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THE MOST STANDARD

*Fabulous Lives vs
Bollywood Wives*
fame Shalini Passi
reflects on glamour,
art, philanthropic
efforts, and her viral
fame in a candid chat
with us... | P12

SHALINI PASSI: THE RISE!

things
to do

INDULGE
FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Hello readers,

The gorgeous Shalini Passi graces our cover this week. She has been making headlines ever since her appearance in the OTT reality show *Fabulous Lives vs Bollywood Wives*. In a chat with us, the Delhi-based art collector and philanthropist gives us a peek into her fabulous life, her brush with the Bollywood wives, her eclectic fashion choices, her fitness regimen, and how she is handling her newfound fame.

In the fashion section, ace designer Raghavendra Rathore decodes his winter edit for the ongoing festive and wedding season. There's also designer Ivory Rose's winter party edit that you can browse through, along with a couple of new collection launches from menswear label Kalpraag and Cosset Clothing.

For foodies in the city, we have reviews of the new diner Flamboyant and Ozora's Sunday brunch.

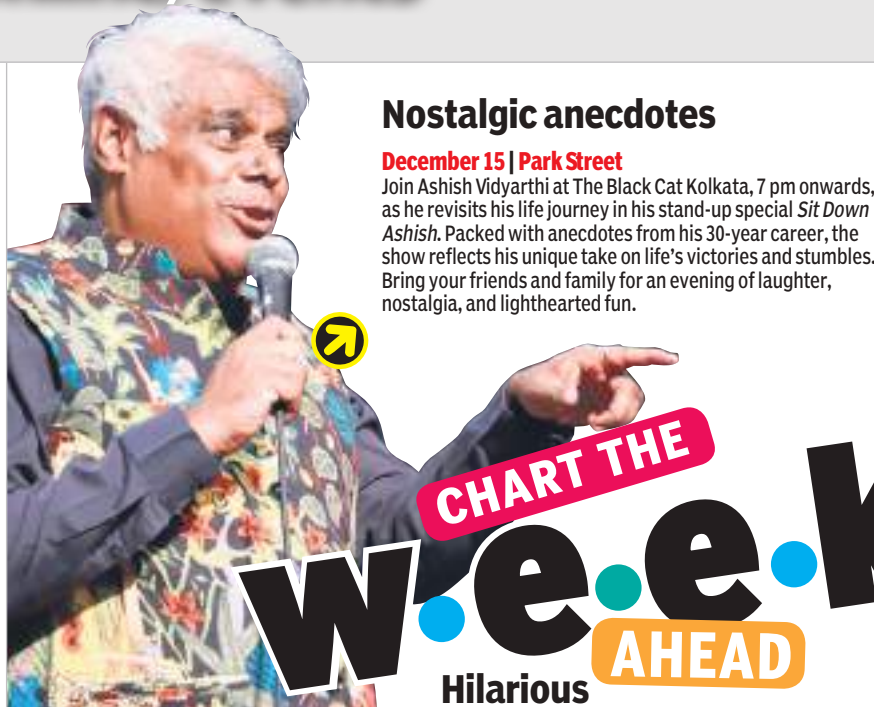
Meanwhile, our Northeast section features Rima Das, the talented filmmaker from Assam, who talks about the sequel to her award-winning film *Village Rockstars* and the anthology *My Melbourne*, which is doing the rounds across film festivals. Popular director Imtiaz Ali, too, weighs in on his story in the aforementioned anthology, which was recently screened at the *Kolkata International Film Festival (KIFF)*.

And that's not all. Director Abhilash Sharma discusses his film *Swaha*, while Tanmaya Shekhar discusses his debut project, *Nukkad Naatak*, which also had a screening at *KIFF*.

Enjoy!



Edison Thomas
Editor, Indulge



Nostalgic anecdotes

December 15 | Park Street

Join Ashish Vidyarthi at The Black Cat Kolkata, 7 pm onwards, as he revisits his life journey in his stand-up special *Sit Down Ashish*. Packed with anecdotes from his 30-year career, the show reflects his unique take on life's victories and stumbles. Bring your friends and family for an evening of laughter, nostalgia, and lighthearted fun.

CHART THE

w.e.e.k.
AHEAD

Hilarious reflections

December 15 | Newtown

Laugh your worries away as Angad Singh Ranyal takes the stage at The Satire Club, 7 PM onwards. *Mid-Life Ghabrahat* hilariously explores his unexpected anxieties about adulthood, from renting to turbulence. Tickets available online.



Festive extravaganza

December 14 | Ballygunge

Jhoomer presents *The Carnival 2024* at Durgabari Pratisthan Club, South Kolkata. Explore over 30 vibrant stalls offering food, crafts, apparels, home décor, and more. Highlights include cooking competitions, arts, and Secret Superstar competitions judged by experts. Meet Santa and Mickey, enjoy live music, and win exciting prizes. The event is pet-friendly and perfect for festive fun. Organised in collaboration with Ballygunge Durga Bari, Daily Hunt Adorn Me, and #servedwithlove.

Musical energy

December 15 | Bidhannagar
Feel the rhythm as the band Lakkhichhara takes over *Five Mad Men* on December 15, 10 pm onwards. With their signature energy and iconic sound, this electrifying night is a must-attend for music lovers. Tickets available online.



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Melodic tribute

December 13 | Dhakuria

Celebrate the timeless melodies of Shyamal Mitra at Madhusudan Mancha, 6 pm onwards with *Tomay Mone Pore: A Tribute to Shyamal Mitra*. Featuring luminaries like Haimanti Shukla, Rupankar Bagchi, and Kabir Suman, this heartfelt musical evening honours Mitra's legacy. Relive the golden era of Bengali music while making a meaningful impact. Tickets available online.



Thrilling secrets

December 13 | Cathedral Road

Experience a gripping family thriller unraveling secrets of crime, guilt, and moral dilemmas. Organised by Rongrup, *Gorol* delves into the haunting journey of an elderly couple navigating personal memories and societal challenges. Featuring Sima Mukhopadhyay and Debasish Chatterjee, the play poses hard-hitting questions about justice and accountability. Catch this compelling performance at the Academy of Fine Arts, 6.30 pm onwards. Tickets available online.



Moral quandaries

December 19 | Cathedral Road

Witness the chilling tale of *Meghla Manush* at the Academy of Fine Arts, 6.30 pm onwards. This thought-provoking play explores commercialisation of euthanasia and the tragic life of artist Gunadhar Nayek. Directed by Anubrata Chakraborty, with a stellar cast including Suparnajit Gupta and Rina Halder, the narrative blends human fragility, societal indifference, and the haunting quest for recognition. Don't miss this poignant drama that raises questions about morality, art, and human worth.



INDULGE

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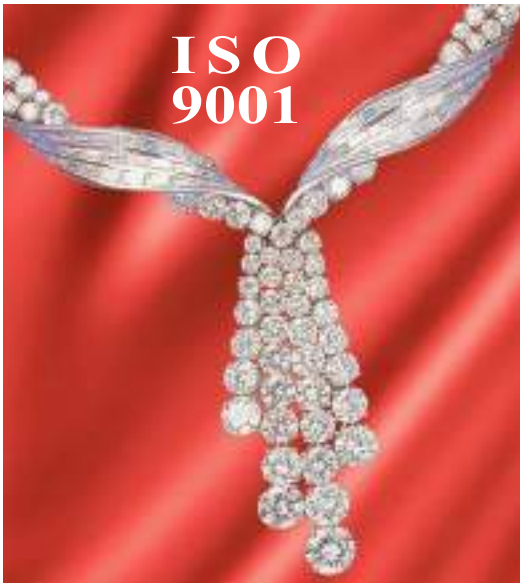
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FRENCH FLAIR

High-end French patisserie label, Ladurée Café had a much-awaited grand debut at Quest Mall, Kolkata, with an intimate evening filled with culinary delights. Co-hosted by Shivika Goenka and Chandni Nath Israni, co-founder of CK Israni group, the launch brought together prominent faces from Kolkata to celebrate the arrival of one of the finest pastry makers. From lively conversations to indulgent macarons, rose cakes, and other delicacies, *Indulge* brings you a few exclusive glimpses of the gathering.



