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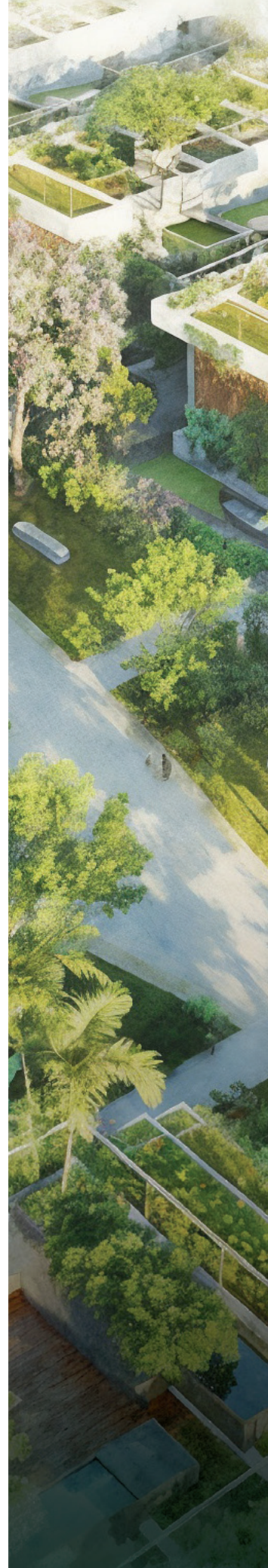
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**WEDDINGS ARE GRAND CELEBRATIONS ROOTED IN TRADITION YET REINVENTED EACH YEAR.**

Think mangalsutras with Bvlgari, vaddanamams with Cartier bracelets, paan-flavored macarons, rasam shots, and jasmine-meets-LED décor. WOW! brings you the top wedding trends of the year

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*spotted*

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ON THE COVER: TAMANNAAH BHATIA  
FOR KALKI FASHION

MANAGING EDITOR  
Deepti Reddy

ASSISTANT EDITOR  
Manju Latha Kalanidhi

FEATURE WRITER  
Ipshita Raman

COPY EDITOR  
Minal Khona

DESIGN  
Vijay Narang

MARKETING  
K V Krishna

CIRCULATION & ACCOUNTS  
Subbarao  
Swamy

EDITORIAL & MARKETING OFFICE  
WOW! Hyderabad  
7-1-27, Third floor, (Next to Green Park)  
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## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Our guide to the exciting happenings in town



### COMIC CON RETURNS! OCTOBER 31 ONWARDS

The Hyderabad Comic Con is back! Perfect for all those who love geeking out to anime, comics, and gaming, the fun-filled event offers a weekend packed with celebrity sessions, jaw-dropping cosplay, and everything pop culture.

**Venue:** HITEC Exhibition Center, Hyderabad

**Timings:** 11 am onwards

**Ticket:** Rs 899 onwards (district.in)



### SERVING HITS OCTOBER 2 TO 26

Introduced in 2022, Prime Volleyball League is a professional men's indoor volleyball league that features franchises from ten cities across India. Serving hits, smashes, and attacks, the teams participating include Hyderabad Black Hawks, Ahmedabad Defenders, Bengaluru Torpedoes, Kolkata Thunderbolts, Mumbai Meteors, Goa Guardians etc.

**Venue:** Gachibowli Indoor Stadium, Gachibowli

**Timings:** 6.30 pm onwards

**Ticket:** Rs 99 onwards (bookmyshow.com)

### WITTY QUIPS OCTOBER 26

Comedian Kenny Sebastian returns to Hyderabad with a brand-new set of jokes to tickle your funny bone. The event Kenny Sebastian Live offers a fresh mix of witty quips, including ones about fatherhood and his numerous observations, alongside a playful dash of music.

**Venue:** The Comedy Theatre, Gachibowli

**Timings:** 5 pm onwards

**Ticket:** Rs 1,999 onwards (bookmyshow.com)



### MUSICAL MAESTROS OCTOBER 25

World-renowned Indian percussionist Trilok Gurtu brings to Hyderabad *The Trilok Effect* that unites the vibrant pulse of Indian rhythm with the voices of European jazz. The live performance will feature his long-time collaborators for Europe, Carlo Cantini (violin), Rolland Cabezas (guitar), Jonathan Ihelfield (bass guitar), and Ryan Carniaux.

**Venue:** Shilpakala Vedika, HITEC City

**Timings:** 6.30 pm onwards

**Ticket:** Rs 799 onwards (bookmyshow.com)



### HOUSE MUSIC SENSATION OCTOBER 11

A global house music sensation, Francis Mercier comes to Hyderabad bringing to the stage his unique blend of Afro-house and deep melodic sounds. Catch him live as he presents to his crowd chart-topping hits and signature grooves that have captivated his fans around the world.

**Venue:** Quake Arena, Kondapur

**Timings:** 7 pm onwards

**Ticket:** Rs 1,000 onwards (bookmyshow.com)





## ROAR WITH LAUGHTER

OCTOBER 4

Known for his sharp wit and his sarcastic sense of humor, Pratyush Chaubey will soon be seen making Hyderabadis roar with laughter. From leaving his job as a software engineer to pursue his passion to turning into a popular name in the world of stand-up, this comic has come a long way.

**Venue:** The Comedy Theatre, Gachibowli

**Timings:** 7:30 pm onwards

**Ticket:** Rs 499 onwards (bookmyshow.com)

## 2000'S THROWBACK PARTY

OCTOBER 11 TO 12

Not just a party but pure nostalgia on steroids, the Somad Y2K Hyderabad turns back time to an early 2000's throwback party. Featuring Gaurav Mehta, Anisha, and D-Magnetic, the event will pay a full-blown audiovisual homage to the biggest icons of the Y2K era.

**Venue:** The Moonshine Project, Jubilee Hills

**Timings:** 12:30 am onwards

**Ticket:** Rs 199 onwards (district.in)



## DARK THEATER

OCTOBER 25

Written by Harold Pinter and directed by Yash Bagadia, *The Dumb Waiter* is the latest one-act production from Rangbhoomi. The dark-yet-comical nature of the play centers around two men, Ben and Gus who find themselves at the receiving end of bizarre requests from an unlikely source (a dumb waiter). Blending absurd humor, suspense, and power games, the play touches upon themes of loyalty, authority, and the unknown.



**Venue:** Rangbhoomi Spaces & Events, Hyderabad

**Timings:** 7 pm onwards

**Ticket:** Rs 300 onwards (bookmyshow.com)



## TRIBAL RHYTHMS + MODERN BEATS

OCTOBER 10 TO 11

After six years, the European electronic musical band Hilight Tribe is back in Hyderabad! Get ready as they gear up to bring a night of electrifying tribal rhythms and modern beats that will keep you dancing all night long.

**Venue:** Odeum by Prism, Financial District

**Timings:** 8 pm onwards

**Ticket:** Rs 799 onwards (district.in)

## JEWELRY SHOWCASE

OCTOBER 3 TO 5

A one-stop destination for retail jewelry, Taj Krishna presents Jewelry World Exhibition that explores a unique curation of gold, diamond, polki, jadau, and temple jewelry. Perfect for families with upcoming weddings, and brides-to-be, the world-class craftsmanship on display includes collections from Jaipur, Surat, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Delhi, Kolkata, and Ahmedabad.

**Venue:** Taj Krishna, Banjara Hills

**Timings:** 8 pm onwards

**Ticket:** Rs 49 onwards (district.in)



If you'd like your event listed in the WOW! events' calendar, please mail it to [wowhyderabad2023@gmail.com](mailto:wowhyderabad2023@gmail.com) for the following month, before the 20<sup>th</sup>.



## START-UP

From pocket change to big dreams, **Savart** is making wealth-building simple for everyone

# THE ART OF SAVING MONEY

Sankarsh Chanda wasn't your typical teenager. While most students his age were cramming for exams, he was dreaming of a world where managing money didn't feel like rocket science. That dream became **Savart**, now India's largest SEBI-registered investment advisor, guiding over 13,000 people across 33 countries.

## HOW IT ALL BEGAN

At its heart, Savart is about democratizing wealth. Savart stands for the ART of SAVings. The platform works for anyone – whether you're investing Rs 500 a month from your first job or planning legacies worth crores. "What makes it different is APART, Savart's in-house AI engine. Think of it as your hyper-focused money coach that doesn't get distracted, doesn't panic, and designs portfolios based on your needs – not hunches," says Sankarsh Chanda, Founder & CEO of this financial platform. This Hyderabad-headquartered startup raised over \$5 million from global venture capitalists without government or accelerator support.

*"We envision a world with equal opportunities for everyone to create wealth and live with joy"*

## FROM TEEN DREAM TO GLOBAL PLATFORM

Sankarsh was just 14 when he gave all his scholarship money to his sister so she could invest in stocks and mutual funds. He joined Bennett University solely to seek the mentorship of Ajay Batra, who went to become the first investor and director at Savart. Sankarsh's vision for Savart is to turn the company into an inclusive investment destination for everyone and bridge the gap between the rich and the poor.

## DECODING FINANCE JARGON

"Investment research doesn't have to be expensive and filled with complex jargon. I also understood that investors are unique, and every investor cannot be recommended the same stocks or mutual funds, no matter how well



they perform. It is for these reasons that we at Savart developed an AI-based investment research system that suggests a unique portfolio for each investor based on their lifestyle and financial goals," he explains. Among other things, Sankarsh is a certified research analyst and also the Founder of Stardour Aerospace, a space engineering company building India's first private space shuttle to the moon, Mars and beyond for civilian and scientific research endeavors.

## BIG DREAMS, SMALL STARTS

In India, many people shy away from investing, worried it's "not for them." Savart's mission is to bust that myth. Even someone earning Rs 20,000 a month can start, grow steadily, and dream bigger. It's about turning confusion – like where to start and how

much to save – into clarity and control," adds Sankarsh.

## SCHOOL OF SMART MONEY

Savart also teaches people how to take charge of their financial journeys. Over 250 students worldwide – from NRI families in London to young professionals in Hyderabad – are learning that financial freedom isn't some elusive dream, but a skill you can master.

## NEXT STOP: GLOBAL GOALS

From Tier-2 cities in India to Southeast Asia, Savart wants to take its AI-driven, low-cost model to the world. The next milestone? Managing and growing Rs 350 crore worth of client money under their personalized service while keeping its promise: making professional money management as accessible as streaming your favorite playlist. ■ MANJU





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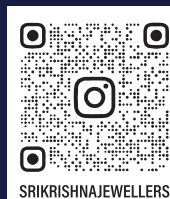
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## SPORTS

Table tennis champ **Sreeja Akula's** recent wins bring her back into the spotlight

## Girl, Uninterrupted

When Hyderabad's Sreeja Akula stunned Manika Batra at the WTT Europe Smash in Sweden last year, the table tennis world took notice. It wasn't just a single win. It was a statement. At 27, Sreeja has firmly established herself as India's top-ranked women's singles player and a name to watch on the global arena.

### RANKED #43

Sreeja's journey began humbly in Hyderabad, where she picked up the paddle as a schoolgirl. Today, she is World No. 43 in women's singles and the highest-ranked Indian in the category. Under the steady mentorship of coach Somnath Ghosh at his Hyderabad academy, she has grown into one of India's most dependable athletes. Her rise has been marked by resilience, consistency and a string of breakthrough victories.

### THE JOURNEY

"My big moment came in 2022 when I won gold in mixed doubles at the

Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. That same year, I clinched the Senior National title in women's singles – my second in a row," she recalls. The same year, Sreeja was honored with the prestigious Arjuna Award.

By 2024, she became the first Indian woman to win international titles with back-to-back victories at WTT Feeder

tournaments. She was also part of the history-making Indian women's team that qualified for the Olympics for the very first time. This year, Sreeja joined hands with sports nutrition brand Unived, adding to her cool factor as a youth icon. And yes, her backspin pushes? They have a separate fanbase!

### SECRET OF HER SUCCESS

So, how does this athlete stay on top of her game? "Every match is important but I rely on yoga, meditation, and psychological coaching besides regular training to stay in form. Winning or losing is not the end of the world. I want to be the same person regardless of results," she says. This sportive spirit is what kept Sreeja going despite not making it (she was a pre-quarter finalist) at the Paris Olympics. Upwards and onwards, for her.

Sacrifices have been part of her journey. Long stretches away from family and the little joys of everyday life – like movies and café hopping – are often put on hold. "But I know why I'm doing this," she says. Eyes on the prize for this young talent. ■ MANJU



### BIG WINS

- **World Rank 37** – Highest ranked Indian table tennis player
- **WTT Contender Lagos 2025** – Runner Up
- **Pre-Quarter finalist** – Paris Olympics 2024
- **WTT Contender Lagos 2024**

**Champion** – First Indian to win a Singles title at WTT Contender

- **WTT Feeder Corpus Christi 2024 Champion** – Her maiden WTT Singles title
- **Arjuna Awardee** – 2022
- **Gold Medallist** – Mixed Doubles, Commonwealth Games 2022





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## CAUSE

From slums to STEM labs, **Akshaya Vidya** is turning dreams into learning, growth, and opportunity for kids and women across Hyderabad

# Lighting Futures, One Child at a Time

Akshaya Vidya began in 2013 with just five students, founded by Tenthu Prasad, who grew up in a rural background and understood that education was the only path to progress. Today, the Hyderabad-based NGO runs 130 centers with over 4,000 students, primarily from underprivileged communities, providing evening tuitions and support for school education.

### LEARNING MADE FUN

Classes run Monday to Saturday from 6 to 8 pm, combining homework help with reading, writing, and comprehension exercises. Sundays are reserved for games and creative activities. Students receive laptops and learn basic computer, communication, and teaching skills. Each tutor is trained monthly at Keshav Memorial School, focusing on interactive, hands-on learning.

### THE BACKSTORY

Tenthu Prasad grew up in a village, struggling in school and failing his 10th grade. But his mother, believing education was the only path forward, never let him give up. After moving to Hyderabad and working in factories, he one day passed through a slum and saw

children playing with discarded cigarette butts – just as he had in his childhood. Moved, he invited them to play and learn instead. They eagerly joined him, but the effort wasn't without risk. Local rowdies, threatened by the change, attacked him (as the children did illegal chores and free labor for them), forcing him to pause. Months later, he returned, encouraged by parents' support who wanted Prasad to take their children under the wings and guide them.

From those first lessons with a handful of children, Akshaya Vidya has grown into 130 centers in Hyderabad, serving over 4,000 students. What started as a simple act of compassion has blossomed into a transformative movement, proving that one person's determination can change countless lives.

### HOW IT WORKS

"Bright girl students from slums are selected and their college fees are covered, along with an honorary payment of Rs 1,500 to Rs 5,000 and a laptop. In return, they teach 30 children in their neighborhood through evening classes. Monthly training at Keshav Memorial School equips them with the

syllabus, teaching skills, and creative tools," says Hyma Jain, project head at Akshaya Vidya.

### SUCCESS STORIES

Some former students now study at IIT Kharagpur, while others work at leading companies like Wipro and TCS. In partnership with Gurukul, Akshaya Vidya has sent over 620 students in three years, with special recognition events for parents and children alike.

### HANDS-ON SCIENCE FOR KIDS

A new STEM center on an acre of land in Tadbund will bring experiential science learning to government and low-income private school students. Scheduled for an official launch in December, it will give children the chance to explore, experiment, and develop a love for STEM subjects. ■ MANJU

### HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Adopt a center or multiple centers
- Sponsor meals through Project Annapurna
- Provide laptops or volunteer to teach (singing, mobile photography, English, storytelling) to the students
- Donations cover essentials – books, stationery, and digital tools – ensuring a holistic, nurturing environment for students and tutors alike





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Five facts about Kannada actor  
**Priyanka Arul Mohan** who's back in  
 Tollywood with *OG*, alongside Pawan Kalyan

# EYES ON THE PRIZE

“I have a team that manages my social media, so I can focus on my work without having to deal with negativity”

## 1. HOMETOWN HEROINE

Straight out of Bengaluru – with a Kannadiga mother and a Tamilian father. Languages? She's got Kannada, Tamil and Telugu in her back pocket.

## 2. FIRST ACT

Remember *Gang Leader* (2019) with Nani? That was her Telugu soft debut, followed by *Sreekaram*. Before that, she was doing theater on campus stages.

## 3. CURRENT MOOD: KANMANI

In *OG*, set in the 1990s, she plays Kanmani. Sweet, innocent, in love with Gambheera (played by Pawan Kalyan) – and quietly shaping his life. “Kanmani will always stay close to my heart,” she asserts.

## 4. ABOUT THE OG STAR PAWAN KALYAN

“Working with him personally made me realize that his

popularity is even more than I imagined. Despite all the fame, he remains grounded. He's a down-to-earth person and very simple,” she says.

## 5. FUN ON THE SETS

Pawan garu and I used to discuss books and novels he's read. He discusses history and sometimes movies and politics. Above all, he talks a lot about people. A real hero on and off screen. He talks books, history, politics – and makes his acting look effortless.”

