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WOW! VISITS THE ANCIENT SHIVLING AT THE PICTURESQUE BABA KOTESHWAR MANDIR at Bolarum, on the Shamirpet Highway



WE REVIEW THE CARIBBEAN-THEMED NIGHT SPOT Raasta at Madhapur and will also tell you where to catch the IPL fever and which SRH cocktail is trending this match day

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OUR EDITOR TALKS ABOUT WHY EVERYONE SHOULD GO AND VOTE THIS MONTH AS THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM IS THE HEART OF DEMOCRACY. In Citizen Speak, we talk to five first-time voters about what bothers them the most about the country, and what changes they want to see when the new government takes over. In Startup, we profile AskLo platform that can find a maid, cook or driver within minutes in your gated community. In Cause, we find out weddings for the disabled. In Sports, we profile the SRH sensation Nitish Reddy

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WOW!'S DEFINITIVE LIST OF THE HAPPENING EVENTS in the city that you should check out this month

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WE HAVE AN AMAZING LINEUP OF NEW EATERIES IN THE CITY AND WHAT TO PICK AMONG THE SCORES THAT ARE OPENING EVERY WEEK. We have honest reviews of Postcard Tapas Cafe, specialty coffeeshop Brewtique, Tumbi Patisserie that makes old-school desserts, Echoes Cafe run by a deaf and mute staff, south Indian restaurant Aidu, the new outlet of Cravery Cafe, brand new eateries Dine Hill and Noho besides a little nook called IIT Elite that sells millet-only *tiffins*

SHOPPING

WE REVIEW KALANECA, AN ONLINE STORE THAT IS DOING WHAT IT TAKES TO RETAIN THE CHARM OF UPPADA WEAVE. Also, beaded bra straps by Yuvanta are creating a buzz for their colorful and woke vibes. We also check out EzPz a new service that helps NRIs shop without a hassle. As the Hyderabad lac bangles get the GI tag, we thought it was the right time to celebrate these local beauties



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WHAT'S HELPING THE MEN'S AND WOMEN'S FASHION LINES blur and create a non-gender style? We check out

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WOW! VISITS A WELLNESS CENTER IN BANJARA HILLS TO GIVE YOU A COMPLETE ACCOUNT OF THERAPIES such as Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy and Red Laser Light Therapy. May is Mental Health Awareness Month and we put together a beginner's guide for those seeking guidance in this realm



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ORRY WAS IN HYDERABAD AND THERE WAS A BUZZ AT THE RAW MANGO RAMP WALK. We get you what you need to know in the party circuit on these pages



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WOW! GUIDES YOU FROM SUNRISE TO SUNSET WITH INSIDER INSIGHTS ON morning bites, favorite lunch spots, picturesque skyline vistas, Instagram-worthy sights, and delectable dinner options in various hoods of the city. We condense the city's essence into eight dynamic itineraries, revealing the enchantment of an ever growing city



MODELS: RHEA CHELLANI AND KESHAV BONAM
 MAKE-UP: GULZAR WALLANI OF STYLICIOUSBYSAM
 HAIR: STYLICIOUSBYSAM
 OUTFITS: MILE ACTIVE
 BICYCLE GEAR: MJOLLNIR
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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

We tell you about the upcoming events for this month



IPL SEASON

MAY 2 AND 8

Hyderabad is all geared up for the two IPL matches. The first is on May 2nd between Sunrisers Hyderabad and the Rajasthan Royals and the second is on May 8th between Sunrisers Hyderabad and the Lucknow Super Giants.

Venue: Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium, Uppal

Timings: 7:30 pm onwards

Ticket: Rs 750 onwards (insider.in)



THEATRICAL HILARITY

MAY 3

Yogi bear Collectives and Lamakaan present a one-hour Hindi-English comedy - *Is There an Author in the Audience?* - directed by Chandani Agarwal. A mild departure from the norm, it is an unconventional comedic play that breaks the fourth wall and redefines the boundaries of theatrical hilarity.

Venue: Lamakaan, Banjara Hills

Timings: 8 pm onwards

Ticket: Rs 200 (bookmyshow.com)



CLASSICAL MOVEMENTS

MAY 5

Roja Kannan & Disciples will present *Gems of the Trinity*, a Bharatanatyam program at Shilparamam. It's based on the compositions of Saint Thyagaraja, Muthuswamy Dikshithar and Syama Sastri.

Venue: Amphitheatre, Shilparamam, Madhapur

Tel: 94907 83969

Timings: 5:30 pm to 8 pm

Ticket: Shilparamam entry fee – Rs 60 (adults) and Rs 20 (children)

EXPLORE THE CRAFT OF ACTING

MAY 6

Samahaara Theatre Group and director Rathna Shekar Reddy, present the *Samahaara Theatre Acting Workshop* (morning batch). It is open to everybody; from beginners, who are interested in exploring the craft, to professionals, who are looking to dive deeper.

Venue: Samahaara Theatre Group, Banjara Hills

Tel: 83411 20303

Timings: 7 am onwards

Ticket: Rs 20,000 (bookmyshow.com)



EMOTION IN MOTION

MAY 4 TO 5

IRA Space for Performing Arts presents *Emotion in Motion* – Expressive Dance Movement Workshop. A unique approach to the Modern & Contemporary Dance, with the help of movement guide Vishal Telang. The focus is on Self Study, Discovery and Awareness through the synergy of Body (Dance), Mind (Emotions) and Energy (Breath).

Venue: IRA Space for Performing Arts, Hyderabad

Tel: 95138 22266

Timings: 4 pm to 6 pm

Ticket: Rs 1,999





RESIN ART WORKSHOP

MAY 9 TO 11

Vandana Badruka introduces a beginner-friendly *Resin Workshop* designed for teens and adults. Learn the art of working with resin and create five products to take home, including personalized photo frames, *rakhis*, keychains, pendants and earrings.

Venue: Kalpaturu by Vandana Badruka, Banjara Hills
Tel: 90006 31246, 90005 81919
Timings: 3 pm to 6 pm
Ticket: Rs 4,000



CINEMA MEETS BOXING

MAY 19

Boxing Bay 2: Cinema Showdown, is an unconventional event. The exciting fusion of activities will have Ramanaidu Studios turn into a space where boxing takes on cinema magic.

Venue: Ramanaidu Studios, Road No. 79, Jubilee Hills
Timings: 6 pm onwards
Ticket: Rs 500 onwards (bookmyshow.com)

AN EVENING OF COMEDY

MAY 18

One of the biggest comedy acts in India, and known for his web-series *Humoursly Yours*, Vipul Goyal is set to bring laughs to the city with relatable jokes and punch lines.

Venue: KLN Prasad Auditorium – FTCCI, Lakdikapul
Timings: 6:30 pm onwards
Ticket: Rs 799 onwards (bookmyshow.com)



MUSIC IN THE AIR

MAY 25

Known for his music in *M.S. Dhoni: The Untold Story*, *Kabir Singh* and the 2020 Telugu film *Ala Vaikunthapurramuloo*, Filmfare award winning singer Armaan Malik will set the stage on fire with his hits at Boulder Hills.

Venue: Boulder Hills, Gachibowli
Timings: 4 pm onwards
Ticket: Rs 999 onwards (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

GO VOTE! It's your right!



The excitement over elections has already started. And the world will be watching us as these elections are a defining moment for our democracy. The way we vote, and who we vote for, will define the nation's course for the next few years. It is therefore our duty, a sacred duty to bestir ourselves and vote.

There is no doubt, a sense of doom among us of how from being a secular country with so much freedom in recent times we have been silenced or coerced into expressing an official thought. Whatever the outcome though, we should be proud that we are a democracy where every citizen irrespective of gender or class has the right to vote, and decide the country's leader!

The process of elections in India is by itself fascinating and is not seen anywhere else in the world in terms of its scale or the money spent by its 870-odd candidates representing a staggering 673 parties (In 2019, parties and candidates spent an estimated \$8.7 billion to woo more than 900 million eligible voters). Nearly a billion people will vote in 10.05 lakh polling

booths in seven phases spread across 44 days in centers across the country. They will elect a 543-member Lok Sabha where the leading party will choose the prime minister who will lead us from here. The Election Commissioner says that 49.7 crore male and 47.1 crore female voters – are eligible to cast their vote in the current elections. As of January 2021, there were 95 million registered voters in the country. Of these 1.8 crores are first-time voters between the ages of 18-20.

The Indian democracy may have failed in many of its deliverables (from right to food, right to work or shelter) but what it does with great aplomb is conduct its elections efficiently. It is in fact, according to political observers, the largest humanly organized event anywhere in the world!

The Election Commission mandates that there should be a polling booth within 2 kms of habitation, and literally, election workers trek across forests, deserts, mountains, and glaciers so that every eligible Indian can vote. In fact, in the core area of Gir Forest in Gujarat, the sole inhabitant of this last refuge of the Asiatic lion has a dedicated polling booth complete with an electronic machine!

When the Constitution was being written there were serious doubts about whether universal franchise should be made a right, and there were concerns whether this nascent democracy would work given the high illiteracy rate then, (as now). Interestingly, the parties' symbols used in the elections were because they felt the majority will be able to recognize the symbols rather than read the candidates' names while casting their vote.

But in the 75 odd years of democracy, we have seen, Indians more than people of any other country, treat voting as a sacred

right. In the West, elections are quiet affairs with people taking an hour or two off from work to go cast their votes. But here it is almost a *mela*, with the Election Day being declared a national holiday. In rural areas people wear their best clothes to go cast their vote, even being taken there in colorfully decorated bullock carts or autos. The otherwise disorderly Indian waits quietly in long lines to go inside a polling booth to cast his vote. Analysts continue to wonder what is it about Indian elections that remains such a sacred ritual.

The Indian democracy may have failed in many of its deliverables (from right to food, right to work or shelter) but what it does with great aplomb is conduct its elections efficiently. It is in fact, according to political observers, the largest humanly organized event anywhere in the world! Think of the sheer scale of elections: the number of people going to vote, the number of elections officers deployed, the number of polling booths, and finally the scale of a billion ballot papers having to be counted in a country where few things run efficiently.

And the ordinary Indian who most of the time feels invisible, feels empowered with the vote he has. Indeed, as he stands at polling stations, he is equal to the actor or the politician standing in the queue along with him.

Yet, we in urban India have grown cynical of the elections and of democracy itself. We have lost the idealism with which Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Ambedkar, or Jawaharlal Nehru constructed the blocks of this nascent democracy at the stroke of midnight hour. Things may have degenerated; religion, caste, class, and gender may now divide us but, let us believe in the process of democracy itself. That we have the power to set things back on track. Yet we hear the first-time voters have not even registered so far. Only 38 percent of those between the ages of 18-25 have registered so far, and that is sad because they don't realize their lives will be closely tied to the politics of the country.

The right to vote is a gift. Do exercise it!

■ RATNA RAO SHEKAR



START-UP

Preeti Mittal's three-month-old startup **Ask Lo** is the next Urban Clap if you are looking for maids, cooks or drivers

Hire a temp maid/driver on WhatsApp

What do you do when your trusted help fails to turn up and you desperately need some help? You probably ask around the neighborhood. Preeti Mittal too did that when her maid ghosted her. However, she went a step ahead and decided to solve this problem - of not being able to get a temporary maid whenever one needs it.

TECH TONIC

A developer and tester with Microsoft a few years ago, Preeti channelized her inner techie to write an APK code and create a WhatsApp-based service. Thus, a social enterprise called Ask Lo was born.

WHAT'S ASK LO

It simply connects those who want help with a maid, driver, or cook in the apartment vicinity. Users post their requirements on WhatsApp and the local working staff quickly gets access to the service needed. It also helps domestic workers with innumerable opportunities to work and earn more.

THE JOURNEY

Preeti deployed the product in her gated community and got an overwhelming response. "People who need a service and people who impart the service are both available on the platform, one just needs to have WhatsApp. All maids in the society are onboarded and whenever someone needs one, the maids get the message with a simple 'Are you available - yes or no'. If they select yes, they get



the number of the customer. Currently, it works only for bigger societies (minimum 500 flats). It's like a much more affordable version of Urban Clap," she adds.

QUALITY CONTROL

Once the communication between the service provider and the customer is established, Ask Lo steps back. Then the subscriber and the maid have the final say about the service charge. The going charge for housekeeping services (dishwashing, clothes washing, sweeping, and mopping) is approximately Rs 200 per service. "However, we are not setting the rates or ensuring the payments at this stage," says Preeti. After a few tries she has added voice messages in Telugu and Hindi for the convenience of the users. Each message is voice-translated into Telugu, "Something like the voice that comes when you pay on UPI."

RATING SYSTEM

Subscribers can rate the domestic staff using their grading system. A maid with a poor rating will probably get less work because of the algorithm. In order to choose the best option, users receive the names along with ratings when any service is requested.

How are they rated? "We have kept it simple with five stars - one being highly dissatisfied and five being highly satisfied."



SUCCESS RATE

The app was launched on January 14, 2024 and has 1,048 service providers and 2,017 users. So far, Ask Lo has facilitated 4,085 service requests.

THE REVENUE MODEL

Preeti does not charge money from the users. As of now, she spends around Rs 5,000 to host it on the Azure platform. She hopes that once it scales up, investors will be interested in her idea.

FUTURE PLANS

Later this year, Preeti plans to add masseurs, gardeners and electricians. The service is also looking to expand to smaller apartment complexes and colonies with fewer residences nearby.

■ MANJU

Tel: 99893 36161

CAUSE

Dr Miriyam has been conducting *Swayamvaram* and mass weddings of underprivileged disabled couples in the state

Playing Cupid to the disabled



The disabled community in India may have had small wins in getting public spaces to be more wheelchair friendly in the last few years. However, their right to get married or find a partner is still a faraway dream. Hyderabad Human Rights activist Dr Lion Babu Miriyam has sought to bridge this gap. He has been on a mission to help underprivileged disabled people find life partners through in-person *Swayamvaram*. In the last 10 years, Dr. Miriyam has conducted over 6,000 mass weddings (where over 50 disabled couples get married on the same day) in and around Hyderabad.

THE INSPIRATION

The resident of Dilsukhnagar, founder and the National Chairman of the Global Human Rights Association, has several disabled individuals within his family circles. He remarks, “Although people offer sympathy, few step forward to assist them in finding suitable partners. It’s as if society overlooks their emotional and physical requirements.” He speaks from personal experience, as his nephew is wheelchair-bound, he understands the challenges of finding him a compatible partner. This experience prompted him to initiate weddings for the disabled in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. About 12.2 per cent of the population

in Telangana suffer from one or more forms of disabilities according to 2011 statistics. A conservative estimate puts the number of eligible and disabled people to be a few lakhs.

Most parents are already exhausted from taking care of their disabled wards and do not show much interest in arranging a dignified wedding for them. “I feel they have the right to this momentous occasion in life. So, I rent out a wedding hall, arrange for a pandit, photographer and lunch for the couples and their

guests. We also organize a wedding kit that helps them start their own life together,” he informs. The wedding kit comprises a gas stove, utensils to run a family of four, disabled-friendly cots and other household gadgets.

HOW IT WORKS

Dr. Miriyam spends his own money to advertise in newspapers or distribute brochures about an upcoming matrimonial event in the city. He also mobilizes eligible disabled people by paying for a caregiver and their transport to and from their house to the wedding venue.

FUTURE PLANS

Dr. Miriyam works aggressively in the summer so that he can conduct weddings in the auspicious months of May and August. He hopes to conduct at least 50 weddings in the next six months.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Add information to their database of eligible disabled people
- Sponsor full or part of wedding kit - from grocery bags (Rs 5,000) to disabled-friendly cots and chairs (starts Rs 5,000)
- Donate towards the wedding expenses - marriage hall, photographer, lawyer, pandit, lunch, etc.
- Send your personal vehicle for a day or a few hours to help the disabled couples commute from their homes to the wedding hall and back
- Volunteer your time for coordination of the events and mobilize funds for the weddings ■ MANJU

Tel: 92466 11707





SPORTS CORNER

The story of IPL's new cricketing sensation, **Nitish Kumar Reddy** from Sunrisers Hyderabad, is one of guts, grit and glory

“Shadow practice is the secret of my success”

When you listen to cricketer Nitish Kumar Reddy's journey, it feels like you are listening to his TED talk. A rags-to-riches story complete with failures, humiliation and tears. It then turns into a life that is exploding with newfound success. The 21-year-old All-rounder is playing for Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) team in Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024. He was in the news for being the first player in IPL history to score 50-plus runs, take a wicket, and secure a catch in a single match. Not surprisingly, the internet is buzzing with headlines like, “Who is Nitish Reddy, the new cricketing sensation,” “Nitish Reddy's earnings, salary and IPL scores.”

Ever since he made his first-class debut on 27 January 2020, for Andhra in the Ranji Trophy, there has been no looking

back. Sunrisers Hyderabad bought him for Rs 20 Lakh, in the 2023 IPL auction. Excerpts from an interview with Nithish.

