

FEMINA

Be unstoppable

SONAM KAPOOR

on films, family and leading a #nofilter life



WATCH THE BEHIND THE SCENES OF THIS COVER SHOOT. FOR INSTRUCTIONS, TURN TO PAGE 03

DISAGREE TO AGREE

Couple fights to have RN

MIRACLE INGREDIENTS TO FEED YOUR SKIN

GET YOUR LIFE'S BEST SEX EVER

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FASHION GOES FLUID



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SWEET NOTHINGS FOR A DULL DAY

Loan life LEARN BEFORE YOU LEAN

DIY ideas

TO PRETTY UP YOUR LIFE

EDITOR'S LETTER



There is something about Sonam Kapoor-Ahuja.

Yes, as this letter goes to press our cover girl's hyphenated surname emerges. In the 12 hours between the cover and the editor's letter being put to bed, clearly a lot has transformed. But more on that later. It was her wedding that trended above Modi's Karnataka tour; it was #SonamKiShaadi and a curated

IT WAS SONAM KAPOOR-AHUJA'S WEDDING THAT TRENDED ABOVE MODI'S KARNATAKA TOUR; AND SHOWCASED THE INDUSTRY'S BIGGEST ITEM NUMBER WITH KHANS, KAPOORS, JOHARS ALL DOING THE SANGEET SHIMMY.

#EverydayPhenomenal that showcased the industry's biggest item number with Khans, Kapoors, Johars all doing the sangeet shimmy; it was her wedding that had me guffawing one full day when stand-up Tanmay Bhatt tweeted about the lengths to which celebs go for their film promotions including tying the knot (case in point, *Veere Di Wedding*). Sonam, the good sport that she is, would have shown her beautiful pearlies at all of this. The effervescent Sonam, the stylish Sonam and the feminist Sonam is now the married Sonam. And she is

clearly a woman in love. The last time we chatted she had admitted to being quite head-over-heels for Anand Ahuja but she had also rather distractedly mentioned how marriage was only a formality, not an institution she entirely believed in. That was then, an off-the-cuff remark.

This is now. When she has taken the plunge, gone through all the rituals of the ultimate union. And to me, this is who Sonam is; from a woman deliberating about the institution of marriage then to going the whole distance now with sindoor, chooda, Anamika Khanna lehenga in tow. What I hear about Sonam is the fact that she embraces her emotions, feelings, articulates what she believes in, evolves with time, and wears her heart on her all-couture sleeve.

In her cover girl interview done a few weeks before she got married, we asked her what makes her unstoppable. Her answer: 'My honesty.'

We approve!

Tanya Chaitanya

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ON THE COVER

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Sonam Kapoor looks happy and stylish on our latest cover. Catch all the action in the behind-the-scenes video of the making of the cover.

How to make sense of Femina's augmented reality (AR) special

VIEW THE AR FEATURE EMBEDDED IN THIS ISSUE WITH THREE EASY-AS-PIE STEPS

1 Get the ALIVE app: Give a missed call to **18001023324** or visit **aliveapp.in**

2 Open the ALIVE app on your phone and scan the page with the ALIVE logo by focusing your phone's camera on it.
Android/iPhone: Hold still and it will scan automatically.
BB/Symbian: Go to Options, then capture image.
Windows: Tap on screen to capture and hold still over image.

3 Voila! Watch your favourite magazine come alive on your mobile device. You will get various options that'll enable you to view, save and share these features.

Available on Android version 2.2 and above, iOS version 4.3 and above, BB version 5.0 and above, Symbian version S60 and above, Windows version 7.5 and above

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WELLNESS RELATIONSHIPS
CELEBS LIFE SPIRITUALITY
PAGEANTS BLOGS AND MORE

SOLE MATE

Spring shoes for every girl

DESERT ROSE

Top Coachella-inspired hairstyles for this season

WHAT'S BREWIN'

Our guide to different kinds of coffee

OPEN WATER

5 lesser-known beaches in India

WE'RE LISTENING ONLINE



We asked our followers on Twitter about their favourite summer beverage that helps them cool down in the sweltering heat. Here's what they had to say:



Sonia Verma @lifascinated
My favourite summer drink is *aam panna*.



Margot @Margot48533660
Fresh coconut and fruit juices keep me cool in this hot weather.



G♥ @gayatrislays
My favourite beverage for summer is grapefruit and rosemary mocktail. It is a perfect mix of sweet and sour. So refreshing that you'll want to serve this mocktail all summer long.



SHINIÑY @Sunshi4ver2427
I like to sip on watermelon juice with lots of ice. It's so cool and refreshing.



Puja Malani @PujaMalani
It's very important to stay hydrated in this heat and I make sure I drink lots of coconut water, lemonade and juice.

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WE HEAR YOU!

Write to us at femina@wmm.co.in

I have always liked *Femina* as it covers a gamut of topics relevant to the modern woman. The April 24, 2018 issue was equally engrossing. The ongoing series on financial advice (Sheconomics) is quite an interesting read. It aptly focuses on smart financial strategies every woman should know to make the



best of her money. The photo feature on pop-coloured makeup (Beauty, Feature) was stunning. The fresh looks are sure to infuse just the right amount of glamour to my everyday style.

Madhuri Rele, Agartala

The magazine always keeps me up-to-date with the latest lifestyle trends. It's the perfect guide for everything, from fashion to beauty and relationships. The story on summer fashion essentials (The Big Story) in the April 24, 2018 issue taught me 26 fabulous ways to elevate my wardrobe. Pooja Hegde looked sensational on the cover. The actor totally turned up the heat in the summer edition of *Femina*.

Sakeena Abraham, Hyderabad

The April 24, 2018 issue of *Femina* was remarkable. The story of Deepika Arun (Reality) was inspiring. Her endeavour allows children to enjoy a gadget-free childhood—something that all parents should learn and encourage. The

autobiography of Neetu Singh (Reality, *The life and times of...*) instantly transported me back to the '70s when she was at the zenith of her career.

Sarita Parab, Sawantwadi

I liked reading the story on how to make time to learn new skills in life (All About You, *Life*)

in the April 24, 2018 issue. A person should never stop learning and this article had the right tips on how to manage time well. The story of Deepika Arun (Reality) highlighted an issue that has been plaguing childhood since the last decade. Kids today are always glued to their mobile or tablet screens and don't go out and play like we did during our childhood. I loved the initiative Arun has taken to give these children a tech-free play time.

Natasha, Mumbai

I loved Pooja Hegde on the cover of the April 24, 2018 issue of *Femina*. She looked sensational. One of my favourite stories from the issue was the guide on how to update my summer wardrobe with the right essentials (The Big Story). It was a great glossary with a healthy mix of designer and high-street brands, which will help me put a high-fashion spin to my everyday style. Thank you, *Femina*.

Rachna Seth, Agra

WIN!

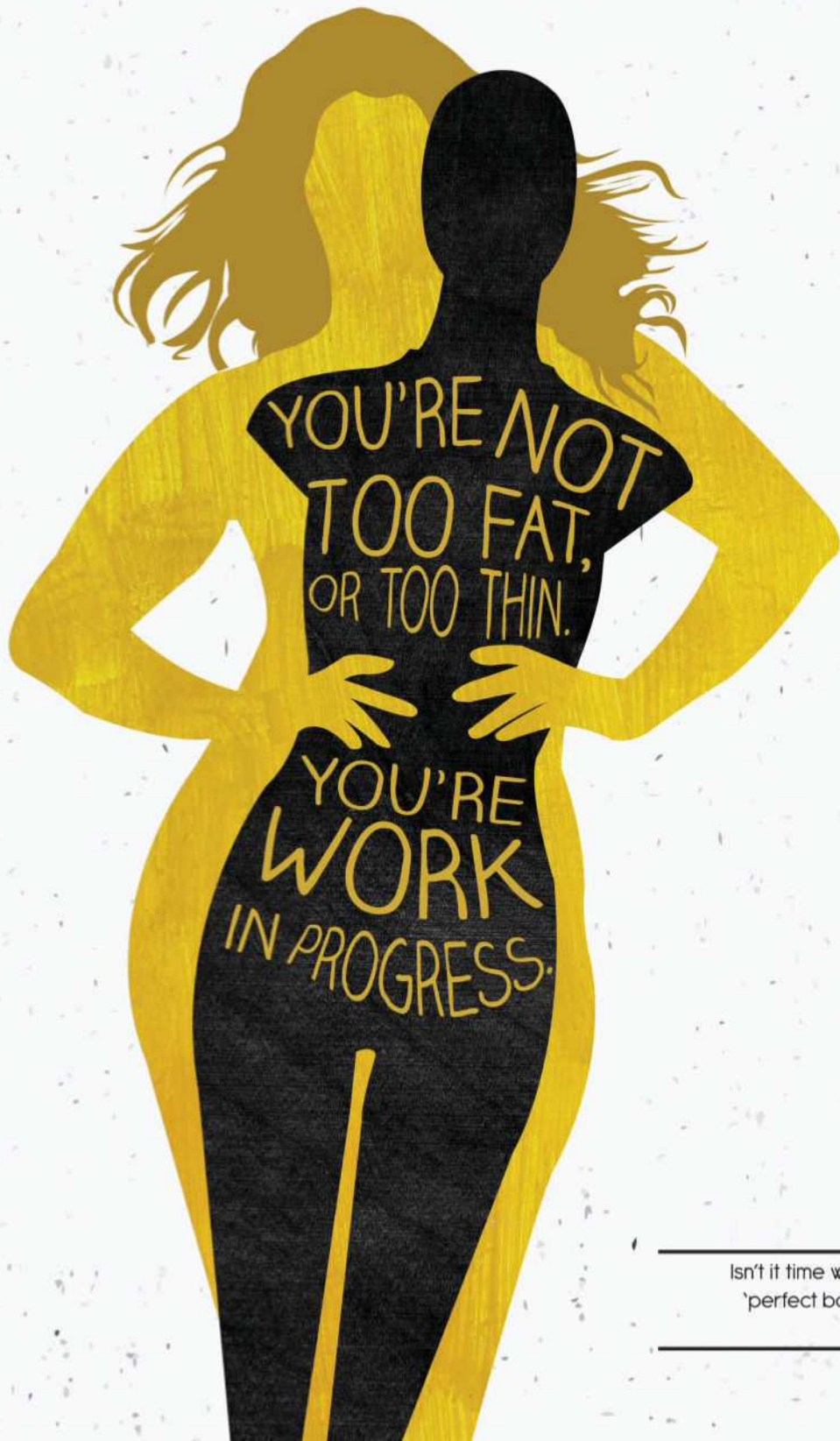
AN EXCITING GIFT FROM ACCESSORIZE

These five letters will win a limited-edition Accessorize bracelet. This sparkling accessory will add a spiritual element to your style.



FEMINA

BE UNSTOPPABLE



Isn't it time we did away with the
'perfect body' myth? Let's talk.
[@femina.in/fitness](https://www.femina.in/fitness)



DIY DONE RIGHT

Few things bring as much pleasure and creative satisfaction as a DIY project, especially when the results turn out to be amazing. **Anindita Ghosh** puts together super-cool and easy hacks for you, with expert help, of course

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Long summer days, with the blazing sun outside, have you imprisoned indoors, how about unleashing your creative side? Making something new with your hands is not just relaxing, but also keeps your brain engaged. What's more, it saves you money and you pick up new skills. Here's a roundup of interesting DIY ideas from our experts to prod you in the right direction. We've got you covered in the fashion, beauty, home décor and party spaces. So gather your raw material and get started!

Funky fashion

Aneeth Arora, founder of péro, who recently started a new service to upcycle your prized wardrobe pieces, shows you how to transform a regular denim jacket and a pair of plain white sneakers into snazzy new pieces, while designer Yadvi Agarwal, founder of Yavi, helps you spruce up a plain tank top.

JAZZ UP

Embellished denim jacket

1 Find an old jacket that's probably seen better days. Gather some crochet or fabric flowers, buttons, beads or any other decorative items you'd like to cover your jacket with.

2 Pin embellishments on the jacket until you have the design and composition you like.

3 Next, secure all the objects by sewing them onto your jacket with small, delicate stitches. Remove pins. Your beautiful 'new' jacket is ready for use. >





SNEAKER SOLUTION

Upgraded white sneakers

1 Find a pair of sneakers and gather colourful badges, little crochet flower pins, fabric strings, etc.

2 Make sure the trinkets have pins, so that they can be secured easily. Using a sewing needle and thread, attach embellishments to parts of your shoe where a needle can pierce through.

3 Place them evenly or bunch them up, and fasten the trinkets well, so they don't drop off while you are walking around.



POP TOP

Spruced up old tank top



1 Take your favourite acrylic colours in a tray (a gold paint with binder can be added as well). Tear and crumple the newspaper in various sizes to be used as brushes to paint.

2 Place some newspaper sheets inside the tank top so that the colour does not seep in from the front to the back.

3 Think of a pattern and start dabbing the colours on the top with a crumpled newspaper ball. Repeat this process with all colours.

4 Leave to dry. Repeat the same process for the back of the tank top.

Beauty tricks

Popular beauty blogger Deeptima Singh of beautyunleashedwithdeeptima.com shares cool ways to make your own makeup products. For skincare DIY solutions, we've roped in Suparna Trikha Dewan, founder of Suparna's Aveda in Delhi.

LUSCIOUS LIDS

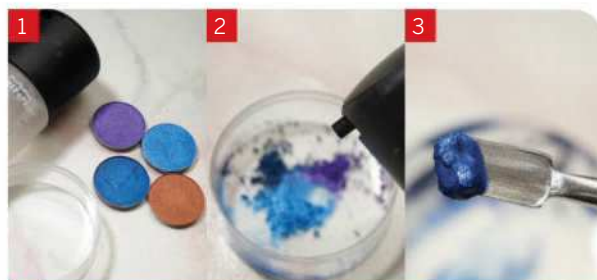
Coloured eyeliner

1 Scrape off some eye-shadow (matte, metallic, pearly or shimmery) from the palette. Make sure it's fine and powdery with no lumps.

2 Mix a few colours in a container to get the desired shade.

3 Mix everything well using some makeup-setting spray until you achieve the consistency you want.

4 Use an eyeliner brush and simply wing it. Allow the liner to dry and you are all set.



BLUSHING BELLE

Cream blush

- 1 Add 2-3 drops of your favourite moisturiser or illuminating primer to a container.
- 2 Scrape off blush or eyeshadow into the same container and mix well.
- 3 Your DIY cream blush is ready. Dot some onto your cheeks and blend well with your fingers or a brush.



WOW BROWS

Tinted brow gel



- 1 Mix medium-hold hair gel and powdered grey-brown eyeshadow in the ratio 1:2. Blend everything with an eyebrow spooly.
- 2 Apply using an angled brush to draw in a few lines and fill the gaps.
- 3 Clean the edges with concealer and your brows are set for the day.

GLAM POUT

Metallic lip colour

- 1 Apply your favourite liquid lipstick.
- 2 Using your finger or a brush, apply some metallic eyeshadow while the lipstick is still drying. The liquid lipstick will lock the pigment when it dries.



Soothing skin remedies for summer

TAN CHASER

Papaya mask

- 1 Mix 2 tsp mashed papaya, 2 tsp flaxseed paste, 2 tsp almond paste and 2 tsp sandalwood powder into a smooth paste.
- 2 Clean your skin and apply the paste all over it.
- 3 Leave on till dry. Wash your face with cold milk and then water. Pat dry.



FRESH FACE

Cucumber skin-cooling tonic



- 1 Mix the juice of two cucumbers, 1 tsp mint paste and 50 ml rose water.
- 2 Dissolve a pinch of camphor in it.
- 3 Store this super-cooling facial tonic in an airtight spray bottle in the fridge. Spray this on your face when you come indoors from the sun. >



SOFT SCRUB

Coconut exfoliator

1 Take 1/2 cup grated fresh coconut, 2 tsp basil paste, 2 tsp mint paste, the juice of one orange, 1/2 cup oatmeal and 2 tsp sea salt, and mix together.

2 Apply the scrub all over your body while bathing.



Décor dreams

Interior designer Shivani Dogra; Mandeep Nagi, design director at Shades of India; designer Pallavi Shantam of the sustainable fashion label Buna; and professional horticulturist Mishi Singh show you to spruce up your personal space.

TABLE STUNNER

Dining table centrepiece



1 Take a clean, wide-mouthed glass jar. Place it in the centre of the table on a wooden plank. Fill one-fourth of the jar with clean water.

2 Take some flowers and leaves of your choice. Wash and stem all the flowers. Place them into the jar evenly.

3 Take some fresh fruits and veggies. Spread in a way that they fill 80 per cent of the plank. Your centrepiece is ready.



GET BOOKED

Fabric bookshelf

1 Measure the length and height of each shelf of your old bookcase.

2 Take leftover wallpaper or wrapping paper cuttings and draw these measurements on it. You could also use fabric that's been mounted on cardboard if you don't have wallpaper.

3 Cut along the lines. Glue the paper to the shelf. Continue doing the same with the other shelves. You could decorate every shelf with a different type of paper for a more eclectic look. >



LET THERE BE LIGHT

Macrame lamp

1 Get an embroidery hoop of any size; some jute rope, white cord or wool yarn; any trinkets to hang at the ends (small pebbles, cowries, glass beads) and a hanging lamp cord with a bulb.

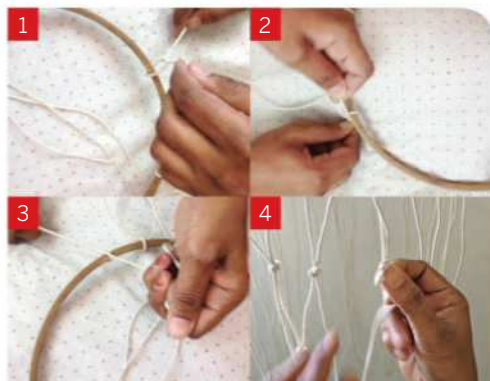
Cut the rope into double the desired length for your lampshade. Fold it in half and wrap it around the hoop. Use a simple knot to secure it to the ring.

2 Knot all the ropes equidistant around the ring. These knots need to be tight enough

to stay in place but not so much that they can't be adjusted if needed.

3 Take one strand each from the pair of ropes on the left and right, and begin to knot about 2 inches down. Keep alternating the knots, ensuring they are lining up evenly.

4 Do the number of rows you want and tie trinkets at the ends to give it weight. Create a hanging by tying two ropes on top of the ring. Knot a corded wire bulb and illuminate it.



COOL CIRCLES

DIY rope coasters

1 Draw a circle on an old piece of cardboard with an old coaster or compass, and cut it along the mark.

2 Mark the middle of the circle. Place a rope there and glue it. Insert a pin to hold it in place.

3 Now, slowly work your way around, gluing the rope, making tight circles.

Pin, if needed, to hold the rope down. When you reach the end, trail rope off to the side, cut and paste. Do the same for the other side.

4 Allow it to dry. Remove pins and your coaster is ready. You can even colour the rope to add texture and make it look attractive.



RECYCLE RIGHT

Eco-friendly planters



1 Gather used plastic containers and saw off their tops. Apply small amounts of synthetic rubber-based adhesive and twirl coconut rope around the containers. Repeat till they are fully covered. Mix different colours of acrylic paint with water to get a spreadable consistency. Paint the rope with a brush and let it dry.

2 Fill the containers with water and place air-purifying plants that don't require any soil to grow, for example, syngonium (releases moisture into the air), money plant (rids air of carbon monoxide), ferns (rids air of pollutants) and drycena (effective air cleanser).

3 To maintain your plants, wash leaves under running water and change the water once a week. >

Party perfect

Wedding planner Candice Pereira, creative head and co-founder of Marry Me (marrymeweddings.in) shares three DIY hacks for your next get-together.

