RNI No. UPENG201978567

POPPDAPP

VOL VI ISSUE IV (Jul-Aug 2025)
Rs. 150

The Art Of Living In COLOR
ANMOL DUA

THE RAW POETICS OF FASHION
Nandini Bhattacharya's Borderless Vision

In The Key Of Many World
KAVYA TREHAN

ARJUN TANWAR
THE MAN WHO LIVES IN CINEMATIC FRAMES

Art Of Becoming More Than One Thing
PANKHURI AWASTHY

JEWELS IN BLOOM
FLORISTAA BY MAHEK

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CELESTIAL THREADS

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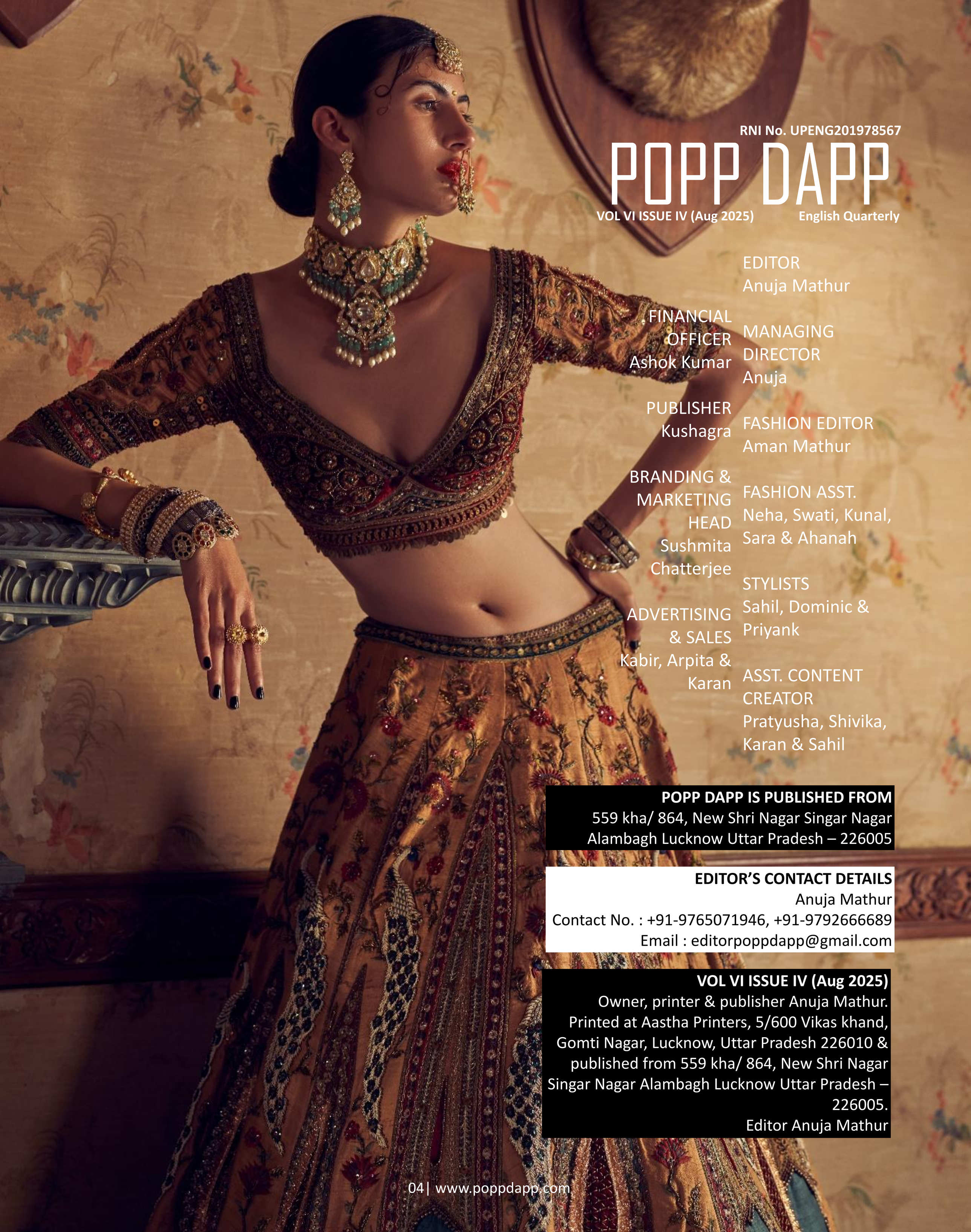
SHIVANGI DESAI
Rewriting India's Health & Style Narrative



CONCEPT **ARCHIRAJ KEYAL** | STYLIST **HARSHAD GADHVI** | PHOTOGRAPHER **MARAN RAJAPANDIAN** | JEWELLERY **ANMOL SANDHU** | MAKEUP **LEEVIEW MAKEUP** | TALENT **SNEJANA SHAK**



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POPP DAPP

VOL VI ISSUE IV (Aug 2025) English Quarterly

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POPP DAPP IS PUBLISHED FROM
559 kha/ 864, New Shri Nagar Singar Nagar Alambagh Lucknow Uttar Pradesh – 226005

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VOL VI ISSUE IV (Aug 2025)
Owner, printer & publisher Anuja Mathur.
Printed at Aastha Printers, 5/600 Vikas khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh 226010 & published from 559 kha/ 864, New Shri Nagar Singar Nagar Alambagh Lucknow Uttar Pradesh – 226005.
Editor Anuja Mathur

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May you traverse these pages not as one rushes through the ephemeral, but as one savours an heirloom!

Dear Reader,

There are covers—and then there are chronicles—rare convergences of image, narrative, and ethos that transcend their moment to enter the quiet, enduring corridors of cultural memory. Our cover muse, the illustrious Saina Nehwal, belongs resolutely to this latter realm.

Here, she is not merely the reigning sovereign of Indian badminton; she is an allegory in motion—a living testament to discipline honed over decades, to grace unshaken in the face of fire, and to a sovereignty forged not by entitlement, but by relentless will. Her gaze—serene, unwavering—does not simply meet the viewer's; it commands presence, holding within it the weight of victories past and the promise of battles yet to be claimed.

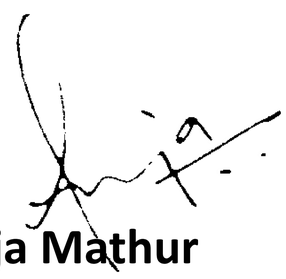
The tapestry of this issue unfolds into a constellation of extraordinary voices, each a guardian of their own creative dominion. Anmol Dua bends colour into an emotional dialect, turning crimson into manifesto and beige into sanctuary. Arjun Tanwar choreographs the language of cinema and melody into a duet of vulnerability and magnetism. Kavya Trehan architects portals where sound, light, and form dissolve into immersive reverie, while Nandini Bhattacharya dissolves borders, threading fashion with politics, spirituality, and care.

The tactile romance of Floristaa by Mahek suspends petals in resin as if halting time's breath, while Lino Perros shapes accessories into talismans of quiet rebellion. Smita Srinivas serves her Garden Martini—a gossamer balance of innocence and seduction—while Shivangi Desai fuses the precision of science with the ancient lyricism of wellness, forging a bridge between East and West.

Even our couture odysseys—set against the whispering expanse of desert sands, the hushed opulence of hunting lodges, and the imagined gardens of fantasy—breathe with narrative soul. They remind us that fashion, at its highest form, is not merely worn; it is inhabited.

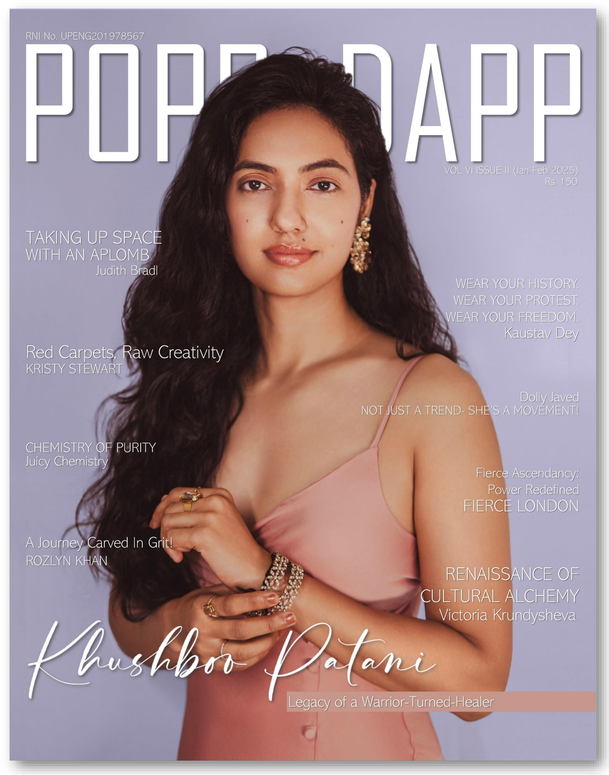
May you traverse these pages not as one rushes through the ephemeral, but as one savours an heirloom—turning each leaf with the reverence reserved for objects destined not for a single season, but for eternity!

