

WOW!

HYDERABAD

focus

OUR LIST OF
TOP SUMMER
FUN ACTIVITIES

food

QUICK FINDS:
LITTI CHOKHA AND
UGADI TREATS

wellness

OF SOUND
BATHS AND
SUMMER MYTHS

trends

METRO CHIC:
CITY DESIGNERS
AT LIFW

SHINING BRIGHT: MRUNAL THAKUR

SPOTTED
EPIC PARTIES
THIS SEASON!



KANCHIPURAM

NARAYANI
SILKS

THE
WEDDING
EDIT:
2024

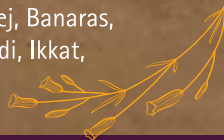
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The 
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WE TALK TO ACTOR MRUNAL THAKUR WHO SHARES HER JOURNEY FROM A STRUGGLING AUDITION ARTISTE TO A SOUGHT-AFTER BOLLYWOOD AND TOLLYWOOD ACTOR IN 2024.

We also talk to the multi-faceted Vishweshwar Reddy who recently joined the BJP

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THE BADSHAHI ASHOORKHANA IS ONE OF HYDERABAD'S ARCHITECTURAL GEMS.

We tell you more about how to experience the beauty of this heritage structure in the best way



WHY CARA CARA SHOULD BE THE PLACE TO PARTY THIS MONTH and these top DJs are making the party-loving Hyderabadis groove to their beats

20 CITY

OUR EDITOR WRITES ABOUT THE NEED FOR EVERYONE'S PRIVACY, ESPECIALLY CELEBRITIES. In sports, we profile 16-year-old award-winning gymnast, Nishka Agarwal. In Cause, we visit the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust which is a rehab center for destitute women and works on Gandhian principles

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QUORUM CLUB OPENS IN HYDERABAD AND WE TAKE A WALK-THROUGH TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THIS ELITE NETWORKING CLUB. Also, a look at the Red Bull Soapbox Race that took place in the city. Wondering what a Soapbox vehicle is? Read about it in this section

18 UPCOMING EVENTS

WOW! GIVES YOU THE TOP EVENTS OF THE CITY THIS MONTH – from live concerts to pop-ups and theater

FOOD 30



WE REVIEW HOUSE OF BAGAARA WHICH IS AN ODE TO HYDERABADI CUISINE; PALLEKODI PULLATLU, A LITTLE NOOK IN DLF EAT STREET THAT SERVES YUMMY NON-VEGETARIAN BREAKFAST; The Parotta Paradise called Sri Andal Mixture and Tiffins in Malajgiri that flips about 2,000 Kerala Parottas a night and serves it with spicy *soya korma*; Roast CCX, Hyderabad's largest coffee experiential café

SHOPPING

REVIEWS OF YELLOW VERANDAH, KALKI FASHIONS, AND A UNIQUE LAUNDRY SERVICE CALLED HIGH AND DRY. Not just high-end shopping, we also tell you about an online thrift concept called Punarvi Closet where you can sell your lehengas and sarees to someone who will love them as much as you do



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HYDERABAD'S FASHION DESIGNERS DISPLAYED THEIR CUTTING-EDGE DESIGNS AT THE LIFW FASHION EVENT in March, and we tell you about the designs that are trending this summer



66 ARTS

READ ABOUT THE ART SHOW THAT CELEBRATED THE OLDEST INHABITANTS OF THE DECCAN PLATEAU: The rocks! Also, a walk-through of the newly refurbished Shrishti Art Gallery

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WE SPEAK TO A HEALTHCARE EXPERT TO BUST THE TOP MYTHS OF SUMMER; we also check out Sound Bath which promises to de-stress and rejuvenate you in its wave of cosmic sounds



ENTERTAINMENT

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WE'VE GOT LOTS THIS MONTH, STARTING WITH OUR REGULAR MOVIE AND OTT RECOMMENDATIONS. In Books, we have our must-read section and an interview with author Ratna Rao Shekar who has penned *Listen to the House* which was released a few weeks ago. Also, a quick look at the film news in Snippets and an exclusive interview with the actor Brahmanandam about his new book *Nenu*



76 spotted

WHO WORE WHAT, WHEN AND WHY? THAT'S WHAT WOW! SPOTTED IS ABOUT. Check out where we partied last month and what you missed



44

FOCUS

SUMMER IS HERE, BUT THE HEAT NEED NOT BE A DAMPENER. We find an array of activities – from horse riding to date night painting and tango dance sessions that you can sign up for – or join your kids in learning the new arts. Yes, all of them are available in Hyderabad this April and May. Get ready for fun under the sun



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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

We tell you about the upcoming events for this month



STARRY ART

MARCH 29 TO APRIL 10

Presented by The Silly Fellows in collaboration with creative entrepreneur Nikhil Chinapa, exhibit **The Real Van Gogh Immersive Experience 2024** comes to Hyderabad. It arrives with a specially curated line-up of 70 visually captivating pieces from Vincent van Gogh's extraordinary collection of artworks. This includes *Starry Night*, *Sunflowers*, *Wheatfield with Crows*, and *Irises*, illuminating every brushstroke and color with never-before-seen clarity.

Venue: HITEX Exhibition Center, Izzat Nagar

Tel: +91 40 2311 2121 / 22 / 23

Timings: 1:30 pm to 9 pm; last entry at 8 pm

Ticket: Rs. 799 onwards (insider.in)



DANCING ENCHANTRESS

APRIL 27

Mohiniyattam, traditionally performed by women, is a feminine solo dance originating from the state of Kerala. The dance gets its name from Mohini – the enchantress avatar of lord Vishnu.

Bringing the dance to life at Lamakaan is **Mohiniyattam** dancer, performing artist, and professor at the Fine and Performing Arts Dept at GITAM University, Mythili Anoop. The event will feature a performance with new choreographies - *Mughlai Vesham*, a form of *Mohiniyattam* that incorporates the style of *Kathak* including its costume.

Venue: Lamakaan, Banjara Hills

Tel: 90300 40525

Timings: 6:30 pm onwards



WHISPERS OF NATURE

APRIL 5 (ON VIEW TILL MAY 1)

Whispers of Nature is an immersive art exhibition that seeks to capture the subtle, poetic nuances of the natural world.

Featuring the works of talented artists including Alpesh Dave, Afza Tamkanat, Avijit Dutta, Chetana Vagh, Dushyant Patel, Manish Chavda, Manisha Agarwal, Shampa Sircar and Vijay Sharma, the exhibition offers a glimpse into the profound connections between flora and fauna, the fleeting moments of seasonal transitions, and the harmonious balance inherent in natural landscapes.

Through vibrant brushstrokes, intricate detailing, and captivating compositions, these artists convey the timeless beauty and subtle revelations that can be found in the world around us.

Venue: Kalakriti Art Gallery, Road No. 4, Banjara Hills

Tel: 99517 40000

Timings: 6:30 pm onwards

SHIVA & SHAKTI

APRIL 5 (ON VIEW TILL MAY 1)

This exhibition sees a series of miniature paintings by artist R Giridhar Gowd. His latest suite of works, **Shiva & Shakti** is based on his study of the *Daakshinatya Natyakala Charitra* by Nataraja Ramakrishna; and *Rupa Dhyana Ratnavali* by Devadaya Dharmadaya Sakha.

Venue: Kalakriti Art Gallery, Road No. 4, Banjara Hills

Tel: 99517 40000

Timings: 6:30 pm onwards





CLIMATE ACTION AS A LIFESTYLE

APRIL 19

Conducted by the founders of EkoGalaxy, Shreyas Sridharan and Urvi Desai, this workshop aims to walk you through a zero-waste sustainable lifestyle. They believe change must first be made in our minds so that we can change our habits and practice mindful sustainability in the everyday.

Venue: Hamburg Hall, Goethe-Zentrum Hyderabad, Road No. 3, Banjara Hills
Tel: 040 23350443
Timings: 6:30 pm

TRADITIONAL MOVES

APRIL 2 (EVERY TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAY)

Align Hub by Padmaja Penmetsa is holding *Bharatanatyam* classes by Sreeshma Latha this month. These classes aim to help their students learn to be persistent, dedicated, patient, and sincere in their efforts, ultimately becoming better versions of themselves.

According to Align Hub, *Bharatanatyam* goes beyond its visual and performing aspects. It has a healing and enriching effect. In a spiritual context, being conscious of one's breath helps in being present, establishing a connection between the mind and body. *Bharatanatyam* serves as a medium for this transformation, requiring mindful practice or *abhyāsa*, leading to a lifelong journey of learning, discovery, internalization, and transformation called *sādhana*.

Venue: Align Hub by Padmaja Penmetsa, Filmnagar
Tel: 83746 31188
Timings: 6 pm to 7 pm
Ticket: Rs. 2,500/month



CLASSICAL CONCERT SERIES '24

APRIL 6



Sangitanjali Foundation in association with the Department of Language & Culture, Govt of Telangana is organizing the 4th Season of **Classical Concert Series 2024** featuring Pt. Sanjeev Abhyankar (vocal), accompanied by Ajinkya Joshi (*tabla*) and Abhishek Shinkar (*harmonium*).

Sangitanjali Foundation is a Non-profit initiative and is one of the cultural organizations in Hyderabad that promotes Indian art, music, and dance to popularize our rich Indian classical music and provide a platform to the young and budding talents of the country.

Venue: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, King Koti Road, Basheerbagh
Tel: 98480 33874
Timings: 7 pm onwards
Ticket: Rs. 300 onwards



SUNDAY FUNDAY

APRIL 7

Hyderabad Pop Culture Con is coming to the city for the first time, promising to make it a Sunday to remember.

The event is meant to be a family-friendly one where people of all ages can indulge in their favorite fandoms. Celebrating pop culture, the event will feature cosplays, gaming, anime, stand-up comedy, DJs, merch, and more with a chance to display your creativity in the epic cosplay contest which comes with cash prizes.

Venue: V Convention, Madhapur
Timings: 11 am onwards
Ticket: Rs. 699 onwards (bookmyshow.com)

FEEL THE RHYTHM

APRIL 28

Widely considered to be one of India's most versatile musicians and one of the best *tabla* players in the world, Maestro Bickram Ghosh is coming to the city to serenade the Hyderabad with his 2001 neo-fusion band *Rhythmscape* and collaborators Arun Kumar, Abhishek Mallick and Pulak Sarkar.

Venue: Ravindra Bharathi, Saifabad
Timings: 7 pm onwards
Ticket: Rs. 550 (bookmyshow.com)



If you'd like your event listed in the WOW! events' calendar, please mail it to wowhyderabad2023@gmail.com for the following month, before the 20th.

FROM THE EDITOR

AUNTY, GIVE ME SPACE

PIC: APUROOPA REDDY



An actor, I know, was recently telling me how she doesn't have much privacy because she is a film star and in between shoots preferred keeping to herself in the trailer, drinking her tea or answering phone calls. She said if she stepped out, fans would swoop in on her to take selfies without even asking her first! Better than arguing and wasting precious minutes, she said, she preferred getting the pic taken.

Actors do realize because of the nature of their profession – the hype around their so-called glamorous life—they are expected to be accessible to the public all the time. But let's look at it from their point of view before impinging on their space. How tiring it must be for them that they can't go to an airport or take a flight without being accosted by people who want to chat them up, and further take pictures. But I feel even a Deepika Padukone is entitled to her privacy, and be allowed to take a catnap on a flight.

I can already hear comments (on my Instagram when this appears) such as – but actors love being in the public eye, or that because they are part of the movie industry their life is for public consumption. But I don't subscribe to this view, because every human needs space, even a Shahrukh needs to sit quietly sometimes and have a smoke without a dozen cameras taking his pictures.

When I say space, I'm also talking of physical space. Why are there no respectful distances in queues in banks or cinema theaters in this country? Why must men fall all over you and push you to reach the ticket counter?

In general, I feel we Indians refuse to demarcate spaces that should remain in the private domain. In Western countries, we wouldn't think of pinching a little kid's cheek (however cute and chubby she is), for fear of a parent reporting us to police. Here, we don't think twice before carrying a rosy-cheeked kid to our table and stuffing her with biscuits and cake without the parents' permission. Even worse, we don't leave a newborn baby or the mother alone, but will make comments and rude remarks like how the baby is a bit dark and puny like the mother. A new mother is going through several anxieties all at the same time and giving space would be a kinder thing.

It is one thing being friendly, but another accosting a parent to ask why her son quit the well-paying IT job to become a stand-up comic or why the daughter despite being a topper is now a Youtuber teaching cooking (not knowing how lucrative that can be, they will even say why has she become a cook?). Indian relatives, I agree, are caring but I think they need to respect boundaries. Why should that random aunty go up to a teenager who is already going through angst and peer pressure, to

ask why she has put on weight or become so dark (aunties' constant obsession)?

And as we are getting older, why is it that our face and body become public domain? Aging is a difficult process for anyone, without people making comments like, your face looks bloated these days, you're putting on weight near your hips, or why are you looking so tired? My skin and mood will not be what it was at 25 years, and please allow me space to deal with menopause.

When I say space, I'm also talking of physical space. Why are there no respectful distances in queues in banks or cinema theaters in this country? Why must men fall all over you and push you to reach the ticket counter? It's worse when you take a flight. If airports are packed with passengers speaking loudly on phones, on flights we are literally sitting packed like sardines; so close that our hands, shoulders, and legs all touch one another. What's more, it's a veritable chaos when a flight lands and people shove and push, and grab overhead bags to scramble out of the aircraft not respecting anyone else's space.

We can also respect another person's space in a public arena by not talking loudly over the phone, and keeping some distance from one another. I was amazed to read how the Japanese hardly answer phones while on trains and buses, and when they stand in lines they do so in silence without any chatter or buzzing phones. Here we could write the life history of the person next to us, just from the conversation on the phone, so loudly do they talk about their personal matters.

India is an overpopulated country as it is, with billions of humans. Let's keep both physical and mental space private. We could begin with not asking questions that are of no concern to us (like why are you not married or have no "issues"), and second, by giving each other breathing space in public (airports, buses, streets).

And yes, even a Shahrukh Khan and Deepika Padukone need their private moments. They are surely not public property. ■ RATNA RAO SHEKAR



START-UP

A Hyderabad startup has devised a diagnostic tool that is lighter, cheaper and more effective than what was being used

Easy Eye Tests



The simple thought that patients of glaucoma - the third leading cause of blindness in India - should have access to affordable, effective, and easy eye testing across India prompted the conception of the revolutionary **Intelligent Vision Analyser (iVA)**. Conceptualized by the Hyderabad-based Alfaleus Technologies, the device has been hailed as having started a new era in visual field testing.

WHAT'S IT ABOUT

An eye-testing device that is easy to use, and carry, works anywhere and makes glaucoma testing more affordable. The iVA is a VR headset to evaluate a person's visual fields, which can further be used in the diagnosis and monitoring of glaucoma. The device is 10 times cheaper (Rs 3 lakh while the traditional devices cost Rs 30 lakh) and 100 times more portable than standard equipment and thus, value for money. The device weighs barely 275 grams and therefore easy to carry and operate.

WHO DOES IT BENEFIT

"Our device overcomes multiple drawbacks faced in the traditional field analyzers like the need for eye-patch, dark room and uncomfortable

seating arrangements," says Sandal who works alongside technical director Dr P Arulmozhivarman. iVA comes with a Bluetooth controller and audio instructions for smooth diagnosis. It also provides immediate report generation with easy printing options and cloud sharing making it telemedicine-ready. iVA comes with an adjustable headgear, fits everyone and is comfortable to wear. Incidentally, testing on the device doesn't require a dedicated dark room, meaning tests can be conducted anywhere, making the service much more accessible than a standard eye test.

MOTIVATION BEHIND THE GADGET

Sandal has always been an enterprising engineer and one of his first products has been a machine to dispense paracetamol tablets for a local hospital. Eye care solutions that are not only effective but also accessible and affordable for all have been the motivation to design and develop the design says CEO and team leader, Sandal Kotawala.

FUNDING AND FUTURE

Alfaleus' VR headset cost them barely Rs 3 lakh which was bootstrapped

and the cost was just one-tenth of the available gadgets for glaucoma testing. They got their investment from Remidio Innovative Solutions Pvt Ltd, a Bengaluru-based medical equipment manufacturer. Their first customer was an ophthalmologist in Mumbai, who wrote them a cheque within five minutes of meeting them. According to Sandal, the company has raised about ₹1 crore in equity funding, including from VIT TBI Seed Fund, BIRAC JAN Care and Bangalore Bioinnovation Centre, and about ₹1.5 crore in various Government of India grants and prize money.

