



THE NEW
**INDIAN
EXPRESS**

INDIA

Couturier and costume designer Neeta Lulla has always chosen the path less travelled. Having dressed some of Indian cinema's most iconic women, she brings the same narrative sensibility to her latest collection, as we discover in this exclusive interview | P12

'TEN JOY SPEED AND SPECTACLE'

things
to do

INDULGE

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Dear readers,

This edition opens on a high-fashion note as Neeta Lulla steps back into the spotlight with an exclusive women's line that celebrates craftsmanship and timeless design.



A four-time National Award-winning couturier whose creative legacy spans more than 400 films, Neeta's return with a solo fashion showcase after several years marks a significant moment for the style landscape. *Indulge* chats with the designer to trace her journey, explore her current body of work, and hear her thoughts on shaping the designers of tomorrow.

Staying with fashion, we speak to Paul Arora on the latest edit, *Ik Kudi*, while Garima Dubey shares why occasion wear remains timeless with her label GKD.Edit.

Raising a toast to new beginnings, we check out The Liquid Library at Four Points by Sheraton, Chennai, where cocktails are crafted with care and creativity. We also drop by Toscano's newest address, which is a little slice of *la dolce vita* in the heart of the city.

For lovers of all things handmade, *The Art Market* offers a one-stop destination for artisanal finds. We also catch up with Jaya Jaitly, as she brings the iconic *Dastkari Haat Crafts Bazaar* back to Chennai after a decade, celebrating handicrafts, paintings and age-old craftsmanship.

Music buffs are in for a treat as the *AlterNation Jazz Festival* takes over the city with a full day of contemporary, original and improvised jazz. On the theatre front, a bilingual production by Pale White Dot and *Ven Muthu Maayam*, titled *Crea-Shakthi*, offers an intriguing take on love, technology and the emotional clutter of modern life.

We're also back with the 37th edition of the *Devi Awards*, celebrating women who inspire change. Meet the Devis in a special two-page spread.

Plus, all your regular favourites, right from angel readings and wellness to auto and gadgets, await your perusal.

Enjoy!

Edison Thomas
Editor, *Indulge*

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GET IN TOUCH

Send your queries and feedback to: The Editor, *Indulge*, 29, II Main Road, Ambattur Industrial Estate, Chennai-600058 or e-mail: indulge@newindianexpress.com; Ph: 23457642

Golden-hour frames

January 31 | Marina Beach

Capture the ethereal beauty of the Marina shoreline at dawn during this community photowalk. Whether you're a seasoned pro or a mobile-photography enthusiast, this session offers an opportunity to click your favourite frames across the shores. If you do not have a camera, then simply bring your own SD card to save your masterpieces. Free (registration required). Starts at 6 am. Meeting point at Light House.



Raw drama

January 31 | Kodambakkam

Step away from the screen and rediscover the unscripted magic of live theatre with *Kalakkki*, an immersive stage performance designed to evoke "the good old days." This bilingual production (Tamil and English) promises a high-energy blend of mischief, nostalgia, and emotions. ₹199. Starts at 5 pm. At IDAM - The Art & Cultural Space.



Muted chaos

January 30 | PVR

Experience a unique cinematic experiment as Vijay Sethupathi, Arvind Swamy, and Aditi Rao Hydari lead *Gandhi Talks*, an ambitious silent dark comedy. Set against a backdrop of financial desperation and a collapsing business empire, the narrative relies entirely on visual storytelling and a powerful score by AR Rahman to explore the ironies of modern life. *In theatres.*

Summer silhouettes

January 30 | RA Puram

Breathe easy in the breezy summer collection from Tilla, an Ahmedabad-based studio renowned for its fusion of traditional craft and modern minimalism. This three-day showcase features an array of tops, tunics, and kaftans in lightweight silk, cotton, and organza, all celebrating the intricate beauty of handmade Indian textiles. Till January 31. ₹4,000 onwards. 10.30 am to 7.30 pm. At The Amethyst Room, Chamiers Road.



CHART THE

w.e.e.k.
AHEAD

Handcrafted heritage

January 30 | Thiruvanniyur

Immerse yourself in a vibrant celebration of Indian artistry at *Kalaa Utsav*, a grand exhibition-cum-sale featuring everything from *Dhokra* art jewellery to organic pen *kalamkari*s. Sourced from master artisans across the country, the bazaar offers a unique chance to discover tribal embroidery from Sittilingi Valley, *moonj* baskets from Uttar Pradesh, and even varieties of flowering plants. Till February 8. 11 am to 9 pm. At CERC Campus Exhibition Ground.

Sufi narratives

January 31 | Alwarpet

Lose yourself in an evening of *ruhaniyat* as storyteller Laksh Maheshwari, popularly known as Single Handedly, decodes the timeless philosophies of Sufi legends with his special *Ishq Sufiyana*. Blending captivating storytelling with the resonant power of Qawwalis, the performance traverses the poetic worlds of Amir Khusrow and Bulleh Shah before diving into the tragic emotional depths of *Laila Majnu*. ₹699 onwards. 8 pm. At Medai - The Stage, Alwarpet.



Comedy night

February 1 | Chetpet

Prepare for a rhythmic rollercoaster as Manhar Seth brings his special, *Main Shayar Toh Nah!*, to the city. Manhar blends soul-stirring poetry with sharp observational comedy and navigates the messy, hilarious, and often poignant journey of love, heartbreak, and growing up. ₹499 onwards. 8 pm. At Sir Mutha Venkatasubba Rao Concert Hall.



Garment confluence

February 2 | ECR

Step into the future of fashion at *ADVAIT 7.0*, a three-day trade fair designed to bridge the gap between Indian manufacturers and global retailers. Hosted by Apparel Manufacturers of India (AMI), this mega zonal fair spans over 1,00,000 sq ft and showcases the latest collections from home-grown brands across Jaipur, Surat, and Mumbai. Till February 4. 9 am to 7 pm. At RK Convention Centre.

INDULGE

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 DEVIS OF CHENNAI**

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January 30
2026

6 pm

ITC Grand Chola,
 Chennai

Mallika Srinivasan

Chairman and Managing Director, TAFE Limited,
 will be presenting the awards



after dark



Keerthi and Shantanu Bhagyaraj



Paloma and Karun Raman



Ramya, Swetha, Mehndi, and Bhaviya



Raj

Saran

ALL ABOUT THE BUZZ

WITH ONE EYE on our vision boards and the other on our planners, it's safe to say that the year is off to a great start. Even the unexpected showers this week didn't quite manage to slow the city down. Umbrellas came out, plans stayed put, and people stepped out anyway, doing their thing with an almost cheerful defiance. Between rain-damp streets and busy cafés, there was a visible mix of fashion moments, beauty looks, skincare obsessions, and unapologetic shopping sprees. If



Hazeera

Ram Kumari



Sonam and Shweta

anything, the drizzle added texture to an already lively week, reminding us that momentum doesn't need perfect weather, just the right mood.

Minus Slimming Clinic, in Velachery, was launched with a glamorous, high-energy evening that brought together industry leaders, wellness enthusiasts and special guests. It was an immersive introduction to the clinic's AI-powered, non-invasive body transformation offerings. The inauguration saw actors

Shantanu Bhagyaraj and Keerthi Shantanu in attendance, adding star appeal to the celebration. Guests explored the elegant new space, interacted with experts, and gained insight into the brand's personalised approach to weight management. It was a milestone moment for Minus, reaffirming the brand's promise to deliver cutting-edge wellness experiences to the city.

It was a similar vibe at two more events, thoughtfully curated, that were all about beauty, self-care, and good vibes. The first was an intimate evening hosted by Shweta Mahtani at Elixify Clinics, small, cosy, and put together for a special group of women. The evening featured a face yoga session with Ananya Mukund, foot reflexology and easy conversations over wine and cheese. Guests also got personalised hair and skin consultations with Elixify's in-house doctors, making it equal parts pampering and practical.

The second was the Tira For You Sale at Palladium Chennai, a lively, feel-good beauty hangout. Think complimentary makeovers, Dyson hair analysis and blowouts, personalised skin consultations, exclusive gifts, and great deals. Not that we needed much convincing. It was a fun evening out where the girls got to catch up on the latest trends, restock their essentials, and compare notes on their favourite products.



where was i

PALOMA RAO

TV Host and Lifestyle Influencer, Paloma Rao gives you a ringside view to the biggest parties in town.

To good health

Shri Bone & Joint Clinic marked a new milestone with the launch of Shri Physio & Rehab, a rehabilitation and wellness centre in Adyar. The evening saw leading names from the medical fraternity and the city's social circuit come together to support the clinic's vision.



RJ Balaji



Sindhujha and Kutty Padmini

Divya

Ramya



Prashant and Shriram



Pugazh and Priya

Ranjani



Divya



Neeraj

Manikandan

after dark



BLACK-TIE ENERGY

Chennai's menswear destination B>More raised the style bar with the launch of Eclipse – A New Shade of Luxury, an exclusive wedding-wear collection for the modern groom. Housed in its sprawling 15,000 sq ft Nungambakkam flagship, the men's-only store continues to redefine fashion retail by blending global brands with India's leading designers.

A hi-tech soirée

Cecil Sundar, director of Data and AI at Microsoft, hosted an elegant evening for entrepreneurs and technopreneurs at the ITC Grand Chola, celebrating friendship and forward-thinking conversations. The evening unfolded over cocktails and dinner, with animated tech talk and meaningful exchanges. A carefully curated guest list of eminent entrepreneurs made the gathering both inspiring and insightful.

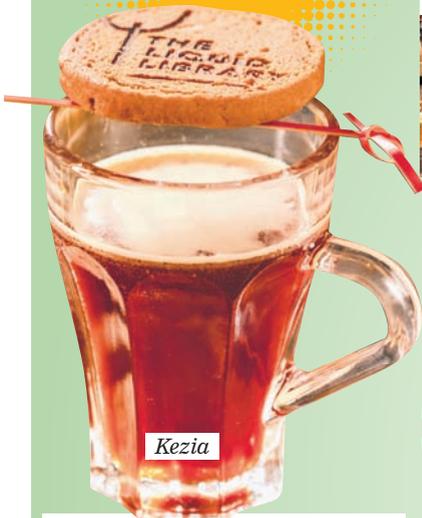


Glow debut

Nivioma Cosmetics marked its grand launch in the city with an elegant showcase attended by business collaborators, distributors, industry insiders, and fashion-forward guests. The evening offered a first look at the brand's skincare and personal care range, highlighting its clean formulations and thoughtful approach.

food
&
drink

taste notes



Kezia



Interiors

mixology

COCKTAIL CHRONICLES

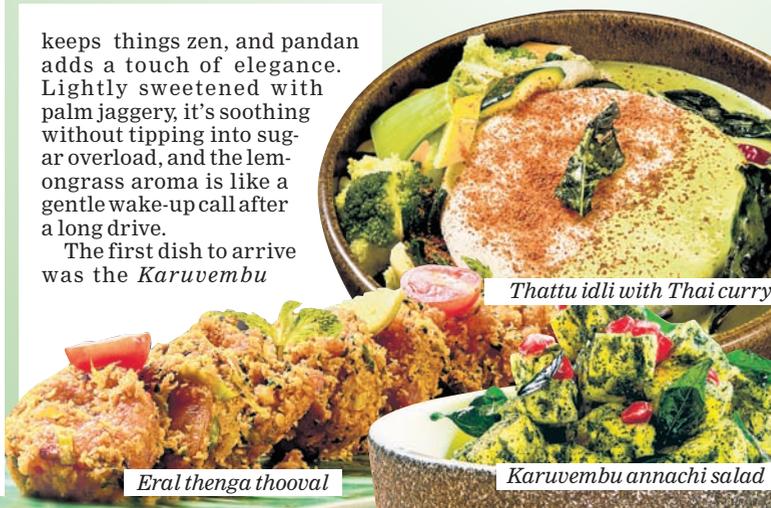
The new conceptual cocktail bar is a haven for those who love curated cocktails and delectable flavours

THE MOMENT YOU step into The Liquid Library at Four Points by Sheraton, Velachery, you are greeted by a shelf stacked with books because here, the plan is simple—sip your cocktails, leaf through some pages, and let the evening unwind at a leisurely pace. We settle into a spot with the perfect view of the city, ready to soak in the ambience. The conceptual cocktail bar, which was recently launched in the city, is perfect for all those who love a quiet evening after a hard day's grind, with some curated cocktails and savourous food for company.

Our evening began with the cocktail TLL-Powerhouse. Imagine a botanical orchestra in a glass where kaffir lime holds the fort, lemongrass

keeps things zen, and pandan adds a touch of elegance. Lightly sweetened with palm jaggery, it's soothing without tipping into sugar overload, and the lemongrass aroma is like a gentle wake-up call after a long drive.

The first dish to arrive was the *Karuvembu*



Thattu idli with Thai curry

Eral thenga thooval

Karuvembu annachi salad



Tori no Karaage



annachi salad, and the curry leaf-coated, spicy pineapple delivered a sharp, tantalising kick. The curry leaves added an unexpected depth, making it impossible to stop at just one bite. Next came the *Kalan paruppu vadai*—lentil patties in a contemporary shape, topped with southern mushroom mousse. Who would have thought humble *paruppu vadai* would go so haute couture?

Tori no karaage, Japanese fried chicken with kewpie mayo, followed. These bite-sized chicken pieces were crispy on the outside and tender and juicy within. Yet our favourite was *Eral thenga thooval*, a delicate mix of bay prawns, young coconut, pepper, and ginger. The shredded coconut added texture and aroma.