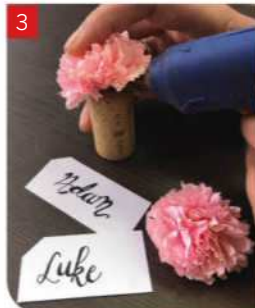
WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Dinner party name cards

1 Collect corks from old wine bottles, card paper for your name cards, paper flowers, a glue gun and a cutter.

2 Slit through the corks as per the length required to fit in your name card.

3 Using the glue gun, stick in a name card and a paper flower over the cork.



FLOWER POWER

Floral table setting

1 Cut floral foam to the size you want and soak it in water (place it over a plastic sheet to prevent mess).

2 Start cutting roses (or any other flower you prefer) to the desired lengths.

3 Ease into the oasis and make sure you cover it up, leaving a space in the centre for the candle.

4 Place your candle holder with a tea light in the centre of the flowers.



LIGHT PRETTY

DIY candle holder

1 Get a tall glass, paper tape, ribbons, an embellishment, a tea light candle, a glue gun and spray paint.



2 Place strips of tape on the glass from the bottom, leaving space in between.

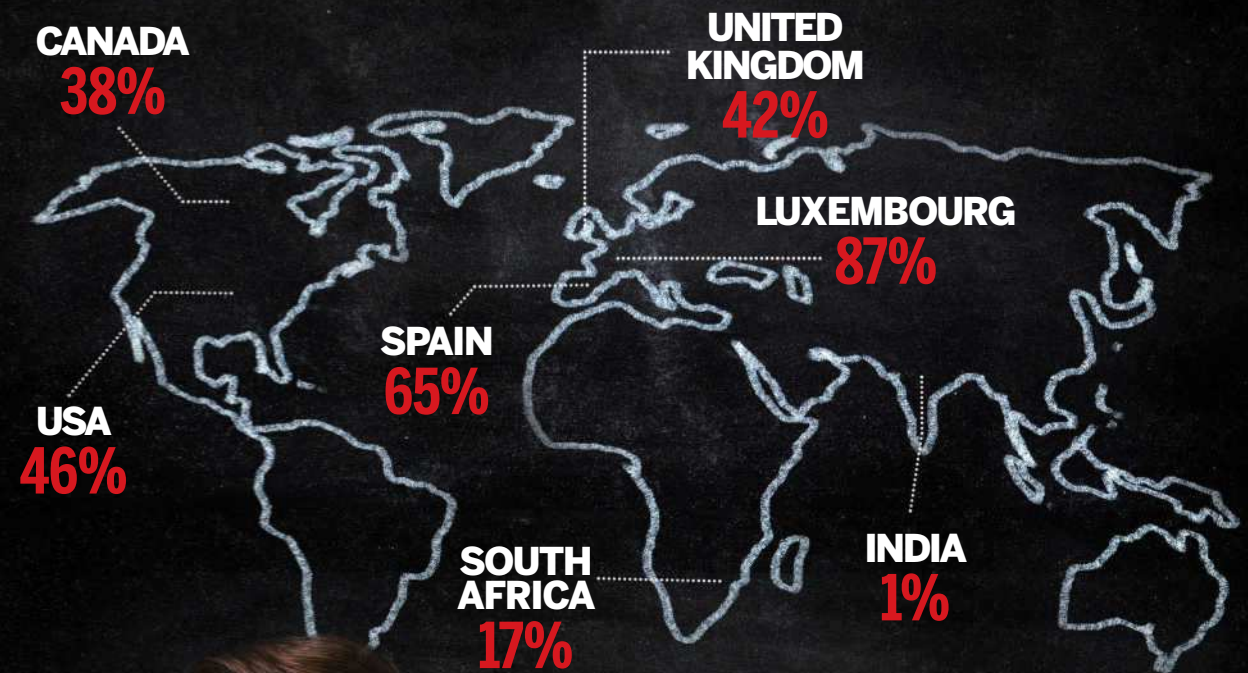
3 Spray gold paint all over the glass, including strips.

4 Once the paint dries, carefully peel off the paper tape to leave behind golden strips on the glass. Stick on a ribbon using a glue gun.

5 Fill the glass with water, float the tea light and light it. **f**

ALL ABOUT YOU

COUNTRIES WITH THE HIGHEST DIVORCE RATE





FIGHT FOR LOVE

Are you even a couple if you don't argue about anything and everything—from where to eat tonight to how to manage money better? But guess what, if you've got a bone to pick with your SO, you might be doing the right thing for your relationship. Surprised? Singer Cheryl Cole aptly crooned: *Anything that's worth having Is sure enough worth fighting for*

Quitting's out of the question When it gets tough, gotta fight some more

If you are a couple planning to go down the marriage route, the more you fight about certain things *before*, the better your understanding of each other's outlooks. The key, however, is to fight fair. Relationship expert and marriage

All disagreements with your partner aren't bad. Some can even bring you closer. **Simran Ahuja** helps you pick your battles wisely

counsellor Shivani Misri Sadhoo says, "An argument creates the opportunity for couples to release stress and, most importantly, it helps open their heart to their partner—as long as couples suppress their instinct to win the fight at all cost."

So, while you get ready with your sharpened swords, remember that the aim is to come up with a solution and wave a white flag of truce.

Here are a few fights you must pick before you get hitched.

"An argument creates the opportunity for couples to release stress and, most importantly, it helps open their heart to their partner."

'Why aren't you a believer?'

Religious or spiritual compatibility can play a big role in a marriage. Believer or atheist—no matter what your partner and your stance is, get a clear idea before tying the knot. "For some, such matters form an important part of their world view. In order to live together, your world views need to co-exist. If you find you aren't compatible, figure out a way around it beforehand. Marriage isn't just the feeling of love between two people; it's also about learning to live with another person—their thoughts and opinions," says Divya G*, a 25-year-old web designer.

‘I don’t want to move cities for your job’

Megha S*, a 32-year-old accountant, had been married for two years when she got a job offer that required her to shift cities. “I wish we had discussed a possibility like this before. My husband wasn’t okay with leaving his job since he was in line for a promotion soon. We never thought we would fight so much over something like this. We’re still figuring stuff out, but I’m scared that whoever gives in will not be able to let go of the regret,” she says. So, while it’s easy to put off crossing such bridges until you come to them, a bit of planning always makes for smooth sailing. Have a plan of action in place in the likelihood of one of you having to move cities for a job. Are you two willing to shift for each other? How will you two deal with a long-distance marriage if it comes to that?

‘Stop bringing work home’

Being in a relationship with a partner who is committed more to his laptop than you is hard. Nothing puts a damper on a blissful marriage than both or either of you coming home exhausted from work, only to sneak in emails during dinner and then turning your backs towards each other in bed. Consider declaring areas of your home—the bedroom or dining room perhaps—as no-work or no-gadget zones where the two of you will spend a minimum of 30 minutes of quality time together.

‘My money is mine’

If you are planning to get hitched, don’t just be penny wise but pound smart as well. Clinical psychologist Sonali Gupta says, “It’s very important for couples to individually understand what their relationship with money is.” Next, sit together and figure out a financial plan for your future. Discuss the following: How much is our individual monthly expenditure? What is our long-term financial goal? Do we want to own a house of our own? How will we save for it? Who will pay the monthly electricity and grocery bills? How will we save

for the education of our kids?

Not just this, having a backup plan if an unforeseen event arises is equally important. Sadhoo says, “Discuss with your partner which health or home insurance would be the best for your family. Include the policy instalments to your budget before making a savings plan for an emergency.”

‘I don’t want kids’

Before tying the knot, it’s important to discuss when/if you want your duo to become a trio. Sadhoo adds that couples need to go a step further than discussing when and how many kids they want (or don’t want). Take the example of Robin Scherbatsky from *How I Met Your Mother*. When her boyfriend, Kevin Venkataraghavan, finds out that Robin cannot have kids, he suggests the couple look at alternative options. Upon finding out that Robin doesn’t want to have any children, period, they part ways. Sadhoo says, “In case a couple decides they want kids but don’t want to do so biologically, then they must discuss their stance on adoption or surrogacy. Or if they choose to not have any kids, then are they willing to look at permanent measures, such as a vasectomy?”

‘Why do you get to be the fun parent?’

If you thought fighting about whether to have or not have kids was the end of the tussle, think again. “We rarely talk >

Discuss the following: How much is our individual monthly expenditure? What is our long-term financial goal? Do we want to own a house of our own? How will we save for it?



Who will pay the monthly bills?



Share to show you care

about the parenting style we would like to adopt," says Sahoo. For example, a child could take advantage of situations where one parent always gives in to their demands while the other plays a hard taskmaster. A mismatch here leaves one parent playing bad cop more often than the other. The counsellor adds, "This could lead to disagreements between parents. A child observes this and eventually learns how to pit parents against each other to get his or her way." Discussing parenting styles beforehand doesn't just positively affect your child's future but your relationship with your spouse too.

'You don't do any chores'

The key to a happy marriage is not just about sharing the same opinion on things, but

Date nights, spontaneous travel plans or mini surprises from time to time—have a game plan in place on how the two of you can keep the spark alive.

sharing chores too. Michelle Job, a 35-year-old photographer, says, "A husband and wife are a team, no spouse is superior. Before getting married, my husband, Vijay, and I discussed that we were not going to give in to any gender stereotyping in our relationship. From changing diapers to doing the dishes, he never hesitates to share responsibilities, big or small, modest or messy!"

'Who will say sorry first?'

Yogita Ravi, a 25-year-old business manager, and her husband Ravi Pidikiti,

a strategist consultant, may fight a lot, but this isn't something that worries them too much. "Ravi is always planning for the future and I can't even decide what I want for dinner. I can't live up to his level of punctuality and this does make both of us lose our cool," she says. The solution they found? "We always resolve an issue before we hit the sack. I'll admit I always wait for him to apologise first, but sometimes, it doesn't hurt to say sorry before he does," she says. The moral? All's fair in love and war, but have a remedial plan in place for times when the battle wages on for too long.

HELLO, MR RIGHT

If you relate to most of these signs, don't be afraid to put a ring on it

➔ YOU ALWAYS FIND A MIDDLE GROUND

You may not always see eye to eye, but you two manage to agree to disagree.

➔ YOU LISTEN TO EACH OTHER

Bad day or rants about *Game Of Thrones*—you're lucky if you've found a partner who is all ears.

➔ YOU'RE NOT JOINED AT THE HIP

Your SO and you aren't afraid to get some space. Even better, you encourage each other to do your own thing.

➔ YOU CHEER FOR EACH OTHER

A promotion or a fitness goal, your guy and you don't just support each other, but push each other to strive for better.

➔ YOU'RE COMFORTABLE

Be it your darkest secrets or your goofy side, you can share everything with him without the fear of being judged.

'There's no spark'

When you're in love, anything and everything your partner does makes the butterflies in your tummy flutter. As time passes, they eventually get tired and nothing seems to be able to stir them from their stupor. Keeping the butterflies active takes effort. Don't wait for the seven-year itch to take action. Date nights, spontaneous travel plans or mini surprises from time to time—have a game plan in place on how the two of you can keep the spark alive. >

'I DO' OR 'DO I'?

If your partner exhibits any of these red flags, it's time to reconsider the relationship

➔ NEGATIVE COMMUNICATION

Do fights with your partner often lead to him bringing up matters of the past or saying things to intentionally hurt you? Consider the direction your relationship is headed in.

➔ ME, ME, ME

Does he call the shots on each date night, travel plan or important decision? Do not settle for a partner who is trying to fit you in his plans. It takes two to make a marriage work.

➔ CONSTANT CRITICISM

It's one thing to want your partner to change for the better and another to expect someone to change their entire personality. You shouldn't feel the need to conform to your partner's tastes or wishes.

➔ SUBSTANCE ABUSE

If your partner is reliant on something, watch out. Addiction of any sort can take a heavy emotional toll. It might be best to wait before making things official.

➔ GASLIGHTING

Stay away from a manipulative partner. Signs of gaslighting include lowered self-confidence or a partner who turns every argument in his favour or skewers events to make it seem like you are always wrong or may have misunderstood him.



Keep the spark alive

'I'm too tired to have sex tonight'

There's no denying the importance of sex in a marriage. But what happens on days when you want some fun and all your partner wants to do is roll up into a blanket burrito and snooze the night away? If a dry spell is your biggest cause of worry, have a suitable plan in place for how your partner and you will deal with one. To get back on the sex bandwagon, have a wham-bam session on days when neither of you is too tired or bogged down with work.

'We always do the same old thing'

Nothing says boring than doing the same thing every time. Before committing to being in the same sack forever, openly talk to your partner about your fantasies or fetishes. "This person is going to be sleeping next to you every night. So it's important to open up and express your needs," says Sadhoo.

"This person is going to be sleeping next to you every night. So it's important to open up and express your needs."

'I can't stay with your parents'

When you marry somebody, you marry his family as well. If you have any concern regarding your partner's parents, don't wait till after the vows are said to bring it up. If grinning and bearing it is not an option, make a pact to not involve either set of parents in any fights. Bring up the matter with your SO in a non-accusatory tone and figure out a way to deal with interactions post marriage.

'I don't like you meeting your ex'

Spending time outside your relationship, be it with yourself or with friends, is another thing that requires your partner and you to be on the same page. "Couples should understand

their partner's priorities about their friends and families, and the influence it could have on the marital life," says counselling psychologist Sailaja Vissamsetti. If either one of you is uncomfortable with the other's association with an ex or friends of the other gender, set some ground rules or agree to always keep the other in the loop.

'Why didn't you tell me about this before?'

Getting married to someone means being there for them in sickness and in health. Sadhoo says, "Couples need to talk about any family history of ailments or health issues. The mistake of not sharing a health issue beforehand can take a toll on your marital life." **F**

SEX AND SENSE-ABILITY

The path to sizzling sex sessions may be as simple as focusing on your senses. **Suchita Parikh-Mundul** guides you towards your biggest orgasms yet



As time flies by, rocking your headboard becomes a logistical nightmare—or worse, it slips off the radar altogether. After all, kids need to be raised, bills need to be paid, and other

important tasks need doing before the dirty deed gets done. Sadly, life can put quite a damper on sex. Even the most amorous couples have weeks when the sexometer drops from XXX to zzz.

Ankita Joshi, a Bangalore-based counsellor, says, “The frequency does not matter as much as the quality of sex. It just requires some effort to get your mojo going again.”

Sometimes all it takes is the right kind of outfit, +movie or music. Psychiatrist and cognitive therapist Dr Shefali Batra, says, “What I do during sex therapy is use the sensate focus technique

to help patients concentrate on their five senses—sight, sound, smell, touch and taste. Stimulating your senses enhances your sexual experience.” The ticket to arousal, sexual performance and heightened pleasure, after all is to tickle the five senses the right way.

This simple yet brilliant psychological Jedi mind trick explains

“THE ORGASM MAY BE THE ULTIMATE GOAL, BUT THE JOURNEY TOWARDS IT IS WHAT MAKES FOR AN ENHANCED SEXUAL EXPERIENCE.”

why setting the stage works so well to get into the mood when you’re planning an intimate night.

Dr Batra says, “The orgasm may be the ultimate goal, but the journey towards it is what makes for an enhanced sexual experience.”

So here are tips to tap those senses and get onto the super-sex highway.



Dress up for the act

TAKE A LOOK AT THIS

When your aim is to clamber back onto the sex bandwagon, visual appeal is key. Raima Sheth*, a 29-year-old homemaker, says, “I’ve been married four years now, and I can tell you from experience that if you or your partner dress up sexy, it will get the

juices flowing for sure.”

Sheth’s on the right path. The effort you put into dressing up in a saucy lingerie or a cowboy outfit often results in success. When you look naughty, you feel naughty too.

Another visual element is your environment. A messy room is a turn-off

THE EFFORT YOU PUT INTO DRESSING UP IN LINGERIE OR A COWBOY OUTFIT OFTEN RESULTS IN SUCCESS.

for some, so tidy up the place, light some candles and spread those satin sheets!

Want to step up the game? Introduce pornography. Be it a whim-bam plotline or a sensual build-up, there’s something for everyone.

If porn is not your cup of tea, romantic films are a much tamer option. Joshi says, “Watching these movies are fun. They are likely to arouse you both. Sometimes, watching your partner getting aroused is a trigger enough to get you in the mood as well.”

PRESS PLAY

Movies to watch to turn up the heat



The Fifty Shades trilogy: Critics may have panned the series, but many babies were born nine months after the release of each of these BDSM-y films. Keep condoms handy.



The Twilight Saga: It’s not about vampires and werewolves as much as it is about young love and raw sexual tension, but the fantasy helps.



Secretary: This is kinky weirdness at its best. It’s a boss-secretary plotline that will pique your imagination. You may want to use your home office to watch this one.



Dirty Dancing: You can’t go wrong with a classic. It’s got romance, yearning, sexy moves, swoony music and a young, beefy Patrick Swayze. All the ingredients for a dirty dessert.

HAVE A LISTEN TO THIS

Titillating the auditory senses builds the mood for bow-chika-bow-wow, so it’s understood that having a washing machine running in the background is not smart gameplay.

Music is a much better idea. It’s best to steer clear of heavy metal and hard rock. Joshi says, “Soothing music helps.” The right kind of music can relax the mind

and help you enjoy sex a lot more.

Another factor that enhances sex is the sounds you make during sex. Shweta Kapadia*, a 25-year-old teacher, says, “I get turned on when my boyfriend lets me know he’s enjoying it. His soft grunts drive me to orgasm so much quicker. And I’m a bit loud, so that helps him get off as well.” >

SOUND AND FURY

Dirty talk can make your sexperience go from 0 to 10. Here’s a bit of inspiration

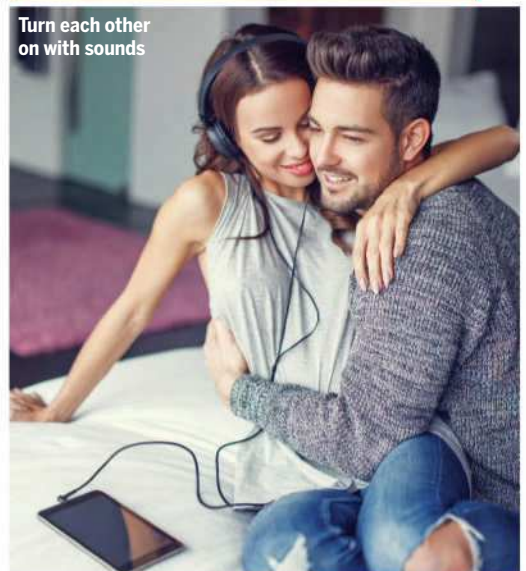
- Moaning helps, but not too loud, at least not at the start. Low and long pleasurable sounds can encourage and guide him.

- Talk about what you want to do to your partner as well. It builds anticipation and heightens pleasure when you actually do it.

- Describe what you want your partner to do. Give directions and be graphic. A woman who knows what she wants in bed is a major turn-on.

- Describe how your partner is making you feel. Verbalising it will add to your pleasure and turn your partner on as well. Win-win!

Turn each other on with sounds



GET A TASTE OF THIS

Aphrodisiacs are mired in debate on whether they are actually effective or just a hoax. The verdict is that they're a bit of both. Dr Batra says, "The food we eat fuels our body, and some components impact certain brain chemicals, which in turn could influence sexuality. To say that a certain food will enhance your sex life may be incorrect, but an aphrodisiac can work as a placebo, through the power of suggestion."

Akanksha Pandey, a Bangalore-based clinical psychology consultant with Fortis Healthcare, says,

"SOME FOOD COMPONENTS IMPACT CERTAIN BRAIN CHEMICALS, WHICH IN TURN COULD INFLUENCE SEXUALITY."

"When it comes to aphrodisiacs, placebo effects are likely to occur because when someone experiences a decrease in sexual deficit, the desire to bring it back can be strong. Just by changing the way you think about something, may actually bring a change sometimes."

So if you believe an aphrodisiac will work, there's a good chance it will. As Dr Batra says, "Positive thinking causes a rush of dopamine to the brain, which makes you feel good." And if you're feeling good, you're in the neighbourhood to feeling sexy.

