

OCTOBER 2024 ₹100

WOW!

HYDERABAD

wellness

8 TIPS FOR A
HEALTHY GUT

shopping

WHAT'S TRENDING
IN ENGAGEMENT
RINGS

trends

PRETTY POTLIS
FOR THE
FESTIVE LOOK

leisure

SKYCAMPING:
DATE WITH
THE STARS

food

MEXAROSA
AND THE SPICE
EXPERIENCE



FITNESS

3.0

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AND
DJ POWERED
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PARTIES AND
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A man in a light grey sweater and dark trousers is sitting on a wide, low stone ledge, reading a book. He is positioned in the middle ground, facing left. The garden is filled with various plants, including a large banana tree with broad green leaves, a tree with red flowers, and several bushes of pink roses. The ground is paved with large, light-colored stone tiles. In the background, modern white buildings are visible under a clear blue sky. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and serene.

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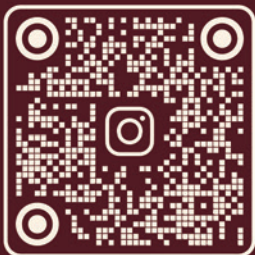
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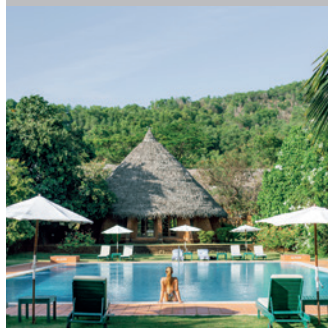
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TAPASME, THE SPANISH PUB, OPENED AND WE REVIEWED IT. We also ask a cocktail curator what Hyderabad loves to guzzle over the weekends

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IN THIS MONTH'S EDITORIAL, OUR EDITOR WRITES ABOUT WHY HYDERABAD IS IN NEED OF A CULTURAL RENAISSANCE. In Sports, we talk to heptathlon champion Nandini. In Startup, we feature Hyderabad-based Flashoot, 'the Uber for Insta Reels'. In Cause, we tell you where you can donate to spread festive joy

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WE VISIT SOME BRAND-NEW PLACES THAT ARE MAKING A BUZZ: CHAI PANI, MAD OVER GRILLS, BEENZ AND MORE. MEET RUCHI, A HOME CHEF WHO MAKES THE MOST DECADENT BROWNIES. Also, the mother-daughter duo of Ziya who cook exclusive heirloom desserts in the city.

SHOPPING

CHECK OUT THE STORES THAT HAVE BEEN MAKING A BUZZ: GAURAV GUPTA, TASVA, RAHUL MISHRA, ABRAHAM & THAKORE, ANDAL GEMS AND JEWELS.

Outhouse Jewellery and Kilangi. Plus, where to source last minute gift hampers for the festive season



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POTLIS ARE ALWAYS TRENDING AND WE SCOUT THE CITY to find the best ethnic bags that go well with the Dasara and Diwali attire



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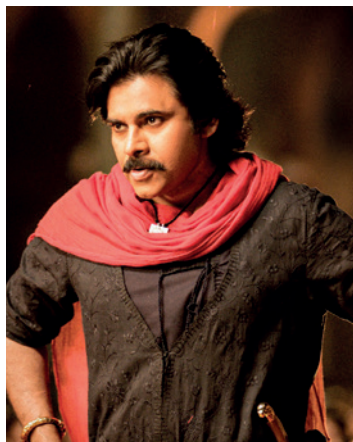
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DID YOU KNOW THAT GUT HEALTH CAN EVEN DICTATE YOUR MENTAL HEALTH? We talk to an expert on eight ways to maintain good gut health. A new wellness platform that enables booking tailor-made wellcations. Plus, actor Pragathi Mahavadi's secret to a strong body



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BESIDES OUR LIST OF MUST-WATCH OTT SHOWS AND CINEMAS, we talk to singer Sahithi Chaganti of the viral Telugu song 'Kurchi madatapetti' about the other exciting projects she has this year. Along with the usual book reviews, do read about Off the shelf, the interesting bookstore in town that offers lot more than books



A ROUND UP OF THE EPIC PARTIES that Hyderabad hosted last month



FOCUS

HYDERABAD IS RIDING THE FITNESS WAVE WITH NEW GLOBAL BRANDS THAT ARE CHANGING THE FACE OF FITNESS. With workouts driven by data, powered by science and backed by AI, the essence of staying fit has taken a new meaning in the city. We check out the new studios, the trend of workout parties, and talk to those in the fitness ecosystem for more insights



ON THE COVER
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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Our guide to the exciting happenings in town

Manthan Samvaad

is back this year with an amazing line up of speakers



SPEAKER SERIES UNFOLDS

OCTOBER 2

Manthan Samvaad, the annual marquee event returns and will see eight thought leaders engage with the informed eclectic audience on a variety of topics. The speakers include Arvind Datar, Leading Supreme Court Lawyer; Alok Srivastava, Stem Cells Scientist; Anuj Gurwara, group Dakhni; Kiran Rao, Filmmaker; Sabah Khan, Activist; Sasikanth Senthil, MP and ex IAS; Sanjay Singh, member of Rajya Sabha; and SY Quraishi, Former Chief Election Commissioner.

Venue: Shilpakala Vedika, Hitech City
Tel: 99088 08000
Timings: 9 am to 6 pm
Ticket: No Entry Fee
Register at: manthansamvaad.com



JIVE TO SUPPI & THE VIBE

OCTOBER 2

Known to blend soulful vocals with hip-hop beats and rap, Suppi & the Vibe is a multi-genre, multilingual homegrown band from Hyderabad that is all set to put on a show **Sing Along Night**. Their music covers a wide variety of styles, including Jazz, Hip-hop, Trap, Reggae, Pop, Semi-Carnatic, and Telangana folk.

Venue: Rangbhoomi Spaces & Events, Gachibowli
Timings: 7.30 pm onwards
Ticket: Rs 200 (bookmyshow.com)



DANDIYA MODE ACTIVATED

OCTOBER 3 TO 11

Get your dandiya mode on at the **Dandiya Mahotsav 2024, Biggest Open-Air Festival**. With live DJ artists, *dhol*, *garba* and authentic food stalls among more, embrace the festive spirit and make it a memorable as you dance the night away with friends and family.

Venue: Uppal Municipal Stadium, Uppal
Timings: 7 pm onwards
Ticket: Rs 99 (insider.in)



A MUSICAL EVENING

OCTOBER 19

Mark your calendars as Saptaparni, after the success of last year's concert, is back with **Dial 9 for Devi - Carnatic Music Live Concert**. Enjoy the pristine acoustics of Saptaparni's new indoor auditorium and join in for an evening of music, spirituality, and community.

Venue: Saptaparni, Road No. 8 Banjara Hills
Timings: 6 pm onwards
Ticket: Rs 499 (insider.in)



INTERACTIVE THEATER

OCTOBER 20

About: **Blank** is a bold reimagining of interactive theatre, where the audience is the heartbeat of the performance. Instead of delivering a prewritten script, Chandini creates a framework within which the audience takes the reins, becoming the storytellers, protagonists, and creators of meaning. Each performance unfolds in real time, with no two shows alike.

Venue: Yogibear Collectives, Begumpet
Timings: 8 pm onwards
Ticket: Rs 300 (bookmyshow.com)



HEAD BANGING TRACKS

OCTOBER 26

The One Artist 2024 is celebrating music and its many forms by bringing three different acts in award-winning Jasleen Royal, Threory Band and DJ Paroma. The Main Act is the Bollywood Singer, Jasleen Royal known for tracks *Heeriye*, *Assi Sajna* and *Ranjha* among more; The Supporting Act features the Threory Band, known for their work in the film, *Animal*; and the final is by DJ Paroma, known to blend genres like EDM, Commercial House Music and Bollywood.

Venue: Gachibowli Stadium, Gachibowli
Timings: 5.30 pm onwards
Ticket: Rs 499 (bookmyshow.com)



SHORT PLAYS

OCTOBER 26

Adapted from Neil Simon's 'The Good Doctor' and Directed by Mala Pasha, **Tea with Everything** is a collection of short plays featuring richly crafted characters. Each play is cleverly plotted, ending with a delightful and unexpected twist.

Venue: The Park Hotel, Rajbhavan Road
Timings: 7 pm onwards
Ticket: Rs 1,500 (bookmyshow.com)

COLLECTION DRIVE

OCTOBER 27

Gāiaa Living - a sustainable lifestyle multi-brand store, holds a **Collection Drive** on the last Sunday of every month. They accept old/torn/unused clothes, books, footwear, accessories and small furniture to make sure it all gets a second life and does not reach the landfill. Mark your calendar for 27th October.

Venue: Gāiaa Living, Film Nagar
Tel: 95500 06577
Timings: 12 pm to 6 pm

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

The City Needs a Cultural Renaissance



It's a sad state of affairs for the creative artists in this country that they do not have patronage, and have to struggle to curate an art show or make an independent film. India was quick to claim credit for Payal Kapadia's, *All We Imagine as Light* that was the first feature film in 30 years to have won the Palme d'Or at the Cannes festival this year, but in reality India had little to do with the film. The funding came from France, Italy, Netherlands among others, and the filmmaker, living in India, struggled for 10 years to have her film see the light of the day. And now, we don't even know when, and if, the film will find a distributor in India.

The arts, by which I mean paintings, sculpture, films, music, dance, are low on government agendas and there are no independent bodies here to encourage such efforts. And this is certainly not because we are lacking in talent, as there are any number of talented and independent film and documentary makers here too. In Hyderabad itself, there is the little known Shivajee Chandrabhushan whose movie, *Frozen* was

shown at several international festivals and is now preserved at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (Oscar) Archives (incidentally, the only other Indian whose films are at the archives are that of Satyajit Ray). How dismal the situation is for independent filmmakers can be seen from the fact that when a private investor pulled out, Shivajee had to use his own funds and had to pay back investors with the prize money! Even sadder, no one in Hyderabad has seen the film.

A city where there is a vibrant art and cultural scene, where there are libraries and museums, where there is public art can truly call itself a megalopolis. How many more decades before we reach there, I wonder. Let's start the conversation around these issues, for now, at least.

Hyderabad, despite a thriving film industry, tech and pharma billionaires, is especially oblivious about creating a cultural stratosphere. We have no performance space that we can be proud of, and we have to make do with existing spaces that have not been upgraded for decades. The promoters of Manam Theatre Festival, launched last year, complained of lack of space where plays could be staged with decent changing rooms and a good stage. They hope to build their own theater space one day in the face of government apathy.

For the Indian Photo festival (IPF), the only international festival of any kind to be held in Hyderabad, we have no exhibition space other than the State Art Gallery. Yet currently its elevators are not working, and air-conditioning or lighting is not always of international standard. Incidentally, IPF, in its tenth year now, was earlier supported by *National Geographic*, (unfortunately post-covid they withdrew) gets a meager amount from state government, apart from support from the State Art Gallery. Aquin Mathews,

the curator of the festival puts it together only because of his belief that powerful stories can be told with photographs. It's the same with the folks at the Manam Theater Festival who do it because they believe in bringing good productions to the city. Curators, film makers, artists thus have to struggle in the absence of an independent body that takes care of the funding for such initiatives (in other countries an independent Arts Council gives out funding for deserving projects).

What is needed is education and awareness at various levels to show that the arts are important for a city for which both the public and administrators must take responsibility. The public must take ownership for the culture of the city in a way that the creative arts can flourish. In this city, we literally have to persuade people to attend art shows and plays, and are reluctant to pay for them. And government as well corporates should take onus for a vibrant city where arts, films and theater flourish. Bangalore being a recent example where companies like Biocon and Infosys, as well as the city's billionaires came together to set up a pulsating institution like the Bangalore International Center (BIC).

In Hyderabad, the tech and bio-technology, pharma companies are booming, yet not one of them will come forward to support an art show or an independent film without wanting to know how it will help their company or what returns they would get: all I can do is to quote Tatas who support so many philanthropic activities as well as having built the NCPA, and have a simple tag line summing up their philosophy, 'we also make steel'. Your core product is not what defines you, but the cultural initiatives and philanthropy that you undertake which sets you apart.

A city where there is an energetic arts and cultural scene, where there are libraries and museums, where there is performing spaces can truly call itself a megalopolis. How many more decades before we reach there, I wonder. Let's start the conversation around these issues for now, at least.

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START-UP

A Startup Making Professional Insta Reels as Easy as a Few Taps on Your Phone

Uber for Insta Reels

Ever wished you had a pro videographer to capture slick content for your Instagram, right where you are, at a moment's notice? **Flashhoot**, a Hyderabad-based startup, is here to ride the reel wave, offering on-demand, affordable videography services. "We're the Uber for Insta reels," says CEO Voleti Karthik. "Simply download our app, pin your location, book a time slot, and one of our professional photographers – within a 5 km radius – will arrive in 40 minutes. They'll shoot, edit, and deliver your reel within an hour." Flashhoot, founded in July, is already creating a buzz in the city.

THE BACKSTORY

The inability to find a good and affordable photographer who could create reels within a few hours for his mother's ice cream company made Karthik find a solution. Sensing a business opportunity here, he and a group of young professionals - Manikanta Bukka, Shreyak Singh and Raghu Nandan - decided to pool Hyderabad's top photographers into a service that fills this growing demand. A seasoned entrepreneur with ventures in fashion and food, Karthik saw the business potential in creating Insta reels on the go. The major investment went into developing the app. "It was a labour of love of 18 months – from syncing locations with Google Maps to thinking of safety of female Flashhoot partners. We raised a pre-seed funding of Rs 66 lakh," he adds.

HOW IT WORKS

Flashhoot has signed up over 150 professional photographers from across Hyderabad. Like Uber or Swiggy, the app alerts the nearest available photographer based on the client's location and time slot. "Though we haven't officially launched with much fanfare, we've already completed over 100 shoots in Hyderabad through word-of-mouth," Karthik notes. About 90 percent of the payment goes to the photographer.

FUTURE PLANS

The startup plans to expand to Visakhapatnam, Warangal and Karimnagar by the end of the year and aims to double the number of photographers on board to



offer even faster services. Popular among city influencers and content creators, Flashhoot's appeal lies in its convenience and affordability. "Our rates start at Rs 999 per hour, Rs 1,400 for advanced features and day packages are also available, which

could be the game-changer for us," adds Karthik. ■ MANJU

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Timings: 11 am to 9 pm
Instagram: weareflashhoot

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GOONJ

Goonj focuses on recycling urban waste into useful resources for rural communities. Goonj accepts old and washed clothes, footwear, school supplies, stationery and electronics. You can also talk to them if you wish to organize the collection drive in your residential area/office/school.

Address: GOONJ, Plot no. 8, Opposite MS Function Hall on Chevella Road, Beside Pharma Corp, behind MATRIXX Bakers, Suncity, Phase-2, Hydershakote, Rajendranagar
Tel: 94415 53473

LIBAS CENTRE

Libas Centre is a self-funded clothing drive aimed at making a positive impact in our community. The goal is to collect gently used and new clothing and pass it on to underprivileged families. They also collect stationery, bags, furniture, etc. Once the donor is ready with the donations, they call Libas and the team will visit the home. "We will then distribute these items to local shelters, community centers and individuals in need. All expenses including transportation, and sorting supplies are covered by our team. This ensures that

every piece of clothing donated goes directly to those who need it, without any overhead costs," says program manager Syed Faiyaz.

