

MARCH 2026 ■ ₹100

WOW!

HYDERABAD

focus

RAMZAN:
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FEAST MODE

nightlife

WHERE JAZZ
THEATER MEETS
CRAFT BEER

trends

DESI MOTIFS
SPARKLE ON
GLOBAL RUNWAYS

food

ICE CREAMERY
WITH GUILT-FREE
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SPOTTED
EVENTS THAT
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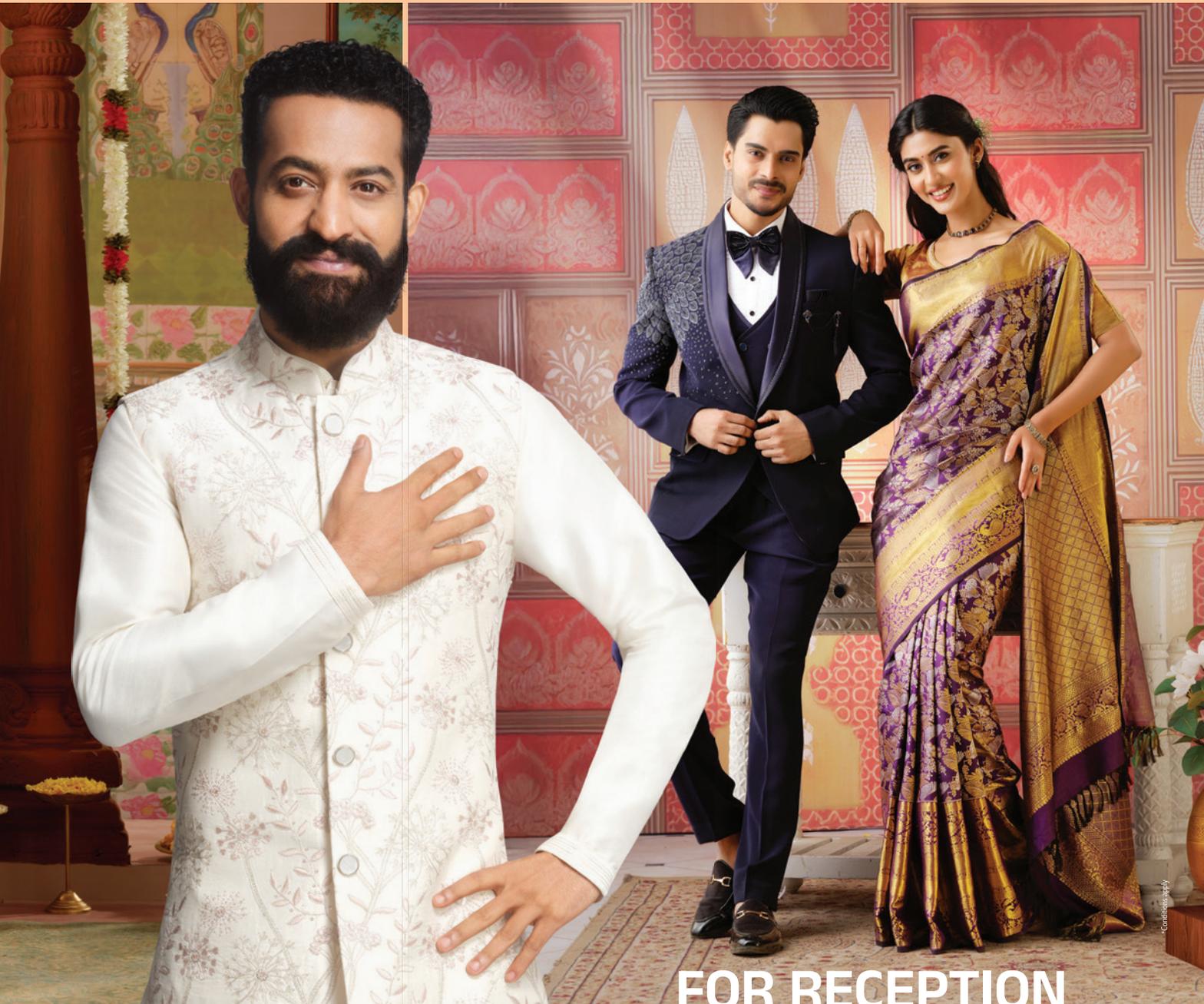


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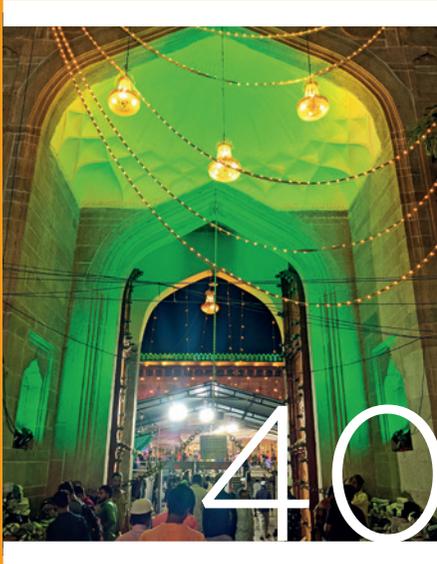
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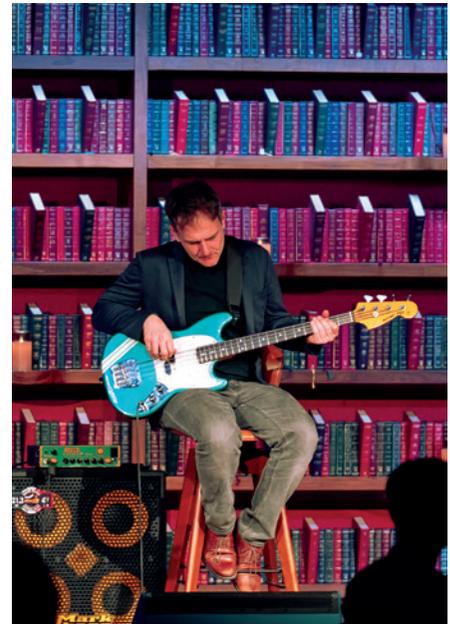
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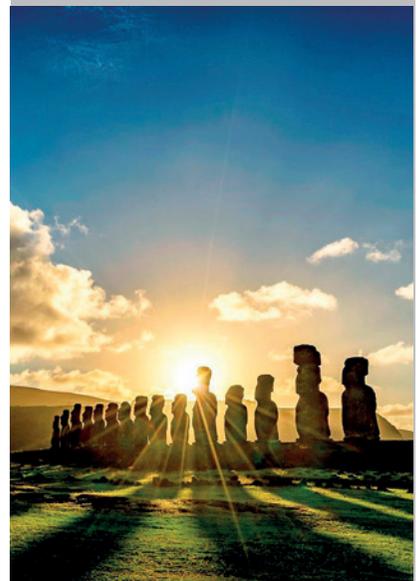


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spotted
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ALL ABOUT THE ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME **ULTRA-LUXE WORLD TRIP FOR THE HNI WORLD**. The catch is that only 40 can make it to this trip



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 STYLING: HARSHIKA RAMESH
 @HARSHIKAA.04
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 MAKEUP: VISHALI SUKUMAR
 @VISHAA_HAIRANDMAKEUP
 HAIR STYLING: ADITHYA JAYAKUMAR
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MANAGING EDITOR
 Deepti Reddy

EDITOR
 Manju Latha Kalanidhi

FEATURE WRITER
 Ipshta 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)
 Ameerpet, Hyderabad-16
 Tel: 6651 1956
 email@wowhyderabad.com

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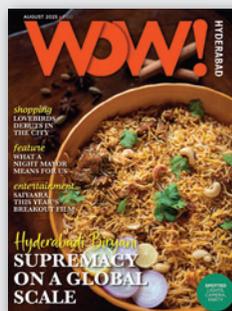
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this month

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Our guide to the exciting happenings in town



A DAY OF COLORS

MARCH 4

This Holi, Boulder Hills plays host to one of the city's biggest festive experiences in The Jungle Holi event by Prism Outdoors. As the venue transforms into a wonderland forest with a cinematic set design, activities staged include a rain dance, with organic colors, food courts, confetti and more.

Venue: Boulder Hills, Hyderabad

Timings: 9 am onwards

Price: Rs 599 onwards (bookmyshow.com)



SUNIL GROVER LIVE

MARCH 20

Heralded as one of the most versatile comedians India has to offer, Sunil Grover is set to visit Hyderabad, bringing his sharp wit and relatable humor with a high-energy performance that promises an evening filled with laughter.

Venue: Quake Arena, Gachibowli

Timings: 7 pm onwards

Price: Rs 2,499 onwards (bookmyshow.com)



BAND NIRAVAL

MARCH 14

Gear up for an evening full of soulful melodies, electrifying vibes, and unforgettable tunes. Known to perform in Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, and Malayalam, Band Niraval brings its intimate ballads and upbeat anthems to the city for a power-packed Saturday night.

Venue: Urban Mayabazar, LB Nagar

Timings: 9 pm onwards

Price: Rs 399 onwards (bookmyshow.com)

HEARTFELT STORYTELLING

MARCH 8

With *Kahanibaaz*, renowned actor Ashish Vidyarthi aims to take you on a captivating journey through his storytelling. Drawing from his life experiences and human connections, Ashish will narrate deeply relatable tales, blending humor and wisdom.

Venue: The Comedy Theater, Gachibowli

Timings: 7.30 pm onwards

Price: Rs 999 onwards (bookmyshow.com)



A TALE OF LOSS

MARCH 15

Manav Kaul of Netflix's *Baramulla* fame will be seen presenting his latest offering with, *Traasadi* – a play that follows themes surrounding parental death. A quest inward, the story explores the experience of repentance associated with loss and maternal bonds, and finding oneself.

Venue: Rangbhoomi Spaces & Events, Gachibowli

Timings: 5 pm onwards

Price: Rs 750 onwards (bookmyshow.com)

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SOUND THERAPY

MARCH 8

Designed to calm your mind and reset your nervous system, this Sound Healing Workshop aims to help you immerse yourself in soothing vibrations that lead you toward deep relaxation. Stress reduction, emotional release, and improved sleep are some of the things the session promises to help with.

Venue: Inner Heal Therapy Center

Timings: 4 pm onwards

Price: Rs 1,299 onwards
(bookmyshow.com)



RUN FOR TWO CAUSES

MARCH 7

Take part in this inspiring community-led run that aims to bring fitness, celebration, and purpose together. Marking International Women's Day and World Obesity Day, these 5K and 10K runs highlight the importance of having a healthy lifestyle.

Venue: Gachibowli Stadium

Price: Rs 399 onwards (bookmyshow.com)

LIVE WITH ANIRUDH

MARCH 21

With his first ever concert in Hyderabad, Anirudh Ravichander is all set to celebrate 15 years of music with his concert titled, *Rockstar Anirudh XV – 15 years With You*. Fresh off the success of his *Hukum* tour, Anirudh is ready to mesmerize his Hyderabad fans, promising a high-energy outdoor experience.

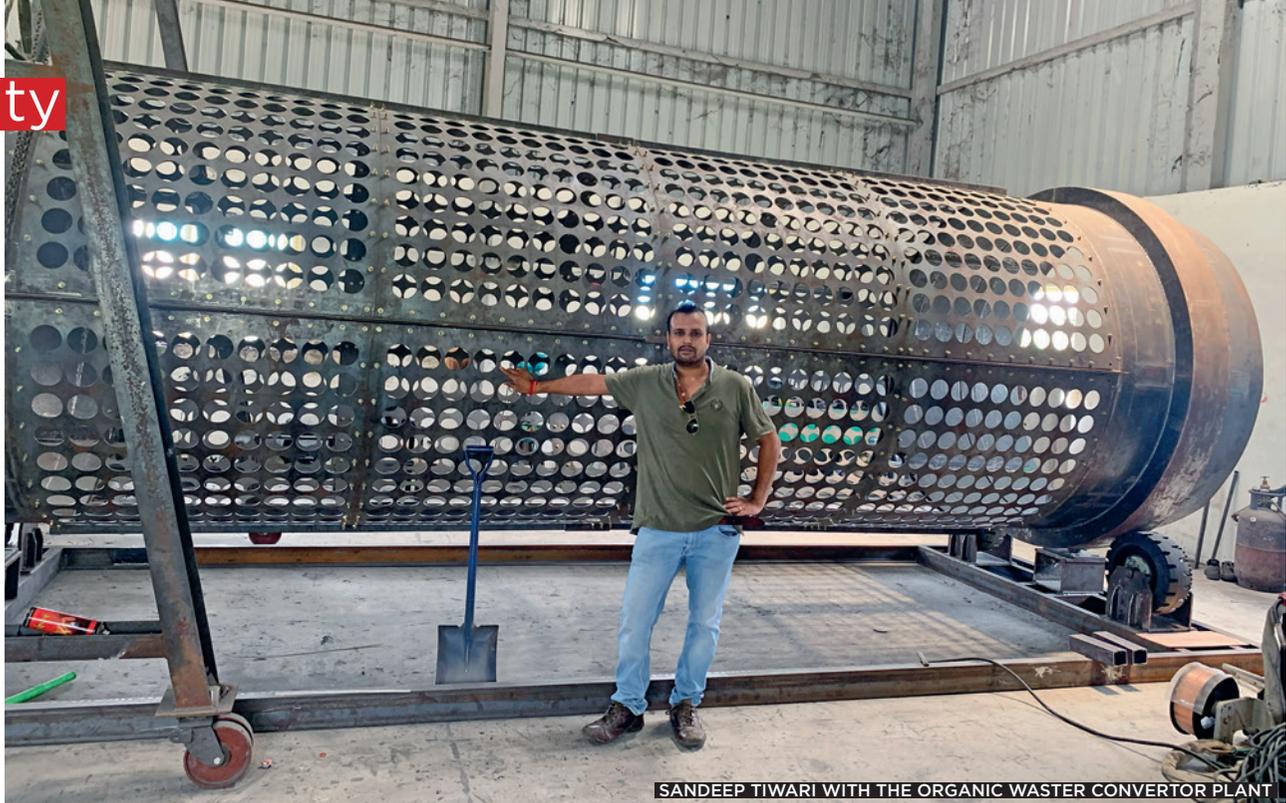
Venue: Gachibowli Outdoor Stadium

Timings: 6 pm onwards

Price: Rs 1,999 onwards
(bookmyshow.com)



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



SANDEEP TIWARI WITH THE ORGANIC WASTE CONVERTOR PLANT

START-UP

How the start-up, **Waste Is Gold**, is quietly helping Hyderabad's gated communities deal with their daily waste

Turning Trash into Value

In a typical gated community, waste is a daily headache – collected, hauled, and forgotten. But a growing number of Hyderabad societies are now processing it within their own premises, converting wet waste into usable compost within days. The system is efficient, relatively compact, and increasingly becoming a necessity rather than a choice.

At the center of this shift is an Organic Waste Converter (OWC), a machine developed by the start-up **Waste Is Gold Technologies**. Installed across nearly 30 to 40 large facilities in the city, (My Home, Prestige Group, etc.) these machines are designed for bulk waste generators – apartment complexes, hotels, schools, and institutions.

FROM PROBLEM TO PRODUCT

The Founder Sandeep Tiwari says, "I never wanted to be in business, to be honest. It just happened when I saw a real problem in a housing society." What struck him was the inefficiency of traditional composting. "Earlier systems took 45 days, needed large spaces, and had issues like smell and methane emissions," Sandeep explains. "We wanted to build something faster, cleaner, and practical for urban living."

Waste Is Gold is entirely self-funded. The

company has since expanded beyond India, taking on technology roles in large waste-to-energy projects, including one in Nepal. Sandeep is an MBA with over a decade of experience in solid waste management. One of his biggest wins is getting Central Food Technological Research Institute to install his machine in their premises for research and development purposes in composting technology.

HOW IT WORKS

In a 1,000-unit gated community, roughly 1,200 kg of daily waste (including horticulture waste) is generated. The OWC processes this within eight hours, reducing volume by nearly 70%. The output (semi-mature compost) is then cured naturally for three to seven days to become usable manure. "You don't get fully mature compost in a day," says Sandeep. "What we produce is treated, odor-free material that becomes nutrient-rich compost with a few days of natural curing."

The system requires about 800–1,000 sq. ft. of space, including curing areas. Segregation remains critical. "Segregation at source is the biggest challenge. Awareness takes time. It doesn't change overnight," he adds.

THE COST OF GOING GREEN

For a large community, the upfront investment is significant. A one-ton capacity machine costs approximately Rs 25 lakh, including accessories. Operational costs include electricity (around Rs 12,000 per month), minimal manpower, and maintenance.