SACRIFICES MADE

It's cricket-first for me 24x7. Nothing feels like a sacrifice or a challenge when I am focused on cricket. Unlike other 20-year-olds, no parties, no pizzas, no momos and no hanging out. I can give up everything for cricket.

COPING MECHANISM

Remain authentic, unperturbed by victories or defeats, critiques or praise. Public opinion is akin to a hole in the boat. Never let that get to you. Regardless of its nature, I've mastered the art of steering clear. I concentrate on delivering my utmost while disregarding the highs, lows, detractors, and admirers.

A DAY IN THE LIFE

I rise at 08:00 am, fuel up with breakfast, then hit the gym from 11 am to 12 noon for strength and flexibility workouts, alternating with pre-hab sessions to prevent injuries. After lunch and a quick nap, it's shadow practice to sharpen my skills. I don my gloves and hold the bat, mentally facing off against imaginary deliveries from bowlers like Bumrah, visualizing my shots and the ball's trajectory. Later in the evening, it's regular pitch practice. On match days, post-lunch is game time.

MY DAD, MY HERO

I belong to a joint family in Visakhapatnam. My dad used to spend all his money towards my cricket practice. He even quit his job when he was transferred to another state, since it would interfere with my cricket coaching. Many people tried to dissuade him from spending on me or quitting his government job. But he trusted my talent and invested everything he had. My parents went into debt due to my cricketing career. However, all that struggle paid off. My dad is my hero. Everything I am today I owe it to him.

ADVICE TO NEWBIES

Make sure you get a sponsor and not depend on your family's earnings alone as it is not sustainable. The cost of a quality cricket bat is Rs 1.5 lakh. You will need to spend a few lakhs on cricket before you get your dividends.

WHAT'S NEXT

I am preparing for the Andhra Premier League (APL) and hopefully for some international games too. ■ MANJU



CITIZEN SPEAK

WOW! talks to a few first-time voters at the 2024 Lok Sabha elections being held in Hyderabad on May 13

From better housing to traffic rules, we want it all

Casting your vote in the world's largest democracy's electoral system is an important and exciting milestone for any Indian. It empowers you to decide the fate of the nation. WOW! speaks to first-time voters to ask what they think is wrong with the country and what should change.

Focus on renewable energy sources

DEVRAJ REDDY

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY, SYDNEY.
BACHELOR OF MARKETING AND MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS



CURRENT ISSUES

1. Unavailability of sanitary products in public places
2. Pollution
3. Inadequate support for sustainable practices

WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE

1. Enacting laws that support the manufacturing of sanitary products for women and increase their availability in public places and schools.
2. Stricter traffic laws as well as incentives for businesses to adopt

- hybrid work arrangements that reduce pollution.
3. The government ought to support investments in renewable energy, encourage eco-friendly behavior, and provide incentives to promote the adoption of more sustainable practices.

Need more startup incubators

VIRAJ REDDY GUNAPATI

BACHELOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION AND BACHELOR OF LEGISLATIVE LAW (BBA LLB) AT ICAFI LAW SCHOOL, HYDERABAD



CURRENT ISSUES:

1. Rampant unemployment
2. Poor public transportation
3. Not enough startup incubators

WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE:

1. The new government should continue to support startup incubators like T-Hub. It encourages foreign investment in the city and the Kokapet Special Economic Zones, which offer advantages to international companies for relocating there. As a result, there will be more jobs created.
2. Digitize Hyderabad in every way: Public transportation should be simplified. Tracking RTC buses made accessible online. Prominent locations should offer free, quick WiFi.
3. The government should provide financial assistance to start-ups to foster innovative ideas and generate employment opportunities.

Better sex education

HRIDAYA SURABHI

CHALMEDA ANAND RAO INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES



CURRENT ISSUES

1. Outdated and mostly irrelevant education system in schools
2. Health care

WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE

1. Provide sanitary pads and better sex education in schools.
2. More health camps and awareness about disease prevention



Improved housing and traffic

KRISHIKA GUPTA

ST. FRANCIS COLLEGE FOR WOMEN

CURRENT ISSUES

1. Inadequate housing for the low income groups
2. Traffic congestion

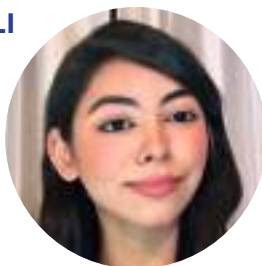
WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE

1. Give the underprivileged access to fair housing policies.
2. Encouraging social parity by providing free public transport. Also implement better traffic management methods.

Stop commercialization of education and healthcare

HUNNA ALI RAZA

APOLLO INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES AND RESEARCH



CURRENT ISSUES

1. **Social Disorder:** Despite a secular constitution that values diversity, social issues are prevalent. These range from caste and religious discrimination to political goals supporting right-wing extremism and minority targeting.

2. Commercialization of the healthcare and education Sector:

There is a shortage of professionals in education and medicine. Both industries struggle with bias towards quality of service for the rich and poor.

3. **Economic Inequality:** Corrupt practices are widespread due to a complete lack of accountability. There is a growing disparity in wealth and resources between classes.

WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE

1. Separation of politics from religion and caste is necessary. Rather than stirring conflict and unrest the political leaders should reject radicalism to get support.
2. Improve public healthcare and education systems. There is a need for rationalized investing in infrastructure, particularly in rural and underserved areas. Establishing a system that enables access for everyone regardless of their financial status.
3. We need stronger anti-corruption initiatives. Increase accountability of public servants by making stringent laws for election-related pledges.

■ VIRAJ





SUHAS WITH PRASANNA VADANAM CO-STAR RASHI SINGH

Says *Colour Photo* actor **Suhas** who has had three consecutive hits in the last four years and a dark thriller waiting for release this month

“Never thought I would come this far”



Ten years ago, he was just another aspiring actor, who moved to Hyderabad with a duffel bag, Rs 10,000 in his pocket, and a dream of making it in Tollywood. He was a computer science graduate with experience in college theatre, mime and monologue performances. In 2013 he started visiting production houses with his portfolio. In hindsight, he says, like *PELLI CHOOPULU*, those photos looked amateur. However, the little steps - from acting in short films and YouTube videos to feature films helped him reach where he is today. Meet actor **Suhas** who came under the spotlight with a lead role in the *Colour Photo* (Best Feature Film in Telugu at the 68th National Film Awards) during peak Covid. Today, he has seven movies in his kitty including one with Keerthy Suresh.

Suhas is eagerly awaiting the release of *Prasanna Vadanam*, a dark thriller where he suffers from a unique health condition called face blindness. WOW! shares snippets of the conversation.

IS YOURS A ‘YOUTUBE TO SILVER SCREEN’ SUCCESS STORY’?

Absolutely. When I moved from Vijayawada, I saw the rise of short films and YouTube videos. Over the past decade, I’ve appeared in 100 short films, with ten gaining significant views and two—*The Athidi* and *Kalakaarudu*—making waves on Twitter. Despite the artistic fulfilment, my financial struggles were real until I joined *Chai Bisket*, a content creation platform. A few of my viral comedy videos caught the attention of movie directors, paving my path to the silver screen.

QUICK TAKE

Favorite place to hangout in Hyderabad: Metropolitan Cafe in Krishna Nagar, for old times’ sake

An acquisition I’m proud of: Gifting a house to my parents in Vijayawada

Best compliment received: A personal video by actor Nani saying that I deserve his Filmfare award for my performance in the short film *The Athidi*

Hashtag that describes me: #NaPaniNenuChesukuntanu

Vacation place I frequent: Maredumilli Forest

IS IT EASY TO MAKE INROADS IN AN INDUSTRY THAT IS REPLETE WITH STAR KIDS?

It’s the kind of work you do (talent and quality) and the kind of numbers it makes (box-office success) that determine your career trajectory. To begin with, you need to be talented and need to get good scripts. Those movies then have to work at the box office or OTT platforms to fetch you more. I was lucky that I got to act in mainstream movies such as *Majili*, *Dear Comrade* and *HIT: The Second Case* for which I won the SIIMA Award for Best Actor in a Negative Role.

WHAT WAS THE TURNING POINT IN YOUR CAREER?

It was *Colour Photo* that gave me a quantum leap in my career. The movie was about colorism in the backdrop of a campus love story. It was relatable and gained traction on OTT. After that, I was cast in the lead role in *Writer Padmabhushan* and *Ambajipet Marriage Band*. These three movies earned more than thrice their budget and won critical acclaim and success for me. I never thought I would come this far. I am 30 years old and at the right place at the right time.

WHAT WERE THE LOW POINTS IN YOUR LIFE?

As actors, we keep giving auditions and there are dry spells. Keeping up our morale at such times is crucial. Only when you cross that spell will you find the right role. These emotionally draining moments are a part of the cinematic journey. One must embrace it and wait for the light at the end of the tunnel. I waited and it paid off.

WE HEAR THAT YOU MARRIED YOUR COLLEGE SWEETHEART. WAS THERE DRAMA IN THE LOVE STORY?

Surprisingly, none at all. We fell in love during college, told our parents and they got us married. It’s a zero-*masala* love story with no conflicts, breakups or chasing scenes.

WHAT NEXT IN 2024?

Prasanna Vadanam releases on May 3rd in cinemas. Then I have *Cable Reddy* with director Sandeep Reddy Bandla, *Uppu Kappurambu* with Keerthy Suresh and *Oh Bhamma Ayyo Rama* a Shobu Yarlagadda production. You will see me turn into a producer for a movie and maybe sing playback for my role soon. ■ MANJU

Echoes Living Room is a cozy diner run by a deaf and mute staff

A One-of-a-Kind Corner!



Modern day diner **Echoes Living Room**, is a unique diner that is run by a deaf and mute staff. Founders Sahib Sarna and Shivansh Kanwar opened its doors to Hyderabad during the summer of '21. They established the diner/café with the vision of creating opportunities for the deaf and mute section of society. With Echoes they have successfully cultivated a space that empowers their staff. It also provides customers with the opportunity to learn more about social responsibility while indulging in some finger-licking comfort food.

“The concept strives to initiate a healthy conversation around the deaf and mute community. This helps create a unique dining experience in an embracing and judgment-free environment,” share Sahib and Shivansh.

There is lovely music playing on the speakers as we enter the cozy space. We are politely shown to our seats by one of the staff members to whom we thank using sign language. To help communicate with the staff, at each

table you will find a switch hanging from a light above, and a note that says, ‘Press the bell and we’ll be right there to serve you’. On the table you will also find cue cards to help make requests, including ones to share the menu and to clear the table.

We begin our lunch with the crispy *Peri Peri Crunch Chicken Momos*, *The OG Big Crispy Juicy Chicken Burger*, that is drool-worthy and one of their signature wood fired pizzas - *Echoes Paneer Tikka Masala Twist*. We also tried their wholesome thick shake, *Very Strawberry Red Velvet Rush* and cold coffee, *Cara-Mello Brownie Old Fashioned Frappe*. The refreshing Strawberry Shake was served with whipped cream and topped with the chocolaty gems candy. While the perfectly balanced and flavorful Frappe came with a soft brownie and was also topped with whipped cream.

When it was time for dessert, we order one of their highly recommended waffles, the *Echoes Nutella and the Brownie Factory*, which comes with a

chocolate-infused waffle topped with ice cream, Nutella and chocolate sticks. The dessert is heavy in all the best ways. The melting ice cream mixed with the silky Nutella is a delightful mess that is totally worth it. ■ IPSHITA

Meal for two: Rs 600 onwards
 Ground Floor, Jyothi Elegance, Madhapur
 Tel: 85000 03150
 Timings: 11 am to 11 pm

WOW!
Recommends
 Peri Peri
 Crunch Chicken
 Momos





For the love of coffee and style, step into this café with sweet treats and couture

A New food and fashion Corner

Named after its founders, sisters Sanober and Ruhi Tumbi, **Tumbi Patisserie and Coffee** is a tranquil nook for lovers of coffee, confectionary and clothes. Yes, you read it right, Tumbi houses a clothing boutique of its own in the cafe. The sisters established the space in December of '23, with Sanober taking care of the patisserie and Ruhi the boutique which carries her eponymous label's stunning hand-woven designs.

As we enter, we are greeted by jovial staff members who show us to our seat overlooking Ruhi's boutique. On display are a wide range of handwoven pieces, including jamdani cotton suits, lehengas, sarees and more. Besides this Ruhi, taking inspiration from Manish Malhotra whom she has previously worked with and learnt from, has also created a shimmering line-up of cocktail sarees.

The coffee menu offers an array of flavorful coffee options, all made from two types of coffee beans - Indian (dark roast) and international (medium roast). From the menu we ask for the *Iced Coffee Matcha Latte* and the *Iced Mango Americano*. With the help of what happens to be India's first gold Modbar that provides a 4D experience, the coffee

is prepared live in front of us. The subtle Iced Coffee Matcha Latte is a sweet, Moorish, umami flavored iced coffee with pure Japanese Matcha topped with foam. Comparatively the Iced Mango Americano is stronger and is made by pouring mango juice over ice followed by shots of espresso extracted from freshly ground in-house coffee beans. Perfect for the summer!

From the desserts, we start with their creamy *School Pineapple Cake slice*, which is filled with chunky pineapple pieces that takes us down a nostalgia trip. Next is their *Home-style Chocolate Cake slice*, made of chocolate sponge layered between dark chocolate ganache and rich in taste. We then try the soft and smooth *Strawberry Cheesecake*; it is just as delicious as everything that came before. However, the crowd favorite and ultra-creamy *Tres Leches*, is one dessert that cannot be missed here. It features three types of milk soaked in airy-lite sponge that is topped with sweet French whipped cream.

Besides the coffee and old-school desserts, Tumbi also takes orders for customized cakes, brownies and cookies which are delivered pan India.



WOW!
Recommends:
 Iced Coffee
 Matcha Latte

Additionally, if you plan to take a trip down to Tumbi soon, be sure to grab a bite of one of their mouth-watering sandwiches. The lineup includes the *Chicken Cold Sandwich*, the *Egg and Mayo Sandwich*, *Tiffin Box Cheese Sandwich* and the *Cold Vegetable Sandwich*. ■ IPSHITA

Meal for two: Rs 550 onwards

Ground Floor, Vimbri Boulevard,
 Road No. 4, Green Valley, Banjara Hills
 Tel: 88850 38997
 Timings: 8 am to 10 pm

Borrowing the Spanish concept of small eats, **Postcard** serves up a medley of global tapas

POSTCARD FROM SPAIN

Eating out solo or in small groups with different food preferences is always a challenge when ordering either too much or too little food. **Postcard** with its *Global Tapas* concept of small plates takes care of that. Small portions of global and local favorites that are easy on the stomach and the pocket are a great option.

THE DECOR

The postbox red bar counter with a crown of shimmering color-changing LED chandelier winks and beckons as soon as you enter. There are multiple seating sections indoors as well as outdoors including two private dining areas and a family section.

FOOD

We tried multiple small plates and this is what stood out for us - the *Podi*



WOW!
Recommends
Podi keema idli



keema idli skewers, pulled jackfruit spinach tacos, paalak patta chaat with a delightful tangy tamarind sauce, flat *garlic bread* and the smokey, peppery *Mutton Adana* from the live grill. The humble *idli* donned a sizzling avatar and was unmissable, and irrespective of whether you are a vegetarian or not, do try the immensely flavorful jackfruit tacos.

PRO-TIP

Tuesdays are dedicated to dance socials. Head over post 9 pm to boogie to Afro- Latin tunes. ■ SUPRIYA

Meal for two: Rs 1,500

Dallas Center, Hitech City Main Rd, Madhapur
Tel: 79975 00081

Timings: 12 pm to 12 am on weekdays & 12 pm to 1 am on weekends

All Hyderabad favorites in one giant plate

BAHUBALI RULES



WOW!
Recommends
Bahubali thali

Dine Hill has a new outlet and a new *avatar*. The popular food joint, in Masab Tank, known for its Hyderabad cuisine has opened an upscale version of its outlet in Banjara Hills. The sprawling 300 seater has a separate, low seating, section for *Mandi* enthusiasts and two private dining areas for groups of 20 and 30. They also offer a celebrity dining lounge for groups of 12.