Tel: 89774 38131

THE CLOTHES BOX FOUNDATION

Before donating, ensure items are in good condition, clean, and functional. However, their home pickup is done by a third-party vendor, available across India, and donors need to bear that cost. The service charges are Rs 89 for the pick-up of each box. Packing has to be done like you give a courier to a DTDC/Blue Dart/Post office etc. Loose packaging, in a box, is not permitted as it's a long transit. For

pickup, each box can have a limit of up to 60 clothes. If you wish to contribute more, you must raise another request. (For example, if you want to give 180 clothes - please raise three requests). It may take anywhere between 3-10 business days for the pickup to happen.

Cost: Rs 89 per box for shipping
Tel: 78383 71356

ORPHANAGES AND OLD HOMES

There are also several genuine orphanages and old age homes where one can sponsor a festival meal, buy them crackers, sweets, chocolates, toys, books etc and brighten their day this Dasara or Diwali. Most of these places allow donors to bring their own food and distribute or pay to get it cooked in the facility's kitchen and partake in the meal to make them feel loved. Sometimes, even recharging an old, abandoned *Tatayya's* phone with Rs 100 means unlimited talk time with his loved ones. To show some heart, here are a few places to try. ■ MANJU

Helping Hands Humanity, Marredpally
Tel: 79954 38644

VCare Sri Sai Old Age Home, Sikh Village
Tel: 90001 18885

Ganamas Smile Foundation, SR Nagar
Tel: 96661 99935

Adarsha Foundation
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Achyut Foundation for Mentally Handicapped
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SPORTS

Nandini Agasara's recent triumphs in the Open Nationals put her under the spotlight

A Rising Star in Indian Heptathlon



Last month, Nandini Agasara secured a remarkable victory at the Open Nationals Athletic Championship in Bengaluru, scoring 5812 points. This win adds to her growing list of achievements as she prepares for the Senior Inter-State Championship in Panchkula. At just 21 years old, this Hyderabad heptathlon champ has already competed in 50 national competitions and won an impressive 45. This includes three international events – the World Under-20 Championships in Kenya in 2021, 2022, and 2023. Though she didn't make it past the semifinals in Kenya, her determination to succeed remains unwavering. For the uninitiated, heptathlon is an event comprising seven athletic disciplines such as 100 meters hurdles, high jump, shot-put, 200 meters, long jump, javelin, and 800 meters. Heptathlon is like the *jugalbandi* of sports.

GROWING YEARS AND ATHLETICS

Nandini's journey into sports began in her early school days at Vijaya School in Kapra, Secunderabad. Her mother, who worked in various homes, was encouraged by an employer to enrol Nandini in Kendriya Vidyalaya, Bollaram, where sports opportunities were abundant. "I started with the typical childhood races like the lemon and spoon competition and transitioned to more serious athletic pursuits under the guidance of Mutaiah, my PT teacher. Recognizing my interest in sports, he encouraged me to compete at Gachibowli Stadium, where I caught the attention of coach Ramesh Napri, who introduced me to the world of heptathlon," she says.

THE HEPATHLON JOURNEY

Nandini began in 2018 when she first trained in pentathlon, a five-event sport. Though balancing academics and sports

proved challenging, "I had to choose sports over academics," Nandini recalls, explaining how she moved to a social welfare school in Narsingi for her 11th and 12th grades, later pursuing a BBA degree.

Her training under the guidance of coach Ramesh at the Pullela Gopichand Academy further honed her skills. Despite an elbow injury that temporarily sidelined her, Nandini's determination kept her going, especially with the support of free coaching and hostel facilities at the academy, starting in 2022.

A DAY IN HER LIFE

Nandini's daily routine is a testament to her dedication. "We wake up at 6 am and start training by 7 am," she explains. Her sessions last until 11 am, followed by lunch and rest. Evenings are dedicated to another round of training from 4.30 pm to 6.30 pm. Recovery is equally important, with sessions focused on foam rolling, rehab, and yoga. Sundays are reserved for spiritual relaxation.

EYES ON THE OLYMPICS

Looking ahead, Nandini has set her sight on even greater achievements. She aims to compete in the Asian Championship, Asian Indoors, and the World Championships, with the ultimate dream of representing India at the Olympics. "Everyone wants the Olympic medal," she says with a determined smile. ■ MANJU



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Three-time Grammy award musician **Ricky Kej** speaks about striking a balance between artistic satisfaction and commercial success and why singing for mainstream may overshadow his previous accomplishments

“The film industry isn’t where my heart is”



Since music is my best form of communication, it naturally became the medium I use to spread awareness, and inspire change

Ricky Kej is a globally acclaimed Indian music composer and environmentalist, known for blending classical Indian sounds with contemporary world music. Ricky enthralled Hyderabadis at a live show at Hotel ITC Kohenur, hosted by the Prabha Khaitan Foundation.

With his unique style often incorporates nature-inspired elements, his work focuses on promoting sustainability and environmental consciousness. His music is celebrated for its serene, meditative quality, making him a prominent figure in the global fusion and new-age music genres.

Ricky has earned several prestigious accolades, including three Grammy Awards, the most recent in 2023 for Best Immersive Audio Album. His latest achievement in August 2023 involved setting a Guinness World Record for organizing the largest ensemble to perform the Indian National Anthem, with 75 musicians from around the world playing together in a historic collaboration. This event underscored his dedication to global unity through music and his passion for fostering a deeper connection between humanity and the environment.

Ricky spoke to WOW! after the event.

WHAT PARALLEL WORLDS DO YOU LIVE IN AND WHEN DID THE ROLES MERGE?

I’ve led parallel lives, as both an environmentalist and a musician. Over time, these two worlds merged, and now, the only kind of music I make revolves around the environment and creating a positive social impact. However, my heart always lies in figuring out how to build a better future for future generations. Since music is my best form of communication, it naturally became the medium I use to spread awareness, and inspire change.

WHAT GENRES OF MUSIC DO YOU RESONATE WITH?

For me, it’s never about making a “good rock song” or a “good pop song”—but about making a good song. Whether I’m addressing something like human-elephant conflict, the goal is to communicate my message emotionally and effectively. If that means using a guitar, sitar, or even a Vietnamese Dan Bau, then that’s what I’ll do. I’ve long since abandoned the limitations of genres because their influences naturally become part of my creative process after traveling and collaborating with so many musicians.

HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT SINGING FOR A TELUGU FILM?

I experimented with film music in 2008. However, the film industry isn’t where my heart is. In film music, you’re often making music based on someone else’s vision, whether it’s for a hero’s introduction or a choreographed dance number. People advised me to work in a Bollywood or Tollywood film to gain more visibility, but I feel that if I did, those songs would overshadow my personal work, and I don’t want that. ■ MANJU



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| 9000 | 10000 |

SCAN FOR
LOCATION



Ziya is all about select indulgences made the old-school way with love, care, time, superfoods, nuts and nothing artificial

True Heritage recipes



In a world dominated by cloud kitchens and instant food, Ziya stands out for its authenticity and unique approach to ethnic indulgences. “We’re not a cloud kitchen,” says Kinjal Dharod, of Ziya’s mother-daughter duo Rashmi-Kinjal. “Our food is prepared at home in a hygienic environment, with love and care. You can’t order it online, and it’s not available in ready-to-go boxes. Everything’s made based on pre-orders only.”

Ziya (which means glow and splendor) is a labor of love, dedicated to reviving ethnic recipes passed down through generations. “We’re passionate about traditional dietary practices that promote healthy living, and our authentic meals have always been appreciated by family and friends,” Kinjal shares. Their customers place orders via WhatsApp and once ready, either pick it up themselves or get it picked up through services such as Dunzo.

BACK TO BASICS

The venture was created to cater to those who crave these forgotten delicacies but may not know where to find them. “Many ancestral recipes were never written down, only passed on verbally by elders. At Ziya, we preserve these culinary traditions.” Kinjal also emphasizes the elaborate nature of the cooking process—sourcing ingredients, meticulous preparation, and the love and dedication required to make these dishes. “In today’s fast-paced world, time and effort are rare luxuries.”

Ziya’s most notable creation is Granny’s Elixir, a signature offering made with 45 ingredients, including five premium nuts such as pistachio, almonds, walnuts; seven superfoods;

nine medicinal plants, and 15 Ayurvedic herbs such as Indian Winter Cherry, Himalayan Marsh Orchid, Morning Glory and spices such as mace, nutmeg and garden cress seed. “It’s an age-old recipe with immense health benefits,” says Kinjal. Another popular option is the Royal Mélange, featuring five exquisite nuts and three superfoods. “It boasts a rich flavor and aroma, along with unique health benefits.” Both sweets are priced equally and are available individually or as an assorted gourmet box.

FUTURE HOLDS MORE

In future, the duo is keen to work on many more treasured recipes which are equally healthy but may have to be refined to be more palatable for the new generation. “Unlike our elders, people will not eat anything (as a regular diet), even if it has benefits unless it is also appealing to their taste buds,” says Kinjal.

Their gourmet sweets are crafted using pure *desi ghee*, milk and *khoa* with no artificial additives, sweeteners, or food coloring. As a not-for-profit initiative, 100% of Ziya’s proceeds go towards supporting a cause. ■ MANJU

Meal for two: A 16-bite-size sweet box is Rs 2,000, and a 9-bite-size box is Rs 750.

Financial District (address is shared with the customer after the order is placed)

Tel: 63033 68886

Timings: 11 am to 6 pm



WOW! DISCOVERS

Revisiting this classic Udupi restaurant that continues to rule the dosa and cutlet space in Hyderabad

Wah! Taj

Ask your granny her favorite restaurant in Hyderabad, and chances are she'll say it's the **Taj Mahal Hotel**, Abids. Prod her a bit and she will tell you that her first official treat from her own salary or the first date with her husband was here.

No relation to the iconic Taj group of hotels, but this Taj Mahal Hotel has its own proud 75-year culinary history, having started in 1942. Nestled in the bustling Abids area, inside a beautifully preserved ancestral Parsi building, this heritage hotel with 81 rooms is famous for its authentic Udupi fare. Founded by three friends—Babu Rao, Anand Rao, and Sundar Rao—the hotel blends traditional charm with modern amenities. While their branches in Jubilee Hills and Secunderabad are equally popular, nothing beats visiting this iconic white edifice and snapping a selfie with the vintage Bajaj Chetak scooter parked at the entrance.

Although their *Sampoorna Meals*



WOW!
Recommends
Mysore Masala
Dosa

(Udupi style with generous usage of grated coconut in dishes) are lunch and dinner bestsellers, the real stars are the Karnataka-style *Masala Dosa*, *Idli*, *Poori-Sagu* and *Mysore Bajji*. A lesser-known gem? Their cutlets, reminiscent of what you'd find on a train journey, served with a unique tomato sauce made in-house. Don't forget to order the filter coffee, a round-the-clock favorite served in steel tumblers—make sure to breathe in the foam before your first sip. ■ MANJU

Tip: *Want to enjoy that same filter coffee at home? You can buy their TMH Filter Coffee on Amazon. Check out their website for more.*

Meal for Two: Rs 500, Rs 326 for *Sampoorna South Indian Thali meals*

Abids Crossroads, General Post Office Road

Tel: 81210 22467

Timings: 7.30 am to 11.30 pm

Website: www.tmhgroup.in



QUICK BITES

What's New

ASIA ON MY PLATE

Makau at Jubilee Hills is elevating its culinary experience by showcasing the finest flavors from around the globe. The cafe has curated an international food festival that celebrates the best of world cuisine. If September was about American food, October would be an ode to Asian Food which brings together the best authentic Asian cuisine.

Tel: 89890 40451

BREWTFUL BREWS

Makobrew, Hyderabad's newest and largest café, opened in Himayat Nagar last month. Featuring a diverse global menu of vegetarian dishes and exceptional coffee. The café offers a variety of seating options, including a banquet hall, rooftop, indoor, and outdoor spaces. From Indian and Continental to Pan-Asian cuisine and South Indian *thalis*, and irresistible desserts, Makobrew has something for every palate.

Tel: 89770 39013

OKTOBERFEST IN CITY

Vault Microbrewery is celebrating Oktoberfest, the traditional German festival in Hyderabad till October 6. The show's star is Vault's special Märzen beer, a classic Oktoberfest style that originated in Bavaria that goes well with Bier Snacks, Wurst (sausage) dishes and a delightful Zwei Käse Pizza (Two Cheese Pizza). Indulge in Süßkartoffel-Käse-Kroketten (Fried Sweet-Potato & Emmenthal sticks) with spicy chilli dip and wrap it up with German Jam Doughnuts – soft, fluffy delights filled with delicious jam and dusted with icing sugar. ■ MANJU

Tel: 80080 80444



WOW!
Recommends
 Mumbai
 Cutting, Vada
 Pav and Bun
 Maska combo

Chai Pani Cafe is back with new vibes while preserving its original charm

Chai Time!

Reopened in July, the famous Jubilee Hills neighborhood café and hangout spot has returned with a larger selection of delectables, more breathing room, and trading its gray hues for brighter and more vibrant tones.

IN WITH THE OLD & THE NEW

Founder Kritin Agarwal first opened Chai Pani in 2017 inspired by cherished experiences at small neighborhood cafés in Australia. The cozy nook initially offered a limited menu with 99 varieties of *chai* alongside quick bites and was a spot thronged especially by collegegoers.

The original charm remains untouched. Despite the fresh spruce-up and additional bites on the menu to accommodate diverse tastes, Chai Pani's charm is still preserved and, might we add, elevated to a whole new level.

MONSOON AND CHAI

We enter Chai Pani on a cool monsoon afternoon. The revamp is the first thing that strikes us as we walk in. Roughly around 1,800 sq. ft., there is now more room to walk around on the ground floor and upstairs on the brand-new mezzanine floor, all covered in warm and inviting hues.

Additionally, like all good community cafés, the space houses games like Jenga, Uno, chess and Ludo among more. A small library will also be set up soon for customers to unwind with a book while sipping their hot cuppa *chai*.

THE DELECTABLES

We take a seat at a table indoors and place an order for Chai Pani's classic *Vada Pav*; the crispy *Chicken Pav*; the extremely soft *Bun Maska*; the creamy Jalapeno Cheese Poppers served with *tandoori* mayonnaise; the spicy Andhra Chicken Curry Rice Bowl, perfect for those who love homestyle chicken curries; the filling Smoky *Paneer* Sandwich and their must try *Haleem* Shots.

In beverages we ask for Marshmallow Hot Chocolate, perfect for the cool weather, and a regional specialty, the Mumbai Cutting *chai*, which pairs perfectly with the *Vada Pav* and the *Bun Maska*. ■ IPSHITA

Price: Rs 400 onwards

Plot No. 1293, Road No. 63, Jubilee Hills
 Tel: 98636 36301
 Timings: 7 am to 1 am

Home chef's decadent KitKat Brownies are a standout treat in the city

Bon petite

Sweet Petite started in November 2020 as a passion during the pandemic and it has since evolved into a thriving eggless home bakery. "The inspiration emerged from my deep-seated love for baking, which I explored during the lockdown. Transitioning from journalism to baking was as unexpected as it was fulfilling. However, baking cakes and cookies for friends and family during that time sparked a deep interest. The positive response and encouragement from loved ones led me to take the leap and turn my hobby into a business," says Ruchi Rai Sohni, a young home chef from Banjara Hills.

EGGLESS MAGIC

An eggless home bakery, it offers an array of desserts. "Small is beautiful. I operate from home and keeping it small provides my customers a personalized baking experience that a regular café, restaurant, or patisserie cannot offer," she says.

Ruchi is popular for baking rich brownies, cupcakes, cake tubs, cookies, chocolate-dipped strawberries, and a lot more. "We also create custom cakes and curate hampers for various occasions, from return favors and baby announcements to festive and invitation hampers," she adds.