EXTERNAL VALIDATION

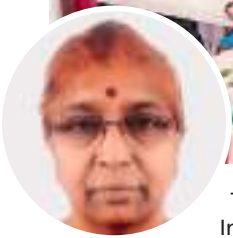
Intelligent Vision Analyser (iVA) has been clinically tested and validated on over 1,000 patients in a clinical setting. Over the last three years of their research, two versions of the device have been developed and validated in association with Aravind Eye Hospital, India, and John Hopkins, Baltimore, USA. The project received support from VIT University, Vellore, and Aravind Eye Care System, Puducherry. ■ MANJU

www.alfaleus.in
Tel: 96550 42547

CAUSE

A **Gandhian Trust** in the old city which offers both refuge and rehabilitation to women

Help the abandoned women!



The world celebrated International Women’s Day last month and words such as ‘women empowerment’, ‘livelihood’ and ‘capacity building’ were bandied about by speakers, paying lip service to the cause of women. But in sharp contrast to such talkers is a silent doer, a senior citizen who has been walking the talk. Meet Pamarthi Padmavathi, in charge of **Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust (KGNMT)**. This is a 75-year-old rescue home that has been working to rehabilitate women in Hyderabad.

DISTRESSED, DESERTED, DESTITUTE

Padmavathi is the Pratinidhi (representative, no fancy designations)

of Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust (KGNMT) which has been the rescue home for deserted, destitute and abandoned women under distressing situations. The 63-year-old academician used to run a school and has also worked as the Chairperson of CWC (Child Welfare Committee) previously. However, since 2002 she has been serving at KGNMT. The Trust is housed in Hydershakote, near Langar Houz. It was established in 1945 by Mahatma Gandhi to address the issues of women. It continues to live by the Gandhian principles of ahimsa, sustainability and independence.

SAFE SPACE

Today, the Trust supports 117 women including 23 senior citizens at Swadhar

Home, a destitute home for women in the KGNMT premises. “Even in 2024, there are women who are thrown out of their homes for delivering a girl child for the second or third time. Sometimes they have no other place to go, but homes such as these,” says Padmavathi. The Trust is run by funds from the state and center.

The home is a safe space for, young girls who have eloped from their homes and subsequently abandoned by their potential partner; women who have been declared mentally unstable; single moms with children and no support system; those who have faced domestic violence or have lost their loved ones and have been exploited and other such unfortunate circumstances.

STANDING UP FOR YOURSELVES

“They are provided with food and clean dormitories to stay in. We also impart education and vocational training that will help them stand on their feet in due course,” she adds. The women are trained in making paper and jute products, eco-friendly bags, tailoring, handicrafts, computer literacy etc. They follow the Gandhian philosophy of life and hence the products are sustainable and good for the environment. The Trust has also helped 10 women find their life partners and lead happy lives.

HOW CAN YOU HELP

- Direct abandoned women to their helpline 93910 11282
- Volunteer time with senior citizens, listen and talk to them in the evenings for a few hours
- Donate medicines, sarees, and other clothes (for all the inmates at one go and not in smaller numbers as it leads to feeling left out by those who haven’t got it)
- Sponsor a medical treatment or surgery
- Doctors and hospitals can volunteer weekly visits for health, heart, teeth, etc, and sponsor health camps for each ailment
- Buy fruits, groceries, mobile phones, etc for the needy women ■ MANJU

Tel: 93910 11282. WhatsApp to discuss what the inmates need
Check their work at <http://kgnmthyd.org6>

SPORTS CORNER

This young Hyderabad athlete is all set to conquer the world

Hyderabad's Gymnastic Sensation!



Nishka Agarwal, a 16-year-old gymnast and student at The Gaudium School, was first introduced to the sport at seven years. As a child, she did not think much of it other than as a fun/fitness activity that she got to explore at summer camps (at LB Stadium). However, as she neared the age of 12, and showed immense discipline and promise, with guidance from acclaimed gymnast Aruna Reddy and her now coach Manoj Rana, she began to consider taking up gymnastics professionally.

Born to Praveen and Aditi Agarwal, the Hyderabad athlete has won multiple gold medals within eight years. She has been awarded at district, state, national, and international levels in the junior category for artistic gymnastics, which includes four events namely table vault, balancing beam, uneven bar, and floor exercise.

THE ROUTINE

Nishka trains for nearly five to six hours a day. Her training involves hyper-stretching exercises divided into two sessions, one in the morning and the other in the evening. Regarding food intake, Nishka does not follow a strict diet but does make sure to avoid “junk food” and stick to proteins.

WINS SO FAR

Some of her recent gold medal hauls include ones for the Junior National Championship held at Odisha; the Khelo India Youth Games, in Chennai; and the International Pharaohs Cup for Artistic Gymnastics held in Cairo, Egypt. Of her one-of-a-kind experience in Cairo last year, the young prodigy who just transitioned into the senior category shares, “It felt like a new step for me, taking part internationally for the first time.”

STAYING GROUNDED

Being thrust upon the world stage has not just been a whirlwind of an experience for Nishka, but also for her parents who have been her supportive guardian angels doing everything they can to make sure their daughter lives out her dream. When asked how they help keep Nishka stay grounded, her mother Aditi shares, “Nishka has always been a very grounded child. Even when it came to studies, she was interested in it personally. The way she has managed it all has been beautiful to see.”

LINED-UP NEXT...

Moving forward, Nishka, who just finished her tenth board examination, will be seen continuing her schooling while gearing up for the Asian championship that will be held in May. After which she will be tirelessly preparing for the Commonwealth Games and the Olympics. ■ IPSHITA

In conversation with Sita and Yashna aka **Mrunal Thakur**, the gritty girl from small-town Maharashtra, who's today among the top stars of the Telugu industry

“My passion for storytelling drew me into movies”

“I intend to collaborate with NGOs, leveraging social media, and engaging with communities to initiate grassroots movements.”

PHOTOGRAPHER: @LEROIPHOTO
STYLIST: @SHEEFAGILANI
OUTFIT: @HOWWHENWEARCLOTHING @VBLITZCOMMUNICATIONS
ASSISTED BY: @ASTHA_KOTHARI @KARENAVINAIAK

She captivated audiences with her portrayal of Sita in *Sita Ramam*, leaving us spellbound. The moment she glanced back in a black handloom saree and a nose pin as Yashna in *Hi Nanna*, our hearts skipped a beat. Her involvement in a panel discussion on human trafficking, following an invitation from the UN, led us back to rewatch *Love Sonia*. **Mrunal Thakur**, both on and off screen, is a certified charmer.

Having been brought up in several towns such as Dhule, Nasik, and Nagpur, this talented storyteller always harbored a passion for acting. The 31-year-old college dropout started with modeling gigs during college. She eventually landed a role in the TV series *Kumkum Bhagya*, patiently awaiting her breakthrough, which came with the impactful role in *Love Sonia*. While she's been honing her craft since 2014 in both TV and film, it wasn't until *Sita Ramam* in Telugu in 2022 that she truly made her mark. Following her success as Yashna in *Hi Nanna*, she now has an exciting lineup of films, including *Family Star* with Vijay Deverakonda.

Beyond her acting prowess, Mrunal advocates for women's causes, earning her a platform at the UN. Undeniably, she's become a shining star in Tollywood. WOW! catches up with her to delve into her remarkable journey and explore what lies ahead.

Your performances often carry depth and authenticity. How do you prepare for your roles, particularly when delving into intense or emotionally challenging characters such as Yashna in *Hi Nanna*?

Thank you for the compliment. For *Hi Nanna*, I delved into the complexities of Yashna's character. I had to understand her position of having had memory loss but also having a deep innate sense of connection to the characters of her life gone by. Understanding her journey and the circumstances allowed me to bring authenticity to her portrayal, capturing the nuances of her emotional rollercoaster. In contrast, *Family Star* (releasing on April 5) required a different approach as it's a full-on *masala* family entertainer. Here, I focused on embodying the vivacious energy and larger-than-life emotions inherent in such films.

What initially drew you to the acting world, and how did your journey into Bollywood begin?

My passion for storytelling and the desire to portray diverse characters drew me into movies. Coming from a small village like Dhule in Maharashtra, I had



MANAGER: @AASHIANAHLUWALIA
 PHOTOGRAPHER: @RAHULJHANGIANI
 OUTFIT: @SHEEFAJGILANI
 MAKE-UP: @MAKEUPBYRIDDHIMA
 HAIR: @SOURAVV_ROY_
 LOCATION: @LOHONOSTAYS_

big dreams but limited opportunities. However, my determination and hard work led me to pursue a career in acting. My journey in Bollywood began with auditions, doing some modeling, and roles in television shows. My breakthrough came with the film *Love Sonia*, where I portrayed the character of Sonia. It's not every day a debutant gets a chance to essay the titular role.

From *Love Sonia* to *Super 30* and *Sita Ramam*, you've portrayed a diverse range of characters. Which role has been the most personally impactful for you, and why?

Playing Sonia in *Love Sonia* was a deeply impactful experience for me. It was emotionally intense, portraying the journey of a young girl caught in the harrowing world of human trafficking. The role demanded a lot emotionally, mentally, and physically, as I had to delve into the psyche of someone experiencing such trauma. It was a challenging yet rewarding opportunity to shed light on such an important issue through storytelling.

As a panel speaker on topics like human trafficking, how do you plan to use such platforms to raise awareness? What are

other social issues important to you?

First of all, I am thankful to the United Nations for giving me this opportunity to share my thoughts on a prestigious platform. Participating in a dialogue on human trafficking, and the impact of sexual violence on women offers a valuable platform to amplify awareness. My portrayal in *Love Sonia* enabled me to delve deep into the subject matter, providing me with first-hand insights into the girls in Kolkata's redlight area Sonagachi. Through such panels, I aim to spotlight the harrowing realities of human trafficking, emphasizing the need for collective action and policy reform. I intend to collaborate with NGOs, leveraging social media, and engaging with communities to initiate grassroots movements.

What can audiences expect from *Family Star* and what drew you to this script?

Family Star is a complete package of entertainment, blending action, romance, drama, and comedy seamlessly. Audiences can expect an exhilarating cinematic experience that resonates with the essence of family bonds and values. What drew me to this project was the script of the film. And also the opportunity to work alongside a talented

actor like Vijay Deverakonda, who brings a magnetic presence to the screen. Moreover, the director's vision for the film intrigued me, and I have full faith in his ability to deliver a compelling narrative.

How has your approach to acting evolved over the years, and what lessons have you learned along the way?

Over the years, I've learned the importance of versatility and depth in portraying characters, honing my skills through diverse roles and experiences. I've also learned the significance of patience, perseverance, and continuous growth in this industry.

From the vibrant streets of Hyderabad to the bustling sets of Bollywood, how has your cultural background influenced your career and artistic choices?

Hyderabad has influenced my career and artistic choices. My journey began with my first Telugu film, *Sita Ramam*, which allowed me to immerse myself in the rich culture and traditions of Hyderabad. The warmth and hospitality of the

people, the diverse environment, the delicious food, and the vibrant cultural scene all left a lasting impact on me. Being a Maharashtrian working in Hindi cinema, I have always cherished the unique perspective and experiences that my cultural background brings to my work. It has instilled in me a deep appreciation for diversity and a willingness to embrace new challenges and opportunities. Transitioning between Hyderabad and Mumbai has been both exhilarating and enriching for me. I enjoy the contrast between the two cities and the different energies they bring to my life and work.

Are there any dream roles or genres you aspire to explore in the future?

Being a huge Marvel fan, the idea of being part of a *Marvel* movie is incredibly exciting to me. I would love to also do a biopic or a full-blown action role.

Balancing a demanding career with a personal life can be challenging. How do you prioritize self-care and maintain a

sense of balance amidst your busy schedule?

I maintain a balanced diet, focusing on nutritious foods that fuel my body and mind. Additionally, regular workouts to stay physically fit and relieve stress. I also make it a point to indulge in healthy eating habits and incorporate home remedies to address minor health concerns. By prioritizing self-care in these ways, I can perform at my best, both personally and professionally.

What advice would you give aspiring actors, especially those from smaller cities or backgrounds similar to yours, who are looking to break into the industry?

Follow your passion relentlessly. Despite the challenges and obstacles you may encounter, don't stop dreaming. Stay focused on your goals and not let negative factors demotivate you. Believe in yourself, hone your craft, and trust that your talent and dedication will eventually lead you to where you want to be in the industry. ■ MANJU



PHOTOGRAPHER: @ART_FILM_PRODUCTION
STYLING, HAIR AND MAKEUP: @MRUNALTHAKUR

QUICK TAKE

Mrunal in three hashtags:
#GlamorAndGrounded
#AlwaysAWorkInProgress
#Gratitude

A myth about Mrunal that is flying around and you want to clarify: That I am getting married. This news springs up every other month according to the media (it's always a LOL moment for me)

Upcoming movies/projects/web series: *Pooja Meri Jaan*, *Family Star*, and there are three other films I have just signed, one of which will go on floors in April.

Three social media stars whose posts you love to see: Priyanka Chopra, Deepika Padukone and Ayushmann Khurrana

Three apps that you often use (besides WhatsApp and Instagram): Twitter, YouTube and Netflix.

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HST Treatment



Donor Area: Picture after 9 months



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WOW! catches up with politician and entrepreneur **Vishweshwar Reddy**, who is contesting from Chevella in the upcoming general elections

“I am an engineer-politician”



A parliamentarian from the Chevella constituency in the 16th Lok Sabha, politician, and former MP Vishweshwar Reddy, made an impact when he spoke on a wide range of topics, from biogas to solar energy. He also introduced three private member bills and combined passion with facts and sound knowledge of polity.

Today, as he stands to fight another election on a BJP ticket, we catch the suave politician at his candid best. From speaking about surface tension to the beauty of Palaash flowers, he is that rare Indian politician who can hold forth about any topic under the sun. Grandson of Konda Venkata Ranga Reddy, former deputy chief minister of the state and after whom the district of Ranga Reddy is named, he comes from an illustrious legacy.

In a freewheeling chat, he speaks about his early years, the ideology that shaped his life, and confesses that, at heart, he is like any other doting grandfather! Edited excerpts from an interview.

“I always like to say that I am an engineer-politician. I want to use my education for social benefit and cannot get the engineer out of me.”

Belonging to a political family (as your grandfather was a deputy CM and your uncle Chenna Reddy was a former chief minister), was politics always on the cards?

Not really. My foray coincided with the agitation for a separate state of Telangana. Earlier, my knowledge of politics was always on the lower side. It is true that my grandfather was in politics even before Indian independence and was an MLC under Nizam’s rule. He was in Congress and was one of the most popular and enigmatic politicians of the day.

He was an extremely successful lawyer who was consulted by the aristocracy of the day and a Persian scholar who was fluent both in Urdu and Telugu.

However, he dissuaded all his children (seven sons and six daughters) from joining politics and encouraged them to be teachers, lawyers, doctors, or engineers. I was brought up in a political household, but he never really wanted me to enter politics. But then, fate had other plans.

Tell us about your life before politics.

I always like to say that I am an engineer-politician. I want to use my education for social benefit and cannot get the engineer out of me. (laughs) Having studied at Guindy Engineering College and the New Jersey Institute of Technology, I wanted to work for a small company so that I could get a 360-degree view of a business. I worked with Malwin Electronics, which is into manufacturing flight simulator instruments, for some time before moving back to India.

How has your time in the US shaped you?

My time in the US was eye-opening. I observed that contrary to popular belief in India, American society does value family, just differently. They focus heavily on children's upbringing until college; contrasting with some traditional perspectives in India where children's needs tend to be overlooked. Also, the concept of dignity of labor; every job is respected and dignified, showcasing that each culture has its merits and flaws.

When I became an MP, there was a lot of discussion about government schools in Telangana. The issue was that the toilets were extremely unhygienic, and forget using them, you wouldn't want to pass by them. An idea was mooted that new toilets should be built which I shot down saying that unless they are maintained they would meet the same fate.

In Chevella, I went to government schools and cleaned toilets for a week. I think that is the biggest achievement of my political life as I helped to shed a social stigma, as no one does that. It was a change maker and people started to understand that it was a job like any other. Had I not gone to the US and recognized the dignity of labor in every job, I would have not been able to do that.

Is it possible to make progress without hindering the environment?

Absolutely. When there was a movement to remove Banyan trees in Chevella for road widening, I made a video about it. When the GO 111 came up last year (which removed protections to prevent



construction in the catchment areas of Osman Sagar and Himayat Sagar reservoirs), we did a lot of work; in fact, I went to hundreds of villages and understood the issues from both sides. While environmentalists were worried about damage to ecology, people wanted development. I met experts, acquired knowledge, and found out that sustainable development was the key. If there is a will, there is a way.

What are the challenges you face?