The restaurant opened during *Ramzan* and had food enthusiasts thronging to it in the wee hours for *Sehri*. The *sehri thali* combo of *Khichdi khatta* with *kheema, tamata chutney* and *papad* was a great hit with the revelers and the ones fasting. While the *Sehri thali* might sound frugal to some, it can be amped up with sides of *bheja fry* and *gurda fry*. We checked out the viral *Bahubali thali* and feasted on *Zeera rice, Khatti dal, Talawa gosht, Chicken 65, Fried prawns, Apollo fish* and *Tandoori roti*. The term *Bahubali* is indicative of the portion size served in this *thali* measuring nearly two



feet in diameter. We dug in with great gusto challenging ourselves to finish the meal meant for four to five people; we didn't succeed but had a gleefully gluttonous time trying! Post the meal we braced ourselves for Hyderabad's favorite dessert – *Apricot delight*. ■ SUPRIYA

Meal for four: Rs 3,000 (Bahubali thali)

129, Plot 8, Road No. 3, Banjara Hills
Near Banjara Hills Police Station
Tel: 92906 79696

Timings: 11 am to Midnight on all days



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Aidu is foodpreneur Aman Chainani's tribute to the distinct flavors of the five South Indian cuisines

PACKING A "PAANCH"

While Hyderabad is booming with restaurants offering region-specific South Indian cuisines like Telangana, Andhra, and Rayalaseema flavors, the F&B space for all five South Indian cuisines under one roof is still a niche area with loads of potential.

It is here that **Aidu**, which translates as five in Telugu, comes in as a breath of fresh air with a host of value additions. First, is the ambience which, while being contemporary in terms of furniture, also retains classical elements like the stone murals in the al fresco area. Second, the cocktails listing is among the best the city has to offer, in terms of innovative appeal. And third, traditional South Indian classics have been presented with a slight tweak, adding innovation and drama to the table.

This review has to begin with *Mustard Mystery*. Mustard gin, rose tart, clarified watermelon caviar, with the subtle and sweet flavors of rose and watermelon being complemented wonderfully by the more pungent notes of mustard, this one is the strong and silent type. *Mogratinini*, a blue gin, *mogra* syrup, peach and *mogra*-flavored peach is another delight created by mixologist Ganesh.

In food, there are varied starter options, beginning from *Paniyaram* (with a cheese-veggies stuffing, delicious!) and the smart *Avakai Soya Chaap to Keema Undai* and *Ulavacharu* Lollipop. The Standout starter in terms of taste and fresh appeal, however, was *Meen Pollichattu*, a good-sized pomfret marinated in the Kerala spices of the recipe and then steamed in a banana leaf.

In main course, there are *biryanis*, *appams*, *Idiyappams*, *Kerala puttu* and *Malabar parathas* to be enjoyed with *Mangalorean Kodi Gassi*, *Malabar fish curry*, *Nellore Chapala Pulusu*, *Aloo Korma*, *Kalan Kuzhambu* (button mushrooms cooked in the traditional Kerala recipe of using coconut milk) and plenty more options. There is enough local representation, both vegetarian and non-vegetarian, on the menu you have *Gutti Vankaya*, *Onion Patti Samosa*, *Marag Charkoni Naan*, *Patthar ka Gosht*, *Kaju Royyala Vepudu*, *Miryala Kodi Vepudu*, *Kodi Chips* and the like.

In the mains, worthy of mention, besides the *Malabar Fish Curry*, is the *Thengaipal Koni Biryani* - chicken *biryani* prepared in coconut milk and served in a green coconut shell. It is creamy, thanks to the coconut milk but light and subtle as minimal spices are added.

Desserts at **Aidu** are the real game changers. Try the *Aidu Mysore Pak* to know what I am talking about, when you decode its deconstructed plating, it is as delicious as or even more so than the original and you also get a much-needed change from its usual plain Jane appearance, as one is used to. Even the *Double Ka meetha* is presented in a cigar roll *avatar*, all very pleasing to the eye and thankfully for the palate as well! ■ SWATI

Meal for two: Rs 1,800

Plot no 1057/G, Road No, 45, Jubilee Hills, Beside SBI Bank

Tel: 82829 70606/82829 80606

Timings: 12 pm to 12 am



WOW!
Recommends
Aidu Mysore
Pak

Cravery Cafe 2.0 gets bigger and smarter in its new outlet at Financial District

Craving for More

Cravery Cafe, earned brownie points during the pandemic year of 2020. A cosy little cafe with the most delicious confectionery, Mac N Cheese and coffee. It has gotten a larger and smarter 2.0 avatar, with a gourmet menu to boast. Founder-owner Priya Vasireddy who had dared to launch the cafe in the year Covid struck giving wings to her dream for a one-stop cafe to fulfil all her pregnancy cravings, has now expanded the ambit of the brand.

The new outlet located in the buzzing (with F&B outlets) building called The District in Financial District, ticks all the right boxes.

First off, it is much larger at 5,000 sq. ft. and about 140 covers, and has a contemporary and energetic vibe. There is abundant natural light with a glass facade on an entire side of the restaurant. The other side has a terrace with stunning view of the Financial District. There are varied furniture options, straight-backed dining chairs, more comfy sofa chairs and bar stools. Greens in pretty pot holders and knick knacks in different nooks and corners complete the pleasant ambience. There

is also a gaming zone for the restless teens and they don't sell alcohol.

The menu is pretty comprehensive, with soups, salads, classic craves, small/big plates, pizzas, Mac n Cheese, pastas, rice bowls, south Indian roasts/starters, south Indian rice/gravies, hot chocolate, chocolate fondue and artisanal ice creams. The beverages menu has organic healthy beverage, bubble teas and the newly-added non-alcoholic wines like the *white/red wine sangrias* and *watermelon/pomegranate wine spritzers*.

We ordered a *Three Leaf Walnut Green Apple salad*, in a tangy balsamic vinaigrette dressing, adding the (complimentary) topping of *grilled peri peri paneer*. In *Mac N Cheese* try the Mushroom, Spinach and Corn as well as the herb and chilli chicken one. For cheese lovers they have *pulled garlic bread* in different fillings.

For starters, we loved the *Sri Lankan Prawn Pepper Fry*, *Chic-O-Fillet Brioche* with its *Katsu styled chicken topping* and the *Crispy Mushrooms* in *Thai Basil*

sauce. I had the *Honeydew Bubble tea* as a divine companion through the meal and I think it did its job of keeping the tummy behaving rather well!

In mains, we first tried the *Farm Fresh Pan Pizza* and *Roast Chicken* served with mashed potato and seasonal sautéed veggies, topped with pan jus. While the pizza was nothing to write home about, the roast chicken was excellent, well-cooked, moist, juicy and with perfect seasoning. Next was *Nawabi Cottage Cheese Pilaf Rice Bowl* and it was quite competently done, will do perfectly when one is looking for one pot meal options.

For desserts, don't skip the extraordinary *Tres Leches* and *Apple Crumb Pie*. There are artisanal ice creams too which I have made a mental note of trying out later!

■ SWATI

Meal for two: Rs 1,500

First Floor, The District, Myscape Rd, Financial District
Tel: 81238 8135
Timings: 9 am to 11 pm



WOW!
Recommends
Srilankan
Pepper
Prawns





Coffee, like clothes, should be customized and that's what **Brewtique** is doing for the coffeeholics of Hyderabad

Espresso Yourself Well

Did you know that coffee made in mineral water tastes better than when it's made with regular water? That piping hot coffee is bad coffee according to coffee connoisseurs? Or can using A2 cow milk enhance your coffee flavor multiple times as compared to regular buffalo milk?

These insights stem from the discerning palate of Sunder Pappu, a coffee enthusiast. **Brewtique**, a 'boutique for the brew' coffee establishment in Jubilee Hills is the love child of three friends — Sundar, Karthik Chandra, and Prabhudronamraju who love coffee in all forms, from bean to the blend.

THE FEEL

This two-level cafe (terrace is even better, with a view) with lots of tropical plants and green foliage is a digital nomad's dream come true. There is Wi-Fi, minimalist decor and the aroma of coffee and cookies/breads wafting from the counter. We recommend you choose the high table with a bar stool overlooking Road no. 45 for your creative 'work from cafe' day!

BOLD BLENDS

The eight-month-old specialty coffee place appeals to the hardcore coffee connoisseur. Every month, the cafe holds a series of three-day coffee workshops - called Brewtopia - to experiment and let coffee lovers try out new flavors. March

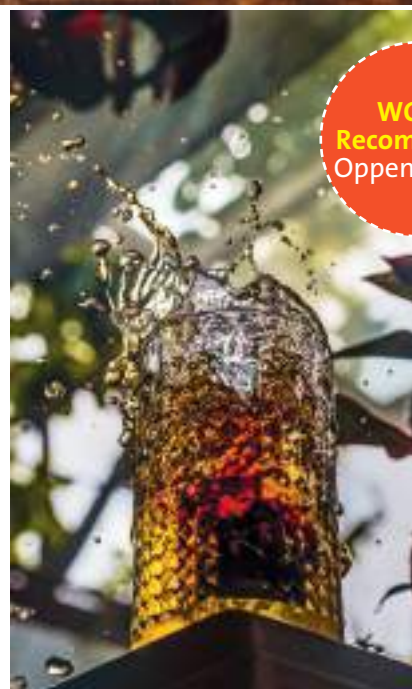
was about Matcha, the OG of Japanese coffee. April was for Italian coffee. Along with the theme/coffee of the month, the decor and the menu changes as well. Coffee experiments are great, but what happens when they fail? "We call them Bean Blunders and offer it to our customers," quips Sundar.

While they source their coffees from multiple coffee estates across the country, Brewtique takes pride in the milk and water they invest in. "We use A2 cow milk and mineral water because every component can make or break coffee," he explains.

BEAN BLISS

The cafe and patisserie have experimented with putting together some mellow tastes that complement coffee and not dominate it. While they have croissants and sandwiches, Sundar recommends their *Sourdough Open Toast*, especially the *Guacamole* variant. It is made of ricotta cheese, roasted cherry tomatoes and herbs as the best partner for coffee.

Brewtique also has milkshakes, fine teas and infusions, but their coffee variety is their pride. There is lots to choose from lattes, espresso, cold coffees and cold brews. We tried the *Zanzibari Latte* which was a frothy cup, refreshing and rich, with a hint of African spices. While browsing through their menu,



WOW!
Recommends
Oppenheimer

Oppenheimer caught our attention. This delectable concoction combines cold brew with Indian tonic and Red Bull, delivering an electrifying boost to the caffeine experience.

With plenty left to explore, we've made a pact to return in May for the next Brewtopia season, featuring the enticing flavors of Moroccan coffee. As we bid farewell, we exchanged a 'see you latte' promise. ■ MANJU

Meal for two: Rs 800

Road No. 10, Jubilee Hills

Tel: 89787 24242

Timings: 6 am to 11 pm, open every day

A little nook near Shilparamam is making protein the main ingredient of its breakfast recipes

Millet Maza

With 'immunity in every community' as the motto, this nook opposite Shilparamam is dishing out healthy, protein-rich and affordable food for the Hyderabadis. Started in late March, Immunity Ingredient Tiffins or **IIT Elite** for short, is run by a mother-son duo - Ganji Shiva Parvati and Vijay Kumar. It boasts of a wide tiffin menu made of millets. Their specialty is adding proteins, so along with the regular coconut, tomato and ginger *chutney* comes the soya chunk curry, known to be the purest form of protein for vegetarians.

Vijay recalls their time selling *idlis* and *dosas* on the roadside at Machavaram in Andhra Pradesh when he was a teenager. Currently pursuing MTEch at IISc Bengaluru, Vijay has started this place with the idea of introducing healthy food to people. "We have had *millet dosas* in other places in Hyderabad and it tasted ridiculous. We knew we could cook a far better fare and thus started IIT Elite," says Vijay.

THE BESTSELLER

While they also have the regular *urad dal idli* and *dosa* (so that customers can compare the taste with the millet version), their main menu comprises of *Millet Idli*, *Millet Vada*, *Millet Dosa* and more. Their best seller is the *IIT Special Non-Veg Millet Dosa* (Rs 99). It comes loaded with shredded chicken breast (has more protein than regular chicken) and eggs besides the usual *chutneys* and Soya Chunks curry.

In the millet varieties, they add fresh grated veggies such as beetroot and carrot. Mom Parvati swears by the *Carrot Ragi Dosa* version she makes. "We also give *Ragi Java* complimentary for our customers and we hope they will start patronizing this tasty and healthy drink like coffee and tea," says Vijay.

PRICING FACTOR

Vijay says that they started their own delivery service to be able to keep their pricing low instead of tying up with food delivery apps. A plate of three *idlis* costs Rs 39, the lowest in the city, he says. For first-timers visiting the eatery, he suggests *Dibba Rotti Panakam*, made of five kinds of millet.



WOW!
Recommends
IIT Special
Non-Veg
Millet Dosa

Ragi Malt introduced in April seems to be their bestseller. Most fitness enthusiasts who work out in the vicinity flock to this place to trade their morning coffee for their share of this iron, calcium, zinc, fibre and protein-rich drink. ■ MANJU

Meal for two: Rs 200

IIT Elite, Ground floor - Ostan Rooftop Resto, Behind N convention Center, opposite Shilparamam, Hi-tech City
Tel: 93815 16909

Timings: 6 am to 12 noon and 6 pm to 12 am

They also do home deliveries via Uber and Rapido



A culinary gem where Asian tradition waltzes with modern flair
Fine Dining Has A New Address

As we walked up the elegantly appointed staircase and through the restaurant we knew that **NOHO** is not just another Pan Asian restaurant. The sophisticated ambiance, with a design that's a creative fusion of metals like brass, copper, iron, and steel offset by the deep reds pays homage to its Asian roots. From floor-to-ceiling abacus-styled grills to funky chandelier beams and cascading chunky chandeliers, the decor is both innovative and inviting. The space features a central bar, a sushi bar, and teppanyaki, along the length of the restaurant. The terrace, an extension of the cocktail bar, boasts its own identity with a metallic ceramic installation inspired by Asian geometry. The large metal tree trunk branching out installation creates a focal point. The metal facade, complemented by lush greenery, ensures Noho stands out on the road heavily dotted with other restaurants.

BEVERAGES

The drinks menu at NOHO is a curated homage to the Silk Road, with cocktails that tell a story each from the ancient trade route. Since it was a dry day, we tried the mocktail menu that was a tad bit less interesting in comparison, but a refreshing mix of flavors nevertheless. We tried *The Tropics* and *Sulawesi* both

had a layered citrus profile. The menu also offers a choice of shared cocktails.

FOOD

NOHO offers an immersive Pan-Asian experience. The live counters invite diners to witness the culinary artistry up close and personal. Each dish, from sizzling Korean stone bowls to Japanese Teppanyaki and Sushi & Robata (Japanese style of bar-be-cue), is a beautifully executed in technique and presentation. We started with *Pho*, a clear star anise broth with flat noodles and vegetables; this was like a light meal in itself. Next we tried two salads, both excellent and with a light dressing – *Baby Spinach topped with crispy leeks* and flavoured with miso; *Burrata* with a sweet soy dressing, shaved frozen tomato and rucola. Among the starters *Thai Lotus stem* was insanely addictive with the very finely sliced lotus stems fried to a crunchy perfection and dusted with kaffir lime dust; it is the most perfect bar snack ever! We also loved the *Lotus Wrap Prawn Dimsum* and *Agedashi Tofu* – deep fried silken tofu set atop a savory soy broth. For the main course we tried *Yellow Noodles in Black Bean Sauce* and the lip-smacking wok fried *Cauliflower steak* served with *holy basil sauce*. Who would have thought that cauliflower could taste this good!



WOW!
Recommends:
 Lotus Wrap
 Prawn
 Dimsum

We ended the meal on a high note with the perfectly set *Crème Brulee* that we broke through with a satisfying crunch and *Deconstructed Lotus Biscoff*.

■ SUPRIYA

Meal for two: Rs 2,500+ (without alcohol)

Plot no 1057/G, Road No. 45, Jubilee Hills,
 Beside SBI Bank
 Tel: 8584 858431 / 8584 858441
 Timings: 12 pm to 11.45 pm



Har Pal Yaadgaar


**THE
GOLKONDA**
RESORTS & SPA
GANDIPET, HYDERABAD

The Daawat-e-Minar is an experience curated to help you taste the authentic flavours of Hyderabad in all its glory. Experience it only at Jewel of Nizam - The Minar.

Jewel of Nizam
THE MINAR
Hyderabadi Fine Dining



Reserve Your Table

Jewel of Nizam

THE MINAR
Hyderabadi Fine Dining

BeEzPz helps you shop even if you are in New York

The NRI's personal shopper



Live abroad and want to shop in Hyderabad or on a whirlwind visit to India or don't know where to shop or no one to drive you around for shopping. Please meet **BeEzPz**, pronounced 'be easy peasy', a personal shopping service that operates from Hyderabad.

HOW IT WORKS

Based on the client's needs, the platform sends buying options or takes NRI customers on a curated shopping spree in a private vehicle. So, if a client in New York is looking for a wedding hamper (either to be delivered to the US or kept ready in India when they come), BeEzPz personnel will travel to the stores - be it Begum Bazar or by lanes of General Bazar. They help select, haggle (if needed) and buy things through video calls on the client's behalf. Customers pay a service fee and BeEzPz does the rest and takes a minimum commission on products purchased.