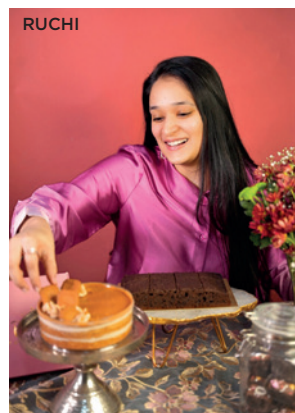
HOT FAVOURITES

Our favorite is their standout treat - KitKat Brownies known for their rich, fudgy texture and the KitKat adds an extra layer of chocolatey crunch. Her chocolate-dipped strawberries are equally popular, often booked several days in advance. "We source our strawberries from Mahabaleshwar and dip them in rich chocolate, creating a perfect blend of flavors and indulgence," she adds. ■ MANJU

Meal for Two: Rs 250 for Jar Cakes, Brownie Box at Rs 700, and custom Cakes at Rs 800

Sweet Petite, Gulmohar Avenue,
 Road No.12, Banjara Hills
 Tel: 62815 43017
 Timings: 10 am to 7.30 pm

WOW!
Recommends
 KitKat
 Brownies



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The Green Barbecue Buffet

WOW!
Recommends
Over-the-table
skewers of
pineapple and
paneer



Nestled in the heart of AS RAO Nagar in Secunderabad, **Mad Over Grills**, a popular chain in Ahmedabad, is now in Hyderabad. A place that is a vibrant celebration of flavors, textures, and aromas that will tantalize your taste buds. Imagine sinking your teeth into smoky, grilled vegetable skewers, perfectly charred and bursting with flavor, or savoring a delectable buffet. The buffet offers a colorful array of dishes, from zesty fresh pizzas and hearty Chinese fare to mouthwatering Indian grub that elevates the barbecue experience.

A casual dining place with a happy young vibe, Mad Over Grills thrives on the concept of "over the table barbecues" live grills embedded in dining tables and serve irresistible treats and the yummiest unlimited dining experiences, including *chaats*, main courses, desserts, mocktails and much more.

SPOILT FOR CHOICE

We were treated to almost all the 70-plus dishes included in the buffet with varieties like live barbecue over the table, salads, soups, starters, *chaat*, mocktails, pizzas, and main courses in North Indian, South Indian and Oriental. Finally, for desserts who can resist hot *Gulab Jamuns* and *Mohanthal* served piping hot! ■ SHRUTI

Meal for two: Rs 1,200

Plot no. 3 & 4, Fourth floor, Pakala Towers, A.S. Rao Nagar
Tel: 88855 54503

Timings: 11.45 am to 3 pm and 6.45 pm to 10.45 pm

Authentic diner offers delightful dishes in a lush ambience

SAVOR SERENITY!

Nestled in the heart of Jubilee Hills, **Beenz** – Authentic Diner relaunched on June 17. It offers a homely ambience and cuisine that complements the space's minimalistic tones and lush green surroundings. Serene and aesthetically rich, the diner is an ideal spot for all those who prefer a fine dining experience served with a well-needed side of peace and calm.

THE WALK IN

Beenz opens into a lavish courtyard bathed in warm sunlight and surrounded by outdoor seating. The indoor dining area is where daylight softly seeps in through large windows, livening up the space. We take a seat at a table which faces a second outdoor seating area, decked again in green foliage.

AN IRRESISTIBLE LINEUP

We start with appetizers that include the crispy and spicy *Palli Karam Tawa Fish* and the flavorful Cottage Cheese *Tikka Tacos*. The mains incorporate Prawn and *Keema Pulao*, a delicious one pot prawn and keema rice dish, complementing spicy Homemade Chicken Curry; and *Masala Kulcha* and *Naan* to go with the Veg *Diwani Handi*.

We paired the food with the Spiced Melon, a sweet drink served in a watermelon bowl; and excellent Magic of Black Currant, which includes black currant crush, lemon, passion fruit syrup, soda, sprite and mango slush.

We ended our meal with the perfectly made homestyle



WOW!
Recommends
Palli Karam
Tawa Fish



Bobbatlu - delicate, sweet-filled dumplings, a beloved south Indian dessert; and the classic *Gulab Jamun*, a perfect way to conclude any meal on high note. ■ IPSHITA

Meal for Two: Rs 1,500

Plot No. 127, Kavuri Hills, Road No. 44, Jubilee hills
Tel: 87126 38182

Timings: 12 pm to 10.30 pm

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WOW! checks out Hyderabad's New Hotspot for Authentic Mexican Cuisine

GO MEXICO

Mexarosa, is the latest destination for gourmands in the city to drop in. After a wave of Italian and Continental restaurants making their mark, this 2,650 sq. ft. space serves delish Mexican food, which hopefully is the start of a new trend.

Started by Aditya and Sripriya Reddy, the vibrant interiors are delightfully eclectic, exuding a relaxed vibe. The interiors are done up by Sripriya Reddy studios and inject a flair of fun to an evening out. Right from the quirky paintings to the colorful palette used, everything transports one to Mexico.

A FUSION OF TASTES

Start with the tried and tested, Mexican speciality - Guacamole and chips which are already a fan favorite. The stone ground guac is freshly made and hits the right notes. The Mexarosa Prawn Fiesta which is served with a fiery hot sauce is a great option for non-vegetarians.

Say Mexican and can tacos be left behind? Try the Fried Avocado which is a sinful burst of flavors and gets our vote at the first bite. The Lamb Birria which is made from five hour slow cooked lamb and spices, it is as good as a dish can get.

While the spice palate of most dishes is just about right, the restaurant has special sauce for those who are used to Hyderabad *biryani*! Our pick is the Habanero sauce which is spicy with a smoky flavor.

BURST OF FLAVORS

For the main course, try the Quesadilla or you can opt for the stuffed bell peppers with rice which is made with the Poblano sauce consisting of 27 different ingredients. The Chicken Enchiladas are another excellent main course option which are rich and filling.



WOW!
Recommends
Quesadilla

For dessert look no further than Tres Leches or Churros, both will ensure your meal ends on a high! There are a range of drinks available and our pick includes the Mescal based Escondido or the Tequila based Estrella. There are other tipples too that cater to a wide variety of tastes.

Open for dinner only until further notice, Mexarosa is adding a different dimension to the dining out scene in town. It is little wonder that just a week in, the restaurant is packed with food loving Hyderabadi! ■ MALLIK

Meal for two: Rs 3,500

First floor, Taro building, Road No. 10, Jubilee Hills
Tel: 70754 66760
Timings: 7 pm to 11.30 pm (Mon-Thu, Sun)
and 7 pm to 12.30 am (Fri-Sat)



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WOW!
Recommends:
Krithi's
Mermaid
Skirt



Gaurav Gupta Couture launches expanded bridal atelier in the city, new line takes center stage

Sculpting Dreams

Gaurav Gupta Couture unveiled its expanded bridal atelier in Hyderabad last month, with a 3,500 sq. ft. showroom in the heart of Banjara Hills. To celebrate this milestone, the ace designer held an exclusive showcase that witnessed the Arunodaya collection's debut from India Couture Week. The event culminated with actor Krithi Shetty as the showstopper. The expanded atelier offers an elevated couture experience and presents an exquisite range of designs.

QUINTESSENTIAL GG

Arunodaya signifies the early dawn, derived from the Sanskrit words 'Arun' meaning dawn, and 'Udaya' meaning rise or daybreak. "This captivating phenomenon, where the first light of day breaks the darkness, is the essence of the collection," Gaurav explained. Arunodaya embodies the mystical transformation of night into day, symbolizing hope, renewal, and the infinite possibilities that come with each new beginning.

EMBROIDERY 2.0

At the showcase, Krithi donned a fitted mermaid skirt and a halter blouse, paired with a shoulder cape. Her mesmerizing *Bordeaux* ensemble was adorned with intricate refraction embroidery. Couturier Gaurav Gupta said "The expansion of our bridal atelier in Hyderabad marks an exciting milestone as we strengthen our connection with the South Indian market. The new space allows us to showcase a broader range of our couture collections and offer an elevated experience to clients in the region."

■ MANJU

Price: On request

Ground floor, 8, Mahmood Habib Plaza,
 2-584, Road No. 9, Vimal Nagar,
 Zahara Nagar, Banjara Hills
Tel: 95506 12200
Timings: 11 am to 8 pm

QUICK TAKE

ACE DESIGNER GAURAV GUPTA GIVES US INSIGHTS INTO THE TRENDS THIS SEASON

What are you giving Hyderabad brides this season?

Lehengas, gowns, saree gowns and everything else the girls have been consuming, but newer versions. The collection is ideal for cocktails, receptions and weddings. Previously we used to do more cocktail and reception couture, but this time the focus is on bridal *lehengas*.

What are the trending colors at GG's?

Gold, red, electric blue and of course the quintessential Gaurav Gupta Lava Red. The wine color is also a hot pick this season.

What's new in your bridal collection?

Classic *lehengas* with new embroidery with unusual floral, abstract and meteoric lines. I have those who love classics and heavy *lehengas* and those who love simpler, cooler and forward-looking gowns for various occasions of their big day. I've had customers who came to buy a *lehenga* but went back with a gown as they fell in love with it.

What's your take on the 'repeat your clothes' statement by celeb fashion icons?

Slow fashion is good for the planet and we at Gaurav Gupta Couture practice being eco-friendly. We use landfill plastic for our packaging. Sustainability is part of our ethos and I support that practice.

Explore the Understated Elegance and Fusion of Classic Craftsmanship and Contemporary Style

Embracing Tradition and Modernity



WOW!
Recommends:
Houndstooth
Double Ikat
Sari and
Blouse

Masters of minimalism, designers David Abraham, Rakesh Thakore and Kevin Nigli swung open the latest flagship store of **Abraham & Thakore** in September, introducing their understated aesthetic which celebrates the marriage between tradition and modernity.

Designed by Saurabh Dakshini of Studio Organon, the store's design imbues its use of the iconic black-and-white palette. The geometric layouts and grids blend style with structure, while the flooring pays homage to retro aesthetics with modern Terrazzo designs.

GROUNDNED AESTHETIC

The creations here are not meant for a single big occasion, instead as the label suggests, it is for, "all the days you are not getting married."

Spanning 1,093 sq. ft., the store houses minimal wear and subdued bling with a stunning lineup of sarees, co-ord sets, dresses, shirts, pants, jackets, *kurta* sets among more. The

thoughtful use of chanderi, cotton, silk, organza, *zari*, the beloved *ikat* and *kantha* work coupled with symbols, colors and irregular shapes elevate the versatile A&T pieces to a whole new level.

The latest Autumn/Winter collection *Parallel Universe* incorporates fabrics such as soft silks, crinkled seersucker, and fluid chanderi adorned with motifs that evoke a sense of time travel.

Additionally, the store has showcased A&T's home collection. From luxurious *tussar* bed linens adorned with *ikat* and *kantha* crafts to porcelain bowls with *bandhani* designs, they offer a diverse collection that not only blends traditional craftsmanship with modern elegance but reflects the brand's commitment to creating timeless products. ■ IPSHITA

Price: On Request

Ground floor, Shop No. 7, Signature Tower, Road No. 1, Banjara Hills
Tel: 86869 98660

Timings: 11 am to 9 pm

Q&A

Q: One line about Hyderabad?

Abraham & Thakore: Culturally lively city that's always on the move.

Q: Can you talk about your first collection that focused on sustainable fashion in 1992?

Abraham & Thakore: We prefer the word responsibility to sustainability. Our first was the *Kantha* collection. We started talking about it because we were studying *Kantha* from West Bengal. The story is about people who took old sarees, shawls, and fabrics they could not use, and patched, stitched, and layered them together to make warm blankets or shawls for their babies. Suddenly, you realize this has been going on for centuries and in a sense, we have always been recycling. That began our whole investigation, and we did a collection around it completely.

Q: For this festive season, what kind of pieces would you recommend from your label?

Abraham & Thakore: Subdued bling.

Kevin Nigli: The limited edition black and white *ikat* jacket. It took six months to work on, and we actually wove only 100 meters.



Opened in Hyderabad this year, the iconic **OH** is not to be skipped

BOLD, SEXY & EDGY

Daring meets cutting-edge at Delhi-based **Outhouse Jewellery**. It is considered to be the 'IT' jewelry label of the moment despite being established over a decade ago. This can be attributed to the vision of its founders, sister-duo Kaabia and Sasha Grewal, who infused Outhouse with a personality of its own. Iconic in every way, the OH monogram is difficult to miss.

HOW IT BEGAN

Fashion has always played a prominent role, and their mother was the first influence, who introduced them to her jeweler, igniting their love for all things sparkly. "We were scoring A's as art students and were swift doodlers. Soon we had our degrees in gemstones and

diamond grading and were off to get our first jobs in the design world," the Grewal sisters shared.

After completing her degree, Sasha designed jewelry for high-street brands like Topshop and River Island, while Kaabia pursued Gemology at GIA, New York, and interned with Edie Borgo. Their shared passion for jewelry and creativity led them to establish Outhouse Jewellery in 2012.

OUR OUTHOUSE VISIT

Outhouse opened its sixth store in Hyderabad in February 2024. Spanning 1,000 sq. ft., it houses a dazzling selection of jewelry, and versatile handbags crafted from vegan leather.

We were most enamored with the iconic *Crystal Furbie*, the colorful *Raffia Bag*, the exquisitely handcrafted *Pico Minaudière Couture Bag*, the *Faena Couture Grande Earrings*, the *Jeweled Leather Glovelettes*, the *OH Celeste Orion Nova Stud Drop Earrings*, the entire *Drip OH* collection and the *Libra Charm Necklace* from the latest collection *Zodiac*. ■ IPSHITA

Price: Rs 15,000 onwards

The Hill Top @7, Resham Bagh, Road No. 7, Banjara Hills

Tel: 96501 68748

Timings: 11 am to 8 pm



WOW!
Recommends:
The Libra
Charm
Necklace

WOW! converses with Kaabia and Sasha Grewal

Q: What has been a career highlight for you so far?

A: Being listed in Forbes 30 Under 30, winning the Vogue Fashion Fund, our first show, and, notably, our first store launch. Opening the store was an audacious decision, met with skepticism. Despite that, we opened our first store in The Chanakya, New Delhi.

Q: Your favorite fashion trend?

A: We'd go for 'Statement' – it's always in style.

Q: Pieces you would recommend from your collection for this festive season?

A: For women, we recommend the *Le Palm Fish Velvet Choker* in jade green. It pairs beautifully with both Western and Indian outfits. Complete the look with our newly launched *Ombré Pink Pico* handbag. For men, the *Poppi Bolt Handcuff Bracelet* and *OH Poppi Pendant* in Gunmetal are versatile choices that work perfectly across all seasons.







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 gaurangskitchen |  gaurangskitchen

shopping

WOW!
Recommends:
 Wine kurta
 collection

Tasva's New Store Redefines Men's Fashion for Special Occasions and Celebrations

Step into Style

The otherwise quiet Himayatnagar experienced a burst of action last month when actor Naga Chaitanya, to-be-groom of actor Sobhita Dhulipala, descended on the streets with his *baraat*. The Akkineni boy was the apt choice to launch the *baraat*-ready store Tasva.

Launched by Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail Limited in collaboration with ace couturier Tarun Tahiliani, the 4,823 sq. ft. store positions itself as the ultimate destination for men's fashion, just in time for the festive and wedding season!