We are self-proclaimed javaphiles, and we couldn't resist trying the whisky-based Kezia, which was laced with roasted fennel, filter *kaapi*, jaggery syrup, and Madras butter biscuit. The whisky provided warmth, the coffee depth, and the fennel a

gentle sweetness that lingered. A must-try for the filter *kaapi* clan.

By the main course, we were nearly full, but the highly recommended *Thattu idli* with Thai curry proved irresistible. Soft, spongy *idli* with a subtle fermented tang soaks up the fragrant, creamy coconut curry, fresh herbs, and gentle chilli warmth perfectly. Who even thought *idli* would go the Thai way?

We washed it all down with the Virgin Bahama mama, a mocktail comprising homemade banana syrup, fresh cream, pineapple and orange juice, finished with a hint of cinnamon. Balanced with palm jaggery, it delivers a smooth, satisfying finish—a perfect conclusion to an evening where cocktails and culinary creativity seamlessly come together.

Meal for one:

₹1,500++ (with alcohol).
₹1,000++ (without alcohol).

11 am to 12 am.

At Four Points by Sheraton, Velachery.

—P Sangeetha

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TLL-Powerhouse

european



Interiors

Italy checks in

Italian charm meets Chennai with this newly opened restaurant

CHENNAI'S ITALIAN SCENE just got a little more exciting with Toscano launching its fourth outlet in Perungudi. We popped in to see what all the fuss was about and were immediately struck by its effortless European charm. Think golden, honeyed lighting paired with decorous and soothing earthy tones.

As we settled down on our seats, we were handed a long menu to choose from. Although it had many dishes that we wanted to try, we settled for the Soya croquettes and the Classic minestrone *zuppa* to start with.

Soya croquettes consisted of breaded and crisp-fried soya sticks, along with onion rings,

fries and sour cream. We felt that the crispy bread crumbs encased the soya flavour rightly here.

Next was the Classic minestrone *zuppa*, which was similar to a vegetable broth. Featuring mixed vegetables, red beans in tomato broth with pesto and parmesan, this was an interesting bowl of soup to have.

Harissa chicken, roasted bell peppers, garlic, ricotta and mozzarella cheese was a flavour that we didn't quite anticipate. This stuffed garlic bread came with cheesy melt-in-mouth insides that we loved from the very first bite.

To quench our thirst, we decided to have a mocktail from their beverage section, but in a hot way. We opted for their Turmeric maple hot toddy, which had refreshing flavours of apple juice, cinnamon, turmeric, maple syrup, and others.

We then moved to the sourdough pizzas. First up was the Ham & mushroom. These thin-crust

pizzas, topped with smoked ham, mushrooms, and cheese, were light yet satisfying—comforting enough to keep reaching for another slice without feeling weighed down. Meanwhile, the Toscano pesto chicken with bell peppers, onions, olives and boiled egg was a healthy version of pizza that you can possibly have without feeling guilty.

For the main plate, we chose the Classic surf and turf. With tiger prawns representing the surf and tenderloin representing the turf part, this dish was a beautiful blend of flavours. The prawns, grilled with lemon butter sauce was accompanied by tenderloin medallions in pepper sauce on the plate, which



Chicken di Toscano

also featured sauteed vegetables. Our dessert came in the form of *Affogato al caffè*, with coffee macaron sandwich, single blend espresso, vanilla ice cream, and nuts praline. This is a must-try for coffee lovers.

Meal for two: ₹1,600++.

11 am to 11 pm.

At Toscano, Brigade

World Trade Center,

Perungudi.

—Apurva P

apurva.p@newindianexpress.com

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



Turmeric maple hot toddy



Soya croquettes

THE GIRL WITH THE GOLDEN THREAD

Ik Kudi, which leans into shades favoured by today's brides, draws inspiration from timeless Indian traditions

LUDHIANA-BASED LUXURY couture label House of Shahana India has long been synonymous with heritage craftsmanship and contemporary expression. Known for its mastery over traditional Indian embroideries—*zardozi*, *dabka*, *resham*, and *nakshi*—the brand's creations bridge generations, transforming heirloom techniques into wearable art for the modern woman. Its latest collection, *Ik Kudi*, continues this legacy with quiet confidence and emotional depth.

Founded by designer Simrat Arora even before she met her husband and business partner Paul Arora, House of Shahana has evolved into a couture house where storytelling is central to design. "She is the designer, and I handle the business and operations," Paul shares, underscoring a partnership that allows creativity and structure to coexist seamlessly.

Ik Kudi—which translates to "one girl"—is deeply personal in spirit. "The collection is a tribute to cultural identity and feminine strength," Paul explains. "Every outfit reflects a dream from a young age—what every girl imagines for her special moments." Drawing inspiration from timeless Indian traditions, the collection blends intricate hand embroidery with modern silhouettes, creating striking pieces.

While House of Shahana remains rooted in bridal and

festive wear, *Ik Kudi* represents a more refined and deliberate evolution. "We worked on this collection for almost four to five months," Paul notes. "The focus was on incorporating intricate hand embroidery with contemporary silhouettes, so each piece feels luxurious yet wearable." The lineup includes bridal *lehengas*, structured fish-cut *lehengas*, elegant *anarkalis*, detailed *shararas* and *ghararas*, handcrafted *saris*, and statement Indo-western ensembles—each reflecting the house's signature meticulous detailing and rich textiles.

At the heart of the collection lies craftsmanship that demands patience and precision. "Our signature has always been *zardozi*, *dabka*, *resham*, and *nakshi* work—that's what makes our brand unique," says Paul. Bridal *lehengas* and heavily embroidered *shararas* often take months to complete, shaped by the hands of nearly 400 artisans working across workshops in Ludhiana, Kolkata, and Balia. "A dedicated team works on every piece to ensure quality and craftsmanship," he adds.

The brand is also known for its expertise with challenging textiles. "Tissue fabrics are especially difficult to work with," Paul admits, "but we've perfected the technique over the years. It allows us to apply heavy embroidery while maintaining flow and structure." This balance is evident in the collection's colour story, which leans into shades favoured by today's brides—baby pinks, soft pastels, and subtle neutrals—without losing a sense of occasion.

While select samples are available, customisation remains integral to the House of Shahana experience. "Most pieces are customisable," Paul shares. "It usually takes 60 to 90 days, depending on the design and detailing."

Prices start at ₹1,07,000. Available online.

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Exquisitely embroidered lehengas

Whispers of nature

Botanical prints, earthy textures, and breezy silhouettes evoke a sense of nostalgia in this collection

HOUSE OF MAYAH'S latest collection is a celebration of effortless silhouettes, and timeless design, perfect for the modern woman who loves comfort and style. The label is helmed by Deepali Mathur, founder and creative designer, whose journey spans fashion studies at NIFT Delhi and advanced training at Istituto Marangoni, Milan—a foundation that informs the collection's refined, contemporary aesthetic.

The lineup features fluid dresses, soft drapes, subtle layering, and hand-painted artistic prints that transition seamlessly from day to evening. Inspired by nature and nostalgia, each piece is crafted to offer comfort without compromising sophistication.

Deepali shares, "My journey has been a whirlwind of colour, art, and creativity. From NIFT Delhi to soaking up the fashion magic of Milan, I've always believed in creating fashion that is timeless and sparks joy. That's what House of Mayah is all about—blending nature's hues into modern silhouettes."

This season, the collection reads as a poetic expression of femininity. "Refined bohemian sensibilities—that's what I would call it," Deepali explains. "The collection is all about ease and elegance with breathable fabrics and artistic detailing. It's designed to feel expressive—celebrating individuality while remaining effortlessly wearable from day to evening."

Relaxed yet striking silhouettes define the range: fluid cuts, soft drapes, subtle layering, and statement prints. "The garments are designed to move seamlessly across occasions, offering comfort without compromising sophistication. Earthy tones and gentle hues enhance the calm, confident aesthetic, while con-

temporary shapes meet timeless appeal—allowing pieces to be styled, layered, and lived in over time," she adds.

Botanical prints, earthy textures, and silhouettes reminiscent of lazy summer days evoke a sense of nostalgia. "It's about crafting pieces that feel familiar yet fresh—a gentle nod to the past, reimagined for today," says Deepali. The designs are intentionally layered and transformable, allowing wearers to tweak their look from day to night with ease. Her styling advice? "Swap a linen jacket for a statement shawl, add some drama with accessories, and you're ready—wherever the day takes you."

Hand-painted and in-house prints distinguish the collection as statement-driven rather than trend-driven, affirming its ethos of conscious, intentional fashion. "From carefully selected breathable fabrics to thoughtfully constructed silhouettes, every garment is created with longevity, versatility, and emotional connection in mind," Deepali emphasises. "Rather than fleeting trends, the focus is on timeless pieces that empower women through comfort, self-expression, and ease—ensuring each design becomes a meaningful part of the wearer's everyday story."

Prices start at ₹4,000. Available online. —MV



Ensembles from the collection

BUILT TO FLOW

sculptural

Garima Dubey's creations are designed to complement the body's natural drape



Architectural detailing

Garima Dubey

FESTIVE FASHION IS often dominated by excess. However, GKD.EDIT takes a quieter, more deliberate route. The emerging occasionwear label approaches dressing as architecture in motion—where form, proportion, and restraint do the heavy lifting. Instead of leaning into predictable glamour, the brand edits it out, offering sculptural silhouettes that feel powerful, modern, and intentional.

Founded by Garima Dubey, GKD.EDIT was born from a clear gap in the market. "There was nothing offering quality occasionwear at an accessible price point," she says. "I wanted to create something that sits between expensive gowns and fast fashion—pieces that feel elevated but are still wearable."

Garima's journey into fashion wasn't conventional. Raised in an environment where design wasn't considered a viable career, she began in science before pursuing an MBA and spending a brief stint in the corporate world. "I wasn't happy," she admits. The turning point came during the pandemic, when she enrolled in a diploma programme at the London School of Design. Fashion, after all, had always been part of her life. "My grandmother and mother would make their own outfits using *gota* laces and traditional fabrics. Growing up around

that definitely shaped my interest in design."

Her first label, Gramacaria Designs, focused on Indian wear and gained quick traction online. GKD.EDIT, launched six months ago after over a year of development, marks a sharper, more global



evolution—one rooted in minimalism and structure.

The brand's design language is defined by tension: exaggerated pleats that feel structural rather than decorative, Swarovski accents used sparingly, and silhouettes that hold space instead of filling it. "The outfits are structured yet comfortable," Garima explains. "The femininity comes from the draping, not from heavy embroidery or loud details."

Minimalism, she believes, is not about doing less—it's about doing just enough. "An outfit should highlight a person's personality rather than overshadow it."

It's about presence, poise, and the way you walk in an outfit. "Even embellishments—crystals, stones, beads, and Japanese glass beads—are applied with restraint, used only to enhance the silhouette."

Inclusivity is also central to the brand's ethos. The brand offers sizes from XS to 3XL, along with custom sizing at no additional cost.

"What I charge for a small, I charge for a curvy woman as well," says Garima. Operating on a slow-fashion model allows the label to cater to diverse body types without compromise.

The brand's upcoming collection, *Moonlight Opulence*, continues this philosophy. Designed around the evening persona of women, the line explores elegance through sculpted forms and fluid fabrics. "It's grand, refined, and perfect for cocktail events," Garima shares. Satin takes centre stage, accented with subtle details like satin tassels, while the colour palette moves through deep blue, royal blue, black, emerald, and flashes of bright red.

Priced between ₹18,000 and ₹38,000. Available online.

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fluid

Soft power

A tribute to India's textile poetry, *Gulnaar* is an ode to handwoven *Chanderi*, and appliqué artistry

BORN FROM THE heart of Varanasi, EEDA blends the timeless heritage of *Benaras* fabrics with the innovative vision of contemporary design. EEDA, which translates to "praise" in the vernacular, embodies the brand's mission: to adorn women in attire that celebrates their individuality, strength, and grace.

EEDA's new collection, *Gulnaar*, is an ode to handwoven *Chanderi* and appliqué artistry. Rooted in the craft legacy of *Benaras* yet tailored for the woman of today, *Gulnaar* exudes all things modern in the way it treats



Aditi Shah

colour, cut and structure.

Each silhouette fluid, exuding effortless elegance—long kurtas paired with wide palazzos, overlay jackets, and statement skirts—all crafted in pure silk *Chanderi*, lined with soft *shantoon*, and finished with meticulous hand-appliqué detailing. The silhouettes are timeless and breathe tradition while remaining modern in design.

Founder Aditi Shah shares that the collection is inspired by the idea of blooming even in stillness. "Women build, nurture, heal, and rise quietly—and this collection translates that gentle strength.

The palette, the softness in silhouettes, and the motifs take cues from blooming florals to represent emotional expansion, renewal, and inner radiance," she says.

Aditi works primarily with *Banarasi* and *Chanderi* textiles because they "hold a rare duality—delicate in weave yet culturally deep, carrying the hand traditions of Banaras." Light, breathable, and poetic, the fabric is quietly powerful at its core. "It is just like women. To me, *Banarasi Chanderi* is quiet luxury—tradition without heaviness, softness without fragility. It drapes like a poem and mirrors the spirit of *Gulnaar*—celebrating women who bloom gently, yet powerfully," she adds.

The collection's delicate appliqué work has become a signature for the brand. Used to create dimensional floral forms and narrative textures, it brings depth to the surface. "Instead of flat embroidery,

appliqué lifts slightly away from the cloth—like petals in motion. It adds tactile realism, making the fabric feel alive, like a gentle garden moment frozen in time," explains Aditi.

Gulnaar is designed for the woman who

prefers statement softness—she doesn't need a loud standout. Aditi suggests styling the pieces with minimal jewellery, nude makeup, and one intentional highlight, whether bold earrings or striking heels. "Let the garment carry the story—everything else should feel like a subtle extension, not competition," she advises.