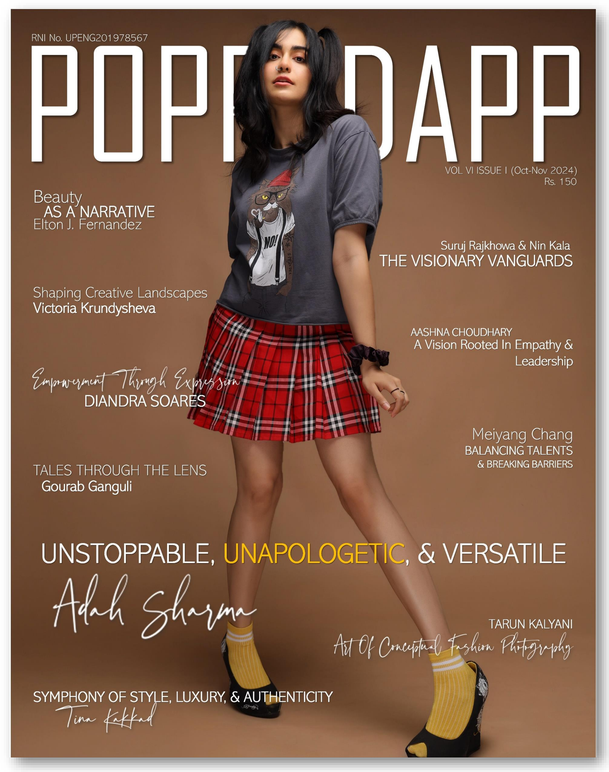
Thank you!



Anuja Mathur
Editor-In-Chief, POPP DAPP
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THE ART OF LIVING IN COLOR

In the shimmering tapestry of India's influencer economy, where aesthetics are curated to a near-imperial precision, **Anmol Dua** refuses to play by the rules of restraint. Her feed is a kaleidoscope—neon punctuations, earthy meditations, silhouettes that flirt with rebellion one day and dissolve into whisper-soft nostalgia the next.

But for Dua, color is never mere ornamentation. “To me, color in fashion is about pure emotion,” she says, her voice laced with the conviction of someone who understands that hue is a language all its own. “Some days I’m poppy with rebellion and on others, muted tones are my armor. Intention drives everything.” It’s why a crimson can roar like a manifesto and a sandy beige can feel like a safehouse. The palette becomes a psychological map—her audience, unwitting cartographers following each shift in tone.

Between Two Cities

Dua’s origin story is stitched from two contrasting fabrics—Ahmedabad’s warm intimacy and Bombay’s unrelenting velocity. “I owe everything to the independence and struggles that came with shifting to Bombay,” she reflects. The city’s duality—its disciplined chaos and anarchic charm—has become the metronome of her creative rhythm. On her Instagram grid, this bi-city identity is legible: chiffon pleats caught in a monsoon breeze juxtaposed with leather boots pounding through a glass-and-steel metropolis.

“The chaos, the pace, the possibility—it’s pushed me to my best limits,” she says. In a digital sphere where personal branding is an industry, Dua’s has been forged not in boardrooms but on streets alive with contradictions: tradition and experimentation, softness and edge, vulnerability and command.

“People love relatability way more than perfection

Brand Partnerships Without Compromise

Having worked with some of beauty's biggest names, Dua occupies a coveted seat in the world of brand collaborations. Yet she approaches these alliances with a tact that sidesteps the trap of commercial gloss over authenticity.

"When working with beauty brands, I integrate our synergies," she explains. "I don't mute my views to fit into a brand's box." The result is a rare equilibrium where campaigns feel less like transactions and more like dialogues—content that glimmers with sincerity, not just corporate sheen.

In an industry quick to reward conformity, Dua's refusal to dilute her identity is a quiet rebellion. It's also strategic: her audience recognizes the difference between a staged smile and a genuine connection.

The Ritual Before the Lens

Before the camera clicks, before the lighting is perfected and the mood board referenced, there is gratitude. "Getting to create what I create, be valued for it, and live the life I get to live is a privilege," she says. This mindset, she insists, is not decorative self-care but a grounding practice.

There is pressure—of course there is—but Dua frames it as a catalyst, not a cage. "Acknowledging both the pressure and the privilege fuels everything," she says. It's this mental clarity that allows her to show up each day with "good intention, not urgency."

The Actor and the Director

Her creative process oscillates between two poles: the vulnerability of performance and the precision of direction. As an actor, she inhabits emotions with an ease that makes her content pulse with relatability. But as a creator, she must also be the architect of the narrative.

"With content creation, I shape the mood, the frame, the intention," she explains. The question she constantly returns to—What am I trying to say?—is not rhetorical. It's the compass that guides every decision, from camera angle to caption. In this way, Dua becomes both the muse and the auteur, collapsing the traditional hierarchy of creative roles.

Saltwater Liberation

If there is a single travel experience that has cracked open Dua's creative lens, it is her time in the Andaman Islands. There, she learned to scuba dive—an act made more audacious by the fact that she doesn't know how to swim.

"It was liberating," she says. The Andamans offered more than postcard beauty; they were a lesson in possibility, in finding treasures that don't require a passport stamp. "Discovering a gem rooted in India, hidden away, was an experience worth having," she adds. The trip left her "super refreshed" and armed with a new perspective on both life and work.

Authenticity in a Filtered World

In the gilded halls of influencer culture, authenticity is often the most countercultural act. Dua embraces it like a second skin. "I started creating content to connect with people, not just impress them," she says.

Her commitment to this principle is visible in the unpolished snippets she shares: a stray thought, a behind-the-scenes misstep, moments where the gloss slips just enough for humanity to peek through. "People love relatability way more than perfection," she insists. And she doesn't just broadcast; she listens—replying to DMs, inviting feedback, shaping content in collaboration with her audience.

The Road Not Taken

If not fashion and beauty, Dua imagines a parallel universe where she is a brand or marketing manager, or perhaps a full-time creative director. "I'm always overflowing with ideas," she says. Her appetite for campaign strategy and visual innovation suggests she'd thrive in any role that allowed her to engineer stories, whether behind or in front of the camera.

This instinct—to orchestrate as well as perform—explains much about her current success. It's not merely that she has a "look" or a "vibe"; she has vision, and the discipline to execute it.

Spotting Red Flags

Years in the creator-collaborator ecosystem have sharpened her instincts for partnerships. Her biggest caution? Unrealistic timelines. "You want exceptional work but don't allow the time to execute it," she says. The compression of creative timelines doesn't just induce stress—it risks stripping the final product of its depth.

For Dua, quality requires space to plan, ideate, and experiment. Anything less, and the result is content that meets deadlines but misses the mark. "It's a big roadblock to good creative work," she notes, with the quiet firmness of someone who has learned to protect her process.

The Future in Full Color

In a landscape where algorithms can dictate careers, Dua is steering her own narrative. She is fluent in the grammar of glamour, yes—but also in the subtler language of intention, discipline, and self-awareness.

Her feed will continue to oscillate between high-voltage reds and contemplative beiges, between the intimacy of Ahmedabad and the electric charge of Bombay, between the vulnerability of an actor and the exactitude of a director. And through it all, she will keep the human thread intact—reminding her audience that beyond the pixels and palettes, there is a woman navigating the same tides of pressure, privilege, and possibility.

In Anmol Dua's world, fashion is more than fabric. It's a living, breathing diary—written in color, worn with courage, and read in the rare, unfiltered moments where life interrupts the pose.■

THE MAN WHO LIVES IN CINEMATIC FRAMES

There are artists who chase the spotlight, and there are artists who carry their own light into a room, bending the atmosphere to their rhythm. **Arjun Tanwar** belongs to the latter. His charisma is unhurried, the kind that doesn't need to announce itself—because the camera will inevitably find him. Actor. Musician. Dreamer. Disruptor. In a few short years, Tanwar has managed to craft a persona that feels as natural on screen as it does in life: charming yet grounded, magnetic yet unassuming.

“I never hold back in expressing myself. I’m a hopeless romantic, and I think the language of honest love—pure, unfiltered—is rare these days.

His breakout in Sherdill placed him alongside cinematic stalwarts like Boman Irani and Diljit Dosanjh—a baptism of fire that tested his craft in unexpected ways. “I learned to forget my prep,” he says, his voice carrying both conviction and awe. “Coming from theatre, I was always meticulous—every line, every intonation rehearsed. But Boman sir told me, ‘It’s good to prep, but the most beautiful thing is to forget the prep on set.’ The moment, he said, will give you something more beautiful than you imagined.” That advice became a quiet revelation. On those sets, Tanwar learned to trust himself, to surrender to spontaneity, to allow the scene to breathe.