The three-floor store done in earthy wood and brass with contemporary aesthetics draws inspiration from India's history and heritage. The designer wear is arranged in a visually stunning ombre cascade. We especially loved the wine collection of *kurtas* in various shades, looking elegant and macho. The floor with Indo-Western blazers has matching brooches while the one housing *kurtas* has matching bracelets and *juttis*. ■ MANJU

Price: Rs 5,000 onwards

Door No. 3/6, Commercial Complex, 238/1, AP State Housing Board, Himayatnagar

Tel No.: 88799 74973

Timings: 11 am to 9 pm

Tarun's Take

What the store offers

The festive collection features stunning *kurta* sets and *kurta bundi* sets with screen prints and modern silhouettes that bring a fresh twist to traditional attire. The wedding collection offers luxurious *sherwanis*, *achkans* and the innovative *Angrakha sherwani*, crafted from opulent fabrics and detailed with intricate embroidery work.

Tarun about the city

Hyderabad's rich cultural heritage and love for tradition resonate deeply with Tasva's design philosophy. The Hyderabad store is a celebration of this connection, offering a curated collection that honors the past while embracing the future of men's fashion.



WOW!
Recommends:
 Tamannaah
 Bhatia's
 sparkling
 deep-purple
 bodycon

Nature-Inspired Elegance in Every Handcrafted Design!

Hyderabad-inspired couture

The latest buzz in Hyderabad's fashion scene? Rahul Mishra's stunning flagship store is firmly in the spotlight. Even before its grand opening last month, the designer was well-known among the city's A-listers, with Tamannaah Bhatia frequently seen in his ethereal creations. And who could forget when global sensation Zendaya dazzled at the NMACC launch in Mumbai, draped in a mesmerizing Rahul Mishra saree! It was only a matter of time before this couture genius opened his doors in Hyderabad.

NATURE INSPIRED

Spread across a sprawling 5,000 sq. ft., the space is a visual marvel, conceived by design guru Amith Chhabra. Drawing inspiration from the iconic prehistoric rock formations of Hyderabad, the store reflects Mishra's AEFW (Air, Earth, Fire, Water) ethos, making it more than just a fashion destination – it's an ode to nature and the city's rich heritage. On launch day, young style star Niharika Konidela set the red carpet ablaze in a custom Rahul Mishra, giving the showroom an immediate stamp of approval.

DELICATE AND DRAMATIC

Known for his intricate floral hand-painted designs, Rahul Mishra's creations blend the delicate with the dramatic. Whether it's a sharply tailored *bandhgala* or a figure-hugging bodycon, the signature floral embroidery is a constant, adding a dreamy, romantic touch to each piece. "The opulence of Hyderabad inspires the stones I use," he shares. Expect a bold color palette paired with his signature, nature-inspired sensibilities. ■ MANJU

Price: On request

Ground Floor, Sattva Signature Tower, Road No. 1, Banjara Hills

Tel: 93267 88526

Timings: 11 am to 8 pm



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Blending love and creativity, Esshitha Guna curates' rings and bracelets that reflect a personalized, unique touch

Custom creations for modern romantics

Esshitha Guna, Founder and Creative Director of **Andal Gems & Jewels**, a lawyer turned gemologist is always on point when it comes to her exclusive and innovative designs in jewelry. Known for her unique pieces, Esshitha first caught the spotlight with a stunning custom Toi Et Moi ring for actor Aditi Rao Hydari and a super bespoke band ring for Siddharth for their engagement in March. However, it's her line of engagement rings that truly embody her flair for reinvention and creativity.

RINGS FOR LOVE

A certified gemologist from New York, Esshitha launched Andal just 21 months ago, drawing inspiration from her father VR Gunashekhar who's a master in Diamond jewellery, Gunaas Diamonds, which shares the same space in Jubilee Hills. 'For someone who loves love stories, this turned out beautifully to be my true calling' she says. Each ring is crafted with passion and care as the emotions they symbolize. Esshitha notes that couples are now spending quality time curating engagement rings, often customizing them to reflect their unique love stories.

BREAKING RING BARRIERS

"Rings are no longer just round," she says, with oval and pear shapes quickly rising in popularity. Apart from Engagement jewelry, her line of eternity rings especially in Rainbow hues featuring delicately set colored stones, is also a major trend this season.

With a packed November and December wedding season ahead, Esshitha is excited about her showstoppers, and her heart lies in Andal's new range of Spiral bracelets and delicate pendants, perfect for date nights, evening wear, or holiday looks. The Holiday Collection also flaunts timeless cuff bracelets and eternity rings in amethyst, blue topaz and more.

BRACELETS AND PENDANTS

Despite the great success of her engagement rings when it comes to what she really loves, her heart lies in Andal's new range of tennis bracelets and delicate spiral pendants. They are perfect for date nights, evening wear, or holiday looks. The Holiday Collection also flaunts timeless cuff bracelets and eternity rings in Amethyst, Topaz and rose gold.

With her sights set on the future, Esshitha dreams of opening a store in New York, solidifying Andal's place as a global brand.

■ MANJU

Price: Rs 62,000 onwards

**Andal Gems & Jewels, 2nd Floor, Gunaas,
Shop No-8-2, Road No. 45, Jubilee Hills
Tel: 95500 07619
Timings: 11 am to 7 pm, closed on Sundays**

Where Tradition Meets Elegance in Every Piece

Elevate Your Destination Wedding with Exquisite Silver Jewelry

WOW!
Recommends:
The Garden
Collection



WOW! checks out the latest collection at **Kilangi**. Ravendra Rathi, a mechanical engineer turned jewelry designer, is the creative force behind the brand. “Unlike gold jewelry, silver pieces often lack the same level of design and craftsmanship. Kilangi aims to fill this gap by offering a well-designed range of silver jewelry that stands out for its elegance and quality” he says. The brand specializes in silver jewelry adorned with the highest quality gemstones and plating. Their handmade creations are designed to rival gold jewelry in terms of look and feel, making them a great choice for destination weddings and travel.

THE COLLECTION

Kilangi offers a stunning array of jewelry pieces, meticulously crafted in silver and embellished with gemstones like moissanites, CZ, petals, corals, tanzanite, and other semi-precious stones. They also work with natural and lab-grown stones on order. Each piece is designed with a focus on hand setting, ensuring a superior appeal and longevity compared to closed or wax settings.

TRENDS AND STYLES

Kilangi is particularly known for its fusion pieces, combining elements like diamond and *polki* with traditional temple designs. “We pay close attention to the details of the face and figure of the deity when crafting temple jewelry” stresses Ravendra. The craftsmanship is evident in the *nakkashi* work on the goddess Laxmi pendant with water filler green beads and petals along with stuffed CZ stones on a gold polish finish. The garden party sets, inspired by a lack of color in

traditional gold jewelry, bring a vibrant and fresh look to any occasion and are perfect for tea soirees and brunches. We loved the exquisite nature inspired necklace set from this collection, made with 92.5 silver and plated with 24k gold. The piece is adorned with natural precious stones like tanzanite, tourmalines and Burmese freshwater pearls that add a subtle, celestial elegance.

CUSTOMIZATION AND PERSONALIZATION

Understanding the importance of personalization, Kilangi offers bespoke services to create jewelry that perfectly matches the theme and outfits of wedding functions. You can collaborate with the team to select materials, gemstones, and designs that reflect your vision, ensuring each piece is unique and special to match your outfit. If you like versatile pieces, check out the stunning chokers that double up as bracelets.

STAY TRENDY

Kilangi also provides a buyback option, allowing patrons to update their collections and stay in tune with the latest trends. This service ensures that clients can continually refresh their jewelry wardrobe, making it a sustainable and stylish choice for those who enjoy variety and novelty. ■ SUPRIYA

Price: Rs 4,000 onwards

5-9-30/1/4/2 near Secretariat, Basheer Bagh

Tel: 89771 67777

Timings: 11 am to 8 pm

Website: www.kilangi.in

Take things up a notch with these bespoke statement handmade bindis

Ready to Embrace Your Inner Goddess?



Founded in 2022, Bengaluru-based **The Bindi Project** offers sustainable statement handmade bindis (can also be statement accessories or pieces of jewelry) for the extraordinary woman who does not fear to express herself boldly.

"These are bindis which have been created for the 'too much' woman. The wild woman. The woman who is ready to embrace her inner goddess," explains Meghna Khanna, Stylist and Personal Brand Consultant, the Co-founder of The Preloved Co. and creator of The Bindi Project.

SETTING THE BALL ROLLING

Conversations with women across the country about gold bindis and their reuse on special occasions played a pivotal role in Meghna taking the idea forward. "Even I did not know that there was actually a bindi glue that could be used to create these bindis and that they could be reusable. And now with every bindi that I sell, I also give out a glue that goes with it," shares the Hyderabad-born entrepreneur who also started a store called Levitate at the age of 23.

Inspired by her conversations with these women, Meghna found herself being led down the path to sustainability and eventually to The Bindi Project that has so far held three pop ups in Hyderabad and 20 across the country.

THE STATEMENT BINDIS

Created with felt base, leather base and studded with semi-precious stones and hand-cut brass, make these colorful accessories one of a kind. They come in various sizes and are versatile and can be styled with almost anything. For instance, they can be worn with ripped jeans and can also be highlighted creatively over your hands, nose, cheeks, around your eyes, etc. Furthermore, these bindis transcend gender norms and can be donned by men as well.

Inspired by the names of goddesses, the collections, *Amaani*, *Ruhaani*, *Devyani* and *Kalyani* are just a few among many showcased elegantly across The Bindi Project's Instagram page. *Ishani* is the latest, it includes 10mm diameter bindis and is just in time for the festive season.

Also displayed on Instagram, you will find prominent figures like the celebrated singer Usha Uthup, well known to rock beautiful large bindis, wearing one of Meghna's special handmade bindis and declaring her love for it. "I think she is the best brand ambassador for my bindis," says Meghna. "I sent them to her as a gift through my friends, and so sweetly she sent a video out thanking me for it. We had a video call; I was nearly in tears. She is amazing, such a humble, gentle and beautiful soul," Meghna shares reflecting on the unique experience. ■ IPSHITA

Price: Rs 1,000 onwards
www.bindiproject.org

Three gifting services in the city that create thoughtful and innovative festive gift boxes that create an impression

Of vegan baskets and gold coin hampers



THE GIFTING BOX

The Gifting Box offers luxury gifting options such as silver-plated boxes, silver-plated frames, luxury hamper boxes, ceramic trinket boxes, healthy, sugar-free bites. They make exclusive baskets, boxes and bags in vegan leather and suede and premium containers. Options include quilted mini fabric baskets with bath products, baby essentials or desk accessories and ceramic jars. They can be an elegant and functional addition to home organization. "We believe that when you give a gift to someone, they should be able to retain it for some time. Hence the products are sustainable and reusable," says Jayavarduni.

Price: Rs 2,500 onwards
Tel: 88891 91888

GRACIOUS WRAPPERS

Friends and homepreneurs from Begumpet, Komal and Vidhi are known for their passion for putting together goodies. As 'Gracious Wrappers', they create adorable gift boxes for the festive season. From chocolates, dry fruits,

cookies and teacakes packed in colorful *potlis* to putting together an extravagant gold coin platter for Diwali, their gifting ranges from extravagance to decadence.

Price: Rs 4,000 onwards
Tel: 81791 61616

BETWEEN BOXES.IN

They give buyers multiple options to choose from. However, their most popular one, loved by corporates, is a leather gift basket. It comprises luxury copper pink glasses, lotus-shaped tea light holder, premium essential oil, *kaju katli* bar, ceramic pottery *diya*, and special Diwali greeting card. Their 'The Happy Diwali Box' also comes with a customized logo, if needed. For those who love something quirkier, they can put together gourmet coffee blends, copper hydration bottles, planters, aromatic *dhoop* sticks and more.

■ MANJU

Price: On request
Tel: 72909 93322



HOW HYDERABAD HAS LEVELLED UP ON THE FITNESS GAME WITH AI-enabled slick new exercise regimes to sport a new and fitter image

MANJU LATHA KALANIDHI

FITNESS

3.0

Pickleball, Muay Thai,
and DJ-Powered Workouts



PANACHA DOING A DUMBBELL WORKOUT AT VYBACTIVE

MODEL: PANACHA AGARWAL
PHOTOGRAPHY: STUDIO CAPTURELIFE
LOCATION: VYBACTIVE, HITEC CITY
STYLING AND CLOTHES: ADITI REDDY
MAKEUP AND HAIR: ALEXANDER HAIR
AND BEAUTY LOUNGE

2024 seems to be the year when Hyderabad embarked on the fitness wagon. Shrugging off the label of being a 'laidback city,' it now rides the fitness wave with a vengeance. The regular walk in the park is so passé. Now, fitness is powered by science, driven by data and enabled by AI. Hyderabad, which takes pride in opening a new cafe or a pub every weekend, has been witnessing the opening of world-class fitness centres every other month.

Pause for a minute to soak in these new-age fitness terms: Multidrive technology, smartphone guidance, performance monitoring and tracking, onboard video-guided routines, quick pad, speed-shift and what have you!

From Muay Thai, a dynamic martial art and combat sport that translates to Thai boxing and Spinning Classes to SkillRun that replicates the workout experience of a sand walk you took last December at Baga Beach in Goa (the data of which was captured by your Apple Watch), fitness is more dynamic than ever. The city's gyms are evolving into wellness playgrounds, offering purpose-driven sessions, hyper-personalized programs and even hosting workout parties for fitness enthusiasts. Plus, not everything is all workout and no play, there are new-age gyms that are going all out to have gaming arenas including the super fun Pickleball.

We dive into this trend by talking to fitness icons, gym owners, trainers, nutritionists, and celebrities to uncover how Hyderabad is shaping-up for a healthier, fitter future.

CONCERNING STATS

A study in The Lancet Global Health highlighted that nearly 50% of Indian adults are physically inactive, posing severe health risks. The study shows a significant rise in inactivity from 2000 to 2022, with women being more affected than men. Doctors attribute this to sedentary office work and poor diets. The lack of physical activity increases the risk of cardiovascular diseases, cancers, and psychological issues.



NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK

VybActive

Conceptualized as a fitness club, VybActive is all about nurturing a community where health and quality of life thrive through innovative fitness programs, wellness services, and recreational activities. Vyb up, tribe up, fuel up is their credo. The 50,000 sq. ft. fitness club, touted to be the biggest in India now, has the latest equipment and curates personalized programs for your wellness journey.

WHAT'S IT ABOUT

VybActive is positioned as something more than a fitness club - a lifestyle movement. "Elevate your fitness journey with our top-tier trainers, state-of-the-art facilities, and flexible online programs," say the founders, Abhishek Maharaju, a first-generation serial entrepreneur; Panacha Agarwal, a banker turned fitness icon and Sridhar Bollam, a seasoned entrepreneur.