Nusrat and Yash



Utsav



Alankrita



Vivek



Minnie



Varsha



Saachi



Devangi



Nilangi



Shreya



Parthiv



Pallavi



Vedika



Raj



Ushoshi



Sachin and Chikky



Suhel



Misha



Shradha



Sumedha



Mallika



Ritu



Rajdeep

Iniya Aesthetics & Wellness, a leading destination for transformative skin, anti-aging, and wellness treatments, is celebrating its six-month anniversary with a grand event hosted by renowned actress Richa Sharma. This milestone marks half a year of offering innovative, science-backed beauty solutions under the guidance of Dr. Shraddha Pandey, a distinguished cosmetologist and aesthetic dentist.

The celebration, held at Iniya's state-of-the-art facility, featured a blend of glamour, expertise, and innovation. Attendees enjoyed personalised consultations, live treatment demonstrations, and exclusive insights into the future of aesthetics. Signature services on display included skin rejuvenation, anti-aging therapies, hair restoration, and permanent makeup.

Actress Richa Sharma shared her excitement, stating, "It was a pleasure to host this event. Dr. Shraddha Pandey and her team have created a unique space where beauty, well-being, and science converge. I'm proud to be part of Iniya's journey."

Dr. Shraddha Pandey, Managing Partner, expressed gratitude, saying, "The support we've received has been overwhelming. Our goal from day one has been to provide personalised, science-based treatments that help our clients look and feel their best."

CEO Debarpita Bhattacharyya added, "This anniversary is a reflection of the trust we've built with our clients. We are excited to continue transforming the beauty and wellness experience with innovative, personalised care."

Iniya Aesthetics & Wellness, founded by Dr. Pandey, is dedicated to offering advanced, science-backed treatments to help clients achieve their aesthetic goals in the heart of Kolkata.



INIYA AESTHETICS & WELLNESS: WHERE BEAUTY MEETS INNOVATION



Ajitesh Pandey, Dr. Shraddha Pandey, Debarpita Bhattacharyya, Suddipto Ghosh



Imran Zaki



Shanti Das



Laboni Bhose and Sayantan Ray

Savita Soni



Shweta Bartaria

Amit Agarwal

Manoj Jangid



Bhavna Hemani

THE SPACE OF OPULENCE

Check out Chowringhee's latest chill spot



Chilli garlic edamame dimsum



Very berry

Pics: Sourav Banerjee

IF YOU HAPPEN to walk around the Park Street crossing, you cannot miss larger-than-life statues resembling Roman sculptures waiting to welcome you to the city's newest lounge—The Flamboyant. Living up to the expectation of its name, the diner is all about extravagance. From the gracious chandelier hanging above the mirrored walkway leading to the seating area, this double-storey eatery exudes opulence, luxury, and grandeur. Dressed in dark and golden hues, The Flamboyant impressed us in the very first go.

As we headed for lunch, we

discovered several unique items on the menu that are new to the culinary landscape of the city. We kicked off with the classic Chilli garlic edamame *dimsum*. The edamame mash filling with small ginger bits in stretchy *dimsum* parcels added both texture and crunch with slight pungency to the otherwise flat notes of edamame.

One of the dishes we highly recommend is the *Tandoori soya chaap*. For those who love the flavour of smoky *tandoor* but avoid it due to vegetarian preferences, must try this delicious and spicy alternative.

The *Purani Dilli papri chaat*

took us on a ride to New Delhi. Packed with flavours and nostalgia of tasting this popular street food in the chilly winters of the capital city, this complete shot of spice, tang, and sweetness is one of the best shareable starters we could have asked for.

Taking a break from these delicious starters, we sipped the Very berry cocktail. Its presentation wowed us at the first glance. In shades of the dragon fruit with its deep magenta colour, and a dried rose petal sash, this refreshing cold drink with subtle sweetness was the one accompaniment which one

might wish unlimited refills of.

For the mains, the quick bite olives wrapped around cylindrical chicken mash are little pockets of joy for those who prefer wholesome yet non-spicy food. Up next was the Aristan pizza. Loaded with vegetables like olive, tomato, zucchini, and bell peppers. These pizzas are available in a crust of your choice. Whether thin crust or neopolitan, what remains same is the cheesy and crunchy taste. We paired the pizza with Russian fizzy melon, a cocktail with infusion of Japanese melon, gin, and quinine water top-up.

To wrap up the meal we headed straight into *Serradura*. This well-known sawdust pudding is a Portuguese delicacy with layered whipped cream, vanilla and crumbled Marie biscuit.

Overall, we definitely recommend this place for a casual dining, parties, or simply chilling out with friends and family. The spacious interiors and innovative menu, both are bound to win hearts over.

Meal for two: ₹2,400 + .
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and 12 pm to 2 am on weekends.

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Serradura

Artisan pizza

Saltimbocca

Tandoori soya chaap

This rooftop restaurant is back with their Sunday brunch and *Indulge* tried the spread for this year



An array of salads

Fruit custard

delectable

Brunching under the sun



Burnt capsicum ginger fried rice

Asian green garlic vegetables

Gondhoraj tempura fried chicken

Tomato mozzarella baked fish and baked chicken in herb rice

THE BEST THING you can do during winters, probably, is soak in the sun while enjoying a hearty meal. And as the winter season has officially begun, Ozora is back with their Brunch and Bliss. Enjoy a glass of hot toddy with the vast Kolkata skyline accompanying you for your brunch.

Start with the live *phuchka* counter to alleviate your hunger, and settle down with some nibbles from the *antipasti* counter, along with a serving or two from a huge variety of salads. Between the Lemon coriander chicken soup and mushroom soup, we chose the latter and it was the star of the show. We never thought mushrooms could be paired so well with roasted cumin.

Moving on to the starters, one can choose from the spicy and crunchy Bang bang cauliflower, or Chilli corn spinach puffs, or the *Chermoula* spiced chicken. If you love to count your calories, go for the Cottage cheese butterfly, Sweet potato bites or *Kala mirchi murgh tikka*. Our favourite was the Gondhoraj *tempura* fried chicken that had bite-sized juicy chicken, with a hint of gondhoraj lemon, lightly battered and fried.

One can choose to have the burnt garlic fried rice or in-house green noodles and pair it with Korean-style *Sapo* tofu, Asian green garlic veg and *teriyaki* chicken. We loved both the saucy vegetarian *curries* paired with rice. Comprising Oriental veggies, these curries hit all the right notes.

One can also choose to have the Indian main course that featured a flavourful *Hariyali* chicken, *Methi malai* paneer, *Sabz diwani handi*, *Dum aloo Punjabi*, *Lasooni dal tadka* and pair them with assorted breads or peas *pulao*.

If continental food is your calling, settle for some Baked chicken in herb rice or the tangy Tomato mozzarella baked fish. Vegetarians can opt for a *Saagwala* cottage cheese *lasagna* or Pesto paneer stick with *ratatouille*. Don't miss the live counters serving *Potato rosti*, *Pav bhaji* and a variety of *Maggi* preparations.

Such an elaborate meal called for desserts and from a huge spread, we settled with *Eclairs*, *Fruit custard*, and *Moong dal* cigar with *rabri* shots, which we loved the most.

Meal for one: ₹1,700 AI (for food) | ₹2,290 AI (for food and alcohol).

Noon to 4 pm. At 20th floor of Acropolis Mall.

— Dharitri Ganguly

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fashion

heritage

Designer Raghavendra Rathore takes us through his regal winter collection



Silhouettes from the collection

A ROYAL TOUCH

FAMED MENSWEAR LABEL Raghavendra Rathore Jodhpur's latest winter collection is an ode to understated opulence that redefines hints of shimmer and heritage. Muted metallic, deep jewel tones, and lustrous silk blends that move like whispers, enhance the classic style synonymous with brand. The colour palette is sophisticated: ivory, muted gold, deep tones like wine, and midnight blues and fabrics are mostly a play of handwoven brocades and silks with jacquard. The signature Jodhpur *Bandhgala* is the dominant inspiration for an array of garments like *achkans*, waistcoats, *kurtas* and jackets. Designer Raghavendra Rathore sits for a chat with us on the same.