Now, he’s preparing to headline his next film—a moment he’s dreamt of since boyhood. “You’ll see why I picked the tracks when you watch it,” he teases, speaking of the fictional Spotify playlist he’d build for his character. Music, for Tanwar, is not a side project but a parallel universe. His approach to singing and acting is intertwined, each feeding the other. “Seldom do singers realise they’re innately actors—every lyric demands emotion. Acting is the same. The medium of expression is the bridge between both art forms.”

When asked to imagine his life as a Saregama album, his answer arrives without hesitation: Sitaro Ki Mehfil Mein Gojhe Ga Tarana. A collection of love songs, beginning with Ikbal Ka Jeena and winding its way to Na Tum Jaan Ho Na Hum. It’s romantic, nostalgic, unabashedly earnest—much like the man himself.

For Tanwar, one emotion is in short supply in today’s music: honest love. “I never hold back in expressing myself. I’m a hopeless romantic, and I think the language of honest love—pure, unfiltered—is rare these days. I want to bring it back, not just through my voice but through movement. Besides singing, I’ll dance my way through it.”

His debut role demanded another kind of vulnerability: mastering sign language for a character who communicates without speech. Where others might have found intimidation, Tanwar found exhilaration. Before his coach even arrived, he had already immersed himself in American, British, and Indian Sign Language basics. “It took five months of training, but it never felt like a challenge—it felt like a privilege. I wanted people to see my credibility from my first film.”



His on-screen pairing with Banita Sandhu radiated effortless chemistry, a magic that was born off-screen. They bonded over family values and food—though his strict diet kept him on cucumbers while she indulged in kulchas with enviable immunity to weight gain. “After filming wrapped, I had ten days of indulgence,” he laughs. “I put on eight kilos. Eat. Sleep. Repeat. It was bliss.”

Tanwar’s social media presence, with its curated chill and cinematic polish, is not an act. “Your Instagram should be an extension of your real self,” he says. His own authenticity is forged from years of slow-burning effort rather than overnight fame. “This wasn’t luck. I’ve worked my way here since childhood. That process keeps you grounded. Success or failure doesn’t change you—your art is your constant.”

When the cameras are off and the microphones silent, Tanwar has a ritual that keeps his creative flame alive: immersing himself in the voices of legends like Mohammad Rafi and Lata Mangeshkar. His acting mentor once told him that listening to Rafi could make him a better actor—a puzzle that only made sense when Tanwar noticed the singer’s chameleonic adaptability, altering his voice to match each actor he sang for. “It taught me that performance—whether sung or spoken—is about shaping your expression to the character.”

His creative compass is rooted in cinema itself. When lost between roles, lyrics, or deadlines, he retreats to films—not necessarily for study, but for immersion. “Movies are where it all started for me. They remind me why I do this. They bring me back to myself.”

And as for legacy? He doesn’t overcomplicate it. One song would suffice: Jeele Zara. “When the world remembers me, I hope they say, ‘Yaar, kya jeeha hai!’—Man, he really lived.”

What makes Arjun Tanwar compelling is not simply talent—it’s the integration of craft, heart, and discipline. He’s a man who treats prep like scaffolding: essential, but meant to be removed once the building stands. He’s an artist who refuses to compartmentalise—music and cinema are not competing paths but twin rivers feeding the same ocean. And he’s a romantic in the most classic sense, unafraid to wear sincerity in an era that often mistakes irony for intelligence.

In an industry addicted to immediacy, Tanwar moves with deliberate grace. He allows roles to marinate, emotions to mature, and music to find its own rhythm. Perhaps that’s why his work feels like it belongs both to the present and to some timeless cinematic past.

As he prepares to take centre stage in his first lead role, the anticipation is less about whether he can carry the weight of a film—he’s already proven that he can hold the frame—but about what unexpected shades he’ll reveal when he does. If his journey so far is any indication, the answer will not come from a plan, but from the moment itself—unrehearsed, unguarded, unforgettable.

For now, Arjun Tanwar is living exactly as he hopes to be remembered: fully, vividly, without hesitation. And if there’s a lesson in his story, it’s that the best art—whether spoken, sung, or signed—comes from the courage to let go and trust that the scene, the song, the life will take you somewhere more beautiful than you imagined.■

CELESTIAL THREADS

MEDHA WEAVES ANCIENT ASTROLOGY INTO THE MODERN WARDROBE OF THE SOUL

There is a rare breed of woman who moves through life as if the universe were her stylist — draping her in constellations, accessorizing her with purpose, and layering her in centuries-old wisdom. **Medha** is one such woman. The moment she steps into a room, there's a texture to her presence — like silk whispering over skin. Her words are tailored, but never rehearsed; her silences are the kind that feel less like pauses and more like deep inhalations before the next act. She is, at once, Vedic Astrologer, Spiritual Counsellor, Theta-healer, and Ashtanga Yoga teacher — titles that could easily overwhelm if she didn't wear them with the elegant ease of a white cotton sari.

These practices expand the understanding of one’s life in captivating ways

Her story begins in a home saturated with the fragrance of sandalwood and the rustle of ancient scriptures. Born into a lineage of healers, Ayurveda doctors, palmists, Vedic astrologers, Vastu Shastra experts, and yogis, Medha's childhood was less about playdates and more about dialogues with eternity. By twelve, while her peers were reading the predictable dramas of adolescence, she was devouring texts on Buddhism, Hindu mysticism, past-life regression, and philosophy. Her bookshelf was a miniature cosmos — each spine a different planet of thought.

This early immersion wasn't just an intellectual exercise; it was a fitting. Like a couture dress that would take decades to perfect, Medha's life was being measured, cut, and stitched by both destiny and devotion.

From Stage Lights to Starlight

In her twenties, she detoured into acting, appearing in television commercials and films — a choice that might seem worlds apart from astrology. But in Medha's universe, nothing is wasted. Every character she played was a mirror, every scene a karmic rehearsal. Later came scuba diving in ocean depths and climbing the Andes — adventures that felt like tactile metaphors for her inner journeys. She spent months in chosen solitude, practicing organic farming, tending to animals, painting life-sized murals — each pursuit another stitch in the embroidery of patience and oneness with nature.

If her life were a garment, it would be handwoven — no machine stitching, no fast fashion shortcuts. The recognition came as naturally as the work: an 'Inspiring Woman of the Year' award for her contributions to mental health and women's well-being through astrology. But the accolade was not the point. The point was Tender Wisdom — the platform she founded to make astrology a sanctuary rather than a superstition.

No-Fear, No-Drama Astrology

In a digital culture addicted to doom-scroll horoscopes and Mercury-in-retrograde panic, Medha's approach feels like a couture fitting in a fast-fashion mall: deliberate, bespoke, and deeply flattering to the soul. "The name 'Tender Wisdom' is literal," she says. "It's how I want to share my knowledge — gently, mindfully — so that people resonate with it, not fear it."

Her philosophy? Astrology should illuminate, not intimidate. Retrogrades, for instance, aren't cosmic villains; they are backstage calls for introspection and realignment. Saturn retrograde in Pisces? "It's like asking a fish to fly," she explains with a smile, "but it's also an invitation to step outside your comfort zone for your own growth." Her language is equal parts poetry and precision — a rare combination in a field too often diluted into meme culture. For Medha, memes are fast food; real astrology is a slow meal that nourishes long after the table is cleared.

The Intersection of Practices

Her toolkit is layered: Theta healing to recalibrate emotional and energetic imbalances, Ashtanga Yoga to realign the physical with the metaphysical, and Vedic astrology to frame a client's life within the vast tapestry of cosmic timing. "When woven together," she says, "these practices expand the understanding of one's life in captivating ways." She speaks of karma not as an ominous debt but as a design blueprint. Your chart is not your sentence — it's your silhouette. And like any skilled tailor, she can see where to let out the seams and where to tuck for a better fit.

Fashioning a New Spiritual Aesthetic

If modern spirituality has a branding problem — trapped between influencer mysticism and mass-market enlightenment — Medha is quietly rewriting the lookbook. She rejects the glittering theatrics of algorithm-driven astrology in favour of something closer to heritage couture: craftsmanship over trend, depth over display. Her advice to detox from the noise is deceptively simple: curate your spiritual feed as you would your wardrobe. "Don't mistake watching spiritual content for being on a spiritual path," she cautions. "It's like thinking you've mastered engineering by staring at a pile of wires." She is unafraid to remind people that true spiritual growth requires a Guru — not a trending hashtag. "Yes, it's not great for my social media presence," she laughs, "but it's the truth."

Personal Turning Points

Astrology has shaped her own life with the precision of a master couturier altering a gown for a pivotal night. She recalls a near-fatal illness when doctors had given up hope. Her astrology mentor's words — "Learn from Rahu but don't get caught in its illusions" — shifted her perspective from victimhood to cosmic kinship. Within months, her body began to heal. The period, governed by Rahu, expanded her worldview and underscored the transformative power of surrender to divine orchestration.