The reality is that the concept of the greater good is harsh. It does a lot of harm to small stakeholders. Many challenges keep one intellectually and emotionally occupied when you try to ensure that no one is at a loss. As much as I hate spending time away from my grandkids, this need to find solutions makes my job worthwhile.

Many worry that the BJP is not syncretic in its approach and is not inclusive.

Absolutely not. It is mostly misunderstood from the way the media portrays us. Hindutva has no bearing on or connection with any religion. It was coined by Veer Savarkar, and the founder of the RSS, KB Hegdewar, was a fan of Savarkar and co-opted the philosophy. Both were atheists, so how can we possibly be religious-minded? Hindutva means nationalism, and every single one of the BJP's policies benefits all sections of the population.

Do you miss your earlier life, considering that politics is a 24x7 occupation?

I don't. But I often wonder if it is worth being in politics. Personally, no. If you are sensitive, it's very difficult, as you have

to go around with a smile no matter how you feel. I also had the greatest of times with my three boys and want to spend time with my grandchildren, but the one thing about politics is that it has helped me to do something I enjoy the most—learn new things. I learned a lot that I otherwise wouldn't have learned from books or exposure to society, be it agriculture, irrigation, weather, or wildlife preservation. It expands your horizons every day.

How confident are you of victory?

Extremely confident of victory. I started my campaign six months ago; I just have to keep up the tempo. ■ MALLIK

QUICK TAKE

Off time: Love spending with my two-year-old grandson and seven-month-old granddaughter. I also enjoy boating and kayaking.

Recent hobby: I love music and recently started learning the drums.

New discovery: Short videos on Carnatic and Hindustani music especially the new age music like Maati Baani and Agam.

Sports I like: Basketball and hockey, and of course, cricket.



This new restaurant addresses the nostalgia for waning Hyderabadi dishes

An Ode to Hyderabadi Dishes

Situated in Madhapur, **House of Bagaara**, puts back the spotlight on Hyderabadi dishes like *Bagaara Khaana*, a Hyderabadi tempered rice specialty, which is gradually losing its former sheen to its more influential cousins, the *Hyderabadi Dum Biryani* and *Haleem*.

“Growing up as a kid in Hyderabad, Sundays meant a meal of *Bagaara Rice* with *Khatti Daal*. This simple combo spells nostalgia for most Hyderabadis, but is gradually getting lost in the commercial clout around *Biryani* and *Haleem*. In a conscious gesture, we thought it apt to name our restaurant after *Bagaara* to evoke that touch of Hyderabadi nostalgia. So, while we have all the Hyderabadi dishes ranging from *Dum ka Gosht Biryani* to *Paya Shorba*, *Shikampurs* and *Patthar ka Gosht*, we definitely have *Bagaara* served with *Khatti Daal*,” says the young and enthusiastic founder Maninee Reddy.

Interestingly, Maninee’s father hailed from the Old City and she lived in the vibrant Hyderabadi environs of Charminar until she was three. Furthermore, she was a vegetarian until marriage. It was her husband, Srikar, who convinced her to try meat dishes, especially in the Hyderabadi repertoire.

Our visit to HoB had us trying the *Mutton Shorba*, which we loved. Its broth was light and clear with the well-

cooked meat chunks adding both body and texture. For starters, we sampled the *Royal Lamb Chops* grilled on tandoor and *Patthar ka Gosht*. We suggest you don’t miss these delicacies. However, our personal favorite was *Sauteed Prawns*. They were absolutely scrumptious: fresh, hot, crisp and crunchy, with a garlicky aftertaste.

Haleem here is a standout, it melts in the mouth while retaining its typical porridge texture and the meat is perfectly blended with wheat and spices. We had to absolutely have the *Bagaara Rice* (it is available in three combos, *Tala Hua Chicken*, *Telangana Mutton* or *Bagaara Baingan*). We opted for *Tala Hua Chicken* with a bit of *Mutton Dalcha*. Despite protesting tummies, we tried a spoonful of *Hyderabadi Biryani*, it was perfection personified, long-grained rice in an aromatic medley of meat and spices and steaming hot!

Vegetarians must try the vegetable *Shikampurs*, they do pack a punch! There are plenty of vegetarian soups, salads, starters and main course options. Continental and Mediterranean dishes also feature on the menu, like sea salt and olive oil *Hummus*, *Falafel* and *Mushroom Rekak*, as well as sizzlers.

The desserts here are worth a try, especially the *Osmania Banoffee*, presented in a bottle, with an Osmania

cookie providing crusty and flaky crumbs finish to the banana pie. The *Apricot Delight* is more like a pastry with apricot goodness oozing out of the layers.

They also have a tea menu between 3 and 7 pm, including *Suleimani*, *Irani* and other teas. They can be sipped with an array of short eats like *Bun Maska*, *Mutton Lakhmi*, *Pyaz ke Pakode* and *Osmania cookies*. ■ SWATI

Meal for two: Rs 1,500 and above

The Square, Inorbit Mall Road, Durgam Cheruvu, beside Vijetha Supermarket, Madhapur
Tel: 89776 05992
Timings: 12 noon to 11 pm



WOW!
Recommends
Lamb's Chop and
Bagaara Rice



A hole-in-the-wall joint offers non-veg dishes with dosa and vada in Gachibowli

Tiffin with a twist



At 7:00 am every morning, when the city is still waking up, the rush at **Pallekodi Pullatlu** is just winding down, and we get lucky when a spot opens up in the seating section.

Planned to primarily cater to the IT crowd, near DLF Campus in Gachibowli, the small self-service hole-in-the-wall joint spreads over a 1,000 sq. ft. It consists of a kitchen and seating/standing tables on the ground floor.

“Post Covid, in 2022, with offices gradually reopening, and people coming back from hometowns, the concept of home style food had caught on. However, South Indian breakfasts were still the standard vegetarian tiffin,” explains the owner, Sai Kumar N.

A foodie himself and seeking variety, Sai veered towards *Pullatlu*, an Andhra and Telangana breakfast staple as his base offering. He further combined it with non-vegetarian curries that are made in many Telugu homes.

BEYOND CHUTNEY AND SAMBAR

One bite into what looks like a *dosa*, but definitely isn't, and it is clear what the fuss is all about. A complete contrast from the crispy, golden *dosas*. These tangy and succulent, yet well-cooked,

fermented thicker crepe cousins are balanced well with spicy mutton curry. We tried the soft and fluffy *Parathas* with *Chettinad Chicken* and *Tomato Chutney*, which is surprising but yet another well-made match.

The fresh *masalas* are brought in from Guntur. This restaurant not only wants to be true to the recipes of the hinterlands but also wants to provide an authentic experience at affordable prices.

Jostling for space but not in the diversity of options, they also offer interesting options like *Kheema Atlu*, *Egg Parotta* and *Egg Chappatis*. These can be further combined with any of the curries, including *Paaya* and specials like *Gongura Boti*. Our favorite and highly recommended, is the unique combination of *Nelluri Chepala Pulusu* with *dosa*. These can be tried with the, melt-in-the-mouth, *Ragendi* or *Rohu* fish in an authentic tamarind gravy.

■ SRUJANA

Meal for two: Rs 250

Gate 1, DLF Area, Gachibowli

Tel: 96869 44779

Timings: 4 am to Midnight on all days

Instagram: @pallekodipullatlu



WOW! explores **Litti Singh**, a Bihari specialty stall

Authentic Thela Food

It took just one Instagram reel to have the Hyderabadis making a beeline to this street food stall. Litti Singh was founded in late 2023 by four IT professionals Tushar Anand, Amrita Bhalerao, Rahul Kumar Singh and Vinita Kumari. Inspired by the Mahadev Litti Chokha stall in Benares, near Varuna Bridge, this vegetarian eatery gets busier after 6 pm for the thela-vibe, says Tushar.

Cook Abhi treats us to the *chokha*, a curry made of potato, brinjal and tomato. The *Litti* is made of wheat flour dough stuffed with a mixture of *sattu* (chickpea flour) and roasted on charcoal. The vegetarian dish can be eaten with and without ghee.

All it takes is one bite to realize we have been served something special. Naturally hot and crispy, the *Litti* turns soft once dipped into the spicy coriander *chutney* and some *Benarasi Achaar*. This is why Litti Singh's loyal customers come from all over the city. Distance does not seem to be an issue as some people travel 50 kms just to get a taste of the Chokha. The only downside is the wait time as the cook makes it fresh right there. This is not much of an ask as the food is ultimately worth the wait. Moving forward, the owners are planning to expand and open more stalls across the city. ■ IPSHITA

Meal for two: Rs 200

High-Tension Line Rd, Park Avenue

Colony, Raja Rajeshwara Nagar,

Kondapur

Tel: 89856 54533

Timings: 6 pm to 11:30 pm

HOME CHEFS

Meet this homemaker who sends homemade *pandaga* treats fit for *naivedyam* to your doorstep for *Ugadi*

Festive treats



WOW!
Recommends
 Chintapandu Pulihora

It started as a small home venture two years ago in August 2021, the second wave of Covid. A neighbor was celebrating *Varalakshmi Vratam* and she had trouble sourcing authentic festive food – fit for God’s offering – at short notice. Today, **G Radhika** spends almost all the festive mornings cooking yummy

prasadam, homestyle in and around Kukatpally from her little home venture.

“My specialty is cooking food with Telugu Brahminical flavors,” she says, complimenting her mother who passed on the culinary skills to her. Even though there are many restaurants where one can order food, she says that the foodies still love authentic homemade food for festivals like *Ugadi* and *Sree Ramanavami*. April is going to be a busy month for me,” she says.

Radhika her daughter Harika and cousin Keethana are the team who rustle up festive treats such as *pulihora*, *daddojanam*, *chakkara pongali*, *minapa garelu*, *payasam* and other traditional delicacies on demand. “My clients love my food as I continue to use old-style slow cooking without shortcuts or pre-made powders,” she states.

Most of her clients also host *parentams* (get-togethers in the evening) with the ladies of the locality dropping by in the evening. So, Radhika also makes pretty-looking *tamboolam* bags in jute and cotton with traditional motifs,



rangolis, *mudras*, and Gods. “My creativity in cooking and handicrafts makes this a sustainable business,” she says. One can also strike a deal for the food, savories, snacks, and bags as a package. ■ MANJU

Price: Minimum order: Half kg; Order not less than Rs 1,500
 Delivery charges extra, based on distance
Tamboolam bags start at Rs 50 per bag. Minimum order is 50 bags.

Timings: Orders have to be placed and advance paid by 5 pm a day before for food and one week for bags and snacks
 Tel: 97049 16629

WOW! DISCOVERS

A little nook in Malkajgiri serves hot, fluffy Kerala *parottas* that Hyderabadis are devouring by the thousands every day

Parotta paradise

They’ve been around for 36 years now, catering to the Tamil populace living in and around Malkajgiri, Secunderabad. But today, **Sri Andal Mixture and Tiffins** has become a ‘viral *parotta* point’ after their 2,000-*parottas*-a-day news (not to be confused with Punjabi *paratha*) leaked out a few months ago, thanks to Instagram food influencers.

Two white Kerala *parottas* served hot with a generous helping of gravy-rich *spicy soya chunk curry* (Mealmaker *korma*) for Rs 45 sounds like a steal. While this longstanding snack shop has been a sanctuary for regular South Indian *tiffins* like *idli* and *dosa*, it’s the evening *parottas* they introduced four years ago that have truly become their standout offering. This vegetarian stand-and-eat quick service place fits about 20 people at a time, but the long queue of

hungry customers prefer to take their plates and stand and devour them near the two-wheeler parking stand.

KNEAD, POUND, STACK

Made with copious amounts of oil, the dough undergoes a rigorous process. It is kneaded, pounded and flattened right there by three expert cooks while the fourth cooks the *parottas*, with another generous dousing of oil. He then flips it deftly, stacking them one upon the other while the other chef gives it a fluffy appearance by scrunching and twisting it. Watching how they cook while you devour the *parottas* is a sensory experience.

The little street also has a food ecosystem comprising sugarcane juice, *badam milk*, *soda* and softy ice cream, so wash down the spicy curry with these



WOW!
Recommends
 Kerala Parotta

sweet beverages costing Rs 20. For Rs 65 including the *parottas*, you can go home in a happy food coma. ■ MANJU

Meal for two: Rs 90 (two medium-size *parottas* for Rs 45)

Andal Mixture Point,
 East Anand Bagh, Malkajgiri
 Tel: 78931 45421

Pro tip: Eat fresh, don’t opt for takeaway or delivery as the *parotta* becomes hard and stringy

Shahi Andaaz Sadiyon Ka Riwaaz


THE
GOLKONDA
RESORTS & SPA
GANDIPET, HYDERABAD

The proud traditions of Hyderabad's culinary artistry are on display at Jewel of Nizam - The Minar, where our chefs curate masterpieces for your palate.



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Reserve Your Table



THE MINAR
Hyderabadi Fine Dining

Roast CCX stands out as a trailblazer in Hyderabad's café scene, pioneering unique experiences

Brewing Success with a Dash of Innovation



WOW!
Recommends
 Prawn
 Dragon Roll

Naineni Hanumanth's journey from launching his first franchise in 2014 to establishing Roast CCX as Hyderabad's largest café is a tale of innovation and bold ventures, setting industry firsts and delighting patrons from dawn till dusk with a modern chic vibe. Hosting hands-on workshops, by master bakers of international repute, for not just their staff but also for anyone from the fraternity! It was the first all-night café (until that was restricted) and is the only upscale café that starts serving from 6 am. Roast CCX – Coffee & Culinary Xperience is the largest café in Hyderabad, and possibly India, with a 500+ seating, indoors and outdoors.

THE COFFEE EXPERIENCE

In yet another first, Roast boasts of a Loring S70 which is India's first air roasting machine of this capacity. This beast of a machine can roast a whopping 400 kilos of coffee beans per hour. With a capacity that large there are imminent plans of retailing roasted coffee beans. The Coffee bar is equipped with cold brew towers and has cold brew on tap! Once we got

past the heady aroma of the roasting beans and settled down, we asked for a coffee sampler.

The sampler shots are great to get a taste of what your palate would appreciate. We sampled the *Guava cold brew*, *Baileys Irish Cream*, *Red Honey Cold brew*, *Tender Coconut Brew*, *Coffee Lemonade*, and *Arabica Cold Brew*; loved the first three. We couldn't resist indulging in the pour-over experience created with meticulous attention to detail at our table. The precise measuring, timing, and percolating by the experienced in-house Barista, Urvaksh, was fascinating to watch.

Apart from coffee, there is also a variety of *Kambouchas*, *Bobba tea*, *Gelato shakes*, *hot chocolate*, and more. We tried the *Chocolate Hazelnut Frappe* and highly recommend it.

THE CULINARY DELIGHTS

We tried the chef's recommendations from the extensive global menu. Chef Amey Vast, an old hand at creating culinary magic wowed us with an array

of dishes. Every dish was so artfully presented that we felt a tad bit guilty disturbing the dish! We had *Avocado Tartare*, *Spinach & Soba Salad*, *Chicken Shish Tawook*, *Irani Biryani*, *Batata Harra*, *Sushi - Prawn Dragon Roll* and *Spicy Avocado Mamenoori* and *Nalli Nahari*. It is quite tough to pick a favorite from all we tasted but the beautifully done *Batata Harra* just stood out for the sheer perfection of a dish that seemed so simple and yet the flavour was unforgettable. We ended our meal with a round of superbly crafted gelatos that Roast is well known for.

NOT JUST A CAFÉ

Roast CCX is set to launch a private banquet space, Chef's table events, private theatre, coffee brewing master classes, and a baking academy. ■ SUPRIYA

Meal for two: Rs 2,000+

GAR, Laxmi Pinnacle, BNR Colony, Venkat Nagar, Banjara Hills
 Tel: 80961 16999
 Timings: 8 am to 11.30 pm / 6 am to 2 am until Ramzan



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A little eatery in Madhapur has tweaked the regular south Indian tiffins for the Gen X-ers

What the shell?

While we can't comment on the new viral video of Watermelon Rice, we can vouch that another 'viral' delicacy of 2020 - coconut shell idli is not just tasty, but also sustainable. Apparently, the coconut shell that is otherwise discarded can be used thrice to steam this south staple. The newly-opened vegetarian South-Indian cafe **Swaad of South** serves one such iteration of the humble *idli*.

This Madhapur cafe, next to Image Hospitals, offers both stand-and-eat options and seating arrangements, catering to patrons looking for a swift indulgence in South Indian delicacies. The self-service billing kiosk is a highlight, eliminating the need to queue for a token and enhancing the overall customer experience.

The *Coconut Shell Idli* comes in the shell and you eat it directly, scooping it. It had a mild taste of coconut (as it has grated coconut too) and tasted novel. They also have the *Ghee Podi Karam Thatte Idli* (as big as a side plate) with a generous helping of *karam podi* and *ghee*. However, it is the *Open Butter Masala Dosa* that we loved.