This month the company has an exclusive partnership with Narsingh Saree Store for various services with the NRIs.

OTHER SERVICES

They also offer help with tailors in Hyderabad, from finding the right one to follow-ups on the delivery of that special wedding *choli*, they take care of it all. Not just clothes, the platform can source anything from pickles to *podis* and keep it ready for the client. They also have a storage space for the client and deliver the package when they visit Hyderabad. ■ MANJU

Price: On request

2nd Floor, Jahanpanah Building, Opp. Jalagam Vengalrao Park, Road No. 01, Banjara Hills

Tel: 70755 25982

Timings: 11 am to 7 pm Monday to Saturday

ONLINE PICK

A pan-India brand is making bra straps fashionable with beadwork on it

FLAUNT YOUR STRAPS



It all started with 'your bra strap is showing' taunt from a stranger. That unsolicited remark prompted Sneha Prabeen to think of an alternative to the straps and she came up with beads. It also inspired her to start the #ShowYourStraps online movement, which she thinks empowers women to proudly display their bra straps without feeling awkward.

Thus began **Yuvanta**, her brand that makes handcrafted beaded bra straps that are comfortable (as opposed to the usual plastic straps) and pretty. This Kerala girl started her idea in a small way and tasted success at a flea market in Bengaluru. It was meant to be a quirky product but it became so popular that Yuvanta started selling it across the country through their website.

They currently make these products in beads, *kundans* and pearls. Customers receive the beaded bra strap with satin elastic and a brass bra hook on one side along with an adjustable slider on the other. The existing strap can be readily replaced with this pair. Their website and Instagram page (@yuvanta.beadworks) have a tutorial on how one can decide



on what the selected strap looks like and the size they need to order. Currently, they offer free shipping for pre-paid orders. ■ MANJU

Price: Rs 599 onwards
www.yuvanta.com

Kalasha Fine Jewels unveiled its Yedu Varala Nagalu to keep jewelry lovers happy throughout the week with astro-aligned gemstones

7-days X 7 gemstones



Do you love dressing up and believe in the science of gemstones with the days of the week? Then the Yedu Varala Nagalu collection - (7 days, 7 gemstones) - unveiled by **Kalasha Fine Jewels** to celebrate its seventh anniversary, is right up your alley. For the uninitiated, astro gemmology believes that you manifest the best things on Monday if you wear pearls, and on Tuesday if you sport rubies. Want your boss to sanction your leave for the next vacation? Wear an emerald on Friday. A job interview on Wednesday will be favourable if you wear an amethyst, astrologers say.

“It’s about aligning the planetary energies with these pieces of art,” says Abhishek Chanda, director of Kalasha Fine Jewels in Banjara Hills. A unit of Caps Gold established in 1901, Kalasha is known for its exclusive handcrafted jewelry collection. The in-store exhibition paid homage to ancient astrology and traditional beliefs surrounding



gemstones. We personally loved the magnificent pearl multi-layered chain. This piece was born to adorn the royal Hyderabadi. Another showstopper was a diamond necklace studded with emeralds.

“Each piece in the collection is meticulously crafted to symbolize the planetary influences and auspicious significance attributed to specific gemstones across the days of the week. This collection has been reimagined with contemporary elegance and craftsmanship,” explains Abhishek.

With a legacy of 120+ years in the gold industry, and as their anniversary gift to customers, they will waive making charges and no wastage charges on *jadau* jewelry, diamond jewelry and silver articles. They are offering free shipping for exports on purchase above Rs 5 lakh. ■ MANJU

Price: Rs 12,000 onwards
www.kalashajewels.com
Tel: 93939 92499

**WOW!
 Recommends:
 Diamond and
 emerald set**

Online store finds markets for a rare weave

Uplevelling with Uppada

“Rooted in ancient textile wisdom,” is how **Kalaneca** positions itself in the current online and offline sarees market. Founded by twins Ramya Rao and Kavea R Chavali, their vision is to put the legacy of Uppada sarees on the handloom map of the world. *Kala* - means skill/art in Sanskrit and *Neca* (or *nikah*) means marriage in Arabic. WE Hub has incubated Kalaneca.

LABOR OF LOVE

Uppada, is an intricate weave renowned for its silk-like texture and lightweight feel. It is now with a GI tag and shipped worldwide. “We weave, we don’t source,” proclaim the twins. While their cotton sarees take two days to weave, their Luxe Royal Jamdhani range of customized weaves takes about 45-60 days to weave!

CELEB STROKES

They have a power sarees collection called the ‘CEO Club’, and many celebs from Lola Kutty, Ishita Mangal and

Seema Anand wear them. Our favorite is Gaja Gamini, a designer gold hand block elephant prints cotton saree for Rs 4,500. It was spotted at the South India Film Festival in Hyderabad, and a sell-out at the Kala Ghoda Arts Festival in Mumbai.

LUXE EDIT

Apart from buying through their website and Instagram handle @kalaneca, they hold pop-ups such as ‘Sarees and Sangrias’ at Yellolife Cafe at Film Nagar. For those who love to flaunt their identity they also create masterpieces called the Kala Luxe line. It is where Kalaneca can put your life story with their art on their looms. The sisters believe that a saree is truly six yards of freedom to drape. ■ MANJU

Note: All their sarees come with complimentary falls, *pico* and tassels

Price: Rs 1,500 onwards
kalaneca.com
Tel: 98194 35038



**WOW!
 Recommends:
 Prakruti
 handwoven
 Uppada silk
 saree**

THERE'S A HEADBOARD
JUST IN CASE



vgreen.co

You turned your head when you first saw one of these majestic beds. Of course you did.

And just in case, your head turns again to gaze at the fine nubuck leather.

And it turns again to admire the expressive design and finish.

And again to look at the impactful curves.

**And... just in case all the head-turning gets too much,
there's a spectacular headboard you can always sit back and lean on.**

NHANCE

Crafted Luxury



For luxuriously crafted beds
that turn heads, visit NHANCE today.



#45 JUBILEE HILLS | +91 94590 57777





WOW! revisits the iconic Laad Bazaar as Hyderabad lac bangles earn their well-deserved GI recognition

Laad Bazaar: Bangles Galore

Visiting Laad Bazaar in Hyderabad is like stepping into a glittering time capsule. While the world has always celebrated the lacquer bangles for ages, the recent Geographical Indication (GI) tag comes as the official validation of our heritage. With over 400 shops on West Street of Charminar selling these colorful beauties, shopping here can be overwhelming, but totally worth it.

Pro tip: Avoid any store with lots of glitter on its tables as it means the handiwork is inferior.

ZORDAAR ZARDOZI

Kaleem Ahmed, who runs an 80-year-old Zohra Bangles, says that the *zardozi* variety is trending in 2024. These bangles, usually broader in width and heavy, have a velvet cloth with embroidery encircled around it. They look resplendent and are ideal for weddings and parties.

Price: Rs 600 for four. These bangles are often sold for twice their price on fancy online sites.
Tel: 91003 18011

CLASSY GLASS

Nagina Bangles specializes in dainty glass bangles with stones sourced from China and Germany. Glass bangles are typically two dozen bangles worn on each wrist. Buy these in excess as many may break even before you wear them.

“The bangles are handmade and women workers painstakingly dot the bangles with glitter. It is intricate work that deserves the amount we quote,” says owner Rehan.

Note: They send bangles bought in bulk via Rapido and other delivery services with advance payment.

Price: Rs 200 for a dozen.
Tel: 99635 01786

START SMALL

“Starting *kya rate hai*” is a good way to begin at Suhaag Bangles and more. Otherwise, they show only the expensive ones, Rs 1,000 and above. Price starts at Rs 5 per bangle for simple variety and they look pretty. They also have sizes 14 and 18 bangles sets and these typically have a mix of thin and thick bangles in coordinated colors, such as pink and orange or blue and green.

Price: Rs 600 per dozen.
Tel: 88976 66044

PEARLS FOR GIRLS

A1 Bangles and Jewellery especially have *maggam* work bangles that are handcrafted. The fabric is drawn with a design, then stretched and secured on a frame. Skilled artisans use needles and threads to stitch the design and add elements like beads, sequins, and stones. A1 also specializes in lac pearl bangles.





They are popular with Christian brides who like pearls to match their white wedding gowns. ■ MANJU

Price: Rs 1,000 for four/six. It takes almost a week to make one set of these bangles.
Tel: 92465 88162
Timing: 11 am to 9 pm

Handy Tips:

- There is no parking here for two or four wheelers
- All stores accept digital payments
- Avoid weekends as they are crowded
- Most stores also have websites or social media pages and you can order through them too

 bhargavikunam

 bhargavi.studio



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Ph: 8885125125, 9989899881, M.L.A. Colony, Road No-12, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad



CHARMINAR | PHOTO CREDIT: SRINIVASA PRASATH

WOW! HOOKS YOU UP FROM DAWN TO DUSK FOR MORNING MUNCHIES, LUNCH FAVES, SKYLINE SNAPS, INSTA-WORTHY VIEWS AND DINNER DELIGHTS. We scrunch the city into eight action packed plans that help you decode the magic of the Nizami city!

TEXT: MANJU LATHA KALANIDHI

ZIP CODES OF HYDERABAD: WHAT TO DO AND WHERE

The Billionaire Boulevard

JUBILEE HILLS

The roadmap: The 'Beverly Hills' of Hyderabad is the city's most affluent neighborhood, housing the political bigwigs, superstars, industrialists and other HNIs. Drive past the hilly roads to get a glimpse of the magnificent lives of the rich and famous. The talk of the town homes of Superstars Chiranjeevi, Ram Charan, Jr NTR and Rana Daggubati are on Road no. 25, aka Billionaires Boulevard.

Start with a hearty Telugu breakfast, at **Naani's Pure Veg**, with *Neyyi Karam Dosa* and *Ulavacharu Idli*. Go on a shopping spree to Road no. 36 with designer boutiques and brands such as **Manish Malhotra Flagship Store** and **Kalanjali**.

Fun fact: In 1967, a visionary IAS officer Challagalla Narasimham was asked to take up the development of Jubilee Hills. He became the first person to build a house in this colony. Thus its first resident too!

ZANY COCKTAILS AND PREMIUM ICE CREAMS

For lunch, head to **Spicy Venue** on Road no. 45 to relish Telugu-meets-Nizami speciality called *MLA Potlam Biryani* and their GI-tagged *Apricot Delight*. Or swing by **AnTeRa Kitchen & Bar** for spicy vodka cocktails with funky flavors and zany names



REIMAGINED FOOD AND COCKTAILS

like *Taggedey Ledu* or *Oddamma Saroja*. In the evening, visit the 150-year-old **Peddamma Gudi** for a slice of tradition. Later head out for an evening of music, masti and high spirits at **Tabula Rasa** or **Zero40 Brewery**. End the day at **Huber & Holly**, next to the TDP office. Try their *Mighty Midas*, a 24-karat gold ice cream with 17 ingredients including golden sprinkles, supposedly the most expensive ice cream in India. Finally, opposite Ramanaidu studios on the Nyayavihar stretch, visit the spectacular view of twinkling lights of Hyderabad. From being the last point/check post in Hyderabad, Jubilee Hills is now in the heart of the city!



HARE KRISHNA GOLDEN TEMPLE

FOREST IN THE CONCRETE JUNGLE

Dubbed as a jungle inside the concrete jungle, the iconic **KBR Park**, has a 'Quiet Book Reading' session that happens every Saturday from 4 pm to 6 pm. While here, don't forget to say hello to the peacocks that saunter in for an evening stroll. If you are lucky, you can spot celebs sweating it out in their athleisure clothes with earpods. For a change of landscape, make a quick dash to the newly-built **Hare Krishna Golden Temple** in NBT Nagar to experience their mesmerizing 6 pm *bhajans* and *aarti*. Squeeze in a bit of art with a quick peek at one of the nouveau art shows at **Kalakriti Art Gallery**. If time permits, visit **Lamakaan**, the quirky cultural hub where you can host a flea market or conduct a seminar on feminism. They have the 'best in the city' lemonade. In the twilight hour, head for a classic *Hyderabadi biryani* at **Sarvi Restaurant** and unwind at **Zing Skybar and Lounge** at **Hyatt Place**, on Road no. 1 Banjara Hills. Other places in this hilly haven are the classic **Hotel Taj Krishna**, a favored venue for slick pop-up exhibitions, and **Park Hyatt**, where you could bump into your favorite celeb nursing a drink.



SILENT BOOK READING AT KBR PARK

2

Address of the rich and glamorous

BANJARA HILLS

The roadmap: If you have an address in Banjara Hills, city's 'Who's Who' zipcode, then you've arrived. This green and rocky suburb has sprawling mansions, magnificent facades and heritage homes with the best of eateries, malls, and even temples. Did you know that Banjara Hills was the hunting ground of the panthers once?

Plan for an early morning fuel up at Hyderabad's most gorgeous artisanal café, **Katha**, with a *Mango and Matcha Frappe* over slices of their summer special *Mango Cake*. If you love a robust non-vegetarian Hyderabadi breakfast, stop at **Fishland Express** on Road no. 12, and relish *Poori* with *Chicken Curry* or *Dosa* with *Chapala Pulusu*. Or try the old classic **Mountain Bakery** for *Mutton Luqmi* and *French Bread*. Do you crave for early morning Telugu *tiffins*? Then drop by at **Panchakattu Dosa** in the Annapurna Studios lane and order their *Pesarattu* or *Pongal*. If global designer retail therapy is your thing, then visit classic ones such as **Gaurav Gupta Couture**, **Elahe**, **Anushree Reddy Flagship Store**, **Anju Modi** and **Sabyasachi**. Or pick some festive ensembles from new-age branded stores such as **Twamev**. Make a trip to **Qmart**, if you want fresh and exotic produce and continental condiments, a popular store with the expats.

Fun fact: Nizam's Minister Mehdi Nawaz Jung developed Banjara Hills. He is said to have lured others to build homes here by ensuring the government gave them free water and electricity for six months in the 1940s.



COLORFUL BIRDS AT KBR PARK



A NIGHT OUT AT WHISKY SAMBA

3

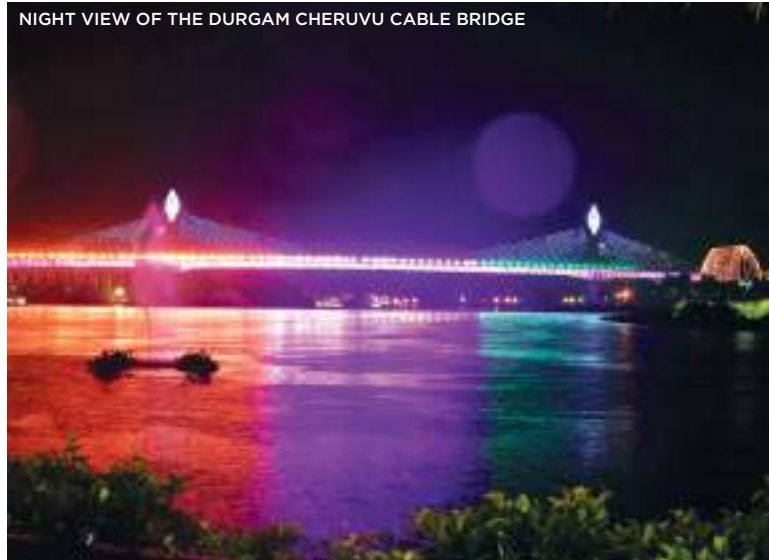
Local life by the lake

DURGAM CHERUVU

The roadmap: Ever since the **Durgam Cheruvu Cable Bridge** opened in September 2020, Hyderabad is on a revenge party mode - like there is no tomorrow. The weekend buzzes with energy in the fancy new lake-view pubs, breweries, lounges and fine dine spaces around here. Turbo charge your Hyderabad morning with a speed boat ride on Durgam Cheruvu (Rs 400 for 10 minutes). For those who love to work and play over their favorite cold brews, head to **True Black Coffee** café. Remember to order their 'glassic' signature *Valencia Orange Coffee* served in their unique ribbed glassware. Along with an *Almond Butter Toast* that is so pretty you may want to make it your Insta DP. If a viral streetside place is your choice for non-vegetarian standing lunch, then hop over at **Kumari Aunty** bandi (yes, she's Insta famous) near ITC Kohenur.

Fun fact: The rocks around the lake are known to be 2,500 million years old

NIGHT VIEW OF THE DURGAM CHERUVU CABLE BRIDGE



FUSION FOOD



SUNSET THOUGHTS

Try and wrap your work soon as there are many things to do. First is experiencing the spectacular scarlet sunset over the lake from the iconic café, **Last House Coffee**. Interestingly, it is literally the last house on the lake side. Like a view point, this cafe fills up by sunset. Do you fancy watching a sitar recital? Members-only **The Quorum Club** curates such special events. Of course you've got to score a friend who's a member at the club to gain access at this destination that's creating a buzz ever since it opened in March. Or grab the front row seats of the newly-launched **Musical Fountains** at the Durgam Cheruvu (6 pm to 8 pm). Soon its time to get on a pub-hopping mode, start with **Whisky Samba**, then move across to **Broadway** for a taste of their signature cocktails and food. Finally wrap it up at **Akan Brewery**.