## 5. ABOUT TROLLS

“I have a team that manages my social media, so I can focus on my work without having to deal with negativity,” says the girl who has her eyes on the prize.

*OG* released on September 25 for the Dusshera weekend in theaters. ■ MANJU



# 24MM Best Photography Studio – Where Moments Become Masterpieces

Every city has its icons—those who shape its culture and define its spirit. In Hyderabad's fast-changing photography industry, one such name has steadily risen, frame by frame: **24MM Best Photography Studio**. What began as a small, passionate team of five to six individuals has today transformed into a powerhouse of creativity with **100+ employees and multiple studios**, each dedicated to capturing life's most unforgettable moments.



From **weddings and private celebrations** to **corporate events, advertising campaigns, and cinematic storytelling**, 24MM Best Photography Studios has redefined how Hyderabad views photography and videography. With deep roots in **visual effects and cinematic artistry**, our team brings a unique perspective to every frame. We don't just capture images—we create **timeless experiences** that resonate for years to come.

## Weddings First, Always

Weddings remain the beating heart of our studio. With unmatched finesse, we weave love stories into

frames that feel straight out of cinema. From the subtle emotion in a bride's glance to the grandeur of the wedding festivities, our films and photographs breathe life into every detail. For couples, their families, and generations to come, these are not just pictures—they are **legacies of love**.

## Expanding Horizons – From Weddings to Corporates

While weddings are our first priority, our next wave of focus is reshaping the **corporate photography and film industry**. Whether it's creating sleek branding videos, capturing the energy of large-scale conferences, or producing polished executive portraits, 24MM Best Photography Studios delivers professional storytelling at the highest standard. Our newest vertical, **AI-powered corporate films in 4K**, combines the latest technology with our storytelling expertise, positioning us at the forefront of India's visual communication revolution.

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India's most in-demand playback singer and Carnatic legend **Sid Sriram** talks to WOW! about his life, love for Carnatic music, his single status and how live performances give him the biggest high

BYLINE: MANJU LATHA KALANIDHI

# “Everything you need is already within you”

Sid Sriram, the Chennai-born, California-raised musical powerhouse, is rewriting the rules of Indian music. From learning Carnatic music at age three from his mother, Latha Sriram, to fine-tuning his craft at Berklee College of Music, Sid effortlessly blends classical roots with soul, R&B, indie, and electronic vibes. He shot to fame with A.R. Rahman's *Adiye (Kadal, 2013)* and hasn't looked back, lending his voice to over 175 hits like *Samajavaragamana* and *Srivalli*. With independent albums like *Entropy* and *Sidharth*, and a slew of awards under his belt, Sid continues to mesmerize fans worldwide. WOW! caught up with him ahead of his Hyderabad concert this year.

**YOUR MULTI-CITY TOURS ARE ONE OF THE MOST ANTICIPATED CONCERTS OF THE YEAR. HOW DIFFERENT IS IT PREPARING FOR A LIVE TOUR COMPARED TO RECORDING IN THE STUDIO?**

Preparing for a live tour is multi-dimensional. First, there's the repertoire – what songs we'll perform, and how to shape the arc of a three-hour set with just me and my band. It's not just about singing; it's about creating a journey and communicating something meaningful. There's the physical preparation too – building vocal stamina and ensuring the band is perfectly in sync.

**RECORDING A SONG OR PERFORMING ON STAGE, WHAT'S YOUR KIND OF PERFORMANCE?**

What makes live shows magical is the unspoken camaraderie – just a glance on stage and we know what's next. Add to that the visuals, lights, and energy of a live audience, and it becomes an entire universe of performance. Recording, by contrast, is far more controlled. You're zoomed in on a single song, one building block. Both processes are creative, but live shows demand a much bigger canvas.

**YOU STARTED WITH CARNATIC MUSIC AT THE AGE OF THREE, YET MOST INDIANS KNOW YOU THROUGH FILMS. DOES IT BOTHER YOU THAT CINEMA OVERSHADOWS YOUR CLASSICAL IDENTITY?**

Not at all. Film music is India's most powerful medium and has always been the biggest form of art and entertainment



here. I feel blessed to live in both worlds – Carnatic music and cinema. Fans who discover me through a Telugu hit like *Inkem Inkem* often explore my Carnatic roots later. Similarly, Carnatic listeners discover my playback work. I see myself as a conduit between these worlds, not limited by them. It's a privilege.

**YOUR LIVE PERFORMANCES FEEL MORE IMMERSIVE THAN STUDIO VERSIONS. DO YOU CONSCIOUSLY IMPROVISE ON STAGE?**

I call it re-imagination. Recorded versions are meant for headphones or speakers, but on stage, I want audiences to experience something new. For example, when we perform *Inkem Inkem*, we give it a rock energy the original doesn't have. At first, it was just an experiment, but seeing the audience's response convinced us to keep it. Every live show has that element of rediscovery.

“I love playback, but my originals and Carnatic music give me other creative outlets”





## A FEW OF MY FAVORITE THINGS

**BOOKS:** *The God of Small Things* and *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*

**MOVIES:** The *Harry Potter* series; *Good Will Hunting* and *Pushpa 1* and *Pushpa 2*

**PASTIME:** When I'm in Colorado, I sing to the deer near my home and watch their ears perk up. It reminds me of the simple, universal grace that flows through everything.

**HYDERABAD HANGOUTS:**  
Moonshine Project and Hotel Leela

### MOMENTS:

1. Recording with A.R. Rahman. I was 21, still in college, and had sent him a cold email the year before. Magically, he responded, and soon after, I was recording a song for *Kadali*. His music had shaped my childhood, so working with him – even over a simple Skype audio session – felt surreal.
2. Performing at Wembley Stadium in 2023. I hadn't been able to travel to London for nearly a decade, so finally being there was special. I opened the concert with a Ganesha prayer in complete darkness, just my voice carrying across the stadium. The moment the lights came on, I saw a packed arena of 12,000 people. That emotion hit me hard. It was overwhelming in the best possible way.

## HOW DO YOU PLAN YOUR CONCERTS?

I structure my concerts so that midway, everything strips down. My band and I step into the spotlight for a more intimate set – four or five songs, including two or three of my originals. That way, I can share deeply personal music like *Dear Sahana* or *Do the Dance*. It keeps me from stagnating. I love playback, but my originals and Carnatic music give me other creative outlets. On this tour, I'll also debut original music in Tamil and Telugu, including *Cheliya*. Performing them live for the first time is something I'm really excited about.

## TOURING IS DEMANDING. WHAT RITUALS OR ROUTINES KEEP YOU GROUNDED?

Sleep is non-negotiable. I ensure eight hours the night before. On concert days, I avoid heavy or spicy food, run for 20 minutes, and watch something light like *The Office* to relax. I also read a little and keep my mind engaged. Before the show, we do sound checks, I review the setlist one last time, then I retreat into quiet for an hour. I always listen to a specific prayer song, then spend 20-30 minutes with my band joking and keeping the mood light. We end with a group prayer before stepping on stage.

## AND AFTER THE CONCERT, HOW DO YOU COME DOWN FROM THAT HIGH?

That's the hardest part. The adrenaline, the audience's energy, and the ringing in my ears don't fade quickly. For two hours after a show, my brain is still buzzing. It's not easy to relax, but I've learned to accept that this is part of the process – the exhilaration is worth it.

## WHAT ARE THE TWO LESSONS LIFE HAS TAUGHT YOU?

1. The more you chase after something, the further it runs from you. Work out of passion and magical things fall into place.
2. Believe that everything you need is already within you and the right opportunities and energies flow naturally toward you.

## WHAT INSPIRES YOU THE MOST?

Everyday life. For example, the other day I saw a little girl asleep on her father's back while he drove her to school. It was such an ordinary sight, but it moved me to tears because it carried so much tenderness. Or sometimes, I'll just stand and watch the rain – that simplicity grounds me. ■

*Sid Sriram Live in Concert*

**5 pm, December 13; At LB Stadium, Hyderabad**

**Tickets:** Rs 3,000 onwards on <https://www.district.in/events/>

## QUICK TAKE

**Current status:** Single and in love with the idea of having someone special. Ready for a relationship

**Mom's pet peeves:** My unruly beard and the way I keep forgetting to put my shoes in the rack when I get home

**On loop right now:** *Maateyraani Chinnadhaani*

**If I could swap voices, it would be with:**  
Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan





For a taste of pan-Indian flavors, visit this restaurant that serves food from Kashmir to Kanyakumari

## Chhoti Si Asaa

With an unwavering faith in the Hyderabad palate to accommodate tastes from Kashmir to Kanyakumari, **ASAA** (meaning 'hope') shines a bright light on India's rich gastronomic legacy. Serving more than just food, the newly launched space hopes to inculcate an appreciation for the stories and the craft that make up each mindfully layered dish.

### CALM AND COLLECTED

ASAA's interiors blend tradition with contemporary design. The comforting aesthetic mirrors the kitchen's adventurous spirit that reintroduces traditional flavors but, with a pinch of magic, via the chefs' creations. Calming hues and tunes fittingly complete the space.

### CASHEW PACHADI AND MORE

The staff welcomes and presents us with a well curated spread. We begin with a mouthful of Avocado and Passion Fruit Pani Puri that includes avocado gojju, crispy nuts, and passion fruit water. Next, we are served the Bottle Gourd Salad made from cashew pachadi, rice crisps, and toasted almonds; Chicken Vepudu, with a mint roti, lemon crema, and mixed lettuce; and Black Pepper Mutton Roast, consisting of corn roti, pickled onion, and coconut.



In large plates, we get a taste of the Olive Cheese Kofta, Mushroom Kulcha, Paneer Khurchan, Jackfruit Kofta Curry, and Mutton Champaran. To conclude, the team served us the creatively crafted Tender Coconut Payasam – a creamy dessert made with compressed coconut, reduced milk, and berry ice cream. ■ IPSHITA

**WOW!**  
Recommends  
Chicken  
Vepudu

**Meal for two: Rs 2,500 onwards**  
Myscape Stories, Financial District  
Tel: 97047 47555  
Timings: 12 pm to 3.30 pm, 7 pm to 11 pm

As an ode to a bygone era, this 50-year-old bungalow-turned-restaurant works with recipes passed down through generations

## Heirloom Fare

A place for the old at heart, **Sa.Ma** (meaning positive energy in Sanskrit and mehfil in Urdu) sits gracefully within a 50-year-old bungalow where heirloom recipes from an ancestral past come alive. Sourcing most of the ingredients from the village of Tenali, Founder Samjana Manne pays tribute to passed-down culinary secrets in remembrance of her grandmother's kitchen.

### KEEPING IT SIMPLE

Tranquility, open spaces, greenery and a streaming water feature holding fish come back in flashes after experiencing Sa.Ma. Striving to preserve old charm and authenticity, this nature-loving sweet spot does away with technologically complicated digital menus, in favor of time-tested hospitality that fosters human connection.

Extending their hospitality to the customers' personal care and needs, a mindful Sa.Ma makes it a point to house essentials like sanitary napkins and other thoughtful items like safety pins, a moisturizer, and locally sourced shawls to keep guests warm on a wintry day.

### MEMORABLE DINING

Highlighting no artificial flavors, colors, or MSG, the menu features an array of dishes that bring back a bygone era. Must-haves include Palak Patta Chaat made from crispy betel nut and spinach leaves, marinated with Indian spices and topped with pomegranate and sweet curd; the very special Kobbaripalu Annam with Gutti Vankaya; the Patthar ka Gosht; Bommadailu Pulusu; and Ammamma's Kodi Pulao. ■ IPSHITA

**Note:** Musicians play sitar and tabla live in the courtyard on Saturday and Sunday evenings.

**Meal for two: Rs 2,500 onwards**

Plot No. 5, Road No. 82, Film Nagar, Jubilee Hills

**Timings:** 12 pm to 12 am

**Instagram:** Sa.ma.india




**WOW!**  
Recommends  
Chilli Garlic  
Lobster






BHARGAVI KUNAM



 [bhargavikunam](https://www.instagram.com/bhargavikunam)

 [bhargavikunam.studio](https://www.bhargavikunam.studio)

snap.snappictures.in

Ph:8885125125, 9989899881, M.L.A. Colony, Road No.12, Banjarahills, Hyderabad.





**Verde**, the new Italian diner at the Inorbit Mall, is a must visit after you've had your fill of arcade games

## Colors of Italy

**Verde**, by The Game Palacio, is the latest Italian fine dining venue on the city's eat-out scene. Verde, which means green in Italian, is on the top floor of the Inorbit mall.

Located behind the newly launched The Game Palacio, it is outdoors, but covered, so you get a glimpse of the sky without the rain or heat. The 140-seater serves a range of drinks, and authentic Italian food. The staff is efficient, friendly and knowledgeable which is a big help.

Among the cocktails, we tried the Limoncello Sour and the Amalfi Coast – but Jeet, the resident mixologist and bartender served up one of his own concoctions – with a whiff of rose syrup and vodka. It overshadowed the ones we'd tried; you can ask him to create one for you.

The food menu is expansive and the portions fairly generous. We sampled the Beetroot Carpaccio Delight, a salad made with sliced beetroots, caramelized

walnuts, rucola or rocket leaves, and goat cheese; and the Prawns and Avocado – grilled prawns, fresh avocado and prawn tartare, drizzled with olive oil. It is a meal in itself.

For mains we had the Gnocchi, the Grilled Jerk Chicken and the Gold Fungi Tartufo – flat bread (pizza in other words; except oblong here, not round). The flat bread, made with exotic mushroom paste, shimeji and porcini, and confit rosemary potatoes and rucola; was the star of the entire meal. Had steaming hot, with a drizzle of olive oil, it was a slice of pizza heaven.

The Chocolate Oak, a layered chocolate mousse, made a fine finish to a truly delicious meal. ■ MINAL

**Meal for two: Rs 2,000 onwards, excluding alcohol**

Level 5, Near PVR Cinemas, Inorbit Mall  
Tel: 8828851118; 8828851119  
Timings: 4 pm to 11 pm



**WOW!**  
Recommends  
Gold Fungi  
Tartufo

PRAWN AVOCADO SALAD





Rohith Rao, the Founder of **True Black Specialty Coffee**, talks about current coffee trends

## “Filter coffee is timeless”



**True Black Specialty Coffee** was launched by Rohith Rao in 2022 and is now based in five locations across Hyderabad. Starting as a home brewer and learning during his travels, he says, “I wanted to build a space that placed coffee at the center. We designed minimal, sensory spaces that invite people to slow down and connect.”

### WITH SO MANY CAFÉS OPENING UP, HOW DOES THE MENU STAY AHEAD OF THE GAME?

Staying ahead isn't just about introducing trendy menu items. For us, it begins with sourcing exceptional green coffee and roasting in small batches based on demand. It's that focus on quality, freshness, and process that keeps the coffee vibrant. Many of the drinks – like espresso tonic, orange coffee, dirty coffee, cortados, and cream-topped beverages – were first introduced by us.



### WHAT NEW TRENDS ARE DOING THE ROUNDS WITH COFFEE?

One of the biggest trends right now is cream-topped iced coffees – where aerated cream, often infused with flavor, is floated over cold brews and iced lattes. It's a contemporary take on Viennese coffee, or Einspänner, and it's catching on quickly.

### WHAT IS HYDERABAD DRINKING RIGHT NOW?

Though still in the early stages of its coffee revolution, city people are exploring everything from exceptional single-estate specialty coffees brewed as pour overs, to cream-topped iced lattes and cold brews, to matcha-based drinks. There's also a growing appetite for seasonal exclusives – flavored coffees, ingredient-driven mocktail-style brews, and curated menus that rotate every few weeks.

### TELL US ABOUT COFFEE RAVES.

There is a shift in how younger people socialize. They're no longer waiting until sundown to connect – social circles today form through shared interests like run clubs, ride clubs, collectors' meets, and coffee raves.

Coffee spaces are becoming platforms. They're no longer just about the drink – they're places where community and culture intersect. Whether it's through music, movement, or conversation, the energy is different – and it's happening in daylight, over cups of coffee, not cocktails.

### WHERE DOES THE EVERGREEN FILTER COFFEE FIGURE AMIDST THE NEW SPARTAN-DÉCOR, HANDMADE POTTERY-BISTRO FOOD CAFÉS?

Filter coffee is timeless – and nothing about the rise of minimal café design or handmade ceramics takes away from that. These newer spaces are reintroducing Indian coffee drinkers to quality, intention, and slowness – the same values that traditional filter coffee has always carried.

While we don't serve filter coffee at True Black, many of our peers do include it on their menus. That's the beauty of the scene right now – it's not about old versus new, but about offering different expressions of craft with better coffee beans. ■ MINAL



**WOW!**  
Recommends  
Munshi Naan  
with Kheema  
Kaleji

ITC Kakatiya has revived their popular midnight buffet with traditional Hyderabadi dishes on offer

## Late Night Food

ITC Kakatiya, Begumpet, has relaunched its weekend **Midnight Buffet** at Deccan Pavilion last month. Available on Friday and Saturday, this late night spread of biryani, comfort dishes, and refreshing beverages has been especially curated for Hyderabad's night owls, travellers, and party lovers. “The midnight indulgence is part of the hotel's 30th anniversary celebrations,” says General Manager Abhishekh Menon.