DELICIOUSLY SEXY

There are various herbs and foods that can play the role of your wingman. Here are some that are worth a shot

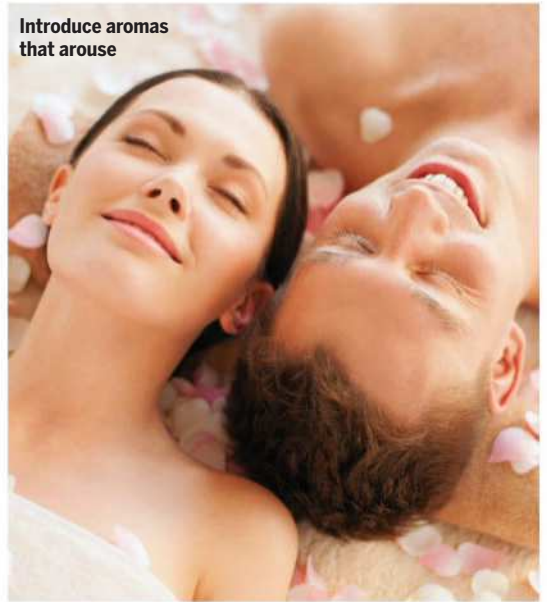
Ginseng: Researchers have found that the Korean red ginseng stimulates sexual arousal even in menopausal women. And it has minimal side-effects. Woohoo!

Chocolate: It contains a substance called phenylethylamine, which is a mood elevator. Bonus: It tastes oh, ohh, ohhh so delicious.

Coffee: Postprandial coffee works as an antidote to sluggish un-sexiness. This makes it perfect for when life gets in the way of your sexual antics.

Chilli peppers: It releases endorphins, and may also cause flushed cheeks and plumper lips, none of which will impede your moving to the bedroom. Wink, wink.

Introduce aromas that arouse



TAKE A BREATH OF THIS

Your olfactory sense matters just as much as the other senses. Joshi says, "Take the time to shower and brush just before sex. Sweaty armpits and bad breath won't enhance your

experience." Dr Batra adds, "Be aware of what aromas you and your partner enjoy. If one of you wears a musky scent that the other doesn't like, that's going to kill the sex drive right there." Remember this while choosing your scented candles or oils too!

SCENTS OF SEDUCTION

Aromatic fragrances that set the tone for some sweet lovin'

Vanilla: It's comforting, welcoming and popular. One simply can't go wrong with it.

Cinnamon: Spicy and soothing at the same time, if raunchiness is what you want, this scent makes a good bedfellow.

Sandalwood: Popular with fans of tantric sex, sandalwood is believed by some to enhance orgasms. Worth a shot.

Rose: The scent of this flower is supposed to be a mood lifter and considering how roses are practically the symbol of love and romance, there's no way this scent cannot be on the list, right?

Lavender: A relaxing fragrance, Cleopatra is believed to have used it to seduce men. Definitely worth considering.



Chocolate can be more than a sweet treat

SEX SUPPORT

The technology to heighten your sexual experience is in the house in the form of handy apps



iKamasutra Lite: It has over a hundred positions to teach you, from novice to grandmaster levels. Available for download on Android.



OhMiBod: This app allows you to send and receive good vibrations, literally. It can connect to your vibrator via WiFi and even has an Oh-Dometer to track your orgasms. Available for download on iOS and Android.



Kindu: Looking for inspiration for date ideas or bedroom activities? Look no further. With this app, both of you get to put in your creative ideas and then a match system allows you to mutually agree on one. Available for download on iOS and Android.

HAVE A FEEL OF THIS

While the sense of touch is crucial to sex, being aware of your body is important too. Dr Batra says, “Know your preferences, and be aware of your partner’s as well. Make sex more about giving than receiving. Giving always feels good, and you arouse your partner enough that they want to give it back to you. This makes sex gainful for both.”

Don’t underestimate the power of touch in helping you communicate your love for your partner. Go on, play with rhythms and patterns as you let your fingers do the talking.

“KNOW YOUR PREFERENCES, AND YOUR PARTNER’S TOO. MAKE SEX MORE ABOUT GIVING THAN RECEIVING.”



Get touchy feely


TOUCH OF LOVE

Your body is a treasure trove of sensations. It’s time to get exploring

The underside of your butt: The line separating your butt from your thigh is a sensitive area, thanks to the many nerves present there. Have him rub an ice cube there. It is bound to turn the heat up!

Ears: The presence of many nerve endings make your ears super-sensitive. Some light kisses or nibbles are bound to leave you in a tizzy. Brownie points if he unleashes his creativity through words as well.

Abs: This one doesn’t need much of an explanation. Your ab muscles are connected to your vaginal muscles, so go figure. Lie down on your back and ask him to use his lips and travel south for a sweet, sweet treat.

Fingertips: Probably the most underrated zone, your fingertips can actually be a great spot to explore. Lightly trace patterns on each other’s palms or spell out secret messages using your fingers. No one will even know! 

Confessions of *a glamazon*

It takes more than makeup to look your best all the time. **Anuja Premika** finds out how these celebrities do it



CHIC PEA

Probably India's most beloved beauty tradition is the besan or chickpea flour face pack. The wonder ingredient can be used to exfoliate, cleanse, remove tan, moisturise and fight acne. Aishwarya Rai Bachchan swears by it too. "One thing I simply can't travel without is besan. It's the answer to all my skin woes," she told a website. Her recommendation is a face pack of besan with fresh cream and turmeric that evens out complexion and instantly hydrates dry and flaky skin.



OIL CLEAR

The ever-graceful Madhuri Dixit-Nene confirms what mothers across the country have been saying all along. "Mix olive oil and castor oil in equal proportions and apply to your hair and scalp—your hair is now ready to fight any weather," she's quoted to have said to a publication. Not only do the two oils have great moisturising and hair-strengthening properties, but they also aid growth and prevent split-ends.

"MIX OLIVE OIL AND CASTOR OIL IN EQUAL PROPORTIONS AND APPLY TO YOUR HAIR AND SCALP—YOUR HAIR IS NOW READY TO FIGHT ANY WEATHER."

APPLE CHEEKS

Actor and former beauty queen from Sri Lanka Jacqueline Fernandez is a fan of apple cider vinegar, an ingredient packed with good bacteria and raw enzymes that can benefit skin and hair. "I've been taking a tablespoon every day with warm water first thing in the morning! Warning though, it's not easy to drink!" she shared with her followers on a social media site.



ICE QUEEN

If your skin looks as tired as you feel when you're just out of bed, Kate Hudson's beauty hack can get two birds with one stone. Dunk your face in a bowl of ice water. "I did it and it works.

To wake myself up or make my skin less dull, I'll dunk my head in a bowl of ice," Hudson told an international publication. Kate Moss also attests to the effectiveness of this hack, which improves circulation and tightens pores.



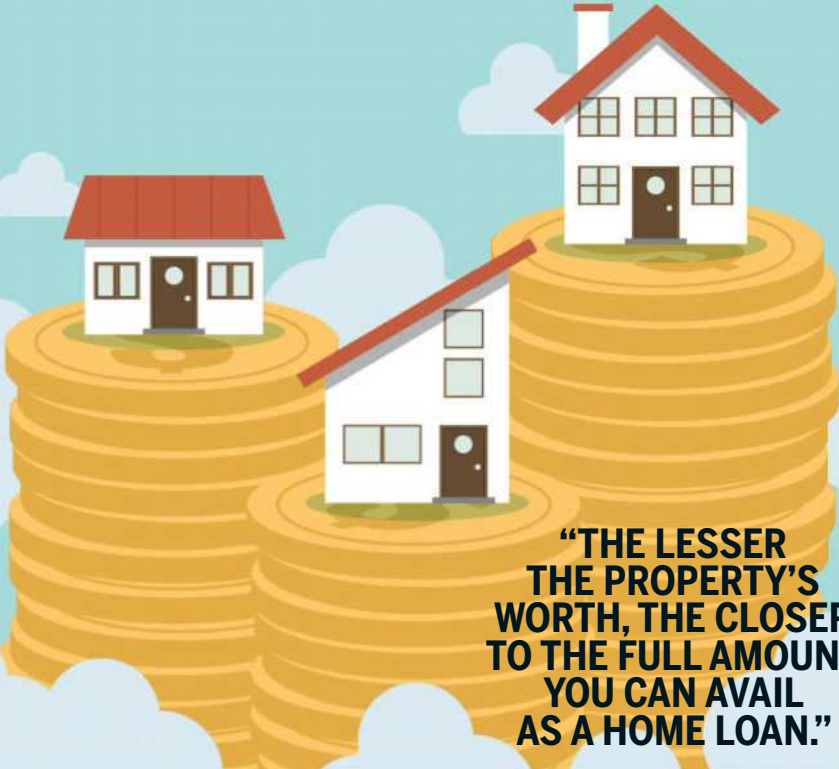
BOTTOMS UP

Cracking open a cold one can help you do more than unwind at the end of a long day. Rinsing your hair with beer can nourish and condition it for shinier-looking mane. Just ask Catherine Zeta-Jones, who admits she's been doing this for years. "I smell like the bottom of a beer barrel for days afterwards, but it's very good for the hair," she told an international newspaper. Demi Moore swears by it too. **f**



GAME OF LOANS

They can get you into trouble, but can be your saviour too when used wisely. **Neeti Jaychander** gets you expert advice on the basics of borrowing and the kind of loans you can avail



“THE LESSER THE PROPERTY’S WORTH, THE CLOSER TO THE FULL AMOUNT YOU CAN AVAIL AS A HOME LOAN.”

Welcome to the big bad world of loans and credit! Often, taking a loan can be a scary thing, especially if you don’t have prior experience. Whether it’s to buy your dream house, study abroad or pick up that beautiful SUV you’ve been eyeing for long, there is a loan for every need. A loan essentially is the money lent to you by a financial organisation at an interest rate. But that’s not all there’s to this financial tool. Read on to know about the various kinds of loans and what they have to offer.

HOME LOANS

- **What is it?** The money you borrow from a financial institution to purchase land, buy a new house, expand or renovate an existing one.
- **Am I eligible?** Surajit Bose, MD of Stupa IT, an independent IT firm based out of Chennai and Bangalore, says, “You are eligible for a home loan if you are above 21 and have the capability to pay EMIs. At the time of loan maturity, you have to be 60 years old or less.”
- **How long can I avail the loan?** People generally take a home loan for 5-15 years. “The loan percentage depends on the property value,” says Shrilekha Ramanathan, former banker. She says, “The lesser the property’s worth, the closer to the full amount you can avail as loan.”
- **Do I get any tax benefits?** Under Section 80C of the Income Tax Act, you can claim up to ₹1.5 lakh per annum on the principal amount borrowed for the loan. Likewise, under Section 24B, you can claim up to ₹2 lakh per annum on the interest incurred. First-time home buyers can claim an additional ₹50,000 under the interest component. Under the principal amount, if your total deduction is less than ₹1.5 lakh, >

you can also claim stamp duty that you have paid in the same year.

→ **What should I keep in mind?**

Bose says, “If the interest rates are at their lowest point, then it is best to take a fixed rate of interest. If not, there’s likelihood for the rates to go down, so it’s advisable to opt for floating rates. Until you repay the loan, the property belongs to the bank. So if you default, the bank has the right to liquidate the property to recover the loan money.”

PERSONAL LOANS

→ **What is it?** A loan availed from a Non Banking Financial Company or a bank for various uses—from paying off other loans to meeting a shortfall in your capital expenditure, to even funding your family holiday.

→ **Am I eligible?** You should be 21 years or above and be able to repay the loan by age 60. “A CIBIL score above 700 increases your chances of a loan,” explains Bose. Adds Ramanathan: “You’ll have to show an income of at least ₹15,000 a month though.”

→ **How long can I avail the loan?** Typically, for a period of two-five years.

→ **Do I get any tax benefits?** The interest (not the principal amount) may get you tax deductions, depending on the loan purpose. Loans taken for constructing a house or for investing in a business have small tax benefits.

→ **What should I keep in mind?** “There is a difference between credit cards and personal loans,” says Bose. The former is usually used to meet short-term expenses since it comes with a high interest rate. Personal loans are taken when you have sudden capital expenditure. Bose says, “It is advisable to pay it off quickly, since it is an unsecured loan, meaning no collateral (an asset pledged by you to the bank for security) from your end is given to the bank, and therefore the interest rate is high.”



EDUCATION LOAN

→ **What is it?** A loan given to a student to pursue higher studies, covering the course fee and other expenses (such as accommodation).

→ **Am I eligible?** Ramanathan says, “The academic records of the applicant are often considered for this loan, so at least 50 per cent marks in high school and UG courses are required.” The bank will also need a letter of acceptance from the educational institution as proof.

→ **How long can I avail the loan?**

The repayment period varies from five-seven years. The EMI generally starts six months to a year after the completion of the course.

→ **Do I get any tax benefits?** Under Section 80E, the person paying the loan can claim tax benefit only on the interest, not on the principal. This deduction is allowed for a maximum of eight years.

IF THE STUDENT IS GOING ABROAD TO STUDY, THE MARGIN MONEY INCREASES TO 15 PER CENT.

→ **What should I keep in mind?**

Bose says, “Banks can fully finance the loan up to ₹4 lakh. For loans above this amount, for a student in India, banks will require margin money of 5 per cent.” Margin money is the difference between the amount you need for the loan and the amount the bank sanctions. If the student is going abroad to study, the margin money increases to 15 per cent. Also, there is collateral involved if the loan amount exceeds ₹7.5 lakh.

VEHICLE LOAN

→ **What is it?** The loan you take to purchase any private or commercial vehicle.

→ **Am I eligible?** You need to be between 21 and 65 years, and show an annual income of ₹4 lakh or more.

→ **How long can I avail the loan?** Typically, for a period of one-seven years.

→ **Do I get any tax benefits?** Auto loans are categorised as luxury items, so there are no tax benefits on these.

→ **What should I keep in mind?** One can also avail a car loan while purchasing a secondhand car. Bose says, “The title of ownership of the vehicle is with the bank and it only hands the ownership to you, along with other documents when you repay the entire loan amount.”

FEMINA

FASHION

NIKHITA TANDON



Embroidered tote, price on request, Christian Dior

VIVETTA



LIGHTFOOT

Whip out your sombreros and tango away in flouncy frills and flamboyant ruffles in all colours and sizes



ALEXANDER MCQUEEN



Cotton blend dress, ₹2,990, Cover Story



CAROLINA HERRERA

RINA DHAKA



GUJARA

Resin and wood bangles, ₹799, Accessorize



Chiffon dress, ₹12,500, FCUK



Recycled polyester mules, ₹5,999, H&M Conscious



Acetate sunglasses, price on request, Louis Vuitton

DOUBLE SCOOP

Why settle for one when you can have double the fun in two-toned pieces. High-octane contrast or hues from the same family—we're having both this season



Khadi blouse, ₹1,899, Promod



Cotton blend dress, ₹17,000, Lola by Suman B



Leather clutch, ₹16,999, Michael Kors

Cotton sweatshirt, ₹1,299, Max Fashion



Ceramic pendant, ₹999, Accessorize



Suede slingbacks, ₹6,299, Charles & Keith



Gold-plated bangle, ₹2,950, Varnika Arora



TIBI

Acetate
sunglasses,
₹12,047,
Maui Jim

Metal sunglasses,
₹2,750, **Opium
Eyewear**

Metal
sunglasses,
₹9,490,
Ray-Ban

Metal
sunglasses,
₹8,400,
Carrera

SLIM SHADY

Revive the '90s teen spirit with micro-sized, tinted shades that are back on every It girl's coveted list

Metal sunglasses,
₹999, **Style Fiesta**
@ Koovs.com

Acetate
sunglasses,
₹3,500,
John Jacobs

Metal
sunglasses,
₹18,900,
Givenchy

Acetate
sunglasses,
₹850,
**The Beach
Company**

Acetate
sunglasses, price
on request,
Max Mara





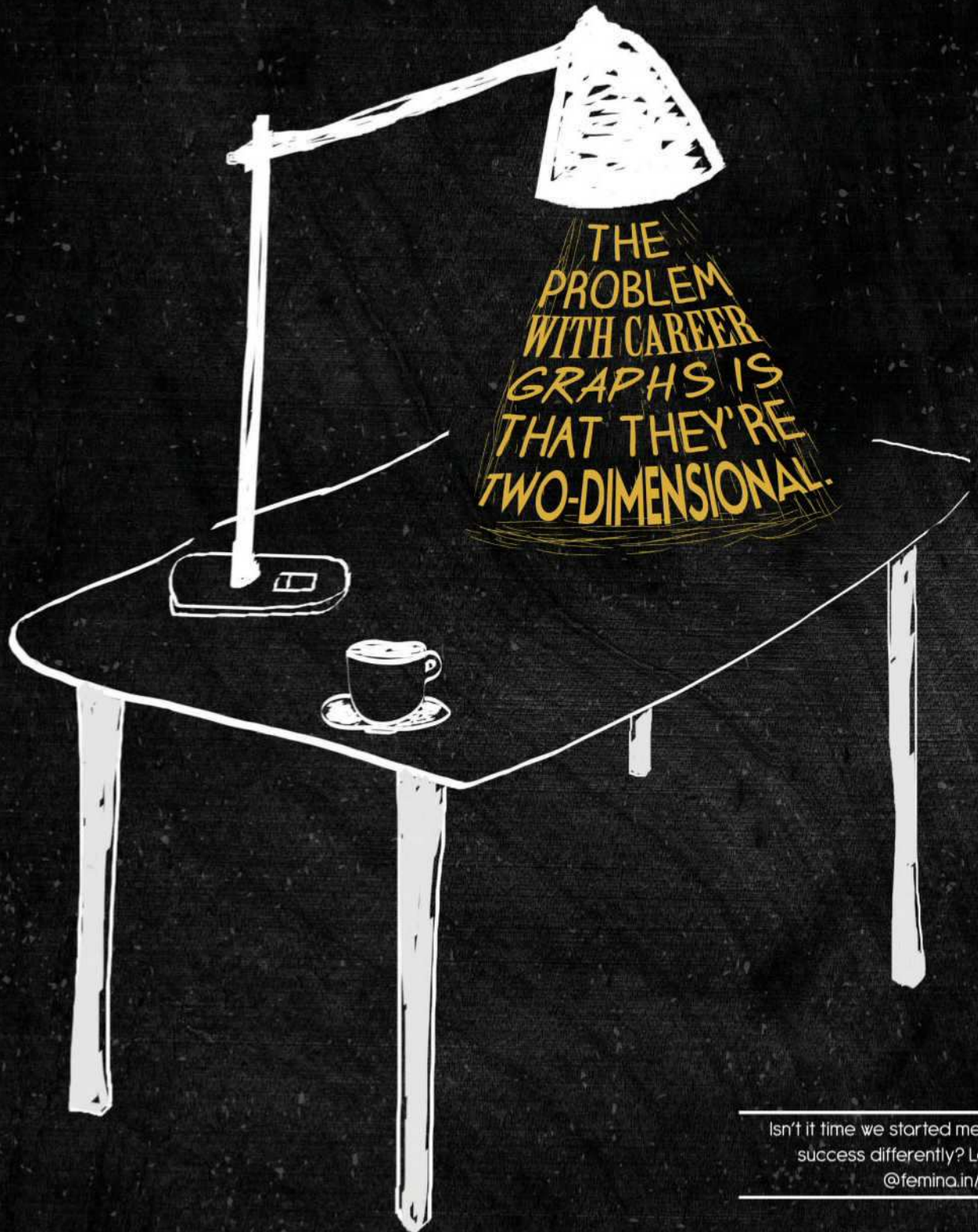
Flash pack

Splash a healthy dose of colour to your everyday wardrobe with these jewelled buds that are both timeless and up-to-the-minute

1. Ruby and diamond brooch, **SLG Jewellers** 2. Diamond studs with rubies, **Velvetcase.com** 3. Sapphire and diamond ring, **Tanishq Shah** 4. Rhodium-plated ring with Swarovski crystals, **Swarovski** 5. White gold ring with white diamonds and tanzanite crystals, **Aurelle by Leshna** 6. Emerald and diamond studs, **Minawala** 7. Diamond ring with sapphire, **Adawna** 8. Sapphire hoops with semi-precious stones, **Varuna D Jani** 9. Diamond and emerald necklace, **de GRISOGONO** 10. Diamond ring with yellow sapphire, **Farah Khan Fine Jewellery** 

FEMINA

BE UNSTOPPABLE



Isn't it time we started measuring success differently? Let's talk.
[@femina.in/lifestyle](https://www.femina.in/lifestyle)



(Clockwise from left) A rural artisan works on an embroidered swatch; Anita Dongre; a look from the designer's spring/summer '18 line

FAIR FASHION

Designer Anita Dongre is trying to bridge the gap between aspiration and accessibility with her ubiquitous brand presence. **Rushmika Banerjee** talks to the woman in charge

The House of Anita Dongre (HOAD) is built on resilience. From starting a label with only two sewing machines (early 1990s) to opening her first store at the Crossroads Mall in South Mumbai (1999) and eventually expanding to a store in Soho, New York (2017), designer Anita Dongre has built an empire within two decades with four labels under its umbrella—AND, Global Desi, Anita Dongre bridal couture and prêt including PinkCity jadau jewellery, and Grassroot by Anita Dongre. Each label has a unique identity and

yet, they are all bound by strong virtues of sustainability and an uncompromising passion for design.