How did your latest collaboration with Diljit Dosanjh inspire the collection?
Diljit Dosanjh is the epitome of a modern youthful personality who stays true to his heritage—bold yet rooted, experimental yet classic. This collection mirrors that thought: it's about reinventing tradition with a touch of reverence and contemporary aesthetics. The idea was to create looks that speak to a large audience redefining heritage styling—sharp cuts with modern accents amalgamate into a fresh take on timeless and traditional dressing.

What is trending in winter wedding wear for men?
Traditional modern aesthetic is always in vogue. Classic tailoring, sharp cuts, and minimal yet rich detailing set the tone of the collection. A balance of colour, texture and silhouette in deep

and vibrant festive hues seems to be the essence of every look. The occasion in correlation to the choice of attire plays a key role in shaping up the array of silhouette offerings and signature detailing that defines the core design concept.

Winter festive wardrobe must-haves?
A velvet *bandhgala*—impeccably cut and modern in appeal, a statement handcrafted *shawl*, textured *kurtas* with traditional embroidery, and a pair of handcrafted breeches.

Your favourite fashion icon?
Working with Oscar de la Renta was a transformative experience that reshaped my perspective on fashion. He taught me to see it not merely as a fleeting seasonal occurrence but as a profound, philosophical expression of identity and culture. For him, fashion was always about the people—about connecting deeply with their essence—rather than chasing passing trends. His iconic vision and unwavering support were instrumental in helping me craft a unique brand identity, one rooted in authenticity and timeless elegance.

What are your plans for the label?
To continue evolving while staying rooted, bridging Indian heritage with global aesthetics, collaborating with artists who inspire us, and embracing technology like AI to enhance certain aspects of design processing.

Tell us about your summer collection.
The upcoming summer collection is a reflection of ease, functionality, luxury, and modern aesthetics. The purpose and relevance of design has been redefined, emphasising on subtle elegance. The palette offers earthy and pastel tones that create a refreshing sense of colour coordination. The silhouettes are clean cut, unstructured, and light, making them relevant for the season. There would be one-of-a-kind, small capsule collections that offer a unique mix of textures, materials and techniques.

Price on request.
Available online.
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modern

Chic and ethical

This new label's latest party edit is sustainable and ritzy



Pieces from the edit

DESIGNER VIDHITANEJA'S new label Ivory Rose is a sustainable women's wear line that seamlessly blends mindful consumption with ethical production, creating handcrafted designs that embody both style and sustainability. Catering to eco-conscious consumers, the brand's collections reflect a commitment to circular economy principles, offering contemporary, wearable pieces that are both chic and eco-friendly. The label's latest party collection is a bold celebration of modern femininity, featuring a versatile palette of deep blacks, navies, emerald greens, and shimmering metallics.

"Rich textures like sleek satin, soft tweeds, shimmering sequins, and ruched detailing elevate the designs, all crafted from high-quality, sustainable fabrics. Each piece exudes effortless glamour and confidence, ideal for everything from intimate gatherings to grand soi-

rées," says Vidhi. The concept behind this collection was to honour modern femininity and redefine partywear, placing a strong emphasis on versatility. The label offers pieces that could be worn in a variety of settings, from intimate gatherings to statement-making events.

Vidhi's approach to design involves a unique blend of boldness and elegance, creating pieces that empower, inspire, and tell a story while being deeply rooted in sustainability and conscious fashion. "Growing up, I admired Jean Paul Gaultier's



work and how he seamlessly blends optical illusions into wearable art pieces. Another designer I have always admired is Tom Ford, who does structured blazers and experimental takes on classic silhouettes," she adds.

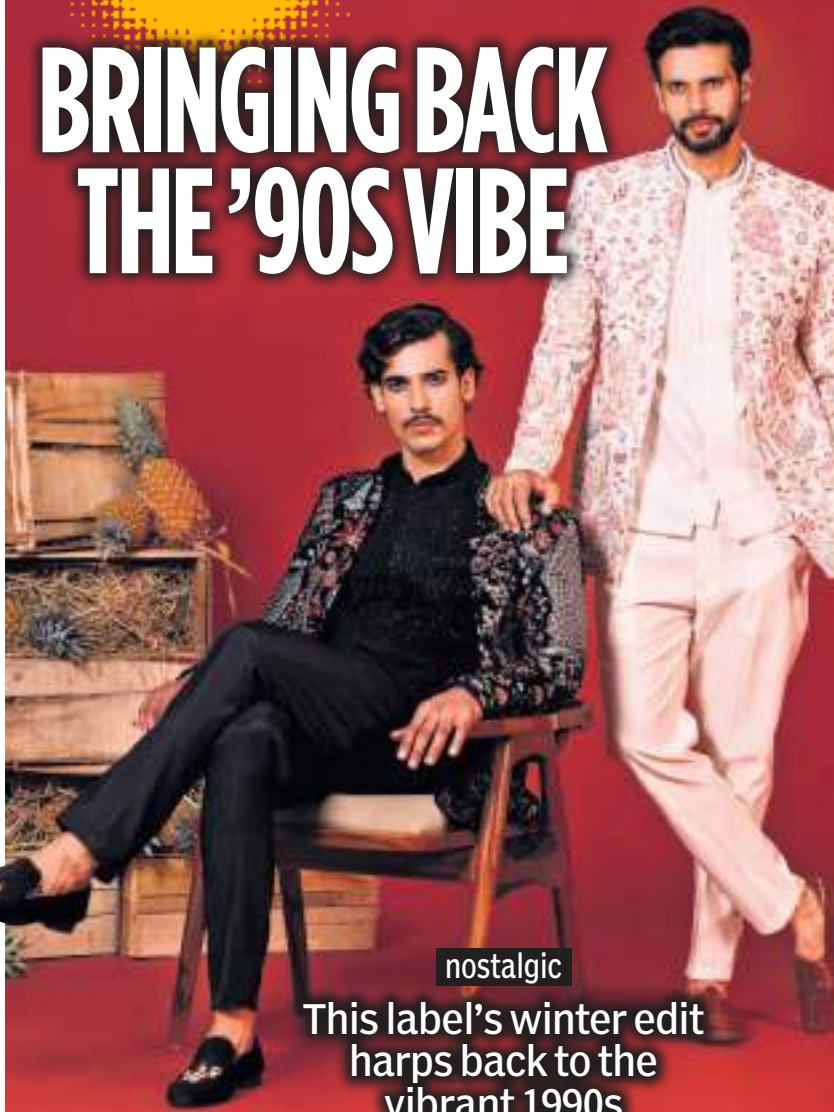
Vidhi mentions that this season will be defined by chic tweed blazer sets and structured dresses. "Think corset-inspired fits, asymmetrical details, and sculptural shapes that flatter the form while radiating confidence. These pieces allow women to transition seamlessly from day to night, embodying strength and femininity equally," says Vidhi.

Her label's upcoming Spring/Summer collection is about embracing the season's vibrancy with fun, bold prints and geometric patterns, turning it a tad playful, and experimental while maintaining the sophistication and elegance that Ivory Rose is known for.

This collection will also feature unique takes on swimwear and resortwear, reimagined with unconventional cuts, eye-catching details, and versatile designs that effortlessly transition from poolside lounging to chic evening looks.

Price on request.
Available online.
—SG

BRINGING BACK THE '90S VIBE



nostalgic

This label's winter edit harps back to the vibrant 1990s

Ensembles from Husn

ARTISANAL MENSWEAR LABEL Kalpraag by designer Mayank Jain has earned a renown for its commitment to eco-friendly practices and meticulous attention to detail. We speak with Mayank as the label's latest festive collection, *Husn* gets launched.

Tell us all about your new collection Husn.

Husn brings together the nostalgia of the '90s with contemporary elegance. The collection is vibrant and textured, featuring majestic *jodhpuris*, *kurta* sets, and versatile silhouettes that cater to diverse occasions. We've played with a wide range of tones, hues, and bold patterns, infusing them with the spirit of festivity and grandeur. Every design in *Husn* reflects the essence of Indian heritage while embracing modern artistry.

What's the idea behind the collection?

Husn is a celebration of individuality, joy, and confidence. It's inspired by romantic essence of the '90s, combined with motifs from Indian heritage and elements of nature. The collection is an ode to men who value style and tradition while exuding contemporary charm. From carnival themes to the serenity of desert landscapes, every piece narrates a story, making it a perfect fit for weddings, festivals, and special occasions.