Looking ahead to 2026, Aditi notes that festive wardrobes are shifting toward breathable luxury—pieces that photograph beautifully yet feel effortless from *puja* to dinner to social gatherings. "*Gulnaar* fits that evolution perfectly—contemporary Indian wear that is rooted, soulful, meaningful, and extremely wearable," she adds.

Priced at ₹18,500. Available online.

—MV



Ensembles with delicate appliqué work

jewellery

buy

sentimental

Each design in the *Floral Collection* is conceived as a wearable keepsake

FLOWERING BONDS

AT MIJA, JEWELLERY HAS always been more than ornament—it is memory made tangible. With the launch of its *Floral Collection*, the brand turns inward, offering a tender, thoughtful tribute to the women who quietly shape our lives: grandmothers, mothers, and daughters. This is not a collection about spectacle but about sentiment—about the understated strength that lives in lineage, love, and continuity.

For Kushal Shah, founder and designer at MIJA, the inspiration was deeply personal. “The *Floral Collection* was inspired by the women who shape our lives across generations,” he shares. “Each piece is a tribute to their quiet strength, enduring kindness, and inherited wisdom.” Flowers, he felt, carried the emotional duality he wanted to express—“delicate yet powerful, fleeting yet unforgettable.” In their transient beauty, they mirrored the way memories live on, long after moments pass.

The designs in the collection are conceived as a wearable keepsake, imbued with intimacy rather than excess. “Every piece is designed to feel personal, almost heirloom-like,” says Kushal. The floral forms are not merely decorative; they are vessels of meaning. “They represent memories, values, and love passed down through generations. When worn,

they become keepsakes of connection—carrying stories that feel intimate and timeless.”

The relationship between grandmother, mother, and daughter is central to the collection’s emotional core. Rather than treating these roles separately, MIJA views them as part of an unbroken continuum. “Strength may begin with a grandmother, kindness with a mother, and hope with a daughter,” Kushal reflects, “but together they form a continuous bond.” The jewellery is designed to move through time—to

be worn, gifted, and eventually passed on, mirroring the way love itself evolves and endures.

Kushal’s creative process began not with sketches, but with feeling. “We started with emotion before design,” he explains, considering what love, resilience, and wisdom might look like in form. From there, these emotions were translated into organic, fluid floral silhouettes. “We wanted the pieces to feel alive, not ornamental,” he adds. “Every curve and petal was designed with intention, allowing the story to live quietly within the piece.”

That sense of quiet storytelling is further amplified through materiality and craft. Soft sculptural detailing, subtle textures, and balanced proportions lend the jewellery warmth and depth. “The goal was to evoke emotion,” says Kushal, “to ensure the pieces feel meaningful and deeply personal rather than purely decorative.”

Prices start at ₹31,000. Available online.

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Delicate statements



influence

K-crush

After K-dramas, K-reels, K-beauty, and K-food, here is a K-jewellery collection



Playful, youthful and lightweight

IN A MOMENT when Korean culture has seamlessly threaded itself into everyday Indian life—from late-night K-dramas and K-pop playlists to beauty routines and fashion cues—Kisna enters the conversation with a quietly confident first. The brand’s newest limited-edition 14kt capsule, *K_miin*, marks a thoughtful foray into Korean-inspired fine jewellery, translating the global K-wave into something intimate and wearable.

For Trisha Paul, head of merchandising at Kisna, the idea emerged from close cultural observation. “I’ve observed how strongly Korean culture has started resonating with audiences in India—whether it’s K-dramas, K-reels, K-beauty, K-food, or even K-stories,” she says. “With this growing influence, it felt like the right moment to introduce K-jewellery as well.” The name itself carries intent: K for Korean, and *miin*, meaning “beautiful lady” in Korean—an

elegant nod to the collection’s muse.

Rather than leaning into surface-level trends, *K_miin* approaches Korean culture through symbolism and softness. The capsule brings together motifs closely associated with K-fashion and K-pop—playful yet emotionally expressive forms that feel instantly familiar to fans. “From delicate, expressive elements to playful forms, each design reflects themes loved by Korean audiences,” Trisha explains. “The idea was to create jewellery that truly feels rooted in Korean aesthetics.”

At the heart of the col-

lection are signature motifs that carry cultural storytelling: the finger-heart *sarang*, Korean fans, bows, butterflies, and pearl beads. “Each motif was chosen for its strong cultural association,” says Trisha. “They act as the signature elements of the capsule and add that instantly recognisable Korean charm to every piece.” Rendered in diamonds and 14kt gold, the designs remain clean and minimal, allowing the motifs to speak without excess.

What sets *K_miin* apart within Kisna’s portfolio—and the Indian jewellery landscape at large—is its

cultural specificity. “It’s one of India’s first Korean-inspired jewellery collections,” Trisha notes. “As far as my understanding goes, no other brand has introduced a capsule in this space yet.” That sense of newness is matched by an aesthetic lightness drawn directly from Korean fashion. The pieces are intentionally lightweight, youthful, and expressive—designed for those who prefer subtle elegance with a playful edge.

Accessibility remains central to the launch. The capsule is available online, across Kisna kiosks, and through in-store ordering, ensuring fans can engage with the collection in the way they prefer. For first-time buyers, Trisha suggests beginning with the finger-heart designs or the Korean fan motifs, along with a distinctive pair of stick-pattern earrings that have already emerged as favourites.

Prices start at ₹20,000. Available online.

—MV

home
décor

artistic

statement

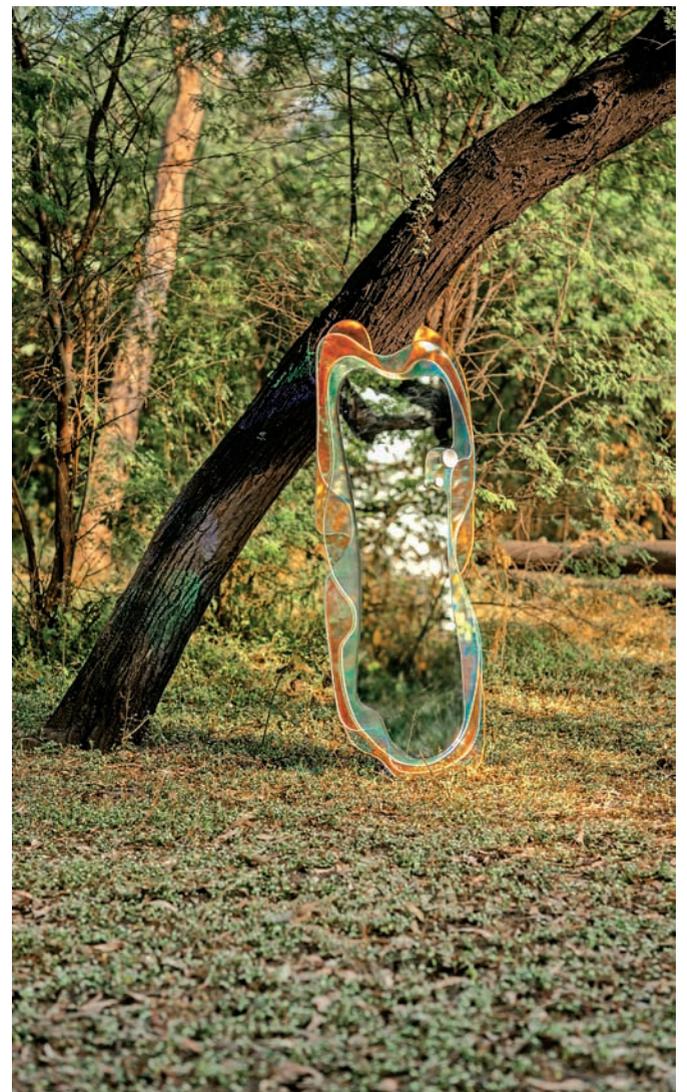
OBJECTS OF DESIRE

When design tells a better story than words ever could

Great interiors aren't assembled—they're narrated. Each object is a character, each material a plot twist, and every silhouette adds meaning to the space it inhabits. From sculptural furniture to poetic lighting and art-led accents, these pieces blur the line between function and feeling. Think of them as conversation starters—crafted to be lived with, admired, and remembered. Here's our curated edit of one-off designs that transform houses into layered, living stories.

Spectrum of surprise

Never the same twice, Prismatic by Design Ni Dukhaan lives up to its name. Created using dichroic film layered on acrylic and mirror, this piece shifts colour with light, movement, and perspective. It's design as discovery—an object that refuses to be static and rewards curiosity with endless variation.



Dark matter

Bold yet balanced, Lagori Black Floor Lamp by Yaavi explores contrast through black-and-white double-cast glass and smoky finishes. A frosted sphere softens the composition, while black-finished metal gives it architectural strength. Equal parts structure and story.



Head in the clouds

Inspired by ever-shifting skies, Sans Souci's Clouds Lighting Collection floats effortlessly between art and illumination. Handcrafted Czech glass with iridescent nanocoating diffuses light in soft layers—sunset warmth, moonlit calm, atmospheric glow. Whether installed solo or as a constellation, these lights lend interiors an airy, meditative quality.



Table talk

Italian finesse meets architectural intrigue in the Manfred Table by Longhi for Sources Unlimited. Designed by Giuseppe Ippolito, its beehive-inspired, laser-cut base is both sculptural and precise—a signature of Longhi's Loveluxe Collection. With options in marble or wood and a discreet lazy Susan at its heart, this table is made for elegant dinners and design-forward living alike.



Curtain call

Texture takes centre stage in The Ball Tassel Curtain by Window Passions. A ribbed weave creates vertical rhythm, while hand-finished ball tassels cascade gently, adding artisanal flair. Subtle, sculptural, and quietly opulent, it frames windows with couture-level finesse.





Blown away
Crystal takes a poetic pause in *Vent Léger Amber Rose* by Daum, curated by Opulin. Crafted using Daum's legendary *pâte de verre* technique, this sculptural artwork captures the movement of a gentle breeze through layered amber and rose hues. Understated yet emotive, it anchors a space with quiet luxury and timeless artistry.



Axis of elegance
A nod to modern design, *The Axis Side Table* by Obeetee Carpets & Home balances old-world charm with contemporary restraint. Crafted from teak wood with a walnut finish and topped with white Carrara marble, its pendulum-like proportions and golden emblem make it a timeless companion beside a lounge chair or bed.

Screen presence

Designed by Daniele Lo Scalzo Moscheri, the *Muse Screen* by Ravoh is functional art at its most refined. Crafted from metal, veneer, leather, and glass, it's fully customisable—transforming spatial division into an opportunity for personal expression and material storytelling.



All that glitters (and gathers)

Like molten metal caught mid-thought, the *Wax & Wane* sculpture by Rabyana Design by Abhaye and Radhika Gupta feels both fluid and deliberate. Crafted from aluminium finished in gold and black nickel plating, its droplet-like form plays with contrast—light against depth, shine against shadow. A quiet showstopper for consoles or curated shelves, it brings sculptural drama without demanding attention.



A reflection on light

Inspired by fragile marine ecosystems, *Coral Echoes Table Lamp* by Oorjaa is lighting with a conscience. Handcrafted banana fibre paper forms echo coral structures, while optical fibres create bioluminescent glows across its surface. Warm and cool light interplay to evoke an underwater calm—beautiful, haunting, and deeply reflective of nature's vulnerability.

Sit happens—in style

Whimsy meets polish in Stax Living's *Elina Accent Chair*, a statement accent chair that knows how to have fun without losing its composure. Upholstered in textured white fabric with contrasting trims, its floating seat and subtly flared legs lend visual lightness, while a brushed metal base anchors it firmly in luxury territory. Designed to turn heads, this is seating with personality.



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'CINEMA IS MY LIFELINE'

PUNE WITNESSED A defining fashion moment as Neeta Lulla returned to the city with a solo fashion showcase after many years. The evening unfolded with a sense of discipline and depth—one shaped by decades of lived design experience rather than spectacle alone.

For Neeta Lulla—the four-time National Award-winning couturier and costume designer whose four-decade career spans over 400 films, including iconic titles such as *Devdas*, *Taal*, and *Jodhaa Akbar*—fashion has never been about immediacy or excess. It has always been about intention. Rooted in cinematic storytelling and honed through over four decades of couture practice, her work is guided by precision, emotional intelligence, and an unwavering respect for craft. Each collection carries a belief that clothing must hold meaning, memory, and longevity—serving the woman who wears it, rather than the moment in which it is seen.

Having dressed some of Indian cinema's most iconic women, Neeta brings the same narrative to this collection. Structure leads the conversation with architectural drapes anchored by strong shoulders and fluid lines. The palette settles into jewel tones, softened metallics, and grounded neutrals.

Each piece unfolds like character development—layered, purposeful, and designed to endure beyond seasons.

When we sat down for an exclusive conversation ahead of the show, what emerged was not just the force of a legendary designer but the warmth of a woman who puts you instantly at ease. She remembers names. There is no distance, no performative grandeur—despite having dressed some of the biggest names in Indian cinema.

Neeta Lulla speaks with the same ease about her three lifelong passions: designing for film, creating couture for women who value craft, and teaching the next generation of designers. Equally telling is her grounding ritual—returning home to become, as she says, “just a wife,” attentive to her husband and devoted to her grandchildren.

It is this quality—cinematic vision paired with domestic grace—that makes Neeta Lulla singular. A woman of immense scale, anchored by quiet humility.

Over to the short interview she graciously squeezed in before her Pune showcase.