Dongre was a visionary from the beginning. The brand, founded in 1995 along with her sister Meena Sehra and brother Mukesh Sawlani, is touted as the most influential fashion house in the country today. She conceived her minimalist fusion wear label at a time when Indian designers relied heavily on ostentatious ensembles. When Dongre conceptualised her signature gota-patti lehenga with pockets and put them on the ramp, it became a trendsetter. Apart from her strong aesthetics, the designer's business acumen is apparent in the placement of her brands in the commercial sector—AND and Global Desi cater to the masses, while her couture line woos the luxury segment. The designer has also been a strong champion of women's empowerment, and her label Grassroot seeks to revive native Indian crafts and simultaneously empower rural artisans.





(From left) Sonam Kapoor in Anita Dongre's creations; images from the Grassroot lookbook

(Clockwise) Shraddha Kapoor in Anita Dongre's ensemble; models showcasing the latest collection; a sketch by the designer

Her designs have adorned royalty (the Duchess of Cambridge Catherine Middleton wore an AND dress during her visit to India in 2016), former first lady of the U.S., Hillary Clinton, and Canada's first lady Sophie Grégoire Trudeau. Dongre also made it to Google's list of most-searched designers in 2016. In this exclusive interview, the designer reminisces about her childhood, talks about holistic sustainability and what the future of HOAD looks like.

"EVERY TIME I AM IN RAJASTHAN, I SEE SOMETHING AND FEEL SOMETHING NEW THAT REJUVENATES MY CREATIVITY."

What inspires you to create?

Rajasthan. She evokes memories of dancing peacocks, majestic elephants, sleeping on the terrace while monkeys prance around and the beautiful songs of the birds in summer. Every time I am there, I see something and feel something new that rejuvenates my creativity.

Tell us about your early years in Rajasthan.

Some of the fondest childhood memories are of summer vacations at my grandparents' home in Jaipur. My grandmother would take me to the Hawa Mahal market, where I would try my hand at making lac bangles with the local artisans and watch the elegantly dressed Rajasthani women in awe. I loved the way they mixed and matched their vibrant cholis and lehengas. This was >





(Clockwise from left) Dongre works on model fittings; an artist at Dongre's factory in Rabale; sketches from the spring/summer lookbook; a model walks the ramp at Lakmé Fashion Week summer/resort 2018

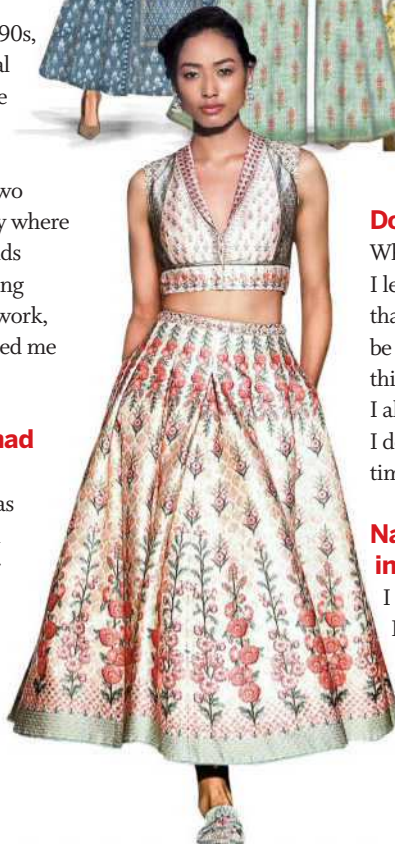


“CREATIVITY CAN NEVER BE CONSTANT, WHICH IS WHY HANDLING SO MANY THINGS KEEPS ME ON THE EDGE AND ENTHUSIASTIC.”

my first brush with fashion. Back in the '90s, fashion designing wasn't considered a real profession, and in a traditional family like mine, this might have been the reason I was even given permission to set up my first workshop. This was essentially two sewing machines in my bedroom balcony where my sister, Meena and I designed for friends and local boutiques. Seeing my unrelenting passion and determination to make this work, my father eventually gave in and supported me in setting up a small factory.

Is there anything you wish you had done differently?

The label has evolved over the years. It has grown in size—the number of stores and even the number of women who buy our clothes. The one thing I wish I had done differently was to start my sustainable brand earlier than I did. I always had the vision and idea, but it took to commence.

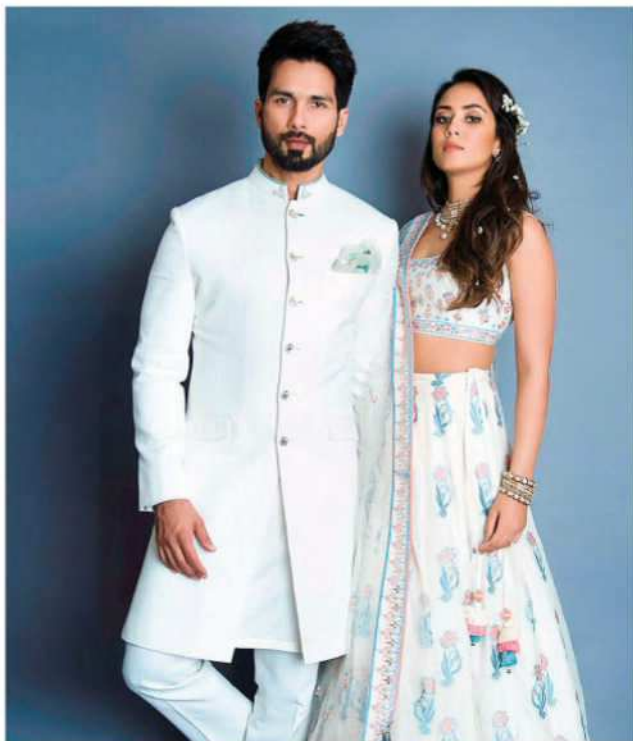


Does it ever get too much?

When you love your work, it's never too much. I learnt to get organised and build great teams that believed in my vision. Creativity can never be constant, which is why handling so many things keeps me on the edge and enthusiastic. I also try to maintain a healthy work-life balance. I do yoga, eat healthy and try to spend as much time as I can amid nature.

Nature also plays an important role in your designs...

I have always been very inspired by nature. It re-energises and invigorates me. Birds and nature completely relax me. I am not a very social person and all my holidays are spent in wildlife sanctuaries.



Shahid Kapoor and Mira Rajput Kapoor pose in Anita Dongre's showstopper looks from summer/resort 2018 collection; (above right) the designer interacts with SEWA artisans in Gujarat who work with the label Grassroot

What does a day in the life of Anita Dongre look like?

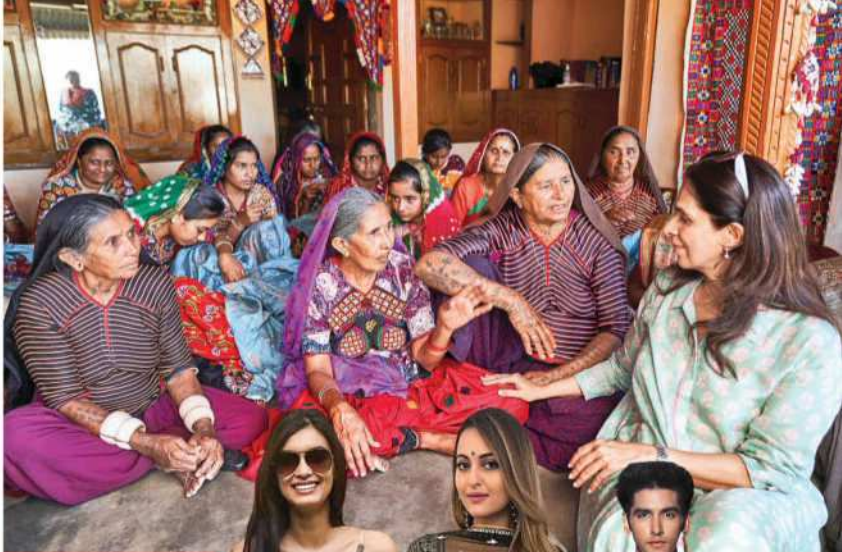
I love to start the day with a nice long walk and watch the sun rise. I am at my desk by 9 am and I delve into work, which takes up my entire day. It's a blessing that my design space (in Rabale, Maharashtra) is nestled amidst green hills and has a picturesque view. After a day full of meetings and brainstorming sessions, my evenings are reserved for dinner with family and some playtime with my dog.

What's the story behind the label Grassroot?

Grassroot works with rural artisans to promote craft. The challenges are in managing to create fashion with artisans from remote parts of the country and to create designs for today's young fashionable woman. We have certainly learnt to be patient, as Grassroot is slow fashion.

How is Indian fashion perceived internationally?

Consumers in New York love the soul and life that radiates from native crafts. They understand the vitality of slow, handmade fashion.



Rapid-fire

First outfit that you designed?

It was a one-shoulder top with a skirt and styled with a beautiful kamarbandh. I had designed, cut, stitched and even modelled it for my annual show in design college.

What are you reading right now?

Good To Great by Jim Collins

A song that plays on loop on your playlist?

Let Her Go by Passenger

A fashion trend you wish to start here?

This season, I would really like to start the trend of big summer hats to protect from the harsh sun. Plus, they look really stylish.

A digital rumour you want to start.

Animal-tested products and leather have been banned worldwide.

Other than HOAD, what other labels would we find in your closet?

Do I need anything else?



Diana Penty and Sonakshi Sinha in the label's outfits; (right) Dongre's menswear line from Anita Dongre couture

"CONSUMERS IN NEW YORK UNDERSTAND THE VITALITY OF SLOW, HANDMADE FASHION."

Handcrafted fashion that spans over decades and generations of expertise is valued there, and I can't wait to share these beautiful artworks world over.

What sets a woman from Gujarat apart from a woman in New York?

Be it a woman from a village in Gujarat or a city like New York, they are all fighting for equality in every sphere of life. The #MeToo protest could resonate anywhere in the world because women are fighting a long and hard battle against sexual discrimination and inequality. We all need to stand together, in order to bring about a change in society. >



“SUSTAINABILITY IS ABOUT MAKING A CONSCIOUS CHOICE IN MANUFACTURING PROCESSES THAT REDUCES THE WASTE PRODUCED.”



(Clockwise from a bove) An image from the Grassroot lookbook; Hillary Clinton in an Anita Dongre outfit; closeup of the designer's embroideries; models in the latest collection Songs of Summer; Anushka Sharma in an outfit from Anita Dongre couture

Given the opportunity, which international designer would you like to collaborate with and why?

I admire Stella McCartney as she is a vegetarian and a crusader for sustainable fashion. I would love to collaborate with her.

Do you think the demand for instant gratification directly affects the sustainability model?

I don't think it does. The challenge with sustainable crafts or clothing, however, is that they can only be produced in small batches. Sustainability is about making a conscious choice in manufacturing processes that reduces, if not eliminates, the waste produced. It can't be compared with a prêt collection since they take around four to six months to be produced. Hence, when customers buy these garments they should also value these pieces and cherish them for a long time.

What's the best and least exciting part of running HOAD?

The most exciting part of my job is being able to go in and create something new every day. The



part that I find cumbersome is dealing with administrative issues, especially when it's a large organisation such as mine.

What advice would you like to offer your son Yash, now that he has joined the business?

Learn from my mistakes so that you don't repeat them. You are, however, bound to make your own mistakes and learn from them. Be disciplined and work hard because there's no substitute for it.

What's next on your list?

It's about time we started appreciating the beauty of Indian craftsmanship. It goes without saying that sustainability is the need of the hour. We are already experiencing the effects of decades of neglect; it isn't going to get any better with time, so it is important that we adopt more sustainable practices as an industry. Also, in addition to the positive environmental impact, the entire process also provides employment to women in the villages, thereby economically empowering them at the same time. We still have a long way to go, but we are certainly on the right track. My plans include celebrating craftsmanship in the best way we can and trying to find a way to being a kinder, completely sustainable brand. 

FEMINA

BE UNSTOPPABLE

Since when did sticking out like a
sore thumb become a bad thing?
Let's talk. [@femina.in/gossip](https://www.instagram.com/femina.in/gossip)



IT'S BETTER
TO BE HATED
BY EVERYONE,
THAN BE KNOWN
BY NO ONE.

RULE BREAKERS



Unravel the binary dress code and weave the shredded, the oversized, the frayed and the asymmetric together for an off-kilter approach to fashion that speaks volumes

TRIPLE WHAMMY

Not quite convinced by the dress-over-pants trend? Throw an extra layer into the mix for added drama.

Cotton blend dress, ₹13,250, knitted scarf, ₹9,500, **both Esha Sethi Thirani**; denim trousers, ₹4,899, **Only**; metal ring, ₹6,499, **Azotique**; shoes, stylist's own >



LINKED IN

Reimagine wardrobe classics by twisting conventional ways of dressing.

Leather crop top, ₹8,500,
Esha Sethi Thirani;
cotton shirt, cotton blend
trousers, both prices on
request, **Chola**





TROPHY OUTFIT

Elevate the forever-favourite black top with seriously polished details. Score extra style points with a pair of heavily-embellished pants.

PU coat, price on request, **Avaro Figlio**; embroidered trousers, ₹38,950, **Shivan & Narresh**; leather belt, price on request, **Michael Kors**; faux leather heels, ₹2,995.
New Look @ [Koovs.com](https://www.koovs.com) >



LINE RIDER

Mix stripes of different lengths on days when you're feeling extra.

Cotton silk shirt, price on request, **péro**; mashru shirt, ₹7,000, **Saaksha & Kinni**; cotton culottes, ₹2,100; **Bhane** @ **Koovs.com**



SIZE OUT

Channel your inner street-style diva with oversized separates.

Polyester windcheater, ₹7,900, **Huenn**; denim trousers, price on request, **Deme by Gabriella**; satin mules, ₹2,499, **Gauri & Nainika X Koovs** >



SHAPE SHIFTERS

Put a quirky spin on an offbeat shirt with another tied over as a skirt.

Cotton shirt, ₹12,000, **Huenn**;
polyester shirt (tied as a skirt),
₹2,490, **Zara**; suede mules,
price on request, **Intoto**;
metal chain bracelet (worn
as a neckpiece), ₹4,000,
Mika Jewels



GLITCH SWITCH

Toss the rulebook out of the window and take on this trend in a flurry of textures, fabrics and prints.

Cotton trench, price on request, **péro**; denim skirt, ₹1,499, **Koovs.com**; PVC jacket, price on request, **Deme by Gabriella**; metal choker, ₹12,999, **Mika Jewels** >



JEAN POOL

Dial up your denim separates with deconstructed pieces to create a stand-out restructured look.

Viscose shirt, ₹7,999, **Only**; denim jacket, price on request, **Deme by Gabriella**; upcycled denim trousers, ₹15,000, **Huemn**; faux suede loafers, ₹1,699, **Vajor.com**; structured cable watch, ₹19,900, **Guess**

DOUBLE UP

We are totally checking out plaids for summer, which is the new groundbreaking trend.

Cotton shirt, ₹8,000, **Shivani Awasty**; cotton blend dress, ₹16,500, **Esha Sethi Thirani** 

PHOTOGRAPHS: VINAY JAVAKAR; HAIR AND MAKEUP: KYANA (TOABH MODEL MANAGEMENT); MODEL: DRISHA (TOABH MODEL MANAGEMENT); ASSISTANT FASHION EDITOR: PRACHITHI PARAKH; FASHION INTERNS: PALLAK H SHAH AND ADITI LAISINGHANI; RETOUCHEE BY: VIKAS KAMBLE



THE CV

An alumnus of National Institute of Design (NID), Ahmedabad, Nachiket Barve is known for his constant design innovation over the years. After completing his education in India, the designer got a scholarship to study at École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, after which he interned with luxury fashion house, Céline. The exposure has helped him develop a unique, intelligent

style that excels in modernising native crafts. But to make his label's 10th year in the business, Barve deviated from his signature aesthetic to present his first-ever bridal wear line at Lakmé Fashion Week in 2017.



PATTERNS: GOLD RUSH

The mainstay of the collection were the gilded Greek words on the outfits that challenged the traditional ethos of bridal wear. "I have taken words that are special to a wedding such as eternal, bride and love, and embroidered them with beads to create patterns on the garments," says Barve.

MIGHTY Aphrodite

The year that his label turned 10, designer Nachiket Barve stepped into uncharted waters with a recalibrated design language. He tells **Rushmika Banerjee** all about it



INSPIRATION: GREEK GODDESS

The collection was titled Theia, which is Greek for goddess. While it drew inspiration from a wide spectrum of Graeco-Roman goddesses, the collection's influences were ingeniously tempered with a modern practicality. The designer says, "The collection emerged from long conversations with my clients, whose concerns with the limited options made me venture into bridal wear. The collection amalgamates fashion trends with an element of classicism to create looks that can be personalised by the bride."



Textiles:

Sheer wonder

Barve has worked with a lot of washed silk, hand-woven raw silk, organza, tulle and silk satin among other fabrics. "I have also created a special tie-dye silk that is inspired by Aegean textiles and their dyeing techniques, so each piece is unique." >





DETAILS: NEO CLASSICAL

Significant motifs from ancient Greek culture, like the olive branch, Juno's peacock and trellises from Byzantine gardens, lent an ethereal vibe to the range. "These rich details give identity and a rich visual lexicon to the collection. I had also developed special head-dresses and harnesses for the runway."



COLOURS: DARK MATTER

The runway presentation moved from midnight blues to deep reds and inky blacks, with bright splashes used sparingly. The designer explains why: "These colours look fantastic on Indian skin tones and bring gravitas to the look."



Celebs: No labels

Barve's contemporary approach to design and compassionate language has found resonance with a number of celebrities, from veterans like Juhi Chawla to millennials like Aditi Rao Hydari and Kalki Koechlin.



SHAPES: FLUID ARMOUR

Sheer skirts, asymmetrical tunics, deep-neck gowns and cape dupattas were inspired by the toga, chiton and other Grecian drapes in an interpretation that felt fresh and up-to-the-minute. Barve says, "I was very keen that these clothes find meaning even after the wedding and can be styled as separates. The struggle was to try and balance my aesthetic with the ornate structure that dominates the wedding market."



PHOTOGRAPHS: YOGEN SHAIH

HAPPY CAMPER

The vivacious Diya Prabhakar started modelling young and today, at 18, she's all set for world domination, says **Rushmika Banerjee**



Diya Prabhakar was 14 when she found her calling. "I was in India for my year-end school holidays and went to see a fashion show. Somebody spotted me there and asked if I was interested in walking for a show. I jumped at this offer, and from the first time I walked the ramp, I just knew this is what I'd always wanted to do," says Singapore-based Prabhakar. Now at the age of 18, she has designers and publications from Singapore, India and London all keen to feature her in their work.

It was a sumptuous bridal campaign

"INTERNATIONALLY, THINGS ARE MORE ORGANISED AND PROFESSIONAL, BUT WORKING IN INDIA IS A BLAST."