How different is this collection from your previous ones?

This collection stands out because it goes deeper into storytelling. It brings a

cohesive narrative of Indian heritage and modern trends and is more experimental in its approach to colours, textures, and patterns.

How have your designs evolved over the years?

Initially, we focused on classic silhouettes, we've now incorporated bolder, experimental patterns and versatile styles. The incorporation of sustainable practices has also transformed our approach, ensuring every piece resonates with modern values while honouring heritage.

What inspires your designs?

My designs are inspired by a mix of Indian heritage and contemporary trends. Themes of nature, culture, and everyday life often find their way into our collections. Personally, I'm inspired by the vibrancy of India, the stories behind its

traditions, and the people who wear my designs.

What do men prefer these days when it comes to fashion?

Today's men are more experimental, seeking styles that reflect their personality while balancing tradition and modernity. There's a growing preference for bold patterns, versatile designs, and sustainable fabrics. Men now value the craftsmanship behind a piece and are more inclined towards custom and occasion-specific wear.

What's trending with grooms and occasion wear this winter?

This winter, we're seeing a rise in rich earthy hues like maroons, deep greens, and mustard yellows. Layered looks with *jodhpuris* and embroidered *shawls*, intricate motifs, and a mix of textures are dominating groom and occasion wear. Fusion styles, where traditional silhouettes are paired with modern cuts, are also gaining popularity. It's all about showcasing opulence with a touch of individuality.

What are groom wear must-haves?

A classic *sherwani*, a well-tailored *jodhpuri*, and a versatile *kurta* set. A statement piece, like a heavily embroidered jacket or an intricately designed waistcoat. Accessories like embroidered stoles, pocket squares, and regal footwear elevate the look.



Price on request. Available online.

—Sharmistha Ghosal

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sustainable

Everyday style

This fresh winter edit can be layered up or down

FOUNDED BY SISTERS Shriya and Isha Suri, three-year-old Cosset Clothing is a sustainable label that celebrates local craftsmanship and blends timeless, handpicked materials such as rose petal, orange peel, cotton, and linen into its collections. Their latest fall-winter collection has tailored and structured fits with minimal detailing that can be easily styled to layer up or down. Pick from comfortable coordinating outfit sets, flared maxi dresses, and formal work wear shirts in

existing and newer blends of premium linens, cottons, and poplin. The colour palette introduces deep plums, browns, and greens in tonal combinations, teamed up with timeless pastels that work all year round. "The campaign for this collection is 'The Art of Everyday', and that's what inspired us. Everyone's 'everyday' is different. Comfort should be at the forefront, no matter what your day is going to look like. The idea is to make comfortable wardrobe essentials a part of closets that are not just meant to lounge in, or wear during vacations, but also at work or formal lunches and meetings without sticking to the regular, basic neutrals," says Shriya.

The label is committed to using planet-friendly, natural fabrics ethically sourced from local vendors. When it comes to personal styles, both the sisters are extremely non-trendy and classic. "We both believe in curating

capsule wardrobes with pieces that are elevated basics and extremely versatile, building the foundation of our personal styles. The endless possibilities of styling one garment in multiple ways inspire us to create quality clothing that our customers would value," says Isha, adding they both are huge fans of Priyanka Chopra Jonas.

Going forward, they are looking at expanding designs in womenswear and menswear, with silhouettes that cater to different market segments globally via both online and offline presence. When asked about the spring-summer line-up, they inform that the label's newly launched FW 24 collection gives a peek into what's in store for the summer edit. "We are looking at wardrobe classics, in and beyond solid colours. Our bestselling silhouettes including airy co-ord sets are definitely going to be a staple and we are excited to get things rolling," adds Isha.

Price on request. Available online.

—SG



Pieces from the edit



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THE ART OF FABULOUS LIVING

Art collector and philanthropist Shalini Passi tells us what keeps her grounded despite being rich and famous

By Sharmistha Ghosal



Shalini Passi with her artwork

IF SOMEONE HAS really taken the internet by storm with everyone talking about her grace, poise and swag, it is none other than Shalini Passi. The art collector and philanthropist has shot up the charts after her over-the-top glam appearance in the third season of OTT series *Fabulous Live vs Bollywood Wives*, where she won over the viewers with her charmingly innocent presence in an essentially material world. Unfazed by the sudden spotlight on her, Shalini continues to remain the grounded individual that she is, and prefers using her new-found fame to advance her philanthropic causes.

In between her busy schedule, the pretty woman sits down for a heart-to-heart chat with us, ranging from her love for art, to her beauty and fashion choices, and how she is grappling with the sudden media attention. **Excerpts from the same.**

You are now the talk of the town after the show. Did you ever imagine you would go viral?

Honestly, when we were working and shooting the series, I never expected I would be famous; I never thought there would be so much love coming in from everybody around the world. People from different age groups, and countries have expressed so much love and affection

towards me. It's really been heart-warming. It's also inspiring me to do much more. It's like the wind beneath my wings.

What was in your mind when you joined the show? How did you plan to conduct yourself?

I am all for new experiences and OTT is definitely a new medium for me. It's a powerful medium. While I was doing the show, I was also busy with planning the *MASH Ball* in support of UNICEF, which is a project close to my heart. I really did not plan anything, the camera caught all the rawness and people loved the honesty of it all.

How was it getting to know all of your co-participants, especially Riddhima Kapoor Sahni up close? Are you in touch with all of them?

When there are seven women, there is bound to be some sort of fun as well as friction, but we all are friends and also family friends and Riddhima is very dear to me. It was a wonderful experience getting to know everybody up close and there was a lot to learn from each one of them, and yes, I am in touch with all of them.

Everyone is talking about your fabulous skin. What's your daily skincare regimen?

In the morning I use facewash followed by a skin cream. I also use a vitamin skin cream in the evening. Furthermore,

I use retinol once or twice a week which I find really helpful and a thick night cream in addition to it.

One skin hack you swear by?

I use *chandan* during the summer months to cool the skin.

Do you really practise not holding grudges? How do you deal with hurt?

Yeah, I do really practise not holding grudges or any negative emotions about any person or situations. Any negative feeling is an energy and you can utilise it in a good way or in a bad way. I like to exercise and work the energy out or do creative activities, such as singing.

You are in great shape. Take us through your daily fitness regimen.

I do meditation in the morning and an hour of dance in the afternoon, which serves as cardio. After that an hour of weights and pilates. I try to sleep on time, eat organic food, and I don't consume alcohol or smoke. Neither do I have aerated drinks, sugar, or carbs.

Coming to style, what are your fashion choices?

I believe in iconic designer Karl Lagerfeld's saying "I am a fashion person, and fashion is not only about clothes—it's about all kinds of change." My personal fashion choice is very eclectic and I am a maximalist. I enjoy different kinds of textiles, fabrics and cuts. I love dressing according to the occasions. For weddings and special occasions, I love wearing *lehengas* which are embellished and mostly in plain colours. I don't like the weight of clothes. That's why I wear a lot of crystals because crystals are light. I do like embroidered clothes and I enjoy beautiful embroidery but I wear it very seldom because I find it heavy. My favourite colours are white, grey, and blue. My favourite piece of clothing is *saris* draped in different ways. I love chiffons and velvets. Five essentials in a wardrobe include a *sari*, a long dress, pant-suit, skirt-top. Currently, my favourite accessories are earrings. Fashion is a personal style statement.

Who are your fashion icons?

My favourite fashion icons are Audrey Hepburn, Maharani Gayatri Devi, my mother, grandmother, and aunt.

Your favourite Indian designer and favourite global designer?

My favourites from India would be Rohit Bal, Rohit Gandhi, Rahul Khanna, and Manish Malhotra. Internationally speaking, it would definitely be Dolce Gabbana and Alexander McQueen. I love their cuts, fits, and style. The structure of their clothes is beautiful, and I enjoy wearing them. Their collections are always incredible, there's something Indian about them, and also so contemporary. Their prints are fun and interesting.

What's your secret to handling wealth and fame responsibly?