This unapologetic *dosa* (open and not folded) comes with the Karnataka-style mushy potato *masala* and a big mound of butter the size of a small *katori* as the jewel crown perched on top of the *masala*. Set aside your thoughts on dieting and dig right in. For the Telugus who love food spicier than their Karnataka counterparts, they have four kinds of *karappodis* on the tables.

The *Malabar Parotta* with spicy *Soya Korma* appears to be the superstar of the evening menu with almost everyone opting for it. Wash it down with their special *Madurai Jigarthanda*. Hyderabadis are just about warming up to this thick and filling Tamil summer cooler made of milk, sugar and almonds. Some innovations in our regular fare are always welcome.

■ MANJU

Meal for two: Rs 250

Sriram Plaza, Adjacent to Image Hospitals, Vittal Rao Nagar, Madhapur
Tel: 89770 39013
Timings: 7 am to 11 pm



WOW!
 Recommends
 Open Butter
 Masala Dosa



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WOW!
Recommends:
Traditional
Indian art wall
decor

A sensory feast with drama at every turn awaits one at **Yellow Verandah**

Bringing Indian crafts to life

The name may sound familiar and yet, you may not be able to recall where you know **Yellow Verandah** from. The reason being, this niche online brand has been steadily growing over the past six years. It has now finally opened this 4,000 sq. ft. store in Banjara Hills. “We had outgrown our earlier kiosks and store set-up and wanted to offer more to our customers,” says Shubhamoy Sinha, who co-founded this brand along with Ajay Kundalia.

From wall decor to furniture and everything in between, the striking store has been designed and executed by the dynamic duo. They believe in a bootstrapped approach, exuding their ethos of bringing together traditional Indian art and contemporary interior design.

Previously a Kindergarten school, this bungalow has been thoughtfully reconverted to create an open floor layout. Amongst mounted *Kalighat* paintings, *Pichwai* wall frames and *Jharokha* mirrors you will find arched walls acting as both entry ways and partitions differentiating the zones. The casement windows bring in natural light and the intentional nooks interspersed in the space offer a brief respite from the sensory overload.

The original roof structure has been retained and given different treatments

at every turn, with embossed wallpaper, textured painting and even contemporary box lighting accompanied by reclaimed old wooden columns. The message of the founders and designers of this store is very clear, that maximalism is embraced in every shape, form and color.

THE SHOWSTOPPERS

They have not only sourced pieces from old scrap sales but also built a network of *karigars* and grassroots community of tradesmen, from Kashmir to Kerala. They are also working with production houses locally as it gives their products not just the authenticity of craftsmanship, but the panache of artwork. A great example of customization is the brass *Varahi* or boar head mounted on thick brocade with a red and gold designer frame. It truly represents the finesse of mounting and attention to design and detail.

The limited inventory on the website belies the extensive product range that they carry in the store. Chandeliers from Firozabad, brassware from Gujarat and Tamil Nadu, bespoke wooden furniture with brass embossing from reclaimed bullock carts, are some of the unique product ranges.

ART WITH HEART

The entrepreneurs, who shifted gears from working with MNCs to setting up this quintessentially Indian art

centric business, believe that Indian craftsmanship is like no other. Especially the sheer variety it offers in every small cross section across a region, with nuanced differences that change the outcomes.

In the future the founders also want this space to be a nexus of community, culture and art. They have even set up a *Rangmanch* or stage, for intimate by-invitation only, performances of lesser-known artists. ■ SRUJANA

Prices: Wall Decor at Rs. 2,000 onwards and furniture at Rs. 14,000 onwards
 Banjara Sevalal Bhavan, Road No. 10, Banjara Hills

Tel: 96180 49302

Timings: 10:30 am to 9 pm on all days

Instagram: @yellowverandahofficial



In a world where the choice is between cheap fast fashion and expensive sustainable labels, this pre-loved clothes platform is unique in more ways than one

Thrifty and thriving!



Born out of a need to extend the life of a child's *lehenga*, the brand **Punarvi Closet**, which literally means to be reborn, was set up three years ago. What started out as an attempt to make more space in a closet, led to a showcase on YouTube. It was an astounding success as most of the clothes advertised were sold out. WOW! spoke to Punarvi's founder Sahaja Madhuri, who moved back to India for good a few months ago. It was an eye opener as Sahaja talked about how she overcame the seemingly insurmountable pile of used clothes.

NEW LEASE OF LIFE

Indians are socially active and love to stand out. However, occasion wear is not always affordable, at least not justifiably so to be worn just once. With pictures shared on various apps like Instagram, Facebook and WhatsApp, one cannot risk being caught in the same outfit.

One cannot keep buying expensive items, wearing them once and hoarding till the next gen is ready. Not to mention the lack of unlimited funds, closet space and the time taken

to maintain them. Even if one can surmount these odds, the clothes may be too outdated to be worn by the next gen. This is the gap that Punarvi Closet fills with a special platform for all those purchases that we cannot always justify, reuse and store.

FACTS AND FIGURES

When it was first set up as an Insta page, it hit 10K followers within a week. Soon it was streamlined into two websites one for India and the other for the USA. The brand is now a full-fledged e-commerce website. With a marginal fee of three percent for the buyer and a minimum of 15 percent of the marked product price from the sellers, the platform acts as a marketplace to bring together like-minded fashionistas.

While buying on the platform is like any other, the seller would need to ship the product within three days of the sale and upload the tracking details on the website. This is critical to ensure the buyer is assured about the veracity of the platform. Sahaja explains that

while the products are expected to be in pristine condition and damage free, it is 'the team's diligent attention to detail' that is the key in this endeavor.

HOW IT WORKS

If you want to sell your 10-year-old *Paithani* saree with a custom made *Zardozi* blouse, you will need to:

- Register your details in the Products section and "Add a new Product" with complete details, like fabric, size, number of times worn
- Upload at least three high-resolution images of the saree
- The Punarvi team approves the outfit and price
- After it is sold, the outfit is shipped and the tracking ID is updated on the website by the seller
- After the buyer confirms receiving the package, the payment to the seller is processed by Team Punarvi ■ SRUJANA

Details:

India: <https://in.ourpunarvi.com>
 USA: www.ourpunarvi.com
 Instagram: @closet_punarvi
 Price: Rs. 1,000 onwards

WOW! DISCOVERS

Hoarding a priceless pair of shoes or a bag that's seen better days, yet not quite ready for the bin? We've got just the fix for you

Clean Kicks and Washed Wallets



This luxury laundry studio founded by Malavika Rao and Tauseef Altamash, stems from their quest for a trusted provider who would shower their precious and expensive sneakers or bags and even haute couture, with the same TLC as them.

A sneaker head himself, Tauseef realized that there was a dearth of professional cleaning services in the city for accessories and sneakers and thus was born, **High & Dry**, a high-end, discerning laundry service provider.

As a business founded on social media and grown through word of mouth, the studio has had many clients in the past three years, seeking services from simple cleaning and washing to restoration of their prized accessories and designer wear, with occasional customization requests.

This niche boutique studio spread across 1,500 sq. ft., has sustainability built

into its founding ethos. They take pride in their manual cleaning process with environmentally responsible products which are also good for their small but meticulous team who are perfectionists with a keen eye for detailing.

Every part of the product gets the TLC it deserves. That sneaker sole? Scrubbed spotless. The tiniest zipper on a bag? Polished to a gleam. Every component is checked, cleaned, polished, and buffed until it is back to looking top-notch, just as it did (or as close as possible) when you first laid eyes on it!

"We do offer the rare pick-up and drop services, but as a business founded on Social media, with Instagram and WhatsApp, we prefer interacting with customers as they come in and drop off their products and tell us their concerns, which helps us in better attending to their valuable products", states Tauseef.

■ SRUJANA

Repair Prices: Rs 1,000 onwards

Road No 3, AK Enclave, Banjara Hills

Tel: 95500 04694

Timings: 10:30 am to 7:30 pm; Mon to Sat

Instagram: @highanddrystudio

A new store with over 500 artisans onboard opens in the city

Ethnic elegance

WOW!
Recommends:
Kajal's scarlet saree



Glamour can be accessible to everyone. This is the message from **Kalki**, Mumbai's renowned ethnic Indian designer brand, as it launches its debut store in Hyderabad (and its sixth across India). Situated at Aan Global, Banjara Hills, the boutique aims to reignite the excitement of dressing up for Indian celebrations.

The 15-year-old brand with its flagship store in Santa Cruz, Mumbai, specializes in ethnic wear and bridal designer wear to offer an entire spectrum of *lehengas*, gowns, *kurtis*, bridal couture, wedding-guest collection, accessories, kids, and men's ethnic wear. Actor Kajal Aggarwal who opened the store in March was the cynosure of all eyes as she strutted around in a fusion scarlet red saree adorned with shimmering sequins and delicately crafted cuff sleeve furs. Perfect for glamorous occasions, it gracefully blends sophistication and allure, ensuring you stand out.

A magnificent 6x7 feet artwork frame, curated by Kalki's artisans, at the entrance, sets the tone for the high-end glamorous and classy fare they have in the store. The store has a chic European vibe with massive French windows.

Nishit Gupta, Director of Kalki, says, the 13,000 square feet of signature shopping experience is not just for clothes but also accessories, such as belts, bridal purses, and footwear. We loved their assortment of intricately layered *lehengas* priced under Rs 25,000. The styles are a blend of occasion wear that's pocket-friendly, repeatable, and comfortable to wear and stow away. Among them, the standout is a radiant yellow printed *lehenga* set adorned with exquisite *Gota Patti* work, priced at Rs. 11,892, ideal for a summer wedding.

"The brand has 500 artisans on board and makes customized designs for the wearer, making it a bespoke experience," he adds. Actor Jahnvi Kapoor recently walked the ramp in Kalki's Inara collection at the LIFW event last month.

■ MANJU

Price: On request

Aan Global, Road No. 10, Banjara Hills,

Tel: 40452 09977

Timing: 11 am to 8 pm on all days

Price: Rs. 3,000 onwards

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Discover the art of Dorodongo or indulge in wine-tasting sessions. Let's make this summer unforgettable!

MANJU LATHA KALANIDHI, IPSHITA RAMAN AND SRUJANA NALAM

Fun under the sun

SUMMER ACTIVITIES



Summer is here, but we promise to make it cool for you by listing out an array of fun activities that will help you optimize the time you get in summer, whether you are a student, employee, or homemaker. Moving beyond the usual summer activities such as arts, crafts, and music, we tell you where to go on a date night painting workshop, where you can learn the Japanese art of Dorodongo (go, Google it), from *Bhagavadgita* classes to wine tasting classes. Are you ready for some fun under the sun?



WHAT: INDOOR SKY DIVING

Where: GravityZip, Gooncha Hills, beside CBIT College, Gandipet

Timings: 11 am to 8 pm

Why: Its indoor sky diving tunnel simulates the experience of sky diving, but in a safe and controlled simulated environment creating the heart-pounding free fall experience of 10,000 feet from the ground.

Fee: Rs. 1,625 for a group of four. Look for better deals during workdays and also for corporate bookings

Tel: 80692 52408; @gravityzipskydriving on Instagram

Tip: Do the activity before your meal



WHAT: ROCKCLIMBING AND ROUTE-SETTING CLASSES

Where: Crag Studio

Timings: All days, hourly classes from 6 am to 9 am and evenings from 4 pm to 9 pm; they also have weekend classes

Why: Hyderabad is blessed with boulders that are the pride of India. The rock climbing activity helps the citizens learn the skills indoors that they can extrapolate on the city's rocks. Route setting is another added skill that helps those who are looking for a side hustle organizing rock climbing sessions in the city. Route-setting classes teach the participants the 5C principles of rock climbing - climbing, creativity, carpentry, common sense, and calculative risk.

Fee: Rs. 12,000

Tel: 91009 44539 @cragstudio on Instagram

Tip: The activity blends a workout with adventure and outdoor vibes

WHAT: HORSE RIDING, EQUESTRIAN AND POLO

Where: Hyderabad Polo Riding Club, Near Mrugavani Resort and Spa, Aziz Nagar Village, Gandipet

Timings: Various timings on weekdays and weekends, starts 6 am

Why: The club houses a full-fledged, state-of-the-art infrastructure including a fully equipped equestrian center offering everything from polo and show-jumping to horse riding.

Fee: Through membership only

Membership: Temporary is Rs 2 lakh and Rs. 10 lakh for permanent. Membership is open for horse riding enthusiasts

Tel: 91770 00056. Website: www.hprc.in

Tip: Horse riding is known to energize mind, body, and soul as horses are known to be empathetic beings that can soothe you if you are agitated

WHAT: DORODANGO WORKSHOP

Where: Gaiaa Living, Senor Colony, Film Nagar

Timings: 3.30 pm to 6.30 pm

Why: Dorodango (meaning mud dumplings) is the Japanese art of polishing dirt/mud into a shiny ball. In this activity, participants mix the earth (clay) with water, mold and polish it to create a delicate shiny sphere resembling a billiard ball. Green architect Yamini Gurjar, the co-founder of Natural Building Collective conducts these workshops in Hyderabad and she conducted one in March and will conduct again this summer.



Fee: Rs. 375 for kids and Rs 600 for adults

Tel: 9550006577, @gaiaaliving on Instagram

Tip: Focus on the conversations around mud/earth rather than just the final product



WHAT: DATE NIGHT PAINTING CLASS

Where: Trailing Ivy Cafe, RBI Colony, Guttala Begumpet, Kavuri Hills

Timings: Across the weekends noons and evenings

Why: These two-hour weekend sessions are designed for couples who have long weekends, but are looking for a relaxing couple activity in the city. The couple combines their creative forces to paint something meaningful that they can proudly take back home and hang up in their drawing room, as a token of their relationship.

Fee: Rs. 1,299

Tel: 099494 31144 and www.bookmyshow.com



WHAT: SMARTPHONE PHOTOGRAPHY - PRO MODE

Where: Ameenpur Lake, Miyapur Road Hyderabad, Also available online via Zoom classes

Timings: Flexible, two hours from April 1 to May 29

Why: Santhosh Kasturi, founder and trainer of Photofountain, conducts these smartphone photography workshops, online and offline for photo enthusiasts. The course teaches one how to operate the Pro Mode in the native smartphone camera application, i.e., controlling the subject's focus and exposure dynamically respective to different photography genres and lighting conditions while also considering the best quality of the image. This course is for beginners and professionals, for both Android & iOS users.

Fee: Rs. 3,000 onwards

Tel: 88851 85098 and @photofountaininsta on Instagram

Tip: Start shooting now so that you can have your first photo exhibition in four months from now, in time for World Photography Day in August

WHAT: SOCIAL DANCE WORKSHOP - SALSA, BACHATA, URBAN KIZ

Where: Quad Bar and Kitchen, 5th Floor, Sujana One, Road No. 82, Film Nagar

Timings: 5 pm

Why: Social Dancing is a fantastic way to connect, relive and explore. There are so many styles like salsa, bachata, kizomba, urbankiz, jive, zouk, and many more. Praveen, a sought-after Urbankiz artist in Asia who has traveled across 10+ countries sharing his knowledge and passion for Social Dancing, will teach you the moves. Not just a social space to connect with like-minded folks, he says the students get ample time to practice what they learn, while also partying at the club after the class. Classes will be conducted for 30 students (15 male and 15 female at a time, admission on a first-come-first-served basis).

Fee: Rs. 299 onwards

Tel: 95008 88169, @praveen_urbankiz on Instagram

Tip: A great way to have fun while also increasing your chances of landing a date this summer

WHAT: MANDALA WORKSHOPS

Where: Venue: Bird Box, Madhapur

Timings: 4 pm onwards

Why: Mandala art is considered to be not just creative but also a meditative activity that helps you express yourself in a non-violent way. As the art form calls for focus and commitment, it hones one's discipline and helps one concentrate on the task at hand. Bird Box conducts workshops for all artists from beginners to seasoned ones. It is perfect for those looking to immerse themselves in an activity that is calming and reduces stress. The workshop led by an experienced facilitator teaches participants about the history and significance of mandalas. It also enables them to explore a range of patterns and techniques to uplevel their creativity.

Fee: Rs. 699 onwards

Tel: 9550006577, @gaiaaliving on Instagram

Tip: Mandala is considered to be an art therapy for those who have been dealing with the loss of a loved one as in some forms of mandala art, the artist is taught to let go of the piece of art voluntarily to understand that nothing is permanent in life and that nothing belongs to us. Try this if you are at a crossroads in life and need purpose and direction in life.