(Clockwise from left) Model Diya Prabhakar; Prabhakar walks the ramp for Daks; images from the Toga show

by Anita Dongre in 2015 that put her on the map. At that time, nobody could have believed that the dusky, curly-haired face of the campaign was just a teenager. It wasn't until she finished her A-levels (equivalent to class XII), that Prabhakar considered doing this full time. She is grateful to her

family for being patient with her and guiding her throughout. She says, "My parents were an essential part of my journey and helped me balance my school and modelling. It can be really difficult for young girls doing everything on their own." In India, she works with Anima Creative Management agency, which handles all her professional commitments.

Modelling is a profession that gets a lot of flak for promoting unrealistic body standards and a less than healthy lifestyle. Prabhakar, who stands at a towering 5 ft 11 inches and has an athletic frame, says, "Yes, it's true that there is constant pressure to look a certain way. But I have to thank my parents, who constantly remind me

RAPID FIVE

1 What's on your playlist right now?

Movements by Pham. Plus, a mix of the latest Bollywood numbers

2 Design houses you would love to walk for one day.

Chanel, Burberry and Karl Lagerfeld.

3 How do you unwind?

Listening to music really calms me. Sometimes I just put on my headset and dance!

4 What's your everyday beauty routine like?

Mostly just cleansing and hydrating.

5 How many pairs of shoes do you own?

About 15, I think.

that at my age, it's smarter to eat sensibly and exercise regularly rather than follow any crazy diets."

When it comes to her favourites from the industry, models Coco Rocha, Gisele Bündchen and Bhumi Arora are right up there.

The young model says she has the best from

both worlds. "Internationally, things are more organised and professional, but working in India is a blast. I love how people are so warm-hearted here. There is a sense of joy even in the chaos." **F**



I have a typical pear-shaped figure—narrow at the shoulders and wide at the hips. I would love to experiment with prints. What kind of prints would you suggest for my body shape?

— Neha Ahlawat, Mussoorie

The pear-shaped body is one of the most common among women. You should focus on clothes that will draw attention to your slender upper body, so pick bold prints for the top. Opt for smaller, geometric prints to make the lower half of your body look slimmer. It will also help you achieve visual balance.

DEEPIKA GOVIND

Renowned Bangalore-based fashion designer, also an associate member of the Fashion Design Council of India



I love fluorescent hues for their fresh, energetic vibe. However, if not worn right, they can look jarring. What colours would complement them well, and how should I style pop colours?

— Amrit Sandhu, New Delhi

Fluorescent colours would go well with a neutral palette. A fluorescent top can be worn with distressed sky blue or white jeans. It could also be paired with an oversized white shirt. Pop colours can be teamed with pastel shades to balance them out. You could also try pairing them with pastel dungarees.

MASABA GUPTA

Mumbai-based fashion designer who retails under her label Masaba



I love wearing antique silver jewellery that I've inherited from my grandmother. However, I always end up looking too dressed up. How can I keep things understated?

— Deepthi Vyas, Mysore

Firstly, you need to understand your style sensibility. Try and play with contrasts. Wear a neckpiece under the collar of a white shirt with sharp trousers. Wear stunning silver jhumkas with a long boho jacket over a pair of jeans. Remember to create a cool, modern vibe if you don't want to look overdressed. **1**

SUHANI PITTIE

Hyderabad-based jewellery designer who graduated from the Gemological Institute of America in Carlsbad, USA



STYLE REHAB

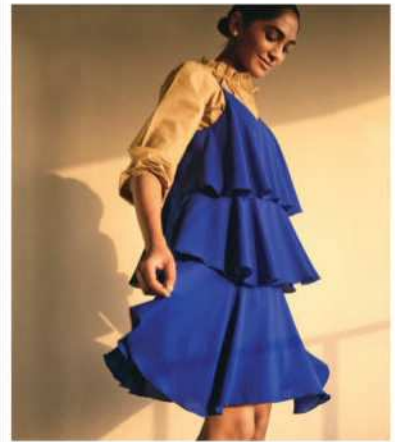
Three fashion experts answer your style queries

Send in your queries to femina@wmm.co.in



DIGITAL POP

H&M's next designer collaboration with Moschino is all sorts of cool. It will feature creative director Jeremy Scott's signature playfulness and tongue-in-cheek humour on a range of affordable clothing and accessories. Titled Moschino [tv] H&M, the collection promises a blend of pop culture and glamour on ensembles like parka dresses and jackets. We can't wait for November 8 to get our hands on the quirky merchandise. PRICE: **On request**
AVAILABLE AT: **Select H&M stores**



DANCE WITH ME

Label Life's latest collection La La Land is a 20-dress capsule line that is playful and gives a modern spin to classic styles. Sway the night away in these pretty swingers, which come in pop hues of ink, crimson, lime and daffodil. PRICE: **₹2,490 onwards**
AVAILABLE AT: **TheLabelLife.com**

Trending

Femina's round-up of the latest news, views and buzz in fashion



LAUNCHES WE LOVE

Luxury bridalwear has a new address in Delhi as designer Neeta Lulla opens her flagship store at DLF Emporio. The retail space, designed in Victorian opulence, houses her most iconic designs. Meanwhile, contemporary jewellery brand Pandora India also marked its first year in the country with the launch of their third store at DLF Promenade, Delhi. **f**

ISLAND GIRL

Nicobar's latest travel drop, Mirissa, draws inspiration from sunny Sri Lanka and its fishermen. The multi-functional capsule features free-flowing outfits to allow ease of movement while travelling. The collection plays around with a natural colour palette, which will seamlessly blend with your jet-setting style. PRICE: **₹550 onwards**
AVAILABLE AT: **Nicobar.com and Nicobar retail stores**



GREEN REVOLUTION

adidas's collaboration with Parley Ocean Plastic features Ultra Boost and Ultra Boost X trainers in shades of the ocean. This partnership spins the problem of marine plastic pollution into a solution by transforming plastic found in coastal regions into sportswear, reusing an average of 11 bottles per pair of sneakers. We're all aboard this sustainable fashion wagon. PRICE: **₹15,999**
AVAILABLE AT: **Select adidas stores**

FEMINA


BEAUTY

Twist of
TASTE

Age-old skincare secrets lie hidden in your kitchen cabinet. **Tatiana Dias** gives you the low-down on ingredients you can add to your beauty rituals

Photographs: **Meetesh Taneja**

SALT, TO TASTE

Take your showers with a pinch of sea salt. Loaded with minerals such as potassium, magnesium and calcium, the compound maintains your skin's health. Sea salt also helps balance out various skin conditions, including dryness and irritation. When used as a scrub, it gently exfoliates, detoxifies and heals the skin, while improving blood circulation. Add a teaspoon of sea salt to warm water and pour into a spray bottle. Whenever your skin feels oily or tired, simply spritz your face with it for a refreshed look. 







ALOE THERE

Rich in vitamins C and E, and also containing beta carotene, this age-old miracle plant helps fight ageing, while also moisturising the skin, without leaving it oily. The anti-bacterial properties present in aloe vera can also calm and heal acne. While you can apply the gel directly on your face, you could also turn it into a toner. Mix fresh aloe vera gel with water in an airtight bottle and leave it in the fridge to cool. Using a cotton ball, apply the liquid on your face and let your skin absorb its goodness. >

FEMINA

BE UNSTOPPABLE



Isn't it time we did away with the
'perfect body' myth? Let's talk.
[@femina.in/fitness](https://www.femina.in/fitness)

SPILL THE BEANS

Wake up and wear the coffee. We're aware that this morning favourite jolts you out of slumber, but did you know that it refreshes your skin too? Coffee is a great exfoliant that stimulates blood circulation and helps fight against free radicals that tend to pull your skin down.

Mix used coffee grounds with coconut oil and cocoa powder into a paste and use it as a body scrub while showering. The coffee gets rid of dead skin while the coconut oil moisturises your skin and, the cocoa powder adds a healthy glow.



ORANGES AND LEMONS

Nothing adds radiance to the skin like a burst of good old vitamin C. Found abundantly in citrus fruits such as oranges, lemons and grapefruits, this potent nutrient not only fights infection, but also purifies the skin and clears clogged pores, all thanks to its wonderful antioxidant properties. Add orange or lemon juice to a face pack containing cucumber or aloe vera to reduce pigmentation or dark spots on the face.

HALDI HABITS


The age-old healer that recently received its international ticket to fame, turmeric is the touch of spice your skin needs. Consisting of curcumin, turmeric has anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties, and can not only heal wounds instantly, but also resuscitates the skin to its former glory. It also cleanses pores and soothes the skin and is perfect for clearing breakouts. Detox your skin with a mix of turmeric, raw honey and oatmeal for an exfoliating face pack and scrub.



OH, HONEY

The busy bee of DIY skincare, honey stays true to its reputation. Used as a spot-treatment to get rid of acne — or as a mask to help avoid skin from ageing, when it comes to achieving that natural glow from within, honey is your go-to hero. If you're looking for a mild yet effective cleanser, simply replace your face wash with a mix of honey, and glycerin and massage it into your skin. The golden liquid deep cleanses the pores while the glycerin hydrates the skin. >

TEA-TOX

Green tea flushes away toxins from the system, within and without. Its antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties make a great kitchen ingredient for acne-prone skin. The tannins present in green tea aids in shrinking pores and makes them appear smaller. Make your own scrub with green tea and sugar by mixing some cooled-down boiled leaves with fine-grain sugar. Apply it to your body and face for a natural glow. 

HOT RIGHT NOW

All that's fresh and fun on the beauty shelf

MANE TALK

Pamper your tresses this summer with Brazilian brand Cadiveu Professional's new hair treatment product, Sol Do Rio Re-charge Protein. Infused with 21 amino acids and coconut water, which make hair stronger and arrest breakage, it combines the benefits of three products –hair-mask, leave-in conditioner and pre-bleach protection. PRICE: ₹2,900 AVAILABLE AT: **All Jean-Claude Biguine salons**

FRAGRANT FEELS

Nykaa introduces Moi, a range of perfumes for the new-age woman. Subtle and elegant, Raison d'être combines top notes of rose and vanilla, and base notes of musk and vetiver for a lasting fragrance. Joie de vivre is a light and spicy scent with top notes of citrus and pepper and base notes of amber and oak moss. Perfect to up your je ne sais quoi element. PRICE: ₹1,800 Available at: **Nykaa.com stores and website**

LASH EFFECT

The one makeup staple that instantly lifts (literally!) your look is mascara. Smashbox Cosmetics introduces Super Fan Mascara, which can help you achieve lift, length and volume that is said to last up to 12 hours. Its unique 360° precision brush uses a blend of firm and soft bristles, which not only enhances lashes but also evenly coats the hard-to-reach ones.

PRICE: ₹1,950
AVAILABLE AT:

Smashbox stores and leading retail outlets

SWEET LIPS

Get selfie-ready and give your lips the dual benefit of a tinted lip gloss with the healing properties of a lip balm with Lotus Make-Up's Colorkick Lip Sugar. Enriched with sugar, kokum butter, shea butter and vitamin E, it's available in six shades and offers UV protection with SPF 20.

PRICE: ₹299
AVAILABLE AT: **Lotus Exclusive Brand Outlets and leading retail outlets**



BEAUTY makeup mantra

Clarins
HydraQuench
Cream-Mask



L'Oréal Paris
True Match
Super-Blendable
Perfecting
Foundation

WHITE OUT

We found a new way to use white eyeliner and it's kinda miraculous, reports **Madhura Sansare**

NYX
Professional
Makeup
Retractable
Eye Liner

Revlon
Colorstay
Crème Eye
Shadow



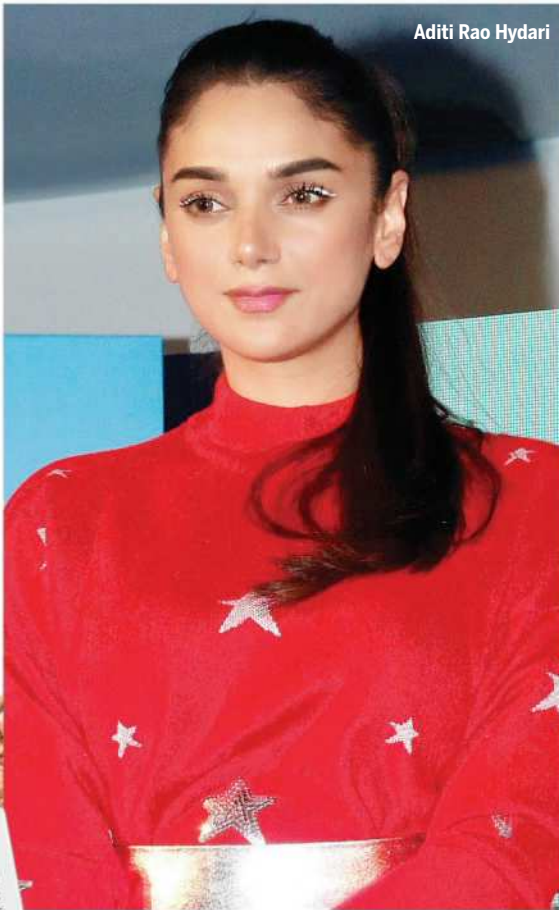
FACE

Start off with a hydrating mask to moisturise your skin. Follow up with a primer to make sure that your makeup stays on for long. Use a liquid foundation to give your skin an even base, and hide away any blemishes with a concealer. Set your base with some loose powder.

The Body Shop
All-In-One
Cheek Colour



Clinique
True Bronze
Pressed
Powder
Bronzer



Aditi Rao Hydari

Applying a line of white eyeliner on your lower lashline is a sure-shot way to wipe years off your face. Aditi Rao Hydari took it up a notch higher when she stepped out with a white winged-tip look. We're officially obsessed.

EYES

Use an eyeshadow primer to ensure that your makeup doesn't crease. Apply a pink eyeshadow on the creaseline of your lids, and on your lower lashline. Follow with a pearly eyeshadow on your lids to create a subtle contrast. Dab some glittery silver eyeshadow on the inner corner of your eyes as well. With a white eyeliner, draw a line from the middle of your upper lashline, thickening it as you move outwards and pulling it into a wing. Apply copious amounts of voluminising mascara to finish.

Kiko
Milano
Lip
Scrub

Avon
True
Color
Perfectly
Matte
Lipstick



CHEEKS

Use a matte bronzer to contour your face slightly, focusing on your forehead, cheekbones and jawline. Use a pink-toned blush on the apples of your cheeks to add some colour.

MAKE IT YOUR OWN

FOR WORK

Tone down the mascara a smidge, and ditch the glittery eyeshadow altogether.

FOR A WEDDING

Swap the pink eyeshadow with silver and pearl shades before applying the liner.

FOR A DATE

Wear a red pout to enhance the drama.

LIPS

Exfoliate your lips to create an even base, and apply a pink lip liner along the edges. Finish with a pink lipstick. **F**

‘WHY SHOULD WE THINK OF CONSUMERS AS BEING UNAWARE?’

Beauty entrepreneurs Vasavdatta Gandhi and Sneha Daftary believe that being honest with the consumer should be a priority for all brands

Sneha Daftary (left) and Vasavdatta Gandhi

As the old becomes new, and more and more companies are tapping into the time-tested benefits of Ayurveda, there's one that's attempting to combine ancient wisdom and beauty rituals with the convenience of modern science. Sova, a luxury Ayurveda brand that recently launched its range of products, is the brainchild of Sneha Daftary, owner of Mumbai-based hair salon Vous, and her aunt and fashion entrepreneur Vasavdatta (Vasu) Gandhi. The duo, however, isn't of the opinion that Ayurveda's entry into the scene is a recent phenomenon.

“ANCIENT SCIENCE HAS ALWAYS BEEN PART OF EVERY INDIAN HOUSEHOLD.”

“It may not have been presented easily in bottles as it is today, but the ancient science has always been part of every Indian household. When we have a sore throat, we have haldi; when we feel like a beauty facemask, our mothers say ‘use besan’.

A newborn is still massaged with til oil or pure almond oil,” they explain. What seems to have taken place, according to them, is a sort of second homecoming for the traditional science.

Despite the market witnessing a surge in Ayurveda-based brands, Daftary points out the need for providing the same sensorial experiences of international brands. “Most people want to try natural products, but the general sentiment is that they leave the hair looking dry and Indian brands don't make good skin products. We felt we would be able >



to break this stereotype,” says Gandhi, a graduate from FIT, New York. Spending time on the road for her trunk shows had left her with little time to tend to her and her daughter’s hair and skincare needs. It was a mother’s desire to provide her kids with products that would shield them from harmful chemicals, pollution and damage caused by UV rays that led her to start Sova.

The duo points out that ayurveda alone is not enough to combat the compulsions of the modern world, like a constant air-conditioned environment, which dehydrates hair and skin, pollution, lack of fresh wholesome food and even the use of colour. “To claim that an ‘all natural’ product can beat these adversaries may not be true. As a result, we’ve made sure that our products have a balance of Ayurvedic wellness along with the right chemicals like protein peptides etc. The right amount of good chemicals enhances the Ayurvedic process,” says the third-generation entrepreneur Daftary.

The brand had pharmaceutical backing in the form of scientist and Ayurvedic expert H I Gandhi, and most of the testing and formulating was done under his supervision.

“Ayurveda alone is not enough to combat the compulsions of the modern world, like a constant air-conditioned environment, pollution, lack of fresh food and even the use of colour.”




During the testing phase, they also engaged with customers at Daftary’s hair salon.

“We realised that products with too many Ayurvedic extracts didn’t work as well with hair. People complained of their colour fading faster, and highlights becoming dull or even changing colour sometimes. We couldn’t achieve the refinement without the right amount of good chemicals,” says Daftary.

So, in the ever-expanding luxury Ayurveda market, what makes the brand stand out?

“Sova came into being as a result of the realisation that the Indian market was starved for a well-researched luxury hair and skin brand that actually delivered what it promised,” says Vasu. It’s in this philosophy of being honest to their customer that, she says, lies Sova’s USP. The bottles list all the ingredients (natural and chemical) that go into the products. The full disclosure policy, they say, show their trust in the product.

“Consumer is king, so why should we think of them as being unaware and uninformed? We are confident that every single ingredient that goes into our products is good for the consumer and, therefore, we have no qualms about putting everything down in black and white,” says Vasu, adding that they are currently in a trial-and-testing phase and plan to introduce many more products in the future. 



MAKEUP

I use eyeshadow shades that match my outfit. What can I do to play up my eyes even more?

— Prachi Iyer, Chennai

You may use coloured eyeliner instead of a matching eyeshadow. Invest in bronze, navy and dark brown liquid or gel eye liners. Smoking up your eyes in dark brown or teal instead of black is also a good trick. Adding a pair of false eyelashes also enhances the eyes.

KAPIL BHALLA

Renowned celebrity makeup artist



SKIN

I popped a zit on my chin and there's been a scar ever since. What can I do to get rid of the scar?

— Sonakshi Sood, Mumbai

Use a mild cleanser to wash your face. Apply a serum infused with vitamin C on the scar twice a day. Do not step out without applying sunscreen, especially on the scar. At bedtime, apply a cream containing kojic acid, arbutin, retinol or glycolic acid.

Dr JAISHREE SHARAD


Celebrity cosmetic dermatologist and CEO of Skinfiniti Aesthetic Skin & LASER clinic, Mumbai



HAIR

What are the best ways to style my hair when I am growing out my bangs?

— Saloni Sharma, Jaipur

You can either wear your bangs up and clip the hair for height, or style it on either side and pin down. You could also try a side twist or a braided style, and pin it to any side of your choice. Try out different partings when pinning your bangs. 