### WHAT'S ON THE PLATE

While biryani continues to be the show stopper (with options such as Murgh Dum Biryani, Kachchey Gosht ki Biryani and Hyderabadi Subz Dum Biryani), there are other local dishes such as the Hyderabadi Nihari, Kadu ka Dalcha plus delish Kheema Kaleji on offer. “Don't forget to relish them with Munshi Naan, the square ones with a local twist,” says chef Bhaskar Sankhari. For the uninitiated, this naan is square shaped so that four people can literally ‘break the bread’ and begin their meal, the chef informs.

### SWEET CRAVINGS

For desserts, dig into Khubani Ka Meetha and Shahi Tukda. “The midnight buffet brings warmth, comfort and togetherness long after the city sleeps,” he adds. The hotel was famous for satiating the midnight cravings of the city folk 25 years ago, and now they have revived it in its full glory. The dishes have been curated to bring back the nostalgia factor to the Hyderabadi, the chef adds. ■ MANJU

**Meal for two: Rs 1,800 plus taxes**

Deccan Pavilion, Hotel ITC Kakatiya,  
Begumpet  
Tel: 040-23400132  
Timings: 11:30 pm to 1 am; Friday and Saturday

**WOW!**  
Recommends  
Dirty Coffee



WOW! recommends these stalls to eat, drink and shop at, in and around the new Secretariat building in Tank Bund

# Secretariat Road: The new food hub



## BABU'S KITCHEN - DESSERTS

You'll find a bike with a huge white insulated cooler box across the street, right in front of the new Secretariat building gate. This is where you will find melt-in-the-mouth desserts. They have a variety of desserts from the famous Kunafa Chocolate to local specials like Sheer Kurma, Apricot Delight, Khubani ka Meetha, and also malai varieties with seasonal fruits like mango and mulberry. We recommend their Apricot Delight, which has two sponge cakes layered with sweet and tart apricots in between.

**Price:** Rs 70 to Rs 200  
**Opp.** New Secretariat building Gate  
**Tel:** 8374241103

## STREET KEBABZ

Find your sizzling hot and freshly grilled kebabs at this barbeque tricycle in the corner, opposite NTR Gardens. They serve pineapple skewers and boneless and chicken on bone kebab skewers here, which have a crowd waiting to devour them at weekends. If you're lucky, you might get your hands on some before they're sold out for the day.

**Price:** Rs 50 to Rs 100  
**Opp.** NTR Garden, Outlet no. 4  
**Tel:** 8977099077



## BEVERAGE AFFAIR

Grab a drink to go at this place opposite NTR gardens near pillar no. 15, whether it's the Desi Masala Cola or the viral Milk Boba or a variety of mocktails served with the option of adding some popping Boba. The vendor mixes the concoction with his own blend of tapioca pearls freshly made for you to enjoy as you walk along to find more food to try.

**Price:** Rs 100 to Rs 180  
**Opp.** NTR Garden Pillar no. 15  
**Tel:** 9705993061  
**Instagram** - beverage\_affair\_



soft and chewy bites. Other versions are available with chicken or prawns and extra cheese as add-ons.

**Price:** Rs 39 to Rs 89  
**Opp.** NTR Garden Gate

## FUNDIR 2.0

This business has the most aesthetic setup opposite the NTR Garden Gate and sells a variety of home-baked goodies, both hot and cold. Their desserts include tres leches, brownies, and cheesecakes. They even take orders for events and online, which are delivered to your doorstep via Rapido. ■ KARTHEEKA

**Price:** Rs 90 to Rs 250  
**Opp.** NTR Garden Gate  
**Tel:** 7997899992  
**Instagram** - fundir\_tomelt



## SURPRISE SHOPPING FINDS

In front of the new Secretariat building, you'll find a bunch of pencil portraits stuck to the fence and an artist live



sketching with a crowd of onlookers. If you've got some time on your hands, visit Siva Arts; the artist draws live A3 pencil portraits for Rs 500, or you can even WhatsApp him your pictures for which he charges around Rs 1200 to Rs 2500, depending on the details. Opposite NTR Garden near a bridge, you'll find a bunch of oxidized jewelry vendors, alongside other shops selling henna tattoo stamps, wooden keychains, toys, and letter beads bracelet makers. Here, you can shop for some accessories starting from Rs 200 and above, depending on the customization.



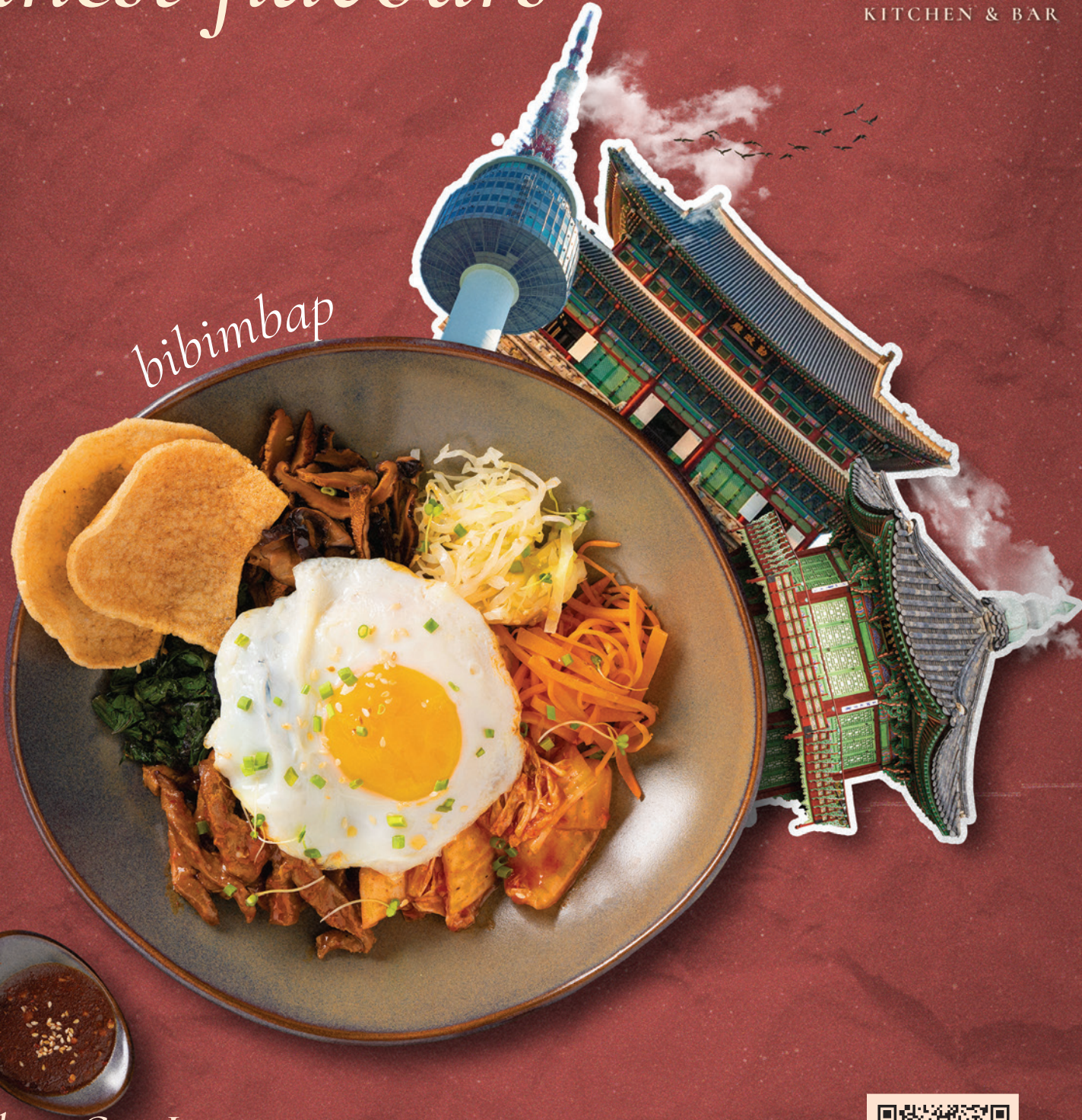


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Rebelling against labels, this brand from Tamil Nadu offers a fresh perspective on statement jewelry

## WEARABLE ART



**WOW!**  
**Recommend:**  
 Equator  
 Earrings

Quietly shattering the glass ceiling of predefined labels is the gender-neutral and minimal-bold **NO NA MÉ**. Symbolizing self-expression beyond names, tags, or stereotypes, the Tirunelveli-based homegrown brand offers both hand-and-machine-made statement jewelry for the discerning individual.

“We focus on creating design-forward pieces which are architectural, versatile, and wearable works of art that feel both contemporary and timeless,” says Smruti Mathisekaran, Founder and Principal Designer of the award-winning brand.

### BACK TO THE ROOTS

With a background in Civil Engineering and Interior Design, Smruti rooted herself in form and design. “Over the years, I’ve worked on furniture and architecture projects, but jewelry became my chosen medium because it’s so personal – it sits on the body, it moves with you, and it allows you to express who you are,” she explains.

### BOLD, FUTURISTIC AND SCULPTURAL

Multi-functional in style, NO NA MÉ’s exquisite pieces include earrings,

necklaces, brooches, ear clip-ons, nose rings, hair and hand adornments, all crafted from brass with gold plating. They also work with leather, solid wood and transparent resin in combination with metal, creating bold, futuristic, and sculptural forms.



Primarily operating online and through pop-ups, the brand has taken part in over 20 curated pop-ups across India so far, including Hyderabad. Some of its pieces can also be found showcased at Theory of Everything in Banjara Hills, perfect for those who would like to explore the collection within a physical setup.

Ending on a hopeful note, Smruti shares, “Every NO NA MÉ piece is created with intention – to feel like an extension of your personality. We hope more people discover our work, experiment with styling, and make it their own.” ■ IPSHITA

**Price:** Rs 1,400 onwards

**Tel:** 98330 30346

**Instagram:** noname.makings

**Website:** nonamejewelry.in

This youth-centric brand is winning the hearts of kurti-wearing students

## Twist to Tradition

### WHAT’S IT ABOUT

**Ishanaa** is a small, Hyderabad-based, online-only business started by friends Vedanth, Pratham, Tanisha and Bhavika (they prefer to be known by their first names because it is cool and casual) as a university project with the vision of making ethnic wear more accessible, versatile and fun. “Our idea is to take the elegance of traditional kurtis and give them a modern twist so they feel relevant to today’s generation,” says the CEO, Vedanth.

### THE RANGE

They design short kurtis that are stylish yet comfortable, with cuts, colors, and patterns that suit both casual and semi-formal settings. The pieces are lightweight, easy to carry, and versatile enough to be styled differently – whether you want a relaxed everyday look or something a little more festive. The idea is to give people affordable fashion that doesn’t compromise on style.

### BESTSELLERS

Two of Ishanaa’s most loved kurtis are the Vaani (blue) and the Qala. Customers love them for their unique designs – the Vaani with its playful modern touches and the halter neck and the prettiest back design; and the Qala kurti that can also be worn as a dress. These pieces perfectly capture the brand’s philosophy of blending traditional charm with contemporary trends, making them favorites among its audience. ■ AKSHITHA

**Price:** Rs 450 onwards

**Tip:** Their dandiya and Diwali collection has just dropped  
 @ishanaa.shop





Taking Banarasi craftsmanship to the global stage

## HERITAGE REIMAGINED

Symbolizing three guiding ideals: Pure, handmade, and Banaras, **Tilfi** is a craft-and-design-led house widely recognized for its handwoven textiles. The iconic Banarasi saree can be found at its heart – a foundation on which the brand is now building a new legacy with its venture into another ancient craft from its home city: metal repoussé.

### WHAT IS METAL REPOUSSÉ?

“Metal repoussé is one of the oldest craft traditions of Banaras, predating even its handlooms,” explains the CEO and Co-Founder, Aditi Chand. “It involves hammering sheets of metal from the reverse to raise patterns in relief. Historically, it was seen in temple décor and ritual objects.”

### THE MINDS BEHIND THE CRAFT

United in their commitment to heritage and innovation, Co-Founders Aditi Chand, Ujjwal Khanna, and Udit Khanna collectively bring their unique strengths to the table – mindfully preserving Tilfi’s

roots while innovatively transforming it with renewed vision.

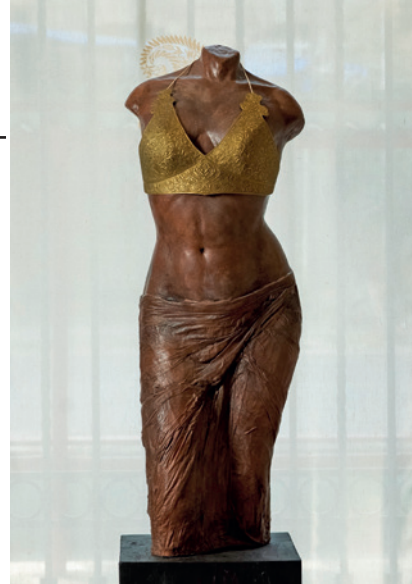
“We see ourselves as custodians of the city’s textile legacy, while also expanding its design vocabulary for a contemporary, global audience,” they share.

### A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

Tilfi works in collaboration with metal repoussé craftsmen based in Banaras and Delhi. Created using brass paired with wood, the crafts span intricate repoussé wall panels, sculptural artworks, and furniture pieces like coffee and console tables. Their product lineup also includes collectibles in platters, trays, coasters, candle stands, and bottle holders. Furthermore, they are set to explore lights next, delving into yet another expression of metal as art.

### HIGHLIGHTS FROM DESIGN DEMOCRACY

Celebrating the heritage of Banaras, Tilfi unveiled their metal collection at Design



Democracy in September. Highlights included the gilded drape console table, the Devangana blouse sculpture, and the opus Meghdoot brass wall art that narrates Kalidasa’s ode to longing and devotion – a quietly resonant expression of emotional distance through the use of three repoussé panels. ■ IPSHITA

**Price: Rs 8,000 onwards**

**Tel:** 73037 41333

**Instagram:** @tilfi\_banaras

**Website:** www.tilfi.com



This pet health and wellness brand makes nutraceutical supplements for your fur kids in the form of tasty treats

## Absolutely Pawsitive

When dog lover and pet parent Jahnvi Maganti returned to India after her education in the UK, she joined hands with her brother-in-law, Vijay Sivaraju, to solve a problem every pet parent knows too well: keeping pets healthy without medical overloads. The result? **Absolut Pet** – India’s first pet health and wellness brand that’s turning supplements into tasty treats.

“We decided to launch treat-like supplements because the products in the market were in the form of powders, capsules, or tablets that were cumbersome to feed and an added expense,” explains Jahnvi. “We didn’t want to overload their systems with more medicines. Instead, we wanted to give pets something tasty, with natural ingredients that addressed their health concerns through proper nutrition.”

With urban lifestyles and lack of exercise taking a toll on pets, conditions such as arthritis, hip dysplasia, gut issues, itchy

skin, and poor immunity have become increasingly common. Absolut Pet makes a proprietary range of supplements that work like good-for-you treats. The founders are particular about ingredient quality. Sourced globally, they use green-lipped mussel from New Zealand, and collagen from Japan, among others. “These chews are completely natural with no preservatives,” says Jahnvi. “The manufacturer and I personally taste a chew from every batch made! The products are all human-grade.”

With pet parents seeing visible improvements in just two weeks, these chews help pets live longer and healthier lives. With plans to launch more products in the near future, Absolut Pet is the easier and healthier treat for your fur kids. ■ MINAL

**Price: Rs 499 to Rs 1,499**

Available on [absolutpet.in](http://absolutpet.in), amazon.in and [supertails.com](http://supertails.com)



On the hunt for some cool fits?  
Enter this bear cave and discover yourself

## BEAR ESSENTIALS



After gaining recognition on Season 4 of *Shark Tank India*, Bengaluru-based **The Bear House** threw open its first flagship store in Hyderabad, following its presence at Broadway. Launched this year by co-founders and sibling duo Tanvi and Harsh Somaiya, this contemporary menswear brand's

essence lies in its reimagining of smart casuals with fine craftsmanship and minimalist European aesthetics.

### THE BEAR HOUSE PHILOSOPHY

Harsh explains the simple philosophy that drives them, "If we can design and manufacture premium products for global brands, why can't Indian consumers enjoy the same quality and style? We saw an opportunity to challenge the status quo and redefine the online shopping experience. With our deep expertise in manufacturing for international labels, we're committed to delivering that same global quality, comfort, and sophistication to the Indian customer."

### CONTEMPORARY MENSWEAR

Situated at the MPM Times Square Mall, the street-facing store opens to a 1,200 sq. ft. area complete with comfort wear with sizes ranging from small to 3XL. Discussing why Hyderabad has been a pivotal market for them,

Tanvi shares, "We've seen tremendous traction online from the city, and this store – with its strategic location and external access – is designed to offer our customers a seamless and elevated offline experience."