WHAT: MUSIC, DANCE, INSTRUMENTAL

Where: Aarambh Summer activities. In-person at Shivan School of Arts - Sun City, also Shivansh Studio, Banjara Hills; online classes also available

Timings: Starts 7 am and ends at 8 pm

Why: Activities to fill up the long no-school summer days ahead. Bharatanatyam, Kalaripayattu, yoga, folk dance, and theatre, mainly for kids between 7-12 years and for older kids in May.

Fee: Rs. 6,000 onwards and Rs. 8,000 for all activities

Tel: 93470 02640, @shivanshschoolofarts on Instagram



WHAT: CRAFT AND DIY CLASSES

Where: The Beanery Cafe, 1st floor, Anand Film Square, Film Nagar

Timings: 1 pm to 4 pm

Why: They have a bunch of three-hour classes such as Sip and Paint- Gold Leaf Painting, pottery and resin art, and baking workshops that teach you a skill or two and give you fun times (sometimes a complimentary drink while at the class).

Fee: Rs. 1,499

Tel: 89770 14276, www.thebeanerycafe.in

WHAT: LIPPAN ART ON A BOTTLE

Where: Raasta Hyderabad, Sattva Knowledge City, Madhapur

Timings: Weekends, 2 pm to 4 pm

Why: The traditional mural craft from the Kutch region of Gujarat, this art class features adding mud and cow dung on the walls. The dough is applied to a moistened surface, such as a wall, to create a border and decorative and geometric motifs such as peacocks, camels, elephants, temples, etc. The workshop is conducted by Real Lives, an online community that encourages conversations and crafts in association with artist Vaishnavi Kesanam.

Fee: Rs. 799

Tel: 89095 09999, @the_reallives on Instagram



WHAT: BHAGAVADGITA WORKSHOPS

Where: Hare Krishna Golden Temple, near Anti-Corruption Bureau office, NBT Nagar, Road no 12, Banjara Hills

Timings: Weekends in April and May, 5 pm to 6:30 pm

Why: Bhagavadgita classes are doorways into the Hindu culture with spiritual classes that sound like management classes that can be applied in real life, from writing exams to navigating the corporate world to making life decisions. With management courses also leaning towards Lord Krishna's life lessons for corporates, learning Bhagavadgita and understanding the concepts has caught up with Gen X. The weekend classes introduce them to this Krishna cult.

Fee: Free

Tel: 95056 88881, @harekrishna_goldentemple on Instagram

Tip: After the class (which comprises reading a few chapters and understanding its essence), one can stay back for the evening *aarti*, *bhajan*, and *bhog* (*prasadam*)

WHAT: WINE APPRECIATION CLASSES

Where: Across Hyderabad's best fine dining places

Timings: Usually weekend dinners, 8 pm onwards. The next one is on April 6

Why: The Hyderabad Wine Society — a club run by Vishal Fernandes and Suryaveer Singh, the sommelier — is a society that enjoys curated wine and dine sessions. From wine appreciation classes to how to store your wine, they have a gamut of activities planned around elaborate seven-course wine dinners in and around the city. Hyderabad food and wine blogger Vishal Fernandes and sommelier Suryaveer Singh's venture has conducted 57 events so far, and have lined up more this summer.

Fee: Based on the restaurant, starts Rs 3,000

Tel: None. Message @hyderabad_wine_society on Instagram

Tip: A great place to make friends with similar wine tastes





ACTIVITY ZONES

If you have children and prefer to choose an activity zone with multiple activities, check these activity zones across the city that offer an array of activities for all age groups and spread across the summer for students and on weekends for corporates.

WHERE: TALENT HUB

Ira Avenue, Road no. 10, Alkapur Township, Manikonda

Timings: 10 am to 1 pm, 2 pm to 5 pm. Timings of regular classes: 4 pm onwards

Why: Founded by musician Jebanezer Rajeev in 2022, this year the summer camp began on March 18th and will go on until June 14th. Teaching the newly introduced electronics, coding and robotics besides storytelling, public speaking, karate, music, dance, gymnastics, and chess. Furthermore, in collaboration with Trinity College, ABRSM, Rock School, and London College of Music, Talent Hub also gears their children up for musical examinations.

Fee: Rs. 400

Tel: 91606 05001, @thetalenthubproductions on Instagram

WHERE: SHREEKA HUB

Road no 71, Near Jubilee Hills Public School, Jubilee Hills

Timings: 9 am to 2 pm, April 15-May 31

Why: They have offbeat activities such as archery coaching, Lego robotics, gymnastics, and fun sporty classes such as Cone crawl, Master Ring Hops, and Hurdle Hops classes in their camps.



Bonus: A fun campfire party under the stars after the completion of the courses

Fee: Rs. 3,000 onwards

Tel: 90040 40429, @Shreekahub_Jubileehills on Instagram

WHERE: EARTH N ART

Plot No. 6, Jyothi Colony, AOC Gate, Secunderabad

Timings: 11 am to 1 pm (Batch one), 3 pm to 5 pm (Batch two), from April 15 to May 10

Why: The 12-year-old Earth N Art is home to founder Fatema Khuzema's handcrafted sustainable home and garden décor. It includes terracotta pots and planters, wall plates, terrariums, nameplates, and more. One batch will be for ages four to eight, and the second batch will be for ages nine to 15. The classes, which will run from April 15 till May 10, will see children taking part in 10 activities that would include wall plate painting, Kokedama (a Japanese style of potting plants in a ball of moss and displaying them in a dish or suspended in the air), terrarium (the art of growing plants in transparent containers), clay modeling and a whole lot more. Students can hone their social and fine motor skills with such activities.

Fee: Rs. 5,000 per child

Tel: 99850 16369



WHERE: KALPATARU

By Vandana Badruka, Road No. 8, Zahara Nagar, Banjara Hills

Timings: 10 am to 12:30 pm and 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm

Why: This 24-year-old hobby classes studio conducts arts and crafts, dance, music, pottery, instruments, education, and fitness which includes taekwondo, aerial yoga, the relatively new mini tennis, and a whole lot more. For courses of longer duration in music and dance, they conduct examinations in partnership with Trinity College and Gandharva Mahavidyalaya.

The summer camp which begins on April 8, incorporates activities ranging from mini tennis, arts and crafts, gymnastics, dance, and more for children under eight. For older children, this year Kalpataru is introducing a week-long astronomy workshop, conducted by Astronomer, Science Popularizer, and Astrographer Sreekanth Panjala, which involves helping children explore the stars, planets, and galaxies of the universe; and a three-week theatre workshop by Feroz MN, an alumnus of the National School of Drama.

Fee: Rs. 3,200 onwards for regular classes and Rs. 7,500 onwards for summer camp

Tel: 90005 81919, @kalpataru_hyd on Instagram





WHERE: OUR SACRED SPACE

Sardar Patel Road, St Ann's School Road, Secunderabad

Timings: 4 pm to 7 pm

Why: Founded in 2012, Secunderabad's well-known cultural center Our Sacred Space hosts a variety of classes and workshops spanning dance, music, art, theatre, martial arts, and sports. The cultural center has been conducting summer camps (April to May) and regular summer classes every summer for 12 years. Last year saw activities like theatre workshops, sustainable farming, forest walks, pottery, karate, kirigami storytelling, and a treasure hunt. This April, they are introducing yoga, drawing and painting, martial arts, and football for ages five to 15.

Fee: Rs. 4,000 to Rs. 6,000

Tel: 90306 13344, 90300 13344, @oursacredspace on Instagram



WHAT: ETIQUETTE AND TABLE MANNERS

Where: Sage Farm Cafe, Road No. 62A, Jubilee Hills

Timings: April 15, six days, 11 am to 5 pm

Why: Hyderabad-based image and etiquette life coach Priya Rajiv conducts these short-duration classes to teach young ones (usually between nine to 12 years) etiquette, manners, communication, social, dining, and leadership skills besides time management. These skills help them develop emotional intelligence and also familiarize them with the global standards of social behavior.

Fee: Rs. 9,000

Tel: 82970 12322; @priyarajivlifecoach on Instagram

Tip: Let your kids learn these precious skills so that you can learn from them

Hyderabadis share their experiences...

“ My daughter Shivi is 12 and has a lot of energy that needs to be channeled during the summer. Besides the fun arts and crafts classes, I enroll her for meditation and breathwork sessions as I am a big believer that such activities teach them invaluable learning skills. Every summer, a bunch of my cousins and besties camp out together in the same houses by turns along with our children and we hire tutors who come to the house to teach our kids. They learn coloring, art, singing, dance, etc. Sometimes, I become a student and learn the keyboard or piano. I don't know if it will work out between my tight schedules as an artist, entrepreneur, and mom, but I want to learn guitar or the keyboard this year along with Shivi. Fingers crossed. ”

Smita Vallurupalli,
Singer, entrepreneur,
talk show host, mother





“ As a student of music, having learned the piano for a while in childhood, these classes are fun and challenging. They involve honing our vocal pitch alongside the *Tanpura*, composing lyrics to tunes, and bringing those tunes to life on the keyboard. Like everything else, learning music can be done online today, with multiple apps. Still, the joy of performing with one another, learning the nuances, and receiving real-time feedback from your teachers, is something that can be done only in a class. And more importantly, it is a high to be able to show off in front of your friends when you get something right. I learn music at Fieto Music by Rohith. ”

Shreyan Nori
Student

“ The three hours of Argentine Tango class is like a game where we observe and watch the movements and respond accordingly and that makes it exciting and blissful for someone like me, who has always had trouble learning and recollecting steps.’ Still a beginner, I have been learning the tango for six months after I came across an Instagram post announcing these classes in Hyderabad. I hope to improve my moves as I am on a summer break right now. I paid Rs. 2,000 for four, two-hour classes at Ameerpet. ”

Aham Gasthee
Filmmaker



WOW! chats with Hyderabad-based designers **Gaurang Shah**, **Archana Rao**, **Varun Chakkilam** and **Arvind Ampula** about their latest collections which were unveiled at the 2024 Lakmé Fashion Week held at the Jio World Convention Centre in Mumbai last month

Representing Hyderabad!



GAURANG SHAH

Self-taught, **Gaurang Shah** is a national award-winning designer with a passion for highlighting the beauty of Indian textiles in his work and putting up on a pedestal the artisans he has interacted and collaborated with across India for the past 40 years. In the process of transforming textile aesthetics, he has made weavers financially independent, and by so doing managed to attract a whole new generation of weavers.

He recently depicted grace and sophistication in his collection, *Gulal*, which was the ultimate showstopper at his presentation at the 2024 Lakmé Fashion Week. The collection shone a light on 40 *jamdani*, jacquard and dobby textiles that incorporated ten saris and 30 *lehengas* in varied hues of pink. “The versatile color ‘*Gulal*’ stands for purity, sincerity, and peace and is worn particularly in the Spring season of *Phagun*,” shares Gaurang Shah of the collection that took over two years to come to fruition.

The lineup for *Gulal* included a *lehenga* with *Patan patola* and *Parsi gara* embroidery, which was in turn accompanied by a handwoven crepe silk *dupatta* sourced from Karnataka. Another was a *Patan patola dupatta* paired with a *lehenga* featuring Kota *jamdani* and a Banaras silk border. The saris and *lehengas* were made richer with embroidery styles like *mochi*, *Parsi gara*, *kasuti*, *Kashmiri*, and *Kutchi*. Furthermore, rare embroideries like *maraudi* from Ahmedabad and *petit point* from Kerala were highlighted.

When asked what it feels like to be back at Lakmé Fashion Week, Gaurang tells us, “This is the 22nd year at the Lakmé Fashion Week. With each passing year, I have witnessed my creative boundaries expand, backed by the platform’s support and appreciation for Indian textiles. It has been a privilege to showcase the diverse weaves of India and garner recognition for our efforts in preserving and promoting our heritage.”



VARUN CHAKKILAM

Designer **Varun Chakkilam** finds inspiration for his designs in, as his eponymous label states: luxury, aristocracy, and ornateness. An admirer of unconventional artistry, Varun brings his own unique style to bridal and fusion wear. Understated, graceful, and playful are a few words that can be used to describe his work.

At the LFW, Varun presented *Lenora*, a collection that represents splendor and opulence with a color palette that ranges from pristine whites to fiery coppers. The collection creates an aura of refined elegance that effortlessly blends classical shapes with botanical details and sumptuous fabrics.

“Through this collection, I could strike the perfect balance between age-old techniques and modern silhouettes, which was quite different from my previous collections. It was truly astonishing to see how beautifully it worked out,” Varun shares of the collection he has been working on with his team for three months.

Actress Sara Ali Khan turned showstopper for the label at the presentation. Discussing his collaboration with her for LFW, an excited Varun declares, “She is the perfect muse to walk the ramp for this collection because, to us, she represents light, purity, and creativity. Her personality is in absolute sync with our collection’s inspiration.”



In keeping with the collection *Lenora*, below are a few trends to look out for this season according to **Varun Chakkilam**:

1. Botanical Embellishments
2. Sumptuous Fabrics
3. Classic Contours
4. Fiery Coppers and Earthy Browns tone
5. Plush Textures



VIKA BY ARVIND AMPULA

“Vika by Arvind Ampula offers a comprehensive shopping destination, catering to everything from everyday attire to the complete wedding wardrobe for brides, bridesmaids, grooms, groomsmen, children, and the entire family,” explains Arvind Ampula, introducing the wide-ranging appeal of his signature brand.

Arvind was among the Hyderabad designers to unveil his latest collection at the recently concluded Lakmé Fashion Week. The collection *Whispers of Empires* honored Indian and Persian cultures and showcased menswear like *Jodhpuri* jackets, *kurtas*, *sherwanis* and *bundies*. For women, they incorporated bridal wear alongside lace and botanical *lehenga*, *dupattas*, *choli*, *shararas* and *kurtis*, with actress Fatima Sana Shaikh closing the show in a purple floral *lehenga*.

“The collection has a combination of new colors and new techniques of work to look forward to, and all the motifs are new and fresh,” Arvind elaborates. When asked to share his thoughts on LFW being an enormous stage for designers to showcase their work, he concludes by saying, “To prove the worth of a designer in the fashion industry, LFW is the highest platform on a national level, and it works as the foundation for the brand’s global outreach.”



ARCHANA RAO

NIFT graduate and national award-winning designer **Archana Rao** founded her label in 2011 and first arrived on the fashion scene under the gen-next category at the Lakmé Fashion Week. She drew inspiration for her work from multicultural traditions and everything vintage. Over time, she went on to carve out a niche for herself with an aesthetic that is, as her label suggests, a balance between structure and feminine sophistication.

Archana has been showcasing her work at Fashion Week for over a decade now and assures us that the experience is different every time. Going into detail about the fashion week process she shares, “The entire process - from sketching out the ideas, and watching it take shape in the form of garments, meeting the LFW Team in person, model fitting sessions, meeting buyers, stylists, and editors and walking them through our collection, greeting our clients personally and the feeling of being present in the moment is priceless.”

Having evolved as a designer, Archana now believes to have more of a ‘less is more’ concept in mind when designing pieces. Being feminine, minimalistic, yet impactful seems to be the approach. This can be seen in her latest collection titled *Sun and Moon* which was unveiled at the LFW ‘24. The collection highlights the stark differences between the Sun and the Moon while also recognizing the harmony between them. “This collection is meticulously embellished with Swarovski crystals and intricate appliqués. Floral embroideries, adorned with delicate pearls, serve as a nod to our brand’s signature aesthetic, adding a touch of timeless femininity to every ensemble,” Archana elaborates.

With this collection, Archana has ventured out of her comfort zone while remaining true to herself and her brand. When asked what she would like people to take away from the collection, Archana ends by sharing, “I would love to see people experiment with my pieces and make it their own. Since this collection is so minimal and strong, I think people will have fun trying power dressing.” ■ IPSHITA



Hyderabad team **Kranken Wagen** tells **WOW!** what it took them to build a German ambulance with no engine to win the **Red Bull Soapbox Race** held in the city

“Our handmade cart won us tickets to the F1 race”



Hyderabad witnessed the **Red Bull Soapbox Race** in March at Rama Naidu Studios and the city’s cool folk went all out to build their own Soapboxes for the fascinating and zany race that challenged their creativity and tested their engineering competence. “Our Soapbox too entailed only the cart, four wheels, and a brake and pushed off a ramp with no motor. Only gravity moved it down, without any engine or battery. But our idea to replicate an ambulance and how we executed it fetched us the win,” says Dhanush Reddy, team lead of **Kranken Wagen**, the first prize-winning Soapbox.

WHAT’S SOAPBOX RACING?

It offers an adrenaline-pumping experience where participants compete racing downhill against the clock in non-motorized vehicles they’ve custom-built. These vehicles rely solely on gravity for propulsion and typically include basic steering and braking mechanisms to navigate the course’s twists, turns, and obstacles. The participants were judged based on the creativity of the craft, showmanship of the craft, and team stage performance along with the race time.