But there are returns. Compost can be reused for landscaping or sold. "We even buy back excess compost from societies," says Sandeep. "There is real value in it, especially with the rise of organic farming." The start-up itself was built through steady, self-funded investment, with Sandeep initially experimenting with prototypes before scaling up.

WHY IT MATTERS NOW

With stricter waste management rules and increasing pressure on landfills, cities like Hyderabad are enforcing on-site waste processing for bulk generators. "If we don't manage waste at source, cities will drown in it," Sandeep says. "This is not just compliance, it's critical infrastructure," he adds.

Waste Is Gold is now working on automation and smaller, home-level portable composters, aiming to take the model beyond communities and into individual households. ■ MANJU



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SPORTS

A Junior Commercial Tax Inspector by day, **Harsha Ratnakar** trains daily and competes for India on the global kickboxing stage

Fighting Forward

Fresh off a silver medal at the Indian Open International Kickboxing Cup this February, Harsha Ratnakar, returned to Hyderabad with a bruised body and a clear head. The final, against a well-trained opponent from Iraq, didn't go his way, but the takeaway was simple. "I gave my best. In this sport, you learn to accept both outcomes and keep moving," he says.

OPENING BELL

The athlete's journey began not with ambition, but curiosity. As a Hyderabad teenager, he was drawn to action films and fitness. Kickboxing entered his life at 17, almost casually. "I didn't start thinking I would represent India. I just wanted to get fitter," he says. That casual start soon turned competitive when coach Suresh Patel spotted potential and pushed him towards state and national events. He believes that

kickboxing is at the intersection of a sport and a wellness art.

"Consistency is everything. Whether it's studies or sport, you have to show up every day"

FOOTWORK AND FOUNDATIONS

A student of Amaravati High School and later CMR Institute of Technology, the 31-year-old balanced academics with sport, eventually pursuing a PG Diploma in Disaster Management while preparing for competitive exams. Today, he works as a Junior Commercial Tax Inspector. The discipline of exams and the discipline of sport run parallel. "Consistency is everything. Whether it's studies or sport, you have to show up every day," he says.

THE COMEBACK ROUND

In 2015, Harsha won his first national gold in Delhi. Then came a long pause. Seven years away from the ring while chasing a career could have ended the story, but the athlete returned in 2022 with renewed focus. Since then, he has built a steady record: multiple state golds, a national bronze, and consecutive international silvers. In 2025, the kickboxer stood out as the only athlete from a 66-member Telangana contingent to win gold at the nationals. "I re-entered the ring after seven years with no expectations. I just wanted to see if I still had it," he says.

GUARD UP

Training is simple, old-school. Morning runs at Krishnakant Park, evening sessions at his Somajiguda academy, and a self-managed diet that shifts closer to competition. No entourage, no excess. "Inside the ring, two minutes can feel like two hours. Your preparation has to cover that," he explains. Interestingly, he takes the monthly pass (from 9 am to 11 am) to ensure he has the running track to himself rather than jostle in the crowd during the free hours.

Kickboxing, he insists, is more art than aggression. "When you start, you feel like hitting everything. But as you grow, you learn control. Respect comes before power," he says.

TITLE SHOT AHEAD

Despite representing India on global platforms, the athlete's journey is largely self-funded due to the sport's limited recognition. International tournaments can cost up to Rs two to three lakh rupees. "We have the talent. What we need is support to step onto bigger stages," he says.

With events like the Thailand World Cup and Asian competitions ahead, Harsha is focused on recovery and rebuilding. There is also cautious optimism about kickboxing's potential inclusion in the 2028 Olympics. "If it happens, I want to be there. That's the dream for any athlete," he says.

For now, the kickboxer stays grounded, running his laps, punching through doubt and letting his work speak. ■ MANJU



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CAUSE

Domestic violence and abuse can happen even in elite homes and the **Invisible Scars Foundation** wants anyone suffering to seek their help, remotely and anonymously, if need be

Invisible Scars: Listening, Responding, Staying

When Ekta Viiveck Verma speaks about domestic violence and abuse, she does not begin with statistics. She begins with silence, the kind that keeps people from naming what they are going through. Her own experience of prolonged emotional abuse within the family, and the isolation that followed, became the starting point for **Invisible Scars Foundation**, an organization she founded in 2016.

“Most women who need our help find it easier to reach out to us via a call or message. So, we function as an online entity with offline impact”

A BEGINNING ROOTED IN EXPERIENCE

“What began as a small, closed Facebook group was not intended to be an NGO. It was simply a safe space. Women wrote in, often anonymously, sharing what they could not say aloud,” reveals Ekta, the Founder and Director of Invisible Scars.

As messages grew into requests for help, Ekta realized that listening was

only the first step. She began learning the ecosystem – interning with other organizations, studying legal frameworks, and understanding how support systems function. Over time, Invisible Scars evolved into a structured, pan-India support network, albeit online (remote). “Most women who need our help find it easier to reach out to us via a call or message. So, we function as an online entity with offline impact,” she adds.

HOW SUPPORT WORKS

At its core, the organization functions as a first point of contact. “When a survivor reaches out, they are connected to a trained first responder who documents their situation confidentially. From there, support is tailored. Some need legal clarity (their rights) without filing a case (FIR). Others seek counselling, mediation or help to leave an abusive environment,” informs Ekta.

WHAT THEY DO

The Foundation provides survivors with resources, including educational materials, customized toolkits to help identify violence and abuse, and connections to legal aid, mental health services, and shelters. They also provide financial support in



certain cases, including food and rations, skill development programs, capacity-building initiatives and other miscellaneous requirements.

BEYOND CRISIS: PRACTICAL REALITIES

One of the biggest gaps the organization confronts is shelter, shares Ekta. Contrary to the assumption, safe housing is limited, hard to come by and inaccessible across socio-economic groups. “Invisible Scars frequently works around this by helping survivors identify safer alternatives – friends, relatives, or short-term paid stays – sometimes even raising funds in urgent cases,” she adds. In the last 10 years, they have impacted 5,400 survivors through their support.

HANDBOOK FOR SAFETY

The organization also equips survivors with practical tools. Safety plans include securing identity and financial documents, maintaining access to independent communication, and planning exits rather than reacting in panic. These small, but critical steps often determine whether a survivor can rebuild stability.

EXPANDING THE ECOSYSTEM

Invisible Scars has also worked with institutions. Its collaboration with Urban Company, for instance, helped implement a workplace domestic violence and abuse policy – linking employees to legal, mental health, and financial support when needed. Invisible Scars has conducted awareness summits across cities, consistently highlighting systemic gaps such as under-utilized funding and lack of infrastructure.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Readers can support the survivors by offering them projects or programs through the Foundation. You can also let those around you, who you think are silently suffering, seek help from them. Also, let service providers around you, such as your cooks, domestic help, nanny, etc. know about the helpline if they are suffering domestic violence and abuse.

■ MANJU

Invisible Scars Foundation Helpline:
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THE LEGACY BUILDER HOW DR GREESMA BATHALA PERAM

IS SHAPING THE NEXT ERA OF REAL ESTATE

Some career decisions follow a straight line.

Others change direction completely.

Dr Greesma Bathala Peram's journey belongs to the second kind.

With an Doctor Degree in hand she could have built a stable and predictable career in healthcare. Instead, she choose to step into business into the world of land, layouts, contruction of villas, planning, and long-term investment. It was not a rejection of medicine. It was simply a different way of contributing to society.

If medicine heals individuals, real estate builds the environments where communities live, grow, and thrive. Today, as **Managing Director of PERAM GROUP**, she is helping guide a **32+ year-old real estate company** into its next phase of growth.

CARRYING FORWARD A 32-YEAR FOUNDATION

PERAM GROUP has built a strong presence over the decades:

- **32+ Years of Industry Experience** • **91+ Completed Projects**
- **25,000+ Happy Customers** • **25+ Million Sq. Ft. Developed**
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THE COMPANY OPERATES ACROSS TELANGANA, ANDHRA PRADESH, AND KARNATAKA, INCLUDING CITIES SUCH AS HYDERABAD, VIZAG, BANGALORE, AND TIRUPATHI.

In an industry that is rapidly evolving, this kind of scale requires careful planning. India's real estate sector is expected to grow significantly in the coming years, and established developers face an important choice stay comfortable or adapt to change. Under Dr Greesma's leadership, PERAM GROUP is clearly choosing to adapt and grow.

FROM MEDICINE TO REAL ESTATE

Though she has Dr. degree, her medical training still shapes how she works. Doctors are trained to study problems carefully before offering solutions. They look beyond the surface, understand root causes, and think about long-term well-being. Dr Greesma applies the same thinking to real -estate.



Before entering a new location or launching a project, there is research, analysis, and planning. The goal is not just to sell property, but to create long lasting value. It is about building spaces that remain relevant and livable years into the future.

LEADERSHIP WITH RESPONSIBILITY

Joining a family business can sometimes be seen as an easy transition. But for Dr Greesma, it meant responsibility. It meant protecting a reputation built over three decades while also preparing the company for expansion.

She Focuses On Three Clear Principles

• Sustainable growth • Community-focused development • Strong brand integrity

BALANCING WORK AND LIFE

Outside the office, she is also a mother. **Her eight-year-old son is an Under-13 cricket champion** something she speaks about with pride.

Balancing leadership and family life is not always simple, but she approaches it with structure and discipline. Early mornings, planned schedules, and clear priorities help her stay focused. When asked how she “manages everything,” her perspective is simple: it is not about managing everything at once. It is about organizing life with clarity.

EXPANDING A LEGACY

For Dr Greesma Bathala Peram, legacy is not something to preserve quietly. It is something to build upon.

As new projects rise across **Hyderabad, Vizag, Bangalore, and Tirupathi**, they reflect more than business growth. They reflect a leadership approach that values vision, preparation, and long-term thinking.

But her ambition does not stop at expansion. Dr Greesma envisions taking **PERAM GROUP** onto the global stage with a clear aspiration to see the company feature among the Fortune 500 and to one day grace the cover of Forbes as a symbol of transformative under 40 female leadership in Indian real estate.

**IN MANY WAYS, HER
JOURNEY SHOWS THAT
LEADERSHIP IS NOT
ABOUT FOLLOWING A
FIXED PATH. SOMETIMES,
IT IS ABOUT CHOOSING
A NEW ONE AND BUILDING
SOMETHING MEANINGFUL
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Actor Kayadu Lohar, the girl who made us groove to *Madhuvarame* with her moves and charmed us in *Funky*, opens up about navigating the highs and lows of the film industry while steadily building her space in southern cinema

“I’ve made my peace with unpredictability”

Kayadu Lohar is that sprightly new face you can’t quite place yet can’t ignore either. With just a couple of Telugu outings – *Alluri* in 2022, *Dragon* last year, and *Funky* this February – she’s already caught attention for her ease on screen and that unfiltered, earnest energy. There’s a quiet confidence, a sense that this 26-year-old actor is still discovering herself while inviting the audience along for the ride. Early days, yes, but she’s clearly here to stay. WOW! caught up with her amidst her crazy schedules with seven movies in her kitty.

YOU WERE A BEAUTY PAGEANT WINNER BEFORE FILMS. TELL US ABOUT YOUR BEGINNINGS – WHERE YOU WERE BORN, GREW UP, AND WHETHER ACTING WAS ALWAYS ON THE CARDS.

I was born and brought up in Pune, though my roots are in Assam. Growing up, my mom always felt I should take part in beauty pageants as she felt I had the right looks and attitude. She saw something in me before I did. That decision slowly opened doors to the film industry. Acting was always somewhere in my mind – I was drawn to drama, to expression – but I didn’t really know how to go about it. Pageants became that unexpected entry point. I won the *Times of India’s* Everyuth Fresh Face Season 12 in 2020. That win got me my film debut in Kannada (*Mugilpete*). It wasn’t a straight, planned journey, but it felt right as it unfolded.



WHAT ARE THE NEW SKILLS YOU LEARNED TO BLEND INTO THE SOUTH FILM INDUSTRY?

The biggest one has definitely been language. Learning Telugu and getting comfortable with other South Indian languages has been important, not just for work but for connection. Along with that, understanding and appreciating the culture and especially the music has helped me feel more rooted. It’s not just about delivering lines – it’s about absorbing the environment you’re working in.

ACTING OFTEN LOOKS GLAMOROUS FROM THE OUTSIDE. WHAT KIND OF EFFORT DOES IT ACTUALLY INVOLVE?

There’s a lot that goes on behind the scenes that people don’t really see. It takes a lot of mental resilience because you’re constantly investing yourself emotionally. Acting isn’t just about looking good on screen – it’s about truly feeling something and then conveying that in a way that moves the audience. That emotional investment can be intense. Alongside that, there’s grooming, public appearances, social media, events – it’s a full-time commitment in every sense.

THE FILM INDUSTRY CAN BE UNPREDICTABLE. HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH REJECTION, FAILURE OR PROJECTS THAT DON’T WORK OUT?

Honestly, there’s no other choice. I’ve made my peace with the unpredictability. When rejection or failure happens, all I can do is accept it, pick myself up, and move on. I don’t believe in sitting and crying over it or letting it affect me deeply. It is what it is. You endure it and keep going. That’s the only way forward in this industry.

YOU’RE AN AMAZING DANCER. WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE YOUR OTHER STRONG POINTS? DID YOU LEARN DANCE FORMALLY?

Thank you! I actually never learned dance formally. It’s something I’ve always enjoyed and connected with naturally. I think one of my strongest points as an actor is that when the camera switches on, I completely lose myself. I dissolve into the character I’m playing. That ability to let go of myself and become someone else – that’s what I really value.

SOCIAL MEDIA CAN BE BOTH EMPOWERING AND HARSH. HOW DO YOU HANDLE TROLLING AND CRITICISM?

I won’t pretend it doesn’t affect me. I do feel sad, I feel bad, I sulk a little. But I don’t stay there for long. I dust it off and move on. Trolls, criticism, unsolicited opinions – they’re all occupational hazards. I’ve accepted that. But I don’t let them change who I am or how I see myself. It’s always about moving upwards and onwards.



WITH VISHWAK SEN IN *FUNKY*

AWAY FROM THE CAMERA, WHAT DOES A PERFECT DAY IN YOUR LIFE LOOK LIKE?

I'm a restless person who can't sit idle for more than two days. A perfect day would involve travelling, exploring new cultures, languages and cuisines. Being around nature and animals makes me really happy. That's where I feel most like myself.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR UPCOMING PROJECTS IN 2026.

I have six releases lined up across different languages, which is really exciting. In Malayalam, there's *Pallichattambi* with Tovino Thomas and *I'm Game* with Dulquer Salmaan. In Tamil, I have *Idhayam Murali* and *Immortal*, and in Telugu, *Funky* has just released; and there's *The Paradise* with Nani. I'm genuinely excited about this phase because I hope audiences will get to see more of my performances, beyond just how I look.

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING AN ACTOR, AND THE DOWNSIDE?

The best thing is definitely the love you receive from the audience. That connection is special. The downside would be everything that comes with it – trolls, criticism, gossip, controversies – and also not getting as much time with family as you'd like.

WHICH ACTOR'S MOVIE HAVE YOU BEEN SECRETLY ENVOIOUS OF, AND WHY?

Keerthy Suresh in *Mahanati*.

WHAT LESSONS HAVE YOU LEARNED IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS?

That everything is unpredictable. You just have to deal with it – and nail it.

IF YOU HAD TO BRANCH OUT INTO SOMETHING ELSE, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

Probably a travel company. I love nature and travelling, so it feels like a natural extension of who I am. ■ MANJU

QUICK TAKE

- **Three hashtags that define you:** #Curious #Sensitive #ChildAtHeart
- **Three apps you use regularly:** YouTube, Netflix, DigiYatra
- **Funny variations of your name:** Kaidu, Kadadu, Kydoo
- **Best biryani in Hyderabad:** Shadab
- **Where would you take a date in Hyderabad?:** RU in Jubilee Hills
- **Song on loop right now:** *KaattuChembakam* from *Pallichattambi*
- **Favourite Telugu words:** *Endukantey, Chalu, Ledhu*

Riding a strong Sankranthi streak, actor **Meenaakshi Chaudhary** opens up about comedy, confidence and choosing roles that stretch her

“Comedy is the toughest test for an actor”

Meenaakshi Chaudhary has quietly emerged as one of the more interesting young actors in Telugu cinema today. A former beauty queen, she has resisted easy slots, moving between mainstream entertainers and character-driven roles with ease. From playing an IPS officer in *Sankranthiki Vastunnam* to a young mother in *Lucky Bhaskhar*, she has shown a willingness to take risks early in her career. With *Anaganaga Oka Raju*, releasing this Sankranthi, Meenaakshi steps into full-fledged comedy for the first time, sharing screen space with Naveen Polishetty in what promises to be a festive entertainer with a fresh tone.