Upon entering the store, friendly staff welcomes us and guides us across each section that collectively house shirts, oversized t-shirts, polos, bottoms, hoodies, jackets, and sweatshirts that come in cotton, denim, linen, nylon, and polyester among other fabrics.

The clothing can be perfectly complemented by accessories on display that include denim caps, necklaces, belts, sneakers, card holders, shades, and bags. The pieces we adored included the oversized tees with positive reinforcement quotes, and the perfectly snug and soft black-and-white cotton jacket. ■ IPSHITA

**Price: Rs 1,499 onwards**

Shop No. 5, MPM Times Square Mall  
Nagarjuna Circle Junction, Road No. 1,  
Banjara Hills

**Timings:** 10 am to 10 pm  
**Instagram:** @bearhouseindia



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From Masaba Gupta to Tarun Tahiliani, here are some of the most powerful eponymous Indian labels to shop at this Diwali

# THE FESTIVE EDIT



## MASABA GUPTA

Bold, vibrant and whimsical prints have made this young couturier a millennial icon. With her one-of-a-kind sensibilities, Masaba Gupta holds a palpable presence in today's fashion scene.



## SABYASACHI

Enchanting admirers across the globe, fashion powerhouse Sabyasachi's instantly recognizable aesthetic seamlessly blends old-world charm with contemporary swag that is unapologetically maximalist at its core.



## RITU KUMAR

Known for her intricate embroidery, indigenous weaves, and effortless grace, the doyen of Indian fashion, Ritu Kumar masterfully embraces our textile heritage, uniting tradition with modern silhouettes.







### MANISH MALHOTRA

From generation-defining Bollywood extravagance to arresting runway hits, Manish Malhotra never ceases to amaze with his ability to constantly reinvent his style with dramatic ease.

### TARUN TAHILIANI

A master of drapes, renowned couturier Tarun Tahiliani presents designs that feature intricate draping, meticulous embroidery and a captivating fusion of traditional Indian craftsmanship and modern silhouettes.



### ANAMIKA KHANNA

Known for her fusion-laden silhouettes and her unique use of applique, Anamika Khanna excels at striking a balance between cutting-edge drapes and classic Indian embroidery.



### MARD BY ABU JANI SANDEEP KHOSLA

Offering exclusive menswear, the celebrated designer-duo behind Mard by Abu Jani Sandeep Khosla blend modernity with traditional sensibility rooted in regal embroidery techniques.

■ IPSHITA



### ANITA DONGRE

A refined blend of lightness, practicality and femininity characterizes the exquisite creations of Anita Dongre. What sets the ace designer apart is her commitment to sustainability and skillful artistry.







*Featured here is a **Full Leather Motorised Power, Home Theater Recliner with Wireless Charging Console.***





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**WEDDINGS ARE CELEBRATIONS OF THE HIGHEST FORM AND THE TREND CHANGES EVERY YEAR, WHILE STILL BEING ROOTED IN TRADITION.**

If it's a mangalsutra meets Bvlgari and vaddanams with Cartier love bracelets for the bridal look, it's paan-flavored macarons and rasam shots at the buffet counters. In décor, it is jasmines meet LED mandaps. From AI tech to drone photography and dessert trees, WOW! talks to the experts and lists out the wedding trends of this year

BY MANJU LATHA KALANIDHI WITH  
INPUTS FROM IPSHITA RAMAN

ACTOR TAMANNAAH BHATIA IN KALKI'S BRIDAL COUTURE 2025



# Weddings 2025

## TRADITIONS REIMAGINED



### LOOKS FOR THE BRIDE AND GROOM BY CONTEMPORARY DESIGNERS

#### JAYANTI REDDY

This wedding season, she continues to build on the sharara and peplum top silhouettes with a modern twist. "I've noticed that brides restyle shararas with a button-down shirt or a peplum

top with skirts, trousers or dhoti pants. That's a good trend as couture should get upcycled," says Jayanti Reddy. She exhibited her collection at the FDCI Manifest Wedding Weekend 2025 in August in Delhi. "The look this year is a touch of art movements like baroque and art deco which make their presence felt in terms of motifs and embroidery. Modern heirlooms are the word," she adds.

Tel: 91214 32255



ACTORS SIDHARTH MALHOTRA AND JANHVI KAPOOR  
IN WEDDING COUTURE BY GAURAV GUPTA



## GAURAV GUPTA



Gaurav Gupta's Indian Couture 2025 collection, titled 'Quantum Entanglement', was launched in Mumbai in August. It draws inspiration from the theory that two particles remain eternally connected, mirroring the emotional synchronicity of Indian wedding rituals. It's all about couture through mirrored silhouettes, dual-toned pairings, and embroidery echoing shared memories this year.

**According to him, here's what trending now:**

### DESIGN:

Saree gowns, sculpted lehengas, and intricately engineered gowns inspired by art nouveau architecture and glacial planes.

### COLORS:

Soft blush and champagne gold to graphite, obsidian black, and electric blue.

### WEAVES AND TECHNIQUES:

- Cathedral-style veils, trailing in translucent layers; brocades handwoven in Banaras over 200 days were embroidered with crystal webs, hand-cut florals, gilded zari, and antique jewelry-inspired detailing.
- Lace developed in Chantilly, France, reimagined into futuristic forms.
- Semi-precious stones, mother-of-pearl inlays, and woven textures embedded like reborn heirlooms, mapped with temple-like intricacy.
- Laser-cut 3D florals and handwoven corsetry.
- Gaurav's ten-piece bridal segment reimagined Indian bridalwear through an architectural, emotional, and deeply contemporary lens. "This is a deeply personal reflection on ritual, memory, and reimagination," he shared. Rich vermilion red lehengas shimmered with over 60,000 bugle beads, zardozi florals, and embedded Preciosa glass crystals, each placement catching the light like constellations across the body. Pastel creations in blush, sage, and ecru offered a more ethereal expression, featuring 3D embroidery and soft ombré beadwork.
- The house's iconic cascading lehenga silhouette (first introduced a decade ago) was reborn in gilded Banarasi brocade, sculpted for the bridal aisle in near-mythic proportions. It added an otherworldly dimension, designed not to veil the bride, but to elevate her presence. These veils became architectural halos, amplifying the silhouette's drama while echoing the collection's themes of cosmic connection and sacred union.

### GROOM WEAR:

For the modern groom, it is classic tuxedos, bandhgalas, and jackets reimagined with unexpected twists like safety pins and hand-woven lapels. The pieces featured animal-esque embroidery, planet-shaped beads, and orbiting metal pins – cosmic embellishments that brought a mythic, future-facing energy to traditional silhouettes. Gaurav's first-ever grooms' wear capsule comprises ten meticulously constructed ceremonial outfits featuring architectural tailoring, sculptural kurtas, and modern bandhgalas.

Tel: 96500 47853

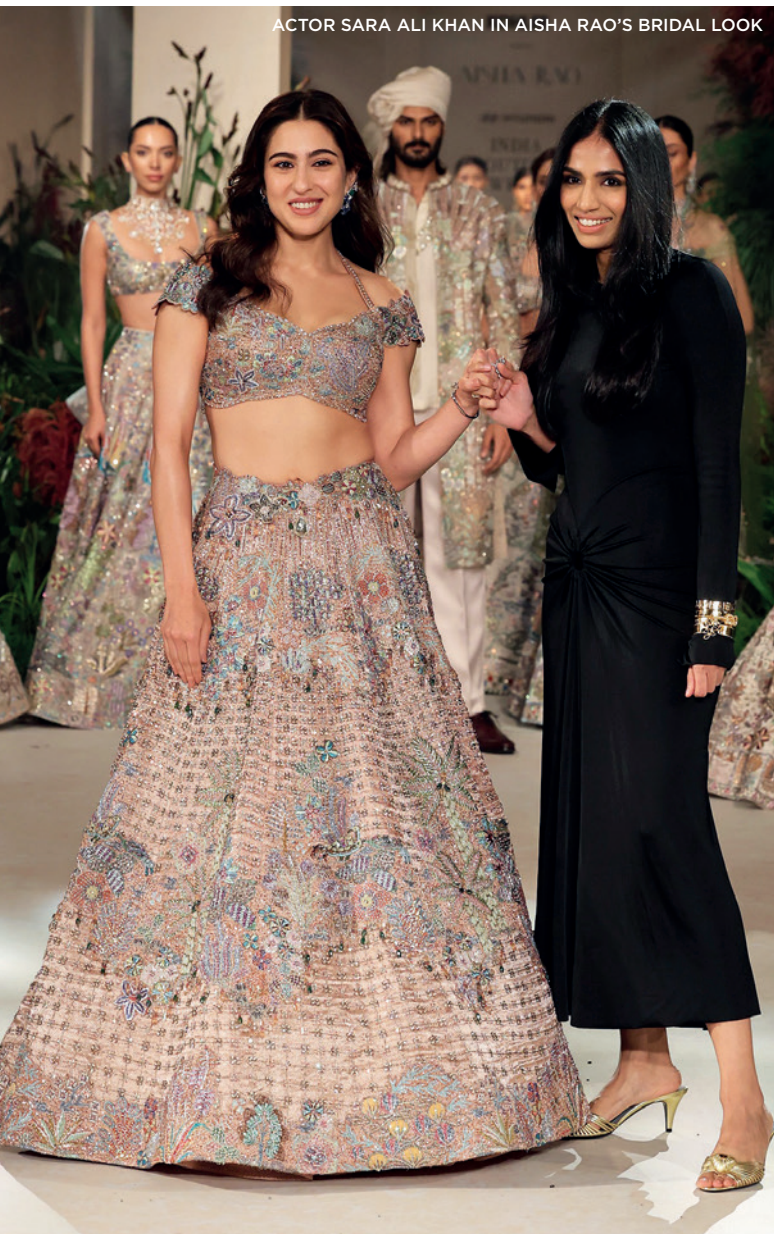


## AISHA RAO

This year, Sara Ali Khan looked radiant in Aisha Rao's pearl dusk lehenga – a rose gold appliquéd and crystal-embellished Banarasi tissue brocade ensemble, featuring geometric checks and whimsical florals. It was paired with an off-shoulder blouse with halter-strap tassel detailing.

"Our palette this year is focused on brides and the entire wedding season. We've spent months fine-tuning every shade – whether it's getting the perfect depth of red or balancing the richness of teal berry, which feels fresh and festive. Lush green brings a sense of celebration, while molten metallics like rose gold and antique champagne add just the right amount of shimmer for bridal and festive looks. Every color has been thought through to feel joyful, memorable, and versatile for weddings," says Aisha.

Tel: 96765 89864



ACTRESS SARA ALI KHAN IN AISHA RAO'S BRIDAL LOOK



## GAZAL GUPTA

Her bridal look is red and pink with intricate zardozi and sequin work across the panels. The scalloped hem, adorned with gold embroidery, added a touch of old-world grandeur. The blouse carries ornate beadwork, a plunging neckline, and tassel detailing on the sleeves, striking the perfect balance between classic bridal craftsmanship and contemporary boldness. The dupatta, lightweight yet richly embellished, completes the ensemble while enhancing its layered textures.

Tel: 74285 79263





**VAISHALI AGARWAL**

The coming year will see a stronger exploration of modern silhouettes, blending the elegance of heritage techniques with the boldness of contemporary design. From pre-draped styles that bring ease to bridal dressing, to structured corsets and statement jackets that add a global edge, the brand is committed to offering brides, ensembles that are versatile, powerful, and uniquely their own. My journey in 2025 is about honoring legacy while fearlessly experimenting and creating bridal looks that resonate with individuality, and stand as enduring works of art.

Tel: 74285 79263

Prices on request for all designers



**COVER GIRL FASHION**

Actor Tamannaah Bhatia is the Kalki bride this year wearing KALKI's Bridal Couture 2025. This collection celebrates authenticity and individuality, blending heritage craftsmanship with contemporary flair to create ensembles that move effortlessly from mandap moments to after party magic.

The bridal look, according to Saurabh Gupta of Kalki is, "Lehengas with dupattas, corset blouses, fish cut lehengas, and airy organza gowns. For grooms, sherwanis, bandhgalas, Jodhpuris, and tuxedos in silk, velvet, and brocade."

**COLORS:**

For brides, it is reds and maroons to romantic pinks, ivories, pastels, metallic golds, and rich jewel shades. For grooms, it is ivories and creams to deep navy, charcoal, and burgundy.



What the OGs of the design world are saying

# Fashion Fundas

Ignoring spectacle and refusing to conform, the modern heritage silhouettes by Sabyasachi present a blend of maximalism and minimalism with memory and intention. The delicate pieces within the collection feature elegant lehengas paired with understated dupattas.

## JACKETS

Perfect for a winter wedding, this modern-day silk and satin jacket by Ritu Kumar is steeped in Indian aesthetics. Blending regal tones with contemporary design, it is made richer with the use of delicate zardozi embroidery along the edges.

## CORSET SAREES

"For 2025, corset sarees and lehengas with a contemporary twist will undoubtedly be at the forefront of bridal fashion," Manish Malhotra told *Vogue India* earlier this year. His collection Inaya presented an oyster-colored satin organza saree with gold ruffles. He paired this with a one shoulder stone encrusted corset and matching in-skirt.

## FUTURISTIC BRIDE

Somewhere alongside traditional and contemporary couture lie futuristic designs. Inspired by the quantum theory, this piece by Gaurav Gupta reinterprets Indian weddings through grace and emotional resonance.



A REGAL JACKET



CHIKANKARI SHERWANI



FUTURISTIC DESIGNS

## CAPES

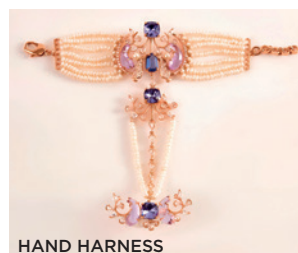
Ditch veils for capes, better yet, hooded capes. For those adventurous enough to incorporate an innovative look for their big day, the hooded bridal cape might be the perfect place to begin. Case in point, on her wedding day, actress Lily Collins rocked this look with ease.

## CLASSIC SHERWANI

Nothing beats a classic sherwani. Featuring Chikankari thread work, pearls, and diamonds, this ensemble by Tarun Tahiliani is made up of a hakoba open stole, salwar, and jacquard kurta.

## ASYMMETRICAL KURTAS

Asymmetrical kurtas are all the rage right now. Exclusively handcrafted, this piece by Shantanu and Nikhil features a black kurta in a poly blend, viscose, lycra and faux leather base with metallic chains and 3D crest detailing.



HAND HARNESS

## ACCESSORIES

Balancing the new with the old in accessories, women can explore contemporary reinterpretations of mangalsutras, kaleeras, and hand harnesses, while men can opt for the timeless safas with kalgis and refined brooches.



SAFA & KALGI



URSHILA WITH HER FIANCÉ, SAIKIRAN



## BRIDE TALK

# 'I found my dream lehenga on Pinterest, finally'

### THE BRIDE:

Urshila Rao, founder of sustainable clothing brand OG & Co, is tying the knot on October 11.

### SAREES:

Kancheepuram silks for muhurat and sangeet; White-and-gold Kerala saree for Haldi; an intricately designed Kolkata lehenga from Moledrow for sangeet (so detailed, it could pass for a Sabyasachi or Manish Malhotra). Wedding outfits by Vaishali Agarwal with Kancheepuram silk – orange saree for her; dhoti-pancha-kanduva set for fiancé Saikiran; gold tissue for parents.

### BLOUSES:

From Vaishali Agarwal and my regular tailors Kriaa (Banjara Hills) and Suvarna (Kondapur)

### RECEPTION:

After endless trials, she found her dream lehenga designed by an obscure designer who was tough to find online. "After a few video calls, we finalized it for Rs 1.2 lakh. The same with any other designer would have cost me thrice that," she shares.

### BEAUTY PREP:

- Focus on healthy eating, workouts, rest.
- Basic skincare at Glow Clinic to keep tan away.
- Believes "what's inside shows on the outside."

### COUNTDOWN MOOD:

Nervous, but excited!

## JEWELRY

Leading jewelry stores tell us what is popular right now

## Tradition with fashion forward vibe

### KISHANDAS & CO

Tradition with fashion forward spirit is what are creating this year. The theme is regal elegance with modern minimalism. The shift is from traditional jadaus to versatile modern pieces. Jewelry should tell a story. They are not chasing trends, but embracing heritage. As always, diamonds rule, followed by gold and platinum for the showstopper jewelry.

Tel: 70457 92992

### KRISHNA DIAMONDS & GOLD

Chunky South Sea and freshwater pearls paired with diamonds are redefining the bridal neckpiece. Brides are choosing statement necklaces and complete sets that shimmer with pearls, diamonds, and heritage motifs, yet pair them with everyday wearables like delicate pendants, stud earrings, and slim bracelets. Stackable bangles, haath phools, and cascading maang tikkas bring ceremonial drama,



while modular designs let you mix, match, and reuse them across events. Grooms are embracing refined chains, cuff-style kadas, rings, and brooches, sometimes accented with pearls or gemstones, blending elegance with personality.