WHAT’S KRANKEN WAGEN?

The three criteria crucial for the win are creativity, showmanship (performance

during the race), and finishing the race in the least amount of time. “**Kranken Wagen** means ‘ambulance’ in German and **our soapbox is an ambulance**,” says Dhanush, representing his team comprising Nirmith, Poojith, Dev and Nidhi.

HOW THEY PULLED IT OFF

TWorks, India’s largest prototyping center in Hyderabad, was one of the partners for the event. “We already work at TWorks and this was one of our best assignments here. For our soapbox, we put together our contraption in 12 days. We worked on the chassis and wheel for

10 days and had just one night to make it look like a hospital bed,” he adds. The team used bicycle wheels, hardware, and other locally available gear to put together the Soapbox which cost them Rs 30,000. For Dhanush and the team, this was the first big win, but certainly not the last.

WHAT NEXT:

Kranken won the race and will get to take a fully paid Red Bull Racing F1 experience when it happens next.

WHO CAN TAKE PART IN IT?

It is open to local amateur competitors who can build their own vehicles that are powered by gravity and leg muscles, but have fully functional brakes and steering. The teams must consist of four people, including the driver, and all members must be at least 18 years old. The soapbox can’t weigh more than 80 kg, not including the driver.

WHEN’S THE NEXT BIG RACE?

Check redbull.in/soapboxrace for details

■ MANJU

FUN FACTS

- Red Bull Soapbox Race was born in 2000 in Brussels, Belgium
- It has been organised in more than 52 countries, and 95 cities (138 events), with over 4.5mn spectators
- Red Bull Soapbox Race India 2024 is the third edition of the event in the country, with past events in Mumbai in 2012 and 2016.





The Quorum Club opens in Hyderabad to curated experiences, intelligent conversations and gourmet food and beverage options

The Members-Only Q Club

“It isn’t where you came from; it’s where you’re going that counts.” With this credo derived from American jazz singer Ella Fitzgerald, **The Quorum Club** opened its third (and largest) center in Hyderabad on April 1st. The newly-opened private members’ lifestyle club will be ‘community-led, content-driven, and design-focused’ to enable organic connections, promises founder Vivek Narain.

CLUB ELITE TRIBE

Q, as it’s called in the elite circles, has already set a bar for the Hyderabadis with over 300 memberships secured even before its inauguration. While all ages are welcome, the club established by Vivek and his wife Sonya Jehan in 2018, leans towards the under-35 club. The Q’s community includes entrepreneurs, venture capitalists, CXOs, bankers, authors, journalists, artists, filmmakers, and public figures who are all voices of influence in their respective fields. “Q is for thinkers, doers, and shapers of tomorrow,” adds Vivek.

THE WALK-THROUGH

Built on pillars such as conversations, culture, performances, arts, wellness, flavors, and family, the club earmarks zones to cater to every need of busy, elite professionals. First up is the meeting room with a funky wallpaper with an African theme featuring playful animals. Just what you need to beat the boredom of endless meetings. Next is Coalesce which offers a diverse selection of gourmet dishes from various cuisines; and Providore, the bar with craft cocktails, resembling a magnificent tree extending from the floor to the ceiling. Up next is the Pilates studio and gymnasium with coaches from Sumaya Dalmia Fitness to offer their services. A little inside is a cozy space to conduct business meetings and interviews.

WHAT LIES BENEATH

A pretty wooden staircase ensconced in a shiny mirror takes you to the floor below that has curated art displays for sale from the city’s galleries. Remember to stop and marvel at the magnificent art that adorns the ceiling of the staircase.

NETWORKING AND MORE

The outdoors opens to a gorgeous gazebo ideal for breakfast meetings and a larger networking area to conduct a seminar. The pool has a little nook on a raised platform for music bands to belt out live music. However, the pièce de résistance of the club is undoubtedly the vibrant library (with books as giveaways from members who often happen to be authors) with a secret, deceptive wall. When gently pushed, the wall leads to a cozy space with seating and tables, for a secret rendezvous or a closed-door business deal!

WHAT AN IDEA

Members of The Q also have access to ‘An India of Ideas’, a digital library of conversations hosted across both clubs, spanning the spectrum of business, tech, art, culture, design, fashion, literature, politics, current affairs, and much more. From financial coaches, stand-up comedians, and live bands, the calendar is packed with events. “Everything we do is inspired and driven by you; it makes us who we are and want to be,” Vivek signs off. ■ MANJU



The Quorum Hyderabad, 6th floor, Sattva Knowledge Capital City, Madhapur

Tel: 89778 61930

Membership: Rs 5 lakh joining fee and annual recurring fee of Rs 1.5 lakh

Members can also use 60 clubs Q is associated with, across 28 countries

Timings: 8 am to 11.30 pm (till 12.30 am on weekends)



The space boasts of a stunning location, delicious food and memorable tunes

A Bar with a view

WOW!
Recommends:
**Berry
 Bramble**

Located on the eighth floor of the well-known Hotel Daspalla Hyderabad, **Cara Cara**, not linked to the hotel, opens to a world of its own. Glitter from the city's twinkling lights burst through the large glass windows overlooking the city and spread across two floors of the culinary bar (including a rooftop dining area). It adds to the relaxed vibe the DJ attempts to set by playing contemporary trending mixes.

THE MOOD

As we walk in further, the place mesmerizes us. Opposite the bar is an artistic structure reminiscent of a tree trunk that rises from the floor and melds seamlessly into the ceiling spreading out into wave-like patterns. We silently take in the breath-taking view before going up to the bar to order two Cara Cara signature cocktails, the *Berry Bramble* and the *Nebraska*.

While the mixologist prepares our drinks, we make ourselves comfortable for the evening. The cocktails are keenly garnished and well presented. Both drinks can be described as being relatively heavy. However, between the two, it is the fruity *Berry Bramble*, made of gin/vodka, redberry puree, blueberry

cordial, fresh lime juice, and apple juice, that tickles our taste buds the most.

THE FOOD

Next, we ordered ourselves something to eat. Chef Jagmohan Rawat helped us choose from the amazing array of dishes. For starters, we ordered Cara Cara's signature sushi rolls dish, *Spicy Rock Shrimp*; the popular South Korean Street snack, *Dak Kkochi* - char-grilled chicken skewers marinated with select Korean condiments, leek, Gochugaru, and lime, and the delicious *Galouti Puff*, made of yam, mint goat cheese, and puff pastry. The main course consisted of *Mutton Sukka*, a Kerela style mutton roast with garlic, curry leaf and red chili; the ever-so-soft *Malabar Paratha* to go with the equally soft *Paneer Kasturi*. For our sweet craving, we opted for the creamy *Death By Chocolate* dessert, a trio of white milk, dark chocolate mousse alongside hazelnut ice cream.

THE BEAT

Once satiated, you can let your hair down and get ready to party as Cara Cara presents a vibrant nightlife. It involves DJ nights and live musical acts from performers like DJ Clement, DJ KAN-i, Band Niraval, Band Aikyam, and a whole



lot more that turn the rooftop area into an electrifying dance floor. ■ IPSHITA

Night out for two: Rs 2,000 onwards

Hotel Daspalla Hyderabad, 8th floor, Road No. 37, Jubilee Hills

Tel: 97694 36666, 97691 26666

Timings: 12 pm to 12 am (Sunday to Thursday), 12 pm to 1 am (Fridays and Saturdays)



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WOW! lists the people who make the city's partygoers groove to their beats

Rocking **DJs** in the city



WHO: DJ 3SPEAR

DJ 3Spear A.K.A. Rohit Aenagandula has been a resident DJ at Mindspace Social and AntiSocial since 2023. Over his decade-long career, he has played in both Hyderabad and Bangalore at places like Taj Deccan, Church Street, and Indiranagar Socials among many more. "I did a residency in Hyderabad from 2014 to 2018, and then moved to Bangalore in 2018 where I played in different bars clubs and learned genres like rock, retro, old school hip-hop," shares the young DJ who began making music after dropping out of an engineering college.

Genres: DJ 3Spear plays multiple genres, including old school/new school hip hop, 4x4, bass music and house, disco, and commercials.

When: 7 pm onwards. Tuesday to Sunday.

Where: Raheja IT Park, Survey No.64, Ground Plus, near Mindspace Junction Flyover.

WHO: DJ DOMNIC FRANCIS

Hyderabad-bred **DJ Domnic Francis** began his DJing career at age 16 after being inspired by his music-loving family. Over his 13-year career, he has played at places like Out Swinger, Cuba Libre, Tease (Vivanta by Taj), and more. Now, a resident DJ for five years at Hyderabad's Carpe Diem – a Bollywood night club, the man has gone on to play alongside national DJs like DJ Akeel Ali, DJ Akbar Sami, DJ Akhtar, and International DJs like Futuristic Polarbears, Salvatore Ganacci, Lost Stories, and many others.

Genres: He plays Bollywood, hip-hop, commercial house, EDM and Techno music.

When: 8 pm onwards. All days.

Where: Road No. 37, CBI Colony, Jubilee Hills.



WHO: DJ M-UNIT

Madan Reddy, who also goes by his stage name **DJ M-Unit**, has been a resident DJ at Zero40 for approximately seven years and has had a long-standing career as a DJ for almost a decade. His first brush with success was playing at News Cafe in 2015 before joining Zero40 in 2017. Apart from burning up the dance floor at Zero40, over the weekdays DJ M-Unit sometimes performs at Prism, One Golf, and Broadway.

Genres: Classic Rock (Monday and Tuesday), Retro (Wednesday), Hip-Hop/R&B (Thursday), Commercial, Techno, Progressive House (Weekends).

When: 8 pm to 11:30 pm (weekdays), 8 pm to 12:30 pm (weekends). Tuesday to Sunday.

Where: Road Number 10, Venkatagiri, Jubilee Hills.



WHO: DJ MY-KEE

Born and raised in Hyderabad, DJ My-Kee (Prakash Raj) began DJing in 2007 and went on to work at Taj Krishna, Taj Banjara, Under Deck, Carpe Diem, Cuba Libre and more before becoming a resident DJ at Zythum Brewing Co. eight months ago. The aim is to create a cozy and relaxed atmosphere through music that matches Zythum's vibe, with DJ My-Kee headlining on the top floor's elevated stage, making his performance even more dynamic.



Genres: Hip-Hop, House, Deep House, Progressive House, Retro, Rock and more.

When: 9 pm onwards. All days.

Where: 74a, Jubilee Hills Check Post Rd, Park View Enclave, Jubilee Hills

WHO: KAYVEE

Vizag-born DJ Kalyan Varma, better known as KayVee moved to Hyderabad in 2016 and began playing his sets here. He introduced the Afro-house genre (South African house music) which was not well-known in the city at the time. "Back in those days, it was only hip-hop, Bollywood, commercials, and techno. People did play house music but not a full-fledged set," he shares. Now recognized for that sound, Kay-Vee performs all over the country including Bengaluru, Mumbai, Goa, and Hyderabad. He makes his presence known in the city during Sunday Sundowners at Olive and Xora. ■ IPSHITA

Genres: Afro house, house music with African vocals, percussions, and drums.

When: 5 pm to 8 pm. Sundays.

Where: Olive Bistro & Bar, Road No 46, Jubilee Hills; Xora Bar & Kitchen, Road No. 36, Jubilee Hills.





VAISHALI

COUTURE - BRIDAL - FEEB

1346, road #68, Jubilee Hills, lane beside Indian oil petrol pump, Hyderabad-500 033, Telangana
Tel: +91 98 85125633 / 040-2355 8633

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Do you have cold water or pudina pani, to beat the heat? Your doubts clarified!

Top summer skin myths busted



Summer is here and no matter how many seasons of it we've lived through, a quick reminder of the dos and don'ts always help. WOW! spoke to skin and hair expert **Dr Rashmi Shetty**, certified dermatologist and celebrity skin consultant, for some quick tips to stay fresh and cool this summer.

MYTH #1

People who travel in a car or work from home don't need sunscreen

Everyone needs to apply sunscreen with a good Sun Protection Factor (SPF) even when you are at home or in the car. This is because different kinds of UV rays enter the house through the glass windows. Hence shielding your skin from these rays is important.

MYTH #2

It's good to splash water on your face, five or six times a day, because it is sweaty and hot

It only dehydrates and dries your face. Lot of times it leads to Trans Epidermal Water Loss (TEWL) in which the

outermost layer of the skin loses water through evaporation. This happens because the skin has a hard time holding on to the moisture by itself. So wash only when you must, don't overdo it. Washing your face twice a day is sufficient.

MYTH #3

The best way to keep the tan away is to apply sunscreen repeatedly when you are outdoors

You need to wash your face or at least use a face cleanser before applying another round of sunscreen. Do not apply it on a dirty, sweaty face.

MYTH #4

Even in summer everyone should apply moisturizer

Use a moisturizer in summer only if you have a dry skin. However, use a light moisturizer. Remember to apply it on a fresh, washed face (just like you would, for sunscreen).

MYTH #5

Pudina water, jeera pani, buttermilk and

lassi that we find at every street corner in Hyderabad are affordable and good for our health

Even if someone gives you gold in a cup from a street truck, say no to it. I would never recommend any roadside food or beverage during summer as it may be unhygienic. Plus, you would be exposing your gut to unnecessary microbes, some of which may alter your natural ones necessary for the gut health. Not to forget the danger of falling sick due to diarrhoea or food poisoning. People are more vulnerable to such bacteria during summers than in any other season.

MYTH #6

All fluids are good for summer as they hydrate us

Only traditional (homemade) or natural drinks such as *chaas*, *thandai*, tender coconut water and lime juice are ideal for your body and skin as they give minerals, salts and energy. However, avoid milkshakes, aerated drinks and canned juices that have loads of sugar.

■ MANJU



Sound Baths indulge you in a therapeutic experience that harmonizes your entire being, leaving you refreshed and rejuvenated

SONIC BLISS

Have you ever experienced a moment where your heart skipped a beat and a wave of goosebumps washed over your body upon encountering a unique sound? Have you felt sound enveloping you like a gentle wave, inducing a relaxation, unlike any other sensation you've felt before? Welcome to the world of **Sound Bath**, also known as Sound Yoga.

THE EXPERIENCE

Participants - sitting in a meditative pose or lying on a yoga mat - are immersed in the calming reverberations of crystal singing bowls and accompanying instruments. The ambiance is dark and soothing, like in meditative sessions. Participants are encouraged to relax and get receptive to the music. The healer or *guru* uses an array of singing bowls, gongs, chimes, bells, finger cymbals, tuning forks, drums, mallets, soft hammers, etc to create sounds that dissolve stress and strain. Science has proven that some sounds and

frequencies relax and calm you. Sound Bath works on this principle of finding sounds that give you a blissful experience, aligning body, mind, and spirit, in perfect harmony. Sound bath finds its origin in Tibetan healing therapies. Energy healer Dhyhan Shanto from Goa often conducts Sound Bath sessions in Hyderabad.

WHO'S IT FOR

Medically, for those with anxiety, stress, and sleep disorders. It helps in stress reduction as sound baths induce deep relaxation. It also helps combat insomnia as the soothing sounds promote better sleep. "For those with a lot of emotional baggage, the sound vibrations gently help them release stored and pent-up emotions," says Neelam Mangat, founder of Adika Yoga, a wellness studio in Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad.

A Sound bath can also calm you before a big day or if you have gone through something stressful recently and want to release it all. These are 90-minute sessions to immerse oneself in the



cosmic sounds of the gongs and singing bowls believed to touch us at a deep cellular level. The mystic sounds will take you to a different level of consciousness.

UNCLOGGING THE NERVOUS SYSTEM

"Just as you dance and feel good when you listen to peppy music, there are specific frequencies and sounds that can clear the stress held in your heart or pelvis," says Neelam. Did you know your pelvis holds your insecurities about money and the future? The music opens up the *chakras* - like clearing a clogged pipe and allows a free flow of positive and rejuvenating energy. ■ MANJU

Adika Yoga, Jubilee Hills

Tel: 99490 01606

Timings: Check their Instagram handle @adika.yoga for Sound Bath workshops. The sessions are usually for three hours

Fee: Starts Rs 3,000



A rock show that celebrated the oldest inhabitants of the Deccan

Custodians of the past

Sentinels of Hyderabad, the art show, aimed to capture the spirit of the city through its silent and often invisible rocks. Several artists interpreted their version of the city's rocky landscape on their canvas.

Shaun Heffernan, artist, teacher (and the force behind the show), was trained at the Royal Academy of London. He currently lives in Hyderabad, but his move back to the UK is imminent. What he will miss the most is the majestic, rocky, Deccan landscape.