A goal—it's something that helps you wake up in the morning. Always have bigger goals, larger goals, so that you prepare for them and eventually when things do happen, you know, you are able to rise to the occasion or do justice to what you have been preparing for all your life. Preparation is important; reading is important; and travelling is really important. However, being connected with yourself is one of the most important things, according to me.

You are an art collector. How and when did you develop a passion for art?

I was always inclined towards art and have been painting since I was young, and I enjoy working across several mediums. Over the years, being an artist eventually led me to become a collector as I had the opportunity to meet many artists during my time at school such as BC Sanyal, Manjit Bawa, and MF Hussain whose deep enthusiasm and passion towards the craft tremendously inspired me. Also, my teacher, Bishamber Khanna, who was an enamelist in Modern School, was instrumental in my growth as an artist as I was refining my practice.

What's your favourite art medium and who are the artists, present and

past, whom you admire?

My favourite artist is Anita Dube. Her work is provocative for she tries to cross the limits. She delves into memory, identity and social issues, and various materials—bones and glass. Her audacity of the subject matter—feminism and politics—never ceases to enthuse me as an artist as well as collector.

Which are some of your favourite art pieces that you have collected so far?

One of my favourite pieces by Mrinalini Mukherjee is her fibre work *Kusum* from 1996. Created using hemp, this artwork, which is flower-like form exudes both delicacy and strength, capturing Mukherjee's ability to blend organic beauty with monumental scale. I am drawn to how *Kusum* transforms humble materials into an intricate, almost mystical expression of nature, showcasing her unique mastery in fibre art.

Tell us a little about your philanthropic work.

The entire proceeds from my television debut in *Fabulous Lives VS Bollywood Wives* was donated to UNICEF India to further elevate their joint mission of enhancing childcare missions in Purnea, Bihar.

All the commercials from interviews and collaborations will also be sent to UNICEF.

When you sit back and watch the series now and see how others talked behind your back, what does it make you feel? How do you react?

I actually haven't watched the entire series. Whatever I've seen, I find the girls to be funny and witty.

You have been pursuing art and philanthropy seriously for years but it took a show like this to get you the spotlight. Do you feel it to be absurd?

Well, it is the beauty of the medium of cinema. But the beauty of OTT is that it reaches a larger audience, and obviously it is more effective. It will be amazing if more people come forward and are inspired by it. We had the *MASH Ball* in collaboration with UNICEF India, to support our activities in Purnea, Bihar. So I'm really hopeful that this medium, which has such a huge audience, will inspire people to be more creative and artistic as well as look at Indian contemporary art and also help others around them.

Do you have plans to further explore the world of Bollywood?

Yes, I am being offered a lot of shows. There's been a lot of interest for talk shows as well as other things, but we are just in talks with all that and let's see what comes out of it. I will definitely be willing to take up offers for acting, although I am not an actress. If the roles offered by the producers suit me, I would be happy to do that.

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directorial

INSPIRING TALE



Stills from the film

“

We need great producers with good intentions. Cinema is an artform and it shouldn't be made just to make money. Artforms act as a mirror to society, and we need more producers who can back up this thought

FILMMAKER RIMA DAS from Assam is the talk of the town, not just for the sequel to her film *Village Rockstars* that received the Kim Jiseok Award for Best Film at the 29th *Busan Film Festival*, but also the anthology *My Melbourne*, which is travelling across film festivals like the *International Film Festival of Melbourne*, *Mumbai International Film Festival*, and the *Kolkata International Film Festival*. Rima is up for inclusivity in the industry, especially with regards to talents from the Northeast and believes that it's okay for the rest of India to not understand the Northeast well. But she says that as she takes her state to a wider audience, she will also be responsible about creating better and more opportunities for the talents from this region. We speak with her about her films and the challenges she faced. **Excerpts:**

Tell us about *Village Rockstars 2*. Why was the win at the *Busan Film Festival* important?

I first started thinking about the sequel when I was making *Bulbuls Can Sing*. The first part ends on the note with the mother bringing the girl a guitar, and I thought it would be great if I showed what happens next. I have grown up in a village myself, so I could relate to it a lot. I never thought of producing my directorial, but when the film was ready and I went to speak to people, they were very skeptical about how the film will fare.

Busan (film festival) was special to us, because the first part didn't travel there. And the win was a surprise to us because I wasn't sure if the jury had watched the first part of the film. But the win gave us courage and confidence. Even at the *Mumbai International Film Festival*, it was much appreciated. I am super happy, especially when people say that this is the perfect sequel.

What do you think are the challenges of making an independent film?

Challenges like a shoestring budget, time constraints, and simpler equipment have

Filmmaker Rima Das talks about her win at *Busan Film Fest 2024*, independent films, and more

always been there, but the visibility of the film remains the main challenge. Even if it is travelling to a lot of places, or people are giving rave reviews, making the film visible to a larger audience is a big challenge. I think the film fests help in visibility.

Even if films do great at the festivals, they sometimes struggle commercially. What's your take on that?

I have always been saying that we need great producers with good intentions. Cinema is an art form and it shouldn't be made just to make money. Even if you pick up an old piece of plate, you would understand how it has been well-thought of and made with a lot of love and affection. Art forms act as a mirror, and we need producers who can back up this thought. These movies often leave a long impact on people's minds, and are good pieces

es for the future generations. Without these, we'll probably have a shallow society.

Tell us about the collaboration with the *My Melbourne* anthology.

My Melbourne is special because it was my first project outside India. Four of us (Kabir Khan, Imtiaz Ali, Onir, and I) shot the films separately. I didn't know what my fellow directors were shooting or what their stories were. My subject was disability and my film in the anthology is called *Emma*, which is about a talented deaf dancer Emma who grapples with self-doubt and discrimination until a chance encounter with another deaf dancer inspires her to embrace her uniqueness and find her inner strength. And it was really fun to work with an all-woman crew, except the cinematographer. We were very keen to make it look authentic, and the lead actor who played Emma is a dancer with a hearing impairment—even the girl who played younger Emma is hearing impaired. We wanted to make sure that inclusivity is not just a buzzword.

How difficult was it to make a mark as a woman filmmaker from the Northeast?

I went to Mumbai to become an actor, and it was a big cultural shock for me. I felt I was not efficient. Somehow, because of the way I look coming from Northeast or the way I speak, I wasn't fitting in. Later when I showed interest in filmmaking, I didn't dare to even assist anyone. I self-taught myself and got ready for my first film, *Man with the Binoculars*, but faced challenges working with the team. There was a feeling that people were doubting me, there was no freedom and it wasn't a comfortable situation. It led to a lot of anger and disappointment. But young musicians from poor family backgrounds saved me. They performed music on stage and celebrated life. This gave me a lot of confidence and courage to start working independently. My first film did grab a lot of attention, travelling to Talin and Mumbai film festivals. Since then my films started talking for me.

— Dharitri Ganguly

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Rima Das (L) with the lead actor of *Village Rockstars*, Bhanita Das

ALL FOR INCLUSIVITY

Filmmaker Imtiaz Ali, who was at Kolkata International Film Festival for the screening of *My Melbourne*, speaks to *Indulge*

interview

MY MELBOURNE, AN anthology helmed by acclaimed filmmakers Imtiaz Ali, Onir, Rima Das and Kabir Khan, delves into powerful themes including race, gender, sexuality, and disability. A stand-out feature at the *Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM)* earlier this year, the film was showcased at the *Kolkata International Film Festival (KIFF)*. After a tram ride from Esplanade tram depot, filmmaker Imtiaz Ali, who helmed the film *Jules* within *My Melbourne*, spoke with us about it and more.

Tell us about *My Melbourne*.

We are very lucky to have a premiere here at *KIFF*. There's a connection between Melbourne and Kolkata—the tram, as seen in the film. *My Melbourne* is an anthology of four films that is loosely strung, in the presence of this visual mnemonic which is also the tram. The film that I have helmed is directed by Arif Ali and we worked with a diverse crowd of young filmmakers, whom I was supposed to be mentoring, but honestly, I learnt a lot from them. I also learnt about inclusive filmmaking, to work with different genders and different abilities as well, which coincides with the theme of the film itself.

Tell us about your film *Jules*.

I think the producer of the film Mitu Bhowmick Lange AM, came up with this story and then, we worked on it. It's about a homeless woman named Jules and a newly married Indian who has shifted her base to stay and live in Melbourne with her husband, but struggles to actually have a 'home'. So it's about home and homelessness, lives of two people who belong to two opposite points of the society colliding, and their lives changing in the process.