*Krishna Pearls & Jewellers and Krishna Diamonds & Gold*

Tel: 91549 51640

Ear chains (mateelu or champaswaralu), convertible jewelry (a bracelet that can turn into a choker) is what brides are going for. Hand-chains or haath phools are also the new statement jewels. Firoza and colorful stones are popular right now. Emeralds and color pops, rose cuts, a maang tika and nath combo creates a stunning look.

*Snigdha Bharutla, a jewelry stylist for weddings*

## RENTED CLOTHES AND JEWELRY

NRIs who do not want to carry heavy wedding outfits and the new age sustainability trend is leading to a surge in rentals for bridal ensembles and jewelry. Here are some options.

*The Dress Bank Hyderabad, Tel: 90361 73055*

*Flyrobe, Tel: 70751 74369*

*Vijaishree Jewels, Tel: 80005 50511*

*Shree Rishab Jewellers, Tel: 78518 64266*

*Price: Starts Rs 5,000 per outfit/piece with a returnable safety deposit*



## HAIR & MAKEUP TRENDS

### COMFORT OVER STYLE

#### STYLE AND SILHOUETTE:

Sleek, comfortable hairstyles – minimal buns, puffs, or heavy traditional poola jadas.

#### FLORAL DÉCOR:

Exotic, lightweight, long-stay flowers; for the muhurtam, hair extensions with jasmine draping are trending right now.

#### ACCESSORIES:

A sleek maang tika paired with heirloom hairpieces (from mothers or grandmothers) for a personal, sentimental touch. Bejewelled tiaras and headbands are in.

#### HAIR PREP AND HACKS

Wash hair a day before the wedding to save time and energy. If you have curly hair, opt for those that leverage your curls instead of straightening it.

Allocate three hours for hair and makeup on the wedding day.

#### GROOMS:

Avoid experimenting with haircuts, colors, or beard/moustache styles a week before the wedding – no surprises!

*Prathiba Raj, freelance hairstylist*

*Price: Rs 5,000 onwards per look*

*Tel: 62814 01212*



A TRENDING BRIDAL HAIRSTYLE

## Soft and sweet, not loud and heavy

#### WHAT'S IN:

- **Face and skin:** Subtle glow, refined dewy look; soft highlighter on cheekbones and temples; “heroines’ bridal glow.”
- **Eyes:** Smoky eyes with touches of pink, warm neutrals, browns, and charcoal for subtle drama; black eyeliner paired with neutral shades.
- **Lips and blush:** Soft lips, light blush; natural brows; nude or soft lip outlines with gentle gradient to darker shades.
- **Finish:** Matte for photos; minimal and refined overall; airbrush technique for layering if weather permits.

#### WHAT'S OUT:

- Face whitening or heavy foundation.
- Glitter or overly shimmery highlights.
- Harsh contouring.
- Bright reds and intense pinks as primary lip shades.

### PREPARATION AND TRIALS

#### TRIAL MAKEUP:

Recommended. Costs approximately Rs 2,500; includes testing saree shade and hair styling.

#### SKIN PREP:

Start a week before with a warm, light facial for a healthy glow.

#### HYDRATION AND HEALTH:

Drink lots of water; sleep is non-negotiable; avoid junk food, fried foods, and anything causing acne or rashes.

#### FITNESS:

Gentle walks starting a month before for overall glow and wellbeing.

*Anussha Mytrea, Director,*

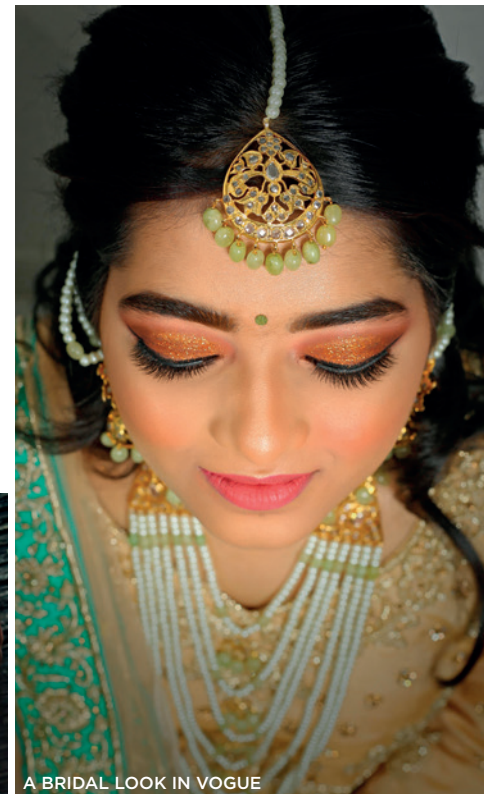
*Cocoon Salons*

*Tel: 88833 39155*

*Price: Rs 10,000 onwards per look (includes hair, makeup and saree draping and two saree changeovers). Extra if the wedding venue is out of town and midnight reporting time for an early morning wedding*



ANUSSHA MYTREYA



A BRIDAL LOOK IN VOGUE



## LOCATIONS AND VENUES

# Big is beautiful

From getting married in the sky (yes, you can book an entire aircraft for it) to a palace or a lavish convention hall, there are a host of wedding venues available for weddings.

## TRENDING NOW

Farmhouses and nature resorts that have ample space, away from the city with good parking are what most elite are preferring this year.

Indrakshi Mahal, Countryside Resorts, Ira Resorts, Vikarabad Road are in vogue now

Check out [www.wedmegood.com](http://www.wedmegood.com) for rates and locations



### TAJ FALAKNUMA PALACE

A symbol of grandeur, this heritage hotel offers a royal wedding experience with its majestic interiors, sprawling gardens.

Tel: 040 6629 8585

### CHOWMAHALLA PALACE

Once home to the Asaf Jahi dynasty, this palace provides an exquisite royal backdrop, making it a top choice for regal weddings.

Tel: 040 2452 2032

### RAMOJI FILM CITY

Offering a wide variety of themes and settings, Ramoji Film City provides a cinematic wedding experience, perfect for those seeking a unique celebration.

Tel: 7659876598

### LEONIA HOLISTIC DESTINATION

For those seeking luxury with a touch of nature, Leonia offers diverse indoor and outdoor spaces, from poolside ceremonies to grand ballroom receptions.

Tel: 040 66403334



### NOVOTEL HYDERABAD CONVENTION CENTRE

Known for its top-notch facilities, Novotel is a reliable choice for weddings of all sizes, offering both indoor and outdoor options.

Tel: 040 66824422

Prices start Rs 1 lakh per day

## TOP THREE VENUES OUTSIDE HYDERABAD

### UMAID BHAWAN PALACE, JODHPUR

One of the world's largest private residences, this golden sandstone palace offers art deco interiors, manicured gardens, and iconic views of Jodhpur.

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

### ITC GRAND GOA, AROSSIM BEACH, GOA

Often praised for its Indo-Portuguese architectural charm, lush landscaping, and direct beach access, this 45-acre property with its sun-drenched sandy shores offers both grandeur and serenity.

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

### KUMARAKOM LAKE RESORT, KERALA

A luxurious backwater retreat offering houseboats, infinity pools, and lush tropical gardens – perfect for serene, destination-style weddings.

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

Rs 5 lakh per day onwards





## FOOD AND DÉCOR

### ELEVATED DÉCOR CHOICES

Dramatic drapery, floral chandeliers artistic cakes and grazing tables, poolside décor is what the hosts are asking for. The bride and groom's entry is among the most important moments of the wedding and hence, a dias that has technology for fireworks, waterworks, confetti, strobe lights, etc. is the need of the hour.

Whimsical by Shalini Reddy, a wedding and event planning company started in 2016 creates custom installations, floral décor and props. "What's unique about us is that we take pride in using sustainable décor created using reusable structures, natural fabrics, upcycled props and lots of greenery. We also use traditional Indian elements – like Bandhani prints, handwoven fabrics, brass accents and vibrant colors – with a modern, minimal aesthetic."

They recently did the décor for actor Vijay Deverakonda's personal event.

#### WEDDING TRENDS 2025:

"Luxury with a personal touch," says Shalini. Couples are loving immersive floral décor in soft pastels for day events, dramatic lighting for evening functions, and a mix of heritage elements with modern styling.

Sustainable touches and personalized details like custom signage or unique installations are also becoming must-haves.

Soft pastels, earthy neutrals and rich jewel tones for evening events.

Natural fabrics, sustainable props, lush florals and a blend of traditional textures with modern finishes

**Whimsical by Shalini Reddy**

**Price: Rs 1 lakh onwards**

**Tel: 97039 37373**



SUSTAINABLE DECOR BY WHIMSICAL BY SHALINI REDDY



TRADITIONAL TOYS ON DISPLAY AT THE MUHURAT



## FOOD

### Bold new world of fusion food

- Fusion food ranging from Charcoal Burst Idli, Rasam Shots to Paan-flavored macarons.
- Food as décor with dessert trees and doughnut walls for food stations, charcuterie carts and long grazing tables.
- Going beyond live pasta and noodle counters to Build Your Tacos and Make Your Own Burger and dimsum counter.
- Signature cocktail station with custom signs such as Sip the Bride's Poison or Groom's Pick, monogrammed stirrers, and colorful cocktails.
- Coconut station with ready-to-drink tender coconuts with the wedding hashtags carved on them.
- Personalized dessert bar with grab and go desserts, cupcakes, cake pops, or mini tarts with the couple's initials or wedding colors.

### CATERING OPTIONS

#### ARORA CATERS

Known for large-scale wedding spreads and seamless service across indoor and outdoor venues. Tel: 8048122633

#### SPICY VENUE

A go-to for flavorful menus and flexible setups for garden weddings and party lawns.

**Tel: 040 6559 5522, 040 6559 5225, 92465 42906**

#### RAYALASEEMA RUCHULU

Specialist in Andhra/Rayalaseema cuisine with bespoke outdoor menu curation. (Multiple locations in Hyderabad)

#### FUSION9

Offers fusion menus blending regional and international cuisines, ideal for destination weddings.

**Tel: 9848968949, 9866510077**

#### MINERVA COFFEE SHOP

Popular for vegetarian spreads and quick catering options across Hyderabad.

**Tel: 7997997734**

Premium menus cost around Rs 5,000 (per plate plus taxes and liquor permissions). Mega weddings can touch a whopping Rs 25 crore.





WEDDING INVITATIONS RANGING FROM CLASSY TO QUIRKY

## BUDGET TRENDS

### Of Silent Shooters and Family Tree Explainer Videos

#### INTIMATE GUEST LIST, MASSIVE CREW

Guest counts are slimming down to 50 to 200 for three-day celebrations, but the staff strength is overwhelming – one wedding had 170 guests cared for by 500 staff.

#### LUXURY STAYS AND SETS

Farmhouses with 50+ rooms and lavishly designed sets are in demand, blending comfort with cinematic grandeur.

#### PHOTOGRAPHY SPLURGES

Photography budgets alone touch Rs 35 to Rs 55 lakh, with silent shooters (photographers who don't hover around and use long shot lens to stay and still record the action) and drone long-shots ensuring natural moments. At times, a crore is spent on capturing memories, with teams of seven photographers, seven videographers, and multi-day coverage including teasers, bachelor parties, and sangeet.

#### OVER-THE-TOP INVITATIONS

Forget plain cards – think silk sarees worth Rs 30,000 sent with invites, Rs 25,000 cheques gifted to each invitee, chocolate-layered booklets, and even musical invites with professionally shot host videos. A quirky trend: We once got a Telangana viral comedian to create a “funny family tree” video so guests know how they're related to the couple!

**KK Raja, Managing Director of Exotic Events & Promotions**

Tel: 91002 22333

Price: Rs 5,000 onwards per plate for high end events



## PHOTOGRAPHY

### Curated Meets Candid

After the bride and groom, the photographer seems to be the most important person at a wedding.



#### CURRENT TRENDS:

- A mix of curated and candid pictures to balance the picture-perfect ones with emotional and raw feelings.
- Invisible photographers, those who do their work unobtrusively without being seen or heard.
- Photographers who can simultaneously shoot video footage, create a teaser and share it within two hours of the event to be circulated in the wedding groups.

**Ashok Bhupathiraju, 24mm Best Photography**

@24mmbestphotography

Price: Rs 1 lakh per day onwards



BRIDAL PHOTOGRAPHY BY 24MMBEST PHOTOGRAPHY



## SANGEET CHOREOGRAPHY

### NICY JOSEPH DANCE & FITNESS

Celebrity and luxury wedding choreographer known for high-energy, cinematic sangeet routines in Bollywood, hip hop and contemporary styles.

**Instagram:** @nicyjosephdanceandfitness  
**Tel:** 86393 02410

### LOVE RASA

A brother-sister troupe from Hyderabad, crafting emotive, personalized choreography that blends storytelling with dance.

**@love.rasa\_**

### TAAL AND THUMKA

Led by Priyanka Dembla, this team specializes in wedding dance routines with creative flair, energy, and stage-worthy transitions.

**@taalandthumka**

### HYDERABAD DANCE COMPANY (HDC WEDDINGS / SANGEET CHOREOGRAPHY)

Founded by Ritesh Bung, this team handles full sangeet choreography, group performances, and dance packages across Hyderabad.

**@hyderabad\_dance\_company**  
**Tel:** 99491 66901

**Price:** Rs 3 lakh onwards includes dance classes for bride, groom, parents, relatives and performance at the wedding



SANGEET REHEARSAL BY NICY JOSEPH



## NEXT-GEN WEDDINGS: 12 TECH INNOVATIONS MAKING BIG WAVES IN 2025

1. **Meta glasses:** Guests can relive the wedding through AR experiences, seeing live effects or interactive overlays on the couple's big day.
2. **Holographic LED Fans:** Bring digital projections to life in 3D mid-air, from animated wedding monograms to live dances, creating jaw-dropping moments.
3. **Wedding content creators:** Professional storytellers capture cinematic moments beyond photography and videography, from reels to live-streaming to social media-ready highlights.
4. **Silent disco:** Guests wear wireless headphones for DJ sets or live music, allowing simultaneous parties without noise restrictions – a fun, personalized experience.
5. **RSVP and reminder bots:** AI-powered bots handle invites, confirmations, and automated reminders, saving time and keeping guests informed seamlessly.
6. **Snax AI photo sharing:** A smart platform for instant photo sharing, AI-powered curation, and creating collaborative albums for guests and couples.
7. **Wedding teasers and dynamic cuts:** Short, cinematic wedding teasers or dynamic highlight reels are produced using AI editing, social-media-friendly formats.
8. **Recreating loved ones:** Holograms or AI-based projections allow couples to "include" deceased relatives in ceremonies – heartfelt tributes that feel alive.
9. **Smoke bubbles:** Tech-enabled smoke bubbles float across dance floors, adding surreal, Instagram-ready effects for photography and videography.
10. **Digital wedding invites:** Animated, interactive invitations with RSVP links, music, or AR filters replace traditional paper invites for modern couples.
11. **Floating palaces and 3D set designs:** Advanced projection mapping and drone effects can transform venues into floating castles or magical landscapes.
12. **Love art projections:** Personalized projections of couple portraits, messages, or animated love stories on walls, ceilings, or dance floors – adding immersive, romantic visuals.





TEJA CHEKURI

With **Last Saturday**, his 70th outing in the F&B world, Teja Chekuri is turning weekdays into weekends. Here are five reasons to visit this new night hub

**WOW!**  
**Recommends:**  
**Better Than Single**

## Saturday, on repeat

1. “Why should Saturday have all the fun?” Teja Chekuri asks with a grin. “Why can’t Tuesday taste like Saturday, or Wednesday feel like one?” That’s the cheeky thought behind **Last Saturday**, his new pub in Jubilee Hills. The pub (now in place of Farzi Café) is the 70th venture of serial F&B entrepreneur Teja, of Full Stack Ventures. He’s the man behind Prost, Ironhill and Ishtaa in the city.
2. What’s with the name? “Your best Saturday shouldn’t be a memory. It should be on repeat,” Teja says.
3. What’s cooking? Teja calls it inspired cuisine – a mash-up of global flavors reimagined with local soul. Think Japan meeting India on a plate, Vietnam and Korea dancing on the same table. Haleem buns with Hyderabad Marag! From the Pickled Gongura Dal Bowl to the Hunan Curry and Chicken Kimchi Bokkeumbap, they have everything you may have on your mind. We loved their meter kebabs, loong kebabs to go with the drinks.
4. Spirits and Foam: They have introduced a new concept called Saturday Chapters – cocktails that change every two months. Clarified, sous-vide, precision-crafted. Sous-vide is a technique that involves vacuum-sealing cocktail ingredients (like spirits, syrups, or fruit) and then immersing them in a temperature-controlled water bath. Sounds fancy? It is. Our favorite is Better Than Single, a vodka, honey, lemon drink with a dash of pineapple and asparagus as an accessory. For Rs 780, it is worth every sip. Deliciously bitter, with the right amount of zing.
5. Beat it: To go with the music, they have Sounds of Saturday, when they play global beats with local notes. If it’s DJWish playing high-energy beats on weekend, it’s a live match with drum roll for the vibe. ■ MANJU

**Meal for Two: Rs 3,000**

Lane adjacent to Chutneys, Road No. 59, Jubilee Hills

Tel: 98388 44999

Timings: 12 noon to 12 am on weekdays; till 1 am on weekends

This Hyderabad every gal gives WOW! a taste of her exciting experiences in the city

## AT OWL’S HOUR

A DIY artist at heart, **Prathiba Raj** is a sought-after celebrity hairstylist/hairstylist. From Sonal Chauhan to Neha Shetty, her discerning clientele spans the Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, and Malayalam film industries. Also making her list is Australian cricketer Pat Cummins, whom she notes is the tallest person she has ever worked with.