TABULA RASA



INDIA'S FIRST SOLAR ROOF CYCLING TRACK

4 Manhattan in Mana Hyderabad

FINANCIAL DISTRICT

The roadmap: This is where global brands such as Amazon, Apple, GAP, Accenture, Development Bank of Singapore and DuPont lean in towards Hyderabad. FD houses over 30,000 corporate employees. The vibe is Gen Z and energy is young. You start 8 kms away, at **Healthway**, the Solar Cycling Track. Rent an app-based bicycle here (at the entrance), cycle your way through the beautiful outskirts of Hyderabad, near Manchirevula and reach the Financial District. Contact Hyderabad Cycle Revolution on Instagram to join the active mobility mission. If driving is your thing, you should definitely try the iconic Outer Ring Road (ORR). Here you experience the joy of driving over 100 kmph, hardly a possibility on the city roads. Host an impromptu luncheon work party with colleagues at **Prism Club & Kitchen**. Don't forget to taste their sundowner called **Jager Iced Tea** as over 5,000 people party under one roof with trending live music. Meanwhile, stay tuned for cricketer Virat Kohli's **One8 Kommune** opening in this part of the city soon.

Fun fact: Financial District houses the first Amazon-owned campus located outside the United States and features the largest Amazon-owned building in the world.

VIRAL TREATS

Check out the bigger and better version of **Zero40 Brewing**, **Tabula Rasa**, **10 Downing Street** and other lounge bars here. Go pub hopping - the first for a drink, a small plate of finger food at another, jump to one for the music and the next for food. The pubs here are known for late night dates and double dates. Post 11 pm, head to **DLF Cyber City** street food zone with over 70 stalls selling everything from *Three-Egg Fluffy Omelettes* to *Teen Maar Dosas* to *Avocado Shakes* to 20 varieties of *Maggi Noodles*. Must-haves are *Smoky Docky's Charcoal Grilled Shawarmas* and London's *Viral Chocolate Strawberries* at **Funzo Food Truck**. Don't hunt for car parking here as these are all street food stalls.



FLUFFY OMELETTE



VARIETIES OF MAGGI NOODLES

PICTURE CREDIT: SRINIVASA PRASATH



MODELS: RHEA CHELLANI AND KESHAV BONAM | MAKE-UP: GULZAR WALLANI OF STYLICIOUSBYSAM
HAIR: STYLICIOUSBYSAM | OUTFITS: MILE ACTIVE | BICYCLE GEAR: MULLINER | PHOTOGRAPHY: STUDIO CAPTURELIFE



CHILKUR BALAJI TEMPLE

5

Reality bites

KOKAPET

The roadmap: One morning in August 2023, when HMDA auction sold one acre of land for one crore, Kokapet went viral and saw the real estate boom. Soon enough came the resorts, cafes, pubs, activity zones and more. The four km stretch between Kokapet and its neighboring Gandipet is now the place where teenagers are heading, to hang out with their buddies and dates. The best way to start this stretch is to seek the divine blessings of **Chilkur Balaji Temple**, aka Visa Balaji, just 14 km from here. For adventure, try out **GravityZip**, India's first indoor skydiving arena in Hyderabad, preferably before lunch.

Fun fact: Kokapet's real estate value grew by 210 percent in 10 years

6

Startups and views

GANDIPET

Love a robust Telugu-meets-Nizami food? Then lunch at **Simhapuri Deluxe**. This suburb is also the hub for several sustainable startups. While here, hire an EV two-wheeler from startup **Hala Mobility** and go around the lake. After sunset, set out for a romantic dinner at **Jewel of Nizam**, at **The Golkonda Resorts and Spa**. The view of the Osman Sagar lake from here is breathtaking.

Fun fact: This 100-foot tall restaurant is built on a single minaret, lovingly called the 'Fifth *Minar* of Hyderabad'.



JEWEL OF NIZAM - THE MINAR



TELANGANA MARTYR'S MEMORIAL



BAJJI PLATTER AT THE TAJ MAHAL HOTEL

Warped in time

7

SECUNDERABAD

The roadmap: You can either complain that nothing much has changed or celebrate the fact that Secunderabad has managed to dodge the evil change wave. This former British Cantonment exudes and old-world charm. At the outset, visit the **Ganesh Temple** next to Secunderabad Railway Station. Stop by at **Clock Tower** to have *nashta* at **Garden Hotel** for hot *Poori Bajji* or *Dosa* followed by *chai* and *Tie-Biscuit*. A drive across the Arts College in Osmania University campus gives you a glimpse of the opulence of the Nizams. For Lunch, its **Bawarchi** at RTC Crossroads. Try their *Mutton biryani* and the *Mirchi ka Salan*, a fiery accompaniment served with *biryani*, it is renowned for slow-cooked preparation. Then for some middleclass shopping for unbranded clothes, drive over to **General Bazar**. Hagglng is a must.

Fun fact: Tank Bund, also known as Hussain Sagar, is a heart-shaped lake that connects the cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad. How romantic!

THE TOURIST TRIANGLE

Stop by the legendary **Taj Mahal Hotel** at Narayanguda for a 4 pm *Mysore Bajji* and at 6 pm head to the promenade on Tank Bund, where it is very pleasant in the evenings. There are vendors selling their fare and people get excited about selfies with Buddha in the background. You can see the newly built **Telangana Secretariat** and the **Telangana Martyr's Memorial** by walking two kms towards Lakdikapul, both look magnificent. Later watch the newly-launched 15-minute Laser Light and Sound Show at **Lumbini Park**. End the touristy session with dinner at **By The Bay**, a lakefront restaurant with amazing views of the lake.



CHOWMAHALLA PALACE



Early Birds Get the Bheja Fry

OLD CITY

The roadmap: Frozen in time, the Old City with the iconic **Charminar** is a crash course in history. Built in 1591 by Mohd Quili Qutub Shah to commemorate mankind's victory over the deadly plague, is one of Hyderabad's best monument.

When exploring the Old Hyderabad circuit, keep in mind some old classic eateries: **Nayab**, **Shadab** and **Nimrah**. Hyderabadis are always on #FoodFirst approach and have no qualms travelling to other parts of the city for breakfast. For the Hyderabadi non-vegetarian breakfast—think *Malai paya*, *keema*, *bheja fry*, and more. These arrive at 4 am to ensure the freshest and most satisfying experience and are available until 11 am. Allocate at least three hours for this elaborate breakfast affair before strolling around Charminar.

Fun fact: Charminar serves as the epicenter of Hyderabad, around which the city was meticulously planned.

OLD IS GOLD

Enjoy a leisurely *chai* session at **Nimrah** hotel and ask the locals to snap perfect photos of you with Charminar as the backdrop. By 11 am, the bustling **Laad Bazaar** shops (known for their GI tagged lac bangles) open their doors. Don't hesitate to haggle. You can even slash prices by nearly one-third of the initial quote. However, for Hyderabadi pearls, go only to old trustworthy stores such as **Krishna Pearls** or **Mangatrai Pearls**.

While there, visit the historic **Mecca Masjid** and indulge in a flavorsome *biryani* from one of the nearby restaurants. Take a quick shopping tour at Patherghatti, renowned for its pearl treasures. Ensure to purchase from reputable stores rather than roadside vendors. If interested, go to Imlibun to see Asia's largest bus terminal, the **Mahatma Gandhi Bus Stand**. If you are a history buff, the majestic **Chowmahalla Palace**, where the Nizams were crowned, is a must-do. Close the day with a glass



HYDERABADI BISCUITS AT NIMRAH CAFE



HYDERABADI PEARLS

of *lassi* topped with *malai* at the original **Agrawala Sweets**. If you want a guided tour of the Old City's culture, tradition and food, sign up for a heritage food walk by **Deccan Archive** to discover little known gems. Savor the memories of your Old Hyderabad adventure as you go back to the new city.

Caribbean-themed club embodies the Rastafarian Culture

Raasta - Not Just A Path, But a Way of Life



The Caribbean-themed **Raasta** opened in late 2023 by partners Gnana Koteswararao, Praveen Dandu and Pavan Chowdary. Funky Caribbean lounge that embodies the spirit of Bob Marley and the Rastafarian Culture as its USP.

Raasta opens to a 16,000 sq. ft. lively space with indoor and outdoor seating. Situated on the ground floor, the exterior that overlooks passersby is breezy and peaceful. The interior is where Reggae and contemporary music plays. Designed by Samyukta Dandu of Ishwara Designs, it is decked in vibrant hues and intricately rendered wall art. Keeping with the spirit of the place it surely has a look alike of Bob Marley, by artist Ram Nayak. The indoors also incorporate a dining area, grand bar, private dining room, and a relatively large stage space for live performances. Samyukta patiently walks us through each area of Raasta and describes the place as being, “very energetic, vibrant and full of life.”

DRINKS

The bar is built around a crafted structure reminiscent of a tree from which bamboo lights hang. The bar’s countertop is made of the translucent onyx marble which is lit up from below. It is here the mixologist recommends two of Raasta’s most vibrant concoctions, Caribbean Bongs *Pink Panther*, made of red and white wine, brandy and Raasta Bar men secret herbs; and *White Rhino*, made of white

rum, vodka and tabasco blended with spices and guava juice. The drinks are, as Raasta’s Instagram declares, “a tropical escape for your senses.”

FOOD

In food we are recommended a varied selection of delectables. This includes the exquisite *Jamaican Clay Pot Roast Chicken*, made of boneless chicken and marinated with Caribbean spices; the scrumptious *Chicken Faffa*, made of fried diced chicken, tossed with chili sauce and coconut milk; the tender *Tandoori Thecha Prawns*, made of tandoori prawns infused with a flavorful *thecha* marinade; the soft and crunchy *Cheese and Yoghurt Croquettes*, made of crumb-fried drained yogurt, garlic, cashew nut and raisin; and the mouth-watering *Barbecue Pineapple Jalapeno and Feta* pizza, a risqué thin crust pizza topped with sweet pineapple, spicy jalapeno and cheese. “For vegetarians, there is a wide variety of food to explore,” Samyukta shares.

We end our lunch with Raasta’s lip-smacking *Sticky Toffee Pudding* which comes with ice cream, perfect for the summer heat.

MUSIC & OTHER ACTIVITIES

Thaikudam Bridge, *Zaedan*, *Theory*, *Eltaxidi*, *Infusion*, *Moksha* and *Nina Shah* are just a few musical artists who put on a great show at Raasta during the evenings. Wednesdays sees *Bachata Nights* where dancers from various

dance schools perform at Raasta, this activity also includes training sessions for customers; Thursdays and Fridays have live musical acts; Saturdays sees *Techno Nights*; and for the rest of the week the resident DJ raises the roof with contemporary tracks and more techno music. Moving forward, Raasta has planned a lot more events and activities, including standup comedy and karaoke nights. ■ IPSHITA

Price for two: Rs 2,500 onwards

Salarpuria Sattva Knowledge City, Silpa Gram Craft Village, Madhapur
Tel: 90763 33777, 90772 77277
Timings: 12 pm to 12 am



WOW!
Recommends:
Pink Panther

Lawrence & Mayo
Boutique

SUNGLASS
MELA



20%
UPTO
OFF*



FIND
your
SUNNIES

* T&C APPLY

RSVP: +91 90731 23781 / 040 2339 9133
ANUSHKA PLAZA, ROAD NO. 12 BANJARA HILLS, HYDERABAD

Watching the IPL matches with friends at a sports bar has a different energy. We check out a few bars and lounges in the city which have special menus and curated drinks to celebrate cricket mania

CATCH THE IPL FEVER

WHERE: HARD ROCK CAFÉ

The Game: You may sit anywhere and would still be able to get a good view of the game with multiple screens – a large LED screen near the stage, three TV screens near the bar and a projector in the outdoor area.

Food & Beverages: A special IPL-themed menu – Timeout Bites and Powerplay - Long Island Iced Tea offer specially curated game-time treats. Try the *Joshila Kolkata Paneer Fry*, *Chak De – Toastada*, *Zabardast Koliwada Prawns*, *Dhuedar Hot & Sweet Chicken Slider*, among others. Wash down these with IPL specials like *Kolkata Knight Twist* or *Mumbai Hitman 45* crafted if sharing with a buddy. Also try *Gujrat Garnet* – infused with *kala khatta* and topped off with coke and, the spicy *Chennai Thala* with zesty *jalapenos*. For the beer fans, beer buckets of three, five and seven are available in special offers, starting at Rs 799, during the match timings.

Price: Rs 2,000+ / person

Salarpuria Sattva, Knowledge City Road, Madhapur

Tel: 072079 11032

Timings: 12 pm to 12 am on weekdays and 12 pm to 12.30 am on weekends



WHERE: MINDSPACE SOCIAL

The game: Social has launched #DoosraStadium for its guests as they cheer for their favourite teams.

Food & Beverages: They have a special cricket-themed menu called the SOCIAL Stad-Yum. It comes with nine new dishes including *Majama Titans Platter*, *The Howzat Chapli Tacos*, *Luru Fried Prawn Popcorn*, and the *SOBO Guac Dahi Puri*, among many more. The #DoosraStadium drinks menu takes the cricket fandom to the next level. It comprises exclusive LIITs to help fans cheer on their favourite teams. The list has an array of wacky names such as *Thalaiva LIIT*, *Namma Ooru LIIT*, *Hyderabad Sunrise LIIT*, and the *Korbo LIITbo Jeetbo*, etc. They have also tied up with FanCode Shop to offer guests a chance to win exclusive IPL merchandise when dining here.

Price: Rs 1,500 for two without alcohol

Upper level, K, LTD, Raheja IT Park, near, Mindspace Junction Flyover
Tel: 86577 25634

WHERE: RED RHINO

The game: There are special Offers during game time only

Food & Beverages: The IPL Sips & Sixes deal offers a selection of three rotating



craft beers on tap / non-alcoholic beverages, and two paired starters. Or, you can choose the 1+1 IPL Shots deal priced at Rs 249, choosing from team jersey color-inspired flavors like *Yellow Venom*, *Red Challengers*, *Blue Flag* and *Black Knight*. Besides two 60-inch TVs, they have DJs (Fri), live bands (Sat), and two massive six-foot projector screens. The ambiance turns a Dusky Orange, for all the Hyderabad matches reflecting its spirit. They have crowd favorites like *Paneer Tikka* or *Viet Chicken*.

Price: Rs 1,399+ / person

Dallas Center, Hitech City Main Rd, ShilpaGram Craft Village, Madhapur

Tel: 040 4917 0000

Timings: 8.30 am to 12 am on weekdays and till 1 am on weekends

WHERE: WHITE HART

The game: They have launched SIP & SAVE offers starting from Rs 145 in food and from Rs 195 in drinks on the launch of IPL matches on March 22. The offer is on from 12 pm to 6 pm every day.

Food & Beverages: Try their *Speziante Pizza* with Grilled Chicken, Roasted Garlic Puree, Avocado and wood roasted jalapenos along with *Prawns Pepper Garlic* and very local *Kodi Chips* and spicy *Guntur Kaaram Panner Tikka* along with summery drinks such as Cucumber-thyme infused gin and tonic. Celebrate the SRH win with their special *Chittimuthyala Royyala Pulav*.

Price: Rs 2,000 for two

3rd Floor, Preston Prime Mall, near BioDiversity Junction, Lumbini Avenue, Gachibowli
Tel: 91000 09878

Other places to check out:

Sattva Knowledge City,
Gate no 6 - Free screening
Tiger Lily Bistro, Jubilee Hills
Atom Lounge and Kitchen, Gandipet
Kulture Sports Bar, Kompally



Where do you party during the IPL?



BARBIE GOYAL
FOOD INFLUENCER

WHAT DOES IPL MEAN TO YOU: Weeks of cricket fest cheering for my favorite teams.

HANGOUT SPOTS FOR IPL MATCHES: Xena, Zythum, Hard Rock Cafe and Red Rhino.

YOUR KIND OF IPL NIGHT: I love watching the match on the big screen with my gal pals over fancy cocktails and spicy, *desi* appetisers. Being a food influencer who makes recommendations under the handle @wanderergirlbarbie, my friends leave it to me to pick the right place and order the best stuff on the menu. And sometimes we chill at home in our *pyjamas* and make a big bowl of Maggi noodles.

SONIKA AGARWAL
ENTREPRENEUR

WHAT DOES IPL MEAN TO YOU: Cricket is a national sport that brings the whole country together, IPL is like the Navratri for sports lovers. We love to see all international players come and play for different states of India, it promotes global sports spirit. Everyone looks forward to coming home early and watching the match.