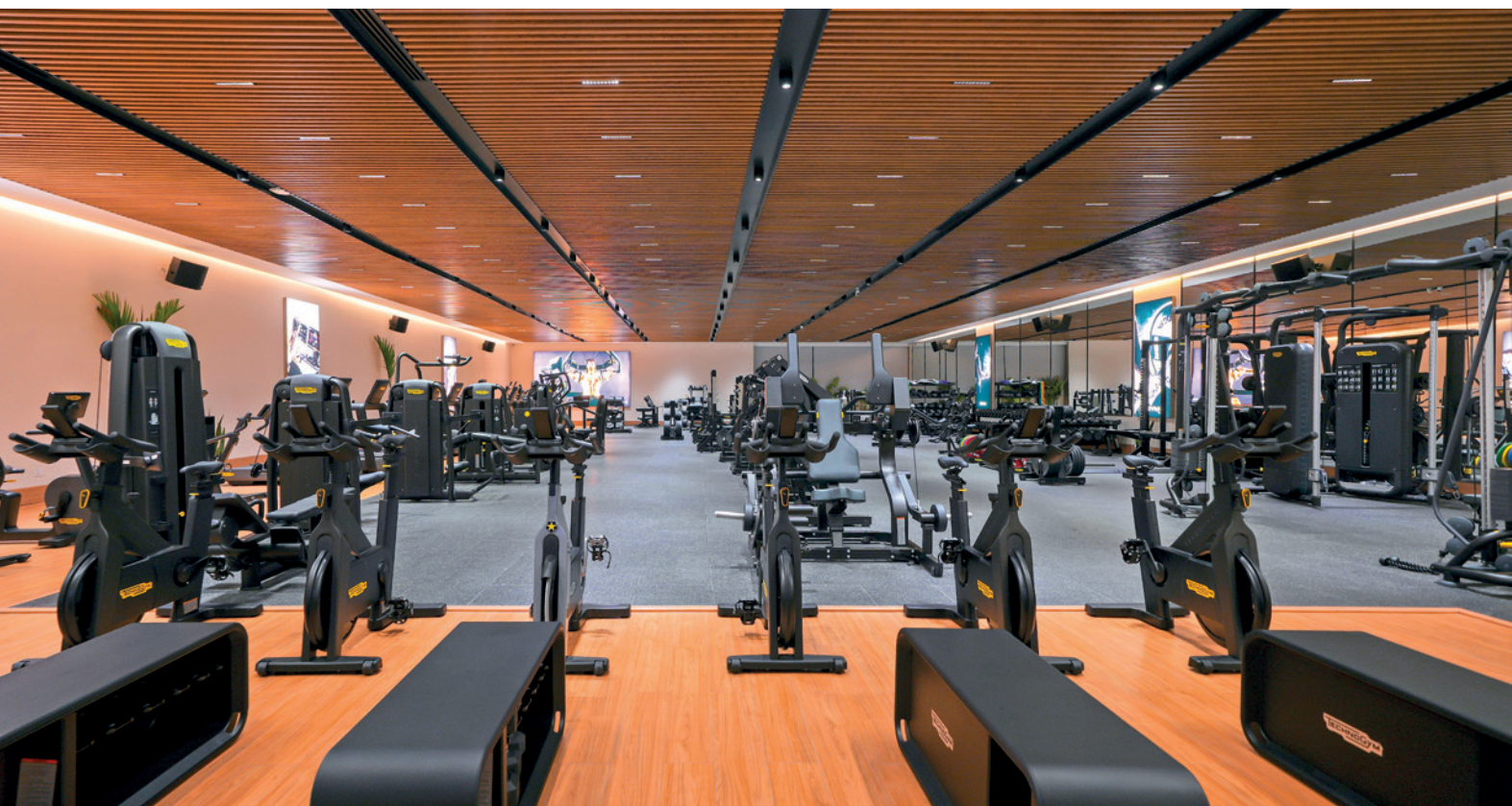
"We wanted to create a space where fitness and wellness are seamlessly integrated, offering a holistic approach to health," says Abhishek. "We believe in the power of community and the importance of a balanced lifestyle along with access to the best-in-trend programs and facilities that are the norm worldwide," says Panacha. Patrons can even get their kids and their parents and both demographics can find their kind of fitness programs. Panacha also talks of hosting wellness retreats with the fit community where holidays leave them rejuvenated, not so tired that they need another weekend to recuperate. They aim to touch 100 with their members to keep it premium and exclusive.

HOW DIFFERENT IS IT:

- **App integration:** A user-friendly app to track progress, schedule classes and stay connected with the community.
- **Running track:** A dedicated running track for enthusiasts to train and improve their endurance.
- **Pickleball court:** For fun and competitive play.
- **Spinning studio:** High-energy spinning classes designed to boost cardiovascular fitness.
- **DJ console:** Live DJ sessions to keep the energy high during workouts.
- **Cafe:** Post-workout meals judiciously curated, balanced nutritious meals and beverages at their in-house Cafe
- **Vyb PlayWith facilities:** A fast-paced game of Basketball, Badminton or Futsal.

Membership: Rs 2 lakh per annum

VybActive, Gate 6, Elixir Tower, Level 2 & 3,
Knowledge City Rd, Madhapur
Website: www.vybbactive.in



IGYM

“While Hyderabad is renowned for its culinary delights, there’s a growing shift towards fitness and wellness. Our research involved analysing market trends, surveying local fitness enthusiasts, and observing the increasing demand for premium fitness facilities. We found that many people are now prioritizing their health and seeking high-quality, personalized fitness experiences, which led us to establish IGYM,” says IGYM founder and CEO Vamshi Reddy,

WHAT’S IT ABOUT

IGYM opened its doors in June 2024 and the gym takes pride in housing Technogym equipment, a mark of premium luxury. “We have more equipment than what Palm Jumeirah in Dubai has,” says Vamshi. The inspiration behind IGYM was to create a fitness sanctuary that goes beyond traditional gym offerings. Technogym is a global leader in fitness equipment, known for its innovation and quality. “Our Technogym machines offer a seamless and effective workout experience, with features like personalized training programs and real-time performance tracking. Hyderabad fitness enthusiasts will appreciate the precision, comfort, and results that come with using Technogym equipment. The equipment records your performance, gives real time data, compares you to how you were a month ago, suggests workout, gives you tasks and what not.” Vamshi says that “their app can even prevent you from exercising that day because it tracks down your sleep and if you partied too hard and got just three hours of sleep, we ask you to go home without a workout,” he explains.

Workouts here begin with tapping your Apple Watch on the scanner in the equipment and your workout history unfolds

within seconds. You know when you worked hard and pushed yourself and when you slacked off.

HOW DIFFERENT IS IT:

They have the following equipment that nobody in the city has

- **Skill run:** This treadmill is designed for both cardio and power training, offering features like biofeedback, sled training, and parachute resistance. Simply put, if you remember doing a mountain trail in Yosemite National Park in California, this equipment can recreate the same experience in terms of workout.
- **Bio-Strength Line:** The patented Biodrive system uses revolutionary aerospace technology powered by AI, to ensure maximum neuromuscular activation as well as correct exercise setting and execution. Personalized training programs and full guidance through biofeedback bring +30% results at the same time.
- **Kinesis Station:** These machines allow for 360° movement, providing a full-body workout that improves strength, flexibility, and balance.
- **Unity Line:** This range includes cardio, strength, and functional equipment, all connected to the cloud for personalized training experiences. Effective workouts for all kinds of users. Sleek lines and connectivity. Perfectly tuned biomechanics. The new generation of sectorized equipment for strength training is here, visual feedback translates into effective workouts.

Membership: Starts at Rs. 36,000 per month

IGYM, beside SK Car Lounge, Diamond Hills,
Lumbini Avenue, Gachibowli
Tel: 94546 94546



FUNCTIONAL FITNESS

ACTIVITY - WHERE IT'S AVAILABLE
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MUAY THAI: ORANGETHEORY FITNESS
DJ-POWERED WORKOUTS: VYBACTIV
PICKLEBALL: THE LEAGUE
SKILLRUN: IGYM



STANDING PILATES



PURE FUEL YOGA ZONE

Founder Aamani Reddy, a yogini herself, started this yoga zone in June and she believes that Yoga has levelled up. “We support our community through yoga, body-weight movements, mindfulness techniques and practices, individual & group health and wellness consultation programs and healthy bites for nourishment,” she says.

WHAT’S IT ABOUT

Pure Fuel conducts Goddess Yoga classes, a women-only practice that empowers and nurtures women of all backgrounds through yoga. Tailored to honor the unique strengths and rhythms of the female body, each session combines flowing movements, breathwork, and mindfulness to enhance physical and emotional well-being.

HOW DIFFERENT IS IT:

“Whether you’re seeking to relieve stress, improve flexibility, or simply take time for yourself, Goddess Yoga helps you embrace your inner goddess and flourish on and off the mat,” she adds. Their Restorative Yoga classes are for those going through trauma -- physical or mental and want to reconnect with their body, restore their energy, and find inner peace.

Membership: Five sessions at Rs 1,000 as part of launch offer

Pure Fuel, Ground floor, Saadath Plaza, Road No. 12, Banjara Hills
Tel: 92910 92910



STUDIO ANANTA

Studio Ananta calls itself a fitness lounge that also invests in building a vibrant wellness community with offerings ranging from —Yoga, Aerial Yoga, Barre, and Pilates— ideal for everyone, from newcomers taking their first steps to seasoned athletes pushing their limits.

WHAT’S IT ABOUT

“We’re especially excited about our new pre-natal yoga classes, designed to support expectant mothers in nurturing their bodies and minds during this beautiful journey. It is a welcoming space where you can connect with others and find strength in community,” says co-founder Sravanthi Gumma.

HOW DIFFERENT IS IT:

Besides musculoskeletal and sports physiotherapy programs that ensure patrons recover effectively and stay injury-free, they also bridge the gap between rehabilitation and peak performance. “As we gear up to launch our juice bar, offering vibrant smoothies and nourishing bowls, we’re thrilled to complement your wellness journey with delicious nutrition,” says Sravanthi.

Membership: On request

Studio Ananta, Sai Vaibhav Layout, Sai Aishwarya Layout, Chitrapuri Colony, Khajaguda
Tel: 91578 93030





THE LEAGUE

This fitness club with focus on a gaming arena believes that all play and no workout can make you fit too. Well, they do have workout zones, but their gaming arena with all the top games from football to Pickleball and basketball is where the fun is.

Membership: Starts at Rs 1,000 per hour for Pickleball

*The League, ISB Road, Financial District, Pappalguda
Tel: 70952 56789*



TREND TRACKER: FROM BMR TO TDEE

Prem Kumar Chary, a Master fitness trainer with certifications in Kettlebell and Battle Rope with the last few years in Sydney, says that ever since he came to Hyderabad a few months ago, he has found that fitness enthusiasts are in an experimental mode and want to try out new trends in gym equipment. "Even three years ago, only actors, models or athletes were into advanced workouts. Today, even a startup entrepreneur wants to develop a ripped look. Fitness in the new feel-good factor in life and there are so many choices to do it. Previously, they used to ask me about BMR (Basal Metabolic Rate). Today my clients asked me about TDEE (Total Daily Energy Expenditure). That is the mindset change I have noticed in Hyderabad," he explains.



FITNESS INSPO RIGHT IN THE CITY

Hyderabad has its own set of inspiring fitness icons - actors Samantha Ruth Prabhu, Rakul Preet, actor-producer Lakshmi Manchu, and model-entrepreneur Shilpa Reddy. While they continue to motivate us with their workout rules, we also found rising stars who are upping the game when it comes to fitness.

CELEB TALK

'Don't perceive diet as a punishment'

Samyuktha Menon, Actor

WHEN DID YOU START YOUR FITNESS JOURNEY.

After my 12th standard, I started going to the gym seriously. Initially, I followed crash diets or starved myself, unaware of the difference between fat loss and muscle loss. I mistakenly believed that being lean equated to being healthy. My fitness journey has different phases, but my dedication and commitment remain consistent.

WHAT KIND OF FITNESS REGIME DO YOU FOLLOW?

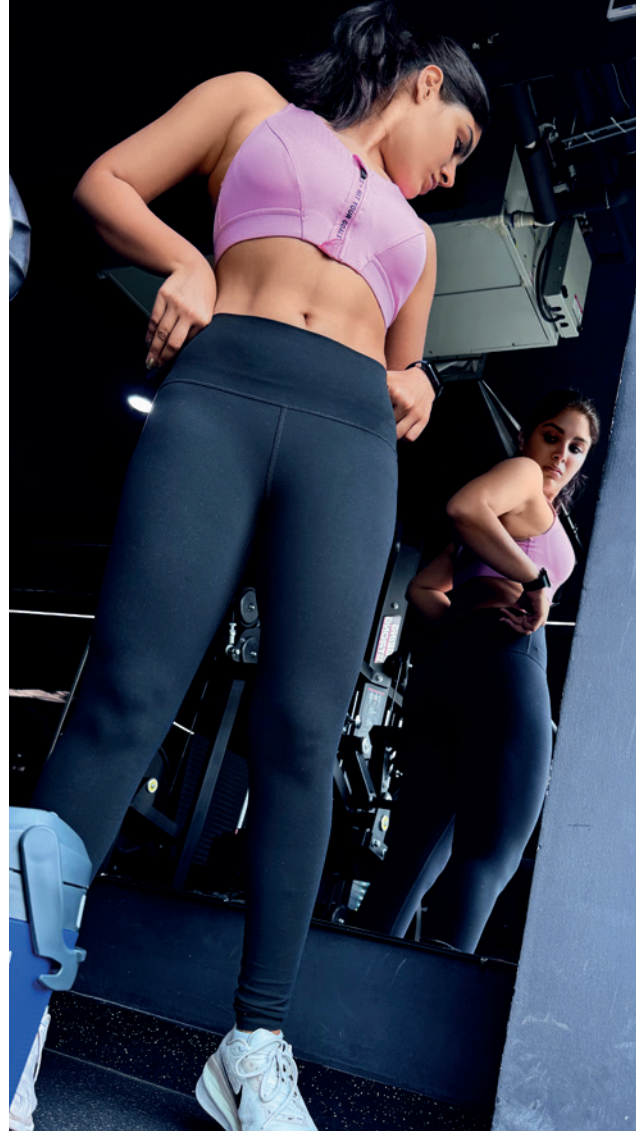
I work out five days a week, and my routine varies depending on my shooting schedule. If the shoot wraps up by 6 pm, I go to the gym. Otherwise, I opt for a home workout, focusing on bodyweight exercises. When I'm not shooting, Supriya, my fitness coach, plans my week with endurance training, weightlifting and HIIT. My fitness plan covers everything from supplements and proper nutrition to quality sleep.

WHAT ABOUT YOUR DIET WHEN YOU ARE HOME?

I stick to two meals a day when I'm not shooting. My nutritionist Arun and my chef work together to create meals that blend a variety of cuisines. But having grown up in a South Indian household, I struggle to adapt to unfamiliar foods. I can't handle salads more than three times a week! My go-to comfort food is Indian, especially Kerala staples like rice, rasam, and green gram. Without them, I get cranky. I believe food, diet, and exercise should never feel like punishment. For occasional sweet cravings, I choose sugar-free and gluten-free treats.

WHAT ROLE/ CHARACTER WITH A FITNESS TWIST WOULD YOU LOVE TO PLAY?

I love films centered around sports and athletics.



WHAT ARE YOUR FITNESS GOALS FOR 2025?

I'm following the right diet, and the framework is what truly matters. Even if I loosen up a bit and gain a couple of kilos, as long as my health is in check, it becomes much easier to get back to my desired state.

COVER GIRL FITNESS MANTRA

Panacha Agarwal, one of the partners of **VybActive** shares her fitness tips with us

Protein powder + Greek Yoghurt is my dessert

WHEN DID YOU START YOUR FITNESS JOURNEY

SERIOUSLY: I was always athletic as a child, but I got into fitness seriously after I gave birth to my children.

FITNESS REGIMEN NOW AS A BUSY ENTREPRENEUR AND A MOTHER:

Routine is the key to a healthy body. I start my day in a dynamic mode with a workout, early in the morning, before life gets in the way. I keep my gym bag in the car so that I can work out anytime even if I miss my morning workout because of my meetings. Moving my body every day is mandatory.

DIETS THAT HAVE WORKED OUT FOR YOU: I don't believe in dieting at all as I feel these are short fixes and one can never maintain them long term. With the way life is, diets prevent you from enjoying life. I am a protein shake girl as it maintains my muscles, even when I am not working out. It

is my breakfast on most days. I add granola or fresh fruit and have it in some or the other way. I have a sweet tooth and I eat my protein powder with Greek Yoghurt, Peanut Butter, nuts and have it as my dessert.