“I love being able to help people feel confident and express themselves. The connections I build with my clients make this work rewarding,” she shares. “It’s more than just styling – it’s trust, artistry, and real human connection. It makes me feel like a therapist and a magician all at once.”

Born and raised in Hyderabad, Prathiba doesn’t take her city for granted. Shaped by it in many ways, she appreciates its diversity, safety, food, old charm, and the countless possibilities of the new – including those at the owl’s hour. A true Hyderabad at heart, the young woman shares with WOW! some of her more memorable experiences in the city after dark.



### QUICK-TAKE

- **FAVORITE HAUNTS IN THE CITY:** I love Big Bull, Swing Lounge, Underdoggs Sports Bar and Quake.
- **FAVORITE LIVE ACT:** My BFF Mr Beatlust is one of the most happening DJs in the city. Please check out Beatlust and Friends (BnF) during the weekends, I try to not miss them.
- **CHOICE OF POISON:** Mimosas and Tequila Passionfruit.
- **YOU PAINT THE TOWN RED IN:** Full glam. Rhinestones, crystals, diamonds, pearls, anything to do with bling and fashion.
- **A CLUB BEST TO DANCE THE NIGHT AWAY:** EXT. Hip Hop and R&B is my jam.
- **YOU PARTY WITH:** My girlfriends.
- **YOU AFTER-PARTY AT:** My place always.
- **HYDERABAD IS A CITY WHERE:** Everybody knows everybody. ■ IPSHITA



# MEKONG

## Black Rice Edamame Roll

*Take some black rice from Indonesia, add crisp asparagus from Thailand, and top it off with edamame sourced from Japan. Then, sprinkle it all with a dash of love and roll them up to create a dish that's truly out of this world.*

*Taste a piece of history at Mekong.  
Now open at Avasa.*







**Kenny's Neighborhood Bar** lives up to its name with easy pours, favorite eats and straightforward rates



## Keeping it Real

In a world where pubs serve edamame and truffle dimsums or prawn tempura tacos, **Kenny's Neighborhood Bar** keeps it real – serving Mirchi Bajji, Pepper Prawns, and even homestyle poha. And the drinks? Let's just say the prices will make you go, "Wait, seriously?" Yes, a meal for two can cost Rs 1,200, including alcohol.

### FAMILIAR FACE

"I always wanted an unpretentious place where good food, great drinks, and live music come together without burning a hole in your pocket," says Co-Founder Sankalp Vishnu. "The funny thing is, most places in Hyderabad usually get only two of those three right. Kenny's is my shot at all three." If his name rings a bell, it should. Sankalp has long been a familiar face in Hyderabad's F&B circuit – as the author and food critic behind the *Times Food Guide*, and as the consultant behind many of the city's buzziest cafés, restaurants, and pubs over the past five years.

### EYES ON THE PRICE

His childhood buddy CN Ramanakar also shared his dream and together they started Kenny's, which aspires to be a bar chain across India. Sankalp's smile says it all: in Nanakramguda, his prices and quality are unbeatable.

"What works for Kenny's?" Sankalp grins. "Free entertainment – live music or a live match." Already in Marathahalli, Bengaluru, and soon in Vizag, Kenny's has made Financial District its adda for youngsters who eat out all week.

### KEEPING IT SIMPLE, SWEET

Sankalp's food philosophy? Keep it familiar, pairable with drinks, and skip the pretentious jargon. The menu stays lean, but smart – think comfort eats that pair well with a pint. The bar covers all moods, from local beers to single malts and classic cocktails. For something different, try Know More Secrets – gin with butterfly pea tea and cardamom. Wrap up the meal with Prawns Masala with Bagara Rice. "As a consultant, I've built menus and pricing for years. That's exactly what helped here," Sankalp admits. ■ MANJU

**Meal for two: Rs 1,200 including alcohol**

Ground Floor, The District, Myscape Road, Financial District, Nanakramguda  
Tel: 98863 43434  
Timings: 12 pm to 12 am

An evening at **The Wine Corner** by District150 is a luxe journey into fine wines with aptly paired food

## Liquid Therapy

For those who believe wine is not merely a drink but a culture, **The Wine Corner** at District150 is Hyderabad's newest sanctuary. Tucked within The Quorum Club (non-members too can walk in), this 15-seater premium room is intentionally intimate. It's an enclave designed for connoisseurs who appreciate conversation as much as complexity in a glass.

### THE LOOK AND FEEL

Done up in browns and burnt oranges, the warm lighting and stunning views of the city's chrome exteriors offer both privacy and sophistication. Among its most compelling offerings is the Reserved Series, a program of curated wine-first encounters where guided flights take guests across regions, styles, and vintages – turning a tasting into an education. Our sommelier Arpit, in between the pours, shares a fun fact: Champagne is actually named after a region in Northeastern France, not a variety of grape. There is no grape called Champagne.

### THE POURS

The cellar reflects a deliberate balance: Old world classics like Domaine Montrose Chardonnay and Dr Schmitt's Pinot Noir stand alongside vibrant new world expressions such as Pasqua Pinot Grigio. Food pairings are equally thoughtful. Tapas-style dishes – goat cheese and caramelized onion cigars, avocado and truffle toast, Thai green curry – arrive with artisanal cheese boards elevating each sip into a memorable pairing. Add to that "Elemental Tastings," where wines and dishes are mapped to earth, fire, air, water, and spirit, and you begin to see why this room feels like more than a venue. It feels like a journey. My favorite stop was the dessert wine! ■ MANJU

**Meal for two: Rs 4,000**

Level 4, Elixir Tower, Gate No. 6, Knowledge City Road, Madhapur

Timings: 11 am to 11 pm

@thewinecornerbyquorum

**The Friday Boardroom to Bordeaux for women features sangrias, bellinis, mimosas, spritzers, etc. over a set three-course meal for Rs 1,999 plus taxes**





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Achieve inner peace by practicing the ancient Japanese art of flower arrangement

## Floral Meditation

**Ikebana**, also referred to as kadō which translates to ‘the way of flowers’, is the traditional Japanese art of flower arrangement. It is a form of creative expression akin to painting, sculpting, dance, and music in other cultures. Originating in the sixth century by Buddhist monks, Ikebana reflects Japan’s longstanding respect for nature and the desire to find harmony and balance in the environment by bringing nature indoors. Ikebana is also a meditative activity that fosters discipline, concentration, mindfulness, and spiritual awareness.

“The Buddhist Zen philosophy with which the art of Ikebana was formed, percolates into the arrangements and into the one who is learning and teaching it,” shares Rekha Reddy, who has been an Ikebana practitioner for over four decades. She has also had a three-decade long career teaching, holding workshops and demonstrations (for both adults and children).

### PASSING ON FLORAL WISDOM

Rekha’s connection to Ikebana can be traced back to her early childhood. She followed in the footsteps of her mother, Shamala Y.R Reddy who practiced the art form herself. Rekha further honed her skills with help from her teacher, Meena Anantnarayan.

Having derived contentment and a sense of purpose by practicing Ikebana, Rekha (also referred to as Ohryu Rekha Reddy – a flower name given to her by the Ohara School of Ikebana) began holding classes with the simple intent to share her knowledge with others.

### IKEBANA CLASSES

The classes are held inside a cozy studio at her residence. The intimate space comes alive with a colorful variety of containers (from vases to bowls with materials like ceramics to bamboos) used to arrange flowers.

Following the principles of the Ohara School of Ikebana (known for its naturalistic and innovative approaches), Rekha encourages her students to work with natural elements (flowers, freshly cut branches, leaves, ferns, vegetables, etc.) sourced anywhere from their backyards to florists. Working with balance, rhythm, depth, harmony and proportions, the students mindfully select a container that holds water and a pin-holder to keep these elements in place at different heights and angles.

The basic course includes 10 classes with flexible timings decided according to Rekha’s and the students’ availability. Each class lasts for 60 to 90 minutes and includes two to four students at a time. Students can further opt for advanced multi-level courses, delving deeper into the spiritual art form.

■ IPSHITA

*Price: On Request*

*Instagram: rekhaflora1*



### BENEFITS OF PRACTICING IKEBANA:

1. Promotes spiritual growth and mental well-being
2. Teaches patience
3. Offers peace
4. Cultivates a deeper connection with nature
5. Helps deal with life’s challenges with a calm and balanced mind



Plan a Japanese dinner after you learn how to make sushi at this workshop

## Roll, eat, repeat



What happens when Hyderabad's green gardens, breezy monsoon skies, and Japanese-Peruvian fusion come together? A sushi workshop that feels less like a class and more like a picnic! Novotel Hitec City hosted Chef Augusto Cabrera of Delhi's BOYA (famous for its Japanese-Peruvian mashups), and foodies turned up to learn how to roll, slice, and savor sushi.

**What we learnt: Never mix wasabi with soy sauce**

### THE VIBE CHECK

Think big white tents, lush lawns, and the smell of sticky rice wafting through the air. Add eager home cooks, notepads in hand, and you've got the perfect Saturday afternoon. Hyderabad's booming food workshop culture just got an upgrade, with Novotel bringing BOYA's flavorful twist to town.

### SUSHI 101

From uramaki basics to the California roll chic, the four-hour workshop covered it all. Short-grain sticky rice (non-negotiable!), sushi mats, Hungarian wooden spoons (who knew?), and nori sheets set the stage for some serious rolling. Chef Augusto even dropped truth bombs like: "Never mix wasabi with soy sauce."

### DESI TWIST ALERT

Chef Augusto knows Hyderabad loves its kick – which is why spicy sauces and crunchy textures always sneak into our sushi. His special asparagus roll, a crunchy revelation from his upcoming book *Sushi: My Food Exploration (Vol. 2)*, was the crowd favorite.

### FINAL ROLL CALL

By sundown, there were certificates, laughter, Insta-worthy plates, and a city full of new sushi converts. Who said learning can't be delicious? ■ AKSHITHA

**Price: Rs 1,800 onwards**

**Duration: 3 hours**

Novotel Hotel, HITEC City

Tel: 040 66067000

**Check their Insta page for the next workshop**

Get your hands muddy, your heart happy, and your masterpiece ready at the workshops held by Claysutra Pottery Studio & Café

## Slay it with Clay

Getting your hands dirty has never felt this soothing. At **Claysutra Pottery Studio & Café** in Gachibowli, a pottery class begins with the simple act of kneading clay. Push, pinch, roll, and suddenly, a lump transforms into a leaf-imprinted coaster – your first masterpiece waiting to be fired in the kiln. Add coffee and chatter in between, and it feels less like a class and more like therapy disguised as fun.

### THE POTTER BEHIND IT

Founded by Carmel Hessing, who has been shaping clay for over 15 years, Claysutra is her second studio after the success of the one in Padmarao Nagar. "The idea was to build a larger space closer to the IT hub," she says. And yes, a café is part of the plan – so the experience blends art and food. Carmel conducts workshops at both her studios and also supplies ceramics to cafés and art stores in the city.

### THE EXPERIENCE

From learning to center clay on a mechanical wheel to deftly slicing it off with a thread, each step is oddly satisfying. You can craft cups, bowls, or quirky figurines. As Carmel explains: "Pottery is a full-sensory escape. The earthy scent, the rhythm of the wheel – it's meditation in motion. There are no rules except being creative." The best bit: You need not have any prior experience in pottery to enjoy this. ■ MANJU



**Price: Rs 850 onwards for corporate events with a meal**

Block 1, 166 & 167, Block I, NCB Enclave, Gachibowli

Tel: 90008 03395

**Timings: 11 am to 11.30 pm**

Their one-day Diwali workshop is on Sunday, October 12, 11 am to 8 pm

**Note:** Workshops start at Rs 1,500, ranging from one-hour tasters to three-hour sessions. They host themed parties for kids (pizza and pottery days), and corporate team-building sessions with curated menus (from sliders and kababs to pasta and pizza). Prices vary with group size and add-ons



**Zaineb Ali of Pilates & Beyond** shares how her workout can transform anyone's fitness routine in a few months

## Get Fitter with Pilates



*"Pilates is for anyone who wants to feel stronger, gain energy and feel confident in their body"*

– Zaineb Ali

### WHO CAN DO PILATES?

Anyone! Beginners or athletes, dancers, sportspeople and even people recovering from injuries. Pilates is for anyone who wants to feel stronger, gain energy and feel confident in their body.

### HOW IS IT DIFFERENT FROM GYM WORKOUTS?

Pilates works the whole body in a flow, focusing on the core, stabilizing muscles, posture and balance. Injuries are less because we follow a structured repertoire. Pilates doesn't only reshape you; it rebuilds you.

What began as "just a workout" 10 years ago for Zaineb Ali, founder of Pilates & Beyond, has made her a Pilates icon in Hyderabad, training hundreds across her studios. "We opened our fifth and sixth studios in Gachibowli and Sainikpuri this September. Gachibowli is one of our biggest, with eight reformers and a lively vibe," she says. We asked her about getting fitter in 100 days for 2026.

### HOW OFTEN SHOULD ONE PRACTICE?

Three sessions a week are ideal. Each session is a full-body workout; alternating with endurance activities like walking, jogging, or swimming works well.

### WHAT ABOUT A DIET?

For maintenance or toning, just ensure you have enough energy before class and protein after. For weight loss, a calorie deficit is necessary.

### ANY SUCCESS STORIES?

My fitness journey began in 2015 as a mother of two, seeking energy, confidence, and strength. Pilates restored my mobility after a knee injury and sparked my passion. From my first studio in Secunderabad to six studios now, Pilates has become more than movement – it's transformation! ■ MANJU

**Price: Monthly membership at Rs 14,000 onwards**

*1st floor, G square, Police Station, beside Raidurgam, Madhura Nagar Colony, Gachibowli*

**Tel: 96182 09073**

**Timings: 6 am to 8 pm across six locations**

## HEALING DIARIES

True stories of struggle, survival, and recovery

## 'Six kilos of pain, lifted in one surgery'



My name is RJ Rajini Govula, I'm 47 years old and from Hyderabad. I never thought I'd go through something this overwhelming, but life had other plans. For months, I carried a heaviness inside me that no words can truly describe. I looked fine on the outside, but deep within, my uterus was covered with fibroids so large and heavy that they changed the way I lived and felt every single day.

### THE SIX-KILO HORROR

When I finally went to the doctor, the truth hit me hard – my fibroids weighed a shocking six kilograms. One of them was nearly 20 cm long, filling up my uterus and leaving me constantly bloated, tired and uneasy. The diagnosis terrified me. I had to undergo myomectomy, hysterectomy, and oophorectomy – removal of my fibroids, uterus, and ovaries. The very thought of surgery shook me, but I knew there was no other way.

### DR PANKAJ TO MY RESCUE

That is when Dr Pankaj Kumar, General and Laparoscopic Surgeon at Srikara Hospitals, RTC X Roads, stepped in. He patiently explained my complicated health condition, guided me through every step, and most importantly, gave me the courage I so badly needed. His calm reassurance soothed my fears, and I felt I was in safe hands.

### FIBROID FUNDAS

After thorough scans – CT and USG – I went into surgery. To my relief, it was a success and I recovered in less than a week. The weight that once crushed me, both physically and emotionally, was finally gone. I give the credit to Dr Kumar.

Fibroids can happen to women of any age, and they often grow silently. My message to every woman reading this is simple: don't ignore the signs. Get an ultrasound, get tested on time, and take care of yourself. ■ MANJU



At **First Cut**, Kokapet, parents indulge in self-care while kids enjoy grooming and the attention of an on-site nanny

# Family Fun

Pampering often takes a backseat for parents, especially when there's no one to look after the kids on weekends or holidays. **First Cut** in Kokapet was designed with that exact challenge in mind. Launched in August by friends Samanthika Janagama, Shreemayi Reddy, and Deepika Vantaram, the women-led space combines a full-service salon with a play-friendly environment for children, supervised by an on-site nanny.

Parents can book hair, skin and spa treatments knowing their little ones are safe and engaged. Children can enjoy haircuts, mini spa sessions or even lice removal. "We offer manicure and pedicure packages for children above four, while our nanny cares for infants who are a few months old," shares Samanthika, a mother herself who understands the difficulty of scheduling self-care with young kids in tow. "We call it 'affordable luxury,' a concept that makes self-care accessible without the stress of childcare," she adds.