YOU’VE HAD BACK-TO-BACK SANKRANTHI RELEASES. DOES THE FESTIVAL NOW FEEL PERSONAL?

Very much so. Last year, *Sankranthiki Vastunnam* gave me a Sankranthi I’ll never forget. To have *Anaganaga Oka Raju* arrive during the same festive window feels special. It’s not something you can plan, but when it happens organically, it’s very gratifying. Reading about the box-office numbers and being hailed as a ‘Sankranthi winner’ is special and the high vibe will definitely linger on into 2026.

THIS IS YOUR FIRST FULL-LENGTH COMEDY ROLE. WAS IT INTIMIDATING?

Comedy is extremely tough. Timing is everything. Even a slight delay can change the impact of a scene. Working with actor Naveen Polishetty was like being in film school. His sense of rhythm is very specific, and matching that was challenging. Among all the roles I’ve done so far, this tested me the most.

YOU ALSO HAVE MASS DANCE NUMBERS IN THE FILM. HOW DID YOU APPROACH THOSE?

There are some really fun songs like *Bheemavaram Baalma* and *Raju Gari Pelliro*. I’m usually a bit shy when it comes to dancing, but I didn’t feel that at all here. We shot those songs with a lot of energy and laughter. All the rehearsals helped us perform well. All the efforts seem to have paid off when I see that the hook step in these dance numbers are trending on Instagram and YouTube shorts. When people relate to it, that’s the ultimate compliment to actors.

“I look at how strong it is, how the director sees the characters, and what the role offers me as an actor”



THE FILM WAS SHOT IN THE GODAVARI REGION. DO YOU GET TO HAVE FUN ON THE SETS OR IS IT ALL WORK AND NO PLAY?

The warmth of the people. They really looked after us. I ate so many local dishes, visited temples and explored nearby places. There’s a deep love for cinema there, and you feel it every day on set.

HOW DO YOU LOOK AT HEROINE ROLES AND THE AGENCY THEY ENJOY TODAY?

They carry much more importance now. I’m grateful that I’m getting roles with substance. Each film has shown me in a different light, and *Anaganaga Oka Raju* adds another dimension to that journey.

WHAT GUIDES YOUR SCRIPT CHOICES?

For me, the story is the real hero. I look at how strong it is, how the director sees the characters, and what the role offers me as an actor. That matters more than anything else.

DO YOU FEEL SETTLED IN YOUR CAREER NOW?

Not at all. Cinema is a continuous race. New people come in every day. As long as I have work in hand and roles that excite me, that’s enough.

WHAT’S NEXT FOR YOU?

I’m working on *Vrushakarma* with Naga Chaitanya, and there are a few other interesting stories in discussion. Announcements will come soon. ■ MANJU



Go on a journey through Nikkei, a blend of Japanese techniques and Peruvian flavors, at **Yuzu**

ASIA WITH AN EDGE

A sensorial voyage for the discerning palate, **Yuzu** shines a spotlight on Nikkei cuisine, harmonizing Japanese techniques with Peruvian flavors. Situated under clear skies within the quiet vastness of Hilton Hyderabad Genome Valley Resort & Spa, the pan-Asian dining destination invites you to explore flavors that give a nod to the familiar, while offering unexpected thrills along the way.

AMBIENCE

The thriving green oasis of the Hilton extends its quiet vitality to the alfresco and interior spaces of Yuzu, accentuating the charming spot.

Introduced to the city in late January, Yuzu made a celebratory debut with vibrant live music, spirited laughter, daring cocktails, and a mindful feast. The evening, which began on a formal note, soon saw a shift in mood as everyone let their guard down.

FIVE COURSE PRE-SET FEAST

Curated by Chef Palden Sherpa, an unassuming creative with unbridled talent coursing through his fingers, the pre-set menu presented to us included a five-course spread, accompanied by Asian ingredient-infused, structured cocktails, crafted and balanced with seasoned precision.



WOW!
Recommends
Charcoal Jiaozi

COURSE ONE:

Each course took us deeper into Asian flavors. Taking the lead was the warm, layered, and comforting The Silk Beginning, which was quickly followed by the Tan Tan Ramen – noodles served in a deeply spiced broth, layered with ajitsuke nori and fresh chives.

COURSE TWO:

The second course introduced the Beet Miso Ceviche and the Yuzu Tiradito, both complemented by the rum-based Eastside Wanderer. The Beet Miso Ceviche included the seven-day cured beet, goat cheese, and miso soy glaze, while the Yuzu Tiradito was brought to life with Hamachi, creamy avocado, duo sesame, yuzu ponzu, and habanero.

COURSE THREE:

Dumplings and flame-charred dishes, paired with the tequila-based Wasabi Sunset, signaled in the third course.

Meat options served were the Yuzu Fire – flame-charred salmon glazed with a spicy Nikkei-inspired citrus sauce; and the Yuzu Gyoza – pan-seared chicken dumplings with coriander and hajikami. Vegetarian options included the Charcoal Jiaozi – charcoal-infused dumplings with asparagus, bamboo shoot, napa cabbage, and water chestnut; and the Avocado Wedges – crisp avocado, togarashi, lemon, and spicy hoisin.

COURSE FOUR:

The fourth course presented us with the Sichuan Kung Pao, a wok-tossed chicken dish, finished with cashews, scallions, and fiery chilli; a fragrant and layered Bangkok Green Curry; steamed Jasmine Rice; and Truffle Soba – soba noodles served with straw mushrooms, vegetables, and truffle oil. The dishes were served alongside the exquisitely balanced vodka-based, Velvet Geisha Unset.

COURSE FIVE:

In closing, the fifth course concluded the wide-ranging dinner with the Yuzu Semifreddo – a classic silky citrus semifreddo with honey-ginger streusel, paired with the final cocktail of the night, the vodka, lime, coconut, passionfruit, and matcha-infused, Zen Chaos. ■ IPSHITA

Meal for two: Rs 5,500 onwards

Hilton Hyderabad Genome Valley Resort & Spa

Tel: 87124 76663

Timings: 7 pm to 11 pm (Wednesday to Sunday)

Check out **Toopa**, the new aesthetic ice creamery, with berry-colored interiors, for a guilt-free dessert

Love & Gelato

Toopa Ice Creamery offers a range of gelatos, which have less added sugar and no added colors, in a variety of flavors suitable for all food palates. The range also includes sorbets made from fresh seasonal fruit purées with toppings from waffle crunch, and cookie crumbs to caramelized nuts and whipped cream. You can enjoy the gelato on top of their hot waffles and carrot cake, all made in-house and eggless.

GRAMMABLE INTERIORS

The interiors are bright red and pink, geometric and pop art-inspired with circular décor and in a retro style perfect for taking pictures. We tried their Signature Hot Chocolate with whipped cream, and the Moody Cocoa Gelato made with 70% dark chocolate, Pista-La-Vista gelato made out of real pistachio.

BAN THE PUDDING

One must have is the banana pudding flavored gelato, which is unexpectedly delicious, as the banana taste doesn't overpower in the gelato called Ban-the-pudding. They also offer a single sugar-free flavor, packed with whey protein and made from protein milk called Power P-nut. Their Carefree Sundae – carrot cake with a jammy and tangy berry swirl, Parle G Party and raspberry scoops finished Toopa style are worth exploring.



WOW!
Recommends
Ban-The-
Pudding

Overall, Toopa feels like a place that you keep coming back to, as their unique flavors are added to midnight cravings, which can be ordered on Swiggy or Zomato. ■ KARTHEEKA

Meal for two: Rs 600

Road No. 38, CBI Colony, Jubilee Hills

Timings: 1 pm to 1 am

@toopaicecreamery

We visit **So-Zo Café**, where a range of cakes dominate the menu

The Cake-First Café



WOW!
Recommends
Chocolate
Valencia Slice
Cake

So-Zo Cakery & Café in Banjara Hills creates a rare experience where you can try a range of cakes, from the mawa to their rainbow cake. These work best when paired with a brew from their wide range of coffees, teas, cold drinks and ice cream blends in a calm and cozy ambience with modern interiors and colored accents.

This vegetarian eatery makes its own bread, cookies and cake from scratch, and all items on their menu are egg-free, making it a hot spot experience for vegetarians.

CHEESE BUN WINS BIG

We started our binging spree with their best-selling Chocolate Valencia slice cake paired with a hot cup of Matcha latte. The citrus of the orange and the chocolate surprisingly complement each other, even with the slight bitterness of matcha. Then we tried another crowd favorite, the Korean Cream Cheese Bun, a delight filled with creamy cheese. The Pesto Cheddar Tomato Baguette, which is a burst of flavors and their Peri Peri Paneer Puff Pizza are must try options, as the combination of the crunchy and flaky layers of puff laid with layers of cheese, veggies and paneer is a unique find served at this place. ■ KARTHEEKA

Meal for two: Rs 1,200

Road No. 14, Opp HDFC Bank, GS Nagar, Nandi Nagar, Banjara Hills

Tel: 90303 33597

Timings: 11 am to 11 pm



Strong flavors served in earthen pots, fruity drinks, and live music, are just a few reasons to visit **Am Aha**, the new rustic terracotta-themed restaurant

THE SOUND OF FOOD

Representing what is perceived by its creators as the sound of food, **Am Aha** is a testament to Telugu flavors that elicit within its patrons, a gustatory ‘mmm’ with every bite.

ESSENCE OF FLAVORS

Launched in February by Co-founders, Thrinath Reddy Sabbasani and Jaswanth Reddy Mukka, the latest outlet opens to terracotta flourishes – a rustic aesthetic that trails across three floors. The design proudly reflects the essence of Telugu cuisine served in traditional earthen pots, which can also be enjoyed under the third-floor skylight with local musicians serenading.

ZESTY SPREAD

At the launch, we explored a good part of the menu that included, for meat lovers, the flavorful Kodi Karam Chips, Military Canteen Mutton Biryani, Kalachatti Mutton Curry, and Mutton Marag.

Our zesty spread also included the Miriyala Rasam, Dragon Paneer, Golden Fry Babycorn, MokkaJonna Garelu in appetizers, and Guthi Vankaya Koorra, and the must-try Matka Pulaos in mains. Among the desserts, we indulged in the comfort of Kesar Jamun with ice cream, which helped temper the strong flavors.

WOW!
Recommends
Kodi Karam
Chips



Speaking of blending contrasting flavors, we also tried the delightful Am Aha signature drinks: the fruity and feel-good Am Aha Rangoli, crafted with fresh pomegranate, apple, and peach, topped with cranberry juice; and the fresh and irresistibly smooth Kiwi Khushi, that offered a silky blend of apple juice kiwi, and cream. ■ IPSHITA

Meal for two: Rs 1,200

1-150/1, Shilpagram,
Madhapur
Tel: 90108 36789
Timings: 12 pm to 11 pm

WHAT'S NEW

Introducing baithak nights and heady cocktails, **Aish** is upping the ante to create a more immersive experience

Something Royal

Step back into the Nizami era as **Aish** gives a fresh touch to its royal dining experience with exciting baithak nights and powerful cocktails.

BAITHAK AND COCKTAILS

Qawwalis, ghazals, and a touch of Bollywood make up these baithak nights. Lending their raw vocals to the senses, the talents comfortably rest on a plush low-seater, serenading the audience from Wednesday through Sunday.



WOW!
Recommends
Heera-e-Aish

To elevate the sensory experience further, don't forget to order the two new cocktails on the menu. Serving power to the palate with an explosion of flavors are the gin-based, Perugu and Pasupu.

SOULFUL FOOD

Playing up the regal vibe, the 2,195 sq.ft. space at The Park opens to comforting interiors and seating, brought further to life by bright lighting. We settle across from where the musicians are performing and place an order for the seven and nine-course signature thalis, the Zar-e-Khaas and the Heera-e-Aish.

Highlights include dishes like the Doodhiya Kebab, Aloo ke Dulme, Bhindi Khagina, Pyaz ka Kulcha, Subz Biryani, Kattal Haleem, Achari Masala Paneer, Meve ke Shikampur, Chowgra, Sigri Wali Mahi Tikka, Patthar ka Ghosht, Zaffrani Dum ka Murgh, Lal Mirch ki Macchi, and the Murgh Burhani Gilaf Seekh.

Finally, we stuff ourselves with a dessert spread that includes the Laziz-e-Meetha, Badam ka Halwa, Qubani Cream Cheese Mille-Feuille, and the Desi Gulab ki Kheer.

Note: Be sure to check out Aish's Ramzan special menu that includes a wide-ranging lineup of traditional delectables. ■

IPSHITA

Meal for two (based on a la carte): Rs 2,000 onwards

Aish - The Park, 22 Rajbhavan Road, Somajiguda

Tel: 040 44990000 / 99082 66088

Timings: Lunch: 12.30 pm to 3 pm (Tuesday to Sunday),

Dinner: 7 pm to 11 pm (Tuesday to Sunday)

Baithak Nights: 8 pm to 11 pm (Wednesday to Sunday)



#HappyWomen'sDay



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WOMEN'S DAY SPECIAL

BoomBird's range of personal safety alarms and tools are apt for gifting to the women you love, this International Women's Day

A safety device when the phone fails



BoomBird is built around a simple insight: most safety tools are used after an incident begins, while BoomBird is designed for the moment before it escalates. "BoomBird is a compact, easy-to-use personal safety alarm that emits a piercing sound of 130 decibels (a gunshot is 135 db) and activates a flashing strobe light. It is designed to be used at the first sign of discomfort or threat, helping

users draw attention, deter a potential perpetrator, and create a window to move away from risk," explains Sindhuja Sura, Founder of BoomBird, a personal safety brand.

The three variants, Echo, Aero and Pebble, can be easily clipped onto handbags or clothing without drawing attention. Unlike tools such as pepper sprays, which are typically used only after an incident has begun, these devices are meant for early use.

PULL THE TRIGGER

"A quick pull or press, triggers the alarm, making them accessible even in high-stress situations where complex actions may fail. This ease of use is central to BoomBird's philosophy; safety tools should not require training, strength, or presence of mind beyond a single instinctive action. Our consumers include students, working professionals, senior citizens and runners," adds Sindhuja.

The online store positions itself as a long-term personal safety, focused on everyday preparedness rather than one-time emergency use. "The emphasis



is on awareness, preparedness, and normalizing the use of safety tools as part of everyday life, much like carrying a torch or wearing a helmet," says Sindhuja.

CAR RESCUE TOOL TOO

In addition to its personal safety alarms, they also have everyday safety and self-defence tools including Hover, a no-touch safety tool for public spaces; Strike, an emergency car rescue tool; and Orb, a weighted self-defence keychain, designed to integrate safety into daily life without intimidation.

Sindhuja holds a Master's degree in Computer Science from the University at Buffalo, USA, and has previously served as the Managing Director of a CBSE school. "The ideas is to make personal safety less about reacting to danger and more about staying one step ahead," she adds. ■ MANJU

Price: Safety Alarms Rs 1,699 onwards; Safety tools: Rs 299 onwards

<https://boombird.shop/>

Cacti, the Instagram-famous permanent jewelry store, is also popular for bags and phones with sequins, letters and bracelets

Charming Accessories

This newly opened store with aesthetic interiors offers a wide range of jewelry in minimalist designs to DIY options, from earrings, bracelets, to dainty necklaces suitable for everyday wear. These pieces are anti-tarnish and waterproof, which makes them durable against all weathers and sustainable as they are produced with an eco-friendly process using materials like high-quality stainless steel and coated with 18k gold polish, also making them hypoallergenic.

SAME, SAME, BUT DIFFERENT

This store is ideal to hang out with friends to get matching accessories, as you can customize your chain with letters and other cute charms based on your preferences and get them as

permanent jewelry – welded in-store and on the spot in a jiffy with care, and stay worry-free of losing or damaging your jewellery, perfect for promise and friendship bracelets and chains.

YOUR BAG, YOUR NAME

You can customize your bags and pouches with various sequin letters and motif patches alongside hats and caps, and aesthetic yet quirky phone cases and straps. There are also bag charms and Apple watch metallic bands available, which elevate the look of your digital watch look. You can also browse their jewelry online and order it to be shipped to your doorstep, but the DIY fun and permanent jewelry is an exclusive in-store experience that can't be missed. ■ KARTHEEKA



Price: For permanent jewelry, bracelet Rs 1,500, anklet Rs 1,800, chain Rs 2,500, waist chain Rs 3,500

Level 5, Next Premia Mall / Irrum Manzil metro mall, Irrum Manzil Colony, Punjagutta

Timings: 11 am to 8 pm
thecactistore.com



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A multispectral imaging system from Korea analyzes skin's micro-texture, pore density, and hydration levels, guiding precision protocols toward the coveted Glass Skin aesthetic.