Does it talk about gender inequality?

Yes, it does. It talks about gender inequalities in a very subtle and basic manner. It got a lot of responses post screenings, since people could identify with the subtle gender inequalities that exist in society.

How difficult is it to make a film that is a part of an anthology than make a full feature?

It is not easy to make an anthology and release it as a feature. You want each part to be distinct, but at the same time, you also want them to be connected somehow.

Would we see you deconstruct your genre and break the notion of a romantic filmmaker?

Well, I hope that I can deconstruct



myself and then come up with the real essence of what I can stand for. Sometimes you need to deconstruct yourself to be more of yourself. I hope that's what I do.

Harry Met Sejal received very negative feedback. Do you have plans to collaborate with Shah Rukh Khan again?

If I have a very good story which will shine with Shah Rukh's presence, I would definitely pitch that.

Are you filming your next project with Fahadh Faasil and Tripti Dimri?

Nothing has been finalised yet. It is in talks but in a very nascent stage. Somehow it got leaked.

Do you think films like *Tamasha*, *Rockstar*, and *Highway* resonate more deeply with today's audience, given their evolved perspective?

Yes. When it got re-released recently it received so much love that *Laila Majnu* needed to be released again. Now, I think the audience is even more accepting of *Rockstar* than it was before. I think it is a great time for films. Not all films are working but this is a time for some artistic revolutions.

Do you think this is a great time for global films and independent filmmakers?

I think the approach towards filmmaking needs to be changed. But we should also make more popular films. Yes, we should welcome the new voices in filmmakers but find the new voices in us to make things work.

By popular, do you also mean commercial hits?

Commercial film has a very negative connotation in the film industry. By popular or commercial hits, I mean something that more people can enjoy.

Music has been a very integral part of all your films. Why is that?

I love music in the cinema. I love the process of making music for the cinema, shooting it and putting it on screen. I feel a lot of things that cannot be expressed through words, can be expressed through music and songs in films. So I think cinema gets another layer or dimension with the music.

—Dharitri Ganguly

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Imtiaz Ali





spotlight

A PARALLEL UNIVERSE

Filmmaker Tanmaya Shekhar's debut feature *Nukkad Naatak* shows vastly different worlds coexisting right next to each other

FILMMAKER TANMAYA SHEKHAR, whose short films have won accolades across the globe, gets inspired in two ways—as a writer, he is mostly interested in dramas that stem from real life, while as a director, he is inspired by every single art form—from music to books, photography, online articles, and Instagram reels. His debut feature film, *Nukkad Naatak*, is a heart-warming coming-of-age film; a cross between *Laapata Ladies* and *Kho Gaye Hum Kahaan*.

A story of best friends Molshri and Shivang, the film begins when they are expelled from college for robbing the canteen. But the dean offers them another chance, provided they do a community service project and help five children from an impoverished slum get educated. But the catch is that these children beg all day to earn a living and have no time for school. And the local school doesn't have space for them. Thus begins a journey that changes their lives forever.

Tanmaya, who is both the writer and director of *Nukkad Naatak*, takes us through the film that had its world premiere in the Indian Languages Film competition section of the recently concluded *Kolkata International Film Festival*.

What led to the idea of the film?

I was visiting my parents during Diwali three years ago, and my mother took me to a slum where she had been teaching for a year.



Tanmaya (middle) on the set of *Nukkad Naatak*



It was an eye-opening moment for me. My father was an IIT professor, and I had been a student at IIT. This place was only 8 km from the campus, but it felt like a different universe. The poverty was extreme, and it shook me—how could we have such vastly different worlds right next to each other?

As I spent more time visiting the place and befriending people, a gem of an idea developed in my head. I wanted to tell the story of

two students at an elite college who share my perspective on life but are suddenly forced to interact with people from the slum, to work with them, and to understand them. I wanted this to form the foundation of the film.

How was the experience of directing a full-length feature?

Directing a full-length film is a beast, honestly. The biggest challenge is that scenes aren't shot chronologically, due to logisti-

cal reasons and actors' availability. This made it difficult to calibrate the emotional intensity of the moment. It made me realise how much preparation a director needs to be able to shoot any scene, in any order.

Who are your favourite filmmakers?

Outside India, I love Wes Anderson, Noah Baumbach, Greta Gerwig, and Christopher Nolan. In India, I love Zoya Akhtar, Farhan Akhtar, and Shoojit Sircar.

What are your upcoming projects?

To be honest, even though I've finished the creative part of making the film, I'm still fully invested in getting it the best possible release. As an independent film, we don't have a producer handling the business side of things, so I've had to put on my 'sales' hat. Currently, I'm focused on getting *Nukkad Naatak* out into the world.

—Sharmistha Ghosal

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Tanmaya Shekhar

art film

Worlds apart

Filmmaker Abhilash Sharma takes us through his film *Swaha* that premiered at *Kolkata International Film Festival*

FILMMAKER ABHILASH SHARMA's latest film *Swaha* that premiered at the *Kolkata International Film Festival* is a black-and-white art film in motion, told in the ancient Magahi language. We spoke with Abhilash about the riveting film.

What inspired you to make *Swaha*?

The seed for writing this film was planted after I watched the short anime film *Animator vs. Animation* by Alan Becker. However, as I delved deeper into the process, the characters and situations began to emerge from my understanding of the world and my personal struggles with it. Looking back, I realise that, at its core, the film is deeply connected to my relationship with my mother, an unconscious source of inspiration that shaped the story.

What's the narrative of *Swaha* and how differently did you think of mounting it?

Originally, the story focused on creating two parallel worlds—a father in the city and a mother in the village—and how the child suffers despite their best efforts. As the narrative developed, Buddhist philosophy influenced its direction, bringing in themes of birth, life, and death. Rather than following a traditional approach, I focused on the essence of the story and its mood, letting everything come together naturally.

How did you choose the cast of the film?

Casting was one of the biggest challenges in making this film. Apart from Chandra Shekhar Dutta and Bulloo Kumar, most of the actors were newcomers. I also worked with talented actors from Patna's theatre scene, and they surpassed my expectations with their performances.

How were you drawn to Buddhism and



Still from the film



how has it changed you as a person?

I went through a personal tragedy that led me to explore Buddhism in search of peace. I realised that Buddhism begins with acceptance, and it gave me a new perspective to look beyond what is seen and heard. Every religion is rooted in faith, and we all need a way to use that faith to discover our own truth. For me, Buddhism's view of life gave me the reason to explore and understand myself more deeply.

Do you plan to release the film on OTT or theatre?

Before OTT release, I

want to ensure my film gets a theatrical release, even if it's with limited screens. It's important for me to show the film in theatres, especially to the people of Bihar, because the story is deeply connected to my bond with the land.

Tell us about your next film.

My next project is a Lucknow-based drama set in a world where the idea of love and human connection is fading away, as we become increasingly disconnected from ourselves and consumed by the struggle for survival.

—SG



Abhilash Sharma

mind & body



Boost digestion, curb hunger, and support weight loss with *Shahi jeera* that is loaded with essential nutrients

SHAHI JEERA: A WONDER SPICE

DO YOU FIND yourself constantly hungry or struggling to shed those extra kilos despite your best efforts? The answer might lie in a humble ingredient from the Indian kitchen caraway seeds, also known as *shahi jeera*. This ancient wonder spice not only adds flavour to your meals but also offers a host of health benefits, including weight loss and appetite suppression. *Shahi jeera* is a medicinal plant known for its aromatic flavour and health-boosting properties. These tiny seeds pack a punch when it comes to nutrients and therapeutic compounds, making them a versatile ingredient in traditional and modern kitchens alike.