THREE FITNESS HACKS FOR BUSY WOMEN LIKE YOU:

First, make time for yourself first thing in the morning; Second, be efficient and plan your work ahead; Third, start small and keep at it, even if it means just using your body weight to get moving.

THREE THINGS A FITNESS ENTHUSIAST WOULD LOVE AT VYBACTIVE: Luxury infrastructure, topnotch trainers and a tribe with resonates your vibe.





ZUMBA WORKOUT

WHEN FITNESS MEETS NUTRITION

Freelance nutritionist Ritika Naidu who consults at three top fitness clubs puts together three must-have power breakfasts especially if your morning workouts are strong:



1. **GREEN SMOOTHIE:** It contains folate, vitamin B, fibre and other nutrients important to the body. A smoothie can be made using greens like – spinach, kale, cucumber, lettuce, etc.
2. **TURMERIC LATTE:** Turmeric Latte is also called Golden Milk for the right reasons. Turmeric has excellent anti-inflammatory properties and is dense in antioxidants that are beneficial for the body. These nutrients help to combat stress and provide energy boost. Curcumin found in turmeric is a reliable source to boost mood and tackle depression.
3. **CHIA PUDDING:** Chia seeds are dense in Omega-3 fatty acids and packed with antioxidants. The Omega-3 fatty acids serve anti-inflammatory benefits to the brain which helps in cognitive function. It also helps regulate stress and support mood. Chia seed pudding can be an excellent choice for breakfast as it is rich in fibre. Fibre is vital to maintain gut health and reduce inflammation. Chia seeds also contain nutrients like magnesium, iron, calcium, etc that nourish the body.

MISINFORMATION AS BAD AS JUNK FOOD

‘Eat for the body you want, not for the body you have,’ says nutritionist Neha Sahaya, who is on the speed dial of celebrities such as Kajal Aggarwal and Suniel Shetty. Deeply concerned by the rise of lifestyle diseases like diabetes and obesity, particularly among younger generations, Neha believes the answer lies in education. “People are bombarded with misinformation. I am on a mission to empower individuals with the knowledge they need to make informed choices. By making changes, we can rewrite the future of health, one delicious bite at a time. “True health is about building habits that stick, not white-knuckling your way through another fad diet.”



4 MUST-DO WORKOUTS FOR THE BUSY BEES

Namrata Purohit, the celebrity trainer for Sara Ali Khan and Janhvi Kapoor, the girl who has mesmerized us with her look in *Devara*, has put together four exercises one must do for a complete workout, even on a super busy day.

- **Squat Twist:** Start with your hands behind your head and ready in a squat position. Go down into a deep squat, come up, and then do an oblique twist. During the oblique twist, your knee needs to touch the opposite elbow! Repeat on both sides.
- **Side Lunge into Shoulder Press:** Start standing straight and hold dumbbells in your hands. Step out into a side lunge, squeeze the glutes when coming back in, and take the leg up towards the chest, working on your balance, at the same time curl and shoulder press on your way back up. Repeat on both sides.
- **Plank Saw:** Get into a plank and rock back and forth. You are going to work your quadriceps, fire up that core, work the arms, and shoulder stabilisers. While doing so, keep your core engaged.
- **Triceps Dips Bridge:** Get down on all fours with your hands behind you, feet in front, hip distance apart and belly up towards the ceiling. Go low into the triceps dips, squeeze your glutes up, while working the entire posterior chain of your body. Make sure your core stays engaged. Complete a couple of reps and then to finish, take one leg up to a tabletop position, the other leg on the ground and hold for 10 seconds and then switch. ■



WOW!
Recommends:
 Goi Cuon,
 Bee Wild

Cocktail Bar with a Vibrant Euro-Asian cuisine

Savor the Vibe

Whether for a trendy lunch, a relaxing afternoon lounge, or pre-dinner drinks, **TapasMe** adapts seamlessly. As evening falls, the atmosphere transforms into a lively, high-energy space. The interiors balance minimalism with sophistication, featuring modern monolithic architecture, organic textures, colorful art, and potted plants.

FOOD

The menu showcases the creativity and skill of its chefs through a Euro-Asian tapas concept, offering small, shareable plates. It includes delicate sushi, flavorful *gyoza*, and uniquely crafted *pides*. We tried Veg *Goi Cuon* (Vietnamese summer rolls), *Gyro* Lamb Platter (spiced lamb meatballs with hummus and crispy pita), and Grilled *Chermoula* Chicken skewers, Raw Mango Avocado sushi rolls, *Nasu Nu Niniku* (roasted aubergine), Chicken *Gyoza* and Moorish Lamb *Pide* (Middle Eastern spiced lamb).



COCKTAILS

The cocktails, inspired by Asian staples, were skillfully blended and equally impressive. We tried Bee Wild that consisted of soya sauce-washed whisky with red bell pepper juice, honey, bee pollen, and dark chocolate tincture and Deja Brew which was made of condensed coconut cardamom milk, matcha *nanari* liqueur, and pineapple juice)

MUSIC

The musical backdrop at TapasMe is a blend of electronic beats, traditional melodies, and harmonious Eastern and Western scales. This multicultural mix enhances the dining and socializing experience, making it a perfect setting for any occasion. Check their Instagram page for the music action planned for the week. ■ SUPRIYA

Meal for two: Rs 2,500 onwards
 Upper Ground Floor, The Skyview10, Madhapur
 Tel: 91084 80800
 Timings: 12 pm to 12 am

A spirited conversation with a cocktail curator who shares some hacks on getting the best out of The Beer Cartel

Spiked Irani Chai, anyone?



NAME: Balakrishnan Subramanyan

PROFESSION: Beverage Consultant at The Beer Cartel, Sattva Knowledge Park

HERE SINCE: February 2024

WHAT IS HYDERABAD GLUGGING NOW: Hyderabad is a whisky-forward market that loves to stick to classics, but is good to go with one experimental cocktail.

MUST-HAVE COCKTAIL: *Sol Kadhi*, a take on the Goan beverage, this spicy drink (typically served with Goan *thali*), it combines *kokum* and coconut, a carbonated version served with vodka with the reddish-brown tinge of *kokum*.

DATE RECOMMENDED COCKTAIL: Try out our Spiked Irani *Chai*, a cocktail inspired by Al-Saba-Cafe in Hyderabad. This Irani *Chai* cocktail served with whisky has notes of cardamom, clove, tea leaves plus milk powder and condensed milk. The other is the very Hyderabad recreation of *Qubani Ka Meetha* cocktail in a cordial form shaken with gin, vodka or white rum with *qubani* on it. Have it with *Galouti Ka Kebab*.

HACKS TO GET A TABLE ON A BUSY FRIDAY:

Have good friends at The Beer Cartel, or become friends with our General Manager Sandeep. Friendship *ke liye jaan aur table dedengey!*

BEST TABLE TO SIT: At the table for a six-seater long garden bench to sit at or at the bar counter! I met my wife at the bar, so I would recommend it. You'll never know what it leads to! ■ MANJU



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"after some salads in Chicago?"

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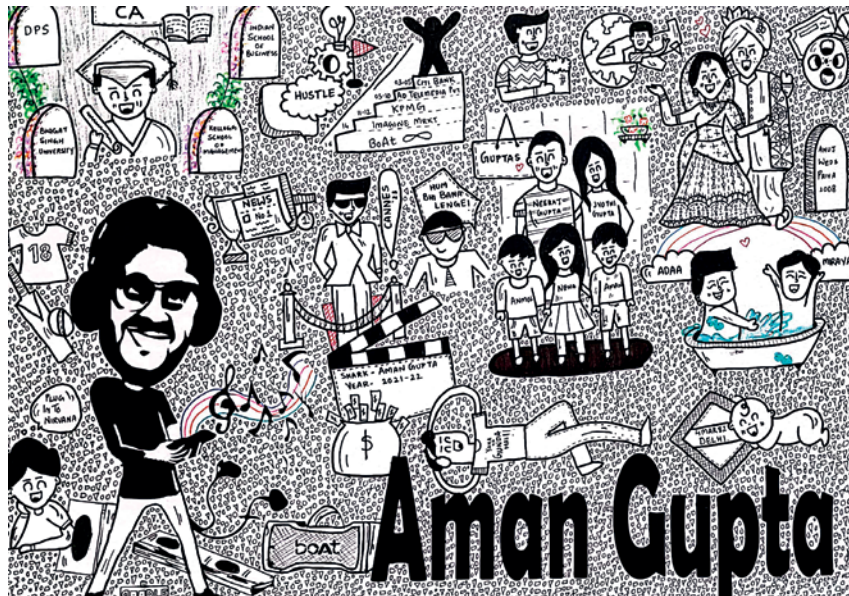
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TEDx Speaker **Atul Kabra** infuses storytelling into his doodles, bringing intimate experiences to life and impacting individuals

STORIES WITH DOODLES



A passion for storytelling coupled with a knack for realizing it on paper paved the way for the creation of **Doodle Kabra** in 2021. The platform brings to life personal stories through the art of doodling, conveying depth and meaning through its exploration of singular human experiences. "I have seen clients literally crying when they look at it as it starts resonating with them," shares Atul Kabra, Founder of Doodle Kabra.

DRIVEN BY PASSION

In May 2024, Atul was invited to deliver his first TEDx talk. "Stepping onto the TEDx stage was nothing short of transformative. I shared my story of breaking away from convention with '25 pe naukari, 26 pe chaukari' – a journey from a stable corporate job to creating Doodle Kabra. It is also a message for everyone who's ever questioned the status quo," Atul shares of the unique experience.



FOR THE LOVE OF ART

No two doodles at Doodle Kabra are the same. Atul's clients come with uniquely personal stories for him to weave together and recreate, for either gifting or for themselves. Each doodle is thoughtfully handcrafted, capturing emotions, memories, and experiences of the individuals it is made for.

One of their most unique offerings is large-scale doodle walls, created for both personal and corporate spaces. Doodle Kabra has collaborated with renowned brands like IKEA, Samsung, and the Titan Group, among others. Additionally, Atul's creations have drawn the attention of celebrities like Allu Arjun, Kareena Kapoor Khan, and Rana Daggubati, who each received their own personalized doodles.

DOODLING CLASSES

The inclusion of doodling as an educational subject in schools marked a milestone for Doodle Kabra. Atul currently takes classes at HPS and Gitanjali Senior School once a week. Affectionately called Doodle Sir by his students, Atul trains young minds of grades one to eight, helping them express themselves freely with the use of their vivid imagination.

The idea, he explains, is to let children use, "their free-flowing imagination to create their very own masterpieces." By putting pencil to paper, they are encouraged to carve out stories that reflect their unique worldview, showing that doodling can be a valuable learning tool and more than a mere hobby.

This is also achieved at his summer camps and classes conducted outside the school premises. This year saw Atul conducting two summer camps for children. One was a three-day workshop, while the other went on for a month that had classes twice a week. By the end of the year classes will be held once more, and again next year for another summer camp. ■ IPSHITA

Fee: On request
Tel: 91600 38846
Instagram: doodlekabra





Here's to a quick weekend spent in the company of the celestial bodies over hot chocolate, noodles, campfire and stargazing

Date with the stars

Planning a five-day trip to Goa may seem daunting, but how about an overnight jungle camping and stargazing adventure near Vikarabad? Just 80 km away from Hyderabad, this unique experience offers the perfect weekend getaway, blending nature and astronomy.

WHAT TO EXPECT

This beginner-friendly hiking and camping trip lets you explore the pristine Vikarabad forests. If you love stargazing, Jungle Stay Camping and Stardust Astronomy Club offer Hyderabad's first astro-camping site. Through a 12" Dobsonian telescope (or a 16" on special events), you'll gaze at the Moon, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and more. As V Venu Gopal of the Stardust Astronomy Club reminds you, "Don't miss this rare opportunity – the sky won't be like this again for five months."

WHERE TO STAY

They have wooden AC and non-AC cottages (ideal for couples and families). However, for the best experience, we recommend the cozy water-proof tents,

especially if you are with friends or single. So far, they have conducted over 500 camp stays for over 3,000 guests. The best bit is that pets are allowed too.

AMENITIES AND ACTIVITIES

Guests can enjoy vegetarian and non-vegetarian meals, as well as outdoor and indoor games. Other highlights include horse riding (extra charge), cycling, Bollywood and Tollywood music, solar observations and a jungle walk. Campfires, lake-view sit-outs, and secured bouncers add to the experience. Alcohol is only permitted from the Vikarabad district, and no hookah is allowed.

ITINERARY

Arrive at the campsite by 5 pm for registration and tent allocation. After a *chai-samosa* high tea and intros, enjoy a crash course in astronomy from 5.30 pm to 7 pm. Telescopes like the Explore Scientific 16" Truss Tube Dobsonian will bring the planets into focus, with guides assisting you in observing the celestial wonders. Dinner under the stars is followed by campfire stories, space

documentaries, and more stargazing. At 1:30 am, guests are treated to hot chocolate and Maggi as they witness the clear night sky. For the diehard romantics, there is also a movie screening under the stars.

In the morning, after a short nature walk, watching the sunrise and freshening up at the mobile bio-toilets, guests can paint, play Frisbee, or browse science books. Breakfast and tea wrap up the trip, with telescope disassembly marking the end by 11 am. And then after a two-hour drive, you are back home and resting for the upcoming Monday. Easy-breezy. The next date with stars is on October 19 and registrations are underway. Check their website for details. ■ MANJU

Price: Overnight stargazing and camping: Rs 2,000/adult, Rs 1,500/kid (5 - 15 yrs)
No charges for kids below five years

Tel: 82476 77570
Timings: 4 pm to 11 am
Website: junglestaycamping.com

This festive season, maintain a good gut to stay at your best physically and emotionally, advises **Anjali Dange V**, Co-Founder and Director, Starlite Wellness, Hyderabad

8 Steps to Improve Gut Health



During festivals, it's easy to indulge in rich, heavy foods. However, keeping your gut health in mind can help you enjoy the celebrations without discomfort. Incorporating fiber-rich foods and probiotics during season can aid digestion and support a healthy balanced gut. This can prevent bloating and fatigue, ensuring you feel energized throughout the celebrations. Anjali Dange, Director of Starlite Wellness, spoke to us about the importance of gut health.

GUT, IMMUNITY AND MENTAL HEALTH

The gut is often referred to as the body's second brain due to its significant role in digestion, immunity, and mental health. The gut microbiome – a diverse community of microorganisms, primarily bacteria – does more than just break down food and absorb nutrients. It also produces essential neurotransmitters like serotonin. A healthy gut promotes better digestion, strengthens immune function, and helps regulate mood, while poor gut health has been linked to inflammation, autoimmune disorders, anxiety and depression.

GUT HEALTH AND RESILIENCE

Around 70 per cent of the immune system is found in the gut, which runs from the stomach to the intestines. The gut helps digest food, absorb nutrients, and contains good bacteria (the microbiome) that support overall health. These helpful microbes teach the immune system to respond properly. A healthy gut not only boosts physical health but also helps you manage stress better, improving both mental and emotional resilience. ■ MANJU

COMMON SIGNS OF POOR GUT HEALTH

1. Bloating
2. Gas
3. Diarrhea
4. Constipation
5. Brain fog
6. Drowsiness and sluggishness
7. Fatigue or difficulty in concentrating
8. Eczema or acne eruptions


TIPS FOR GOOD GUT HEALTH

1. Include fiber-rich prebiotics that the beneficial bacteria feed on. This is in ripe or semi ripe banana, soaked jowar, ragi, onions, garlic and jackfruit.
2. Consume probiotics and fermented foods like yogurt, kefir (fermented drink similar to yogurt), and sauerkraut which introduce beneficial bacteria to the gut.
3. Stay hydrated. Drinking plenty of water supports digestion and helps maintain a healthy gut lining.
4. Switch from sugar-laden sodas to home-brewed kombuchas, now widely available at cafes and hypermarkets
5. Stick to your roots and eat a good South Indian breakfast that includes using fermented idli/dosa batter.
6. Reduce the use of preservative-laden sauces and switch to homemade fermented pickles instead.
7. Include a portion of curd/kefir/kimchi at least four times a week.
8. After using antibiotics, consume probiotic foods in your main meals to balance the gut microbiome.