Four decades into her remarkable journey, couturier and costume designer Neeta Lulla's creative ascent continues—affirmed by the quiet authority of her recent solo fashion showcase. Neeta talks to us about her three lifelong passions: designing for films, creating couture for women who value craft, and teaching the next generation of designers

By Manu Vipin

“**Fashion should serve the person wearing it, not just the occasion. When a woman feels comfortable and confident, it elevates the entire event. That belief is at the core of this collection**”



Neeta Lulla

This is your fashion showcase in Pune after many years. What made the city feel right for this edit?
I have a strong client base in Pune, especially bridal clients. Many of them travel to Mumbai for their outfits, particularly for the *Nauvari sari* (the iconic Maharashtrian iteration of the traditional *sari*), which I specialise in. Over the years, they kept asking, “Why don't you come to Pune?” This showcase also felt like a great synergy with INIFD Fashion School, and after a long time, I wanted to do a solo presentation where all my clients could come together and be part of the experience.

How is a standalone fashion showcase different from working in cinema?
I've worked in films and mainstream couture for over 40 years. This is a very different synergy because here I'm working directly with clients—women who want to look special for weddings or important occasions.

Especially in couture, it's all about fit, finish, fabric, and detailing. This show has a similar energy—cinema meets fashion. Since I come from Bollywood and have worked on so many films, many interpretations of the *Nauvari sari* come from my cinematic work.

The clothes are high fashion, but the presentation is larger than life—dynamic and dramatic, much like what you see on screen.

You often say fashion should serve the woman, not the moment. How does that reflect in this collection?
Fashion should serve the person wearing it, not just the occasion. When a woman feels comfortable and confident, it elevates the entire event. That belief is at the core of this collection.

Your work today feels more restrained and intentional. Has restraint become a creative strength?
Restraint has come naturally over time. I move from one project to another because the brand must keep evolving and speaking through its products. But when you're creating a special piece for a client, you collaborate with many people—it's not about intentional restraint, it's restraint by default.

I'm a solo brand without investor backing, by choice. While the brand has grown organically and carries a certain enigma, scaling up brings a different kind of structure and responsibility.

Rapid fire

- Morning ritual you never skip...**
Meditation at 5 am
- One fabric that feels like home...**
Khadi
- Everyday uniform...**
Black—black top, blue jeans, white shirt
- Jewellery over trends...**
Solitaires
- Heels or flats...**
Heels
- Colour you turn to for strength...**
Black
- Designing with music or silence...**
With everything on—TV, lights, noise
- Habit that keeps you grounded...**
Going home, being with family and grandchildren
- Solitude or conversation...**
Conversation
- Luxury today, in one word...**
Comfort

Does your background in cinema influence how you design for real women?
Absolutely. Whether it's cinema or bridal couture, you work with a persona. You understand the woman's character, her likes, dislikes, how she carries herself. In films, you build a character from a script; with clients, you build it through conversation.

Your latest collection balances structure with fluidity. Was that challenging?
Not really. It's a philosophy I've worked with for years. Fashion is cyclical, and this collection revisits structured silhouettes with flow, romance, and lace—techniques we've used before, but reinterpreted with a fresh perspective.

Do these design choices reflect the women of today?
Very much so. Today's women want structure, comfort, and sustainability. The garments may look dramatic on the hanger, but when worn, they feel effortless—almost like a second skin.

You've dressed some of Indian cinema's most iconic women. How has your idea of power dressing evolved?
Power dressing today is no longer a formula. It reflects women who are genuinely in positions of power. It's about confidence, comfort, and authenticity rather than just appearance.

What excites you about collaborating with fashion students and institutions?
I've been teaching fashion for 38 years. I believe in dialogue—understanding students' passions, fears, and dreams. I learn as much from them as they learn from me. Understanding Gen Z is essential; they are future clients and collaborators.

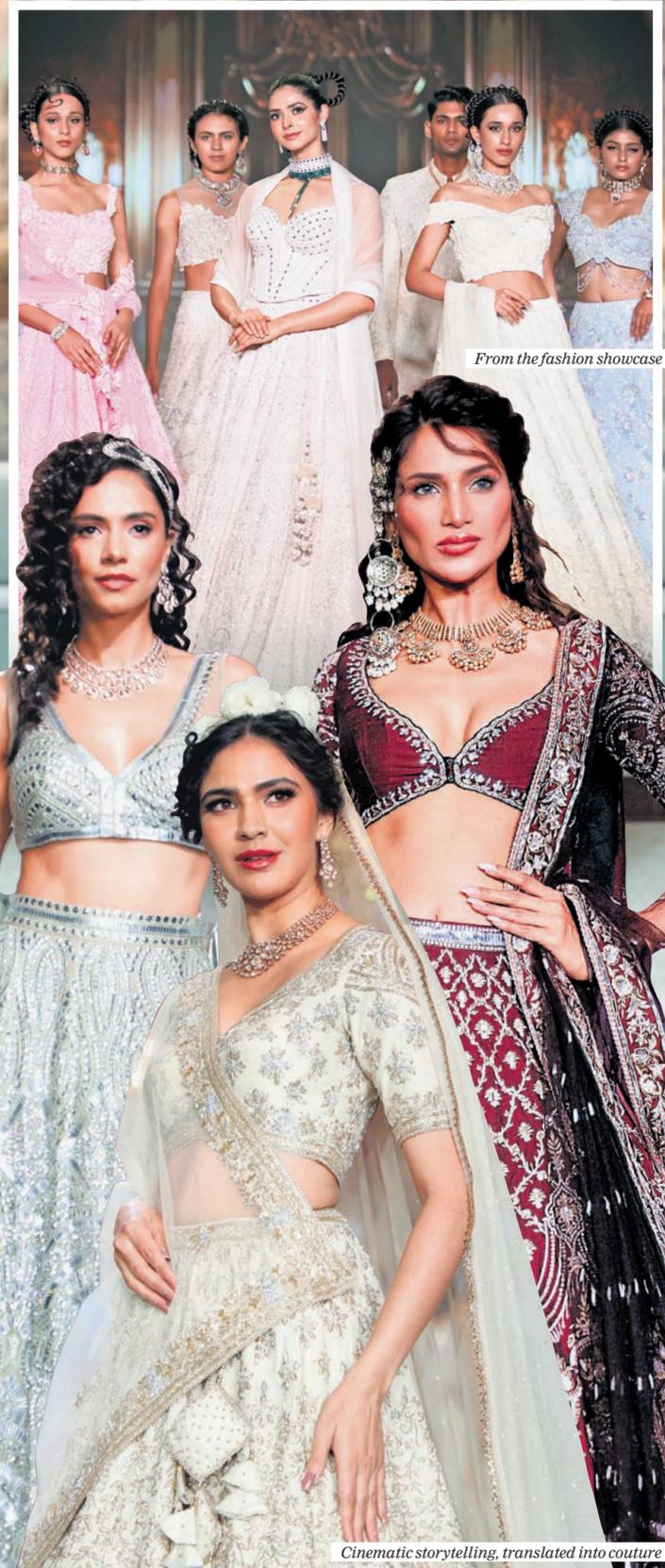
Do you prefer cinema's fast pace or fashion's quieter rhythm today?
I enjoy speed and spectacle. I work across cinema, couture, and teaching. If I don't have an 18-hour workday, I feel lost.

Are you currently working on film projects?
I've just completed a project with Andhra Pradesh's Deputy Chief Minister, Pawan Kalyan, and I'm in talks for two more films. Cinema is my lifeline.

If this fashion showcase were a film, what genre would it be?
Mainstream fashion with a strong Bollywood influence—that's who I am.

Why did you choose Vaani Kapoor as the showstopper?
I wanted to end the show with something spectacular and unconventional. Vaani felt like the perfect fit for that vision.

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From the fashion showcase

Cinematic storytelling, translated into couture

special

KNOW YOUR DEVI



Meet the Devis whose courage and commitment have shaped change, as Chennai gathers today to celebrate women who lead from the front

CHENNAI IS ALL set for an evening that celebrates the unstoppable force of women. The city will host the 37th edition of the *Devi Awards* today at ITC Grand Chola celebrating trailblazers who lead with courage, compassion, and conviction. The evening will shine the spotlight on 12 remarkable women from Tamil Nadu who have rewritten the rules across fields.

This year's inspiring line-up features environmentalist Jayshree Vencatesan, theatre practitioner Aysha Rau, museologist Deborah Thiagarajan, paediatrician Dr Soumya Swaminathan, psychiatrist Dr Thara Srinivasan (SCARF), badminton paralympian Thulasimathi Murugesan, staff nurse G Santhi (ICH), auto driver Mohana Sundari, mountaineer Muthamilselvi Narayanan, actor Suhasini, designer Vino Supraja, and social activist Mary Susanna Turcotte — a powerful mix of voices, visions, and victories. Mallika Srinivasan, chairman and managing director of TAFE Limited, a changemaker in her own right, will present the awards.

Launched in December 2014, the *Devi Awards* have grown into one of India's most respected platforms honouring women who dare to dream big and challenge the status quo. With 35+ editions across the country and 350+ women honoured over the years, the awards stand as a symbol of resilience, progress, and possibility.

The Presenting Partner is Adani, Celebration Partner is Radico, Luxury Mobility Partner is Volvo, Jewellery Partner is Lalithaa Jewellery Mart Limited, Exchange Partner is NSE, Associate Partners are Sundari Silks, India Circus, and Aachi, Knowledge Partners are Crescent Institute of Science and Technology, MOP Vaishnav College for Women, and King Makers IAS Academy and Content Partner is *Indulge*. Introducing the Devis, women whose work speaks louder than words.



Culturally connected Deborah Thiagarajan, museologist

Deborah Thiagarajan founded and conceptualised the DakshinaChitra Museum for the preservation and promotion of the arts, crafts, folk performing arts, and lifestyles of the five South Indian states in December 1996. She is the founder and president of the Madras Craft Foundation and DakshinaChitra Heritage Museum and a former director of the museum. Deborah was also the convener of INTACH Tamil Nadu from 1984 to 1998. She has written many articles on museology and museum education. She has authored or been the editor of all the Madras Craft Foundation's publications, including her latest book, *Rural Creative: Arts, Architectural craft, and Folk Performing Arts of Karnataka*.



Championing for a healthy world Dr Soumya Swaminathan, paediatrician

Dr Soumya Swaminathan is a globally recognised paediatrician and public health scientist with over four decades of experience in clinical care, research, and health policy. She served as the World Health Organization's first Chief Scientist, where she played a pivotal role during the COVID-19 pandemic by coordinating global scientific efforts and helping establish COVAX to ensure equitable vaccine access for low- and middle-income countries. Formerly Director General of the Indian Council of Medical Research, she is currently Chairperson of the M S Swaminathan Research Foundation and Principal Advisor to India's National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme. Her work continues to shape global health, climate resilience, and nutrition security.

Legend behind the lens Suhasini Maniratnam, actor/filmmaker

Suhasini Maniratnam's life is a tapestry woven with art, intellect and compassion. A pioneering presence in Indian cinema, she has spent over four decades shaping stories not only in front of the camera, but behind it — as cinematographer, writer, director, producer, and mentor. The first woman cinematographer to graduate from South India, she went on to become one of the most respected actors across Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada cinema, with over 350 films that reflect emotional depth and fearless choice. Beyond cinema, Suhasini's journey has been guided by empathy. Through television, theatre and digital platforms, she has created spaces for women's voices and untold stories. Her Naam Foundation, dedicated to empowering single women, stands as a living extension of her belief in dignity, solidarity and second chances. A former Honorary Consul and a cultural ambassador, she continues to build institutions, nurture young talent and serve society with humility.



Little efforts, major impact Aysha Rau, founder, The Little Theatre

Aysha Rau's pantomimes have a separate fan base in Chennai. This theatre practitioner, playwright, and producer with over 34 years of experience in children's theatre, children's literature and puppetry founded The Little Theatre in 1991 to provide creative training for children. It was later registered as a trust to support underprivileged students through education and the arts. In 2010, she pioneered toddler theatre in Chennai and introduced baby theatre in 2020, expanding arts-based learning to children as young as six months. She has also begun developing theatre strategies for children and young adults on the autistic spectrum. Aysha is the author of four children's books and has written extensively on marine life for children's publications. Over the years, the trust has introduced thousands of hospitalised children to creative therapy and clowning, and brought international productions from across Asia and Europe to young audiences in Chennai through *The Little Festival*.



special

A mental health pioneer Dr Thara Srinivasan, psychiatrist

A psychiatrist by training, Dr Thara is the co-founder and vice chairman of SCARF (Schizophrenia Research Foundation), an NGO in Chennai where she served as its director for 23 years. After her PhD on disability in schizophrenia, she lobbied hard for the inclusion of psychiatric disability in the Persons with Disabilities Act 1996. This was then included as the seventh disability. She developed IDEAS, a measuring tool to assess mental disability, which was recognised by the Government of India. She initiated several community-based programmes. She was on the Advisory Committee to the Director General of the World Health Organization, Geneva. She was the first Indian to win an award from the Schizophrenia International Research Society (SIRS) for research in clinical and community psychiatry in 2021. In March 2022, she received the *Naari Shakti Puraskar* award from the President of India.



Protector of the wetlands Jayshree Vencatesan, environmentalist

The first Indian to receive the prestigious *Ramsar Wetland Conservation* award for 'Wetland Wise Use' in 2025, Jayshree Vencatesan is an environmental scientist and wetland conservationist. Two decades before she won this award, she cofounded the conservation group Care Earth Trust in 2000. Over the years, she has worked tirelessly to highlight the ecological significance of wetlands and the challenges they face. What began as a personal mission and a relentless drive has grown into a nationwide effort to protect India's marshlands. She was one of the first to document the Pallikaranai Marsh in Chennai, once dismissed as a wasteland, bringing to light its critical role in flood mitigation and biodiversity. Beyond Chennai, she has applied her science-based model to restore 44 different wetlands across Tamil Nadu, many of which are now designated Ramsar sites. For Jayshree, change isn't about quick wins; it's about persistence, often measured in decades, to ensure a lasting impact.