SAVIO JOHN PEREIRA

Celebrity hairstylist and founder and creative director of Savio John Pereira Salon



YOU ASK

The one-stop panel for all your skin, makeup and hair questions

Send in your queries to femina@wmm.co.in

One of the biggest deterrents to skin health, pollution is almost inescapable in the times we live in. **Tatiana Dias** helps you navigate the grimy minefield to offer your skin the TLC it deserves

SKIN DEEP



We all know that bad skin is the result of an unhealthy diet and increasing stress levels. Not to mention careless mistakes like not removing makeup before going to bed, not drinking enough water and not getting enough sleep—little things that pile up over the years and eventually wreak havoc on your skin by causing breakouts. The biggest enemy of your skin, however, and one that you've probably been ignoring, has got to be pollution. And this is one hazard none of us can escape from.

If you live in a city, you might want to wake up to the fact that it's probably the environment that's bringing your skin down, quite literally. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), India is home to 13 of the 20 most polluted cities in the world. The 2017 State of Global Air Report, a study jointly conducted by the Health Effects Institute and the Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation, documented that air pollution-related deaths in India between 1990 and 2015 had risen by approximately 150 per cent! So, imagine what pollution is doing to your skin.

So rampant is the menace, that the beauty industry is experiencing a huge surge in anti-pollution skincare products that cater to this issue. This is however, just scratching the skin's surface because merely slathering on the sunscreen alone isn't going to solve it. For that, you first need to understand what pollution is and the ways in which it causes damage to your skin.



WHAT IS POLLUTION?

Simply put, pollution is a contamination of the natural environment—both indoors as well as outdoors. It occurs in different forms, including air, water, soil, heat and light, and noise. “Air pollution is the most common of all that affects the skin,” says Sham Kumar, education manager at Kiehl’s India. “This can lead to premature ageing of the skin, and dull and fatigued skin.”

Dr Madhuri Agarwal, founder and medical director of YAVANA Aesthetics Clinic, Mumbai, says, “Various air pollutants such as ultraviolet radiation, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, volatile organic compounds, oxides, particulate matter, ozone and cigarette smoke affect the skin as it is the outermost barrier.”

“THE PRESENCE OF POLLUTION IS CONSTANT AND SMALL ENOUGH TO ENTER THE SKIN, LEADING TO INCREASED SENSITISATION AND AGEING.”

“Air pollutants damage the skin by inducing oxidative stress. Even though human skin acts as a biological shield, prolonged or repetitive exposure to high levels of these pollutants may have profound negative effects on the skin,” adds Dr Agarwal.

Besides the obvious air pollutants such as dust and smoke, ash particles and gas emission from paints and road traffic, are equally harmful to the skin. Avni Amlani, international skin expert and consultant, Dermalogica India says, “The presence of pollution is constant and small enough to enter the skin, leading to increased sensitisation and ageing.”

Water pollution also plays a significant role in damaging the skin. Dr Agarwal says, “Tap water contains chlorine, which can damage the skin and lead to premature ageing. Although chlorine is used to treat drinking water, it’s also a toxic chemical which, in large quantities, can cause serious skin agitation.” >



“TOXINS FROM HOUSEHOLD CLEANING MATERIALS, CARBON DIOXIDE, AND CARBON MONOXIDE MIXED WITH PARTICLES SUCH AS DUST ARE ABSORBED BY THE SKIN.”

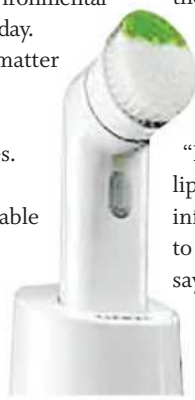
TOXIC TRUTH

While sun damage is probably one of your biggest daily skincare concerns, there are a lot more dangerous issues to deal with. “The skin is the largest organ of our body and plays an important part in protecting it from external agents. The daily toxins that impact skin are ground-level ozone and particulate matter found in industrial emissions and vehicle exhaust,” says Dr Agarwal.

She adds, “Ground-level ozone is harmful gas from toxic emissions, and when it reacts with sunlight, it reduces the skin’s natural antioxidants three to four times faster than the upper ozone layer in the atmosphere by itself, thus increasing the harmful effects on the skin.”

According to Amlani, even toxins from household cleaning materials, carbon dioxide, and carbon monoxide mixed with particles such as dust are absorbed by the skin. This essentially means that your skin is soaking environmental pollution minute by minute, every day.

Dr Agarwal says, “Particulate matter in the atmosphere has chemicals attached to them from various sources such as fuel and pesticides. When these get into your skin, it creates free radicals—highly unstable molecules that have unpaired electrons—that affect it.”



THE IMPACT

Airborne particles that enter the skin’s deeper structure oxidise the surrounding lipids and tissues thus harming the skin’s health. Amlani says, “Like UV radiation from the sun, air pollution poses an invisible threat. The effects on the skin are easily visible—pigmentation, fine lines, weakened skin structure and increased sensitivity.”

According to Shah, exposure to pollution in both air and water can lead to various skin concerns including acne and premature ageing. Free radicals cause injury to the collagen, resulting in hyperpigmentation and fine lines. They can also increase inflammation, which in turn aggravates acne and rosacea. “The most severe thing they can cause is DNA damage and cell mutation, which can eventually lead to cancer,” she adds.

Other factors such as the weather, UV exposure, diet, lifestyle and allergies all contribute towards it, eventually aggravating the common skin concerns people have.

On acne-prone skin

Impurities in the air and water enter through the pores and along with dead skin cells, sebum and sweat. This then leads to acne breakouts. Amlani says, “Pollution particles like dust, ash and pollen are smaller than the average skin pore and adhere to the oil and sweat on the skin, resulting in blocked pores, comedones and even breakouts.”

Dr Agarwal adds, “They can also increase the sebum production of the skin.” This could lead to breakouts too.

On dry skin

While one may think that pollution only affects those with acne-prone skin, dry skin can also be a major concern. Shah says that the atmospheric pollution causes oxidative stress on the skin, compromising the barrier, which results in dull and dehydrated skin.

“Pollution particles oxidise the protective lipid barrier in the skin causing irritation, inflammation and dryness. Lipids are known to keep the skin cells hydrated and nourished,” says Amlani. >

On prematurely ageing skin

The combination of UV exposure and pollution is detrimental to the skin. Dr Agarwal says free radicals damage healthy skin cells and diminishes the skin's ability to repair itself. "This contributes to the cross-linking of collagen and elastin, and leads to fine lines and wrinkles."

Is your city to be blamed?

Higher levels of pollution have been associated more with metropolitan cities. Dr Agarwal says, "The urban skin is more impacted as the percentage of pollutants from various sources is definitely high—traffic pollution being the most toxic of all. In a German study conducted in 2010, it was discovered that women in high-traffic areas had 20 per cent more pigmentation problems on their cheeks and forehead compared to those in rural areas."

Amlani, on the other hand, says rural areas also experience pollution due to farming and industrial activities. "The difference in skin texture is irrespective of whether you live in a metropolitan city or a rural area."



Dry skin

Use a gentle moisturising face wash to cleanse your skin. Apply a daily serum and a cream-based, antioxidant-rich sunscreen during the day, and a rich cream to nourish your skin at night. Amlani recommends using a multi-vitamin mask twice a week to keep the skin hydrated.

- LOOK OUT FOR
- OLIGOPEPTIDES**
- ANTIOXIDANTS**
- HYALURONIC ACID**
- VITAMIN B5**
- PLANT BUTTERS AND**
- ESSENTIAL OILS**
- CUCUMBER AND**
- CILANTRO**

POLLUTION-PROOF YOUR SKIN

Since prevention is better than cure, make sure to shield your skin from the adverse effects of environmental pollution. In order to do so, experts suggest maintaining a balanced lifestyle and following a good skincare regimen. No matter what your skin type, follow a strict routine to combat pollution. Cleanse your skin daily in the morning and evening to remove any buildup of debris. You can exfoliate to remove the accumulation of pollutants, while allowing for the healthy cells to move to the surface of the skin. Add a moisturiser to your regimen to create a protective barrier and top it off with an SPF for full protection. You can also customise your skincare routine depending on your skin type and concern.

YOU CAN EXFOLIATE TO REMOVE THE CUMULATION OF POLLUTANTS, WHILE ALLOWING FOR THE HEALTHY CELLS TO MOVE TO THE SURFACE OF THE SKIN.

Normal to combination skin

Use a gentle face wash to cleanse the skin and apply sunscreen in the mornings. At night, apply an oil-free lotion to moisturise the skin. Dr Agarwal suggests using a moisturising cream only on the dry areas during daytime. Throw in a charcoal-based mask to detox the skin once a week. >

- LOOK OUT FOR
- HYALURONIC ACID**
- ACTIVATED CHARCOAL**
- KAOLIN CLAY**
- GLYCOLIC ACID**
- VITAMIN C**
- ALOE VERA**





Oily skin

People with oily skin need to use an oil-control face wash to deep clean their pores, followed by an alcohol-free toner on the face and neck. Use a matte moisturiser to prevent the glands from producing excess oil. Dr Agarwal suggests using a gel-based sunscreen in the mornings and oil control face pads. A salicylic-glycolic cream at night is perfect for reducing daytime oiliness. She recommends using a small-granule scrub at least twice-thrice a week to reduce skin buildup.



LOOK OUT FOR

- NIACINAMIDE**
- ACTIVATED CHARCOAL**
- SALICYLIC ACID**
- MANDELIC ACID**
- VITAMIN C**
- CALENDULA**

MISTAKES YOU'RE MAKING

- Irregular use of skincare products
- Erratic food habits
- Consumption of processed foods
- Not using SPF indoors or on cloudy days
- Over exfoliating
- Under cleansing
- Not following a nighttime skincare routine



Acne-prone skin

Follow a similar routine as you do with oily skin, however, add an anti-acne cream to help reduce breakouts.



LOOK OUT FOR

- TEA TREE**
- MENTHOL**
- SULPHUR**
- RETINOL**
- VITAMIN C**
- CINNAMON BARK EXTRACT**

TIPS

- Cleanse, tone and moisturise
- Double cleanse, if required
- Stay hydrated through the day
- Always wear sunscreen
- Cover up when outdoors
- Sleep well
- Regularly visit your dermatologist to detoxify and repair skin

Ageing skin

Make sure to use a hydrating face-wash when cleansing your skin. Follow it up with a serum that should be used twice daily to protect and prevent the skin from ageing. Dr Agarwal also recommends using an anti-ageing cream and an under-eye cream at night.



LOOK OUT FOR

- RETINOL**
- VITAMIN C**
- VITAMIN E**
- FERULIC ACID**
- PEPTIDES**
- GINGER LEAF**



WHAT TO EAT

If you're wondering whether it's possible to pollution-proof your skin from inside out, the answer is yes. "The main function of our skin is to be an immune-barrier and if pollutants have weakened this barrier, then it's important to strengthen it. This can be achieved by fortifying the skin with essential vitamins such as E, C, and B and antioxidants. These help heal the skin damaged by free radicals and keep the immune barrier healthy," says Dr Agarwal.

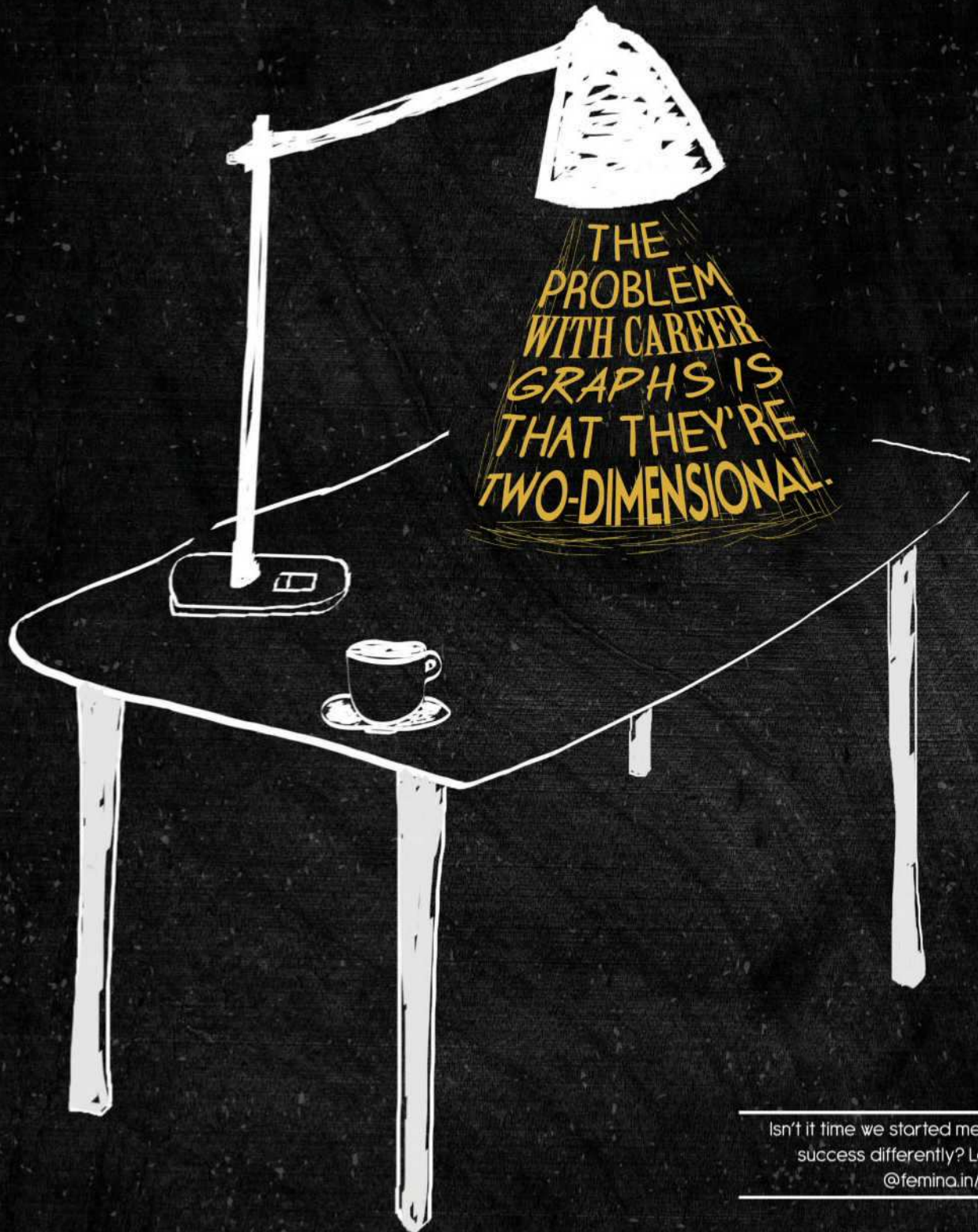
Citrus fruits, beetroot, oregano, apples, avocado, blueberries, and leafy greens and beans play a significant role in the body's capability to heal itself, especially the skin.

Water is also essential when combating pollutants internally, so make sure you drink plenty of water through the day to detoxify the body.

While the effects of pollution are rather alarming and you may not be able to completely undo the years of damage to your skin, you can prevent it from further harm by taking care of it from here on. **f**

FEMINA

BE UNSTOPPABLE



Isn't it time we started measuring success differently? Let's talk.
[@femina.in/lifestyle](https://www.femina.in/lifestyle)

Inhale, EXHALE

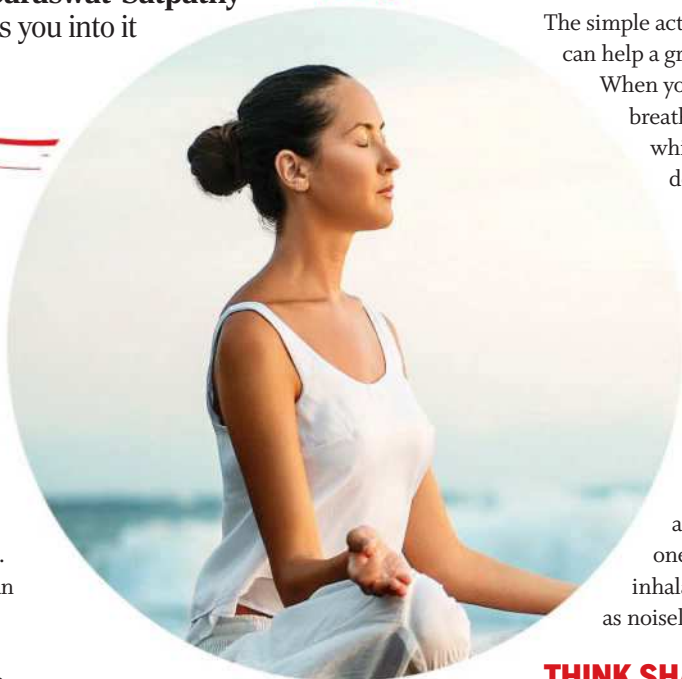
Even a few minutes of meditation every day can do wonders to reduce your stress levels. **Kriti Saraswat-Satpathy** eases you into it

Take a deep breath..." is perhaps the most common advice given to calm someone down. Yet, it is the most underrated one. The power of long-drawn, mindful breathing is embedded in the very heart of the ancient practice of yoga. It is believed that one's life span is measured in the number of breaths they take. Therefore, the key to prolonging one's life is to take longer, deeper breaths.

Not only does this habit improve blood circulation, it is extremely beneficial in calming your nerves and busting stress. According to research by the University of Mississippi, meditation is more beneficial than physical exercise in reducing anxiety, worry and chronic neck pain. In our fast-paced life, we seldom get the

time to grab a meal in peace, without getting distracted by our phones; and sitting down in one place with our eyes shut sounds more daunting than meeting a deadline. Yet, a few minutes of meditation can do wonders for your productivity, reduce stress levels and help you stay more focused. We give you easy stress-busting meditation techniques that'll help you disconnect.

When you pay attention to every breath, you take in more oxygen, which in turn helps you calm down. The best part is you can do this anywhere, anytime.



START TOMORROW

If you are someone who wakes up daily with a jolt and hurries off to work, you are inadvertently adding more stress in your life. Starting your day by meditating for a few minutes is the better way to go. Sit cross-legged on the bed with your palms on your thighs. Close your eyes and observe your thoughts. Try not to think about your to-do list for the day, but focus on things you like or find relaxing. Start with a five-minute session and increase it to 15 minutes over time.

BREATHE CONSCIOUSLY

The simple act of observing our breaths can help a great deal in de-stressing. When you pay attention to every breath, you take in more oxygen, which in turn helps you calm down. The best part is you can do this anywhere, anytime. Close your eyes to concentrate better. Simply inhale for five counts, and then exhale for 10 counts. You can increase or decrease the count as per your capacity, but the ratio should be 1:2. Repeat at least 10 times in one sitting. Make your inhalations and exhalations as noiseless as possible.

THINK SHARP

This relaxing technique is great for heightening awareness. To practise it, lie down on your back with your legs and arms slightly spread out. Imagine a burning flame and move it across your body slowly to feel the warmth. Start by placing the imaginary candle on your left foot. Move it across the toes, heel, ankle, shin, calf, knee and thigh. Now move it to your abdomen, stomach, chest, shoulder and neck. Then, imagine it moving across your left arm. Repeat for the right side of the body and the back. In the end, move it across your face and your eyes. Once done, slowly open your eyes and sit up. Rest this candle on each body part for a few seconds before moving on to the next. **F**

Child's play

Vijitha Rethesh's handcrafted dolls are not only appealing, but also impart a lesson in being eco-conscious. **Nikita Sawant** chats with the doll-maker about her passion and craft

Vijitha Rethesh sees beauty where others see scrap. The Kerala-based doll-maker might have started making cute dolls out of waste materials quite recently, but her love for all things discarded goes back to her childhood—the first thing she ever made using scrap was a lotus.

The idea behind using waste materials like paper, wood, fabric and metal in her craftwork is fairly simple. Rethesh says, “Scrap is easily available and it doesn't cost a thing. Plus, since I reuse waste materials, it's eco-friendly too. I've never had to go to a store and buy material for my work.”

Rethesh reuses every little piece of paper that she can get her hands on, be it a wedding card, brochure, greeting card or a flyer. She likes the creative freedom that comes with using scrap—one can make anything out of it, she says. When the doll-maker runs out of scrap paper, all she has to do is source some from her friends and neighbours. Rethesh uses the quilling technique, commonly used to make dainty floral art, to create her dolls. “If I'm making a flower, for instance, I can make it quickly. But in the case of dolls, the more detailed it is, the longer it takes to make it,” says the 32-year-old.