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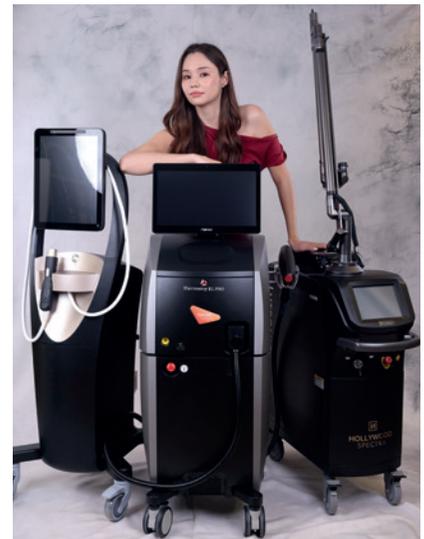
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Call: 9551933333

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Esteem Plaza, No 356/20, 13th Cross, 4th Main, 1st Floor, Sadashivanagar, Bangalore, Karnataka – 560080
Call: 9551933333

Mail: info@vcarecoe.com

Website: www.vcarecoe.com





MD BHARATH REDDY

these large-scale projects. The floor plan helps in understanding measurements of a given space, and the 3D designs help in understanding its design language (contemporary, neo-classical, or Roman styles, among others).

The steps followed thereafter introduce concept creation and a concentrated effort to enhance the space element by element. From ceiling solutions, color schemes, technical and decorative lighting, wall panels, washroom vanities, modular kitchens and wardrobes, to detailed décor work, the space is transformed into an exclusive living environment.

Born from the desire to match the constantly evolving lifestyles of people and fast-growing upscale real estate projects, this luxury interiors space offers a one-stop solution under one roof

ENHANCING LUXURY LIVING

There's more to **Nhance** than meets the eye. Continually evolving in the realm of interiors since its inception three years ago, this premium brand has been redefining luxury with intent.

Going beyond the exquisite pieces of furniture that its opulent four-storey Jubilee Hills store opens into, Nhance's bespoke offerings include turnkey services that mindfully realign the concept of luxury with functionality and individuality.

"Beyond selling furniture, Nhance is a solution provider that handles luxury projects and gives end-to-end services. From project execution to working with different materials and vendors, we offer our clients a single solution," explains Managing Director, Bharath Reddy.

END-TO-END SERVICES

A passion for creativity, a keen eye for design, and an overall transparent approach (from global sourcing to pricing) have aided Nhance in building trust among its patrons over the years. They currently have their own manufacturing unit for modular kitchens and wardrobes, and plan to expand to manufacture their own furniture soon.

In collaboration with architects, interior designers, builders, and a core team of 70, Nhance offers customizable end-to-end projects with the aim of bringing you a step closer to yourself, with your environment serving as a reflection of you.

The turnkey solutions offered begin with the client's floor plan and 3D design, which determine the foundation of

TRENDS AND STORE HIGHLIGHTS

The current trends in luxury interiors, we are informed, include a creative blend of elements. The latest pieces housed at the store include an experimental fusion that, for instance, combines stone, fabric, and metal to create something that's aesthetically unique. Wardrobes made of leather and silk fabrics, and motorized units and cabinets are a few additional trends that are gradually surfacing.

Highlights from our store tour include: leather panels; motorized and reclining sofas, including ones in boucle and leather fabrics; stone and marble dining table sets with glossy and matte finishes; motorized wardrobes; touch-sensor kitchen cabinets; and bright accent pieces. ■ IPSHITA

*Price: On Request
Road No. 45, Jubilee Hills
Tel: 94590 5777
Timings: 11 am to 9 pm*

PROJECTS THUS FAR

COMMERCIALS:

- Apollo Hospitals
- Apollo Corporate Office
- Birla Open Minds Admin Office
- Honer Homes Corporate Office
- Continental Coffee Corporate Office
- Skandhanshi Corporate Office

CLUBHOUSES:

- 'W' by DSR
- Sri Srinivasa Sonthalia
- DSR First
- GVK Skycity
- Sri Srinivasa Esmeralda Fortune
- Sri Srinivasa Fortune One
- Honer Aquantis
- Sri Srinivasa Infra Som Boulevard

SHOW FLATS AND VILLAS:

- DSR Twins (15,999 Sft on single floor)
- SAS Crown
- Raghava Iris
- Candeur Skyline
- Honer Richmond
- Honer Signatis
- My Home Avali
- Marquise
- Promenade



The online brand **Roza Pret** opens its store in the city with collections for the festive season

Silhouettes to Festive Edits

The online brand **Roza Pret** made its brick-and-mortar debut with the launch of its first flagship store in Hyderabad a few weeks ago. The contemporary label dedicates 1,540 sq. ft for its silhouettes and occasion wear.



WOW!
Recommends:
Carolina Set

“Hyderabad felt like the most organic place to open our flagship. This space is our way of offering something more immersive, more personal... a space that allows the Roza Pret woman to experience the brand in its entirety,” says founder Aayushi Kapoor.

SEASONAL EDITS

The opening marks a major milestone for the seven-year-old brand, which until now has retailed through leading multi-designer stores

across the country. “With this launch, Roza Pret brings its complete brand universe under one roof from curated seasonal edits to Hyderabad-exclusive color ways and bestselling silhouettes,” she adds.

Inside, you’ll find Roza Pret’s signature range of: kurta sets, dresses, tops and tunics, stoles, and kaftans. All of which span daywear to festive edits, with prices starting from Rs 3,500 and going up to Rs 15,000, and the range suitable for brunches to wedding lunches and gifting to workwear.

The store also offers personalized styling assistance, with team members trained to help shoppers build intentional wardrobes or select the perfect piece for intimate occasions. Hyderabad shoppers can also place customized orders from the store for delivery within days.

PIECES TO BOOKMARK

Our pick is the Amelia long kurta set, Carolina, Primrose Phiran and the playful ice cream set, all available in-store. The launch also includes limited-edition hues and exclusive Hyderabad edits, designed to reflect the city’s celebratory spirit and love for wearable opulence for the upcoming festive season of Ramzan and Holi this month. ■ MANJU

Prices: Rs 3,500 onwards

Shop No. 1, Hilltop@7, Banjara Hills

Tel: 78270 74145

Timings: 11 am to 8 pm



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As Indian fashion continues its ascent to worldwide glory, WOW! revisits international fashion trends that first took root here

Desi Motifs, Global Runways



KHADI, CHANDERI & MORE

Vivienne Westwood embraced Indian textiles at her Indian debut in 2025. Set against Mumbai's iconic landmark, the Gateway of India, the presentation saw models walk the runway in dramatic silhouettes adorned in khadi, Chanderi, raw silks, Muga weaves, and blush-toned cottons.

THE PAISLEY PRINT

The teardrop motif of the paisley print has long since been on the scene, appearing in exquisite Pashminas and stoles. It caught the attention of fashion enthusiasts globally once more when it was presented at the Richard Quinn Autumn/Winter 2019 collection; this oversized paisley printed dress with big sleeves was worn atop a black latex body suit.



MADRAS CHECKS

Another presentation at the Gateway of India was Dior's Madras check inspired Fall 2023 collection. Colorful and elegant, the ensemble that stood out was the one in the Madras checks silk sari fabric that was specially woven for the show.



BANDHANI

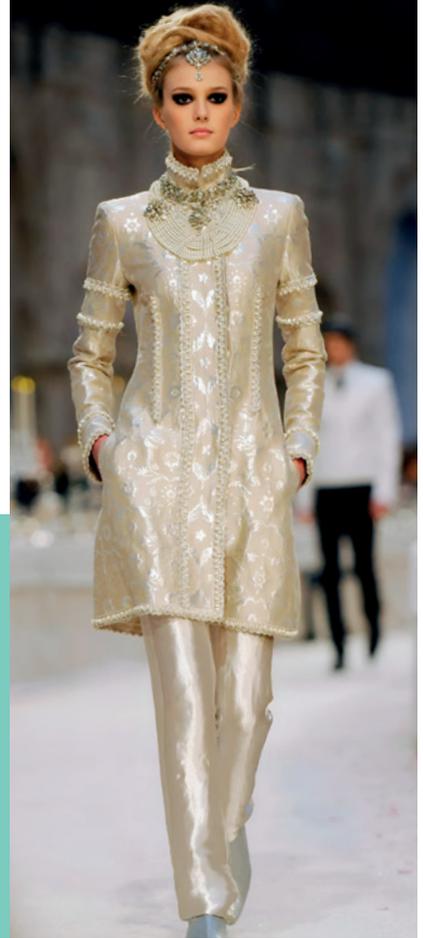
This iconic presentation at the Paris Fashion Week back in 2016 saw Rahul Mishra showcase the craft of Bandhani on the global stage. Featuring a traditional Bandhani tie-dye technique and signature hand imprint embroideries, this piece in blue from the Autumn/Winter collection represented India while embodying the spirit of Paris.





SLIM JODHPURS

Giorgio Armani's Armani Privé haute couture show in Paris in 2025 was a triumph. The fashion house's daring silhouettes included velvet, slim Jodhpur style pants that were paired with shimmering jackets and capes, and tweed coats embellished with ostrich feathers.



MAANG TIKKA

The late legendary designer and creative director of Chanel, Karl Lagerfeld took inspiration from India for a pre-autumn/winter 2012-13 collection at Chanel's Grand Palais home that had undergone a Maharaja transformation. Described as the Parisian version of the idea of India, the presentation included shades of fuchsia, pearls, hand-painted floral motifs, and a stunning range of Maang Tikkas.



KOLHAPURI CHAPPALS

With a legacy of over 700 years, the Indian Kolhapuri chappals are statement footwear without which traditional Indian styling wouldn't look the same. Today, a household name globally, Kolhapuris have drawn the attention of many fashion brands, including Prada who debuted the chappals as part of their Men's Spring/Summer 2026 collection at Milan Fashion Week.



CUMMERBUNDS

Balmain highlighted cummerbunds during a showcase at Paris Fashion Week in 2016. The brand introduced an aesthetic akin to military-style wear with heavily embellished garments. Models walked the runway adorned in Olivier Rousteing's collection which included luxurious, bejeweled cummerbunds, embroidered jackets, and army-style coats.

■ IPSHITA



The Art of Bringing it All Together

From spatial planning to final styling, every element flows through one cohesive vision—creating interiors where materials, proportions and details align effortlessly into a beautifully complete experience.

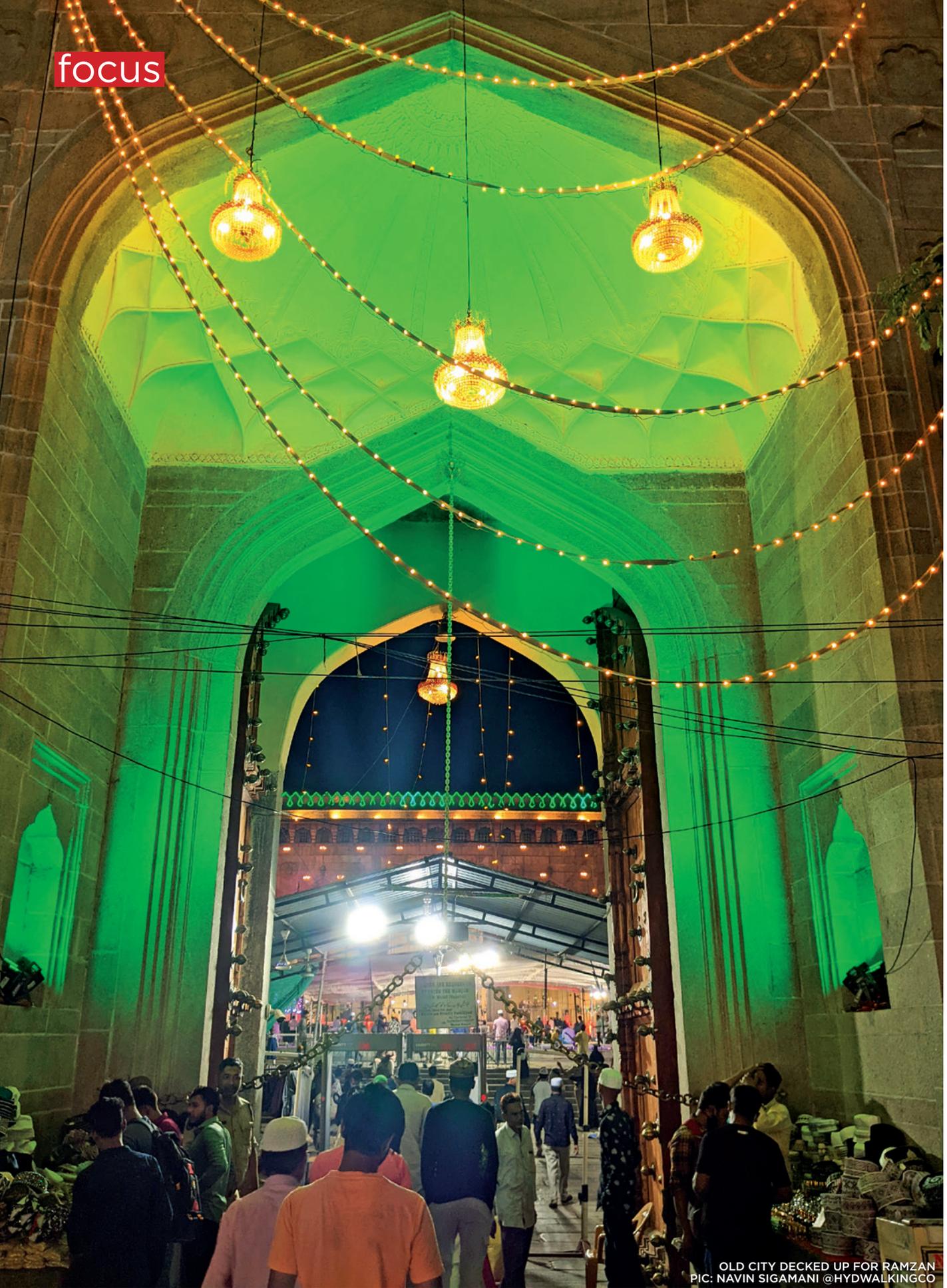


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OLD CITY DECKED UP FOR RAMZAN
PIC: NAVIN SIGAMANI @HYDWALKINGCO

IFTAR PARTIES, HALEEM HOPPING AND RAMZAN FOOD WALKS TURN HYDERABAD INTO A NIGHTLY CULINARY CELEBRATION DURING THIS MONTH. WOW! tells you all about about breaking the fast from days gone by, the best haleem spots and why it is an experience to be savored if you live in this city

TEXT: Manju Latha Kalanidhi with inputs from Ipshta Raman and Kartheeka Inturi

The Ramzan Vibe

Come Ramzan, Hyderabad doesn't just observe a month – it slips into a mood. One that is equal parts spiritual and social, quiet and chaotic, deeply personal yet shared by everyone in the city. You can belong to any religion to experience it. You just have to step out after sunset in Hyderabad!

As the day winds down, there's a palpable pause. The azaan echoes across neighborhoods, masjids light up, and for a brief moment, everything slows. Then comes iftar. And just like that, the city switches gears. Plates of dates, fruit chaat, dahi vadas, and of course, that first spoon of haleem. It's the kind of food that feels earned.

And then, the madness begins.

By 7 pm, delivery apps are in a tizzy. Swiggy riders zig-zag through traffic, balancing multiple haleem orders like pros. WhatsApp groups are buzzing – “haleem ek kilo order kare?” “Shah Ghouse ya Pista House?” The great haleem debate is a full-blown Hyderabadi sport this time of year. Mana film celebrities from Rana Daggubati to Tarun Bhasckar have their own sweet spots for this prized wheat-and-meat delicacy and have popularized these spots with their midnight appearances.

Step into the Old City, and it's another world altogether.