Hands that heal G Santhi, staff nurse, ICH

Ganapathy Santhi, a nursing superintendent Gr-II at IOG & Hospital for Women and Children, MMC, Egmore, Chennai, has a career spanning over 35 years. Having grown in ranks, she is adept at handling sick newborn babies. Santhi has been instrumental in establishing the Human Milk Bank (HMB) at the Institute of Child Health and Hospital for Children, Egmore, in 2014, a first in Tamil Nadu. She is a faculty member for the mentoring sessions for the FBNC, SNCU doctors and nurses in various states. For her exemplary work, Santhi has received several awards, including the National Florence Nightingale Award 2022 from the President of India in June 2023. Additionally, she has also been felicitated by the Trained Nurses Association of India and the Indian Nursing Council.



A mission rooted in care Mary Susanna Turcotte, educator/social activist

Wanting to spend retirement as a service to fellow mankind, Mary Susanna Turcotte, an educator whose life's work has been rooted in early childhood care and community development, moved to India in 2006 with her late husband. Beginning with tsunami rehabilitation work in villages south of Chennai, their experiences led to the founding of a non-profit trust and later Mountain View Nursery and Primary School in Madurai, created to support vulnerable and differently abled children. Today, Susanna meticulously continues to expand educational access and community awareness programmes through Relief Projects India. What was once a shared mission with her husband is now a lived reality.

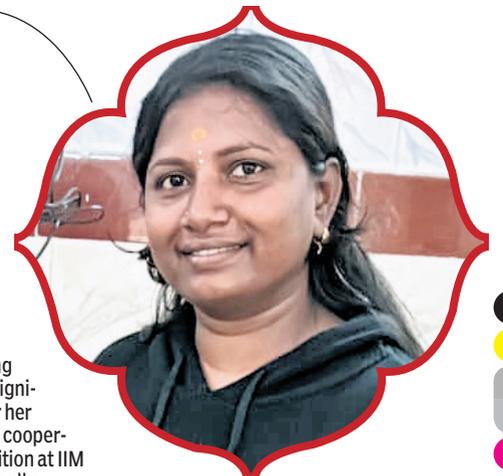


Shuttle and shine Thulasimathi Murugesan, Badminton paralympian

Thulasimathi Murugesan is a fourth-year veterinary medicine student at the Government Veterinary College and Research Institute, Namakkal. Trained by her father at the SDAT Government Stadium in Kanchipuram for the past 13 years, Thulasimathi has been a National Badminton Champion, competing alongside able-bodied athletes from Classes 9 to 12. Nationally ranked world No 1 in singles and mixed doubles, she is also ranked world No 1 in singles, world No 2 in doubles, and world No 3 in mixed doubles internationally. In January 2025, Thulasimathi was conferred the *Arjuna Award* by the President of India and received the *Kalpana Chawla Award for Courage and Daring Enterprise* from the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. She is also the first Indian woman shuttler to reach the finals and win a silver medal at the Paris Paralympics 2024, among other accolades.

Driving a revolution Mohana Sundari, auto driver

Mohana Sundari is a pioneering auto driver and the president of Veera Pengal Munnetra Sangam (VPMS), a collective of women auto drivers in Chennai. Challenging gender barriers in a male-dominated profession, she has emerged as a strong leader advocating financial independence, safety, and dignity for women in urban mobility. Under her leadership, VPMS was registered as a cooperative and won the Co-op 2024 competition at IIM Kozhikode. Featured in the internationally acclaimed documentary *Auto Queens*, Mohana has received multiple national awards for driving gender equality and empowering women through collective action and grassroots leadership.



Scaling heights Muthamilselvi Narayanan, mountaineer

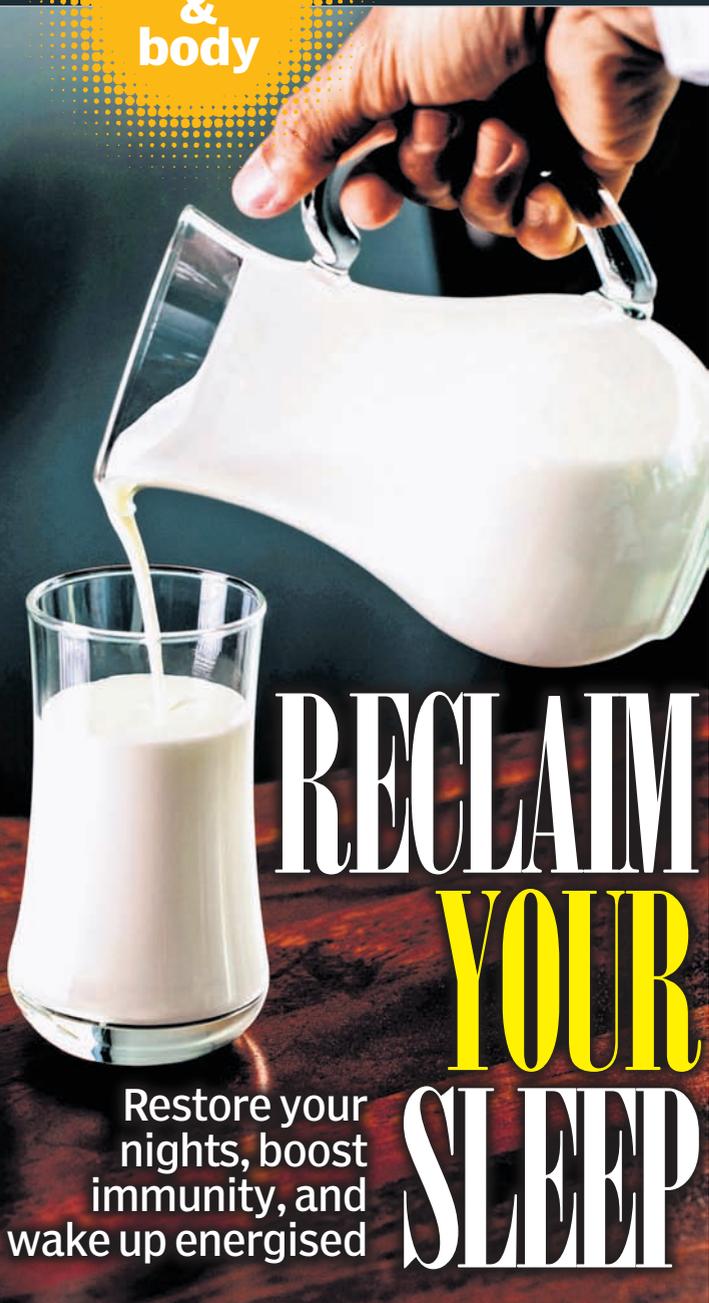
Muthamilselvi Narayanan's life reads like a summit-to-summit chronicle. The first Tamil woman to conquer Mount Everest, she has transformed personal ambition into a larger statement on women's strength and resilience. Her journey across the highest peaks of the world's seven continents places her among India's most inspiring mountaineers and pioneers in adventure sports. Beyond mountaineering, she is a powerful advocate for women's capabilities. Through daring feats such as blindfolded mountain descents, symbolic archery-on-horseback tribute to Rani Velu Nachiyar, and awareness initiatives spotlighting women's talents, she has redefined how society perceives courage, capability and possibility. Her achievements have been recognised with several prestigious honours, including the *Kalpana Chawla Award*, *Singappen Award*, *Princess of the Himalayas* and *Shakti Awards*. An author and motivational speaker, she has documented her experiences in the book, *Oru Vetriyin Utchi*. Today, she continues to inspire students and young women to embrace challenges and aim confidently for their own summits.



Designs of sustainability Vino Supraja, sustainable fashion designer

Vino Supraja Audikesavalu is the founder of the ethical fashion label Vino Supraja, and her work fuses heritage, art, and ethics. With a global presence in the UAE, Singapore, and India, it is known for conscious couture and close collaboration with grassroots artisan communities. Her debut collection walked at *Shanghai Fashion Week*, and has since appeared at *Brooklyn Fashion Week* and *New York Fashion Week*. In 2023, she presented *Purisai* at London Fashion Week, featuring an authentic *Therukoothu* performance. In 2025, she returned to *London Fashion Week* with her *Bhavani Jamakkalam* collection. She is the author of *What is Sustainable Fashion: An Antidote to Fashion Pollution* and host of the *Via Vino* podcast. She has addressed the British Parliament on garment workers' rights, was awarded the *Global Sustainable Fashion Trailblazer Award* by the UK, and was felicitated by the Governor of Tamil Nadu for her contribution to craft and culture.

mind & body



RECLAIM YOUR SLEEP

Restore your nights, boost immunity, and wake up energised

I see many people glued to their phones or TVs way past bedtime, doom-scrolling until their eyes burn. But is it okay to trade sleep for one more episode or news update? Nope, not when it strains your eyes and body, especially if you're reaming to boost your immunity against whatever life throws next. Good news: A solid night's sleep is your secret weapon for staying strong and healthy. It helps your body relax, detox, heal, fight off bugs, and even manage weight. Skip it, and stress skyrockets, messing with everything from your mood to your defences. The culprit here is disrupted hormones like cortisol (the stress king) and melatonin (your sleep superhero).

Melatonin, made in your brain's pineal gland, kicks in at night to regulate your body's internal clock for deep, restorative sleep. It's also an antioxidant powerhouse that protects your cells from damage. But here's the catch: your body only pumps it out in darkness, after sunset. During the day, sunlight shuts it down, which is why staring at bright screens (phones, laptops, TVs) late at night is a total buzzkill. That blue light they emit mimics daylight, tricking your brain into thinking it's noon, slashing melatonin levels, and wrecking your sleep cycle. This further results in tossing and turning at night, plus less healing time for your body. And why am I so obsessed over sleep?

That's because it's your immunity's best friend. Skimping on sleep weakens your defences, and several studies show it drops T-cells (your virus-fighting pros) and ramps up inflammatory stuff like cytokines, making you more prone to colds, flu, or worse. Chronic sleep loss spikes C-reactive protein (CRP), fuelling inflammation and leaving you wiped out. Aim for a good quality, deep, uninterrupted sleep cycle every night, where quality matters hugely, but hitting that quantity sets the foundation for feeling unstoppable.



It is time to flip the script and prioritise sleep for a healthier you. Start tonight, and your body will thank you! Here's how to make it happen:

▪ **Screen-free wind-down:** Power off gadgets an hour before bed and that blue light sabotage will be gone. Keep the room mildly lit and read a book or chat with loved ones. You'll feel melatonin flowing naturally, easing you into dreamland. Try it once, and you'll crave that calm; commit to it for a week and watch your energy soar.

▪ **Create a sleep sanctuary:** Make your room pitch-black when sleeping, with curtains drawn and no sneaky lights. Add soft, soothing music like gentle rain sounds or lullabies. It's like a cosy hug for your brain, signalling "time to rest". Do this and you'll slip into deeper sleep faster, waking refreshed and ready to tackle the day.

▪ **Breathe your way to bliss:** In a dark room, lie down and try left-nostril breathing: close your right nostril, inhale deeply through the left for four counts, and exhale for eight. It activates the cooling centre of the

body, melts stress, lowers cortisol, and quiets racing thoughts. Just 5-10 minutes pre-bed can transform restless nights into peaceful ones.

▪ **Nutmeg nightcap:** Stir a pinch of nutmeg powder into warm A2 milk, almond milk, chamomile tea, or water, and sip it 30 minutes before lights out (skip if allergic). This age-old trick relaxes nerves for sounder sleep. Make it your ritual—it's simple, tasty, and a small step toward building that strong immune shield.

You deserve nights that recharge you, not drain you. Start with one tip tonight and build from there. Better sleep means a tougher immune system, less stress, and more joy. Let's make healthy sleep your new normal!