Shahi jeera is loaded with essential nutrients that contribute to overall health and well-being, like fibre that helps you feel full for longer, reducing overeating and aiding digestion. It's a rich source of iron, magnesium, copper, and calcium, which are vital for energy, bone health, and overall body function. *Shahi jeera* contains limonene and carvone, powerful compounds that fight free radicals. Along with these benefits, let's look at a few other as well:

- One of the most remarkable benefits of *shahi jeera* is its ability to support weight loss. The fiber in the seeds helps suppress your appetite, keeping hunger pangs at bay. By making you feel full for longer, it reduces the chances of overeating, making it easier to manage your calorie intake.
- *Shahi jeera* has long been used as a remedy for digestive issues. It helps reduce bloating, indigestion, and even phlegm. The essential oils in the seeds promote healthy gut function and can aid in managing conditions like H. Pylori infections, gut inflammation, ulcers etc.
- The antioxidants in *shahi jeera*, such as limonene and carvone, fight inflammation and oxidative stress, which are linked to various chronic diseases. By neutralising harmful free radicals, these compounds help your body stay healthier for longer.
- For those struggling with low iron levels, *shahi jeera* is a natural source of this essential mineral. Iron is crucial for maintaining energy levels and supporting red blood cell production, making it a great addition to your diet.

- The essential oils in *shahi jeera* have anti-inflammatory properties that can alleviate discomfort from various conditions, making it a gentle, natural remedy for inflammation-related issues.

To get the above benefits from this mighty seeds, let's add *shahi jeera* to your food with rice, curries, or soups. Its aromatic taste enhances dishes while offering health benefits. You can even steep a teaspoon of *shahi jeera* in hot water for 10 mins for a soothing tea that aids digestion and curbs appetite. If you are looking at weight loss, then lightly roast the seeds and sprinkle them over salads or roasted foxnuts/jowar puffs etc for an extra crunch and flavour.

Shahi jeera is more than just a spice — it's a natural remedy that can help you manage hunger, lose weight, and improve digestion. Packed with fibre, various essential minerals, and antioxidants, these seeds offer a simple yet powerful way to enhance your health. With a balanced diet, regular exercise, and *shahi jeera* in moderation on your side, your wellness goals are just a step away!



HEALTHY LIVING
DEEPIKA RATHOD

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



ARIES

(Mar 21 - Apr 19)

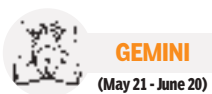
Welcome the silver lining, as everything in life happens for a reason. Release any feeling of regret and embrace the opportunities for happiness. Search for the silver lining, as you deserve to be happy. The relationship in the past has come to a completion; you are free now. Your creativity will be rewarded with abundant resources. Lucky colour: **Rustic orange**



TAURUS

(Apr 20 - May 20)

Follow your passion. You are ready for any challenge. New opportunities for adventure and excitement will come. It will be better to make a decision. Do not overanalyse the issue. Finding a mutual compromise is the best way out. People with good intentions will offer their support and guidance. Follow your creative passion. Lucky colour: **Olive green**



GEMINI

(May 21 - June 20)

It is time to act upon your plans. Your hard work is going to be acknowledged by your seniors and subordinates. A promotion or a change in job is on the cards. Follow your heart; the love for home and family will always keep you grounded and very humble. With the help of your trustworthy psychic information, you are going to have a great week ahead. Lucky colour: **Bright blue**

Angel Calendar

This weekly column is based on angel oracle guidance and numbers



AALIYAA H JARIWALA

Chaldean numerologist, Angel oracle guide & healer



LIBRA

(Sep 23 - Oct 22)

All your materialistic needs will get fulfilled in the most magical and unexpected ways. An act of kindness amplifies the blessings. You will have ample reasons to celebrate with friends, family, and near and dear ones. Make bold choices, as great progress is only possible when you are in a relationship with people who share the same vision. Lucky colours: **Yellow, orange, sea blue**



SCORPIO

(Oct 23 - Nov 21)

Stability and efficiency are important. Making impulsive decisions or overthinking can lead to trouble. Seek out other possibilities to keep your body, mind, and soul, calm. Look for the magic in life. Wisdom and objectivity are important now, so stay in your integrity. A situation will call for honest and open communication. With the help of passive therapy, a dream of yours will come true. Lucky colours: **Off-white, white**



SAGITTARIUS

(Nov 22 - Dec 21)

Embrace your inner child and spend some quality time with your old friends or siblings. On the work front, excellent opportunities will be offered to you. An additional course or an add-on information will be given to you. Your strength and grace will intimidate many around you. Stand up for what you believe in. Claim your personal power, as you have worked very hard to achieve this success. Lucky colours: **Copper, brown**



CANCER

(June 21 - July 22)

A troublesome situation is coming to an end soon. You will be finally free; new opportunities for happiness will follow. So put the past behind you; be aware of the intentions of your friends and well-wishers, as this is your time to be facing your fears. Do not get carried away by the opinions of others; rather, listen to what your heart says. Lucky colour: **Purple**



LEO

(July 23 - Aug 22)

You have the ability to do anything right now, so go after what you want. Answers to all your questions will come only through meditation, so enjoy the process of spiritual awakening. This is also the time for you to be careful about attracting the evil eye. You need not go through your current challenges alone. Lucky colours: **Pink, magenta**



VIRGO

(Aug 23 - Sep 22)

Ask your angels for helpful people to lighten your load. There is light at the end of the tunnel, so breathe a sigh of relief. For those who have been working very hard in the past can expect a promotion with a relocation or temporary travel plans. A new job will offer a promise of financial success and a peaceful retired life. Lucky colours: **Dark pink, brown**



CAPRICORN

(Dec 22 - Jan 19)

Stay determined and move forward in life. Release yourself from burdensome situations, as the love of your partner will make every effort worthwhile. You can manifest the life you want; what you want will appear. This is also the beginning of a successful new year. This is a time for your career rather than a relationship. Lucky colours: **Mauve, rainbow, golden**



AQUARIUS

(Jan 20 - Feb 18)

This is your lucky week. New resources of money, time, and support are being offered by the universe. A change in job or a promotion is on the cards. For those who have been fighting for justice or have been fighting a legal battle, the ruling will be made in your favour very soon. So do not give up very easily. Make a courageous choice to change your situation. Lucky colours: **Royal blue, brown**



PISCES

(Feb 19 - Mar 20)

Monetary expenses are high. Do not be resistant to changes. A committed romantic relationship will sweep you off your feet. Situations or topics that will make your heart flutter are on the cards. Success will come through objective compromise; self-control and patience are required. Your plans will work out. Use your resources wisely. Lucky colours: **Deep purple, red**

Drama: Bandish Bandits (Season 2)

The second season is expected to build on the core themes of music, love and tradition which prevailed in the first season. The plot is expected to dive deeper into the evolving relationship between Radhe (a classical music prodigy) and Tamanna (a pop singer), exploring how their love and careers face new challenges. *Language: Hindi. December 13. On Amazon Prime Video.*



Docuseries: The Secret Lives of Animals

This 10-part nature docuseries, narrated by Hugh Bonneville, explores extraordinary and previously unseen animal behaviours, showcasing the intelligence and adaptability of 77 species across 24 countries. Each episode focuses on pivotal life stages, such as finding food, raising an offspring and survival strategies. *December 18. On Apple TV+*



Romance: Mismatched (Season 3)

The new season continues the journey of Rishi (Rohit Saraf) and Dimple (Prajakta Koli) as they navigate the challenges of adulthood in Hyderabad after leaving their college days at the Aravali Institute behind. The series looks deeper into themes of love, ambition and self-discovery. *Language: Hindi. December 13. On Netflix.*



Thriller: Carry-on

Directed by Jaume Collet-Serra, the film stars Taron Egerton as Ethan Kopek, a young TSA agent who is blackmailed into allowing a dangerous package onto a Christmas Day flight. The cast includes Sofia Carson, Danielle Deadwyler, Logan Marshall-Green, Dean Norris and Theo Rossi, among others. *December 13. On Netflix.*

Mystery: Harikatha: Sambhavami Yuge Yuge

This web series revolves around a mysterious figure, who assumes avatars of lord Vishnu to punish criminals in a village. This prompts a police investigation led by a determined officer to uncover the truth behind these divine acts. The series blends mythology with crime-thriller elements. *Language: Telugu. December 13. On Disney+ Hotstar.*



Thriller: Despatch

Directed by Kanu Behl and starring Manoj Bajpayee, the film is an investigative thriller that delves into the challenges of journalism amidst the digital age. Joy Bag is a seasoned crime journalist who is navigating the dangerous underbelly of Mumbai while seeking a breakthrough story. The film also features Shahana Goswami and Archita Agarwal in key roles. *Language: Hindi. December 13. On Zee5.*