Rethesh's creations include miniatures of Santa Claus, elaborately costumed Kathakali dancers, Victorian-era women, Japanese women in kimonos holding parasols, and many more. But while she is known for her colourful dolls, she also makes charming pieces of jewellery. In fact, it was her handcrafted jewellery set that got her a mention in the *Limca Book of*



“
Scrap is easily available and it doesn't cost a thing. I've never had to go to a store and buy material for my work.
 ”

Records in 2016, when she created a 50-ft necklace and 2.5-ft *jhumkas* out of cardboard.

Rethesh believes she could pursue her passions because she had the support of her family. She says, “We have artistic people in both my husband's family and mine, so

they understand art and have always encouraged me where my creativity is concerned.”

In 2017, Rethesh also earned a place in the *Guinness Book of World Records* with her display of 1,350 dolls that took five months to make. The remarkable thing was that no two dolls were alike and Rethesh made the quilling material required for them herself. The serial recycler is now working on a DIY book that is all about salvaging household scrap to make craft items like flowers, photo frames, dolls, wall hangings and disposable dishes. She hopes that her endeavour will motivate children to get creative and reuse scrap as much as they can.

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A GIRL WITH A VIEW

At a time when women all over the world are being celebrated for taking a stand, Sonam Kapoor's highly-opinionated and bona fide demeanour places her in a revered league.

By **Rushmika Banerjee**
Photographs: **Arjun Mark**

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"THE INDUSTRY IS STILL AT A NASCENT STAGE AND YOU CAN BE THE ONE WHO CAN BREAK THE GLASS CEILING."

DRESS: RUBAN FASHION; DENIM JACKET: ALEXANDER MCQUEEN; @MYTHERESA.COM; LEATHER BOOTS: CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN; EARRINGS: SHRUTI SUSHMATA FINE JEWELLERY; CYLINDER RING: GEHNA JEWELLERS; TWO STUD RING: ANMOL JEWELLERS; GEOMETRIC RING: ZOYA JEWELS



FEMINA

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How often does perception differ from reality? When I met Sonam Kapoor, I walked in with my own bundle of preconceived notions. But one thing nobody told me was that she would be so

effortless. From the time she stepped on to the set till the time we sat down for the interview, it was one happy, smooth-sailing ride. Sonam Kapoor is not your regular celebrity who comes with her coterie of fussy managers, overstressed stylists and ludicrous demands. She is like you and me—an uncomplicated girl who is just here to do her job—and she aced it every single day. When I walked into her vanity, I saw the star—who has been a part of industry for a decade, has the country's best designers at her beck and call, and comes from a family of highly talented artistes—heartily gorging on homemade lunch. "I have been vegan for a year now," she told me.

From the time she made her debut with *Saawariya* (2007) at age 21, to when she made all those headline-making sartorial choices and when she silenced the naysayers with her performance in *Raanjhanaa* (2013) and *Neerja* (2016), the actor has gone from strength to strength in her career. In this interview, Kapoor, who recently married her long-time boyfriend Anand Ahuja, speaks about her latest flick *Veere Di Wedding*, the lessons she has learnt from her father, and what makes her sleep peacefully at night. Excerpts:

Did the Hindi film industry always entice you?

Contrary to what people think, I'm not much of an extrovert. I wanted to be in academics and didn't want to be in the public eye. I feel extremely comfortable in a library or a classroom. So, I could have studied for the rest of my life. But there is another side to me which likes expressing herself through different artistic mediums. I guess I do that through my films, clothes and what I say, in general. That calling got stronger when I was 18, and Sanjay Leela Bhansali gave me an opportunity through *Saawariya*.

What motivated you to keep going?

Public and critical appreciation makes you believe in yourself a lot more and *Raanjhanaa's* success has been very encouraging. I was 21 when I did *Saawariya* and I will turn 32 this year, so life has changed a lot. As you grow up, you become wiser and your choices evolve, which is equally important.

What excites you the most about this industry?

The industry is still at a nascent stage and you can be the one who can break the glass ceiling.

Looking back, is there anything you feel you could have done differently?

No, I think my journey so far has been inspiring in a way where I know I have done whatever I could to make my life better. Like to be responsible towards other people, to be authentic, to have a moral compass, to be progressive and to be idealistic. Through the ups and downs in my career, I have never faltered in what I believe in. I feel like I can sleep soundly every night because I know have not hurt anybody.

Tell us about a moment from the film sets that you will cherish forever.

My most favourite part was when my father (Anil Kapoor) came on the sets of *Neerja* and spoke to the cast and crew. We had Aamir Khan and Rajkumar Hirani coming along every two-three days just to pep us. Everybody knew this was a special film. They all spoke so incredibly on why this (project) is important; it motivated us so much. And then on the last day, the last person to come was my dad. We were shooting the climax and it was one of the toughest times for me and everyone else. It just felt amazing that he was there for one of the most important days of the shoot.

Post *Neerja*, do you feel more pressurised when selecting a movie?

I just do what I feel is enjoyable and where I can grow as an artiste and a person. If you keep doing things for somebody else, and not because you want to, you get depressed. I want to express myself and grow in the process, so I have never felt that pressure. I don't care what >

"I FEEL LIKE I CAN SLEEP SOUNDLY EVERY NIGHT BECAUSE I KNOW I HAVE NOT HURT ANYBODY."



FEMINA

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I chose to do it. They expect me to always play a titular character, but they also know I'll always give them good content.

Which has been your favourite role so far?

Well, it's Mili Chakravarty from *Khoobsurat*. I had so much fun playing the character. Though *Neerja* (the character) is very close to my heart, I think Mili was light-hearted and exciting. It's interesting because it's quite different from my real-life persona.

What are you like off-screen?

I'm just an ordinary girl who is always positive and likes working hard. It helps to be real about everything—own every line on your face and cherish every pain that you have in your body. It's important to value those moments and not see them as defeats.

What has been your biggest learning from your father?

To be always searching and wanting to grow. It's amazing to see how at 61, he is still the lead in 90 per cent of the films he does. He's redefined the way people look at older actors. He is an amazing father; he brought me up with progressive point of views and he's such a feminist. It's incredible to see how much he believes in his moral compass.

Your relationship with Rhea and Harshvardhan has given many people major sibling goals. Tell us more about the bond you share with the two.

I'm very protective about my brother, but my sister is my best friend. Rhea and I are just a year-and-a-half apart. She is my partner in everything, whether it's films, fashion or business. Sometimes, we don't even want space from each other—at least, I don't. I recall this hilarious fight I had over the TV remote with my brother, when we were kids. I threw the remote at him and he smashed it back at me, and my mom fired him because it hit me. Nowadays, when we get together we gossip and talk a lot, mostly about films.

What advice would you like to give Janhvi Kapoor now that she has begun her film career?

I have already given her enough counsel. When I joined the industry, her mom (Sridevi) helped >

"IT HELPS TO BE REAL ABOUT EVERYTHING—OWN EVERY LINE ON YOUR FACE AND CHERISH EVERY PAIN THAT YOU HAVE IN YOUR BODY."

people say and think. As long as I am honest and authentic, it will work and that has always been my game plan.

Have expectations from you risen after *Neerja* won the National Award and you received special mention from the jury?

Expectations have always been high. People loved me in *Padman* and they were happy that

me quite a bit, including with my makeup. I remember I used to go to her house and have a lot of conversations with her. I know she had those talks with Jahnvi already, but all I can say is, that she needs to be professional, respect hers and everyone else's time, which is something she knows already. There will be a lot of naysayers, but she just needs to keep her head down and keep working.

You have also been quite the digital trendsetter in real life...

I enjoy social media and I don't look at numbers. I believe that digital media, if used in a positive manner, can be a very effective tool for change and to express yourself. It could be such a creative medium—look at some of the YouTubers that we have, the amazing comics, and the amazing videos that are being produced.

Do online trolls bother you?

At the end of the day, all you need to think is that they are faceless people who have nothing better to do in life. I feel sorry for them. I am not saying it in a patronising tone; I mean it in a genuine way. Can you imagine the insecurities they carry, and the negativity and hate they must be receiving that they just sit and troll others?

What's your take on the plagiarism debate that's happening in the fashion industry online?

Everyone needs to be called out at some point. There has to be some policing somewhere and it's all in good spirit and should not be taken in a negative way.

How did you prepare for your role in Veere Di Wedding?

The kind of preparation that I have done is insane. Every few months, your idea of the character evolves because you evolve as a person. I had done back stories, workshops and dialogues of every character.

What did you enjoy the most on the sets?

I was working with my best friends and with my sister, so it was so much fun. It's amazing to work with such strong and talented women who all want the same thing. And obviously the incredibly talented Shashanka Ghosh (director, who's also done *Khoobsurat*) who I admire.

HAIR: HIRAL BHATTIA; MAKEUP: AARTI NAVAR; SENIOR CREATIVE DIRECTOR: MEETESH TANEJA; STYLISTS: CHANDINI WHABI AND ABHILASHA DEVNANI; ASSISTED BY: SHIVANI SARIN; SHOOT COORDINATOR: PRACHITI PARAKH



Fast Five

What makes you unstoppable?

Honesty.

Do you have a secret talent?

I can make anybody laugh.

Who is your biggest source of strength in vulnerable moments?

My sister and mother.

What are the challenges you faced while chasing your dreams?

A lot of people don't have idealism and a moral compass, and they tell you to give up on that, which you shouldn't.

A message for the scores of women who look up to you?

You are better than what they tell you you are.

It's my third film with Swara (Bhasker) and it's always amazing to work with her. It's my first film with Bebo (Kareena Kapoor Khan). I have known her my whole life and it's great to see how progressive, intelligent and talented she is. For me she has always been Bebo, but when I saw her on set, I realised why she is Kareena Kapoor Khan because she is so magnetic.

What are you working on next?

A film adaptation of Anuja Chauhan's book, *Zoya Factor*. It is produced by Aarti Shetty, Pooja Shetty Deora and Fox, and directed by Abhishek Sharma. I am also doing *Ek Ladki Ko Dekha Toh Aisa Laga*, which is produced by Vidhu Vinod Chopra and Rajkumar Hirani, and directed by Shelly Chopra Dhar. **f**

‘It hasn’t been a simple journey’

An actor, producer, dancer, writer and mother, Rituparna Sengupta is a woman of many roles. **Hemchhaya De** finds out what keeps Tollywood’s leading lady always in boss mode

Rituparna Sengupta is a bundle of energy and it is tough keeping up with her pace. The day I caught up with the actor for the interview was no different. When I walked up the stairs of her palatial house in South Kolkata’s Lake Gardens, Sengupta was getting ready for an event and a shoot for National Award-winning director Kaushik Ganguly’s *Drishtikone*. She will be seen opposite Tollywood superstar Prosenjit in the film. The gorgeous actor, who has worked with some of the biggest names in the industry such as Aparna Sen and Rituparno Ghosh, welcomed me into her beautifully done drawing room, and after a brief puja, sat down on a plush sofa for a tête-à-tête, interspersed with numerous work calls and getting her makeup done.

You have a formidable body of work. What’s the secret to your success?

It has not been a simple journey. You can’t have the luxury of thinking that you have achieved everything. You need grit and determination to stick around. This is true not only for our industry, but for other professions as well. You should be able to do your job well and encourage hundreds of others to follow you. Setting a goal for yourself is the most important thing in life. I believe in karma. I cannot ensure any results or accolades for my karma, but your karma can get you and others a better life. And this can be any kind of work—if you cook well and teach others to do this, they can perhaps earn a livelihood from it. So you are not only strengthening your capacity, but that of others as well. A lot of people ask me, ‘Why do you always work with new people?’ I say, ‘Why not?’ Many tell me that I could have scaled greater heights or that I could have been more strategic, but I cannot be strategic in the strictest sense >



“SETTING A GOAL FOR YOURSELF IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN LIFE. I BELIEVE IN KARMA. YOUR KARMA CAN GET YOU AND OTHERS A BETTER LIFE.”



of the term. When you do so, you are only thinking about yourself or about your own victory. I want to create an example for others. When a junior actor compliments me on my work or when they say I am a warm person, I take that as my reward—the fact that they are perhaps looking up to me in some way. That is far more important to me than a blockbuster.

What's your take on ageism in the industry?

People still believe that heroines have a short career span. I always ask, why don't we have a Meryl Streep, a Kate Winslet or a Nicole Kidman here? Of course, Hollywood actors get paid better, have more exposure and a different mindset. But we can perhaps take a bit from them; we women actors should prove that we are here perform and to be honoured. We need to push the boundaries. Today, in the Indian film industry, why isn't a script being written

for a Madhuri Dixit-Nene? Actors of such stature have contributed so much and still can. I feel bad when I see such age brackets being imposed on women. A lot of people have said I have defied this, and I will continue doing it. When I am not around, people will remember that this lady had defied such limits, so that she could make way for others. Sometimes women actors feel scared and threatened. Then there's lobbying. I want to dispel such fears. The mindset of men won't change; they will still think they are the masters, creators, drivers of change, and the only ones who can only keep the flag flying high. It's time we rethought this.

How are you helping women artistes in the industry?

I have a lot of friends with whom I want to work. Those actors who feel that they are good at their work, yet there are no projects for them. I try to focus on such women and offer them roles. I feel obligated to do something for them—just like when a producer or a director entrusts me with the responsibility of carrying a film on my shoulder.

Do you think women need to make more efforts to lead?

Women should come forward and take charge. They are doing it, but not enough. They have to make leadership efforts—they need to step out of their comfort zone and take up issues, even if those are not meant for them. Generate power from within, so that you can create power for others. I have incessantly tried to do so at home and even at work.

You have done a few acclaimed Hindi films. Why didn't you focus more on Bollywood?

I could have definitely done a lot more in Bollywood, but Kolkata perhaps lured me back. This year though I am planning to focus more on Bollywood.

Do have any regrets about Bollywood?

God has given me enough, so I don't really have any major regrets. My first film was *Teesra Kaun* in 1994. Since then I have worked with actors like Mithun Chakraborty >

“PEOPLE STILL BELIEVE THAT HEROINES HAVE A SHORT CAREER SPAN.”

(in *Zakhmi Sipahi* and *Dadagiri*), Rajpal Yadav and Kay Kay Menon (*Main, Meri Patni Aur Woh*), Ajay Devgn (*Dil Toh Baccha Hai Ji*) and directors like Priyadarshan (*Bumm Bumm Bole*) and David Dhawan (*Do Not Disturb*). Working with big houses isn't mandatory for me. A lot of new content is being created, a lot of good directors are emerging. There are also good independent producers doing niche films.

Which are the recent Bollywood films you enjoyed watching?

I liked Alankrita Shrivastava's *Lipstick Under My Burkha* and Leena Yadav's *Parched*. There are a lot of good women directors, actually.

But there aren't as many women directors in Tollywood...

When I want to work with women directors here (in Tollywood), no one wants to support it. I have worked with Reshmi Mitra in the critically acclaimed film *Baranda*. But Reshmi didn't get that much help from others because some believe that only 'power houses' or their directors should get the opportunity to make films. Efforts of those who are trying to make good films should be recognised too.

What's your take on the #MeToo campaign? Do you think actors in the Bengali cinema need to be more vocal about sexual harassment?

Most women actors do not have the freedom to speak about such things. They feel that somehow they will be harassed even more. People here are usually vindictive and they fear that they might lose out on many things if they speak up. But why point fingers only at the film world? It's happening everywhere. In the film industry, sometimes people succumb in order to carry forward their ambition, so the question of consent comes in. Of course, one needs to have a strong mind to speak up against harassment. If you don't want to accept it, you have to be vocal.

Are you a workaholic?

Life is short and I have to work. I don't wait for magnificent scripts to drop into my lap; I wait for other surprises as well. Of course, I also do things without thinking (*laughs*), but then that's me—it's part of my creative madness.



“LIFE IS SHORT AND I HAVE TO WORK. I DON'T WAIT FOR MAGNIFICENT SCRIPTS TO DROP INTO MY LAP; I WAIT FOR OTHER SURPRISES AS WELL.”

How do you balance it all?

I do get overwhelmed at times. I am a parent and my children are growing up. My husband too wants my time. But at the end of the day, when I think that my vision has to be larger and I have worked so hard to put everything in place, I have no choice but to work harder.

Tell us about your upcoming projects.

I have just done a short Hindi film on terrorism called *Who Am I—Ek Zindagi*. I want to make a film on parenting. Plus, I am planning a few things in the digital domain as well. I will be directing a musical also, like an opera. It will be a woman-centric production, but, there will be no male bashing (*laughs*). I respect men and if they combine their power with ours, we can do amazing work together. **F**

LIQUID GOLD

Goey, sweet and deeply indulgent—there's hardly a dessert that can't be paired with salted caramel. From rich chocolate truffles to creamy cheesecakes, you can add this wonderfully delicious sauce to all your favourite guilty pleasures. What's more, it's not that difficult to make it at home. It's our DIY special, after all, so go on and try it.

Salted caramel sauce

INGREDIENTS

2 cups granulated sugar
12 tbsp butter
1 cup heavy cream
1 tbsp sea salt

METHOD

In a heavy-bottomed saucepan, melt the sugar over medium-high heat. Swirl the pan occasionally. Once the sugar has melted and turned amber in colour, add butter and whisk vigorously. Take off the heat and slowly pour in the cream while whisking. Add sea salt and whisk again. Let it cool for 15 minutes before pouring into a glass jar.

SWEET SPOT

Three perfect plans for an easy-breezy summer meal—a refreshing drink, a light salad and a moist berry cake. By **Gia Claudette Fernandes**

APRICOT MINT PUNCH



For the sour mix

- 1 cup fresh lemon juice
- 3/4 cup simple syrup
- 1/4 cup fresh lime juice

For garnishing

- Fresh mint sprigs
- Apricot wedges

For the apricot-mint sours

- 2 tbsp sugar
- 12 fresh mint leaves
- 100 ml gin
- A splash of apricot nectar

SERVES: 4 > **PREP TIME:** 10 minutes > **CHILLING TIME:** 2 hours

1. For the sour mix, blend together the lemon juice, simple syrup and lime juice. Cover and refrigerate until chilled.
2. For the apricot-mint sours, muddle the sugar and mint leaves in a pitcher. Add the sour mix, gin and apricot nectar, and mix until combined.
3. Serve with crushed ice, garnished with mint sprigs and an apricot wedge.

TIP: REPLACE THE GIN WITH PINEAPPLE JUICE FOR AN ALCOHOL-FREE VERSION.

BEETROOT RADISH SALAD



100 g caster sugar
2 tbsp sea salt
200 ml red wine vinegar
4 beetroots, peeled
150 g radishes, thinly sliced

For the dressing

50 ml beetroot water (after boiling)
50 ml olive oil
1 tsp sea salt
1/4 tsp wasabi paste
2 tbsp poppy seeds

SERVES: 4 > **PREP TIME:** 20 minutes > **COOKING TIME:** 40 minutes

Calorie count:
100 calories
(per serving)

1. In a medium saucepan, heat the sugar and salt with the vinegar until the sugar dissolves. Then add the whole beetroots and enough water to cover them. Cook over a medium-low heat for 40 minutes or until tender.
2. Remove the cooked beetroots using a slotted spoon and set aside to cool. Reserve the liquid. Place some radish slices in the reserved beetroot juice for around 30 minutes until they take on a pink hue.
3. Cut the beetroots into thin slices. Arrange some in overlapping layers in the middle of a large, round plate. Put the radish slices and remaining beetroot slices in concentric circles around the plate.
4. Mix the dressing ingredients together and drizzle over the salad. >

TIP: GARNISH WITH CHOPPED PISTACHIOS AND POMEGRANATE SEEDS FOR EXTRA CRUNCH.