HANGOUT SPOTS FOR IPL MATCHES: Le Vantage Cafe having my fav *Falafel Pockets*, or White Hart sipping *Cosmopolitan*. If going out doesn't work, then on my couch with homemade popcorn and French Fries.

YOUR KIND OF IPL NIGHT: Watching it with a group of friends in a sports bar or at home and of course home team SRH winning it big.



ANIL RATHOD
ACTOR AND MODEL

WHAT DOES IPL MEAN TO YOU: Whether I'm at a cozy penthouse or a laid-back lounge, the thrill of IPL is always electrifying. Personally, I love watching it in an open-air stadium where the live screen adds to the excitement, or in my own gated community where huge screens are set up for IPL. Watching it with friends and family, enjoying drinks and ordering snacks from KFC, make IPL nights truly memorable for me.

HANGOUT SPOTS FOR IPL MATCHES: Anthm, Xora, and Hard Rock Café.

YOUR KIND OF IPL NIGHT: Where I am totally free (without my phone notifications) with friends and fully immersed in the game and when SRH wins with a great margin. ■ SUPRIYA



City folk are loving playing around with clay to create beautiful pots with quick pottery classes this season

Get your hands dirty



That Hyderabadis are falling in love with pottery is evident from the fact that Numaish, Hyderabad's annual shopping carnival, had a pottery stall this year; needless to say, it had people flocking to it. The stall by master artisan Prabhakar Dama attracted people of all ages. However, if you missed it in January, and want to try your hand, literally, at pottery, we've got you covered.

OneEarth Pottery, an art studio in Jubilee Hills is holding workshops this season. But seriously, is it an activity you want to take up? **WOW!** explores.

Sowmya Thurimirla, founder of OneEarth Pottery, an architect, and a potter, is currently conducting summer workshops for kids and adults on weekends in May and June.

WHO IS IT FOR?

Pottery is for anyone who loves creating something with their hands, especially something malleable like clay, and the willingness to learn and experiment. "The classes cater to all skill levels - from beginners to advanced artists. The best time to start is when a child is nine years old," says Sowmya.

WHAT IT ENTAILS

Learning Pottery involves understanding the basics of pottery, learning techniques such as wheel throwing and hand-building, practicing skills, and understanding kiln firing and glazing.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

Pottery enhances concentration and focus, mindfulness while distracting

you from everyday stress and worries. It involves learning a new skill and seeing tangible results in a short duration can provide a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction.

THINGS YOU NEED

The fee is inclusive of all the material required. The material includes clay, pottery tools, glazes etc. Just bring your creativity!

TANGIBLE RESULTS

It typically takes two classes to make a pot that can be used to fill water or plant a sapling that you can place on your table.

SIGN UP

"We love curating experiential art sessions through our pottery classes. We keep the sessions to a limited number of people so there are only a few spots per session. Prior appointment to book a slot is required," informs Sowmya. Each session lasts for two hours to ensure a deep dive into the art of pottery. Their hand-building workshops are held on weekends, either on Saturdays or Sundays from 5 pm-7 pm. For those interested in wheel-throwing pottery (creating shapes using the potter's wheel) courses or workshops, they offer weekday workshops from 11 am to 1 pm or 3 pm to 5 pm. ■ MANJU

Road No. 23/A, Jubilee Hills
@oneearth_pottery on Instagram
Tel: 88010 83269

Fee: One day workshop is Rs 1,800;
Beginner's course (12 classes) fee is 18,000





WITH STATE-OF-THE-ART COSMETOLOGY TREATMENTS FROM DR. JAMUNA PAI'S SKINLAB

Beautiful body, beautiful mind. **SkinLab** by celebrity cosmetologist **Dr Jamuna Pai** is a testimony to the power of an aesthetic appearance and its impact on the mind and overall wellbeing. When you look your best, you exude confidence which leads to success. Situated on Road Number 1, Jubilee Hills, SkinLab boasts of state-of-the-art facilities in a tastefully done-up space, designed to provide its clients with high levels of medical proficiency, comfort, and care. There are different types of treatments offered at SkinLab ranging from Laser Hair Reduction, Professional Peels, Anti-ageing Treatments, Pigmentation Treatment, Skin Tightening, Advanced Skin Brightening, Anti- Oxidant Radiance Therapy, Botox, Dermal Fillers, Thread lift, Acne Treatments, Skin Resurfacing, Advanced GFC for face and hair, Medi facials and clean-ups, Coolsculpting. Coolsculpting is a revolutionary non-surgical contouring treatment that eliminates stubborn fat.

SkinLab offers the latest and most effective laser hair reduction procedures conducted only by certified medical professionals, and this is what sets them apart from most other clinics and spas.



The Advanced Skin Brightening Peel is a result-oriented treatment for melasma and stubborn pigmentation. Botox Cosmetic injections and dermal fillers can reduce or eliminate wrinkles by relaxing facial muscles and adding back lost volume under the skin surface. Chemical peels speed up skin cell turnover essentially making them skin resurfacing and exfoliation agents. The basic aim of chemical peels is to replace the outer, dead layers of tired, sallow, blemished, and wrinkled skin to reveal the underlying areas of fresher, younger-looking skin. Threadlift is the perfect solution to enhance facial contours, reduce roundness, and lift sagging skin in the cheek, jowl, neck, and eyebrow areas.

SkinLab gives you the most effective appearance-enhancing treatments which are US FDA-approved, with the shortest downtime, and longest-lasting results. All in the capable hands of medical doctors, under the renowned and professional banner of Dr Jamuna Pai who is trusted by leading celebrities, top film stars, sports persons, corporate executives, housewives, and even college students. SkinLab treatments are much sought after by both men and women as more and more people begin to realize the power of appearance. It's time to put your best face forward and stride confidently in the world to chart your success course by giving yourself the SkinLab advantage.

Results you can trust

SkinLab's dedication to excellence shines through in everything they do. Their team of doctors and professionals is meticulously trained to ensure you get the safest and most effective treatments for your unique needs while minimizing any risks.

Beauty solutions, customized for you

Forget cookie-cutter facials and one-size-fits-all solutions. SkinLab boasts a diverse menu designed to address your unique needs. With thorough consultations, they ensure that your treatment is carefully curated to suit your skin type and that you receive proper follow-up to ensure that the care you get goes beyond just skin-deep.

All treatments at SkinLab are conducted by Medical Doctors under strict guidelines and protocols to ensure your safety at all times.

SkinLab Treatments

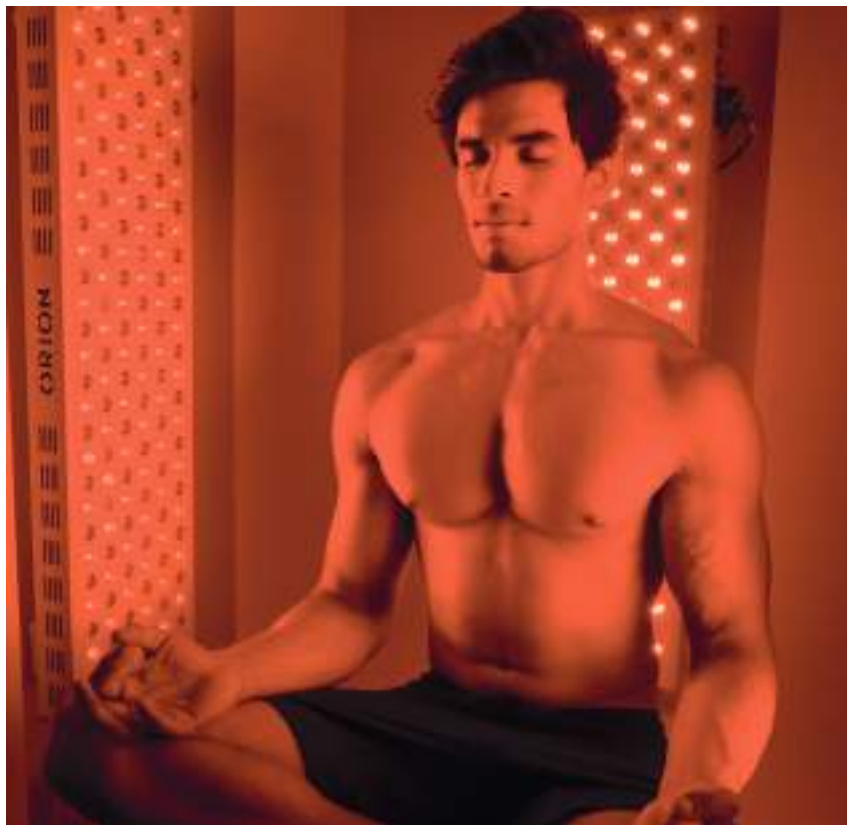
- ◆ Laser Hair Reduction
- ◆ Professional Peels
- ◆ Anti-Ageing Treatments
- ◆ Pigmentation Treatment
- ◆ Skin Tightening
- ◆ Advanced Skin Brightening
- ◆ Anti-Oxidant Radiance Therapy
- ◆ Botox
- ◆ Dermal Fillers
- ◆ Thread Lift
- ◆ Acne Treatments
- ◆ Skin Resurfacing
- ◆ Advanced GFC for Face and Hair
- ◆ Medi Facials and Clean-Ups
- ◆ Coolsculpting

Address:

Dr. Jamuna Pai's SkinLab
No: 8-2-293/80/J – III/573-H,
3rd Floor, VVC Park View Complex,
Road Number 1, Jubilee Hills, Hyd - 033.
Contact: 7358 300 300

What it feels like to take the much-hyped **Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy** and **Red Laser Light Therapy**

20-minute pampering retreats



HYPERBARIC OXYGEN THERAPY (HBOT)

HOW IT IS DONE: You enter a pod resembling a train's top berth, latch on a nose mask, and the pod's lid seals shut. Pressure adjusts, feeling like a blast of AC, then it normalizes. You can stretch out, scroll your phone, and feel no claustrophobia due to the glass chamber. After 20 minutes you emerge feeling refreshed.

WHAT HAPPENS IN THERE: It involves breathing pure oxygen in a pressurized environment, known as a hyperbaric chamber. The therapeutic potential of pure oxygen forms the cornerstone of HBOT. It harnesses the healing properties of oxygen to promote wellness.

BENEFITS: Treats infections, air bubbles in blood vessels, and wounds that might not heal due to diabetes or radiation damage. It also boosts skin health and helps achieve a healthier complexion. This Therapy is risk-free as it is non-invasive. It relies only on pressurization and oxygenation to heal the body. Though multiple sessions are recommended for tangible health benefits like improved sleep. ■ MANJU

Price: Rs 7,670 for a 20-minute session
Note: Check all therapy details before signing up, for your own safety

3rd Floor, The Hilltop @ 7, Road No. 7, Resham Bagh, Banjara Hills,
Tel: 1800 121 2429
Timings: 10 am to 9 pm

Wellness just got easy. Lay back in a cozy sleeping pod, snug up in a closed cabin, or lounge in style on a funky chair for 40 minutes. It could lead you to almost promised sound sleep, glowing skin and sharp vision. Hyderabadis are abuzz about cutting-edge treatments like Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy and Red Laser Light Therapy. WOW! dives into The Wellness Co. in Banjara Hills to test out these trending therapies firsthand, uncovering their sensations and safety.

Svetlana Petrenko from The Wellness Co. guided us on a tour, where we selected two indulgent therapies. The three-month-old establishment offers an extensive range of wellness and healing treatments, from Oligoscan to IV Drips. Here's what we explored.

RED LIGHT THERAPY

HOW IT IS DONE: Sit minimally clothed on a soft stool in a red laser-lit enclosure for 15 minutes. As soothing music plays, let the rays penetrate your body. The room turns crimson, reminiscent of a photo studio's darkroom of yesteryears.

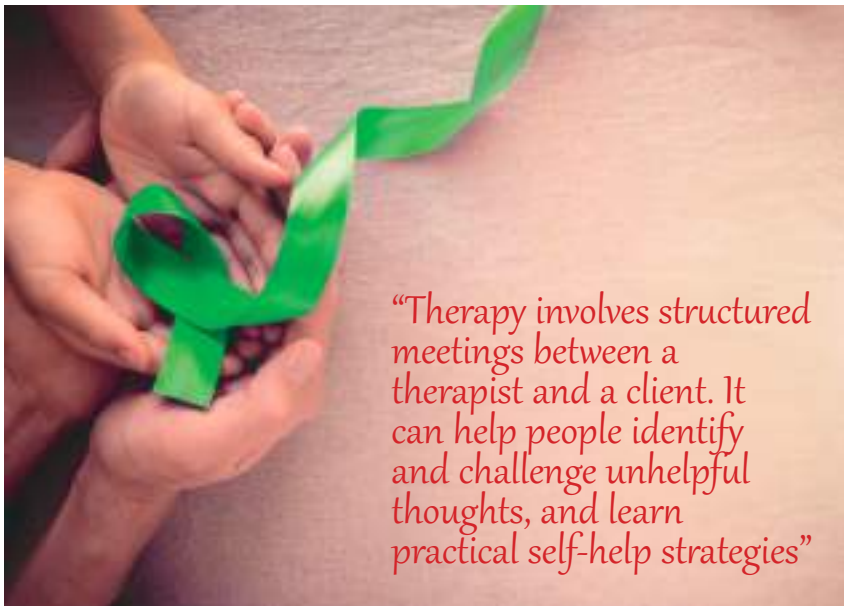
Use an eye mask if needed, sip water, and find comfort knowing there's an emergency button. No pain, no noise, just relaxation. Importantly, no phone usage during the session.

WHAT HAPPENS IN THERE: The red light stimulates the cells with light energy that gets absorbed well by the surface of our skin, called the dermis. This absorption has healing properties, from increasing collagen (meaning better skin), energy and sleep. Red light therapy has become popular because it is non-invasive; there's no downtime and few side effects.

BENEFITS: Heals various skin conditions like acne, inflammation, and signs of aging such as fine lines and wrinkles. Additionally, it aids in muscle recovery, alleviates joint pain and inflammation, enhances mental acuity, and supports thyroid function.
Note: You may need to take multiple sessions across four or five days for the results to be tangible.

Price: Rs 6,490 for 15 minutes.





“Therapy involves structured meetings between a therapist and a client. It can help people identify and challenge unhelpful thoughts, and learn practical self-help strategies”

May is **Mental Health Awareness Month** and a good time to understand if we need some help

Mental health for beginners

It wasn't until the early 2000s that mental health was discussed publicly. Give it to Bollywood superstar Deepika Padukone for discussing her battle with depression and anxiety in 2014 which led to mental health becoming a mainstream topic of discussion. Around the same time, in 2016 came *Dear Zindagi* starring Alia Bhat and Shah Rukh Khan which normalized therapy and words such as self-love.

The month of May is declared as Mental Health Awareness Month. It is an opportunity to raise awareness around us, which could possibly lead to reducing the stigma to seek help. WOW! decodes a few common phrases of mental health.

THE THERAPY

Also known as psychotherapy or talk therapy. The word 'therapy' means treatment that helps improve mental health and relieve emotional distress. It involves structured meetings between a therapist and a client. It can help people identify and challenge unhelpful thoughts, and learn practical self-help strategies. Sessions are confidential and can be in-person, over video or a phone call. You can find psychotherapists in the city and there are also NGOs that offer free counseling services.

Fee: Starts at Rs 1,500 per hour

Where: Roshni Counselling Centre, Next to ITC Hotel Kakatiya, Begumpet

Tel: 090106 6117

Timings: 10 am to 6 pm

Pro Tip: Free counseling camp every Thu from 11 am to 6 pm

DEPRESSION

Common signs and symptoms: Change in appetite and sleep patterns, weight gain/loss, fatigue levels, consistent tiredness or fatigue, small tasks seem hard to do, forgetfulness, and chronic pain.

Potential options: Talk to your doctor if any of these signs show up consistently for at least two weeks or more. The doctor could suggest therapy, prescribe medication, or both.

ANXIETY DISORDERS

Common signs and symptoms: Excessive fear and worry, along with changes in behavior that are linked to these feelings, consistent tiredness or fatigue, agitation or restlessness, constant sweating, headaches, tense muscles, high pulse, trembling, or gastrointestinal issues.

Potential Options: There is effective psychological care and treatment, and based on the intensity and age, medication could also be considered.

EATING DISORDERS

Eating disorders, like anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa, are conditions

causing unhealthy eating habits and can include an obsession with body weight and image. The behaviors or symptoms put one's health at great risk, causing a lot of stress.

Potential Options: Several effective treatment options exist including cognitive-based therapy and family-based treatment.

NEURODEVELOPMENTAL DISORDERS

Neurodevelopmental disorders are cognitive and behavioral concerns, during the early developmental phase. These include disorders of intellectual development, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism spectrum disorder (ASD), etc.

Potential Options: Thanks to pioneering research and new advancements, psychosocial interventions, and occupational, behavioral and speech therapy are potential treatments. In certain cases, medication can also be considered.