BHARGAVI

 bhargavikunam

 bhargavi.studio

Zencations is a new platform for invite-only wellness vacations and transformation holidays

Find your Zen tribe



Since the news of Anna Sebastian Perayil, a 26-year-old chartered accountant who died four months into her highly stressed job at Ernst & Young went viral, the spotlight is back on de-stressing oneself, seeking wellness therapies and getting back on one's feet to be at the best form at work. **Zencations**, a new platform for wellness holidays, caters to the group that is keen to take vacations with a purpose.

Wellcations are slow holidays taken with a purpose and aligned with your needs to reconnect with nature, oneself or seek therapy. From a 10-day Hormonal Rebalance retreat at Ananda in the Himalayas to Yoga Paddleboarding Hiking Retreat, they have it all. "Helping busy stressed professionals thrive and not just survive," is what Zencations says it is. The startup is based in Hyderabad.

Sameera Bandari, who curates these vacations, describes Zencations as a 'platform for invite-only wellness vacations' for busy professionals. They also help people reach out to specialized, alternative therapies. For instance, recently, she could find an alternative and effective therapist for a person with psoriasis.

"We create tailor-made retreats - based on yoga, breathwork, meditation etc - designed to match your unique wellness goals and interests. We connect you to a community of like-minded individuals who share your passion for wellness and personal growth", explains Sameera. The wellness startup is coming up with more vacations later this year, she adds.

■ MANJU

Price: On request

Instagram: zencations.club



Telugu actor and fitness icon **Pragathi Mahavadi** on what keeps her in shape

'I feel like an achiever after a good workout'

AT WHAT AGE DID YOU START TAKING FITNESS SERIOUSLY, AND WHAT MOTIVATED YOU?

When it came to fitness, I was a late bloomer. I began my journey at 30. The rush of dopamine and feel-good factor after a workout keep me going. I feel like an achiever when I stay disciplined and finish a workout, and that's what drives me to continue.

HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU DEDICATE TO YOUR WORKOUTS?

I started with 45 minutes a day for the first six months, but now I train for two hours daily, five days a week.

WHAT KIND OF FITNESS ROUTINE DO YOU FOLLOW?

I'm a gym rat! I focus on weight training, and use all the equipment available, to ensure that I train every part of my body with the guidance of an instructor.

HOW HAS WORKING OUT TRANSFORMED YOU PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY?

Physical fitness boosts your confidence and self-esteem, which in turn builds mental resilience. Since I began my fitness routine, I feel five times stronger, both mentally and physically.

WHAT'S YOUR APPROACH TO DIET?

I keep it simple by eating light or skipping dinner. That one rule has helped me stay healthy and fit.

THREE TIPS YOU WOULD GIVE TO WOMEN IN THEIR 40S?.

Love yourself, stay fit, and stay strong. Remember, strong is the new sexy! ■ MANJU

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Flashy, elegant, quirky and colorful are just a few ways to describe these handbags and *potlis* that are sure to add that extra oomph to your look this festive season

BAG IT!



GIVING OFF BOSS VIBES

Priyanka Chopra looked like a total boss lady as she elevated her Rahul Mishra 3D hand-embroidered Himadri pantsuit with **Outhouse Jewellery's** iconic

Gold Rush Crystal Furbie bag. This party essential is designed in PETA-approved vegan leather and is handcrafted with over 2,000 Champagne rhinestones exuding power and sophistication.



MASTERING TRADITIONS

Looking elegant in Gaurang Shah's handwoven Kanjeevaram saree at the Ambani wedding, Vidya Balan complemented her vibrant look with a traditional *potli* bag by **The Pink Potli** - a brand famous among the B-town crowd that also has loyalists in Kajol, Kareena Kapoor Khan and Alia Bhatt to name a few.



STRIKING LOOK

Spotted in a custom Surya Sarkar, *Bulbbul* actress Tripti Dimri looked ethereal in classy white floral co-ords, which she accessorized with the eye-catching black **Jimmy Choo** Diamond Chain Top Handle bag and shoes, creating a striking contrast.



GRACEFUL CHARM

Genelia D'souza Deshmukh accessorized her Saroj Jalan saree with **Lovetobag's** Amara Potli Sublime Pastel Multi for an event in Goa earlier this year. Meticulously crafted, the statement piece features pastel hues, offers versatility, and further enhances the *Bommarillu* star's graceful appearance.



HERITAGE-FORWARD SPIRIT

While promoting Netflix's *Heeramandi* early this year, Sonakshi Sinha channeled her character Fareedan from the series in a black Lajjoo C sharara set. She accessorized it with **The Pink Potli's** black Paisley Paradise potli bag, which incorporates paisley design in *zardozi*, beads and *Kundan* work.



BLACK HEART CHIC

Ananya Panday was seen sporting the Amore 3D Heart Crossbody bag by **Kate Spade New York** in her latest Amazon Prime series, *Call Me Bae*. Donning a chic monochrome outfit in the Boucle Mini Dress from label River Island, she accessorized her look with the black leather bag which features a fun heart-shaped design that can put a fresh spin on any outfit.



BLINGING IT UP

Dressed in Sameer Madan's Sofia Bodycon, Rakul Preet Singh blinged things up with accessories from **Outhouse Jewellery**, which included their exquisite Pico Minaudière Couture Bag. Featuring the famous OH monogram, the bag has an elegant structure and is equipped with a striking pearl top handle.



BUCKETS & FEATHERS

Bucket and bracelet bags can also make great additions to your festive and party wardrobe. **Tarun Tahiliani's** Jeweled Feather Bracelet Bag, **Outhouse Jewellery's** OH Poppi Bucket Bag, **Jimmy Choo's** Bon Bon Satin Bag with Velvet Bow and **Sabyasachi's** timeless The Nani Bucket Bag to name a few.



LOOKING REGAL

Suhana Khan gave off major *desi* vibes as she walked down the red carpet at the Ambani's *Aashirwad* ceremony. She rocked the purple Aztec Allure potli by **The Pink Potli** and teamed it with Mayyur Girotra's multi-color lehenga which was in turn paired with an *ikkat* blouse and *kalamkari* dupatta that took 90 days to make. ■ IPSHITA



We drop in at a show that merges maps with art

Unfolding Maps

In **Maps Unfolded**, a solo exhibition by Ankon Mitra curated by Prshant Lahoti, one sees a variety of material folded into unique forms that share interesting stories of the past and the present. Using folding as an art form is the architect and artist Mitra's forte, and this show proves why he is the pioneer of the genre.

The interest stemmed from the 42-year-old artist's love for landscape architecture in which he noted the intricate patterns of nature. "From a beehive to the center of a sunflower, folds give shape and structure. Human body itself is made of folds – because everything I do is centered around nature, I wanted to explore how different materials respond to folding."

From his first art show in 2014 to his current exhibition the artist has used a diverse set of materials to show how folding can allow different ideas and perspectives to emerge. From textiles to concrete and metal to paper there is hardly any material he has not explored over the years. He explains, "Folding gives a 3D view, when the light and shadow come into play, to the objects I create. It unearths unknown facets by balancing science and art."

A MIRAGE OF FORMS

The current exhibition sees the artist use the maps from Kalakriti Archives, one of India's largest private repositories of historic maps, and fold them in distinctive styles. The maps featured in this exhibition include traditional Indian pilgrimage maps, printed bazaar maps, and city maps, each offering a window into the society of a bygone era.

One interpretation shows the juxtaposition of the British Map of Jaipur from 1920 and the UNESCO World Heritage Map in 2012. While the folded surface gives a glance of the same localities separated by nearly a century; one can see how time changes borders, population and priorities. He explains, "I want people to view narratives in different ways. As one walks around the maps, different stories emerge. The visual comparison shows how the syntax of the journey of cities and people can change with the passage of time."



Other installations show the maps of Tibet that explore terrain through folds while others use the Japanese technique of Origami to create objects of beauty. Apart from maps, other installations traverse the genres of space and nature, a recurring theme in the artist's work.

CELEBRATING NEW IDEAS

In little over ten years the artist has made his mark for his eclectic work without precedence. Ask him why and the genial artist smiles, "It is because geometry is universal and I layer Indian sensibility throughout my works. The material, the sense of color and the references are all Indian, while the outlook is international. My work marries global thought with Indian roots." ■ MALLIK

The exhibition is on view till Oct 5 at Kalakriti Art Gallery



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Parameshwar Raju's Pictorial calligraphy merges mythology with modernity

INDIAN ICONOGRAPHY

Poosapati Parameshwar Raju's name is synonymous with the art of calligraphy, a field in which he has left an indelible mark over the past four decades. His journey over 40 years, now chronicled in his book *The Wonderful Calligraphy of Poosapati Parameshwar Raju*, captures the evolution of his work from traditional Devanagari script to what he now calls "pictorial calligraphy." The book not only showcases his artistic milestones but also brings to life his deep connection to Indian iconography, mythology, and symbolism.

Collaborating closely with art historian and curator Koeli Mukherjee Ghose, the artist's work has been intricately woven with narratives that allow readers to engage with each piece on a deeper level.

A LIFE SPENT IN ART

When asked how the book came about, the artist shares, "It was important to highlight how ancient iconography, symbols, and stories can be expressed with modern and avant-garde vision through this medium. I also felt that my work could contribute to the global conversation about how tradition and innovation can coexist in art."

Parameshwar Raju's innovative use of minimalism, particularly through the rhythmic "thin-thick-thin" line technique, allowed him to simplify complex symbols while retaining their depth. His exclusive use of the color red in his pieces, symbolizing Shakti or feminine energy, adds a spiritual dimension to his work.

He muses, "Over the years, my work has become more introspective and layered. Initially, my focus was on mastering form and technique, but as I evolved, I began to incorporate deeper symbolism, drawing from Indian mythology, Puranas, and ancient texts. My calligraphy has shifted from being purely script-based to becoming a narrative-driven art form."

INSPIRED BY TRADITION

The book took two years to compile, and he credits Ghose for adding depth to the presentation of each piece. "Her insights into iconography and mythology helped shape the final narrative of the book," he said. Ghose's deep understanding of Indian cultural traditions, gathered through years of research, ensured that the book was not just a visual delight, but also an intellectual exploration of calligraphy as an art form.

The artist acknowledges that traditional calligraphy may not be as widely practiced today, but he believes there is a resurgence of interest in it, especially as contemporary artists find ways to blend it with modern influences. The inspiration for his work comes from the rich ceremonial culture of India, its mythology, and sacred texts. "There is a growing appreciation for how calligraphy can blend with visual art to tell stories. These storytelling traditions passed down through generations, especially by my grandfather, deeply influenced my understanding of narrative and symbolism. Each piece I create is a visual exploration of these traditions, filtered through a modern, minimalist lens," he concludes. ■ MALLIK

MEKONG

Ikura Gunkan Maki

Get a taste of the ocean and flavours of the far east as you experience the burst of umami in every bite of our perfectly crafted sushi. This is where delicate rice meets pearls of salmon roe. This is where culinary magic meets our chef's artistry.

*Mekong is now open at **Avasa**.*





A Wellness Retreat to Reconnect with Nature and Self

Unplug. Pause. Recharge

When you want to reset and rest your body and mind, there is nothing like getting away from your comfort zone. This took me to **Swaswara**, a wellness resort remotely situated in Gokarna in Uttara Karnataka. For three days I did nothing but hear the roar of the ocean and the silence of nature. It led to a space that gave me opportunity to be myself. Hence the name Swa-Swara, which means the 'music of the self'.

THE PLACE

Built on the rolling hills, overlooking the Gokarna's famous Om Beach, the 23 spacious cottages are spread over 26 acres. The property overlooks the sea and the forest, overgrown with trees and plants that grow untamed. You can sometimes hear hornbills or the chirping of grasshoppers and if lucky, can spot a snake. The philosophy is to live in tune with nature, and even the villas follow the local Konkan architectural style with laterite stone and thatched roofs. They are like a mini house of 1,100 sq. ft., with verandahs, terrace and an open central courtyard where herbs are grown. One part of the villa overlooks the water bodies and the other side is verdant nature. There is no television in the rooms and use of cellphones is minimal.

THE PROGRAM

The resort has several wellness programs that can be fashioned according to the number of days you want to spend here. Swa Well-Being, is a three-day introductory program. The guests experience and implement various mind and body techniques to create positive changes in the way they approach modern day stress. The philosophy is to slow down and this is done through yoga *kriyas*, Pranayama, meditation, yoga *nidra*, Abyanga sessions, and interestingly an art and pottery class. A core principle is changing the way you eat. The chef creates a sattvic diet, devoid of excess oil, salt, spice, and complete absence of non-vegetarian food. These dishes can be learnt at the free cookery class that is part of the program.

There are more rigorous 14 and 21-day programs that include Panchakarma, Nasya, purgation and complete detoxification.

Dr Praveen, the gentle ayurvedic doctor, however, says, Swaswara is not for those seriously ill as this is not a hospital.

THINGS TO DO

At the resort you can sit doing nothing, or attend the yoga or meditation sessions. You can also relax in the library and generally learn to be by yourself. However, if you feel the need to explore, there is hiking, or a stroll on Om Beach, or you can visit Gokarna to see its old Konkan houses and ancient temples.

COST

Three nights cost around Rs 1 lakh that includes consultations with ayurvedic doctors as well as yoga teachers. You can reach Gokarna by air, land at Dabolim airport, Goa and drive the 170 kms in four hours. Swaswara will organize a pick-up.

■ RATNA

For the different programs, and any other info, contact:

Tel: 97440 70099

Website: greswaswara@cghearth.co.in



MOVIES

In theatres



VENOM: THE LAST DANCE (ENGLISH)

Tom Hardy returns in the most epic superhero role since Robert Downey Jr. as Tony Stark/Iron Man, in the 3rd and final film of the franchise as the symbiote and his host face off against the people from both their worlds. Kelly Marcel – the writer behind the previous 2 movies, makes her directorial debut.

Date: 25th October



JOKER: FOLIE À DEUX (ENGLISH)

Following up to one of the highest grossing R-rated films of all time and a surprise blockbuster, Todd Phillips and Joaquin Phoenix return to further explore the psychology of Batman's greatest foe. Lady Gaga joins in as Phillips' version of Harley Quinn as the film takes place 2 years after the first one, exploring his time at the Arkham State Hospital and how he falls in love with a fellow inmate.

Date: 4th October

MECHANIC ROCKY (TELUGU)

Consistently delivering box office hits while also pushing the boundaries of visual appeal, Vishwak Sen returns in this action comedy. Directed by Ravi Teja Mullapudi, the film is produced under the banner of SRT Entertainments. It also stars Meenakshi Chaudhary and Shraddha Srinath among others while the music is provided by Jakes Bejoy, marking his first collaboration with the actor.

Date: 31st October



VETTAIVAN (TAMIL/TELUGU)

T.J. Gnanavel, returning after the critical blockbuster *Jai Bhim*, teams up with Superstar Rajinikanth and puts together a fantastic cast in the form of Amitabh Bachchan, Fahadh Faasil, Rana Daggubati and Manju Warrier in this action drama. Lyca Productions is the producer of the film and Anirudh Ravichander is composing the score for the 170th film in Thalaivar's filmography.