RASPBERRY CAKE



110 g butter
1 cup sugar
1 lemon zest
1 tsp vanilla extract
2 large eggs,
at room temperature

2½ cups all-
purpose flour
2 tsp baking powder
1/2 cup yogurt
200 g raspberries

**Calorie
count:**
300 calories
(per serving)

SERVES: 6 > PREP TIME: 20 minutes > BAKING TIME: 55 minutes

1. Heat the oven to 180°C. Grease a cake pan and line the bottom with baking parchment.
2. Beat the butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Then beat in the lemon zest and vanilla.
3. Beat in one egg at a time, making sure each is incorporated well before proceeding.
4. Toss the raspberries in a separate bowl with two tablespoons of flour. Mix the remaining flour in another bowl with the baking powder.
5. Add the flour mix to the egg batter, a few tablespoons at a time, alternating with the yogurt, until everything is incorporated and you have a smooth, thick batter.
6. Spread one-third of the batter on the prepared cake tin. Evenly scatter half of the raspberries on top. Repeat with another third of batter and the remaining raspberries. Finish by topping it with the remaining third of the batter.
7. Bake the cake for 50 to 55 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the middle comes out clean.
8. Let it sit in the tin for 10 minutes, and then remove on a wire rack to cool completely.
9. Dust with icing sugar and serve. **f**

TIP: SUBSTITUTE THE YOGURT WITH CREAM CHEESE FOR A RICHER TASTE.

Baingan bharta ratatouille

By Zorawar Kalra

The classic north Indian delicacy made from smoked eggplant, mashed and flavoured with Indian spices

INGREDIENTS

- 500 g large eggplants
- 50 ml mustard oil
- 15 g ginger, chopped
- 1/2 tsp garlic, chopped
- 50 g onions, chopped
- 250 g tomatoes, chopped
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp cumin powder
- 1½ tsp turmeric powder
- 2 tsp red chilli powder
- 1 tsp chaat masala
- 1 tsp garam masala
- 4 tsp ghee
- 1 tbsp fresh green coriander

METHOD

- Char the whole eggplants in a tandoor until completely cooked and easy to peel; mash and keep aside.
- Heat the mustard oil in a medium-sized pan; add



CHEF'S TABLE

The Foodhall Cookbook showcases the exclusive dishes of five celebrity chefs—Zorawar Kalra, Kelvin Cheung, Pooja Dhingra, Sabyasachi Gorai and Gresham Fernandes. Curated by Foodhall, the premium lifestyle food superstore, the recipes cover the culinary gamut of dishes from modern European and Asian to contemporary Indian and Mediterranean cuisines, while reflecting the food philosophies of the regions



Braised beetroot with oranges, plums and brie

By Gresham Fernandes

A hearty salad with spoon tender beetroot, plums and brie, flavoured with sweet acidic oranges

INGREDIENTS

- 4 plums, thinly sliced
- 100 g brie cheese, chilled
- 4 medium beetroot, peeled
- Juice and zest of one orange
- 1 sprig fresh thyme, plucked
- Salt and sugar, to taste
- 100 ml olive oil
- 1 tsp fennel seeds, toasted
- 1 tsp coriander seeds, toasted
- 30 ml beetroot juices
- 30 ml extra virgin olive oil
- 15 ml balsamic vinegar

METHOD

- For the braised beetroot, mix together the beetroot, juice and zest of orange, thyme, salt and sugar to taste, olive oil, fennel seeds and coriander seeds in a bowl. Refrigerate overnight to marinate.

- Preheat the oven to 200°C. Mix the beets again and transfer into a pan with a fitted metal lid (or use aluminium foil instead). Bake in a preheated oven for 45 minutes or until a knife inserted in the beet goes through without any resistance.
- Remove the pan from the oven and allow the beets to cool in the liquid. Cut the beets into slices and let them rest in the same liquid (use the liquid as part of the dressing).
- For the dressing, mix the beetroot cooking juices with the extra virgin olive oil and balsamic vinegar. Season with salt and sugar, if required.
- Neatly alternate the sliced beets, chilled brie cheese and plums on a serving plate, garnished with any seasonal leaves and the dressing. It also goes well on toast as a crostini.

Recipes and photographs excerpted from *The Foodhall Cookbook* (Lustre Press/Roli Books). **F**



A THOUSAND SPLENDID SMILES

It's a place you must visit—for the craft, for the palate, for the soul, but mostly to discover the Ganga-Jamuni tehzeeb that exists despite the surround sound of politics. It's Lucknow, the city that wakes up to the muezzin's call, trundles at its own unique pace unhurried by the din and surrenders to the night under the clanging of temple bells



Bara Imambara,
the world's largest
arched monument

You do it when you see a mural of the man who looks suspiciously like Sir Cliff Richard; you do it when you devour a sweet-and-sour combination of chickpea patties dunked in yoghurt (chaat) along with the basket it's presented in; you do it when you are told about street fights laden with utter finesse in language (Sample: '*Sahab, aap ko sharam nahin aati galat side pe parking karne mein*' loosely translated to 'Sir, you should be ashamed about parking on the wrong side of the road.').

You smile.

As you should; you're in the land that was Cliff Richard's birthplace, the best-chaat-in-any-city competition winner and the land that lives up to its tagline: '*Muskuraiye ki aap Lucknow mein hain*'.

For a first-timer, the capital of Uttar Pradesh offers a plethora of tourist-y options. We work out a three-day time-travel



Hyatt Regency
Lucknow

itinerary for you to soak in the old-world charm of Oudh, mixed with a few modern must-dos.

Culture call

Excited about being in a land that prides itself on the cultural renaissance it experienced a few centuries ago, we check in at the city's latest five-star property Hyatt Regency Lucknow in Vibhuti Khand, Gomti Nagar. Kumar Shobhan, the general manager, a Lucknow boy himself, gives us a quick take on how through the launch they wanted to keep the stay experience contemporary while focussing on service as the hallmark for the property. "Our passionate, caring and well-trained team, along with the inherent style associated with our brands, will set the stage for dynamic interactions—from a quick coffee meeting to shared culinary experiences, our guests can come together to socialise, collaborate or celebrate." With 206 guestrooms, including 19 suites, the hotel offers elegantly decorated,

bright and spacious accommodations.

We chose to take a suite, which came prepped with the essentials, plus the bells and whistles.

From the 43-inch LED HD television, multi-functional workspace, comfortable seating zone and well-appointed bathroom to the awesome Regency Club access, our stay was what they call 'Nawabi' with an edge. This, when the sightseeing is yet to begin.

Quick advice to solo women travellers: To move around the city, dress comfortably, carry a scarf, and preferably hire a cab. For us, the journey into Lucknow's history began from traversing the worn-out lanes of old Oudh. Chowk, the area where you find the now famous tuesday kebab (yes, the same melt-in-the-mouth kebabs, which legend says were created for a toothless prince). In the labyrinthine lanes of Chowk, you find the most exquisite chikankari shops. Handmade chikan is a craftsman's labour of love and is priced way higher than machine embroidery. >



All-day dining
restaurant, Rocca

Preferably travel with a local to get the best deal. Suffice to say that our shopping left us with extra baggage worth its weight in gold on our return journey.

Soul-satisfying shopping out of the way, next on our agenda was Idris ki biryani. For those who came in late, Idris ki biryani serves the singular purpose of death by cholesterol but not without good reason. The hearty dum biryani is slow-cooked and has a quality that makes my mouth moist even as I write about it today. A culinary experience that cannot be missed.

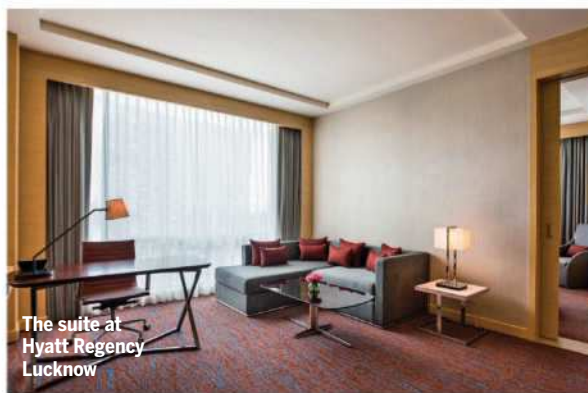
Next up, we headed to Bara Imambara for a culture check, and also a long walk within its premises. The world's largest arched monument, Bara Imambara houses a three-storeyed building used for prayers, Asafi mosque, bhul bhulaiya (a maze of corridors), a stepped well, multiple courtyards and well-manicured lawns. Built in the 18th century by Nawab Asaf-ud-Daula with an altruistic motive—to provide employment to citizens during the year of the big famine in 1785. Eleven years later, the complex came together and so did the line:

'Jisko na de maula, usko de Asaf-ud-Daula' ('To whom god does not give, Asaf-ud-Daula gives'). The interiors with their gaudy green paint may not do full justice to the magnificence of the imposing structure, but it still is an architectural marvel standing without the support of pillars.

On our agenda is also the Chhota Imambara, which is built with elements of



Royal bath at Bara Imambara



The suite at Hyatt Regency Lucknow



Tunday Kababi restaurant in the old city of Lucknow

Persian and Indo-Islamic architecture. This one is a smaller congregation hall built by Nawab Muhammad Ali Shah and it now serves as his and his family's mausoleum. Its golden dome, which is visible from a distance, minarets and turrets make the building one of the grandest structures in sight.

Enter the Rumi Darwaza. Again, built by Nawab

RUMI
DARWAZA
IS THE
STRIKING
GATEWAY
THAT LEADS
INTO OLD
LUCKNOW.



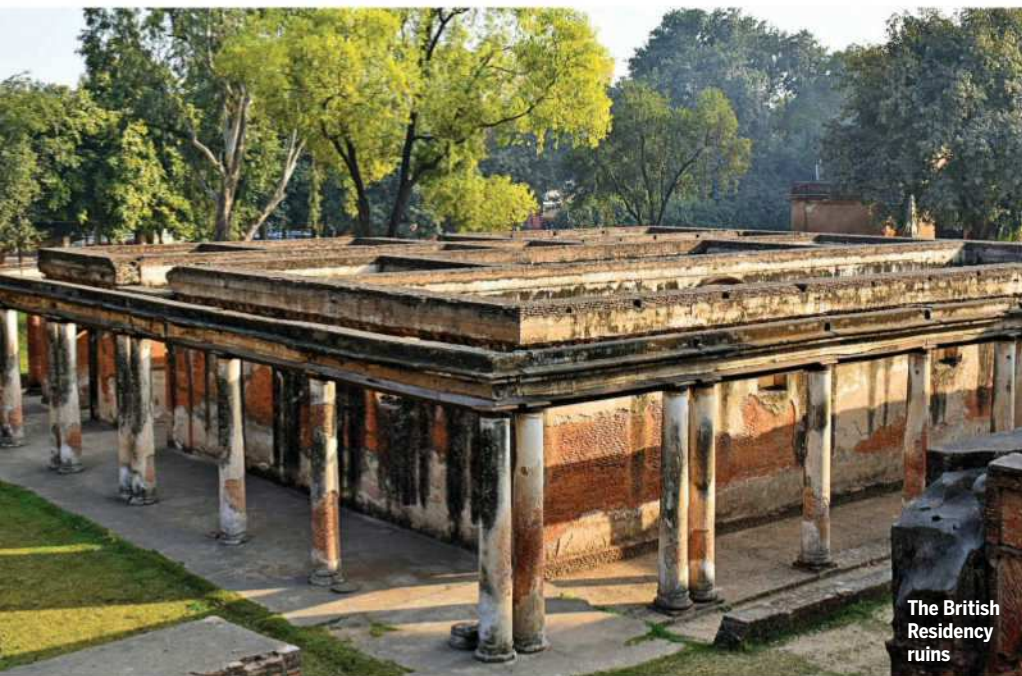
Asaf-ud-Daula, it is the striking gateway that leads into old Lucknow. Inspired by the Istanbul Sublime Porte, today it connects the Bara Imambara to the Chhota Imambara.

It's now past sundown, and we head back to the hotel. Just in time for a little tittle. The lounge known as UP's metamorphoses into a lively bar in the evening. A social venue with a menu of creative cocktails inspired by local ingredients and spices is just what the doctor ordered. You can try the Muradabadi Mule (a vodka-ginger ale-lime juice mix), Kakori Mary (a vodka-kakori masala-tomato juice concoction) or The Chowk (a tequila-berry-tamarind-salt cocktail) or like me, the Bareilly ka Jhumka, which brings together vodka with jamun juice and lime. It's a heady, happy night out.



Chhota Imambara

OFF TO THE RESIDENCY, A RUINED PRECINCT, WHICH HOUSED BRITISH RESIDENCES TILL THE 1857 REVOLUTION OCCURRED.



The British Residency ruins

The culinary trail

It's day two. And Lucknow's hidden treasures beckon. But not before a landmark visit. The morning is spent in Hazratganj, where Universal booksellers stands tall at the entrance. The treasures you find in this bookstore should not remain untold. Run by the genial Manav Prakash and family, it has kept pace with time and is now known as north India's biggest bookmall, both offline and online. Multiple chikankari outlets and designer clothing stores dot Hazratganj but we walk undistracted to Moti Mahal for kulfi falooda that deserves a deafening applause. There is, of course, basket chaat at Royal Cafe just a few steps ahead, but the real piece de resistance has got to be Sharma Chaat in Lalbagh. How do we articulate the glory of dahi bhallas that come freshly prepared from heaven? We don't. We simply eat. And then some.

All this eating needs to be given a break and we do so with a few more history lessons. Off to the Residency, a ruined precinct, which housed British residences till the 1857 revolution occurred. During the siege thousands of British men, women, children went under and the cemetery is where they lie. The Lucknow siege lasted for 87 days and marked a milestone in India's war cry for freedom from the British rule. It's a place you visit for knowing the past and how consequences of any war claim the innocent.

Sombre and reflective, we are taken to the many gardens and parks the city stands for. >



Siddh Spa

WE VISIT THE MANY GARDENS AND PARKS THE CITY STANDS FOR. FIRST UP IS SHAHEED SMARAK, A MARTYRS' MEMORIAL BY THE RIVER GOMTI.



Rumi Darwaza

First up is Shaheed Smarak, a martyrs' memorial by the river Gomti. Next on the agenda is Buddha Park and Haathi Park, neighbouring gardens that offer great play zones for children.

Fun and games done, we are off to the hotel for our appointed dinner at Hyatt Regency's Thai and Chinese

speciality restaurant LukJin. Walter Pereira, director of Food and Beverage, gives us a taste of authentic flavours from the Far East. Appetisers you should choose are chicken in Sichuan style and pomelo salad; for main course, order the chicken siu mai and lamb in black bean sauce with fried rice

yang chow style; finish the meal with date pancake. As for the thamthim krop made with coconut milk and water chestnut, we'd like to take a running jump into it.

So long

Eating, shopping, history lessons, eating, sightseeing, more eating has been

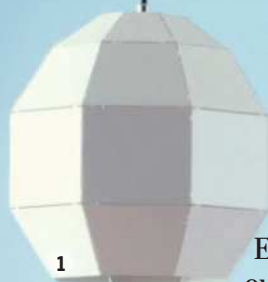
covered in the last two days. So what do we do today, our final day in Lucknow? We eat again. This time at the hotel's all-day-dining restaurant Rocca, which offers Italian and Awadhi cuisine. The quattro formaggi pizza with mozzarella, provolone, gorgonzola and pecorino is any cheese aficionado's delight. The fritto misto and gnocchi al pesto make a meal so delightful, you will be back for more.

But tired feet need to meet a super-luxuriant massage. Siddh Spa on the property offers beauty and wellness therapies that hark back to ancient wisdom. Based on your desired state of being, one can choose the wellness path of Vatham (tranquillity), Pitham (replenishment) or Kapham (radiance). The spa features four treatment rooms and separate hydro areas for men and women, equipped with steam room and showers. To get rewired and rejuvenated, we try Marma Shastra, a 90-minute massage that blends movements and patterns into a stress-melt experience. The body is relaxed, the mind even more so. Both the city and our stay has been phenomenal. Before we depart, a quick look at the property reveals event facilities running across 18,000 square feet equipped with ballrooms, multi-functional spaces and breakout rooms. A conference is underway, we quietly exit.

So we take our grab 'n go muffins and say au revoir to the gorgeous memories created over the last three days. Till we meet again, Lucknow! 🇮🇳

LIVING IN FANTASY LAND

Whether Willy Wonka's delicious dreamscape or Enid Blyton's treacle tea parties, story books remain our inspiration when it comes to bright, happy homes



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1. White comet pendant light, ₹7,275, [Voylite.com](#)
2. White bowls, ₹120 each, [Freedom Tree](#)
3. Quarter plate (set of two), ₹470, [Tresorie](#)
4. Dinner plate (set of two), ₹670, [Tresorie](#)
5. Pineapple mason jar, ₹399, [Thechicpad.in](#)
6. White flowers, ₹995 each, [Tresorie](#)
7. Vase native neon pink, ₹2,775, [Tranceforme](#)
8. Transparent bell jar, price on request, [Nostos](#)
9. Triangular vase, ₹10,722, [Defurn](#)
10. Powder blue ceramic vase, ₹13,512, [Defurn](#)
11. Soap cupcake, ₹490, [AA Living](#)
12. Teapot set, price on request, [Marry Me](#)
13. Dining table, price on request, [Nostos](#)
14. White dining chair, ₹23,760, [Defurn](#)
15. Pom pom throw, ₹6,900, [AA Living](#)
16. Round pink cushion, ₹2,900, [AA Living](#)
17. Candy cushion, ₹2,900, [AA Living](#)

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1. Chevron tray, ₹1,800, **AA Living**
2. Fruit mug, ₹449, **Thechicpad.in**
3. Triangular vase, ₹6,679, **Defurn**
4. Paper clouds, price on request, **Mi Ikigai**
5. Black and white vase, ₹1,240, **Freedom Tree**
6. Black and white canister, price on request, **Tranceforme**



1. Handmade paper leaves and butterflies, price on request, **Mi Ikigai**
2. Pineapple mason jar, ₹399, **Thechicpad.in**
3. Quarter plate (set of two), ₹470, **Tresorie**
4. Dinner plate (set of two), ₹670, **Tresorie**
5. Orange duck (set of two), ₹5,900, **AA Living**
6. Soap cupcake, ₹490, **AA Living**
7. Black and white canister, price on request, **Tranceforme**



PHOTOGRAPHS: VIKRANT KHARAT; ART DIRECTION: PINKY AKOLA;
STYLING: PRERNA MEHRA



You didn't have any support within the industry when you started. What has the journey been like?

I studied at the Film and Television Institute of India, Pune, and one of the reasons I went there is because it seemed like the only legitimate way to enter the industry. It helped because there was a huge community from the institute based in Mumbai, and I knew most of them. But when it comes to getting work, you're on your own. You have to fend for yourself, which I believe is the right way to do it. I don't want people to recommend me; I want people to hire me because of my work.

You've been part of films like *Margarita With A Straw*, *Parched* and *Fan*. What's been your takeaway from working in these films?



I think it's the reminder that you cannot get complacent with the work you do. I did all my films because I really enjoyed the script, and my characters in these films were different and challenging. I don't take up roles similar to the ones I've played before. I've also got to work with great co-actors and directors, so even that has been a big takeaway.

You'll be seen next in *Kaushiki*, Viu's new digital series. What is it about?

Kaushiki is a thriller about a happy-go-lucky group of friends, who have lots of fun together, but then they get too close for comfort and get to know each other's dark sides. I play Kaushiki, the newest member in the group. She

witnesses all the events unfolding in the series. It's shown from her perspective.



SAYANI GUPTA

on new ventures and passion projects

The versatile actor talks about her new digital series and why she likes portraying diverse characters

Is there a difference between acting for films and for digital series?

Digital series are longer. Since you're not shooting in a linear format, you tend to forget what happened in the previous episode. It becomes a little difficult to keep the emotional continuity going.

Where do you see yourself in the next five years?

Hopefully in a huge penthouse overlooking Worli Sea Face (laughs). I would also like to see myself in a position where I can fund films myself, not only in India, but internationally too. There are so many scripts I identify with that I want to back; it would be amazing if I could do that. **F**

—As told to Nikita Sawant