PAID COUNSELING SERVICES

Asha Hospital, Banjara Hills: 96666 55558

Hope Trust, Banjara Hills: 90008 50001

Inner Connect: 70135 85414

FREE HELPLINES

Nimhans - 080-46110007

Roshni Trust - 84488 44845

iCall - 022-25521111, 91529 87821

Vardela Foundation - 99996 66555

Parivarthan - 76766 02602

ONLINE SOURCES

<https://www.thelivelovelaughfoundation.org/>

<https://www.rockethealth.app/>

<https://www.felicity.care/>

Nowandme.com

Mastermindfoundation.com ■ ANUSHKA



We're spotlighting trendsetters reshaping fashion norms for self-expression

Fashion goes gender-neutral!

With the rise of gender-fluid fashion, heteronormative ideals within the world of fashion are being challenged. Contributing to this redefining moment is the newer generation and their desire to practice self-expression by embracing inclusivity and breaking down the barriers of gender norms.

WOW! takes a look at prominent people who have played an instrumental role in leveling the playing field by rocking versatile new-age fashion trends.

FASHION DARLING

Hyderabad-born **Vijay Varma** has taken the fashion world by storm by experimenting with offbeat looks in the recent past. The *Darlings* actor famously donned a raven-black saree with a red *pallu* designed by Rimzim Dadu for a photo shoot in 2023. The bold look was further accentuated with the addition of contrasting electric blue locks which tied the entire look together.



ROCKING GOWNS

Made in Heaven 2 actor Jim Sarbh is not the one to shy away from taking risks when dressing up and embracing gender-neutral designs. Over the years he has donned many versatile pieces. One of them being a striking sheer lace gown from Mehraab by Arun and John.



BLAZING THE OFFBEAT TRAIL

Not new to experimenting with fashion, **Ranveer Singh** has been stunning us with his offbeat looks for some time now and by so doing has been blazing the trail for others. Not too long ago he was seen soaked in fuchsia pink giving off major Barbicore vibes. The ensemble featured an oversized pink blazer, matching trousers, a tee, and sneakers from Valentino's Pink PP collection.



TWEAKING TRADITIONAL WEAR

Giving traditional fashion a genderless twist is **Sonam Kapoor** who looked elegant in Kunal Rawal's champagne, beige and ivory embroidered *bandhgala*, champagne *kurta*, and flowing ivory split *dhoti* pants. The look was further enhanced with a matching golden choker, earrings, rings, and bracelets.



NON-BINARY CHIC

As she walked down the red carpet for the Vogue Women of the Year Awards, **Anushka Sharma** looked like a boss lady in her power suit. She rocked a white and blue checked jumpsuit by Gucci which she paired with a matching blazer. She topped the look off by making a statement with a quirky ear-shaped gold ear cuff.

SHADES OF GREY

In collaboration with her stylist Law Roach, **Zendaya** has been firing up the red carpet for some time now. Currently deemed a fashion queen, the *Dune* star looked graceful at the Women in Hollywood event in an edgy Peter Do suit (*bolero* jacket complementing the satin shirt, the trousers, and the asymmetrical skirt placed over it) that has a bit of both femininity and masculinity. ■ IPSHITA

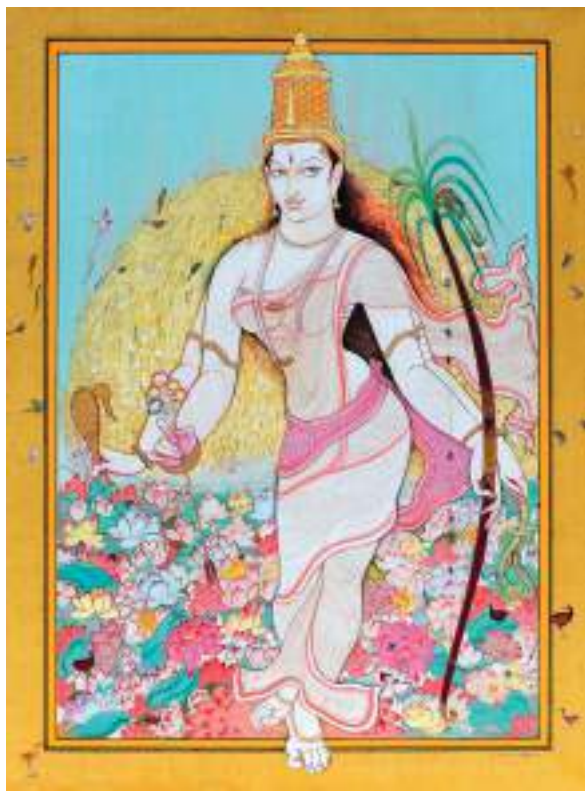


RED-HOT IN BLOOD-RED

Oscar-nominated actor **Timothée Chalamet** is no stranger to taking risks on the red carpet. At the premiere of his film *Bones and All* at the 79th Venice International Film Festival, the *it* boy of Hollywood was seen in one of his boldest looks yet - a blood-red sleeveless and backless custom Haider Ackermann ensemble with a scarf-like neckline.

WOW! drops into artist **Giridhar Goud's** latest show

HOMAGE TO DIVINITY



Giridhar Goud presents his latest series of miniature art, 'Shiva & Shakti', a culmination of years spent studying the *Dakshinatya Natyakala Charitra* by Nataraja Ramakrishna and *Rupa Dhyana Ratnavali* by Devadaya Dharmadaya Sakha.



In the making since 2010, this exhibition delves into various themes surrounding Shiva, exploring different forms of *tandav* inspired by *Dhyana shlokas*, the *Nava Durgas*, and the concept of *Ardhanareeshwara*.

Crafted in the ancient Indian miniature style, the artworks on display demonstrate his mastery over the medium. The 59-year-old artist residing in Garuvupalem village, Andhra Pradesh, has had a passion for art since childhood.

His artistic journey began with chalk drawings on the floors of his home, guided by his father's introduction to basic shapes. He recalls, "My father was my first *guru*, even my interest in literature stems from the fact that he used to read the epics out loud while I would be working on my craft."

Inspired by artists like Vaddadi Papaiah and Bapu, he ventured into various mediums such as charcoal, watercolors, and pencil drawings. However, it was during his time at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Baroda, under the mentorship of Ghulam Mohammed Sheikh, that he honed his craft.

His fascination with miniature painting, fueled by visits to temples in Lepakshi and Hampi, intensified after a transformative meeting with Jagdish Mittal in 1999. Giridhar recalls, "I was supposed to meet him for 15 minutes and ended up spending five hours with him. He helped me understand the importance of materials and mediums for art. That understanding really helped me to refine and gain mastery over my work."

For his current show, the artist found his calling when he read lines from *Soundarya Lahari*. He states, "It is Shakti that makes Shiva. Without Shakti, there is no Shiva. Without both the male and female forms, there is no nature; hence, the *Ardhanareeshawara* is central to life itself."

What is also striking about these works is the clear impact on the artist of the Vijayanagara style of painting. The natural colors used add a layer of mystique to the works on display. The artist not only sources natural colors from Jaipur but also makes his own from herbs and natural substances to get the shades he desires.

By seamlessly blending the earthly with the celestial, Goud's exhibition reverentially honors tradition through attention to detail and expansive thematic exploration.

The show will be on at Kalakriti Art Gallery from April 5 to May 1.

■ MALLIK

Kalakriti Art Gallery
Plot 8-2-465/1, Road No. 4, near Hyatt Place, Green Valley, Banjara Hills
Timings: 11 am to 7 pm



WOW! catches up with **Sivani Saraswatula**, a young Carnatic singer straddling between Germany and India

One *raga* at a time

When she was seven years old, Sivani Saraswatula attended a wedding in which there was a dance performance that enthralled the young girl. “I remember coming home and asking my mother to enrol me in a dance class,” she recalls. Her mother, a singer herself, agreed on the condition, that she take music lessons as well and the rest, as they say, is history.

From the age of seven, the Carnatic vocalist learned the rudiments of music from a variety of teachers – Dr. P Uma Devi, Dr. Vyzarsu Balasubrahmanyam, Komanduri Ramachary, M Gopalakrishna, and even today continues to learn from Hyderabad Brothers (one of whom passed away last month) and Malladi Sriramprasad.

Sivani, a Mechanical engineer from Osmania University, worked in Infosys for four years before participating and winning in the popular Telugu music program *Paadutha Teeyaga* in 2015. She recalls, “It was a very different and challenging experience as I was used to singing classical music and not movie songs, and both are completely different. However, I was guided by the late singer, SP Balasubramanyam (who hosted the show) on pitch and voice modulation which was extremely useful.”

Immediately after the win she sang for a couple of movies (*Leo* in Kannada and *Virata Parvam* in Telugu) before getting married and moving to Germany. Even after moving abroad, the 31-year-old singer continued her love for Carnatic music. She explains, “While I did many shows especially during Telugu festivals, I did not get to sing Carnatic music, it was mostly film songs. In 2020, I started Samathva, which conducts classes and workshops around Carnatic music.”

Living in Europe came with its challenges but where there is a will, there is a way. And Sivani with her passion for her craft ensured that she practiced daily, took online lessons from her *gurus*, and shuttled between India and Germany performing and honing her craft. Favoring songs of DK Pattamal, K V Narayaswamy, and Malladi Suribabu, she comes dressed in simple handlooms and with a *Veena* for backdrop wherever she performs.

Another initiative of hers, Bayern Baithak (Bayern being the city she is based out of) is all about bringing musicians together. She states, “This is an initiative to bridge gap between the artists and audiences. Over two hours, a music and a dance performance are conducted in close interaction with the audience.”

Community is a crucial factor for musicians in traditional art forms. Sivani operates without one – be it accompanying musicians or avenues to perform yet thrives despite it. “Self-motivation is crucial,” she smiles and adds, “Carnatic music is devotional, spiritual, and philosophical. Singers like Thyagaraja and Annamaya sang because they were on the path of liberation, which is the very essence of Carnatic music that keeps me going.”

Conquering the world, one *raga* at a time, the onus is on singers like Sivani to take Carnatic music into the future.

■ MALLIK





This hidden gem of a temple houses almost a million-year-old Shivling

Echoes of Ancient Faith

Tucked away from the bustling city, **Sri Baba Koteswar Mandir** is located on a hillock at a height of 50 meters. At the entrance, near the staircase you will be greeted by a 21-foot tall Lord Shiva statue. Installed in 2023, the statue is dedicated to the many devotees of the temple that dates back to nearly a million years.

Koteswar temple's origins are rooted in the Vedic period. It also receives a mention in the *Shiva Purana* that refers to the natural formation of a *Shivling* a long time ago. Discovered in the general location of the temple, then a stone quarry, the *Shivling* was preserved and had a small temple built around it by workers.

In 1953, 1 EME Centre relocated from Bangalore to Secunderabad. The staff and trainees of the Promotion Cadre Company of 4 Training Battalion of 1 EME Centre refurbished the Shiva temple. They started to perform *bhajans* and *kirtans* once a week. Since then, the *mandir* has gone through several renovations, and to this day it is maintained and looked after by the Indian army.

We enter the temple on a Thursday morning. It is quiet and peaceful as any temple ought to be. The only audible presence is that of birds chirping in the

distance. We ring one of the temple's 10,000 bells before journeying upwards to the *Shivling*. Along the way we come across smaller temples of Sai Baba and Ganesh.

The temple is spread over roughly 300 square meters. On the landing we locate the cave within which the famous *Shivling* is situated. We say our prayers and enter a spacious cemented courtyard that can accommodate 4,000 devotees at a time. This kind of gathering can especially be witnessed during *Mahashivaratri*, which is celebrated each year with fervor.

The courtyard incorporates more of the smaller temples. Including ones

of Hanuman, Durga, deities Radha and Krishna and many more. Beyond the courtyard, you'll find situated within another cave, a *Shivling* made of ice which is maintained at a particular temperature.

Aarti is performed for each deity twice a day: once between 5 am and 6 am, and again between 6 pm and 7 pm. The priest can be seen conducting prayers at all the *mandirs* and you are welcome to join him.

■ IPSHITA

Silver House, Golf Course, Bolarum, Secunderabad

Timings: 6 am to 9 am and 4 pm to 6 pm (Monday to Saturday), 6 am to 11:30 am and 3 pm to 6 pm (Sunday)





VAISHALI

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1346, road #68, Jubilee Hills, lane beside Indian oil petrol pump, Hyderabad-500 033, Telangana
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MOVIES

In theatres

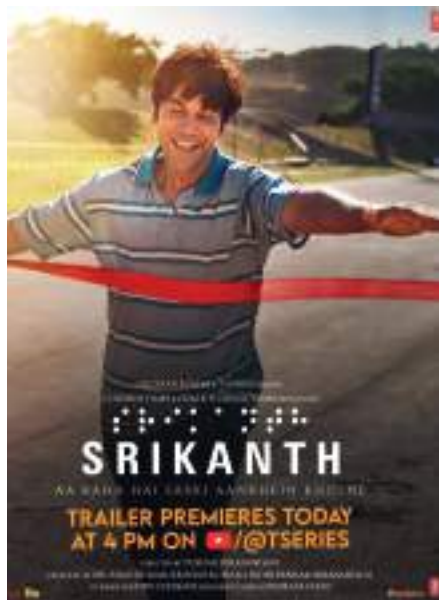


KALKI 2898 AD

(Hindi & Telugu)

The most expensive film in the country finally makes its way to the cinemas this month with a massive star cast comprising Prabhas, Deepika Padukone, Kamal Hassan, Amitabh Bachchan, Disha Patani and Mrunal Thakur. Nag Ashwin – who proved his mettle with *Mahanati* and *Yevade Subramanyam*, returns to mark the very first sci-fi dystopian epic ever made in India. It also became the first Indian film to be presented at Hall-H at San Diego Comic-Con. The excellent marketing and limited knowledge of the film have only increased curiosity about it.

Date: 30th May



SRIKANTH

(Hindi)

This is the story of the blind Hyderabad industrialist Srikanth Bolla of Bollant Industries. Rajkumar Rao reprises the title role as Jyothika plays his mother. *Srikanth* traces the journey of how this middleclass Telugu boy who went on to become MIT's first blind student and became an epitome of empowerment with his vision for Bollant Industries. Directed by Tushar Hiranandani, the inspiring biopic shows his struggles from childhood and is a commentary on his grit and perseverance.

Date: 10th May



Mr AND Mrs MAHI

(Hindi)

The life story of cricketing legend Mahendra Singh Dhoni is all set to come alive this month in the movie starring Rajkumar Rao and Janhvi Kapoor. Directed by Sharan Sharma, this movie by Dharma Productions is the second outing about the cricket's life, the first being *Dhoni: The Untold Story* which released in 2017.

Date: 31st May

BHAIYYA JI

(Hindi)

After years of delivering characters that have now become immortal in cinema, the legendary Manoj Bajpayee takes on the avatar of a mass hero in this action-drama. Looking every bit the part



and oozing swagger in every frame of the first teaser, the film marks a whole new version of Manoj created by himself for the big screen. The film co-stars Zoya Hussain and Vipin Sharma. It is directed by Apoorv Singh Karki and produced by Bajpayee as well. This is where character meets entertainment. The film also marks Bajpayee's 100th outing as an actor. A filmography one can be proud of!

Date: 24th May



GANGS OF GODAVARI

(Telugu)

Vishwak Sen returns to do what he does best – mass in full form. Produced by Sithara Entertainment and Fortune Four Cinemas, Vishwak co-stars with Neha Shetty, Anjali, and Nassar in this action-drama about Eluru and Godavari coast politics in the 1980s. Krishna Chaitanya returns as director, after *Rowdy Fellow* and *Chal Mohan Ranga*, while also having been a lyricist in various movies over the years.

Date: 17th May

OTT SHOWS



11th Hour

(Telugu)
AHA

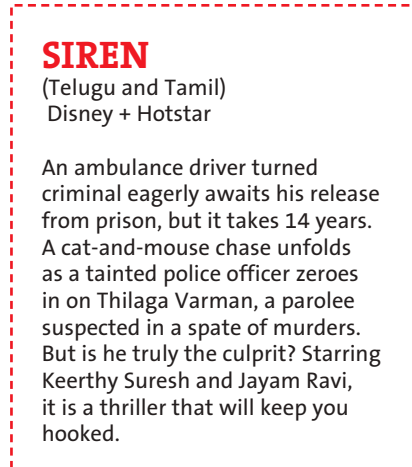
Praveen Sattaru creates curiosity unlike any other filmmaker. He brings his immaculate execution to the small screen with Tamannaah Bhatia in the lead in a series based on the book *8 Hours*. It follows Bhatia who faces a boardroom discussion that unfolds through the course of a single night. The show also stars Adith Arun, Vamsi Krishna, and Jayaprakash among others. It makes for a unique experience as corporate dramas are a rare genre in our country.