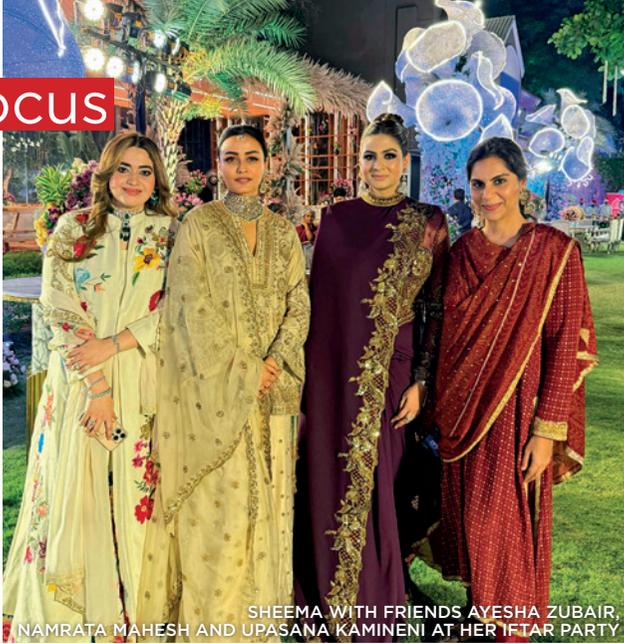
Around Charminar, lights spill across Laad Bazaar, shops stay open late, and the air smells of kebabs, ittar and freshly fried snacks. Post-iftar strolls turn into shopping sprees – bangles, kurtas, jootis – all part of the Eid prep.

Meanwhile, iftar parties have become a scene of their own. Carefully curated menus, iftar boxes being sent across the city, and endless hosting. And just when you think the day is done, Sehri calls. At 2 am, restaurants are packed again, serving full Sehri thalis as if it were peak dinner hour. Midnight cravings? Sorted. For those who want the whole experience, with a dash of history and some food points, there are the Ramzan Food Walks that are conducted during this season.

But beyond the food and the frenzy, there's a warmth that defines Ramzan in Hyderabad. Dropping into a friend's home for iftar, being handed a bowl of sheer qorma, the ritual of saying “Eid Mubarak” and collecting Eidi – it's all part of the festive atmosphere.

Because here, Ramzan isn't just observed. It's lived, shared, and celebrated. WOW! puts together a Ramzan special that captures the vibe of the city – from pakka Hyderabadis talking about the legendary iftars, haleem hotspots, shopping zones and even a small glossary to understand Ramzan better.





SHEEMA WITH FRIENDS AYESHA ZUBAIR, NAMRATA MAHESH AND UPASANA KAMINENI AT HER IFTAR PARTY

VOICE OF HYDERABAD

Sheema Naseer tells us about what a full-fledged grand HyderabadI Iftar is about

Iftars with 50 varieties of dates, guest chefs and over 100 dishes

MEMORIES OF EID AS A CHILD

On Chand Raat, my mother would take all of us – my two sisters, my brother, and me – to the market for our shopping. We would excitedly choose our bangles, mehendi and shoes, enjoying the festive rush and the happiness in the air. Since childhood, I’ve always worn outfits designed by my mother, the founder of Fakhre Jehan Bridal Studio. Watching her create beautiful handmade traditional clothes has been a part of my growing up. Her designs are not just garments for me; they are filled with love, hard work, and our family’s identity. It’s carrying a piece of my mother’s art and affection with me.

On the morning of Eid, we woke up early, dressed in our best clothes, and began the day with the delicious sheer qorma prepared at home. Afterwards, we visited our relatives to exchange Eid greetings, and everywhere we went, we were warmly welcomed with more sheer qorma and Eidi.

THE GREAT IFTAR DINNERS

For us, Iftar is not simply about breaking the fast – it’s about honoring tradition, heritage and family. Every Ramzan, we open our doors to loved ones and friends for what has become a deeply cherished annual tradition. The spread is extraordinary – not for extravagance alone – but because every dish carries history.

We begin with dates, of course. Around 50 varieties sourced from across the globe, some directly from long-standing farms in Saudi Arabia that have preserved their cultivation heritage for generations. Since breaking the fast with dates holds such spiritual and cultural importance, we give it the reverence it deserves. The selection itself becomes a conversation piece. Arabic ghawa is gently poured, setting the tone for an evening that beautifully blends HyderabadI tehzeeb with Arabian elegance.

I grew up watching my grandfather (the great-grandson of the Nizam) cook. He was deeply passionate about the culinary arts

and carried recipes that traced back to the royal kitchens of the Nizams. Those weren’t just dishes – they were heirlooms.

I remember him preparing Dum ke Roat, rich and fragrant. His Shahi Kheema, slow-cooked over coals with a complex blend of hand-ground spices, was unforgettable. There were evenings when a whole lamb would be roasted to perfection. He also made a particular HyderabadI lamb roast that I have never encountered anywhere else since – a true relic from the royal kitchens. Those memories shaped my understanding of food – it is storytelling on a plate. It’s truly a celebration of HyderabadI cuisine at its most authentic form.

WHAT’S ON THE PLATE

Silky marag, delicate teetar and batair preparations, creamy malai paya, the iconic broken wheat haleem, slow-cooked for nearly 24 hours and pounded by hand, tala hua ghosht, crisp lukhmi kebabs, sufiyani biryani and traditional HyderabadI biryani, qubani ka meetha and double ka meetha. And that is just a glimpse – the full spread often touches close to a hundred dishes. My husband, Naseer Khan, adds his own flair by inviting master chefs from across India – from Lucknow to Kashmir – bringing subtle regional nuances that enrich the experience even further and also personally oversee all the arrangements. For me, Iftar is not about opulence – it is about legacy, devotion and togetherness. It is about honouring where we come from while celebrating the present.

THE HALEEM TRAILS

The haleem trend in Hyderabad is not just about food; it is a beautiful reflection of culture. For many people, it has become a tradition to go on “haleem drives,” tasting different varieties and discussing which one is the best. This shared experience makes the trend feel more like a celebration of heritage and togetherness rather than just a seasonal dish. My top picks are Pista House at Shahalibanda, Hotel Shadab at Charminar, Bawarchi at RTC X Roads and Saleem ki Haleem, Masab Tank.



GRAND IFTAR DECOR

Mohib Baig and **wife Asma** believe long, mindful hours of fasts and prayer deserve a good iftar meal

Season of family gatherings, iftar catch-ups and haleem trails

For Mirza Mohib Baig, senior Congress leader and great grandson of the H.E.H VII Nizam of Hyderabad, the day begins with Sehri at around 3:30 am, wrapping up prayers and food by 5:15 am, when the fast begins. What follows is a long, mindful stretch of 13 hours, leading up to that much-awaited moment at 6:30 pm when the fast is broken with dates, fruit, dahi vada, pakodas, and other fried delicacies – often accompanied by the refreshing mohabbat ka sherbet, perfect for Hyderabad’s summer heat. “Evenings are rarely quiet. There are family gatherings, iftar catch-ups, and of course, the essential haleem trail,” he says.

“For Asma, my wife, a fabulous cook and an amazing host, Ramzan is a hectic time, planning meals with variety, taste and nutrition. After our prayers and iftar, we go haleem hopping. Our top picks are Pista House, Café 555 and Shah Ghouse,” he says. Asma makes the best chicken samosas and dahi vadas, and loves to feed friends in the evenings.

Hidden Gem: Mohib also shares that there is a hidden gem (with no board or name really) in the Barkas area where they have sweet haleem too. Customers can choose the sugary or salty version that is served throughout the day as well (for those who don’t fast).



Legendary Iftari host and pakka Hyderabadi **Farah Raju** shares why Ramzan is the best time to gather, host, and celebrate food

“For me, Ramzan is a reset”

I’m a pakka Hyderabadi, and for me, Ramzan has always been about reflection. Growing up, it was like a detox for the mind and body – a time to pause, center yourself, and go inward. That, to me, is still the crux of it, even if everything around it has evolved. Today, every evening is a festive one.

Now, with social media and changing lifestyles, every iftar almost feels like a mini celebration. We break the roza with dates, fruit chaat, and dahi vada. After prayers, it’s dinner – but not necessarily biryani or haleem every day. Haleem became synonymous with Ramzan because it’s wholesome – meat and dal together, filling enough to sustain you for hours.



“I prefer to keep the hosting special – I go all out on Eid. That’s when biryani, different kinds of meat, and sheer qorma come in”

In my house, we’ve had the same cooks for decades, and Ramzan means something is always being prepared – pakodas, cutlets and simple, comforting food. That’s the real essence. Women get ready, the house feels festive, and there’s always something on the stove.

IFTAR PARTIES

These days, iftar parties are elaborate. People host frequently, with big menus and lots of guests. I prefer to keep the hosting special – I go all out on Eid. That’s when biryani, different kinds of meat, and quintessentially Hyderabadi sheer qorma, come in.

THE HALEEM FACTOR

The first 10–15 days are all about Taraweeh prayers, which go on till 11 pm. Post that, the city is still wide awake – restaurants serve Sehri till 2:30 am. Add shopping to that, and there’s constant activity everywhere.

Haleem here is not like anywhere else. In Mumbai, it’s called khichra; you can see the dal and meat. In Hyderabad, it’s a smooth paste. Completely different texture and experience. Even at home, we make haleem or harees occasionally, maybe once or twice a month, sometimes with chicken.

Yes, there’s a lot of food, and buzz – top 10 lists, influencers, the best haleem debates. But at its heart, Ramzan is about bonding. Visiting homes, giving Eidi, tasting sheer qorma everywhere you go, that’s what stays with you.

COME BACK TO THE CORE

For me, it’s important to remember that Ramzan is a pious period – like Navratri or Lent. The fun and foodie element is great, but the real meaning is to reset, reflect, and reconnect – with yourself and with others. That’s my Ramzan.



CITY EXPERIENTIAL

From haleem to fruit cream, this two-hour walk through the Old City is a feast you earn, step by step

The Ramzan Food Walk

7:30 PM – START AT HOTEL NAYAB, CHARMINAR

Ramzan evenings in the Old City are a sensory overload – in the best way possible. We joined a weekend food walk curated by Yunus Lasania along with guides Mukthyar and Vaishnavi from The Hyderabad History Project, starting at the ever-bustling Hotel Nayab.

The first stop sets the tone: a comforting plate of special haleem topped with egg, fried onions, and cashews, paired with kareli. It's rich, indulgent, and exactly what you want to kick off the evening.

7:50 PM – MADINA HOTEL

A short stroll later, we pause at Madina Hotel – not for something heavy, but for a quick reset. A warm cup of black tea with a hint of lime cuts through the richness and preps you for what's ahead.

8:05 PM – MIRCHI CHAAT & DAHI VADA CART

Tucked into a busy lane, this unassuming cart is easy to miss but absolutely worth the stop. Their Ramzan-special dahi vada – available only during the season – is soft, tangy, and comforting. The vadas are soaked generously in curd, lightly spiced, and incredibly satisfying.

At just Rs 50 a plate, it's one of the simplest yet most memorable bites of the walk.



8:30 PM – SONU KEBABS

After a short walk (and a much-needed appetite reset), we arrive at Sonu Kebabs for the meaty main act. Known for their Pathar Ka Gosht and Mutton Marag, this is where things get indulgent again.

The Pathar Ka Gosht – lamb cooked on a heated stone – comes with a back story that can be traced back to the Nizams. Paired with a creamy, comforting bowl of Mutton Marag and smoky malai kebabs served with mint chutney and onions, this stop is hearty, flavorful, and worth every bite. Seating is available inside, which is a welcome break.

9:10 PM – TAWAKKAL NAZEER JUICE CENTER

The final leg is all about desserts. A short walk brings us to Tawakkal Nazeer Juice Center near Charminar, where the iconic fruit cream awaits.

Loaded with cherry, pineapple, apple, papaya, and generous amounts of malai, the dish is sweet, cooling, and the perfect end to the walk. The Mango Malai is another crowd favorite if you're in the mood for something richer.

From here, you can wander into the Charminar lanes for some late-night shopping or head to Hotel Shadab if you still have room for biryani.



WALKING GUIDELINES

- This is not a walk you rush through. It's about 4,000 steps (roughly 2.7 km), so wear comfortable clothes and shoes.
- Parking in the Old City can be tricky, so it's best to take the Metro to Osmania College and hop into an auto to the starting point.
- It may take about 90 minutes to reach the starting point of the walk, if you are travelling from Jubilee Hills orHITEC City and beyond.

Price: Rs 300 per head (excluding food)

Timings: 7:30 pm to 9:30 pm (weekends during Ramzan. They organize walks on weekdays too if they have enough numbers)
Insta: @thehyderabadhistoryproject, @thathyderabadiboy





PIC: NAVIN SIGAMANI @HYDWALKINGCO

SECRET FOOD WALK, ANYONE?

Navin Sigamani, founder of The Hyderabad Walking Company, a guided walking tour of the city, conducts what he calls the 'Secret Ramzan Walks' that entails discovering hidden gems (away from the eyes of prying influencers). "In addition to tasting the food, we will also walk

through a restaurant kitchen and a local market from where the local restaurants get their supplies," adds. Navin founded The Hyderabad Walking Company (@hydwalkingco on Instagram) in 2017 to bring curated experiences to folks who wished to explore Hyderabad's heritage and food.

Over two decades and countless tastings, we at WOW! put together our list of places to savor haleem

Our Top Six Haleem Hotspots

A week before Ramzan begins (this year, it started on February 18), Hyderabad goes into a tizzy over haleem. Giant cauldrons appear almost overnight outside restaurants. Signboards get louder, crowds get thicker, and temporary dining setups take over pavements – all signalling one thing: haleem season is here. This iconic wheat-and-meat preparation, slow-cooked for over 12 hours, arrives at your table glossy with ghee, generously topped with fried onions, herbs, and that unmistakable aroma that defines the month.

Fun fact: There are over 5,000 pop-up haleem counters across the city and Hyderabadis ordered over 5.3 lakh plates on Swiggy alone last year!

At WOW! Hyderabad, we've spent over 20 years tracking where the best haleem is served – through heated arguments, repeat visits, and endless chai breaks. The result? A list we still stand by.

Here's our 2026 edit of the ultimate haleem checklist.

1. PISTA HOUSE

Shahalibanda, Charminar
Tel: 93965 00786

Highlights: Still the gold standard for consistency, Pista House's haleem arrives topped with fried onions, coriander, and a touch of shorba. With outlets now stretching to the US and Oman, their Ramzan haleem travels far beyond Hyderabad.

Pro Tip: Get there early in the evening – queues build up fast and don't slow down.

2. SHAH GHOUSE CAFÉ

Opposite SA Imperial Gardens, Near RTA Office, Tolichowki
Tel: 88862 07861

Highlights: Since 1989, Shah Ghouse has been serving haleem that leans into tradition – slow-cooked, deeply flavored, and reliably good. Multiple outlets make access easier across the city.

Pro Tip: Add a cup of Irani chai to your order – it completes the experience.

3. HOTEL SHADAB

Near High Court Road, Opposite Madina Circle, Charminar
Tel: 040-65550023

Highlights: A local favorite for a reason, Shadab's haleem is creamy without being heavy, making it a go-to if you prefer something less greasy. Portions are flexible, whether you're eating solo or in a group.

Pro Tip: The "Chhota pack" is perfect if you want a taste without committing to a full portion.



4. CAFÉ BAHAR

Old MLA Quarters Road, Hyderguda, Basheer Bagh
Tel: 040-23243798

Highlights: Since 1973, Café Bahar has built a loyal following for its rich haleem and generous servings. Toppings like goat tongue or chicken 65 add an indulgent twist.

Pro Tip: Pair it with their Irani chai and pick up Osmania biscuits before you leave.

5. SARVI FOOD COURT

Road No. 1, Opposite Care Hospital, Banjara Hills
Tel: 040-23303311

Highlights: Known for its ghee-forward texture, Sarvi's haleem comes loaded with cashews, fried onions, egg, and cream. The relatively calmer setting is a bonus.

Pro Tip: Finish with their phirni – it's light, fragrant, and the perfect ending.

6. SALEEM KI HALEEM

Sri Lakshmi Complex, Road No.2, Shantinagar Colony, Lakdikapul
Tel: 77996 66637

Highlights: Run by Mast Ali (aka Saleem Pheku), this place offers a more homestyle haleem with a slightly coarse texture. It's simple, hearty, and consistently good.

Pro Tip: Spot Saleem bhai? Don't miss a selfie – your Instagram will thank you.

Meal for two: Rs 150 to Rs 350
(A single portion is often enough for two)
Timing: 7 pm to 4 am



SEHRI THALIS ARE HERE

For those who want a complete, nutritious and grand dinner, restaurants are hosting full-fledged Sehri meals, an extension of the haleem, so to speak.

Menu: Buffets and a la carte, but with khichdi, khatta, kheema, gurda, bheja, khaleji, tala hua gosht, paya, and biryani of course!