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)

Legal battles will be resolved in your favour. Those fighting for justice can breathe a sigh of relief. Trust in your visions and your cause, and release unnecessary worries about the future. Focus on the outcome you desire. Let go of regret. Your dreams for an abundant life are manifesting, and hard work will lead to success. Lucky colour: **Pink, lavender**



TAURUS

(Apr 20 - May 20)

Your intuitive insights will guide you through this phase. Expect an increment, bonus, or an increase in your retirement package. By the end of the year, there will be much to be grateful for, including financial stability and a promising retirement, supported by family love and blessings. Monitor your health as your *chakras* are imbalanced. Lucky colours: **Bright blue, lavender**



GEMINI

(May 21 - June 20)

Determination and self-control will lead to career advancement. Your success will be acknowledged by those around you. Expect a busy period ahead, and ensure you maintain clear communication with your seniors. A long-held dream of yours is about to materialise. Believe in yourself as this marks the resolution of a challenging situation. The universe is in your favour. Lucky colours: **Gold, all shades of 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)

You have been working hard, and the universe is guiding you to relax and avoid rushing. You are being watched over and cared for. Remember, all work and no play is unhealthy. Small, humble offerings to the divine can outweigh material wealth. A long-held dream of yours will come true, trust yourself. A bit of charity and faith in the divine is all the universe asks. Lucky colours: **Indigo, green**



SCORPIO

(Oct 23 - Nov 21)

Your prayers are being heard by the lord. A change of place is anticipated, embrace it. You have more than enough for your needs; sharing your fortune will multiply your blessings in the future. Remember the golden rule: what you give, you receive. Have faith in the universe and always look for the positive side of things to stay ahead in life. Lucky colour: **All shades of green**



SAGITTARIUS

(Nov 22 - Dec 21)

This week will be busy, with sudden and immediate results. Clear communication with loved ones is vital. You have the ability to manifest your desires. Successful new beginnings are on the horizon. A change in direction will bring happiness. The message from the lord is to focus on your *karma*, act with goodness, and maintain faith. Be prepared for all possibilities. Lucky colours: **Sky blue, purple**



CANCER

(June 21 - July 22)

People with good intentions will enter your life, offering unconditional love and support. Professionally, you are capable of achieving much simultaneously; follow your creative passions. Your investments have been wise. Exercise patience and await the harvest. Avoid over-analysing problems. Lucky colour: **Yellow**



LEO

(July 23 - Aug 22)

This is set to be a wonderful week. Life is thriving through the power of positive thinking, and your success will inspire those around you. Your *karmic* cycle is coming full circle, and spiritual growth with profound insights is on the horizon. Starting a new chapter is a blessing; embrace it with forgiveness and compassion. Lucky colours: **White, brown**



VIRGO

(Aug 23 - Sep 22)

An exciting new challenge is on the horizon. You have the skills to succeed, so review contracts or documents carefully before signing. You are capable of attracting helpful allies. Powerful psychic insights are entering your subconscious; connect with your inner divinity. Sit quietly, calm your mind, and you will receive answers to your pressing questions. Lucky colours: **Orange, red**



CAPRICORN

(Dec 22 - Jan 19)

Surrender and let go of struggles. Accept both wanted and unwanted circumstances, and trust in divine guidance. You are free to make courageous choices and change your situation. Committed romantic relationships may sweep you off your feet. Professionally, review contracts and documents carefully before committing. Lucky colours: **Grey, white**



AQUARIUS

(Jan 20 - Feb 18)

The universe has profound messages for you. Your choices shape your destiny, so choose wisely. Connect with the divine within, sit quietly, and calm your mind; you will find answers to troubling questions. External connections are less important than your inner connection with the universe. Your new ventures will thrive. Lucky colours: **Orange, sea blue**



PISCES

(Feb 19 - Mar 20)

Every experience, whether joyful or painful, is part of your journey. Observe without attachment, treating joy and sorrow equally. Endings and new beginnings are natural. Those seeking opportunities will find doors opening. Humble offerings to the divine outweigh material wealth. Lucky colours: **Brown, black, rust**

beauty

listings

Glow insurance

Red-carpet skin doesn't start with makeup—it starts with a strong barrier. ColorBar Skin Prep & Glow Base / Miracle Barrier Moisturiser is designed to prep Indian skin for long-wear makeup while quietly improving skin health over time. Powered by panthenol, allantoin, and glycerin, it rebuilds the moisture barrier, smooths texture, and helps makeup sit better and last longer. Lightweight yet nourishing, it softens fine lines and restores resilience without heaviness—making it a backstage essential disguised as skincare. Priced at ₹2,500. Available online.



GROOMING GRAIL

Consider this your sharp, no-fuss guide to what's actually worth trying now

A whole host of high-performance beauty launches have flooded the market—each promising smarter results with less effort. From regenerative skincare and sculpting rituals to fragrance-led storytelling and hair-growth science, this edit cuts through the noise. These are the products redefining modern grooming, where innovation meets intention.

must-haves

Slow indulgence

Herbaria Modern Botanicals approaches beauty with restraint and intention. Its Body Oils—including White Floral and Sweet Tart—are lightweight yet nourishing, designed to be massaged in slowly as part of a sensory ritual. The Milk Baths (Ivory, Jade, and Teal Soaks) transform bathing into a restorative pause, softening skin while calming the mind. Vegan, refill-led, and plastic-neutral, these are products made for longevity, not impulse. Prices start at ₹999. Available online.



Plant mucin

Snail mucin has met its match. LEAFOBERRY's Mucin Fusion Face Serum is a vegan, plant-powered hydration serum that mimics mucin's plumping benefits using okra extract, gotu kola, and lotus. The texture is lightweight and non-greasy, delivering long-lasting hydration while smoothing fine lines. Papaya enzymes gently refine texture, while rice water, hyaluronic acid, and squalane keep skin supple and comfortable. Ideal for daily use, even on sensitive or acne-prone skin. Priced at ₹1,599 (30 ml). Available online.



Regenerative hydration

The Face Shop enters the next phase of K-beauty with the Alltime PDRN Hyaluronic Serum, a high-performance hydrator built around plant-derived PDRN—a cruelty-free innovation rooted in regenerative dermatology. Combined with seven types of hyaluronic acid and over one billion Hyaluballs, the serum delivers deep, multi-layer hydration while supporting skin repair and elasticity. Lightweight, fast-absorbing, and clinically proven to boost inner moisture in just five days, this is hydration that works beneath the surface, not just on it. Priced at ₹1,820. Available online.



Strength cleanse

Biop Professional's 04 Hairfall Shampoo is a performance-driven formula designed to strengthen strands and reduce shedding. Infused with biotin, red clover extract, and citric acid, it helps plump hair fibres and improve overall density. Free from parabens and sodium chloride, it delivers salon-grade care while fitting seamlessly into everyday routines. Priced at ₹2,070. Available at select salons.



Sculpt ritual

Facial massage goes modern with Skinvest's Slip Oil and Snatched Kansa Gua Sha combo. The featherlight oil—powered by phytosqualane, rosehip, and watermelon seed oil—offers the perfect glide without clogging pores. Paired with the unbreakable, Ayurvedic Kansa Gua Sha, the ritual helps de-puff, sculpt, boost circulation, and enhance glow in minutes. Think contouring, minus the makeup. Priced at ₹1,599. Available online.



Dark intimacy

As men's fragrance moves toward warmer, layered compositions, BVLGARI Man In Black Parfum delivers depth without excess. Spices like cardamom and cinnamon open the scent, followed by an unexpected floral heart of iris and tuberose, before settling into a dark ambery-woody base. Designed to sit close to the skin, it's refined, intimate, and ideal for evening wear or modern gifting. Price on request. Available at select retailers.



Scented storytelling

Kimirica's collaboration with Netflix's Bridgerton puts fragrance front and centre. The Kimirica x Bridgerton Collection is built around three evocative scent narratives—Mayfair Soirée, Lady in Silver, and Midnight Masquerade—each designed to capture romance, elegance, and intrigue. Rather than supporting the story, fragrance is the story here, turning self-care into an immersive, emotion-led ritual that feels indulgent and transportive. Price on request. Available online.



Growth booster

Pilgrim's Advanced Hair Growth Serum combines 3 per cent Redensyl, 4 per cent Anagain, and 5 per cent Capilia Stem Cell Complex to tackle thinning, hair fall, and breakage. Clinically tested to show visible growth in 28 days, the water-based, non-greasy formula absorbs quickly and works without disrupting daily routines. Available in spray, dropper, and roll-on formats, it's hair science made practical. Price on request. Available online.



True undertones

Simply Nam's Hydratit Concealer does what most complexion products still don't: understand Indian skin. With 10 undertone-correct shades—warm, cool, and neutral—named Cheeni, Kahwa, Kishmish and more, it eliminates ashiness and cakiness in one go. The formula blends seamlessly into skin, offering coverage that looks natural rather than masked. This is undertone science done right. Price on request. Available online.



— Team Indulge

concerts

music

Experience a day of live, genre-defying jazz in the city with AlterNation

CHENNAI'S JAZZ CALENDAR gets a pulsating addition this weekend as the *AlterNation Jazz Festival* brings together contemporary, original, and improvised music for a full-day showcase. Curated by AlterNation, the festival continues its mission of creating space for artistes who rarely find a platform in traditional venues.

Opening the day is The Tuesday Jazzers Collective, a group of emerging Chennai musicians reimagining classic American jazz with fresh energy. They are followed by Many Things, known for blending jazz, rock, classical, and funk, and Suman Sridhar & The Black Mamba, the award-winning Mumbai-based act fusing jazz, pop, Indian classical, opera and spoken word. Jatayu, Chennai's genre-blurring quartet rooted in Carnatic music and modern improvisation, closes the festival.

So, what can audiences look forward to at this year's festival? Cathy Ayer, co-founder of AlterNation, says, "*The AlterNation Jazz Festival* will showcase the best of original jazz and



Jatayu



The Tuesday Jazzers Collective

unplugged



Suman Sridhar

RHYTHM OF JAZZ

jazz-inspired music, with three incredibly diverse and original bands taking the stage. The festival will also spotlight new local jazz artistes who have been mentored and supported to develop their jazz chops and musical voices right here in Chennai."

Harish, a band member from The Tuesday Jazzers Collective, which opens the festival, tells us, "Music at its core, be it jazz or otherwise, be it old or new, be it slow or fast, needs to be done right for it to feel fresh. Unlike classical music, jazz isn't set in stone and allows each musician involved to express their individuality. We aspire to bring that quality to our performance, by taking these tunes and making them our own while retaining the core elements of the original tune."

Maarten Visser, saxo-

phonist and bandleader of Many Things, says, "Composition and improvisation carry equal weight and importance in our music. Improvisation is a consequence of composition, a collective process in search of sound, sound that emphasises, continues or opposes the ideas in composition."

This interplay of influences is echoed by Suman Sridhar, who explains her genre-blending

approach, "I bring various styles into my music as it reflects my origins of having grown up with Indian music and then studied Western music in the US."

For Sahib Singh, guitarist and bandleader of Jatayu, the fusion of styles is all about authentic expression. "We don't really think in terms of genres when we write; we focus on expressing what we genuinely feel. Carnatic music, jazz, funk, and rock are all languages we've grown up with, so they naturally flow into each other. The originality comes from that honesty; when the expression is real, the music finds its own voice."

Finally, on what the festival hopes to leave audiences with, Vivek Ayer, co-founder of AlterNation, says, "We hope audiences leave the fest feeling just how fun, inclusive and accessible jazz can be, while also experiencing firsthand how the genre continues to evolve."

₹750 onwards, January 31, 3pm to 11pm, At Zol Garden, The Palomar by Crossway, ECR.

—P Sangeetha

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Many Things

evergreen



Members of The Thursday Ladies Club

Classic revival

Nostalgia takes centre stage as Subhashree Thanikachalam's *Quarantine From Reality* returns as a live concert

CHENNAI IS ALL set to slip into a warm reverie this week as *Quarantine From Reality (QFR)*, the musical concept curated by music producer Subhashree Thanikachalam, comes alive on stage in a grand live format. Organised by the Thursday Ladies Club (TLC), the evening promises a journey down memory lane with a stellar line-up of singers Sai Vignesh, Santhosh, Samanvitha, and Shradha, accompanied by a

full live orchestra.

QFR began as an online initiative during the Covid lockdown, at a time when the world had come to a standstill and live music had fallen silent. Talking about the transition from digital screens to a live audience, Subhashree tells *Indulge*, "When the world locked down and the entertainment industry came to a standstill, *QFR* was actually an escape from depression for many. The advan-

tage of online was that we could connect globally and get talents from across the globe to perform."

What truly sets *QFR* apart from other film music shows is its sense of nostalgia and authenticity. "*QFR* is nostalgia. In today's Gen Z world, the chance to listen to classics and yesteryear masterpieces has gone down. The main difference between other concerts and *QFR* live is the grand live orchestra, where musicians play live, sans tracks or karaoke. The highlight will be the way we present this with the stories behind, interactive presentations and trivia," she explains.

QFR is also widely appreciated for decoding the musical brilliance behind classic film songs, revealing layers that often go unnoticed. "The importance and significance of the use of musical instruments, the beauty of intricate nuances and the brilliance of lyrics by legends; this is why *QFR* live is different. A song that you have listened to a 100 times will sound totally different in *QFR* live because you

understand these nuances and details," says Subhashree.

One of *QFR*'s greatest strengths is its ability to bridge generations. "The seniors enjoy this because they get to hear the songs they grew up with. Youngsters enjoy this because the presentation is modern and all the singers are from this current generation."

Recreating legendary songs live, however, comes with its own set of challenges. "Most recordings of these old gems that are available online are not of good sound quality, so deciphering the layers and notating them is a task. Our core team, comprising Shyam Benjamin, Venkat, and Xavier, takes on this tough job. As the singers are from the current generation, we also make a conscious effort to explain the importance of the lyrics while narrating the scene and situation so that they are able to emote better. The toughest challenge, however, is choosing the songs, ensuring that even the repeat audience leaves happy."

₹500 onwards, January 31, from 5.30 pm, At Narada Gana Sabha, TTK Road, Alwarpet.

—PS



Subhashree Thanikachalam

culture

drama



Marriage on mute

This play finds drama in everyday pressure, digital intrusion, and quiet acts of trying

ONCE AN ASSISTANT that promised ease, technology has quietly slipped into the role of an uninvited house guest. It pings, rings, reminds, and intrudes, often shaping our lives more than we realise. In *Pale White Dot* and *Venmuthu Maayam*, contemporary musical theatre productions by Crea-Shakthi presented in English and Tamil, respectively, this intrusion becomes the emotional backdrop to a story about love, partnership, and the uneasy act of keeping up with modern life.

Set in urban South India, the plays follow Ram and Lakshmi, a young double-income couple navigating marriage, work, and the pressure of starting a family. Tension accumulates through everyday moments, unanswered questions and the feeling that the world is always knocking.

Director Dushyanth Gunashekar anchors the play around a deceptively simple sound, the doorbell. "There is no expectation or thrill anymore with the doorbell. It almost feels like attending to it is now an additional chore," he says, pointing to how systems and apps have stripped everyday interactions of human warmth. Writer Tanvi Srivatsan dwells on the weight of the ordinary. "The biggest dramatic events in our lives are the small ones that build up around us every day," she says. On what the play reflects about contemporary urban intimacy, she adds, "The play mainly symbolises trying. Different people, all the characters, trying to do something, be something, achieve something."