The Season Ahead

In fashion, seasons are everything. In astrology, it's the transits. Medha's eyes are on Jupiter retrograde (November 11, 2025 to March 10, 2026), a time she advises pausing all major launches or commitments. There's also Shraadh (September 7–21, 2025), which she marks by meditations that honour ancestral blessings — a quiet runway show for the soul, where the models are memory and gratitude.

The Closing Look

Medha's life is an ensemble of paradoxes: rooted yet fluid, ancient yet relevant, disciplined yet tender. She moves like someone who knows the choreography of her own soul but is still curious about the improvisations of the universe. And perhaps that's her most fashionable quality — the refusal to be just one thing. In her presence, you feel as if you, too, could be recut, refitted, and restored to your original pattern, the one the stars sketched for you before you were born.

After all, in a world that sells enlightenment like fast fashion, finding someone who treats your spirit like bespoke couture is the rarest luxury of all. ■



Jewels IN BLOOM

FLORISTAA BY MAHEK

The brand's signature is not a shout—it is a sigh, a whisper, a brush of light through petals suspended in resin, a curve of wire drawn through the air like a stroke from an artist's hand. Every piece feels like it has been coaxed into being rather than manufactured, carrying with it the quiet intimacy of something made slowly, with deliberate hands and an unhurried heart.

For Mahek, resin and wire were not simply materials—they were love at first sight. "With resin, you can preserve delicate florals," she says, "and wire gives you the freedom to shape and move—almost like drawing in 3D." These media became her language, allowing her to sculpt stories that felt at once modern and timeless.

Now, as Floristaa steps into a new chapter with fresh base materials, Mahek admits it's like "stepping out of my comfort zone in the best way—exciting but also a little scary." The goal is to evolve without losing that essential Floristaa feeling: the dreamy romance wrapped in soft light and meticulous detail.

Romance, Opulence, and the Modern Bride

The upcoming festive collection leans into pastel tones with delicate bridal influences. Mahek describes her muse as "the modern bride—she wants to look ethereal but also stand out." It's a fine balance between softness and spectacle, achieved by layering: pastel shades dusted with metallics, intricate floral work, and the deliberate architecture of wire detailing.

This is jewellery that knows how to walk the line—gentle enough to feel like a keepsake, polished enough to gleam beneath wedding chandeliers.

Handmade, but Never Rustic

In a world where jewellery is often pressed, cast, and multiplied in anonymous factories, Floristaa still insists on the slow way. But "handcrafted" here is not synonymous with rough-hewn. "It's all about intention and detail," Mahek explains. "Smooth edges, clean fittings, refined shapes—so the end result feels elevated. It's not 'raw handmade,' it's 'thoughtfully handmade.'"

That philosophy extends even to the least glamorous part of the process: colouring and dipping wired pieces for an even finish. It's painstaking—humidity, tiny bubbles, and uneven drying are constant saboteurs. But perfection demands repetition, and repetition, in the right hands, becomes ritual.

When Mistakes Become Signatures

Every atelier has its tales of unintended genius, and Floristaa's comes in the form of a best-selling hair vine. It began as a misstep—florals placed asymmetrically, not according to plan. But in that moment, Mahek saw something fresh, effortless. Brides saw it too, and the design now lives as one of Floristaa's signature pieces—a reminder that sometimes beauty blooms from imperfection.

Characters in Jewellery Form

Mahek imagines her creations as characters in short stories: dreamy romantics with a modern edge. These are pieces for women who love softness but refuse sameness—who will choose a pearl if it comes wrapped in wire, who will wear pastels if they're tempered with gold.

They are accessories that seem to know the wearer as much as the wearer knows them—companions as much as adornments.

Flirting with New Materials

For a designer known for resin and wire, venturing into other mediums feels both thrilling and daunting. Mahek's latest experiment: pairing resin with fabric. The textures speak different dialects—resin with its glassy permanence, fabric with its whispering softness. Together, they offer new possibilities for layering and depth, though making them work harmoniously requires a technical patience that matches her artistic one. It's a dance between delicacy and durability, and Floristaa is learning the steps in real time.

The Floristaa Moodboard

If Floristaa could be distilled into the senses, it would smell like fresh jasmine and rain-soaked leaves, sound like a soft indie playlist threaded with vintage classics, feel like smooth resin against petals, and live at golden hour, that liminal space between day and night when everything feels cinematic.

This synesthetic identity carries through in every campaign, every flat lay, every bridal portrait that pairs a Floristaa piece with silk saris, flowing veils, and laughter caught mid-turn.

For the Hashtag-and-Heirloom Bride

Today's brides are as likely to plan their wedding moodboards on Pinterest as they are to inherit a grandmother's jewels. Floristaa thrives in that duality, offering customisation to bridge tradition and trend—colours tailored to a bridal palette, mix-and-match silhouettes, or tiny personal details embedded in the design.

And always, the jewellery is lightweight, as mindful of comfort as it is of how the piece will photograph from every angle. The result is a collection that serves as beautifully in an intimate mehendi as it does under the sweeping grandeur of a reception.

A Global Horizon

For Mahek, the dream extends beyond borders. Floristaa's future lies in cross-cultural collaborations—joining hands with artisans from other traditions to blend techniques, motifs, and materials. The brand's heart will always be in handcrafted beauty and storytelling, but she believes this soul can only deepen when nourished by new cultures.

It's not about losing identity; it's about giving it more facets, more textures, more stories to tell.

Luxury in Slowness

In the age of instant everything, Floristaa offers a counterpoint: the luxury of slowness. The time it takes for resin to cure, for wire to be coaxed into perfect curvature, for a piece to pass through patient hands again and again until it meets Mahek's quiet, exacting standards.

This is jewellery that doesn't rush to meet trends—it chooses to outlast them.

The Light That Stays

Perhaps what makes Floristaa most compelling is that its pieces don't feel seasonal—they feel timeless. They might be worn by a bride in Jaipur this winter, or by her daughter in Paris decades later. They're not anchored to the moment they were bought, but to the memories they help make.

It is the difference between jewellery that shines and jewellery that stays luminous—between a fleeting sparkle and the light that lingers after the candles have been blown out.

Floristaa by Mahek is more than a label—it's a love letter to the patient beauty of handwork, to the romance of florals suspended in time, and to the modern woman who moves between softness and strength without ever needing to choose.

And like the resin that cradles its petals, Floristaa captures beauty at its most fragile and makes it endure.■







HE WEARS HIS CHARACTERS LIKE COUTURE

There's an art to stepping into someone else's skin, and Shivam Khajurria does it with the ease of slipping into a perfectly tailored coat. It's not a costume for him—it's a second soul, a fabric stitched from words on a page, embroidered with the quiet details only an actor who listens more than he speaks can notice.

“It’s about working with talented people and scripts that demand more of you

In the post-leap world of Anupamaa, where drama dances with destiny, Khajurria's "Prem" is no ornamental addition. He is a character born into tension—a man whose emotional silhouette is sharply cut by grief, love, and the weight of inherited conflict. The death of a brother, the murmur of blame, the precarious balance between two feuding families—all of this gives Prem a kind of lived-in gravitas. It is the sort of role that television often flirts with but rarely commits to: layered, human, resistant to stereotypes. Yet, Shivam insists he has never divided storytelling into the compartments of TV, film, or OTT. "The medium isn't the muse," he says. "The character is." That statement alone feels like a manifesto. It strips away the hierarchy between platforms and places the artistry back where it belongs—inside the craft, not the container.

The Allure of Emotional Couture

Khajurria's cinematic appetite leans toward the intense—psychological thrillers that probe the shadowy edges of the human mind, and love stories that sting like vintage perfume, lingering long after the scene fades. "These genres let you explore the unexpected," he muses. "They let the audience feel something deeply." It's not the genre's label that tempts him, but its emotional tailoring—the way it can be cut close to the skin, challenging the actor to wear it with authenticity. He sees such roles as collaborations rather than conquests. The right script is not a stage to dominate but a shared atelier, where writers, directors, and co-stars thread their artistry together. "It's about working with talented people and scripts that demand more of you," he adds. The hunger here is not for screen time, but for substance.

A Chemistry That Dresses the Narrative

On-screen, Prem's dynamic with Adrija Roy has become a fan favourite—not the sort of romance that shouts in sequins, but one that hums in silk undertones. Love, for Prem, has altered the tailoring of his personality. The fit is different now—his responsibilities are broader, his emotional palette richer. Caring for his wife and mother-in-law doesn't just soften his edges; it redefines his silhouette entirely. In television, chemistry is often a stylistic embellishment; for Khajurria, it's the invisible thread holding the entire garment together.