Date: 10th October

JIGRA (HINDI)

Alia Bhatt returns as a producer after her maiden venture – *Darlings*, as she teams up with Vasanth Bala for an action thriller about a young woman who wishes to break her brother out of prison, portrayed by Vedang Raina. Bala is best known for the highly underrated *Mard Ko Dard Nahi Hota* and the brilliant *Monica, O My Darling*. The film is co-produced by Dharma Productions while the music is scored by Achint Thakkar.

Date: 11th October





AMARAN

(TAMIL)

Based on the book *India's Most Fearless: True Stories of Modern Military* by Shiv Aroor and Rahul Singh. It explores the life of Major Mukund Varadarajan. Actor Sivakarthikeyan has transformed himself for the part as the teasers are top-notch and laced with an inspiring and patriotic script. Filmmaker Rajkumar Periasamy teams up with Kamal Hassan as producer along with Sony Pictures Films India. Sai Pallavi and Bhuvan Arora co-star as G.V. Prakash Kumar provides the music.

Date: 31st October



VISWAM

(TELUGU)

Sreenu Vaitla – one of Telugu film industry's biggest masala directors, returns behind the camera with his next film starring Gopichand, Kavya Thapar and Sunil among others. Vaitla's recent films have not been able to reach the success of *Dookudu*, despite being filled with abundant humor for the entire family. The teaser for this film promises to offer the family entertainment Vaitla has been known for.

Date: 11th October



CTRL

(HINDI)

Vikramaditya Motwane – the masterful filmmaker behind *Trapped*, *Udaan*, *Lootera* and *Sacred Games* among others, returns to direct his next venture starring Ananya Pandey and Vihaan Samat in the lead and Aparshakti Khurana as a supporting actor. The film is about an influencer couple where Pandey uses an AI app to remove her partner from her life after he cheats on her, but the AI begins to take control.

Date: 4th October

OTT SHOWS



BIG BOSS

(TELUGU)

Disney+ Hotstar

King Nagarjuna returns to host the 8th Season of the hit reality show. The contestants will now be placed in 2 separate houses from the start to escalate alliances, rivalries and add a fresh dynamic to the competition. Elimination has been advanced to, as early as, the first week of the show. The contestants consist of astrologer Ven Swamy and comedian Kirrak RP among others. The show has received a record-breaking opening of 5.9 billion viewing minutes on opening night.



THE KAPIL SHARMA SHOW

(HINDI)

NETFLIX

Having been acquired by Netflix, India's most successful prime time comedian returns for the next season, airing every Saturday starting September 21. This time around, the show comprises stars including but not limited to Alia Bhatt, Karan Johar, Saif Ali Khan, Jr. NTR, Janhvi Kapoor and Rohit Sharma among others. It is touted to be an improvement over the previous season, which had not received the ratings the show was once known for. ■ CHANDRAMOULI

SNIPPETS



SHAADI MUBARAK

Amidst all the depressing news of sexual harassment of Tollywood's top choreographer and somewhat lackluster business of movies in the last few months, the beautiful photographs of actors Aditi Rao Hydari and Siddharth Chhabra has brought in a whiff of fresh air into the beleaguered industry. Their dreamy wedding in an intimate ceremony at a heritage fort in Telangana brought in much cheer in an otherwise dull month. Looks like #AaduSiddhu is the new hashtag we will follow for some time now.

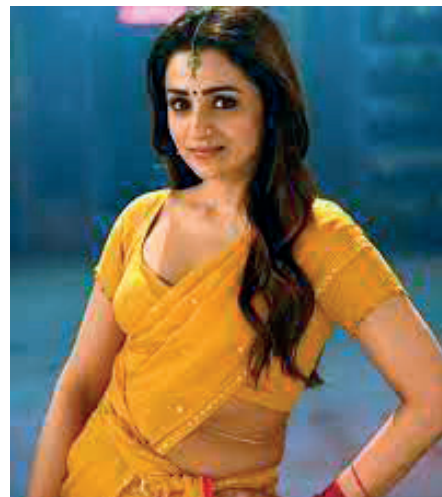
PAVAN 3.0

Sometimes personal charisma adds to their professional charm and that's what seems to be happening with actor Pavan Kalyan. The actor who took a break from movies to mold his political career in Andhra politics is all set for a big release with the period saga *Hari Hara Veera Mallu*. Although we still don't know the release date, this will be the Power Star's first movie outing after he got elected as Deputy Chief Minister. Will he be able to pull the crowds in the new role, we gotta wait and watch.



IN TOP SHAPE

Trisha, known for shunning item numbers throughout her two-decade career, surprised fans by dancing alongside actor Vijay in a song from *GOAT*. Although the song has gained popularity, Trisha has made it clear that she is still the girl who grabs the lead roles in major projects. Considering she has plum roles in *Vishwambhara* with Chiranjeevi and *Thug Life* with Kamal Haasan and Mani Ratnam, she can just chill and go for the kill. Trisha rules!



FAM JAM

A celebrity baby means non-stop entertainment for the public. Joining the ranks of Vamika and her baby brother (Anushka Sharma and Virat Kohli's kids) and Raha (Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt's daughter) is DeepVeer's (Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh) newborn girl. The *Padmavat* star has reportedly made it clear that she'll be a hands-on mom, with no need for a nanny. For now, the couple is keeping their baby out of the spotlight, but thanks to the paps' super zoom, we're still getting our fix. Baby, we're loving it!



CHILLMORE GIRLS OF CINEMA

Nobody remembers what Aishwarya Rai Bachchan won at the recently-held SIIMA awards in Dubai (okay, she won Best Actress (Critics) award for *Ponniyin Selvan: I*) because the cute mom-daughter bonding at the awards ceremony caught our attention and warmed our hearts. We all know that Aishwarya is a besotted mom, but watching Aradhya go into raptures about her mom's success and turning into a photographer was adorable. The internet went gaga about AA bonding over the awards. Little drama in real life never hurt anyone. ■ MANJU

Meet Tollywood singer **Sahithi Chaganti**, the voice behind the viral Guntur Kaaram track *Kurchi Madatapetti* and her commitment to make the most of every opportunity she comes across

420 million views and counting

Sahithi Chaganti's career skyrocketed when the song *Kurchi Madatapetti* from *Guntur Kaaram* garnered 420 million views on YouTube. It became one of the year's most popular songs, establishing her as a household name. "Even when we were recording at Prasad's Lab last year, I enjoyed the peppy vibe. I knew it would be a blockbuster," she says.

This 24-year-old 'pakka Hyderabad' started off with music reality shows that put her under the spotlight and fetched her plum opportunities in Telugu playback singing. Her best works include the catchy *Laahe Laahe* from Chiranjeevi's *Acharya*. The song went viral on social media during Covid followed by *Etthara Jenda* in *RRR* and the Hindi rendition of *Jaragandi Jaragandi* for Kiara Advani in Ram Charan's *Game Changer* earlier this year. WOW! chatted with Sahithi about her journey.

THE MAKING OF A SINGER

Raised in Hyderabad's Moosapet, Sahithi was always surrounded by music. Her mother, Seeta Devi, filled the house with devotional songs, which introduced Sahithi to the world of melody at a young age. Sahithi initially set her sights on a career in journalism, earning a BA in Mass Communications and Journalism from Villa Marie College, but music became her true calling. She formally learnt music under Peddadi Suryakumari, MC Murthy and Srinidhi Venkatesh. When she was seven, she joined the Little Musician Academy which molded her playback career.

REALITY SHOW SENSATION

Sahithi's talent began to shine at the tender age of seven when she participated in music reality shows. "I got eliminated in the semifinals of *Paadalani Vundi* in 2007 and that was a huge jolt to me. However, I channelized my emotions of the rejection into vowing to practice music and sharpen my craft every single day. This dedication paved my musical journey with wins and recognition." By 2010, at just 10 years, she became a mentor for younger contestants on a music reality show, marking the beginning of her rise to fame.



PLAYBACK STARDOM

Introduced to composer Mani Sharma by fellow singer Sri Krishna, Sahithi got her first break in playback singing in 2017. For every opportunity that one gets - be it as a chorus singer or the headliner of a live show in a stadium in the US, one has to show the same commitment to be a successful singer," she opines. When

Sahithi isn't recording for movies, she's performing live in concerts across India and abroad, as well as at sangeet functions, college events, and music venues.

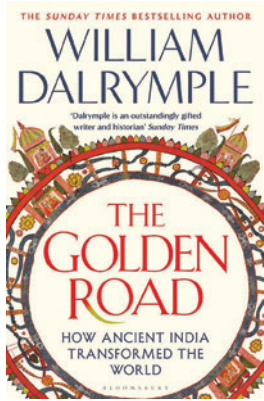
DREAM COLLABORATIONS

To be able to headline a live concert with at least 20 blockbuster songs from her own musical repertoire. ■ MANJU

BOOKS

THE GOLDEN ROAD

William Dalrymple



William Dalrymple looks back at ancient Indian exports from Buddhism and Hinduism to astronomical texts, the number zero and the game of chess. He argues that more than the famous Silk Road, it was the waterways connecting India to Europe via Persia, Arabia and north Africa to the west and China, South-East Asia and Sri Lanka to the east that helped India build its empire of ideas.

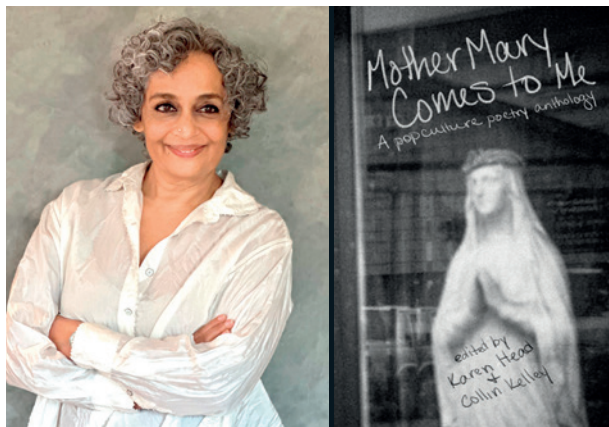
Dalrymple draws from a lifetime of scholarship to highlight India's

oft-forgotten position as the heart of ancient Eurasia. His crisp narrative style gives us a great ringside view of history without it making sound like a boring documentary.

THE FOREST BORN

Vardhini Amin

A magical world hidden away to humans. A young girl and a tree spirit trying to save what they hold dear. The author creates a fantasy that is grounded in the Indian lexicon – from the language to the philosophy. Being a photographer has enabled her to paint a beautiful canvas of a life centered around human bonds and fallacies. The crisp narrative style and the great imagery adds to the story. Though written for young adults, this book is enjoyable for people of all ages including this reviewer!



NEW BOOK ALERT!

Arundhati Roy's new book *Mother Mary Comes To Me*, is set to be released in September 2025.

Her first work of memoir, this is a soaring account, both intimate and inspiring, of how the author became the person and the writer she is, shaped by circumstance, but above all by her complex relationship with her mother, who she describes as 'my shelter and my storm'. 'Heart-smashed' by her mother Mary's death in September 2022, puzzled and 'more than a little ashamed' by the intensity of her response, she began to write, to make sense of her feelings about the mother she ran from at age 18, 'not because I didn't love her, but in order to be able to continue to love her.'

This book is an ode to freedom, a tribute to thorny love and savage grace – a memoir like no other.

BOOKER SHORTLIST

Percival Everett, Rachel Kushner and Anne Michaels are among the writers whose novels have been shortlisted for the 2024 Booker prize. The list of six includes five books by female authors, the highest number of women shortlisted in their 55-year history.

Novels by Samantha Harvey, Charlotte Wood and Yael van der Wouden feature on the shortlist. The winner of the prize will be announced on November 12th. They will receive £50,000, while each of the shortlisted writers receives £2,500.

Many of the shortlisted books have strong historical elements. Everett, the American author, was chosen for *James*, a retelling of Adventures of Huckleberry Finn told from the perspective of the enslaved Jim.

The Safekeep by Van der Wouden – the first Dutch writer to be shortlisted for the Booker and the only debut novelist on this year's list – looks at the treatment of Jews in post-war Netherlands through a family drama. ■ MALLIK



New Independent Bookstore Blends Cozy Culture with a Modern Twist

BOOKS AND MORE



When sisters Meghna, 30, and Manasa, 34, traveled, they were always struck by the reading culture and cozy independent bookstores that dotted the great cities of the world. Inspired by them and noticing the gap in the family-run book store space in Hyderabad, the duo started **Off the Shelf**. It breathes a whiff of cerebral culture in our city known for its cafes, designer exhibitions and IT offices.

Manasa adds, “I remember going to Walden and picking up Harry Potter after queuing up in a line. It is such a nostalgic moment for me! I’m introducing reading to my young son and want to make reading accessible for both parents and kids.”

The store has got its location right – in the heart of the IT district. The 1,800 sq. ft. store with its sunny interiors, bookshelves groaning with a well-curated list and a growing collection of stationery is a sight to behold.

THE COLLECTION

The genres span multiple areas – from self-help and books in Telugu to international best sellers and little-known Indian authors. Even the stationery has some catchy merchandise from brands including Nappa Dori, Ekatra and Midori. A touch of whimsy is



MEGHNA

the addition of a Post box where people can send postcards to their loved ones free of cost inspired by the founder’s habit of sending postcards to each other on their travels!

THE PHILOSOPHY

“This is a bookstore for everyone,” Meghna states and adds, “We want Hyderabad to read more and this is the place that encourages you to do so. We want to cater to different audiences not only literary buffs but those who want to read management books or picture books.”

The founders understand that they are operating a niche business. Were they nervous before the launch? Manasa laughs, “Of course we were a little nervous but once the store opened and the response we got, made us confident.” The duo is full of ideas. They have a roster of plans that include hosting authors and book reading sessions while having other events that appeal to parents and young readers.

THE DUO

Multitasking their respective professions (Manasa is a lawyer while Meghna is the CEO of the construction company, Ark Group) along with running the store, the siblings are clear that this is their passion project and what they are doing is for the love of books. With Manasa being the bigger reader among the two she is in charge of the bookshelves while Meghna looks after the operations and stationery.

A personalized bookstore is just what the city needs and they have the city’s book lovers in their corner rooting for their success! ■ MALLIK

1st floor, Loft Building, Hitech city
Tel: 90001 01707
Timings: 10 am to 9 pm, all days



MANASA



DEEPTI, GAURAV AND REGINA



SUSHMA BOPANNA



TARA CHELLANI



NEHA



YUTIKA RAJU



ANU MYNENI



DOLLY & SHRIYA BHUPAL



ANVITA & SHILPA



PAVAN & SAMYUKTA



MODEL

Talk of the town

Sept 10, Mekong - Avasa Hotel

Editor Deepti Reddy hosted a private party for friend and ace designer Gaurav Gupta who was in town to launch his new collection. The food and the vibe were top-notch.



ANSHU & ASMITA



KIRTI REDDY



SANJANA



KRITHI SHETTY

PIC CREDIT: TALES BY AKKPIXEL AND NARSINGH

RAHUL MISHRA AND SUDHA REDDY

PINKY REDDY

DIVYA BHATT MISHRA

Triple treat

Sept 3, Banjara Hills

Three designer stores – Abraham & Thakore, Satya Paul and Rahul Mishra opened on the same day bringing in options galore for city's fashionistas. Glam girls Tamannaah Bhatia and Seerat Kapoor were among those who graced the red carpet for this three-in-one launch party.



MANISHA



TAMANNA



POOJA



PRIYANKA CHIGURUPATI



SEERAT KAPOOR

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Shop No. 4, Vamsiram Jyothi Valencia, Road No. 2, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad, Telangana. © 8121006074



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