For actor Yugesh Ramachandran, who plays Ram in the English version, the digital interruptions on stage feel like characters in themselves. "The screens and other notifications directly or indirectly add on more characters who also need reactions of their own," he says.

When audiences leave the theatre, Dushyanth hopes they carry reassurance. "Give themselves a break and say we will figure it out," he says.

₹400 onwards.

Venmuthu Maayam will be staged on January 31 at 7.30 pm, *Pale White Dot* on

February 1 at 5.30 pm.

At The Mylapore Fine Arts Club, Mylapore.

—Shivani Illakiya

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revival

CRAFT COMES FULL CIRCLE

Returning after 10 years, Dastkari Haat Samiti invites Chennai to rediscover the joy of crafts

"THIS BAZAAR IS meant to be walked slowly, seen deeply, and remembered long after. A space to reconnect with craft, with people, and with the joy of the handmade, as it was always meant to be experienced," says Jaya Jaitly, founder of Dastkari Haat Samiti, as she brings her *Dastkari Haat Crafts Bazaar* back to Chennai after a decade.

This edition unfolds as a canvas of India's handmade traditions, bringing together master artisans, weavers, painters, and craft communities from across the country. The crafts might look conventional on view but will probably find relevance in your contemporary life.

What finally brought *Dastkari Haat* back was not nostalgia, but insistence from the artisans themselves.



Jaya Jaitly

"Our artisans were very keen on reviving our presence in Chennai, and now we were happy to find an opportunity to collaborate with the National Institute of Fashion

Technology (NIFT). I wish someone would help us find other lovely, larger environs for the future."

Walking through the bazaar reveals the breadth of India's material culture. Visitors can encounter textiles and weaves, ranging from *ajrakh* block prints, *ikat*, *jamdani*, *Banarasi*, *maheshwari*, *chanderi* and *bandhani* to *patola* weaving, *gamchha* textiles, carpet weaving from Uttar Pradesh and Kashmir, and loom-woven fabrics from across regions. Alongside them sit craft objects, including *Dhokra* metalwork, bamboo and cane crafts, wood carving with brass inlay, bone inlay,



Artefacts that will be on display



silver filigree jewellery, terracotta, ceramics, seashell crafts, glass bangles, jute rugs, handmade paper, *Channapatna* toys, and metal crafts from Odisha and West Bengal.

There is art too—*Pattachitra* and *Pichhwai*, *Gond*, *Kalighat*, *Godna*, *Madhubani*, *Phad*, and *Shajhi* paintings—where storytelling unfolds through line, pigment, and rhythm. "The very nature of crafts is that they are diverse interpretations every time," Jaya notes. "We offer newly found craftspeople and new items from others. When the customers are good, they prepare good items for them."

Having worked in the craft sector for decades, Jaya has seen the landscape change dramatically. "I notice a hugely increased interest in crafts, a blossoming of craft entrepreneurship, designer business in craft, corporate interventions and plenty of craft bazaar organisers because they pose as patrons but make good money from commissions." As *Dastkari Haat* returns to Chennai, Jaya's hope is simple, to revive that special relationship with the city.

Entry free. January 30 to February 5. 11.30 am – 7.30 pm. At NIFT Campus, Tharamani.

—Apurva P

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curated

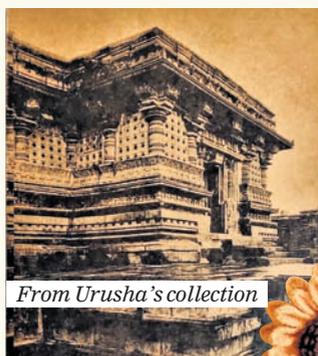
Art unboxed

A closer look at this market and you see how the makers turn stalls into stories

SOME SPACES ARE built for selling. Others are built for sharing. The Art Market leans firmly towards the latter, offering a space where art is nurtured through conversation and discovery. Curated by Sunshine House, this gathering brings together artists whose practices are deeply personal, wildly different, and united by the need to make and to be seen.

This might not be your regular exhibition. Here linocut prints can be seen alongside crochet toys, hand-carved wood meets digital concept art, and installations, performances, and workshops, inviting visitors to explore new creations and artists from the city.

One such artist is Urusha of Paper Dolphin, for whom creativity has always been instinctive. "I was an artistic kid from the beginning. Art just melted into my life without me knowing," she says. At this edition of The Art Market, she collaborates with DARE on a stall that resists polish in favour of honesty. Their *Hoarder's Garage Sale* is an eclectic mix of art, supplies, merchandise, and thrifted finds. Based on the idea of reducing waste, the stall celebrates creative leftovers and



From Urusha's collection

forgotten experiments. "We don't like seeing it go to waste. Hence, the *Hoarder's Garage*—from one hoarder to another."

A few steps away, the mood will soften at the market. At Shop Knora, Sareema Safiya's

crochet creations speak gently of self-expression and healing. "Art is something I've always turned to when I wasn't able to express myself with words," she shares. Crochet entered her life without intention or expectation, and that freedom shaped everything that followed. Her table blooms with forever flowers, cuddle bunnies, crochet toys and tiny desk buddies."

Naveen Prashanth's journey to art comes from a different place altogether. "I was convinced I had no talent or passion for anything," he admits, reflecting on a childhood where art felt out of reach. After working in the high-pressure world of visual effects, he returned to drawing, this time with intention. "I don't believe

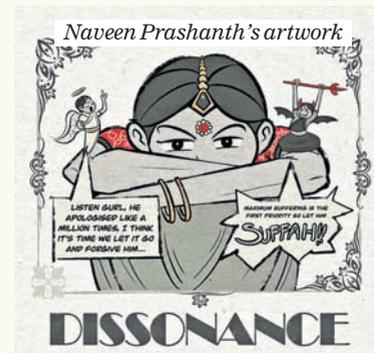
in talent. I believe talent equals passion that is pursued and worked on consistently." His stall reflects that philosophy: digital prints, calendars, stickers, posters, charcoal drawings, and limited-edition merchandise inspired by video games, cinema, comics, and master painters. "This is my first time putting up a stall. It is scary, but I am also thrilled," he says candidly.

Together, these voices shape The Art Market into a shared ground of creativity, experiments, and conversations.

Entry free. On February 1. 2 pm - 8 pm.

At Backyard, Adyar.

—AP

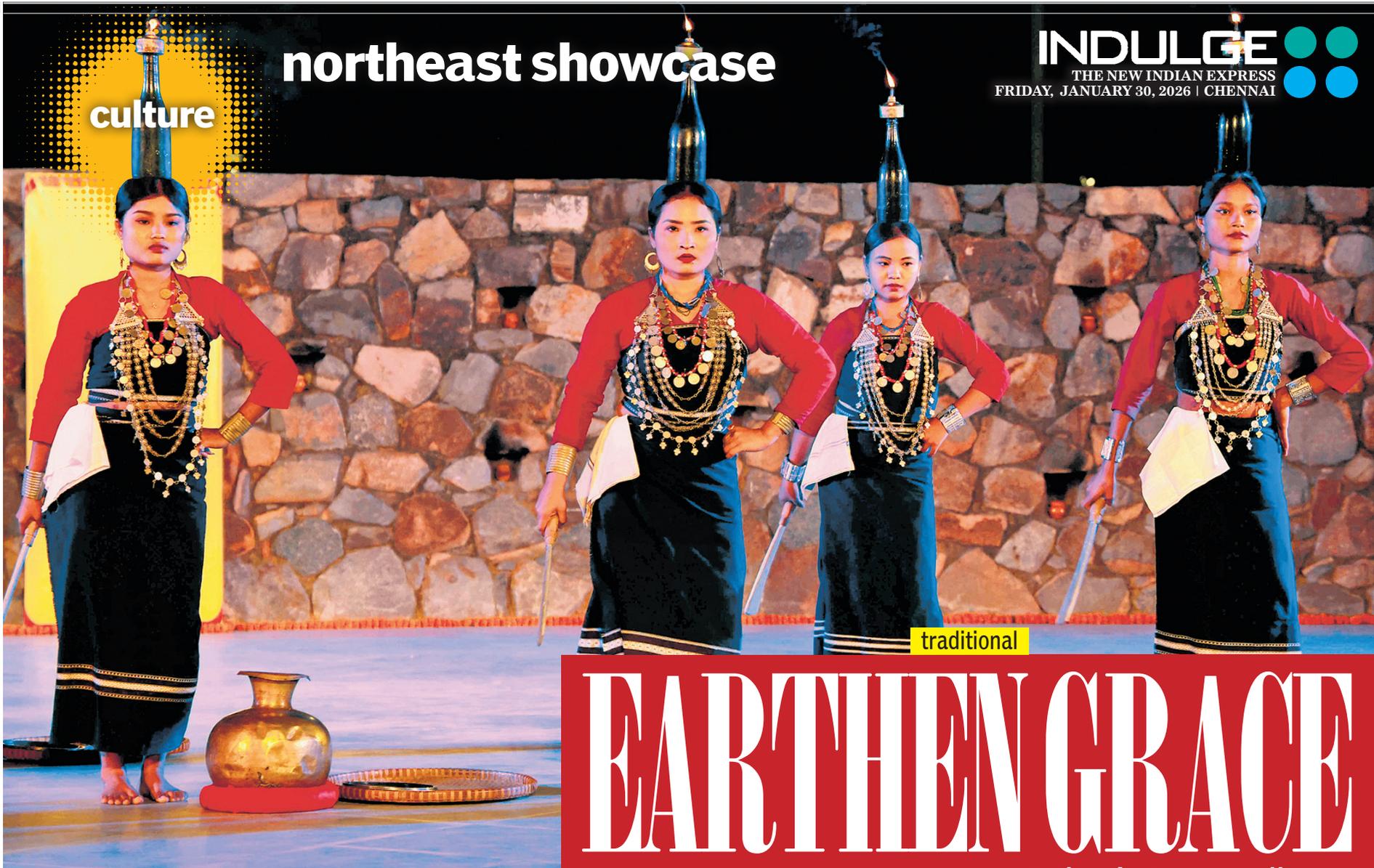


DISSONANCE

By Sareema Safiya

northeast showcase

culture



traditional

PARITHEEN GRACE

Debasis Reang talks about the traditional *Hojagiri* dance form of Tripura

CLOSE YOUR EYES and form the image of a dancer balanced on an earthen pitcher, the feet hardly touching the rim, the hands balancing a lamp or plate and the wrists swaying gently to the music of the flute. This is the *Hojagiri* dance originating from the Bru/ Reang community from Tripura. It is believed to be an offering to the Goddess Lakshmi, seeking fortune and fertility. Through the dance, one showcases the entire harvest process, right from sifting (Jhum) to the cultivation. This also reflects how the community relies on and respects nature, encouraging and worshipping the man-nature coexistence. Recently, Debasis Reang's troupe introduced this performance in Delhi during the *SPIC MACAY Folk and Tribal Arts and Crafts Festival*. We spoke to him to know more about this piece of tribal tradition.

Could you tell us about your journey with *Hojagiri* dance?

My father inspired me to build my knowledge about the preservation of culture. Song, dance, music, and drama intrigued me from a young age. Moreover, with time, promoting and preserving cultural events became necessary and unavoidable. Thus, I stepped in and got involved with the *Hojagiri* dance form.

***Hojagiri* is famous for its balance-based movements. What kind of training is required to master such skills?**

Every artiste has to go through training for a long time because the dance involves body balance, right from the head to the toe. Performers not only pay attention to their physique but also hone their concentration and mental fitness to make them successful *Hojagiri* dancers.

What traditional musical instruments accompany *Hojagiri*?

Several instruments play a crucial part

during the performance. Among these, the *Ksumu* (flute) has a major contribution. The *Kham* (drum) matches the balance and the rhythm and draws complete attention to the performers. The cymbal is sometimes used to create the sounds of *Bengi* (leg ring).

Can you describe the traditional performer's costume?

The male artistes who play the instruments or sing wear the *Kamsoih* or turban, *Kutai Bura* (shirt), and *Longkla* (Dhuti), all made of handloom. For the female artistes who perform, their clothes are made of handloom, but the jewellery and accessories make them more attractive. Traditionally, they wear *Sangai* (hair clip) that are used to tighten their buns. The

and the *Trwo*, or the wrist bangle. Made of handloom, the *Rsa* is a chest band, and the *Rnai* is a scarf.

How do you choreograph your performances—do you stay traditional or incorporate contemporary elements?

While the overarching performance is still traditional, certain bits of choreography may involve individual perceptions shared by musicians and senior performing artistes, making it slightly modern.

What are the biggest challenges in keeping *Hojagiri* alive today?

One major challenge is poverty or financial insolvency. This provokes artistes to take up other works, thus depleting the artiste pool for this performing art. There is no aide from the government either. Also, the youth is attracted to the new and modern and not age-old culture. If the performers get employment, monthly honorariums or pensions, then more people might take up this art form. We have also proposed to open a *Hojagiri* and other folk arts academy in Bru / Reang populated areas.

Why do you think traditional folk arts like *Hojagiri* struggle to gain mainstream attention?

To gain mainstream attention, it is important for performing arts like *Hojagiri* to get support facilities, more youth involvement, financial solution for artiste's families, and more.

What is your vision for *Hojagiri* dance?

I hope that *Hojagiri* dance becomes a prime identity of Bru / Reang tribes. It ensures that the artistes lead a good life relying on the performing art. I also wish that the dance form would garner audiences at the national and international levels.