The Private Gentleman in a Public Wardrobe

It's tempting, in an industry addicted to visibility, to assume that presence equals persona. Shivam dismantles that assumption neatly. "I've always been private," he says—not with the defiance of someone guarding a secret, but with the grace of someone who simply prefers the quiet atelier to the runway. He listens to podcasts, not as public performances but as intimate rooms where ideas can breathe. And yet, every now and then, a moment spills into the public eye—like the now-viral video of him with Rupali Ganguly on a Mumbai local train. "I was just having fun," he says, smiling at the storm of speculation. Virality, in his world, is a side effect, not the goal. It's the equivalent of an unplanned photograph—beautiful, yes, but not the point.

The Indian Telly Awards and the Joy of the Set

At the 2025 Indian Telly Awards, Khajurria spoke of the joy of simply being on set—a remark that might sound modest until you realise how rare it is. Many chase roles as if they're chasing a season's "it" bag; Shivam seems to collect experiences instead. His wish list for the future reads like a carefully curated mood board: intense love stories, mind-bending thrillers, even slapstick comedy. "Anything that pushes me to break boundaries," he says. The only constant is that the project must feel like a bespoke creation, not something mass-produced.

From Mann Sundar to Anupamaa: The Fittings and Alterations of a Career

There's a quiet symmetry in Shivam's career arc—from his earlier appearances in Mann Sundar and Kumkum Bhagya to now embodying a pivotal character in one of Indian television's most watched shows. "Each project has been about learning," he reflects. Theatre workshops, ad campaigns, ensemble shoots—each has added a stitch to his artistic fabric. He speaks of a "magical project" on the horizon, one where he will be able to pour in everything he's learned so far. You get the sense that, when it comes, it will fit him perfectly.

Navigating the Industry's Transition

Khajurria calls the industry a "transition phase"—a remark that resonates with anyone observing the tectonic shifts in Indian entertainment. Audiences are crossing borders between platforms, content is travelling faster than couture trends, and actors are expected to be as nimble as they are talented. "I don't always have the luxury to choose only by preference," he admits, "but I can keep improving—understanding both the creative and the economic side." It's a pragmatic approach, the kind you'd expect from someone who sees himself as both artist and artisan.

The Style of Substance

Though not a fashion actor in the literal sense, there's an undeniable style to the way Shivam carries his career. He doesn't chase trends; he invests in timelessness. He doesn't fear typecasting; he reshapes the role from the inside. There's an elegance in that patience, the same elegance you see in a well-made trench coat—it never shouts, but it never disappears. Shivam Khajurria is not trying to become the loudest actor in the room. He is, instead, becoming the most prepared for when the room falls silent and every eye turns his way. Whether Prem survives the tempestuous arcs of Anupamaa or not, whether his next project is a love story dripping in velvet or a thriller sharp as a blade, he will approach it the same way: with honesty, with curiosity, and with the quiet confidence of someone who knows that the best roles—like the best clothes—are the ones you inhabit fully.

And perhaps that's the real throughline in his journey: the belief that the truest performance is like a perfectly fitted garment. It doesn't just look good from the outside—it moves with you, breathes with you, and becomes, in time, indistinguishable from you.■

IN THE KEY OF MANY WORLDS

To call Kavya Trehan a singer-songwriter would be like calling an architect a bricklayer—it's technically accurate, but omits the sweep of her vision, the layering of her influences, the way she builds a sensory ecosystem rather than just a song. One moment she's shaping an R&B hook with molten ease, the next she's floating through neo-soul atmospherics, then plunging into ambient electronica or French-accented acoustic. Somewhere between these pivots, she is also acting, designing jewelry, painting, collaborating on cinematic visual landscapes, and touring with an EP that treats the future as something both imagined and excavated.

Trehan doesn’t so much dabble as dwell—fully, and with a kind of polyamorous fidelity to each form.

“I don’t think I’d be able to match my ambition if it weren’t for the amount of time I spend understanding and re-evaluating what I’m meant to prioritise,” she says, her voice carrying the assured rhythm of someone who has learned the choreography of her own drive. “I do this through three filters: Am I genuinely interested in the project? Is it with people I’ve always wanted to collaborate with? Do the commercials make sense to me?”

The triage is both pragmatic and poetic—a balancing act between the electric now and the long arc of her creative life.

Excavating the Future

Her latest project, Hyperreal, arrives with the premise of “archaeological discoveries from the future.” It’s the kind of phrase that could have been a marketing conceit in lesser hands, but Trehan renders it tactile, even intimate. She speaks of folklore and fossils as if they’re living creatures, insists on the emotional weight of relics yet to be born.

“Music is on its way to becoming fossilised,” she says. “If I could create something, it would be an instrument that reminds people to sing—emotional, human, timeless.”

This imagined instrument is less an object than a manifesto: that technology might advance, genres might mutate, but the act of opening one’s mouth to create a melody is a birthright worth preserving.

The Stage as Portal

Trehan began performing in theatre at nine, an age when most children are still learning to colour inside the lines. The stage taught her to inhabit a voice fully—not only the pitch and timbre but the emotional musculature behind it.

“I realised a big part of my artistry lives in performance,” she says. “Creating space for collaboration, pulling focus in my costumes, exploring newer mediums like light and visuals.”

In Hyderabad, her shows unfold like immersive installations. Lighting is not an afterthought but a co-star; movement is not choreography but choreography-as-conversation; visuals are not decoration but emotional subtext.

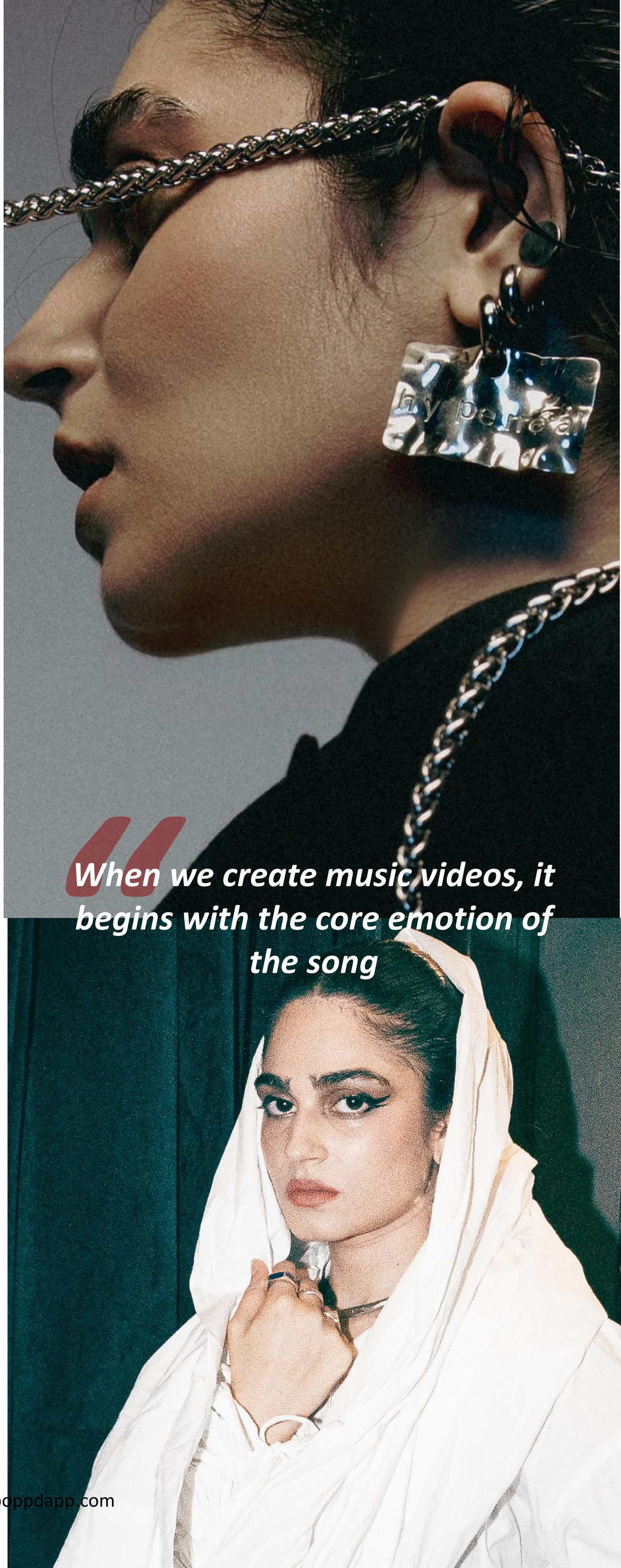
“The emotional arc of the performance is the blueprint,” she explains. “The essence is creating a portal—allowing the audience to transcend, to feel both uplifted and understood.”

The Freedom in Shapeshifting

Genres, for Trehan, are less boundaries than rooms in a house she moves through at will.

“I believe musicians need space to evolve,” she says. “Shapeshifting isn’t about chasing reinvention; it’s a mechanism for growth.”