## KID ZONE

The kid zone features toys, slides, and salon seats shaped like airplanes, cars, and boats. There are tic-tac-toe boards, unicorn plushies, soft toys, and even iPads for screen time. The space doubles up for kids' spa parties, complete with services, food, tattoos, and return gifts. "With expansion plans in the pipeline, First Cut is designed for working parents seeking balance between family and personal wellness," says Shreemayi. ■ MANJU

**Services for adults range from facials (Rs 1,000 onwards) to massages (Rs 450 upwards) and full-body treatments (Rs 2,500); Kids' haircuts start at Rs 700. No charges for kids care under nanny. Mini mani-pedi (4+ years): Special packages available. Nail Art/Hair spa / Keratin / Botox / Coloring: Price on request. They also organize spa parties for kids at Rs 2,000 per child (any service) or Rs 1,400 for 3 services including food, tattoo, stationery or toy return gift**

3rd floor, GV Pride, Gandipet Main Road, Kokapet  
Tel: 90141 68542  
Timings: 10 am to 8 pm



It is designed for babies between six weeks to nine months to soothe them

## Baby Spaaaah!

Why should adults have all the fun? Fernandez Hospital has launched a baby spa by at Fernandez Stork Home, Banjara Hills, a space that supports early development through hydrotherapy, infant massage, parental bonding and sensory stimulation under expert supervision.

## THE EXPERIENCE

Designed for infants aged between six weeks to nine months, these nurturing 45-minute sessions, support growth, bonding, and wellbeing. Each visit begins with a paediatric check-up to ensure your baby is ready for hydrotherapy. The experience includes 15 minutes of sensory play, hydrotherapy in UV-sterilized, temperature-controlled pods and a gentle massage with safe, organic oils. "These sessions ease colic, reflux, and digestion, encourage sound sleep, spark milestones, and build early water confidence. Parents also receive guidance on bonding techniques, making it as enriching for you as it is soothing for your baby," says Dr Evita Fernandez, Chairperson and MD, Fernandez Foundation.

## SAFETY PROTOCOLS

The sessions are integrated with paediatric check-ups before every session includes a paediatric check-up prior to the UV-sterilized RO-filtered water and therapies led by certified physiotherapists. "A baby's earliest memories should be made up of warmth, laughter and play, that's what we want the Baby Spa to give every family who walks through our doors," Dr Evita says. ■ MANJU

Fernandez Stork Home, Road No. 12, Bhola Nagar, Banjara Hills  
Tel: 1800 419 1397  
Timings: With appointment  
Price: Starts at Rs 2,000 per session  
for a six-month package of 12 sessions





**Nolwa Studio's** Bidri workshop and gallery trail invites visitors to engage with tradition through thoughtful design

## Craft in Conversation

This October, **Nolwa Studio** is opening its doors to a special month-long Bidri workshop-cum-showcase, offering Hyderabad's design and art enthusiasts an opportunity to meet artisans, understand their stories, and try their hand at this centuries-old craft. More than just a demonstration, it's an experience that blends storytelling, tactile exploration, and design-led engagement.

### HANDS-ON BIDRI

"The immersive experience is part of Nolwa Studio's design interventions," explains Ashwini Shwetha Ketharaj, Founder and Principal Architect of ASK Space Design Studio, the brain behind the design of this space. "We wanted

to go beyond a display and create an environment where visitors traverse the journey of the craft itself. Each step narrates the legacy, process, and innovation of Bidri, allowing them to experience the artistry first-hand."

Spread across 3,000 sq. ft. and located 15 minutes from the ISB campus in Gachibowli, the gallery was conceived as a linear narrative trail, drawing visitors deeper into the story rather than revealing everything at once. The design unfolds in phases: beginning with immersive storytelling walls that use textures, tools, and videos to bring each stage of the 600-year-old craft alive, and leading into an activity zone



*"This balance between engagement, pause, and reflection shapes the visitor's rhythm"*

where guests can experiment with traditional tools and motifs.

### THE WALK-THROUGH

"This balance between engagement, pause, and reflection shapes the visitor's rhythm. A lounge-like buffer space provides a moment to sit, discuss, and absorb the experience before transitioning into the main showcase," says Ashwini. Here, Nolwa's collection featuring works by Indian and international designers with products priced from Rs 40 lakh onwards is displayed in carefully designed zones. Soft partitions in cotton fiber linen, paired with precise lighting, allow each object, be it a surfboard light, mirror, bar cabinet, or tower lamp – to be appreciated without distraction.

### THE ART OF STORYTELLING

Set aside a good two hours to experience the workshop and the gallery trail. What begins as a meeting with artisans and their craft slowly unfolds into a design-led journey – where architecture, storytelling, and tradition come together seamlessly.

The space is for art and design lovers, architects and anyone who is keen to give a Bidri twist to their spaces. ■ MANJU

**Price: Rs 40 lakh onwards for the products**

Survey No. 7A, behind OM Marble, Khanapur

**Timings:** 11 am to 6.30 pm  
[www.nolwastudio.com](http://www.nolwastudio.com)





# 15<sup>th</sup> NAREDCO TELANGANA PROPERTY SHOW HITEX, HYD

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## MEET THE ARTIST

**Artist Devanshi Goenka** who displayed her works in the city for the first time at Design Democracy last month, says she loves how Hyderabadis embrace sophistication with playfulness

# “Hyderabad surprised me”

**IN THIS ERA OF INSTAGRAM FILTERS AND PRETENCES, WHERE DOES THE UNFILTERED SERIES STAND? WHAT DOES THE COLLECTION SEEK TO CONVEY?**

*Unfiltered* is about stripping away the need to present a perfect image. On social media, we curate, polish and filter every detail. On canvas, I do the opposite. I embrace the raw, the messy, the instinctive. These works are playful yet honest, layered with fragments of memory and unexpected juxtapositions. The collection reminds us that authenticity has its own

beauty, and imperfection is where the real stories live.

**FOR THOSE WHO COULD NOT COME TO DESIGN DEMOCRACY, CAN YOU TELL US WHAT THOUGHTS AND MATERIALS WENT INTO PUTTING UP THIS SERIES?**

I wanted the works to feel alive. I layered acrylic paint with unexpected materials: LEGO blocks, cameras, ropes, knots, even little everyday objects. These aren't props, they're metaphors. They are symbols of building, seeing, tying, or holding on.

## WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR INSPIRATION FOR UNFILTERED?

The inspiration came from the push and pull between chaos and control. Growing up, I was always stacking, building, tinkering with objects. Later, my business, which is an agri-tech platform for farmers, gave me discipline and systems thinking. In the studio, I let those worlds collide. *Unfiltered* is really about that collision of past and present, instinct and intention.

*“Travelling exposes me to new textures, colors, and ways of life – whether it's the chaos of a market or the quiet rhythm of a coastline”*

**YOU EXHIBITED YOUR WORK IN HYDERABAD FOR THE FIRST TIME AT DESIGN DEMOCRACY. WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE AESTHETIC OF THE HYDERABADI ART LOVER?**

Hyderabad surprised me. I noticed that people gravitate toward works that have both sophistication and playfulness, something that resonates with the city's own blend of heritage and modern energy.

**DO YOU SEE YOURSELF EXPERIMENTING WITH DIFFERENT MEDIUMS OR FORMATS?**

Absolutely. For me, the medium is never fixed – it evolves with the story I want to tell. I've been exploring sculpture and installation, especially working with everyday materials in larger formats. I'm also interested in digital-physical crossovers: where a painting doesn't end on canvas but lives as an experience – whether through projection, sound or interaction.

**WHERE DO YOU HOPE TO SEE YOUR WORK FIVE YEARS FROM NOW?**

I hope to be showing in international spaces, but equally rooted in India, because the contradictions and textures of this country inspire me endlessly.

**WHAT FUELS YOUR CREATIVITY?**

Travel and my children. Travelling exposes me to new textures, colors, and ways of life – whether it's the chaos of a market or the quiet rhythm of a coastline. My kids constantly remind me how to see the world without filters. The way they stack, play, and imagine with complete freedom often sparks ideas I carry back into the studio. ■ MANJU



WOW! connects with three enterprising young ladies for a thoughtful exchange on the importance of art and the connections people form with it, creating meaning in ways that words struggle to capture

# THE POWER OF ART

In September, **The Art Connect** by Miheeka Bajaj Daggubati in collaboration with A&H Colab by Amrita Kilachand and Hina Oomer Ahmed introduced the first in a series of experiential pop-ups, the **LUME/VYANA**. It showcased works across visual art, performance, design, digital media, etc.

Examining the quiet power of artistic expression, WOW! had an introspective conversation with the three creative minds behind the event.

## CAN YOU SHARE YOUR PERSPECTIVE ON PEOPLE'S CONNECTION TO ART?

**Miheeka:** While the artist has the freedom to express themselves in the way they think is apt, everyone looks at an artwork and interprets it differently. This process of creating, experiencing and finding meaning in art for me, is very cathartic and liberating.

**Hina:** I think the most interesting and expansive thing about art is that there's space for everyone to like and interpret something in a way that is unique to them.

**Amrita:** I believe art should provoke an emotion, a memory, a reaction. It could be anything that you wish it to be but as

long as it stirs something in you, I think it has achieved its goal.

## CAN YOU TALK ABOUT ARTISTIC EXPRESSION AND CONNECTION IN RELATION TO MENTAL WELLBEING?

**Miheeka:** Mental wellbeing is about being able to express yourself and words at times, are not the best medium. Sometimes you don't fully understand what you're feeling. Putting that down, whether it's using a paint brush, movement, or an instrument, it allows you to release the emotion you're holding, and the most beautiful kind of art comes out from that.

**Hina:** I think color therapy and the way it stimulates your senses can be very healing. Secondly, when you look at a piece of art and for a few moments it transports you elsewhere – mentally and emotionally. It's like meditation.

**Amrita:** Both internationally and in India, there are therapists that use gardening as a form of therapy. Art is also used. Even children, who unfortunately go through trauma, end up expressing their emotions through their drawings. So, I think it (art) is a fantastic medium to use for therapy.

## AS THE EXHIBITION IS A REFLECTION ON HOW WE CONNECT, COLLECT, AND LIVE WITH OBJECTS, WHAT ARE SOME OBJECTS YOU HAVE FORMED DEEP CONNECTIONS WITH?

**Miheeka:** I usually buy pieces that really call to me. I have two 'Last Supper' paintings; (quirky reinterpretations of Da Vinci's famous mural). I have had them for two to three years now, but every time you look at them, you discover something new.

**Hina:** For me it's pieces I pick up when I travel as they're unique to that region and culture. They also connect you back to those memories.

**Amrita:** Through the decades, it's been about stories I see and relate to. I recently bought a work by an artist called Kulpreet Singh who advocates for farmers in Punjab, and I am Punjabi, so there's a connect and old history there.

## WHAT GETS YOUR CREATIVE JUICES FLOWING?

**Miheeka:** Most everything that you encounter – nature, emotion, art, or a memory. It could be anything that moves you or touches you in some way.

**Hina:** For me it's the small things. Nature is one; it could be just clouds in the sky or a floral arrangement. I also love beautifully packaged things – something as small as the label on a wine bottle (laughs).

**Amrita:** I think I draw a lot from just my experiences. But like Hina, I find nature to also be a huge source of creativity.

## WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO CREATIVE MINDS WHO ARE EITHER HESITANT TO START THEIR JOURNEY, STILL FIGURING OUT THEIR CRAFT, OR CONTEMPLATING GIVING UP?

**Miheeka:** Stay authentic to yourself. Go back to what the reason you started it was and don't get lost in the process of trying to become famous.

**Hina:** In a world where attention span is so short and everything is so trends-based, find your own unique voice and trust it. Somewhere that will pay off.

**Amrita:** Be resilient, be determined. I think if you are lucky enough to be able to put food on the table and follow your passion, and marry both, that's just the most wonderful work-life balance you could have. ■ IPSHITA



HINA OOMER AHMED, MIHEEKA BAJAJ DAGGUBATI AND AMRITA KILACHAND



## tourist info

No, not on your phone, but the real deal in Hyderabad with bird watching camps – in the heart of the city or a little beyond

# Tweet Spotting

Ever thought Hyderabad and bird watching go together? Not exactly the first thing that pops into your mind, right? And yet, at Botanical Gardens at Kondapur (day-long) and a little beyond the city chaos at Forestrek Park in Manchirevula (weekends), you'll discover a side of Hyderabad you never expected – one filled with calls, chirps, and flashes of feathered beauties.

### GOLDEN HOUR

October and November are the golden months for birding here. The monsoon greens linger, the weather turns pleasantly cool, and migratory birds make their seasonal stopovers. It's the perfect time to trade in your shopping bags for binoculars and swap crowded cafés for quiet trails.

Bird watching is surprisingly addictive. At first, it's about catching sight of something moving in the trees. Then, before you know it, you're excitedly identifying birds like a seasoned pro. Children love the thrill of spotting colorful bee-eaters, while adults find the slow pace deeply calming – like mindfulness, but with wings.

Deccan Woods and Trails, the eco-tourism division of the Telangana Forest Development Corporation (TGFDC), conducted a bird walk at Forestrek Park, for which 14 bird enthusiasts turned up. Naturalist R Aparanjani handed over a birds' pocket guide (developed by the tourism corporation) to help participants identify species and learn to recognize them by their calls.



### BIRDS TO EXPECT

Some of the notable bird species sighted during the walk included: shikra, Indian peafowl (male and female), black drongo, green bee-eater, kingfisher, spot-billed duck, painted stork, golden oriole, Asian koel, Indian myna, coppersmith barbet, red-vented bulbul, swallow, red-wattled lapwing, Indian silverbill, grey francolin.

### FEATHER WEATHER

And what a lineup it was! From the majestic Indian peafowl to the dazzling green bee-eater, from the swift swallow to the regal painted stork, the park revealed itself as a treasure trove of avian life. The kingfisher provided flashes of electric blue, while the coppersmith barbet added its signature “tuk-tuk” call. Spotting the elusive shikra felt like a badge of honor. Yes, all of it in mana Hyderabad. It's wholesome, fun, and nothing like your usual mall-hopping weekend. ■ MANJU

**Price: Rs 3,800 per person inclusive of stay, meals, and guided walks**

**Assembly Points:** The Breeze Eco Tent –

Deccan Woods & Trails, Ananthagiri Hills, Vikarabad  
Botanical Garden, Gate No.2, Masjid Banda Road,  
Kothaguda Post Office, Kondapur

Tel: 94935 49399 / 73823 07476

Every weekend in October and November, but check for holidays or camps on days coinciding with long weekends

### HOW A TYPICAL WEEKEND BIRDING CAMP UNFOLDS

**5:30 am:** Wake up with chai, because the birds are early risers

**6 am – 9 am:** Guided trail with naturalists, binoculars provided

**9:30 am:** Breakfast under the trees

**11 am – 4 pm:** Fun sessions including bird call basics, photography tips, feeder-making for kids

**Afternoon:** Hammock naps, book reading, or just soaking in the calm

**4 pm – 6 pm:** Evening walk near the lake for water birds and sunset views

**7:30 pm:** Dinner by a campfire with stories under the stars



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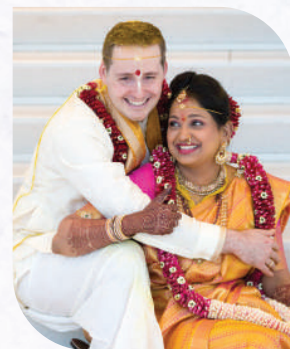
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# WOW, HYDERABAD!

Here are some beautiful glimpses of Hyderabad as the winter sets in. The enticing Charminar and the charming Qutb Shahi Tombs caught on camera for those who love the heritage city!

## A visit to Charminar

At the heart of Hyderabad is the 432-year-old monument. Climb the heritage structure for a bird's eye view of some of the oldest parts of town. Go in the morning and soak in the sights, sounds and scents of the Old City. Walk its ancient alleys, haggle for lac bangles, a *khada dupatta* (yes, the same garment icon Rekha wore for the *Vogue Arabia* shoot) and drop into Nimrah for delicious biscuits. End your stroll at the textile museum at the Chowmahalla Palace. A feast for your eyes and your followers on Instagram.

**PS:** It's a traditional market and dressing conservatively is advised.

PHOTO COURTESY: @AASTHAINWANDERLAND ON INSTAGRAM





## Soak in Some Heritage

The Qutb Shahi tombs are Hyderabad's answer to Central Park and Sundar Nursery. This necropolis built in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries is where the entire Qutb Shahi dynasty is buried with the exception of its last king. The complex houses close to 100 structures including tombs, a *hamam* (Turkish baths), stepwells, and hundreds of other unmarked tombs.

Spread over 100 acres, its lush green environs, heritage structures and verdant spaces make it a joy to take a stroll or have a picnic. For Instagram junkies – this is manna from heaven – with nary a bad angle, this gives you images for your dream feed.