— Subhadrika Sen

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



Dancers performing *Hojagiri*



Docuseries:
Glitter & Gold: Ice Dancing

Top ice-dancing couples from around the world train hard for the 2026 Winter Olympics in Milan-Cortina. This series follows their intense practice sessions, teamwork and personal struggles. As they compete on the ice, we see their dedication, dreams and emotions — revealing the challenges and triumphs behind the quest for Olympic gold. February 1. On Netflix.



Crime: Daldal

Set in Mumbai, the series follows DCP Rita Ferreira (Bhumi Pednekar) as she investigates a series of shocking murders. While chasing a dangerous killer, she struggles with painful memories, pressure at work and deep personal fears. Each case pushes her closer to the truth, testing her strength, choices and sense of justice. Language: Hindi. January 30. On Amazon Prime Video.

Romance: Relationship Goals

Leah is a successful TV producer who aims to become the first woman to host a major morning show. Her journey takes a turn when her ex, Jarrett, enters the race for the same position. As they compete professionally, unresolved emotions surface, leading to fresh lessons about trust, ambition and love. February 4. On Amazon Prime Video.



Drama:
Lincoln Lawyer (Season 4)

Picking up right from where the previous season ended, lawyer Mickey Haller is arrested when a body is found in his car. Now he must defend himself in court. With help from his team, he searches for the truth, tries to prove his innocence and uncover who trapped him before losing everything he can again. February 5. On Netflix.

Comedy: Sarvam Maya

A struggling musician returns home after his plans abroad fall through. While helping his family with religious rituals, he accidentally meets a young spirit with no memory. Naming her 'Delulu,' he forms a bond. Through simple moments, both begin to heal, understand themselves better and find hope in unexpected places. Language: Malayalam. January 30. On JioHotstar.



Reality show: The 50

Fifty celebrity contestants live together in a grand house, facing challenges that test their strategy, teamwork and wit. With alliances, betrayals and unexpected twists, they compete to avoid elimination. The game pushes each contestant to adapt, survive and outplay others for a chance to win the grand prize. February 1. On JioHotstar.

Comedy: Mo Gilligan: In The Moment

Mo Gilligan takes the stage at London's O2 Arena, sharing stories from his life, family and career. He reflects on fame, culture and being British in America. Through jokes and personal moments, he reveals his journey and connects deeply with the audience. February 3. On Netflix.

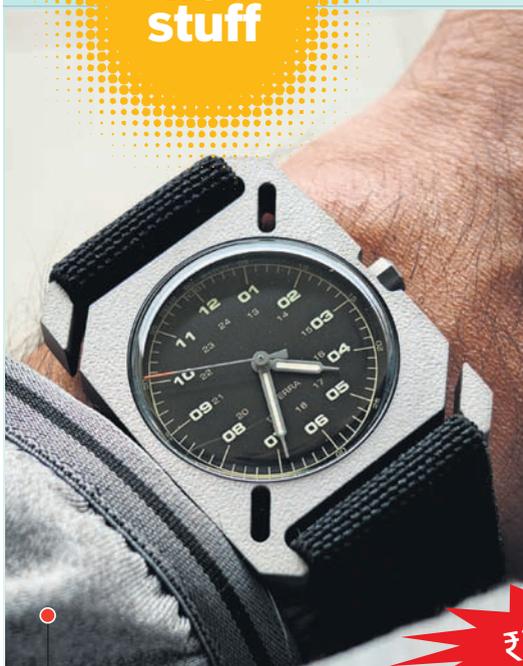


hot
stuff



**GADGET
BOY**

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



₹3,999

DWC Terra

The Delhi Watch Company makes some of the most innovative yet well-priced timepieces in the market. Their new Terra is inspired by a carabiner and is forged from Grade 2 Titanium. It sports a GL 32 quartz movement and offers lume on the markers and 30m water resistance. With SCHOTT glass protecting the dial and a 316L SS caseback, Terra looks like no other and is a steal if you can pocket one. delhiwatchcompany.com

Salomon S/LAB phantasm 3

The Phantasm 3 is an ultra-light racing shoe engineered for top performance and developed in partnership with aerodynamic experts Swiss Side. The shoe features cutting-edge design to maximise speed and efficiency—features include a PEBA-based foam (optiFOAM+) for cushioning and a full-length carbon plate for energy return. Phantasm 3 is ideal for speed runs, offering maximal cushioning and a drop of 6mm. The upper is constructed using aerodynamically stretchable gaiter material. Salomon.com



₹31,000



₹37,999

**Fujifilm Instax
Mini Evo Cinema**

Fujifilm's new Instax Mini Evo Cinema can capture video and photos and provide a print of photos from itself or your smartphone. It comes with a nifty "Eras dial" which lets you shoot your camera style by decade (e.g., 1960s - 8mm), capturing the unique flavour of bygone eras. The camera also features a vertical grip design inspired by the "FUJICA Single-8". fujifilm.com

Gadget
Review



₹4,990

Sennheiser HD 500 BAM

Sennheiser's new HD 500 BAM microphone can transform audiophile-grade headphones into dynamic gaming headsets. I had a chance to try out this brilliant Boom Arm Mic (BAM) in conjunction with the HD 560S (an incredible open-back reference headphone from Sennheiser) for a few weeks, and the results were formidable. The Mic can seamlessly plug into a Sennheiser headphone's cable port and turn it into a microphone solution—ideal for gamers and everyday professionals. HD 500 BAM also has broad compatibility with laptops, desktops, and game consoles as well as select mobile devices. On usage, I could level up and use it for calls and conferences and as an essential communication device while gaming. HD 500 BAM sports a special condenser capsule delivering outstanding speech clarity. Essentially this device provided a single solution to me which could handle crystal-clear sound in both directions whether I was gaming or on a Teams call. HD 500 BAM also comes with volume and mute controls, a universal 3.5mm jack, a 1.50m cable and a Y-adaptor for PC use. in.sennheiser-hearing.com



₹7,999

NoiseFit Pro 6R

Powered by Noise AI Pro, the NoiseFit Pro 6R is a truly special smartwatch from Noise. It's crafted with stainless steel and features a 1.46" AMOLED display that's incredibly bright (1000nits) and elegant. On usage, I found the Pro 6R a superb smartwatch with ultra-useful features. The watch provides extensive health tracking as well as an accurate built-in GPS that's reliable. The watch fits extremely well on my 7" wrist and I loved being able to switch out the straps (metal, leather and silicon) seamlessly for different looks. Noise's own AI Pro is useful for gaining health insights as well as setting reminders, starting workouts, etc. BT connectivity ensures that you don't miss any notifications and can take calls as well. There's also Strava integration, cycle tracking, guided workouts, 30m water resistance, and an IP 68 rating as well as a 10-15 day battery life depending on usage. Highly recommended! gonoise.com

Sonos Era 100

If you're looking for a single speaker for your acoustic needs—The Sonos Era 100 is your best bet. It features next-gen acoustics with multiple levels of connectivity and provides stereo sound with rich bass to transform any room into a sonic experience. Setting up the Era 100 took me about 10 minutes (Sonos uses Trueplay tuning tech to optimise the speaker's EQ to your space automatically) with the help of the Sonos App. Once I was connected via wifi, the whole space lit up, as I played my favourite music via Spotify (Era 100 plays from any service or compatible device). Sound quality is top-notch with detailed stereo separation, deep bass, and crystal-clear vocals even at top volume. There's a real nuanced, balanced, and harmonious vibe to this speaker that sets it apart from competitors. It also supports BT and connects via line-in to devices. Exceptional Speaker! sonos.com



₹22,999

Ashok Pandian
@ashokpandian



power

THE GLC IS now coming with EQ Technology. Extensive customer feedback from around the world defined the development of the electric GLC from the start. It leads the way with an elevated design language and intelligence powered by an AI-driven MB.OS superbrain. Built electric-first, as the first model in a completely new vehicle family, it excels in performance, range, efficiency, and charging speed. At the same time, it sets new standards in its class for design, value, versatility and space: the vehicle offers even more legroom and headroom than its ICE siblings, and combined with features like a seamless 39.1-inch MBUX hyperscreen and inviting ambient lights that illuminate even the starry sky control panoramic roof, it gives a new level of a 'welcome home' feeling of comfort, safety and being supported.

The all-new GLC's unparalleled driving experience includes the One-Box braking system. It provides exceptionally smooth, consistent and assured deceleration, whether via energy recovery or friction braking. And with intelligent air suspension familiar from the S-Class, the vehicle guarantees supreme ride comfort. This combines with a 4.5-degree rear-axle steering for exceptional agility. The vehicle is the epitome of versatility, spaciousness and comfort, making it the perfect companion for every day adventures. With a wheelbase that's 84 mm longer compared to its ICE counterpart, passengers can enjoy



an exceptionally roomy and comfortable ride. The result is 13 mm more legroom and 46 mm more headroom up front, while rear passengers benefit from 47 mm more legroom and 17 mm more headroom. For those requiring ample storage space, the boot provides a generous 570 litres of capacity, and when the rear seats are folded down, it expands to 1,740 litres. Additionally, the frunk (front trunk) contributes an extra 128 litres of load capacity and can be opened partially electrically via touch control.

The all-new electric GLC combines the reliability and elegance of Mercedes-Benz with cutting-edge electric-drive systems and intelligent, intuitive software. Designed to adapt effortlessly to diverse needs and lifestyles, it continues the GLC legacy in electric form—iconic, versatile,

This mid-range SUV from India's luxury carmaker has been a bestseller, and now comes it's EV version

intuitive and smooth. The GLC 400 4MATIC with its 483 bhp motor will come with up to 713 kilometres of real-world range.

The MB.DRIVE systems in the all-new GLC take advantage of a lot of hardware and integrated software to offer advanced driver assistance (ADAS) level 2. Every model is equipped with an extensive sensor set using up to ten external cameras, five radar sensors, and twelve ultrasonic sensors to offer first-class driving assistance. They are all connected to a high-performance control unit that runs with MB.OS and acts like the GLC's brain. Fully focused, constantly alert and lightning fast, MB.DRIVE uses artificial intelligence to process vast amounts of raw data from the sensors to understand the

traffic situation. With MBUX Surround Navigation, the driver always knows what the car has detected from the surroundings, increasing trust in the system. MB.DRIVE assists the driver with steering, braking, and accelerating. All active safety systems are standard equipment and can be updated from time to time OTA even as they help to avoid or mitigate more crashes than before.

The new GLC electric will epitomise a smart car and will offer a sustainable alternative to its ICE counterpart.

Estimated pricing around ₹65 lakh, ex-showroom.

— Ranojoy Mukerji
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The week that was



• Mahindra Thar Roxx Star

Mahindra has announced the new Roxx Star edition, with features like all-black leatherette seating with suede accents, a piano black front grille front fascia, piano black alloy wheels and a vibrant new colour, Citrine Yellow, adding a distinctive and sporty presence. Powertrain options continue to be the G20 TGD i mStallion and D22 mHawk, with both manual and automatic options driving the rear wheel. Prices start at ₹16.85 lakh, ex-showroom.



• Renault Duster launched

The New Renault Duster is made for India, with close to 90% of the car made specifically for India. It underpins the new Renault Group Modular Platform (RGMP). The platform is validated for extreme conditions and engineered for 5-star safety standards. It is powered by a Turbo TCE 160 engine which churns out 163 PS of power and 280 Nm of torque, while Turbo TCE 100 is meant for smart and accessible segment. A strong hybrid 1.8-litre engine with a 1.4 kWh battery will be available later this year.

chic
Fashionably Retro

This motorcycle company has been manufacturing retro bikes for some time and this model is its latest salvo in this unique space

THE MY2026 YAMAHA XSR 155 is here to make a splash in the neo-retro space in a traditional Yamaha way. Creating a benchmark, moving on its own, not copying rivals and offering the highest standards of performance and economy for Indian riders are the unique characteristics of this bike. The motorcycle impresses with its blend of retro and modern design elements and with modern features that score big on convenience and utility. It has useful features like a unique LED headlamp that doubles as a daytime running light, eliminating the clutter of separate lighting setups. The ribbed seat and fuel tank panels contribute to its upscale classic vibe while making it look fashionably trendy. The size is compact yet charming, though of course, there's potential for a bigger version with a larger engine in the future. The bike also features an LCD instrument cluster that includes a gear shift indicator, traction control, and fuel efficiency metrics, though the screen could use better



brightness for easier visibility in daylight.

When it comes to engine performance, the XSR shines particularly in urban settings. Thanks to a larger rear sprocket compared to the R15, it delivers strong acceleration at lower speeds. In fourth gear at 30 km/h, the bike picks up smoothly without any hiccups. However, this gearing does limit its highway performance; hitting 120 km/h means pushing the engine to its limits in fifth gear, and the absence of wind protection can make climbs in areas like the mountainous roads quite strenuous. We rode the bike for more than 400 kilometres recently, and that revealed impressive fuel efficiency of around 50 km/l. Even with its modest 10-litre tank, the bike offers a remarkable range of over 450 kilometres. The motor itself is a 155cc liquid-cooled, 4-stroke SOHC, 4-valve unit that is fuel injected and outputs around 18 bhp with 14.2 Nm of torque. It is E20 compliant and has been tuned more for urban commuting than long highway rides. Traction control is standard.

Constructed on Yamaha's iconic perimeter frame and linked monocross suspension, the bike is nimble and agile around corners, while maintaining stability at moderate speeds. It has been celebrated as a "beautiful city bike" that combines excellent refinement with stylish looks, making it an ideal choice for urban riders who prioritise elegance and efficiency over touring.

Priced at ₹1.5 lakh, ex-showroom.
— Mohit Soni

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