Her sound refuses to flatten into a single label—there’s R&B’s velvet, electronica’s shimmer, garage hip-hop’s grit, and the intimacy of an acoustic confessional. The cohesion comes not from sonic uniformity but from her instinctual curation of what feels alive in the moment.



“When we create music videos, it begins with the core emotion of the song



Objects as Memory

Beyond music, Trehan's aesthetic extends into the tactile. Her Hyperreal jewelry line—created in collaboration with visual minds like Khyati Trehan and Sanchit Sawaria—is less about ornament and more about talisman.

"There's something deeply powerful about turning thought into a tangible object—something that holds memory, intention, and energy," she says. "When I see someone wearing the plate as a necklace or earrings, it feels like they're carrying a shared symbol."

This sense of shared language threads through her work—props, garments, even the light in her sets are imbued with semiotics, a visual vocabulary that mirrors her sonic one.

Self-Love, Sung and Seen

Pieces like "Quin" and her #YouAreGold painting articulate vulnerability not as weakness but as a fierce act of self-preservation.

"For me, it's always been about the conversations I couldn't have face-to-face—but could express through song," she reflects. Over time, these internal dialogues have shifted from melancholic reckonings to celebratory affirmations.

The music has followed suit—production that once swelled with ache now shimmers with buoyancy.

Family as Creative Conduit

Her sister Khyati is a recurring collaborator—credited as a visual lead for live shows and album aesthetics.

"We often operate without a union or formal support system," Trehan says. "Having Khyati and Sanchit as my creative visual leads elevates the work in ways I couldn't imagine alone."

It's a reminder that artistry is rarely a solitary endeavour, and that kinship—whether familial or chosen—can be infrastructure.

Building Community in the Indie Landscape

Trehan is quick to name her own influences within the Indian indie scene, citing pioneers like Sandunes for creating safe spaces and workshops.

"I try to share whatever knowledge I have, or connect artists to someone who can," she says. Her current focus includes appearing on podcasts to articulate the often-invisible labour of being an independent musician.

"Maybe it all begins with something as simple as a WhatsApp group," she muses.

Songs as Scripts

Her acting credits—Amazon Prime's Hush Hush, Netflix's The Royals—bleed into her music-making. She treats songs as emotional scripts, each one a role she must inhabit before she records it.

"When we create music videos, it begins with the core emotion of the song," she says. "Now I'm excited to lean into story-driven visuals, collaborating with directors who can bring new dimensions to the music."

Theatricality isn't an overlay in Trehan's work—it's embedded in the marrow. Her EP, dropping August 1, promises to expand this ethos into something even more immersive.

Kavya Trehan is not interested in being pinned to a genre, a medium, or even a decade. Her art operates on a continuum—past and future folded into the same measure, tactile and digital speaking the same dialect. In an industry that often demands niche and novelty in the same breath, she has built a practice on multiplicity without fragmentation.

Perhaps the best way to experience her work is not to ask which version of her you're seeing—but to accept that, in her world, there is no singular version. Only portals. And each one is an invitation.■

LINO PERROS

WHERE FUNCTION WHISPERS, & FORM SINGS







There are brands that shout for attention, and then there are brands that lean in and speak softly, knowing that the right woman will always hear. Lino Perros belongs to the latter—the kind of luxury that doesn't announce itself with fanfare but lingers in the mind, like a remembered perfume or the weight of a lover's glance. In its two-decade journey, Lino Perros has perfected the art of creating accessories that don't just accessorize—they companion, accompany, and narrate. Their latest Charm Collection is not merely a showcase of craftsmanship; it's a tactile diary of elegance, resilience, and quiet rebellion. When asked what such a collection might say if it could speak, the brand answers without hesitation:







"To the woman who moves through the world with grace and quiet power—I was crafted for you. Each contour, each glint of hardware, each stitch in my form was made to echo your elegance and ease… I promise to hold your essentials, your secrets, your confidence—with charm, always."It is this humanization of design—the idea that an object can have a soul—that sets Lino Perros apart.









The Intersection of Sculpture and Solace

For Aashish and Natasha, the creative force behind the label, the essence of a Lino Perros bag lies in its dual identity. “We believe that function is a form of beauty,” they say. It’s why every tote, sling, or clutch is born at the crossroads of utility and art. In an industry often seduced by fleeting aesthetics, the brand insists on a deeper purpose. Compartments are not just stitched in—they’re thought through, anticipating the rhythm of a day. Textures are chosen not only for how they look but for how they respond to a curious touch. The metal hardware doesn’t just glisten—it converses with light, catching the sun at the exact angle of a confident step. A Lino Perros creation does not beg to be worn; it belongs—like sculpture finding the perfect plinth.

Forever Over Fad

In a cultural moment ruled by micro-trends, Lino Perros chooses to resist the tyranny of the disposable. “By choosing restraint over noise, and intention over trend,” they explain, “we design with the conviction that true luxury lies in permanence.” This means palettes that remain relevant regardless of season—muted earths, dignified blacks, delicate blushes—and silhouettes that could just as easily appear in a 1970s Italian film as on the streets of Mumbai today. It is a quiet rebellion, this act of making pieces that live beyond their launch date, and one that feels almost radical in an era of instant obsolescence.

A Feminine Spectrum, Not a Stereotype

If there’s a signature Lino Perros philosophy, it is that femininity is not a fixed point but a constellation. “Modern femininity is bold, soft, assertive, dreamy, and utterly fluid,” they insist. This sensibility translates into designs where a structured handle might be softened by a pastel finish, or where a capacious interior hides beneath a minimalist exterior.

In this universe, there is space for the poised Classicist, the free-spirited Wanderer, and the elusive Muse—three personas the brand delights in dressing. The Classicist is eternally relevant, speaking in full sentences rather than fragmented fashion slang. The Wanderer carries dusky rose or moss green, collecting stories with each step. The Muse? She blends daydream and determination, never surrendering one for the other.

A Bag as a Manifesto

If you ask Lino Perros whether a bag can carry more than lipsticks, phones, and keys, they’ll answer with conviction: absolutely. “A bag is not just an object—it is a manifesto.” In their eyes, each piece is an act of ethical craftsmanship, a nod to cultural consciousness, and a refusal to yield to the pull of disposable fashion. Their designs are for the woman who leads with quiet confidence and buys with conscious clarity. It’s luxury redefined—not by the brand’s own hype, but by the thoughtfulness woven into every seam.

A Runway of Emotions

Imagine, for a moment, a runway that doesn’t showcase trends but feelings. Lino Perros can. The opening look? Calm Confidence—a structured tote in cloud beige, composed and eternal. The midwalk? Radiant Rebellion—a belted tote in earthy tan or coffee sling, unapologetic in its structure. The finale? Dream in Bloom—a soft, textured piece with glints of gold, romantic and celebratory, carrying the promise of a future in full bloom.

Such a runway would not expire with the season—it would live on in memory, like a film one returns to again and again.

The Cultural Closet

In India’s evolving fashion landscape, Lino Perros aspires to occupy an intimate position. “We want to be the bag closest to the wearer’s skin—emotionally speaking,” they say. This is not the bag you reserve for special occasions; it’s the one you instinctively reach for because it feels like you. Within India, the brand symbolizes a fresh form of aspiration—rooted not in status symbols but in self-worth. Globally, they aim to redefine perceptions of Indian design, proving that heritage and modernity can co-exist in the same silhouette without either overpowering the other.

Unexpected Muses

Inspiration for Lino Perros is often found beyond the predictable realms of fashion. Their most recent muse? The silent geometry of brutalist architecture. Its clean lines, shadow play, and unapologetic presence inspired a capsule of top-handle bags with linear cuts and matte finishes—a translation of concrete into confidence, and structure into softness. This willingness to let architecture, poetry, or even cinema bleed into their design language ensures that each collection is as intellectually intriguing as it is aesthetically pleasing.

An Elegance That Endures

At its heart, Lino Perros is not chasing the high of the “it” bag. Instead, it is crafting companions for a lifetime. Bags that can attend boardroom meetings as easily as beach weddings. Bags that don’t just match an outfit, but match a life. In an age of endless novelty, their work feels like a meditation on endurance. A reminder that luxury is not the loudest thing in the room—it’s the thing you notice last, remember longest, and never quite forget.

If Lino Perros were a sentence, it would end not with an exclamation mark, but with an ellipsis—an invitation to continue the story together, one carried day, one careful step, one glint of sunlight at a time. ■

The Raw Poetics of Fashion

NANDINI BHATTACHARYA'S BORDERLESS VISION

In the flicker between continents, there is a certain rhythm—a pulse that shifts from the monsoon-slick streets of Hyderabad to the brisk, rain-stained pavements of London. For **Nandini Bhattacharya**, that rhythm is not just geography; it is the metronome of her creative life. From Ranchi to the London College of Fashion, from internships at Vogue India to the founding of her deeply personal digital journal SKIIINMAG, she has fashioned not merely a career, but a philosophy—stitched with empathy, sharpened by experience, and unapologetically raw.