Did you know? The Aga Khan Foundation restored the complex and saved many structures from the brink of collapse.

**Insider's tip:** Watch out for the heritage walks conducted on Sundays which add a dash of storytelling to your evening.





THE ICONIC CHARMINAR AND THE SOARING BIRDS CAPTURE THE ESSENCE OF THE CHARMING CITY OF HYDERABAD. LIKE THE HERITAGE MONUMENT IN THE BACKDROP, THE CITY HOLDS ON TO ITS ROOTS PROUDLY. LIKE THE BIRDS, THE SPIRIT OF THE CITY FLIES HIGH, READY TO EMBRACE THE NEW TIDINGS. HERE'S A GLIMPSE OF THIS BEAUTIFUL CITY.







## INTERVIEW

Actor **Faria Abdullah** is juggling a million things and still nailing it – movies, music, creative ventures, award nights, and everything in between

# Films, Beats, and Feats

Hyderabad's own Faria Abdullah is having a whirlwind 2025. "Busy is an understatement," she laughs, juggling film shoots, rehearsals, her social life, and whatever slivers of sleep she can squeeze in. With 95 per cent of her time consumed by upcoming projects – including a Tamil debut with Sundeeep Kishan (official announcement soon!) and films with Tamil veterans Suseenthiran and Vijay Antony – it's safe to say this is her busiest year yet.

*"The Telugu industry is so welcoming; I can do so much more now"*

### LEARNING TAMIL, AGAIN?

Languages aren't new to Faria. The Hyderabad girl once stumbled through Telugu for *Jathi Ratnalu* but eventually owned it. Now, she's learning Tamil, thanks to "friends who are patient teachers." It's cinema that pushes her into new tongues, and she's loving every bit of it.

### DANCE IS HER USP

Fans think she is Tollywood's Nora Fatehi with her high-energy dance movements. She blushes at the very thought. She agrees that 2025 allowed her to light up the stage with Chiranjeevi at the ETV 30-year bash. Trained in Western, street, and underground styles, Faria never leaves home without a speaker. "There's always time for movement," she insists. Appreciation from Sekhar Master, Allu Arjun, and Sukumar? That's the cherry on top.

### WHAT'S BEYOND FILMS?

Acting might be the headline, but entrepreneurship is the sub-plot. Faria has been running multiple IPs

(creative concepts) for a decade – dance workshops, indie music videos, and quirky collabs in Dakkhani English with a Hyderabad twist. Now, with her own company Farimagination Entertainments, she's been curating with actor-producer Rana Daggubati's South Bay (digital channel for quirky content) on hip-hop jams, and through Limitless Greenz, she's bringing together music, dance, and art in alternative spaces. "It's about creating new experiences for artists and audiences," she explains.

### FITNESS, BUT MAKE IT FUN

Faria's fitness regime mixes yoga, Pilates, boxing, cardio, and yes, dance. "It's never just one thing. Variety is my way to reach my goals," she says.

### STANDING TALL

Faria Abdullah handles questions about her height with grace and confidence. "Luckily, my height has never been

a hurdle in my work. Top Tollywood actors have delivered blockbusters even with a taller female co-star," she says. Proud and unbothered, she adds, "It's what it is – I don't make a big deal out of it."

### MANIFESTING MAHESH BABU?

What's next? More films, more dance, and more "wholesome projects." She openly dreams of working with Mahesh Babu and wouldn't mind an OTT team-up with Siddu, Vishwak, or Naveen either. "The Telugu industry is so welcoming; I can do so much more now," she adds.

### THE GIRL WHO WON'T BE BOXED IN

Whether it's dancing with megastars, rapping in Hyderabad slang, or curating a sitar-and-guitar gig at a gallery opening, Faria is writing her own playbook. And 2025? It's less about limits, more about leaps.

■ MANJU





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## MOVIES

### In theaters



#### CAUGHT STEALING (ENGLISH)

Directed by Oscar nominated filmmaker and the visionary behind films like *Black Swan*, *The Wrestler*, and *Requiem for a Dream*, Darren Aronofsky is

back with an all-new film titled *Caught Stealing*. Starring Austin Butler, Zoë Kravitz, Regina King, Liev Schreiber, Matt Smith etc., the film revolves around a burned-out ex-baseball player who finds himself embroiled in a dangerous struggle for survival amidst the criminal underbelly of 1990's New York City.

Date: 10<sup>th</sup> October

#### SUNNY SANSKARI KI TULSI KUMARI (HINDI)



Helmed by Shashank Khaitan, *Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari* is a romantic comedy set in Delhi that follows two ex-lovers trying to win each other back. Varun Dhawan and Janhvi Kapoor lead the ensemble cast along with Sanya Malhotra and Rohit Saraf.

Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> October

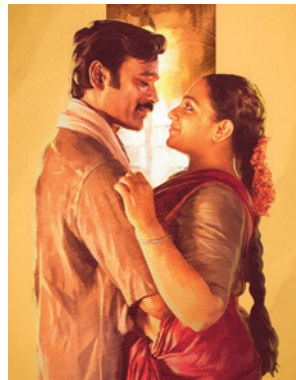


PICK  
OF THE  
MONTH

#### BAAHUBALI: THE EPIC (TELUGU)

Marking ten years of its enduring legacy, S.S. Rajamouli's magnum opus *Baahubali* returns to the big screen as a two-part saga, *Baahubali: The Epic*. Weaving together the grandeur and drama of *Baahubali: The Beginning* and *Baahubali: The Conclusion* into one tale, this cinematic event will feature a remastered and re-edited version for its diehard fans.

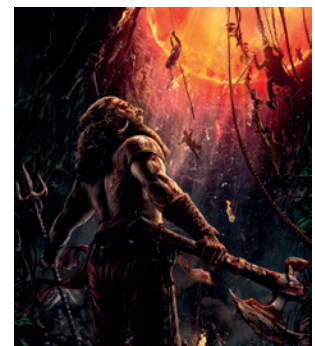
Date: 31<sup>st</sup> October



#### KANTARA: CHAPTER 1 (KANNADA)

Directed by Rishab Shetty, *Kantara: Chapter 1* is a mythological action drama that is a prequel to the 2022 film, *Kantara*. Starring Rishab Shetty, Rukmini Vasanth, Gulshan Devaiah, and Jayaram Subramaniam, the prequel delves deeper into the origins of the mythological tradition and ancestral conflict introduced in the first film.

Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> October



#### IDLI KADAI (TAMIL)

Written, directed and co-produced by Dhanush, *Idli Kadai* is a drama that explores familial ties as it tells the story of a man whose father runs a traditional idli stall. The movie stars Dhanush with a cast that includes Nithya Menen, Arun Vijay, and Shalini Pandey.

Date: 1<sup>st</sup> October



#### THE SMASHING MACHINE (ENGLISH)

An American biographical sports drama written and directed by Benny Safdie, *The Smashing Machine* stars Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson as a former amateur wrestler and MMA fighter Mark Kerr, along with Emily Blunt as Kerr's then-wife Dawn Staples. The film had its world premiere at the 82nd Venice International Film Festival in September where it won the coveted Silver Lion.

Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> October

#### THE BLACK PHONE 2 (ENGLISH)

A follow-up to the 2021 horror-mystery of the same name, *The Black Phone 2* focuses on a 15-year-old Gwen who receives calls from the ominous black phone and sees disturbing visions of three boys being stalked at a winter camp. The cast returns with a lineup that includes Ethan Hawke leading the pack along with Madeleine McGraw and Mason Thames.

Date: 17<sup>th</sup> October





## SNIPPETS



### Such a tease!

Bollywood Queen Priyanka Chopra is back in Hyderabad, shooting (for director SS Rajamouli's *Globe Trotter*) and slipping into city life as smoothly as only she can – but don't expect her to spill it all. True to form, she's keeping fans guessing with carefully cropped pictures, fleeting glimpses of her schedule, and just enough behind-the-scenes teasers to make us crave more. No full reveal of her hangouts, no elaborate diary of her days – just Priyanka being Priyanka, the queen of mystery. She knows exactly how to keep Hyderabad buzzing without ever giving the whole story away, leaving us all leaning in, waiting for that one big peek into her world.

## Comeback Magic

Actor Raashi Khanna is back in town and in style! Teaming up once again with her fave stylist Neeraja Kona, she's serving one glamorous look after another for her upcoming film *Telusu Kada* alongside Siddu Jonnalagadda. Raashi's been glowing in every frame we've caught so far. With the buzz already building around the movie, it feels like just the right comeback moment for her on the big screen. Here's hoping *Telusu Kada* gives Raashi the solid box-office run she deserves – because glamor, talent, and timing are all totally on her side right now.



### Girl on the Go!

Malayalam actor Kalyani Priyadarshan has completely floored Telugu audiences with her charming turn as Chandra in *Lokah*. Effortless, warm, and strikingly real, she's brought a refreshing energy to the screen that fans can't stop raving about. What's adding to the buzz is her adorable bond with producer-actor Dulquer Salmaan – whether it's candid banter on set or their easy camaraderie off-screen, the two make quite the delightful duo. She's shaping up to be the next big girl to watch out for – very much in the league of Keerthy Suresh.



### Jaan of Sridevi

Janhvi Kapoor hit the perfect nostalgic-yet-fresh note at the *Homebound* premiere in that stunning blue saree tribute to her late mother, Sridevi. It was simple, elegant, and loaded with emotion – a look that needed no gimmicks. What made it stand out even more was how her stylist chose restraint over risk. No distracting bralettes, awkward drapes, or “trying too hard” experiments – just a clean, classic saree moment that let Janhvi's grace and the sentiment behind the outfit shine through. It felt like a true homage, timeless yet young, and easily one of her most memorable red-carpet appearances to date. ■ MANJU





## SERIES

Streaming Online



### MR SCORSESE (ENGLISH) APPLE TV+

Directed by Rebecca Miller, *Mr Scorsese* is a five-part documentary that will feature “unrestricted access” to the life of legendary filmmaker Martin Scorsese. From his private archives to lengthy interviews with both the filmmaker and his many collaborators, the documentary explores the themes of good and evil that have fascinated Scorsese.

It will also feature Robert De Niro, Daniel Day-Lewis, Leonardo DiCaprio, Mick Jagger, Robbie Robertson, Thelma Schoonmaker, Steven Spielberg, Sharon Stone, Jodie Foster, Paul Schrader, Margot Robbie, Cate Blanchett, Jay Cocks and Rodrigo Prieto, his wife Helen Morris and his children.



### THE GAME: YOU NEVER PLAY ALONE (TAMIL) NETFLIX

Premiering this month is Netflix’s psychological thriller *The Game: You Never Play Alone*. Directed by Rajesh M. Selva. Starring Shraddha Srinath, the story delves into secrets, trust, and deception as a game developer faces a cyber-attack, examining themes of identity and betrayal.

### TWO MUCH WITH KAJOL AND TWINKLE

(HINDI/ ENGLISH)  
PRIME VIDEO

PICK  
OF THE  
MONTH

Actor Kajol and actor-turned-author Twinkle Khanna are coming together to host a first-of-its-kind talk show, *Two Much with Kajol and Twinkle*. With celebrity-heavy episodes continuing into this month, it promises unfiltered energy, something both hosts are well-known to inherently possess.



### NOBODY WANTS THIS - SEASON 2 (ENGLISH) NETFLIX

Adam Brody and Kristen Bell are back for another season of the hit series, *Nobody Wants This*. Following the events of the first season, Season Two of the Emmy-nominated comedy finds Joanne and Noah in a committed relationship while they take things further by bringing their families together. ■ IPSHITA



## BOOKS

### THE PARENTING FLOW

By Sanket Dharod; Nuvoice Press/ Rs 199



Becoming a parent is a transformation like no other. Once a parent, always a parent! With every stage of your child's growth, you shape a life, guiding them from absolute dependence to independence.

*The Parenting Flow* guides you to trust your innate parenting instincts, whilst mastering the fine balance of holding on and letting go. Blending science with the art of nurturing, the book offers practical insights, age-specific guidance, and a holistic approach to raising a child. The parenting guide hand-holds the reader on what to expect from children at each stage of life and how to tackle the action. He discusses the idea of being a "Parent Pal" to your child while also giving special insights on handling their teenage years.

### SAMALKOT STATION & OTHER STORIES

By Sindhoor Varkoor / Notion Press; Rs 485

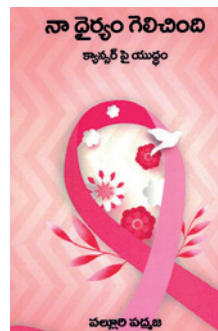


This book by Sindhoor Varkoor invites readers into intimate worlds – ancestral homes, forgotten stations, sacred courtyards, chance encounters – where nostalgia breathes alongside quiet revelations. Enhanced by

travel sketch artist Viswaprasad Raju's evocative sketches, this is a book to savor slowly, like a familiar song you return to for comfort. The book is a lyrical collection where everyday shimmers with memory, magic, and meaning. Sindhoor is a Hyderabad-based academician and poet whose debut poetry collection, *Musing Madhawa: Viraha Madhawam* received the 2019 Kabi Rabindranath Tagore Award from the Arpita Foundation, Vrindavan. Her poems have been widely published in numerous national and international anthologies.

### NA DHAIRYAM GELICHINDI

By Valluri Padmaja/ Anvikshiki Publishers/ Rs 150

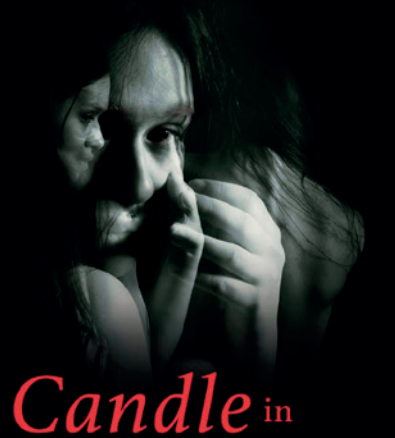


Cancer survivor Valluri Padmaja's book (translates to My courageous win over cancer) is a motivational biography of her fight against cancer. Published in Telugu, the memoir is

deeply personal and carries a message of bravery, strength and resilience for anyone facing life's toughest battles. Having walked through one of the most challenging chapters of her life, she felt a calling to share her story, not just to reflect on the pain and suffering she underwent but also to celebrate the victory, the lessons and the unbreakable human spirit. Padma seeks to help others navigate similar journeys, and to raise awareness about cancer, the power of early detection, mindset and support.

Foreword by **Shikha Goel**  
DGP Women's Safety, Telangana Police

# SHARMISHTHA SHENOY




## CANDLE IN THE WIND: STORIES OF TRUE CRIME AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN

By Sharmishtha Shenoy; Rupa Publications/Rs 276

The book is a reminder of how crime against women and young girls continues unabated, and why patriarchy is its real cause. Based on true crime cases, these stories by well-known crime writer Sharmishtha Shenoy are a glimpse into the harrowing, tragic, and sometimes bizarre circumstances faced by the victims.

A six-year-old child is sexually abused by her tutor's husband. The life of a 14-year-old orphan, who exhibits extraordinary potential and academic prowess, ends tragically due to an influential man, who, in the guise of being a benefactor of the orphanage, repeatedly rapes her. A 20-year-old woman is stalked and ultimately killed by a classmate whose advances she had dared to reject. The book has a foreword by Shikha Goel, a distinguished IPS officer. The underlying message in all the stories is the same: unless we make India safe for women, we can never achieve true equality. ■ MANJU

## Candle in the Wind



STORIES OF TRUE CRIME AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN



## Top Notch

Sept 8, Artyk

The launch of the home furniture store drew the city's leading architects and interior designers all eager to explore the global brands on display.



PINKY REDDY



PRACHI, BOBBY AND FRIENDS

## Sparkles & Shine

Sept 22, Solitario

The opening of the diamond store glittered with shimmer and sparkle, as guests in their Navratri finery turned it into a radiant affair despite the city's rains.



ISHITA RAJ



KAMINI SINGH



ANJU KHAN



RICKY VASANDANI





RADHA AND ANCHAL AGARWAL



DARSHANA TULSHAN

**Luxe Premieres**  
*Sept 12, The Colosseum*  
 From festive wardrobe and styling trends to a jewelry pop-up, Curated Corridors hosted by the luxury home interiors brand had all the components to make it a day-long party, over cheese and mimosas.



GAURAV JAIN



GAURHAV JAIN

**Swoon Worthy**  
*Sept 23, Orange Tree*  
 The furniture and décor store celebrated the debut of UK design house Swoon with a panel discussion and a curated dinner.



PREETI REDDY



SHEETAL ZAVERI



DIVISHA KHAITAN



PALLAVI JAIN & PRREYA JAIN





KATRINA



JASNEET AND SHIVANGI



ARCHITA



DIYA

## Double Delight

Sept 3, Inorbit Mall

The launch of rooftop Italian restaurant Verde and The Game Palacio lit up a monsoon day with tarantella dancers, as the city's foodies feasted on pastas and spaghetti and got playful at the gaming arena in the premises.



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