Timings: 1 am to 4.30 am

Price: Rs 350 onwards

Available at:

- Dine Hill, Banjara Hills;
- Kholani's Banjara Hills,
- Nayaab, Charminar,
- Sarvi, Masab Tank
- Peshawar, Lakdikapur

Fun fact: Some restaurants are offering Sehri, chai and then breakfast as well, so you can be busy from 1 am to 9 am with the Hyderabad delicacies



IFTAR BOXES ARE ALSO NOW ON DEMAND IN FOOD DELIVERY APPS



PIC: SRINIVASA PRASATH

FESTIVE MODE

Already heading to Charminar for haleem? Take a detour into Laad Bazaar where the city shops for Eid

Eid Shopping, Sorted

If there's one time to shop at Laad Bazaar, it's Ramzan. As you make your way to Charminar for haleem and late-night food trails, this iconic lane quietly pulls you in – with over 400 stores glittering with lac bangles that now proudly carry a Geographical Indication (GI) tag.

The experience can feel overwhelming. Every shop looks similar at first glance – bright lights, stacks of bangles, eager shopkeepers. The smartest move? Walk the stretch before stepping in. Because once you start browsing, it's hard to walk away without spending at least Rs 1,000.

The variety is vast – lac, glass, metal, enamel, and stone-studded styles. But quality matters. Tables covered in loose glitter are usually a red flag. The better pieces are neater, more refined.

At Zohra Bangles, an 80-year-old store, zardozi bangles are in demand this season. Velvet-lined, embroidered, and bold, they're perfect for Eid and wedding wear. A set of four is priced at Rs 600.

For everyday sparkle, Nagina Bangles offers delicate glass bangles, priced at Rs 200 per dozen. These are handmade, often in sets of two dozens per wrist – so it's wise to buy extra.

At Suhaag Bangles, begin with “Starting kya rate hai” to see budget options first. Basic lac bangles begin at Rs 5 each, while coordinated sets are around Rs 600 per dozen.

A1 Bangles is known for maggam work and pearl-studded lac



PIC: SRINIVASA PRASATH

bangles, popular for bridal looks. These take up to a week to make and start at Rs 1,000.

Good to know: No parking, peak crowds on weekends, and all shops accept digital payments.

Timings: 11 am to 9 pm

KNOW YOUR TERMS

Ramzan Glossary Decoded

RAMZAN (RAMADAN)

The holiest month in Islam, observed through fasting from dawn to sunset, along with prayer, reflection, and charity. This year, the fasting days began on February 18 and go on for a month.

ROZA

The fast observed during Ramzan – no food or drink from sunrise (fajr) to sunset (maghrib).

SEHRI (SUHOOR)

The pre-dawn meal eaten before the fast begins. Usually light but energizing enough to last the day.

IFTAR

The meal at sunset that breaks the fast, traditionally starting with dates and water, followed by dishes like haleem, fruits, and snacks.

EID-UL-FITR

The festival marking the end of Ramzan, celebrated with prayers, new clothes, feasts, and family gatherings.

EID KA CHAAND

Literally “the moon of Eid” – the sighting of the new moon that signals the end of Ramzan and the beginning of Eid celebrations.

EIDI

Money or gifts given to children (and sometimes younger family members) by elders as part of Eid celebrations.

ZAKAT

A form of charity and one of the five pillars of Islam – donations given to those in need, especially during Ramzan.

FITRA (ZAKAT AL-FITR)

A specific charity given before Eid prayers so that everyone can celebrate the festival.

TARAWEEH

Special night prayers performed during Ramzan, usually in congregation at mosques.



WOW!
Recommends:
Smooth
Operator

A jazz-first, design-led space in Gachibowli that's flipping the script on how the city parties

Plates, Pours & Pure Jazz

Hyderabad has no dearth of places to party. Loud music, packed dance floors, and cocktails that arrive faster than conversations. But **Windmills Craftworks** opened with something unique. The Stéphane Wrembel Trio that played on the launch night, was a sign of things to come. Heads nodding, glasses clinking softly, conversations pausing for guitar solos. It felt less like a "scene" and more like an experience. And honestly, that's not something you say about most nights out in the city.

A JAZZ-FORWARD SPACE

Windmills Craftworks takes pride in calling itself a music-first space. Jazz, blues, world music. The kind where the artist isn't background noise, but the reason you showed up. "We love creating experiences rooted in music, arts, and crafts — spaces where everything comes together naturally," says Akshay Puljal, General Manager. "We wanted to build a space for people who are looking for something more immersive."

NOT YOUR USUAL BAR

Walk in and you'll notice warm wood, soft lighting, and a layout that makes you want to stay put for hours. And then there are the books. Shelves and shelves of them. It's part bar, part performance space, part library. "It's about creating a space where people feel connected — to the music, to the food, and to each other," says Akshay. Windmills

Craftworks also released their month-long artist lineup for March with names such as Barmer Boys and Etienne Charles scheduled to perform.

The day we visited Windmills, Ragabop, the Carnatic-jazz band (Prasanna — guitar, George Brooks — saxophone and Steve Smith — drums) got us into the groove. We noticed that Hyderabadis tend to slip into the chatty mode ever so often, but Prasanna's notes kept us coming back to the music.

ON THE TABLE

We started with Poached Pear Salad with goat cheese foam, and walnut crumble. Then we moved to Karara Paneer with beaten rice and spice-crust paneer. Akshay recommends Guava Chicken laden with subtle aromas and flavors. The Curry Leaf Chicken Kebab is packed with flavor, and the Dahi Kebab is the kind of vegetarian dish even meat lovers will keep ordering.

THE COCKTAIL CIRCUIT

At the bar, the Smooth Operator (sesame-infused Black Label blends with Japanese black-sugar trickle honey) and the Jungle Kiss (a classic Negroni at its core and a truffle-infused finish that adds depth) stood out. Those who love the outdoors and the quiet, the alfresco space is spacious with water and greenery, with a view of the microbrewery (yet to begin). We



wrapped up the meal with the yummy Carrot Cake.

"Every element here has been curated to enhance the experience," says Akshay. And jazz like that, we wrapped up a nice evening with selfies, memories and an artist lineup card for the upcoming month. ■ MANJU

Meal for two: Rs 4,000
Seated tickets: Rs 999 onwards

Knowledge City, Commerzone Road, Shilpa Gram Craft Village, Madhapur
 Tel: 87124 94508
Timings: 12 noon to midnight
NOTE: Friday and Saturday evenings have the line up of the best artists

Kadamba, the new rooftop bar and cultural compound by the lake, is recreating a sense of community over sips and bites, under the trees

The tree of life

WOW!
Recommends:
Aam Spritzer



MURGI KO DRY MASALA



CHENNA JALEBI



The name **Kadamba** comes from the tree around which people traditionally gathered in the evenings in a village square. The bar, named after the tree has three of them blending into the décor.

Kadamba is the place to go if you want to try unique fusion food that also feels nostalgic and gives a sense of belonging. It's dimly lit and perfect for laid-back hangouts with friends while listening to music, chatting and sharing plates of food over drinks. Their food and drinks have a cultural foundation, and the music moves away from loud EDM to folk, jazz, indie and house and acts as a platform for local music performers, which complements the relaxing vibe of Kadamba.

THE ANALOG LIFE

"Kadamba is a neighborhood bar at heart. It is about an analog life, where experience comes first and evenings unfold without pressure. We wanted to create a place people can return to again and again, a bar that feels familiar, comforting and open to everyone," says Founder Vikaas Passary.

Their bar serves interesting drinks that take western cocktails and give

them a desi upgrade, crafted using house infusions and ferments with no preservatives or syrups. Drinks like Rumba Ho, made with rum and a spicy undercurrent through pickle, for example.

AAM-RUDH, ANYONE?

Their cocktails also have fruity flavors like the Aam Spritzer, which is a mango twist to the European Aperol spritz, Aam-Chur, which is tequila and olives paired with aamchur and Aam-Rudh, a salted pink guava blend paired with tequila.

While most of their food is paired with bread – pav, naan or lachcha paratha to share bites with your friends, we started with their Compound Wala Ceviche, which is seabass infused with a chatpata pani puri-inspired gravy and topped with crushed puris. Their Crispy Nethallu Fry is a great match with drinks, as the fried anchovies served with slices of cucumber are refreshing and perfect finger food.

EXPERIMENTAL, WITH A DESI TWIST

Tamarind Chilli Prawns are prawns coated with gravy similar to the tangy flavors of a pulusu. Apna Seekh Kebab and Chicken

Bhuna are good dishes to start for the Hyderabadi palate if you want something familiar and less experimental.

The desserts bring a desi remix to end your feast, with Kesar Pista Brûlée, which has a pista gelato served with caramelized sugar crust; and Chenna Jalebi, a salted caramel gelato. If you prefer having something familiar, go for Death by Chocolate, which is a chocolate cake topped with vanilla ice cream and chocolate sauce.

The place brings together experimental food with items familiar to our desi roots, which makes it a fun culinary experience. It serves food with a range suitable for everyone, whether they're looking for familiarity in classics or to experience new fusion food to enhance their taste palate. ■ KARTHEEKA

Meal for two: Rs 3,000

4th Floor, R Quad, beside NCC Building, Doctors' Colony, Madhapur

Tel: 90631 69915

Timings: Monday to Sunday: 5 pm to 11.30 pm; Friday and Saturday: 12.30 pm to 11.30 pm



THE FOUNDERS

Opened just seven months ago, this village-themed library aims to inculcate reading habits in children and adults, and inspire illuminating conversations

A WORLD BEYOND STORIES

Peeling back the layers of a given text and getting to its root through comprehension is the foundation on which **Kathatitam** is built.

Founded by wife-and-husband duo Shilpa Kiranveer and Kiranveer PN, Kathatitam is a welcoming, village-themed library and reading experience center. Its name translates to something that goes beyond stories, equating the act of comprehending a text to an invaluable tool. One that, when strengthened through exposure to illustrated and chapter-based imaginative storytelling, nourishes young minds and builds curiosity in them toward school texts with an eager-to-learn approach.

“I found that a story book is a great tool to practice comprehension and ease your understanding of and relationship with academics,” Shilpa explains, sharing one of her many valuable learnings over the years.

AN ORGANIC EVOLUTION

With over 12 years of experience as a storyteller, Shilpa’s journey to Kathatitam can be attributed to an organic unfolding of events.

From offering mindful guidance to the students of Vidyaranya High School, to inviting young readers into her home, and now launching her library and her first children’s book, *Olugulu Finds Her Paws* (for which she drew inspiration from her husband’s experience in the corporate world), Shilpa is among those rare few who blaze the trail for others with an honest and kind disposition — immeasurable virtues that are thematically evident across her newest offering and the many books of Kathatitam.

Curious to learn about the discussions *Olugulu* may have sparked, Shilpa excitedly expresses, “I am very interested in

hearing back from parents and educators about how they resonated with the book and what conversations they had with children after reading it.”

ROOFTOP LIBRARY

Designed by SS Interior Designers, Kathatitam is a rooftop library that opens to terracotta hues and old-world charm. Lining the outdoor courtyard are multiple sections of reading material held together by bookshelves from the Montessori-inspired furniture brand, WonderVed.

Accumulated over the years for her children, the books are categorized by Shilpa according to the themes and messages they convey. The racks, placed both outdoors and indoors, display meaningful section titles. *What is Bad?* explores the concepts of good and bad that most children are introduced to at an early age; *New Baby!* helps break the news to a child about a baby on the way; *Why Waste?* discusses challenges related to the environment; and *War and Loss* helps introduce sensitive topics around colonization and the refugee crisis.

The diverse, curated selections showcased also include mythology, young adult, and adult fiction/ non-fiction, among others. Furthermore, the space houses books in English, Telugu, Hindi and Kannada.

As we sit down in the courtyard and dive into reality-inspired imaginative realms with *What is a Refugee?* By Elise Gravel, and *The Conquerors* by David McKee, we realize that these beautifully illustrated books cater to everyone and defy age barriers. ■ IPSHITA

Note: Book donations are accepted as long as the stories resonate with the core values of Kathatitam.

5th floor, Lakshmi Nilayam, DLF Road, Gachbowli

Tel: 97391 02042

Timings: 12 pm to 6.30 pm (Tuesday to Friday), 10 am to 6.30 pm (Saturday and Sunday)

Instagram: @kathatitam

SUMMER ACTIVITIES

This summer, Kathatitam is all set to burst with creativity. Held from April to May, the upcoming summer activities at the library will include a wide range of workshops related to live reading, pottery, papier-mâché, and more. By the end, all participants will be featured on Kathatitam’s podcast, detailing what they took away from the experience.



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Jewel of Nizam
Hyderabadi Fine Dining



wellness

The **My Rafiky** wellness ecosystem offers affordable therapy, empathetic listeners, meaningful community spaces, and curated travel experiences, where you can heal, belong, and grow together

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Feeling heard and understood is an integral part of the human experience. It reassures you of the fact that you are not alone, while connecting you to something greater than yourself.

Named after the Swahili word for 'friend' and inspired by the wise baboon

from the Disney epic *The Lion King*, **My Rafiky**, established in 2023, is a social health ecosystem that provides a sanctuary for individuals seeking support for their emotional and mental well-being, and by so doing, offers a space where they feel heard and understood by allies akin to 'friends'.

FORMS OF THERAPY

My Rafiky offers affordable therapy through compassionate listening, and community-driven events where individuals can connect, share, and grow within a safe and supportive environment.

Different levels of therapy are offered to people to choose from based on their comfort zones. For instance, My Rafiky holds group discussions like the *Sharing Circle* where multiple individuals come together to connect over their experiences. For those who prefer a more intimate interaction focused solely on their stories and experiences and not their appearance, one-on-one discussions like *Blindfolded Conversations* are held as well.

Aid may further be sought from therapists, and listeners/trained wellness companions. Therapy sessions are led by qualified therapists and kept confidential. In comparison, listeners



do not provide clinical advice but are there to lend you an ear and offer emotional support whenever you need it. To engage in these sessions, you can choose between text, audio, or video call to connect, with each session lasting 30 minutes to one hour.

Additionally, My Rafiky curates community travel experiences with strangers, designed to transform unfamiliar faces into meaningful connections, bringing together like-minded individuals to explore new places, share stories, and build bonds beyond digital interactions. ■ IPSHITA

Tel: 87148 88758
Website: myrafiky.com
Instagram: [myrafiky](https://www.instagram.com/myrafiky)



Wellness Bazaar is hosting Sunday Socials which blends workout with fun, music and healthy food

Sunday Socials Come to the City



Hyderabad Gen Z is no longer waking up in the afternoon after a Saturday night party hangover. On the contrary, they are seen taking longevity challenges first thing in the morning, having water fun with Aqua Zumba followed by a healthy breakfast and going back home with goodies as a reward to their good behavior.

MOVEMENT-FORWARD WEEKEND

"Our Sundays are more happening than your Saturday nights," quips Kashif Ali Khan, the founder of Wellness Bazaar, a wellness community in the city. The city saw high voltage action at these Sunday gatherings in the last few

weeks. "A typical Sunday Social would have an innovative workout, pool time, protein refills, healthy breakfasts and conversations about wellness," he adds.

SUNDAY DONE RIGHT

Their Aqua Dance on February 22 at Hotel Sheraton was all about move, splash and socialize. The activities begin at 7.30 am and conclude by 10 am, including breakfast. "All you have to do is just come in pool wear, carry a towel and sports shoes to take part in our Sunday Socials," he adds. ■ MANJU

Price: Rs 999 onwards
Timings: Sunday mornings, 7:30 am to 10 am
Venue: Next event on March 8 at Red Rhino, Financial District
[@wellness.bazaar](https://www.instagram.com/wellness.bazaar)

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Let us capture your love story the way it deserves to be remembered.



In Conversation with Sussanne Khan

A year ago, The Charcoal Project opened its doors in Hyderabad and invited the city into a world where design is deeply personal, layered, and unapologetically expressive. As the brand celebrates its first anniversary, founder and creative visionary Sussanne Khan reflects on the journey, the city, and the philosophy that continues to shape its spaces.

WOW! Hyderabad: It's been a year since The Charcoal Project launched in Hyderabad. What does this milestone mean to you?

It feels very special, honestly. Hyderabad has such a strong identity, it's rooted in heritage but at the same time it's incredibly progressive and forward-thinking. When we brought The Charcoal Project here, it didn't feel like just an expansion. It felt like beginning a relationship with a city that understands legacy but is also evolving rapidly.