Her journey began with the naive optimism of a young fashion student in Hyderabad, drawn to the tactile pleasures of fabric and the clean lines of illustration. But creativity, she discovered, often grows its deepest roots in the cracks of disruption. Two and a half years into her fashion course, mental health struggles forced her to step away. “It was the hardest decision,” she recalls, “but it became my turning point.” That pause became a portal—to healing, to spirituality, and to an understanding of fashion as not just surface but substance, not merely beauty but an emotional architecture capable of holding human stories.

From that interlude bloomed an unexpected succession of opportunities: internships at Vogue India and Cosmopolitan India, freelance design work for Vogue. The leap to London was less an escape than an expansion—a deliberate walk into a city where art is as polyphonic as its streets, where beauty has no single accent. “London cracked my world wide open,” she says. “Everywhere I turned, there were new kinds of bodies, new ways of being, new narratives. It made me want to challenge the narrowness of what fashion had taught me to celebrate.”

It is this marriage of two sensibilities—India’s deep-rooted craft and spirituality with London’s editorial precision and unruly experimentation—that defines her aesthetic today. Her creative truth is disarmingly simple: fashion must make people feel seen. And to do that, it must tell the truth.

A Multiverse of Mediums

To call Bhattacharya a stylist is to commit an injustice. She is a stylist, yes, but also a creative director, photographer, graphic designer, and occasional model. In her own words, these are not “separate worlds” but “interconnected expressions of the same vision.” The juggling act can be chaotic, but she refuses the industry’s insistence on a single niche. “We live in an era of multi-hyphenates,” she says with a smile. “I think that’s liberating. You just have to know when to slow down, when to rest.”

She is guided less by trend than by intuition—Indian roots and spiritual practice acting as her compass. “I take up work that feels honest and that I know will have a positive impact,” she explains. “The rest, I let go. I truly believe what’s meant for me will never pass me by.”

SKIIINMAG: A Digital Sanctuary

Her most personal creation, SKIIINMAG, is both manifesto and mirror. It emerged from a simmering dissatisfaction with the fashion world’s obsession with perfection—digitally edited bodies, curated lifestyles, exclusion masquerading as aspiration. “We’re all consuming an overdose of perfection,” she says. “It’s exhausting. It took me years to unlearn what I’d been conditioned to believe about beauty.”

SKIIINMAG became her rebellion, a space for unfiltered narratives where imperfections are not flaws but signatures. It bridges fashion with mental health, gender politics, spirituality, and cultural identity—an antidote to algorithm-driven sameness. The result is an editorial language that feels less like content and more like communion.

The Literature of an Image

For Bhattacharya, a photograph is not a static frame but a chapter from an inner novel. “The literature of an image lies in its emotion, its intention, its layers,” she insists. Clothes and sets are merely syntax; the real sentence is in the gaze, the posture, the textures. She learned this instinct not in school but in childhood—flipping through fashion magazines, sketching compulsively, absorbing the visual rhythms of her Bengali heritage.

From Satyajit Ray’s cinematic lyricism to the spiritual iconography of Goddess Durga, her references run deep. “India gave me soul,” she says. “London gave me structure. Together they’re my dual lens.” In her work, a London editorial edge might be softened by a sari’s handwoven history, or a high-gloss shoot might carry the undertone of a folk song.

Academia in Action

The London College of Fashion has not merely polished her technical skill; it has deepened her critical gaze. Every project begins with research—books, articles, historical archives—and ends in translation: theory made flesh through imagery. One project traced the colonial imposition of the blouse in India, reframing it as a testament to women’s resilience and self-invention. “That’s empowering through fashion,” she says, “turning garments into acts of defiance.”

This scholarly discipline means she approaches collaborations with meticulous care, aligning only with brands whose ethics match her own. The result is work that carries both intellectual weight and emotional resonance.

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Dreamscapes and Alien Light

If given the constraint of a single feeling, a single fabric, and a single camera, Bhattacharya’s dream editorial would channel “freedom and standing in your own power,” rendered in organza—playful with light, mutable as mist—through the lens of a Fujifilm Class S or a vintage Nikon, possibly warped through a fisheye for a surrealist tilt. It is telling that her imagined mood board is part couture, part cosmos.

Legacy and Experimentation

Working with Vogue India and Cosmopolitan India affirmed her skill, but it also clarified her intent. “Legacy is important, but it can’t be a cage,” she says. Her balance lies in reverence for what came before, paired with the courage to experiment. “One anchors you. The other frees you.”

This philosophy fuels her resistance to fashion’s frantic pace. She creates not for algorithms but for longevity—the kind of work whose emotional aftertaste lingers long after the scroll has ended.

Navigating the Age of AI

In a time when artificial intelligence can conjure beauty in seconds, Bhattacharya is wary of its seductions. “AI can mimic aesthetics, but it can’t give you meaning,” she argues. “Human-made art is alive because it’s imperfect.” Her process begins with emotion and then gathers its materials—garments, models, set design—around that core feeling. Diversity and inclusivity are not afterthoughts but prerequisites, ensuring the stories she tells reflect the many faces of beauty.

F**ashion as Care**

Her definition of empowerment is neither abstract nor performative. It is rooted in her own adolescence, marked by judgment and the feeling of not belonging. Fashion became her counter-narrative—a way to construct visibility where there was none.

This ethic permeates SKIIINMAG, where she glamorizes not just red carpets but the mundane: brushing one’s teeth, grocery shopping, the private poetry of daily life. She collaborates with artisans, musicians, and designers who share her commitment to storytelling as care rather than spectacle.

“Clothing can change how you see yourself,” she says. “It can flip a personality, shift a mood. Why not use that power to create a space that’s humane, not just glamorous?”

In a world that measures relevance by speed, Nandini Bhattacharya’s work invites us to slow down, to see not just the outfit but the person inside it, not just the image but the story that hums beneath its surface. She is building a fashion future where beauty is not a standard to meet, but a truth to uncover—where every seam, every shadow, every unedited pore says, in its own voice: You are already enough. ■

THE RALLY BEYOND GLORY

THE ARTISTRY & GRIT OF SAINA NEHWAL

From Hyderabad's modest courts to the Olympic podium, Saina Nehwal's journey is a tapestry of grit, grace, and groundbreaking vision. Beyond medals, she has rewritten India's sporting narrative—turning badminton into a national heartbeat and championing "sporting equality" for girls from every corner. Balancing power and poise, discipline and mindfulness, she stands as athlete, advocate, and architect of possibility. Now, through initiatives like NAARICA, she rallies not just for victories on court, but for a future where empowered girls lift the nation higher.

The first time Saina Nehwal ascended the podium at the 2012 London Olympics, the gleaming bronze medal around her neck reflected far more than personal triumph. It became a prism—fracturing into stories of quiet sacrifice, unspoken dreams of Indian mothers, and a nation eager to believe that girls too could script sporting destiny. That day, an otherwise reticent young girl from Hyderabad stepped into the realm of legend—a meteoric elevation that altered the trajectory not just of her life, but of an entire generation's belief in possibility.

In the hush before dawn, long before the cheers of packed stadiums, there was her mother—the first muse. For Saina, badminton was never merely sport. It was a language learned in silences, where each shuttlecock stroke spoke volumes more than words ever could. Her grammar was built of action: each daunting fall and victorious rally, each punctuation of heartbreak and comma of resilience, and tenses shifting between past disappointments, present toil, and future hopes.

When she captured the Philippines Open in 2006, a seismic shift occurred. The racquet no longer symbolized her mother's dream; it became her own voice. The court transformed from arena to identity forge—endowing her with autonomy, mental steel, and a champion's fire. Yet, the most illuminating lesson came not from triumph but anguish: the heartbreak of the 2015 World Championships final cut deeper than victory ever could. That loss revealed how preparation meets unpredictability—how the body may be ready and the mind still falters. From it, she emerged with newfound humility and a profound reverence for success.

If discipline once meant regimented diets, grueling drills, and timers mapped to minutes, today it is something quieter, more profound. It is the art of internal stewardship—of cultivating serenity amid praise, fortitude under critique, and unwavering focus through the cacophony of distraction. The practice of discipline, Saina says, has evolved from regimented routine to mindful living.


naarica
PERIOD UNDERWEAR

Inside the court, she often says, a match unfolds like a psychological thriller: rapid-fire exchanges of tactics, adrenaline surges, and shifting rhythms. When she's in the zone, every rally feels like melody—effortless, flowing, intuitive. When doubt or pressure creeps in, the court becomes chaos. And it's in that tempest—the dance between calm and storm, music and madness—that champions are born.

In India, where cricket has long monopolized the spotlight, Saina's legacy was a watershed. She helped carve out space for badminton—relentlessly powerful, supremely graceful, and dramatically demanding. She envisions "sporting equality" as a landscape where girls from remote villages with racquets dream on equal footing with boys wielding cricket bats in metros. She believes we are moving closer to that aim, thanks to breakthroughs in boxing, wrestling, and athletics—but the journey remains incomplete.