With this initial impetus of an idea, the group was led by Shaun to depict the various facets and memories that Hyderabad's boulders evoked in them. While one brought to life these stately denizens, others sketched them with glitter or interpreted them in deep abstraction. Eternal, majestic, silent, and historical, are, however, the most omniscient emotions the works inspire. There is a clear sense of nostalgia, longing, and urgency about the changing landscape.

The disappearing ancient rocks of Hyderabad have long been an integral part of the city's landscape and cultural heritage. They are wonders of nature that need to be documented. However, despite their cultural and natural significance, rapid urbanization, and unchecked construction have encroached upon these rocks' natural habitats, leading to their destruction or removal. It is efforts like these that put the onus on conservation.

Sumeela Mody, who participated in the exhibition shares, "Every week, we see a little less of these natural wonders. They are slowly becoming invisible to us and I hope we can retain what we are left with." For Swathi Kantamani, another participating artist, the exhibition was a chance to explore a different style/medium than what she was used to – botanical flowers and miniatures. "I really wanted to learn new techniques and push my boundaries as an artist. Shaun, through the show, nudged me in that direction," she states.

Shaun Heffernan, Sneha Subramanian, Priyanka Damaraju, Simran Dhillon,

Smita Rane, and Jumi Park were a few of the many participating artists.

As Hyderabad continues to modernize and expand, it is crucial to strike a balance between development and preservation, ensuring that the city's rich heritage is not lost. These rocks serve as a poignant reminder of the importance of safeguarding our legacy, lest they vanish into oblivion, leaving behind only memories and nostalgia.

The show was held at the State Art Gallery from March 11-13.

■ MALLIK



WOW! drops into the renovated **Srishti Art gallery**

Focused on the future

“I can’t stop smiling ever since we reopened the gallery,” says Lakshmi Nambiar of Srishti Art Gallery. For the last one year, the gallery, which is one of the oldest in the city, has been revamping its space and has transformed it into a seamless, space that finds a home for art in its precincts.

The new space, spread over 2,000 sqft, allows the gallery to display large-sized artworks, especially sculptures and installations that require a lot of room for display. With improved lights (the owner calls them the best in India), which is important in viewing art, the onus is on enhancing the experience for the visitors.

The show *Arrival - Art of the Modern Masters* inaugurated the refurbished space, showcasing a dream collection from the titans of modern art, including works by MF Hussain, H Raza, and FN Souza, setting the stage for future exhibitions.

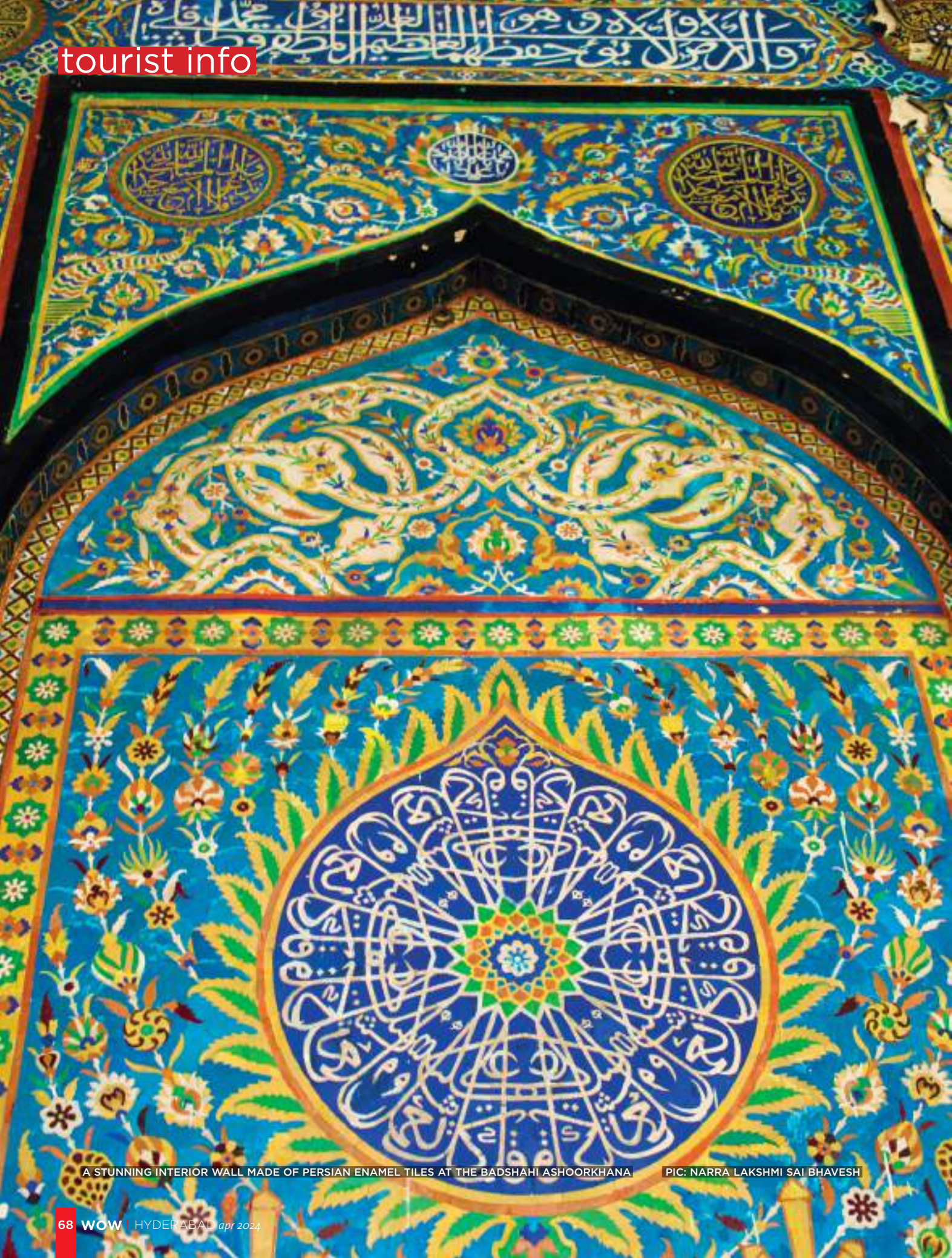
Lakshmi states, “We want to focus on two different verticals in the future – Moderns, that is the artists before the year 2000 as well as the contemporary art which has always been our focus. We will continue choosing and curating according to our philosophy of bringing the best to our city.”

The journey into presenting stimulating works of art continues with their upcoming show, *Phantasm* (from March 31-May 5) curated by Veeranganakumari Solanki, who also curated the Serendipity Arts Festival, Goa, in the past. The concept of the show is to explore the endless possibilities of imagination and to look at fantasy from a unique new lens. With eclectic artists like Rithika Merchant, Devika Sundar, and Unnikrishna amongst others participating this promises to be a unique show.

Lakshmi explains, “This was a show that I was planning to do for the past five years. The show finds its inspiration from multiple sources – be it mythology, deeply personal narratives, and imagined universes. Through artists who work on a cross-functional array of materials and mediums, it will implore the viewer to look at art in a new light.”

Invigorated, enthused, and excited about the shape the gallery is taking, the owner is taking it one show at a time, bringing in shows and artists that can redefine the paradigm of conventional art. The best thing she heard about the new gallery, is that “It looked like something straight out of New York,” she signs off with a hearty laugh. ■ MALLIK





A STUNNING INTERIOR WALL MADE OF PERSIAN ENAMEL TILES AT THE BADSHAHI ASHOORKHANA

PIC: NARRA LAKSHMI SAI BHAVESH



WOW! Explores one of the lesser known architectural beauties of one of Hyderabad's oldest heritage structures

A gem from the past

Mosaic tiles of spellbinding beauty are the first thing any visitor to the **Badshahi Ashoorkhana** notices. The dazzling array of colors, stunning patterns of staggered hexagons and the intricacy of artistic flowers and leaves will definitely leave you speechless. You will not be able to resist capturing its beauty by reaching out for your phone camera.

A protected heritage site, the structure is widely believed to be the second oldest monument of Hyderabad. It was built in 1594, three years after Charminar, which was constructed as the city's foundation in 1591 by Mohd Quli Qutb Shah.

Ashoorkhanas are places where Shia Muslims congregate, especially during Muharram, to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Hussein, a grandson of the Prophet. Badshahi Ashoorkhana was where the Nizams of Hyderabad used to pay homage hence the name *Badshah* in its title.

While some ancillary structures like the Naqar Khana, Abdar Khana, and Niyaz Khana still exist in some form despite suffering intense damage, the main hall of the Badshahi Ashoorkhana remains intact. Walls decked with multicolored tiles and the dominant theme of flaming Alams are the cynosure of all eyes here.

A tapestry of intricate patterns with jewel-like shapes fills the four walls making one lose oneself in their breath-taking beauty. Typical Indian colours like

mustard yellow and brown add vibrancy while the high ceilings give it a stately effect. The mosaic tiles were originally from Iran and the walls have a mark, left by the floods of 1908. These damaged lower parts of the tiled walls were then painted in the same patterns and colors.

Anuradha Reddy, convenor of Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage Hyderabad (INTACH) says, "The original tiles were a work of art. They were used widely in Hyderabad as its founding dynasty had its roots in Iran. Even in Qutb Shahi tombs one can see these tiles emerging from layers of cement and lime, post restoration. Though the painted tiles of 1908 are a lost work of art, it is a unique craft to be seen and appreciated."

After Aurangzeb's conquest of Deccan, the place was relegated to being a stable. It was later restored and religious activities were resumed. While the place is stunningly beautiful, its structure and outer areas can easily do with a bit of conservation efforts which can further transform the space.

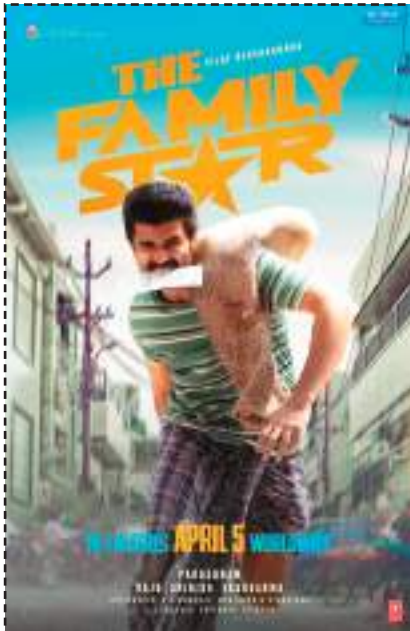
Anuradha asks, "Why do tourists climb the Charminar and the Golconda fighting off people, heat and fatigue?" She elaborates, "It is because these monuments fill you with a sense of awe and wonder. We don't see crowds queuing up to go see flyovers! The Badshahi Ashoorkhana has immense tourist potential and should be nurtured."



Located in the heart of Old City, this ancient architectural gem is a feast for the eyes. ■ MALLIK

Tip: This is a religious place so dressing conservatively is advised.
Location: Near Madina Circle, Charminar
Timings: 7 am to 6 pm

MOVIES



Family Star

Vijay Deverakonda returns to the screen in the role of a mass hero with Mrunal Thakur and Divyansha Kaushik as director Parasuram captures the essence of middle-class life in his portrayal of a working-class hero who is simple and humble at home, but turns fierce and aggressive when out in the world. Vijay returns after *Kushi* while Mrunal returns after the exceptional *Hi Nanna!*

Date: April 5th.
Where: The Cinemas



Rathnam

Vishal and Hari collaborate yet again for the former's 34th outing as the lead in their next action outing. Priya Bhavani Shankar stars as the female lead while Devi Sri Prasad shall be providing music for the first time to a Vishal motion picture. Shot entirely in and around Tamil Nadu, the film has action choreography by Peter Hein and Kannal Kannan while the film is produced by Stone Bench Films and Zee Studios.

Date: April 26th.
Where: The Cinemas

Monkey Man

Dev Patel – the *Slumdog Millionaire* star, returns to direct and star in his next feature film as a crime-fighting vigilante inspired by Lord Hanuman. Sobhital Dhulipala and Sikandar Kher co-star. Originally meant for an OTT release, the film was purchased by Jordan Peele for distribution after seeing the film and acquired it from Netflix to distribute it under Universal Pictures.

Date: April 5th.
Where: The Cinemas



Geethanjali Malli Vachindi

A sequel to the 2014 surprise blockbuster, actor Anjali returns as the lead in this movie along with Sunil, Ali and Brahmaji. This is the 50th film in Anjali's illustrious career and is produced by MVV Cinema while Pravin Lakkaraju provides the score. *Geethanjali* was a horror-comedy that ran for 50 days at various theatres in the state. Will the sequel continue the streak?

Date: April 11th.
Where: The Cinemas

OTT SHOWS



Locked

Satya Dev takes the small screen by storm in this thriller series about a neurosurgeon who is trapped inside his mansion with uninvited guests and robbers. Created and directed by Pradeep Deva Kumar, Satya Dev pitches in a superb performance as the lead and is supported by Samyukta Hornad and Sri Lakshmi. It is engrossing from start to finish and a season 2 is on the way.

Where: AHA



CommitMental

Revolving around a couple who are considering marriage after a three-year long-distance relationship. An official remake of *Permanent Roommates*, the show stars Punarnavi Bhupalam and Udbhav Raghunandan as the calm one and the chatty one respectively. Filled with relatable moments of humor and a few hard-hitting moments, the series is a fine watch for those who enjoy romantic comedies.

Where: AHA



Rebel Moon: Part Two – The Scargiver

Zack Snyder's sequel to his *Star Wars* script which was funded by Netflix and split into 2 motion pictures, reaches your home this month. The upcoming sequel to *Rebel Moon* will pick up the narrative thread following Sofia Boutella's character Kora, resuming her journey as the concluding events of the Clans unfold. Snyder's visual imagery is impeccable, and the epic conclusion is guaranteed to blow some minds.

Where: Netflix



Pitta Kathalu

Netflix's first original Telugu film and boasting of a host of talent in the same space, the anthology drama brings together the works of Tharun Bhascker, BV Nandini Reddy, Nag Ashwin, and Sankalp Reddy and actors including Jagapathi Babu, Amala Paul, Shruti Hassan, Satyadev and Lakshmi Manchu among others. The film is produced by Ronnie Screwvala under RSVP and Ashi Dua under Flying Unicorn Entertainment.

Where: Netflix

Heeramandi

The anticipation for Sanjay Leela Bhansali's much-awaited Netflix series *Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar* has reached a feverish pitch. The director, known for his larger-than-life movies, is making his OTT debut with this eight-episode *magnum opus*. In addition, fans recently were treated with first-look posters of each character. Since then, fans have been left wondering what is *Heeramandi*'s OTT release date.

Where: Netflix



Chamkila

A humble singer's brash lyrics ignite fame and fury across Punjab as he grapples with soaring success and brutal criticism before his untimely death. Starring Diljit Dosanjh and Parineeti Chopra. ■ CHANDRAMOULI

Where: Netflix

WOW! catches up with one of the Telugu Industry's iconic actors, **Brahmanandam** who has been tickling the audience's funny bone from his unforgettable performance in *Aha Naa Pellanta* in 1987 to last year's cult, *Ranga Maartanda*. In a freewheeling chat, the Padma Shri awardee talks about his life, both on and off-screen

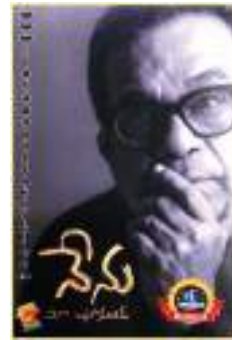
No Laughing Matter



ANANDO BRAHMA

You have recently released *Nenu* that showed an unknown facet of your personality and is a best seller (having sold over 13,000 copies till March). Writing has been on my cards for a long time. Rising from humble beginnings to becoming a Padma Shri laureate, I feel compelled to chronicle my journey of overcoming adversity on the path to success. Moreover, as a former professor of Telugu literature, getting back into writing feels like a homecoming to my original passion.

The book is unique in its style and dispenses with many standard templates writers use. Yes, I have written in a narrative style that merges prose and poetry, making it easier for people of all ages to read. Writers always complain that no one reads their books but my question is what have you done to make it easier for the readers to read? With attention spans shrinking, we need to reinvent traditional styles. Also, I did not give a foreword or an index as they do not



serve any purpose for my book. **You hold the Guinness book record for most screen credits for an actor (over 1,250 films). How do you look back at your career?**

I did not realize it until director Shyam Benegal mentioned it at an event! I find it surreal as during my college days I was a ball boy on the college tennis court who was paid Rs. 5 per month! So, I thank the almighty for his kindness. At one point in my career (most of the 90s), I used to work seven shifts a day, it was humanly impossible but I did it. Also, I dubbed for all my movies myself which is just as difficult as acting!