Sports: Manchester City vs Manchester United

The Manchester derby is back this weekend as Manchester United travel to the Etihad Stadium to take on Manchester City in the Premier League. The two sides last met each other in the Community Shield, where Manchester City beat the Red Devils on penalties to claim the trophy. *December 15, 10 pm. On Disney+ Hotstar.*



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Portronics Beem 500

Beem 500 is a smart LED projector with 1080p Full HD native resolution and can scale to 8K UHD resolution where supported. It has a 6,700 lumen LED lamp for sharp images and vibrant colours at high levels of brightness. Pre-loaded apps include Hotstar, Netflix, Prime, YouTube etc while you can also stream directly from your smartphone and similar devices. Beem 500 projects up to 120" transforming any space into a home theatre. 16W speakers are built in for ample sound, while Wifi and BT connectivity ensures connectivity. Other ports include USB, HDMI and RJ45 as well as AUX audio. amazon.in/flipkart.com



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Oofos Oomy stride

Built-in OOfoam technology, the new Oomy Stride comes in multiple colours. OOfoam tech absorbs 37 per cent more impact than traditional footwear with a patented footbed design that reduces stress on knees, ankles, and joints. Other perks include an upper with breathable 4-way stretch, pillowed heel cushions, an antimicrobial footbed lining, and deeper flex grooves for more traction and durability. oofos.com

Flix UltraCharge P125

The P125 is a solid power bank with a 20,000mAh capacity, 22.5W QC fast charging and features triple outputs (dual Type-A and Type-C) and dual inputs (Type-C and Micro USB). It also has a useful percentage indicator and advanced protection against overcharging and short-circuiting. P125 is also PD and PPS compatible, letting you charge a variety of devices at optimised speeds. Most impressively, the P125 is available in colour options and is probably the most affordable 20,000mAh powerbank in the market. amazon.in/flixaccessories.com



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Casio CPP 002

This unique watch from Casio has a very specific purpose: to tell you the time inside the hot and humid Sauna. Features include a 12-minute timer, analog quartz movement, a 35.4mm resin case, and 50m of water resistance. There's also a spiral, twisty band that lets you put on and remove the watch with ease. Currently at a crowdfunding stage for the Japanese market. casio.com/jp



Ashok Pandian
@ashokpandian



THE PIONEER

forerunner

This was India's top-selling luxury SUV on its launch and has been totally revamped to aim at the crown again

WHEN AUDI LAUNCHED the Q7 officially in India in 2008, it had little competition and quickly went on to become one of India's top-selling SUVs. Gradually, competitors caught up, and there was bloodshed, but the aura of the Q7 always remained — to the extent that more than 10,000 units have been sold to date. Now to cater to loyalists and appeal to the new SUV-buying folk, Audi India has introduced the new Q7, a CKD unit assembled in Aurangabad.

At the heart of matters is a 3.0-litre, V6 TFSI engine developing 335 bhp and 500 Nm of torque, coupled to a 48-volt mild-hybrid system. Together, this is enough to propel

the new Q7 to 100 km/h from rest in a mere 5.6 seconds and onto an electronically limited top speed of 250 km/h.

High-intensity Matrix LED headlights light up the road as standard, and a new system is digital daytime running light signatures. They give Q7 a characteristic and unmistakable appearance, allowing the user to select one of four individual light signatures via the MMI. For the first time, the vehicles also come with largely digitalised OLED rear lights, which also have digital light signatures. The standard equipment is also being expanded and now includes 20-inch alloy wheels, a rearview camera, four-zone automatic climate control, and adaptive air suspension. You also get a panoramic glass sunroof, which first debuted on the Q7 in India.

The equipment list is quite com-

prehensive inside a very inviting interior. Cricket leather seats with decorative inlays in ash natural grey and brown give a luxurious feel while ample screens exist to pander to any screen fetishes you might have. Thankfully, physical buttons have not been totally done away with, and some degree of analog controls exists. The driver's instrumentation, Audi's innovative Cockpit Plus with a 12.3-inch screen, can display everything from basic information to maps in the binnacle in front of the driver. Then, of course, there is Audi's tryst with Bang & Olufsen, and their lovely sound system setup. With 19 speakers and a heart-thumping 730-watt RMS output, this is one sound system, which can play anything from Raag Thumri to trash metal with aplomb. It is, indeed, one of the best sounding car infotainment systems out there, easily com-

paring with Burmester or B&W.

The new Q7 is a very safe car too, with 8 airbags and a whole suite of safety features, including Electronic Stability Control (ESC), Hill hold and many others. The new Q7 is definitely the pick of the lot if you are looking for a tried and tested SUV in India, and now it comes with many extra and useful features over its competition.

Priced at ₹88.6 lakh, ex-showroom India.

— Ranojoy Mukerji

ranojoy@newindianexpress.com

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The week that was



• The new BMW M2 debuts in India

An increased power output of 480 hp and 600 Nm translated into even better acceleration, doing the 0-100 km/h stint in 4 seconds, onwards to a top speed of 285 k/h with the optional M Driver's package. It comes standard with an eight-speed M Steptronic transmission with Drivelogic, or you can specify a six-speed manual gearbox, creating a performance experience in the classical mould, rooted in the intense interaction between the driver and car. The new M2 is priced at ₹1.03 crore, ex-showroom.



• Tata puts up scrapping and recycling facilities

Tata Motors recently inaugurated a new Registered Vehicle Scrapping Facility (RVSF) named Re.Wi.Re - Recycle with Respect'. This facility has an annual capacity to safely disassemble 21,000 end-of-life vehicles. Equipped with cell-type and line-type dismantling for both commercial and passenger vehicles, there are dedicated stations for the safe dismantling of various components, including batteries, fuel, oils, liquids, and gases.

economical

Pulsing RIDE



This mainstream two-wheeler manufacturer has always had an iconic image and continues that legacy with this new model

INDIAN TWO-WHEELER manufacturers are known for creating some fantastic motorcycles in the last decade. One of the biggest contributors to this genre is Bajaj, especially with its brand Pulsar. While the 180 and the 220 are considered iconic offerings, many have missed out on the demure N 125, a new offering. Equipped with a 4-valve engine sitting on a diamond-shaped frame, the styling has now been made more crisp, thanks to cleaner lines overall. The fuel tank is tall, and the new double-edged headlamps give an upmarket look to this machine. The front fork has a sort of covering on it, avoiding the typical gator for a different look. Add the skinny tyres and the tall stance, and the bike starts giving macho vibes, so important for a large section of the population.

The instrument cluster lacks a tachometer, which is a glaring omission, but it has Bluetooth connectivity on the top-end variant. The switchgear is high quality as always and has the right

tactile feel. The seat is comfortable and well-suited for weekend rides and daily commutes.

Riding a brand new 125cc engine with 11.8 BHP and 11 Nm of torque has never felt this smooth or good. The motorcycle has very good refinement parameters, something that is



praiseworthy and increasing over the years in Bajaj motorcycles. The performance right from zero to 60 km/h puts a huge smile on your face, considering the machine's light weight of just 125 kg and spot-on gearing. The motorcycle is far more linear and smoother than the previ-

ous generation Pulsar and 135LS of the past. Riding in the city is a joy, but highway trips end up at a sedate pace. The exhaust and intake note are typically Bajaj, i.e. you can hardly hear it until you really rev her.

The handling is sporty and comfortable at the same time. The Pulsar N 125 feels light, confident, and stable, and the ride quality is extremely impressive. Fuel economy stands at an impressive 70 km/l on the highway and 60 km/l in the city. Pulsars have generally been the heaviest bikes in their class, but this one tells a different story. The brakes and tyres are adequate rather than very good, though they manage to hold in both dry and wet weather.

This brings us to the fact that the smallest member of the Pulsar family is now back with a thump and how! Although the 125cc segment is highly contested, this time around, Bajaj has the firepower to compete against them all.

Priced at ₹94,175.
— Mohit Soni

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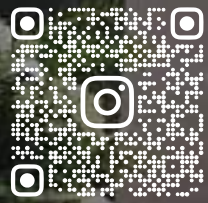
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