This first year has really been about listening, understanding how people here live, entertain, and express themselves through their homes. Building that connection has been the most rewarding part.

WOW!: What made Hyderabad the right choice for expansion?

Hyderabad appreciates detail. There's a certain love for scale and grandeur, but there's also a very strong desire for individuality now.

I felt the city was ready for something immersive not just a showroom, but a design experience. The Charcoal Project is about walking into a space and feeling inspired, discovering layers, engaging with materials, textures, art.

And the response has been very warm and very encouraging.



WOW!: How would you describe the design language of The Charcoal Project Hyderabad?

Layered, definitely. Textural. Emotional. We work a lot with contrast - raw and refined materials, sculptural forms that are still functional, bold elements balanced with intimacy. I don't believe a home should look like it was created overnight. It should feel collected over time. The Hyderabad space unfolds almost like a journey. Each corner has intention. Every material, every object has been chosen to evoke something - warmth, drama, curiosity, calm. I always want people to feel something when they walk in.

WOW!: Over the past year, what has resonated most with clients in Hyderabad?

The bespoke aspect has resonated deeply. Clients here are very discerning. They don't want something that exists everywhere, they want pieces that feel personal.

We've collaborated on custom furniture, statement lighting, and very curated styling. There's also a beautiful openness toward blending global design influences with Indian craftsmanship. That mix of international perspective and artisanal depth has created some very exciting outcomes.

WOW!: How do you personally define luxury today?

For me, luxury is emotion. It's not about excess. It's about intention. It's about how a space makes you feel when you wake up in it or unwind at the end of the day. A beautifully crafted piece, the right lighting, textures that ground you, those details change your everyday experience. True luxury is when a home feels completely aligned with who you are.



WOW!: What has this first year taught you?

That every city has its own rhythm. Hyderabad taught us to slow down and listen first. To really understand family dynamics, lifestyle patterns, how people use their spaces. It reinforced something I've always believed - design is collaborative. It's not about imposing a signature. It's about shaping a shared vision.

WOW!: What can Hyderabad expect in year two?

More depth. More dialogue. More immersive experiences. We are planning exclusive collections, stronger collaborations with creatives, and curated showcases that bring the design community together. I want The Charcoal Project to keep evolving here, to remain a space where people feel inspired and where design feels limitless but still personal.

Visit **The Charcoal Project Hyderabad** at Road No. 36, Hitech City Road, near Easy Kitchens, Jubilee Hills.

Connect with us at **89777 36506**.







Light, material and memory come together under **Mita Mehta's** direction in this 18,000-sq-foot opulent, yet restrained Jubilee Hills home

SPACES THAT BREATHE

Speechless is the only fitting response when you arrive at the centre of this 18,000-square-foot, three-level residence in Jubilee Hills. Here, a verdant courtyard quite literally holds court, commanding light, air and attention in equal measure, setting the tone for everything around it as architecture yields to openness and the house gathers itself around this living, breathing core. At the heart of this home, this open courtyard quietly dictates how the home is experienced.

AN EVOLVING BRIEF

Styled by the Hyderabad-based Mita Mehta Studio, the home for the media-shy Reddy couple reflects a long-standing relationship rather than a fixed design directive. "There was no rigid brief," says Mita Mehta. "It was more about understanding how they live and what they value, and allowing that to guide every decision."

That familiarity, built over two decades, informs the ease with which the spaces come together. Mita was brought in at a stage where the architecture was largely complete, yet the house still needed cohesion. "I was essentially walking the last mile with them," she notes. "The goal was not to decorate, but to complete the home emotionally."





ROOMS AS INDIVIDUAL NARRATIVES

The styling approach begins with art, much of it collected over years of travel. These works are not treated as accents but as anchors. “We always began with the art,” Mita explains. “It informed the palette, the materials and sometimes even the placement of furniture.”

This method results in rooms that feel distinct yet connected. In the formal dining space, Central Asian textiles introduce both texture and history, offset by carved wood and a carefully considered lighting scheme. Upstairs, Burmese hand-carved panels sit alongside a restored Persian carpet and a piano, creating a layered composition that leans into memory rather than display.

The bar area shifts tone. Finished in emerald green leather with brass detailing and a sculptural focal point, it carries a more relaxed energy. “Not every space needs to behave the same way,” Mita says. “Some rooms can be more expressive, even playful, as long as they still belong to the larger story.”



HOME HIGHLIGHTS WE LOVED

Location: Jubilee Hills

Area: 18,000 sq ft

Levels: Three

Completion: March 2025

Styling: Mita Mehta Studio

Key Feature: Central open courtyard

Material Palette: Oakwood, silk, brass, stone

Art & Artefacts: Pichwai, Central Asian textiles, Burmese panels, Southeast Asian objects



BALANCING CRAFT AND CONTEXT

The house brings together a wide range of references without forcing contrast. A 90-year-old Pichwai artwork shares space with a European console, while Burmese lacquerware and Southeast Asian artefacts sit alongside contemporary furniture. The mix feels deliberate but not overly curated.

Natural materials recur throughout, including oakwood, silk, brass and stone, creating continuity without obvious repetition. The palette remains largely neutral, with controlled moments of colour in plum, burnt orange and muted gold.

RESTRAINT OVER OPULENCE

Despite its size, the house avoids excess. The styling does not attempt to match the scale with grandeur, instead relying on layering and proportion. “Restraint is what gives a home longevity,” Mita says. “You don’t need everything to stand out at once.”

A HOUSE THAT SETTLES IN

For Mita, the project reinforces her belief that styling is integral rather than incidental. “Styling is not the final layer,” she says. “It is what brings meaning to the space.” The Reddy House does not rely on spectacle. Instead, it reveals itself through smaller moments: an artwork that shapes a room, a material that repeats subtly, a corner that invites pause. It is a home that feels considered without appearing controlled, where the emphasis remains on how it is lived in rather than how it is seen. ■ MANJU

INSTALLING A SOUL INTO A BODY: MITA MEHTA

With over three decades of experience, Mita Mehta, an interior stylist, curator and founder of Mita Mehta Studio, started her design journey with her education at the LS Raheja School of Interior Design in 1992. From her very first project, her own home featured in Society Interiors in 1999, Mita has been driven by the belief that styling is about more than beauty, it is about connection. She often describes her work as “installing a soul into a body”, creating spaces that resonate with those who inhabit them. Her projects span a wide stylistic spectrum, from mid-century modern and Victorian to Indian traditional and English country, each one tailored to reflect the spirit of her clients. Having travelled to over 25 countries, Mita draws inspiration from a vast canvas of cultures, from the intricate craftsmanship of North India to the refined simplicity of the English countryside, from Suzani embroideries of Samarkand to antique panels of Myanmar. She sources artefacts, furniture and textiles from Southeast Asia, Europe and beyond, weaving them seamlessly with local artistry. This breadth of influence gives her work a rare versatility, where every object carries a story and every room breathes with personality.



Arpan Sadhukhan's solo show at Srishti Art Gallery explores what remains when everything else fades away

LOVE AFTER THE END



February was all about Valentine's Day, roses and big declarations of love. But as we step into March, the mood takes a thoughtful turn. At Srishti Art Gallery, the conversation shifts from love to something we don't often talk about openly – death. And interestingly, the two come together in a new solo show titled *Death is nothing but love*, by artist Arpan Sadhukhan.

LOVE MEETS LOSS

At first glance, the title feels heavy. But spend a little time with the works, and it begins to make sense. Through large woodcut prints, drawings, and sculptural pieces, Arpan explores what remains when everything unnecessary is stripped away. What's left, he suggests, is often love in its simplest, most honest form.

The works move between quiet humor and deeper reflection. They touch upon themes like how we live under constant watch, grow emotionally distant, and how systems shape our everyday lives. Yet, there's a consistent thread of tenderness running through it all. The idea is not to overwhelm, but to gently nudge viewers into thinking.

ROOTED IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Arpan's work doesn't feel removed or abstract. It draws from real, lived experiences. Growing up amidst a family-run grocery store in West Bengal, he closely observed how people behaved – what they desired, what they bought, and how identity often played out in small, everyday exchanges. Those early

observations continue to inform his practice.

Working largely in black and white, his pieces feature unusual, sometimes exaggerated human forms that reflect a world caught between desire and disconnection. There's commentary on modern life, but it's never preachy. Instead, it's layered with a subtle wit that makes you pause and look again.

PROTECTION AND CONTROL

Across prints, collages, and sculptures, Arpan uses his medium almost like a storytelling tool. The act of carving, cutting, and layering becomes part of the narrative itself. Some works hint at a world overwhelmed by consumption, while others reflect on the fragile balance between protection and control.

In one striking visual, a guarded figure stands watch over an egg – bringing together ideas of safety, belief, and uncertainty about the future. Elsewhere,



his sculptural pieces feel like fragmented structures, almost like promises that were made but never quite kept.

WHY THIS FEELS RELEVANT

What makes this exhibition stand out is how relatable it feels. It doesn't demand that you understand art theory or references. Instead, it speaks in a language most of us already know – everyday life, emotions, and the quiet contradictions we live with. And perhaps that's the point. In a world full of noise, this show asks you to slow down and reflect on something as universal as love and loss. ■ MANJU

The exhibition is on view till March 30, 2026.

*Srishti Art Gallery, Jubilee Hills
Tel: 81793 10208
Timings: 11 am to 7 pm*



KNOW YOUR ARTIST

Arpan Sadhukhan is a printmaker from West Bengal known for his large-scale woodcut works and sculptural practice. He completed his Master's in Visual Arts from Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda (2018–2020) and his Bachelor's from the Indian College of Arts and Draftsmanship, Rabindra Bharati University (2014–2018). His work draws from everyday life, combining social observations with a touch of humor and sensitivity.



A unique **Cheriyal** installation by Club Artizen and One Immersive created a buzz in the city for blending the traditional art with modern day storytelling

A SCROLL THAT STARTED SPEAKING AGAIN

A small crowd gathered around a Cheriyal scroll at the Hyderabad Lit Fest at Sattva Knowledge City in January, some observing it quietly, others leaning in to take a closer look at the intricate details. Then a few onlookers began picking up the iPads placed nearby, pointing them at the artwork.

What follows shifts the mood instantly. Characters begin to move, scenes come alive, and through audio, a story starts to unfold. Visitors take turns, scanning different sections, watching as the narrative reveals itself layer by layer. Presented by Club Artizen, in association with One Immersive, the immersive augmented reality (AR) installation draws people into the traditional Cheriyal scroll painting form in a way that feels both familiar and new.

THE AR FACTOR

The installation reinterpreted the narrative richness of Cheriyal through augmented reality, enabling visitors to experience characters, scenes, and storytelling sequences layered over hand-painted scrolls. The work offered an interactive entry point into folk narratives while preserving the integrity, authorship and cultural context of the

original art form. The project is layered on *Virataparvam*, an intricate artwork by D Nageshwar.

Anita Hariharan, CEO of Club Artizen, says, “Cheriyal has always been a living, narrative tradition — designed to be seen, heard, and experienced. Augmented reality allows us to extend that storytelling vocabulary without altering the soul of the art. This installation was to create access and curiosity, while keeping the artisan and the hand-painted scroll at the centre.”

COMING TOGETHER

Saiteja Alamally, founder of One Immersive, said, “Technology is often positioned as antithetical to craft, but when designed with intent, it can become a trusted collaborator. Our focus was on building an immersive experience that amplified narrative depth. The collaboration with Club Artizen shows how AR can be purpose-built to extend traditional art forms without disrupting their cultural core.”

OLD SCHOOL AND BEAUTIFUL

“The painting used is a 40-year-old Cheriyal scroll, created in the same traditional style, with no changes to



its form. What has evolved is the way audiences engage with it. Historically, these scrolls were accompanied by a storyteller, but over time, that narrative element disappeared, leaving the artwork static. This project attempts to restore that missing layer through augmented reality,” explains Meera Rajagoplan, co-founder of Club Artizen.

TECH MEETS ART

When viewed through a pre-installed app on an iPad at the installation, elements within the painting animate and the story unfolds through audio, allowing viewers to experience the narrative as it was once intended. The installation was designed as an immersive setup where visitors could first see the painting and then engage with its digital extension. At present, the work does not have a permanent display space and is being placed in galleries or considered for museum acquisition.

Viewings are possible by appointment, and the installation can also be commissioned for exhibitions or events

■ MANJU

Tel: 97909 52129

tourist info

A 22-night, exclusive journey around the world, in a chartered flat-bed flight across eight countries, aboard a private Boeing 757 for just 40 travellers from India

An Invite-Only Global Tour



Imagine this: A private Boeing 757, configured with lie-flat seating for just 40 guests, becomes the setting for a 22-night journey across eight countries. No queues, no transit lounges, no fragmentation. Instead, the experience unfolds as a continuous passage through some of the world's most remote and culturally rich landscapes.

A restricted-access geothermal ceremony at dawn in Iceland. A private dinner in a historic Havana mansion with musicians and cultural historians. A night ceremony with indigenous elders in the Amazon. A sunset ritual at a restricted Moai site on Easter Island. In Thailand, a closed temple blessing followed by a farewell feast. Conceived by **Lushescapes**, a Dubai-based luxury travel house, this ultra-luxe experience titled **Meridian One** is a completely private, around-the-world journey aboard a chartered flight, priced at USD 125,000 per guest.

“Meridian One was conceived for travellers who no longer measure luxury by square footage or star ratings,” says Abhishek Dadlani, Founder of Lushescapes. “This is about access, rhythm, and moments that are impossible to replicate independently. It is a world journey designed as a single, flowing experience rather than a collection of destinations.” The plane departs Dubai on November 29 and returns on December 21. Abhishek’s notable work includes chartering a private boat in Vietnam for a billionaire’s 50th birthday in 2025, producing a high-profile Bollywood celebrity’s birthday celebration in Bangkok, and leading complex, multi-country journeys for private clients requiring absolute discretion.

WHO GETS TO BOARD

This is an invitation-only journey, shaped as much by the people as by the places. The selection leans towards travellers who value experiential depth over conventional luxury, and who are drawn to lesser-known geographies. “People who

ABHISHEK DADLANI



understand experiential travel have a penchant for out-of-the-box destinations and seek an opportunity to learn and network with like-minded folks from India, Middle East and Europe,” says Abhishek, outlining the criteria.

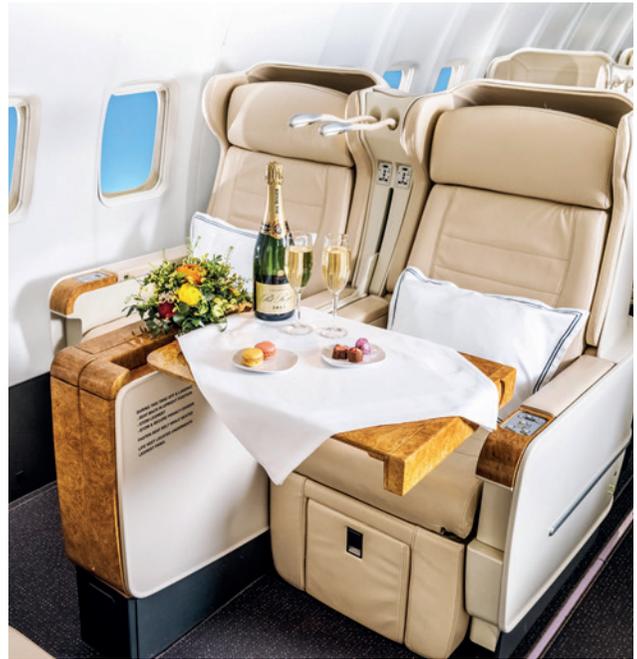
THE ROUTE AS A NARRATIVE

The journey starts from Dubai and moves through Iceland, Cuba, the Peruvian Amazon, Easter Island, French Polynesia, Australia and Thailand, before returning to Dubai. The design removes the friction of commercial travel and replaces it with continuity. Each destination is approached not as a stop, but as a chapter, he adds.

INSIDE THE EXPERIENCE

So what else is special about Meridian One? “We call it Impossible Moments. These are closed-door experiences, created exclusively for this group,” he adds. Onboard, the experience mirrors this intent. Silent cabin hours, curated rituals, and concierge-led personalization begin even before departure. After the journey, guests receive a private photo archive, a memory book and personal correspondence.

Accommodation includes the Retreat Hotel at the Blue Lagoon in Iceland, an Amazon river expedition aboard Zafiro, and a series of handpicked lodges and resorts. ■ MANJU



IN A NUTSHELL

Dates: November 29 to December 21, 2026

Duration: 22 nights

Route: Dubai, Iceland, Cuba, Peru, Easter Island, French Polynesia, Australia, Thailand, Dubai

Guests: 40 by invite

Price: \$125,000 per person

Meridian One is not positioned as a recurring departure. It is conceived as a singular, time-bound journey with no assurance of repetition.