Generations of moviegoers identify with you. How do you ensure that you stay relevant for over three decades? Adaptability. That is the key to success. At a time, comedy in Telugu movies was laced with double entendre, then at one point, it became subtle. I think what I did came naturally to me, I never plan my expressions or acting. It is how I react to a scene or situation and that has helped me immensely.

The Internet is full of your expressions converted into memes. They call it the Brahmi language!

(smiles) Absolutely, the emojis never fail to bring a smile to my face. But what truly touched me was when a psychiatrist from Andhra, Dr Karri Rama Reddy, told me he uses nine cut-outs featuring my various expressions (in navarasas) to understand his patients' emotional responses. Knowing that my work aids in healing and brings joy to others fills me with immense gratitude. There's no greater honor than that.

■ MALLIK

SNIPPETS



NBK 109 – First look out!

Nandamuri Balakrishna has been one of the most popular stars of Indian Cinema and his films have a rare quality of being wholesome entertainers with a dose of mass, stylish, and ferocious action sequences. He has had a great run and now, he has joined hands with big action blockbuster director Bobby Kolli.

This kind of dynamic presentation is creating waves on social media among fans and movie lovers. Makers have already announced Bollywood star, Bobby Deol to feature in the film and with music scored by superstar music director, Thaman, one would like to think that the actor has another big hit in his kitty!



Like mother, like daughter?

After her mother, the legendary actress Sridevi who dominated the Telugu cinema scene, it may now be the time for her daughter to collaborate with the industry's top stars. After signing a movie with Junior NTR, the actress has signed her next movie with Ram Charan. It feels like a throwback to the days when her mother was the queen of the screen with Chiru. Tentatively called RC16, the film is being directed by Buchi Babu Sana. Fans are keen to know if the film will recreate the magic of *Jagadeekha Veerdu Athiloka Sundari*.



Expect the unexpected, says Pawan Kalyan's Ustaad Bhagat Singh makers

Powerstar Pawan Kalyan is right now busy with his political assignments. He is contesting as MLA from Pithapuram, and things have really heated up since the moment Pawan Kalyan announced his constituency

The makers of his next film, *Ustaad Bhagat Singh* are gearing up to present the star in a new *avatar*. The action drama is being directed by Harish Shankar, the man who made the biggest comeback film for Pawan Kalyan. The movie is based on the Tamil blockbuster *Theri*, and Devi Sri Prasad is composing the tunes. Sreeleela is the female lead.

Sanjay Dutt cameo in Allu Arjun's *Pushpa 2?*

The highly anticipated sequel, *Pushpa 2: The Rule* which is set to be released on Independence Day this year is rumored to have roped in Bollywood actor Sanjay Dutt for a special role. While the role is strictly under wraps it is rumored that he plays an antagonist and is being used to enhance the powerful storyline.



Kareena Kapoor to make her Kannada debut with Yash starrer *Toxic?*

After Alia Bhatt, Raveena Tandon, and Janhvi Kapoor, Kareena Kapoor is all set to make her big South debut with *KGF* star Yash's upcoming Kannada movie *Toxic*. While the details have been kept under wraps, the reports suggest that she will be portraying the female lead in the pan-India movie. The actress confirmed her big South debut in a fan interaction on a Zoom meeting with her fans and this will be her first foray outside Hindi films. ■ MALLIK

BOOKS



WOW!
PICK

VAGABOND PRINCESS
Ruby Lal

It was in 1997 in the library at Oxford University that the author, then a student, came across the original travelogue by Gulbadan Banu, Babur's daughter and a premier chronicler of the Mughal dynasty. Witness to the rule of three Mughal sovereigns (Babur, Humayun and Akbar), she was one of the few who dared to go to Haj (at a time when the Portuguese controlled the seas) and had

a ringside view as a daughter, sister and a great-aunt to three very different kings. The author's exquisite research and complete command over her muse make this a compelling read. While the original manuscript ends abruptly, Lal has astutely created a profile that is equal parts intriguing and engrossing. It also disproves popular misconceptions of Muslim women by showcasing the journey of a woman with a steely resolve and great agency.

FROM WARIS TO HEER
Haroon Khalid

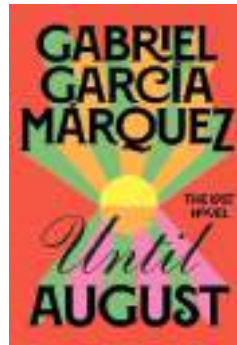
A retelling of the popular romance of Heer and Ranjha, *From Waris To Heer* by Haroon Khalid weaves into the life of 18th-century Sufi poet Waris Shah, providing a glimpse into society, culture, and religion in pre-colonial Punjab. An evocative read that tells a story that one is familiar with in a new form, this is a great retelling of the epic.



UNDER THE NIGHT JASMINE

Manav Kaul, translated from the Hindi by Vaibhav Sharma

When the pandemic strikes and the lockdown happens, the usually, always traveling Rohit is forced to introspect and dwell on his relationships thus far: with his mother, his teacher, and his lovers – relationships that affect his current thought process and relationships. Of the first stirrings of desire, guilt, remorse, and growing up, this is a great read in more ways than one. ■ MALLIK



UNTIL AUGUST: THE LOST NOVEL

Gabriel Garcia Marquez; translated from the Spanish by Anne McLean

Posthumously published after his death, the Nobel-winning author never wanted this book to be read! But his sons thought otherwise and this evocative read which is a profound meditation on freedom, regret, and the mysteries of love is now just a bookstore away.

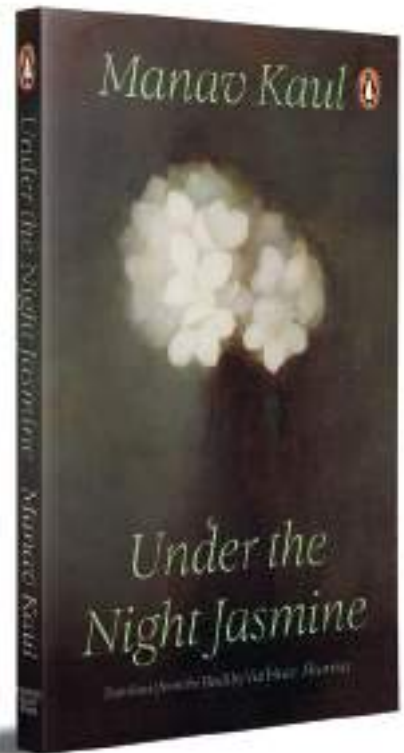


A YEAR OF LAST THINGS: POEMS

Michael Ondaatje

Sri Lankan-Canadian novelist—Ondaatje returns to poetry with this collection that is centered around themes of memory and history. He paints a picture of his life in a Sri Lankan boarding school to Molière's chair during his last stage performance, to Bulgarian churches and their icons, to the California coast and Canadian

rivers. What's interesting is that he mixes his work with quotes and makes reference to a wide panoply of artists and poets, from Bashō to Chuck Berry. The collection is soft and nostalgic and meant to be savored.



Chatting with WOW!'s very own editor on her debut novel!

AN ODE TO HYDERABAD



Listen to the House by Ratna Rao Shekar is as gentle and comforting as a child's hug. The story unfolds through the eyes of two young girls, Malavika and Haasini, and their dreams, aspirations, and hopes for life. As they grow up, Malavika marries and moves to the US while Haasini becomes a renowned *Bharatanatyam* dancer, but they remain connected throughout aided by the bond of a city and a childhood spent together.

The novel set in the Hyderabad of 1970s unravels at an unhurried pace. Sharing stories from the bygone era – of MS Subbulakshmi's *Suprabhatam*, of Raja Ravi Verma's portraits of Hindu deities, of languid afternoons spent in the arms of a mango tree, and of reading the great English classics till late at night. It is a book about Hyderabad by a passionate Hyderabadi for its inhabitants who are slowly losing their connection to the city's glorious past.

HOW AND WHEN DID THIS BOOK COME ABOUT?

I have been working on the novel for many years now, on and off when I

had the time. It lay neglected on the computer before being resurrected during Covid when I felt that it was important to share what stories about Hyderabad. It was written so that there is a record of what Hyderabad was like in my time, or else the younger generation will think that all there is to the city are only Gachibowli and the Financial District (smiles).

WHAT DOES THE TITLE OF THE BOOK CONVEY?

I believe we are tied to our childhood homes that hold so many of our histories. It's like our first crush and holds a special place. A home is more than a physical structure and is a living entity that embraces you during your worst times. I say it is like a kind, loving grandmother, not even a mother. In fact, as the manuscript was getting ready for publication, I saw many of my friends who had moved all over the world, coming back to their ancestral homes in Domalguda or Marredpally.

THE BOOK TIPS ITS HAT TO HYDERABAD IN SO MANY WAYS. WHAT IS IT ABOUT THE CITY YOU GREW UP IN DO YOU MISS?

Cities have to grow and change character, that is the way of things but what I do miss is the graciousness of old Hyderabad, the Art Deco homes, the greenery, the and sense of community we grew up with. I remember so many lost joys like cycling up to Qutb Shahi tombs all the way from Banjara Hills to the annual ritual of women converging to make *avakai* during summers all of which play out even now in my mind's eye like stills from a film.

THE CHARACTER OF SIRAJ (NEIGHBOR TO THE LEAD CHARACTERS) IS SOMEONE I REALLY ENJOYED READING. WHO WAS HE INSPIRED BY?

There was no particular inspiration. But as a young girl I liked the idea of a 'neighbor' uncle, erudite, charming, who'd guide you through the maze of literature, music, city, and even life.

Someone a young girl would naturally have a crush on!

AMITAV GHOSH SAID THAT FIRST NOVELS TEND TO BE BIOGRAPHICAL. HOW MUCH OF YOUR LIVED EXPERIENCES FORM PART OF THE BOOK?

I know everyone who knows me will ask if all this is autobiographical. Of course, we write what we know best. The city I grew up in Hyderabad is the most autobiographical part. The people you have met morph in some form in the book. As do some names. The father's character (Malavika's) is a bit like my own father who moved here from Madras, was a banker, and was a gentle soul.

YOU SAID YOU TOOK MORE THAN A DECADE OVER THE WORK. DID YOU HAVE TO CHANGE MANY THINGS AS TIME PASSED?

Hyderabad had changed, but fortunately, my story is rooted in a Hyderabad of the 60s and 70s. More than anything, I was amazed that all those things I meditate upon in the letters: about loss, relationships, ageing, and marriage are more true than ever, and have since played out in the lives of people around me. ■ MALLIK

QUICK TAKES

Your favorite character from the book
Siraj.

Malavika or Haasini, you resemble? Haasini, I think traveling all over the world with her dance, she leads an exciting life!

Your biggest learning in the course of writing the book
That discipline is key to a writer's life. You have to sit there and write every morning with some rigor. Also, you have to have to be insane in some way to sit and play with words, when you could go out there and party!



MODELS WALKED ON THE RAMP



SHIVAN, SNEHA, UPASANA, DEEPTI AND NARRESH

Spring comes in summer

March 22, Akan Brewery

Designers par excellence Shivan and Narresh stopped summer in its tracks and ushered in spring with their Creatures of Spring collection. Fashion models walked the ramp wearing their eclectic and whimsical collection, a burst of creativity and colors.



SHRIYA BHUPAL



VASUKI PUNJ



ASMITA AND RISHIKA



SUSHANTH AND DIVYA



CHANDRIKA RAVI

SHRIYA SARAN



SUHASINI



RATNA



GULNAR



ANJU PODDAR

By the book

March 18, The World Experience Center

The launch of author Ratna Rao Shekar's novel, *Listen to the House*, by actor Suhasini Maniratnam was filled with nostalgia. The conversation veered towards Hyderabad of the 70s and 80s and of course the author's formative years in the city. The wine and cheese soiree ended with book lovers grabbing a copy of the trending fiction novel that evening.

PRATEEKSHA



LAKSHMAN AELAY



NANDINI RAJU



VAIKUNTAM

PICS BY: VINAY



 bhargavikunam

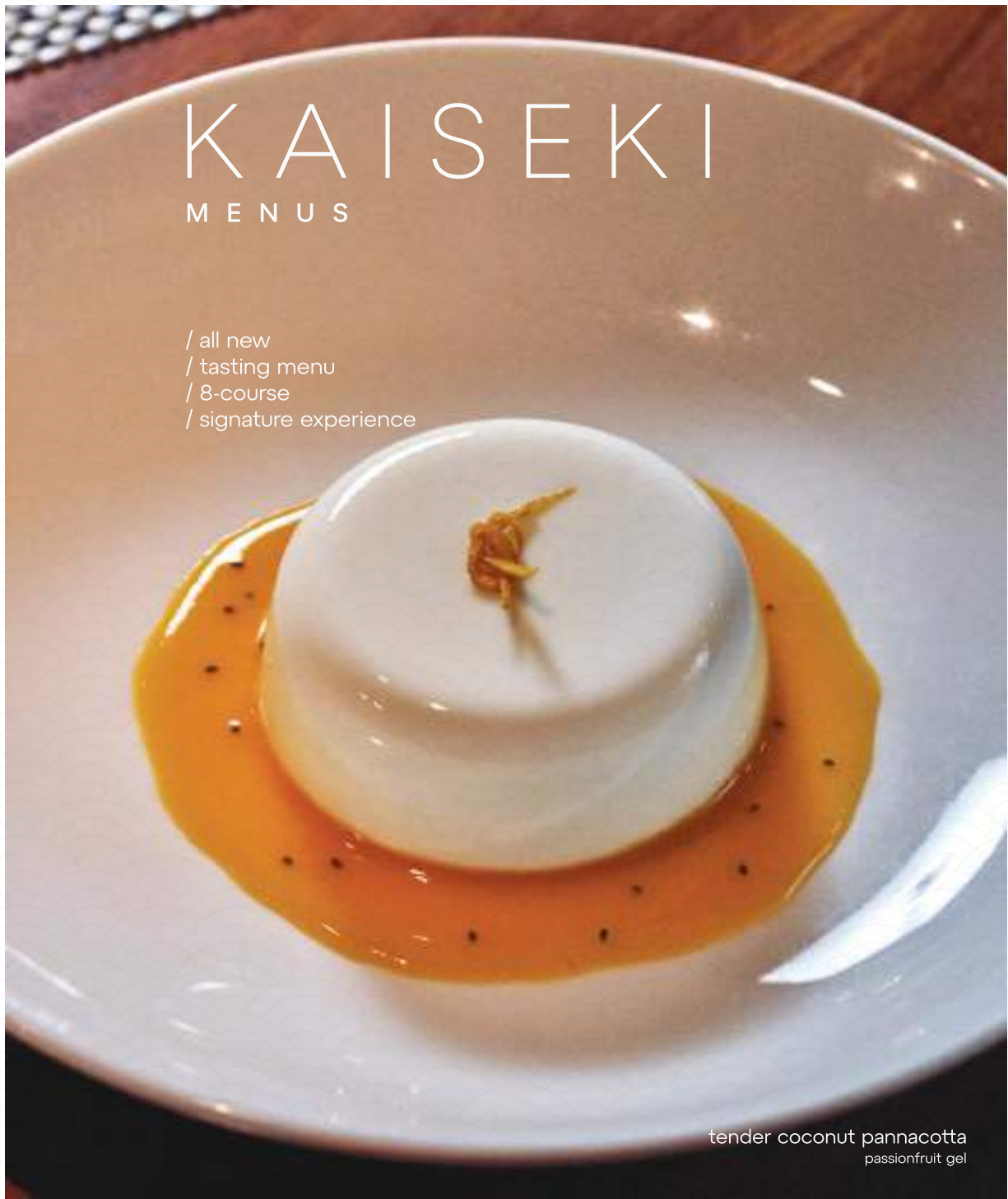
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Unapologetically you
 March 17, YelloLife Cafe
 It was a summery evening spent discussing how women should be their unapologetic selves and celebrate their identity. Puja Khan, the visionary behind the artisanal jewelry label Juvela, orchestrated the event in collaboration with *WOW! Hyderabad* magazine.



Pencil sketching | Water Colour Painting | Oil Painting | Clay Painting
 Acrylic Painting | Tanjore Painting | Knife Painting | Sand Painting

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DEEPTI



FARIA



SINDHURA



TWO GUESTS

**Boss girls
and high vibes**
March 12, Whisky Samba
 The Women on Top Awards, aligned with International Women's Day, was about Power Women, a dose of inspiration and hot trends. The awards night by global luxury magazine *Women on Top* felicitated 26 extraordinary women from various walks of life in a night filled with accomplishments, good vibes, and high spirits.



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ASHISH AND KAVITHA



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