PARASYTE: THE GREY

(English)
Netflix

Based on the manga series of the same name, the series depicts parasite creatures who live on humans and what unfolds when they turn on them. Starring Jeon So-nee and Koo Kyo-hwan among others, the South Korean series has some of the best visual imagery in recent times while Yeon Sang-ho – the filmmaker behind *Train to Busan* and *Peninsula*, is the mastermind behind the series, with Netflix producing the same.



SIREN

(Telugu and Tamil)
Disney + Hotstar

An ambulance driver turned criminal eagerly awaits his release from prison, but it takes 14 years. A cat-and-mouse chase unfolds as a tainted police officer zeroes in on Thilaga Varman, a parolee suspected in a spate of murders. But is he truly the culprit? Starring Keerthy Suresh and Jayam Ravi, it is a thriller that will keep you hooked.



THE RANA CONNECTION

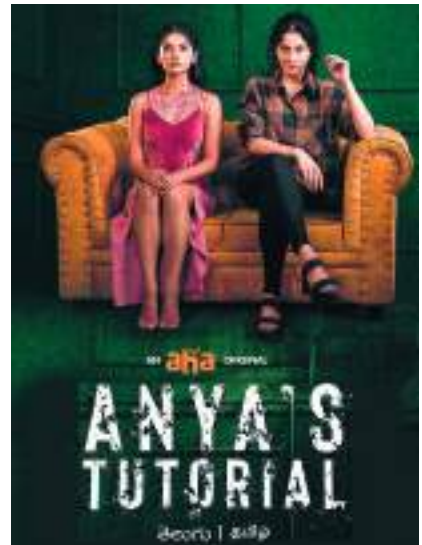
(Hindi)
Amazon Prime

Actor Rana Daggubati is spilling the tea in the curiosity-piquing talk show featuring his friends and contemporaries from Indian cinema. The show will bring in celebs who are creating a buzz every week. ■ CHANDRAMOULI

ANYA'S TUTORIAL

(Telugu)
AHA

Regina Cassandra is unstoppable. She returns with a horror-psychological series about a YouTuber who becomes popular due to the paranormal activity in her home. It is not as simple, of course, and Cassandra makes the most of the opportunity by delivering a knockout performance. She is stellar and so is Nivedithaa Satish. Pallavi Gangireddy makes her directorial debut while Shobhu Yarlagadda – the legendary producer of *Baahubali* duology, produces the series under Arka Media.



SNIPPETS



Toast of Tollywood

Telugu cinema has witnessed scores of female actresses become the toast of Tollywood with their blockbuster performances. However, only a few male actors have managed to get there. Malayalam star **Dulquer Salmaan** seems all set to become one with his third Telugu movie *Lucky Bhaskar*, after delivering two blockbusters - *Mahanati* and *Sita Ramam*. The actor with legions of female fans in the Telugu states will play a simple middle-class man next door, a bank cashier, in this Venky Atluri directorial. Carry on, Dulquer!



Twinning on screen

Every die-hard Koffee fan knows that the episode with **Sara Ali Khan** and **Ananya Pandey** was Lit! The two divas brought the sass and the class, making Karan blush and the audience gag with laughter. And now, get this juicy scoop: word on the street is they might be cast in *Cocktail 2* for their sizzling *chemistry*! Talk about adding some spice to the mix! With these bombshells on screen, you know it's going to be double the drama and double the delight for the audience!



Slow and slaying

As *Tillu Square* races towards hitting the Rs 150-crore collection target, one actor has stolen the thunder right from under Siddhu Jonnalagadda, aka mana Tillu anna. **Neha Shetty** was a surprise element in the sequel to *DJ Tillu* and in the 10 minutes she appears onscreen, in her trademark black georgette saree, she sets it on fire. The actress who awaits the release of her movie *Gangs of Godavari* this month has just signed a new movie opposite young star Bellamkonda Srinivas. Neha is definitely in the slow, steady, and successful mode.

Name dropping bling

Announcing that a star is dating someone in a post like 'he said yes' is so mainstream. Gen Z girl **Janhvi Kapoor** chose to proclaim her love for polo champion Shikar Pahariya by sporting his name as a pendant at the *Maidaan* premiere in Mumbai recently. The paparazzi went nuts filming the pendant and then hyper-zooming in to share the breaking news they got hold of. Is name-dropping on accessories going to be the next big thing in 2024 fashion? Watch out world, Janhvi's setting trends and turning heads!



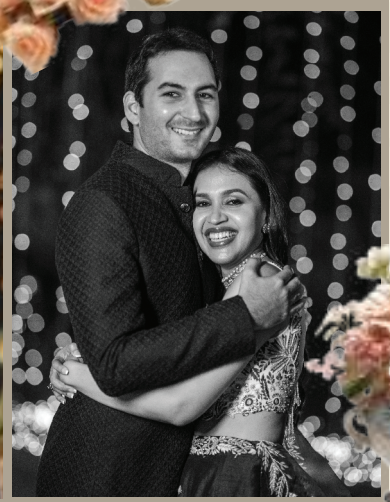
Rugged vibe alert!

Alright, brace yourselves for this summer's hottest scoop! **Vicky Kaushal**, the heartthrob from *Uri*, is cooking up something seriously spicy for his next flick, *Chaava*, alongside Rashmika Mandanna. Get this: he's ditching the clean-shaven look for a rugged, beefed-up vibe as he steps into the shoes of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj! Rumor has it, he's hitting the gym hard, packing on a solid 25 kgs of pure muscle to nail the role. And guess what? He's not keeping it all under wraps! Vicky's giving us sneak peeks of his transformation, and trust me, we're all drooling in anticipation! Vicky, we are just so lucky!

■ MANJU



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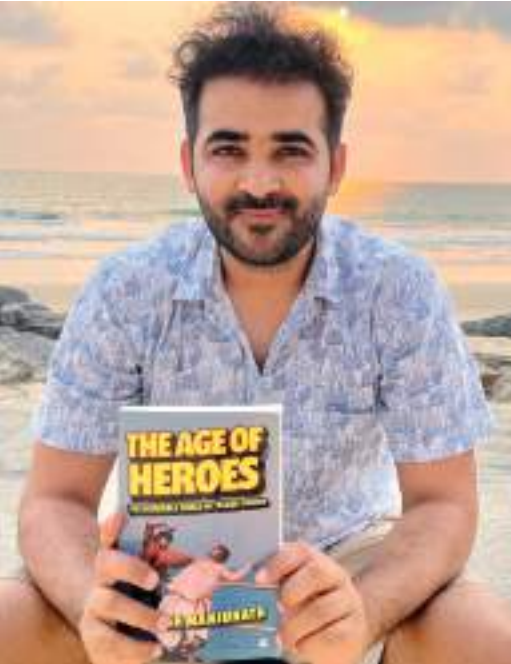


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BOOKS



THE AGE OF HEROES
Mukesh Manjunath

Mukesh has penned down an excellent book for movie buffs. It unravels the mystique and charm of the heroes of Telugu cinema. From NTR to Chiranjeevi to Vijay Deverakonda, it helps understand their pull over the masses, as well as the heroism of artists like Vijayashanti. This book boldly explores themes of caste and the role it plays in the red cinema and its effect in the 90s.



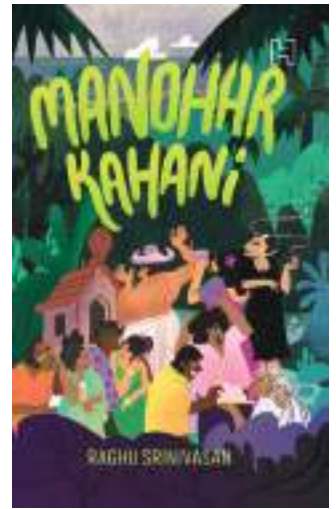
NEVER NEVER LAND
Namita Ghokale

The Sahitya Akademi award-winning author returns to the scene of Kumaon once again. This time with an elegiac ambivalence that evokes a strange feeling of sadness and dismay. Though it lingers nostalgically on the natural beauty and remote charms of forested ridgelines and deep valleys. Ita Arya, the narrator, is an editor and aspiring novelist who abandons Gurgaon for the verdant foothills of Kumaon. Seeking refuge from a general sense of

discontentment in her life, Ita wants to spend time with her maternal grandmother, Badi Amma (also called Lily). Who lives with another elderly widow, Rosinka, in a hilltop house known as 'The Dacha'. This lyrical novel is a tender ode to relationships that weather the test of time.

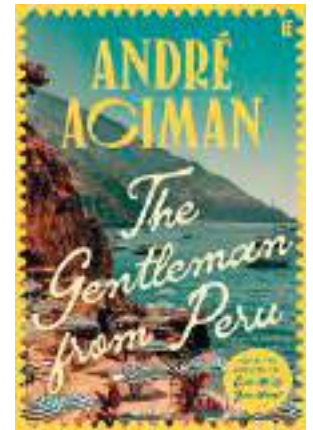
MANOHAR KAHANI
Raghu Srinivasan

This slim novel is the perfect light read for a lazy summer afternoon. In *Manohar Kahani*, a seemingly ordinary family faces a seemingly ordinary problem. A real estate shark has eyes on the homestay owned by the Mehtas, who are far from amenable to the idea of selling it. Neither the lure of money nor the menace of a rogue business owner can sway the household, more so because it has the support of a hidden army to fight back.



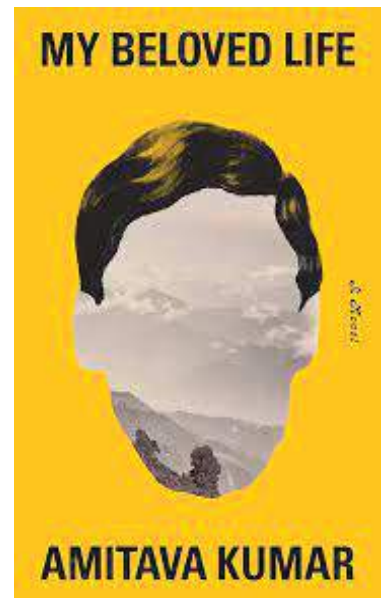
THE GENTLEMAN FROM PERU
André Aciman

A group of college friends find themselves marooned at a luxurious hotel on the Amalfi Coast in Italy. While their boat is being repaired, they can't help but observe the daily routine of a fellow hotel guest – a mysterious, white-bearded stranger who sits on the veranda each night and smokes one cigarette, sometimes two. The acclaimed author returns to a tale of love and betrayal, themes he has explored with great success in his earlier works.



MY BELOVED LIFE: A NOVEL
Amitava Kumar

The acclaimed author returns with the tale of Jadunath Kunwar or Jadu, whose life skates between the mythical and the mundane. As changes big and small sweep across India, Jadu finds meaning in the most unexpected places. Piercing, fleet-footed, and undeniably resonant, it is a novel from a singularly gifted writer about how we tell stories and write history. How individuals play a counterpoint to big movements and how no single life is without consequence. ■ MALLIK



WOW! catches up with **Nico Slate**, History Professor at Carnegie Mellon University and author of *The Art of Freedom*, a book on the pioneering freedom fighter and textile revivalist, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya

A great page of lost history



WHEN WAS THE FIRST TIME YOU HEARD OF KAMALADEVI? WHEN DID YOU DECIDE TO WRITE THE BOOK AND HOW LONG DID IT TAKE YOU TO WRITE?

Like most Americans, I did not learn much about the history of India in school. It was when I began graduate school that I first learned of Kamaladevi. A few years later, to research for my dissertation, I traveled to Delhi. I looked through the papers of a range of Indian anticolonial activists. Kamaladevi struck me as one of the most fascinating figures I encountered. She was committed to confronting not just British imperialism but also other facets of white supremacy such as American racism. For twenty years, I have been studying her life and this book is the culmination of that research and writing.

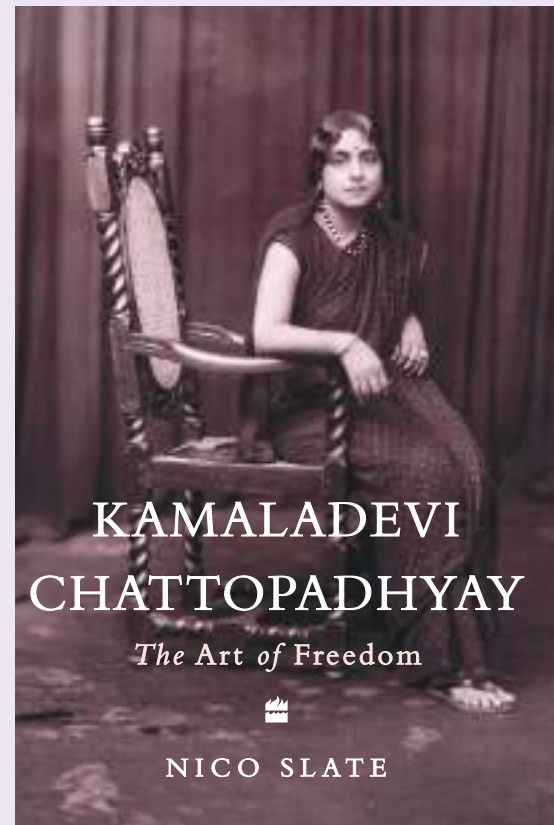
WHAT IS THE SENSE YOU GET OF HER AS YOU LEARNT MORE ABOUT HER?

Many of the people I interviewed stressed her deep empathy. It was not

just kindness for her friends and family but also empathy for those she never met. Consider the countless artists and artisans Kamaladevi supported, many of whom treasure her memory even now. She was deeply caring but did not suffer fools, and could come across as distant or even intimidating. With her closest friends, by contrast, she shared a sharp wit and generous warmth.

YOU WRITE ABOUT HER MANY ACHIEVEMENTS – BUT MOST PEOPLE ONLY KNOW HER WORK WITH THE TEXTILES, WHY IS THAT?

After independence and especially after the 1950s, Kamaladevi's career was focused on arts and crafts. I think she is remembered for that work simply because it dominated the last few decades of her life. Part of my hope is that my book can help us recover the vital work Kamaladevi did earlier in her life. Helping to lead the All-India Women's Conference, the Salt



Satyagraha in Mumbai, and the Congress Socialist Party. Building networks of solidarity with African Americans and others throughout the world, and helping and empowering refugees in the wake of Partition.

WHAT WERE THE FACTS/INCIDENTS IN YOUR RESEARCH THAT SURPRISED YOU?

I was surprised by the depth and richness of her relationship with Gandhi. Unlike many of Gandhi's disciples, Kamaladevi did not hesitate to challenge the Mahatma when she thought he was mistaken. Also, despite her tumultuous second marriage, Kamaladevi showed generosity towards two of the women with whom her husband had long-term affairs. She saw them as human beings and helped rather than blame them.

HOW RELEVANT IS THE STORY OF KAMALADEVI TO TODAY'S INDIA? WHAT LESSONS CAN WE PICK FROM HER LIFE?

Kamaladevi fought multiple forms of injustice: sexism, imperialism, racism, inequities of class and caste. She believed in the freedom of speech and of the press. She opined that the greatest form of patriotism is to challenge one's own country to live up to its ideals. Perhaps the most important lesson I learnt is that we all have the power to fight for justice and to create beauty.

■ MALLIK



DANCERS ON STAGE



SUDHA REDDY

Stepping Up Well

April 21, Bansilalpet Stepwell

Entrepreneur Sudha Reddy of MEIL & SR Foundation hosted a cultural event featuring the Shanmata performance in the backdrop of the stunning heritage structure, Bansilalpet Stepwell in Secunderabad. The vibe was on point for World Heritage Day, with all the city's culture buffs showing up decked in their fanciest threads for a night of musical bliss.



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REGINA



SUSHANT

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SANDHYA RAJU



ANAM MIRZA

MANASA VARANASI AND KASHYAP



CHAITANYA MRSK AND CHAITANYA PELLAKURU



ORRY



Bodacious Bash

April 19, Studio Ananta

The lit debut of **Studio Ananta**, a premium fitness spot in Khajaguda, shook things up with social media sensation Orhan Awatramani, aka Orry, in the mix. Shilpa Reddy, brand ambassador of the fitness studio, hosted the event, and founders Chaitanya Pellakuru, Chaitanya MRSK, and Ankit Kumar brought the celebs and fitness legends together for one epic night of mingling.

MANGLI



SUNDEEP KISHAN



SREEJA



RENUKA CHOWDARY



NEHA SHETTY



SHALINI



NAMRATA SHIRODKAR



SANJAY GARG



PINKY REDDY



ASMITA

Mango Magic

April 13, Raw Mango

Raw Mango founder Sanjay Garg displayed the "After The Flowers Summer 2024" collection to an elite crowd that loved the summer fresh collection. The designer store in Banjara Hills became the hotspot as Hyderabad's high-heeled strutted their stuff at the lit fashion show.



RAJAKUMARI



ELAHE HIPTOOLAH



DIVYA REDDY



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