MOVIES

In theaters

THE BRIDE! (ENGLISH)

This is a gothic crime film written and directed by Maggie Gyllenhaal, starring Jessie Buckley as the main character, a murdered young woman. She is brought back to life as a companion by the lonely Frankenstein, played by Christian Bale, with the help of Dr Euphronius, played by five-time Oscar nominee Annette Bening. The film is set in the bustling Chicago of the 1930's, where the protagonist, as the radical bride of Frankenstein sparks a social revolution against the rich, with a police pursuit following their dangerous romance.



Date: 6th March



TOXIC: A FAIRY TALE FOR GROWN-UPS (KANNADA, TELUGU, HINDI)

The film is set in the neo noir underworld where a powerful drug cartel operates hidden against the backdrop of vibrant beaches and circuses of 19th century Goa. It was a time when the coastal land's

smuggling routes were sought after by multiple rising crime syndicates. The film stars Yash, Nayanthara, Huma Qureshi, and Tara Sutaria and is directed by Geetu Mohandas.

Date: 19th March

Ustaad Bhagat Singh (TELUGU)

The film stars Pawan Kalyan as IPS officer Bhagat Singh alongside Sreeleela and Raashii Khanna in the remake of the Tamil hit *Theri*, directed by Harish Shankar. This high-energy action-comedy film follows the story of an IPS officer and his daughter who live in hiding after the murder of their family by his enemies. Trouble ensues when the enemies discover they're alive, forcing the officer out of hiding to confront his enemies and protect his child.

Date: 26th March



Dhurandhar: The Revenge (HINDI)

The much-awaited sequel directed by Aditya Dhar, continues with the undercover Indian agent's mission in Pakistan under the alias Hamza. Reprised by Ranveer Singh, the story continues from where he steps forward to claim the newly vacant throne of the king of the Lyari area and Karachi gangs. The plot also sheds light on the story of the undercover agent back home in the past and his journey of becoming a covert operative, who is now on a counter mission to bleed Pakistan with a 1000 cuts.

Date: 19th March

HOPPERS (ENGLISH)

The Disney animated film follows Mabel, who's passionate about saving the local forest. She transforms her consciousness into a robotic beaver with a new technology developed by her college professor, Dr Fairfax, to help the animals fight against the town's mayor, Jerry. The mayor is hellbent on turning the forest into a freeway, while the college professor gains insight from Mabel's adventure into the forest. She leads a revolution to fight against the mayor to save the forest, which takes an awry turn when the animals decide to destroy humankind instead. The film shows the journey of Mabel on a mission to save her kind from destruction by the animal kingdom, while keeping her animal friends safe.

Date: 6th March



SERIES

Streaming Online



BOYFRIEND ON DEMAND

(KOREAN)
NETFLIX

Starring Kim Jisoo of *Blackpink* as the female lead – Seo Mirae, a webtoon producer going through burnout and a busy life as she tries a new virtual dating subscription. It allows her to interact with a range of simulated virtual partners of her ideal type in different stories and settings. But soon, trouble begins when the lines of romance blur between the virtual service and her professional reality world. The K-drama has a star ensemble of male interests with Seo In-guk in the lead, followed by Seo Kang Joon, Lee Soohyuk, Lee Jaewook, Kim Sungcheol, Lee Sangyi and Ong Seongwu.



SCARPETTA

(ENGLISH)
AMAZON PRIME

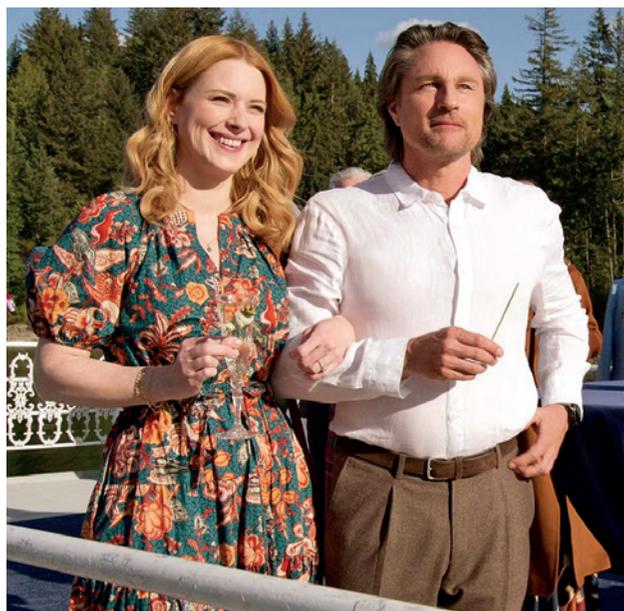
Starring Nicole Kidman as Dr Kay Scarpetta, a skilled forensic medical examiner who has to revisit one of her first cases in her career when she returns to her hometown. This in turn leads her to confront secrets that could destroy her career, while a raging sisterly drama ensues with Dorothy Farinelli, played by Jamie Lee Curtis. There is also a possible serial killer on the loose. This chilling crime thriller is based on the book series *Kay Scarpetta* by Patricia Cornwell.



Daredevil: Born Again Season 2

(ENGLISH)
JIOHOTSTAR

The series continues the story of the blind superhero Matt Murdock, played by Charlie Cox, returning to lead a resistance against Mayor Fisk. The mayor has declared martial law and outlawed the vigilantes in New York City. Jessica Jones and The Punisher join the Daredevil to fight against the notorious Kingpin and a new criminal, Muse, on the loose who's creating graffiti from the blood of his victims.



VIRGIN RIVER

(ENGLISH)
NETFLIX

Season 7 starts on March 12 and is about the newly-married couple Mel and Jack pursuing their dream of adopting a baby, while old loves smolder and new threats challenge Virgin River. Expect drama, emotions and trauma in big doses in this season too. ■ KARTHEEKA



70TH FILMFARE AWARDS

Top Telugu names like Allu Arjun, Sai Pallavi and Nivetha Thomas bagged big awards and stole hearts at the 70th Filmfare Awards South held recently

Tollywood Power Moves on the National Stage

If there was ever a night when Kochi felt like the center of South Indian cinema, this was it. The red carpet at the 70th Filmfare Awards South shimmered with full-blown Tollywood glamor as Allu Arjun, Sai Pallavi, Nidhhi Agerwal, Nandini Gupta, Priya Mani, Kajal Aggarwal, Nivetha Thomas and Sri Gouri Priya showed up looking like they owned the night.

The Black Lady event brought together the biggest names from Malayalam, Kannada, Tamil and Telugu cinema to celebrate the best of 2024 – and the vibe was equal parts prestige and party.

Telugu cinema came in strong and left stronger. *Pushpa 2: The Rule* dominated with five awards, while *Devara: Part 1*, *Kalki 2898 AD*, *Committee Kurrollu* and *Guntur Kaaram* picked up two each – basically a clean sweep kind of year. *Pushpa 2* took home Best Film, and Allu Arjun bagged Best Actor (Male), turning his win into a full-on fan moment by recreating the film's iconic dialogue and signature pose on stage. He said, "This is my hat-trick win and my seventh Filmfare Award," he said, adding, "Every actor who wins Best Actor does so because a director first envisioned it. Cinema is a collective energy, and this honor belongs to the entire team."

STAR POWER

Prithviraj, never one to miss a charming moment, added his own flavor to the night while talking about Arjun. "I

was just telling Allu Arjun, or as we fondly call him, 'Mallu Arjun', that you all should visit Kochi more often," he quipped, earning laughs and cheers.

And then came the performances – because what's Filmfare without a little fire on stage? Sanya Malhotra brought the house down with *Viral Vayyari* and *Kurchi Madathapetti*, Pranitha Subhash turned up the heat with *Illuminati*, Nidhhi Agerwal had the crowd grooving to *Aachaley*, while Aparna Balamurali added a local touch with a vibrant Kerala number. Trisha Shetty closed in style with *Yama Yama*. ■ MANJU



BIG WINNERS IN TELUGU

Here is the complete list of winners from the Telugu category:

- **Best Film:** *Pushpa 2: The Rule*
- **Best Director:** Sukumar (*Pushpa 2: The Rule*)
- **Best Film (Critics):** *Lucky Baskhar* (Venky Atluri)
- **Best Actor in a Leading Role (Male):** Allu Arjun (*Pushpa 2: The Rule*)
- **Best Actor (Critics):** Teja Sajja (*Hanu-Man*)
- **Best Actor in a Leading Role (Female):** Nivetha Thomas (*35 Chinna Katha Kaadu*)
- **Best Actress (Critics):** Kajal Aggarwal (*Satyabhama*)
- **Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Male):** Amitabh Bachchan (*Kalki 2898 AD*)
- **Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Female):** Anjali (*Gangs of Godavari*)
- **Best Music Album:** Devi Sri Prasad (*Pushpa 2: The Rule*)
- **Best Lyrics:** Ramjogayya Sastry (*Chuttamalle – Devara: Part 1*)
- **Best Playback Singer (Male):** Sri Krishna (*Kurchi Madathapetti – Guntur Kaaram*)
- **Best Playback Singer (Female):** Shilpa Rao (*Chuttamalle – Devara: Part 1*)
- **Best Debut Director:** Yadhu Vamsi (*Committee Kurrollu*)
- **Best Debut Male:** Sandeep Saroj (*Committee Kurrollu*)
- **Best Debut Female:** Nayan Sarika (*Gam Gam Ganesha*)
- **Best Production Design:** Nitin Zihani Choudhary (*Kalki 2898 AD*); Ramakrishna & Monika (*Pushpa 2: The Rule*)
- **Best Choreography:** Sekhar Master (*Kurchi Madathapetti – Guntur Kaaram*)

BOOKS

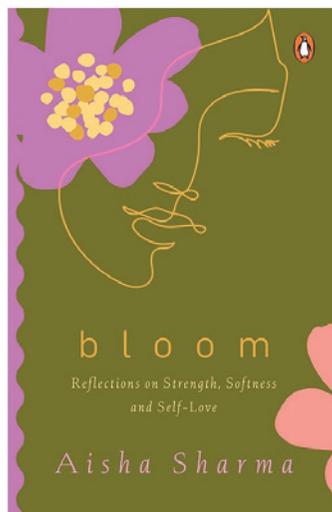
NEVER LOGGED OUT - HOW THE INTERNET CREATED INDIA'S GEN Z

Ria Chopra, Bloomsbury India, Rs 354



One day we logged on to the internet, and then we never logged out. From the quiet potential of the early internet to Bollywood's clumsy depictions of youth culture, from tote bags and trending aesthetics to anonymous hate and viral fame, from Ask.fm to AI, *Never Logged Out* by 'extremely online' Gen Z debut writer Ria Chopra tries to make sense of her generation and how they love, shop, and live on the internet. Ria was at the Hyderabad Lit Fest in January to promote her book.

In eight essays, each posing questions about selfhood, love, memory, privacy, anonymity, knowledge, fame, and ambition, the book interrogates how the internet makes and breaks this generation. Ria weaves together personal anecdotes, cultural commentary, and a sharp understanding of her generation and the world today into a first-of-its-kind book about the experience of growing up on, with, and because of the Indian internet.



BLOOM - REFLECTIONS ON STRENGTH, SOFTNESS, AND SELF-LOVE

Aisha Sharma, Penguin Random House, Rs 499

In a world that glorifies speed, perfection, and performance, actor, former model, and digital creator Aisha Sharma offers a quiet rebellion – an invitation to slow down and return to your own rhythm, your own truth, your own heart. Each reflection is a gentle mirror, guiding

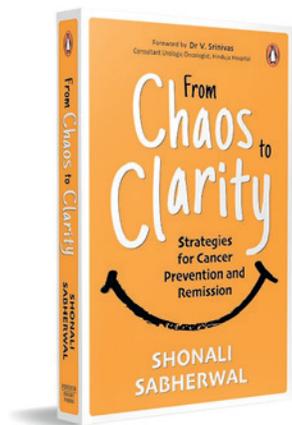
you from self-abandonment to self-trust, from seeking to belonging, from tenderness to quiet power. The book reminds us that transformation isn't about becoming someone new, but about remembering who you've always been. Growth, Aisha reminds us, is not loud or linear – it's the soft, steady unfolding of the soul, the journey of the lamb that learns, endures, and one day roars. The book can be a tender companion for anyone learning to come home to themselves.

FROM CHAOS TO CLARITY - STRATEGIES FOR CANCER PREVENTION AND REMISSION

Shonali Sabherwal, Penguin Random House, Rs 499

Acclaimed nutritionist Shonali Sabherwal provides a beacon of hope for those affected by cancer. Whether you are newly diagnosed, undergoing treatment or caring for someone with cancer, this essential guide offers a wealth of knowledge to help you and your loved ones navigate this challenging journey. With diet plans, a variety of nutritious recipes and crucial health tips, Shonali presents a holistic dietary approach for the prevention, remission and treatment phases. Drawing on her extensive experience and expertise, Shonali empowers readers with practical advice and actionable strategies to enhance their well-being.

The guidebook empowers you to take control of your health and well-being during one of life's toughest battles.



IT'S OKAY NOT TO GET ALONG WITH EVERYONE

Dancing Snail, Rs 699, Harper Collins

We live in an era of constant communication and obligation – messages, calls, meetups, events – and sometimes it's just too much. The book explores the necessity of maintaining a healthy distance in relationships, prioritizing your needs and surrounding yourself with people you are comfortable with. Whether it's learning to say no, embracing solitude

without guilt or focusing on personal wellbeing over pleasing others, this book serves as a guide for those seeking balance in their everyday interactions. The book is for anyone looking to cultivate healthier and more fulfilling connections in their lives. ■ MANJU





Bloom Brunch

Jan 30, Lé Vantage Café Bar

Hosted for architects and interior designers by Terra Bloom, the event showcased an exquisite range of planters and pots, and engaging conversations with the design community of Hyderabad. Ideas were discussed, and guests bonded over a fabulous spread of food and drinks at the cozy outdoor venue.



KAALI

By Vaishali Agarnal



Plot No 1346, Rd Number 68,
Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad, Telangana 500033



PRANAYA



SOBHITA AND NAGA CHAITANYA



JIM, LAURA AND SOFIYA

Brews And All That Jazz
Jan 31, HITEC City
Windmills Craftworks, the storied jazz theater and brewery, opened its doors to Hyderabad, featuring craft beer, global cuisine and live music. Enthralled guests heard the gypsy jazz of French virtuoso, Stéphane Wrembel, which was accompanied by signature brews, and a thoughtfully paired dinner.



ANJU ALI KHAN



SURYA



SAKSHI AND FRIEND



SUMAN MANNEY

MEKONG

Avocado Tender Coconut Salad

Ripe avocados are gently paired with tender coconut flesh in this Thai delight, and infused with a hint of garlic and jaggery for a delicately balanced blend. A perfect ten. In looks and taste.

*Discover more such flavours of the Far East at the Mekong.
Now open at Avasa.*





RICHA JAIN

DR BRIGITTE RODER

REEMA GUPTA

REKHA REDDY

Love Language

Feb 20, Srishti Art Gallery

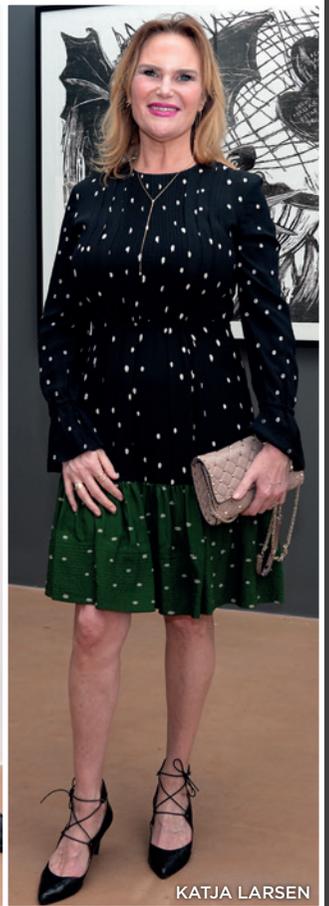
Death and love – two words that hook you instantly. It's this curious connection that brought art lovers to the launch of Arpan Sadhukhan's solo exhibition, turning the evening into a conversation-filled celebration of life's most fascinating ideas.



LAKSHMI NAMBIAR, LAXMA GOUD AND ARPAN SADHUKHAN



PETER DOMINIC KVIETOK



KATJA LARSEN

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