Her clarion call for change begins in classrooms. If schools made sports as essential as algebra; if rural communities had access to coaches, courts, and financial aid; if society treated sporting ambition not as pastime, but as aspiration worthy of investment—then the next generation of champions would rise unburdened. Media, corporations, and policymakers must converge to reshape a culture that still undervalues non-cricket disciplines.

It's often thought that badminton is elegant—not exhausting. Yet, as Saina knows too well, the sport demands blistering speed, nimble reflexes, anaerobic endurance, and an emotional stamina that few outsiders expect. Every match is a mental tightrope, teetering between triumph and collapse.

Off-court, her Instagram is a tapestry of power and softness. From strength-training in the gym to swaying gracefully in saris, the snapshots showcase the many facets of a modern Indian woman—grounded yet fearless, disciplined yet expressive, strong yet intentionally vulnerable.

This duality—embracing tradition while forging modern identity—is at the core of who she is. Saina lifts weights with the same pride she drapes herself in a five-yard sari, both presence and poise emanating from the same person.



SAINA NEHWAL & SHRUTI CHAND

If she could whisper advice to the eight-year-old who first clutched a racket in Hyderabad, she'd say with quiet warmth: "Don't be daunted by adversity. You're going to inspire millions and make your family proud. Be kind to yourself, take risks, and always remember why you started—for the love of the game." That love, she insists, has carried her through every triumph and setback, and continues to fuel her ambition—though today that ambition is no longer merely personal legacy; it is legacy with impact.

For Saina, reinvention is as vital as victory. She hopes to inspire a golden decade for Indian badminton—one built on depth, grit, and global respect. Her dream is to guide that future not just from the sidelines as a mentor, but perhaps as a coach, a voice, a constant—passing on wisdom not only about swing and serve, but about life's greater rally.

She imagines a nationwide program: "Power through Opportunity." Identifying girls with potential—rural and urban alike—and offering them coaching, educational support, mentorship, and exposure to international arenas. Often, she says, "We claim girls are the future—but only if we invest in that future truly." Her initiative would fuse confidence, education, and athletic excellence, forging a movement where empowered girls lift the nation higher.

NAARICA: Cultivating the Next Generation of Indian Champions

In a natural extension of her passion for empowerment, Saina Nehwal proudly aligns with NAARICA, an initiative dedicated to transforming young female athletes' lives through education, nutrition, training, and mentorship. Her words reflect clarity and conviction: "When girls receive not just coaching but holistic support—academic, emotional, physical—it's the fulcrum that tips dreams into reality." With NAARICA's model, Saina envisions a future where young girls across India, regardless of background, are equipped not only to play but to persist, to compete, and to command their own destinies.

Saina Nehwal's story is not just an anthology of medals and matches. It is a narrative of emergence—from reserved in Hyderabad to resolute on global courts. She shaped history not by seeking attention, but by letting her resilience speak. Today, that same resilience fuels dreams and movements. She is not merely a former world number one, Olympic bronze medallist, or world-class champion. She is a storyteller, advocate, mentor—an architect of possibility.

In her hands, a badminton racket becomes a pen, scripting narratives of hope, ambition, and transformation. And through associations like NAARICA, that pen grows communal, inscribing futures for thousands of young Indian girls—one shuttle, one school, one victory at a time.

NAARICA BY SHRUTI CHAND
POWER VISION & OLYMPIC TRAILBLAZER

How a riverside epiphany in Paris, a revolution in Indian femtech, and an Olympic champion are rewriting the rules of intimate health.

It began on the banks of the Seine, with the kind of conversation that refuses to dissolve in the air. Two women, eyes locked in the amber light of a Parisian sunset, spoke of the body in whispers that soon turned into battle cries. Menstrual blood, incontinence, sweat—the stuff advertising agencies turn into blue liquids on television—was their subject matter. The world around them was champagne and croissants; their minds were on cotton, leaks, and liberation.

If that moment had a soundtrack, founder Shruti Chand is certain it would be Beyoncé's Run the World (Girls)—a song that opens with a military drumbeat and crescendos into unapologetic defiance. "It's bold, it's empowering, it's a power move," Chand tells me, leaning forward as if to push her conviction into the air between us. "Just like NAARICA."

From Taboo to Tech: The Birth of Smart Underwear

In a country where sanitary products are often wrapped in newspaper and handed over like contraband, NAARICA's "smart underwear" is a quiet but seismic rebellion. It's functional enough to absorb blood, pee, and sweat—but also shame, stigma, and centuries of whispered discomfort.

"Femtech, to me, is about turning silence into solutions," Chand says. "It's not just product innovation—it's emotional infrastructure. We're building the confidence for women to live unfiltered and unashamed."

This is not the pastel-pink hygiene aisle of yesteryear. NAARICA's design is feminist in form and fit: soft enough to feel like a hug, engineered for performance, and aesthetically fierce enough to be a visual protest. "Every stitch challenges shame, not just stains," Chand says, her voice sharpening on the consonants.

When a Product Becomes a Protest

The first time Chand realised NAARICA was more than a brand was during a rural distribution drive. A young girl, no more than fifteen, swapped her rash-inducing plastic pads for a NAARICA pair. She smiled. The moment was devastating in its simplicity. "That's when I knew," Chand says. "We weren't just selling underwear. We were dismantling an old order."

By merging circular economy principles with intimate care, NAARICA is equally an environmentalist and a feminist. A pair can last years, drastically reducing plastic waste. It's design as dissent—against pollution, against disposability, against the idea that comfort and care must be traded for modesty.

Empathy as Engineering

If NAARICA could speak to its user during each cycle, Chand imagines it would say, "I've got you—leaks, cramps, mood swings and all." That's the philosophy of empathy-driven design: products that don't just function, but understand.

"Our job was to listen first," Chand explains. "To create something stigma-free, secure, and beautifully made—because periods deserve products that feel like care, not compromise."

The Movement in Motion

NAARICA's work doesn't end with underwear. Every purchase funds literacy and access initiatives in underserved communities. The brand's grassroots wing travels to villages, schools, and health camps across India—distributing products and information. In one workshop, a girl whispered to Chand, "I didn't know this was normal."

"That moment shook me," Chand recalls. "It reminded me that dignity is as essential as absorbency."

The data is clear: menstrual literacy reduces absenteeism in schools, improves self-esteem, and in some cases, even decreases the rate of child marriage. But the change isn't just statistical—it's cultural, conversational, and deeply personal.



"To create something stigma-free, secure, and beautifully made—because periods deserve products that feel like care, not compromise

When **Saina Nehwal**—Olympic bronze medallist, former World No. 1 in badminton, and national icon—first heard of NAARICA, the synergy was immediate. For over a decade, she had lived in the glare of stadium lights, yet understood the shadows cast by taboo. Her career had been a testament to discipline, resilience, and breaking the mold of what Indian girls could aspire to be.

NAARICA offered a new court for her advocacy—a platform where she could wield her influence not for medals, but for menstrual dignity.

Saina Nehwal Enters the Chat

When Saina Nehwal—Olympic bronze medallist, former World No. 1 in badminton, and national icon—first heard of NAARICA, the synergy was immediate. For over a decade, she had lived in the glare of stadium lights, yet understood the shadows cast by taboo. Her career had been a testament to discipline, resilience, and breaking the mold of what Indian girls could aspire to be.

NAARICA offered a new court for her advocacy—a platform where she could wield her influence not for medals, but for menstrual dignity.

“For me, sport has always been about more than just the game,” Nehwal tells me. “It’s about pushing boundaries—whether it’s in the mind, the body, or in society. NAARICA is doing the same for women’s health. It’s reclaiming space that has been denied for too long.”

Her association with the brand is more than endorsement; it’s embodiment. In NAARICA campaigns, Nehwal is not the stylised sports star frozen mid-smash, but the advocate speaking directly to girls in both urban gyms and rural playgrounds. Her voice lends the mission weight, her image lends it aspiration, and her journey—from shy Hyderabad child to global sporting force—makes her the living proof of possibility.

Quiet Feminism, Loud Change

At its core, NAARICA is quietly feminist—more interested in function than fanfare, yet radical in its insistence on dignity. And yet, its change is anything but quiet. Every pair sold funds more conversations in places where menstruation has been invisible. Every workshop disrupts the inherited silence of generations.

“When you wear NAARICA, you’re not just wearing underwear,” Chand insists. “You’re wearing a revolt stitched in cotton.”

That revolt is now rippling outward. Saina Nehwal’s voice, amplified by her global following, is introducing NAARICA to young athletes, students, and working women who may never have thought of their period products as an act of self-respect—or as a tool for planetary care.

Beyond the Blood

If NAARICA’s current chapter is about periods and incontinence, its next frontier is broader still. Chand’s eyes light up as she sketches her vision: menopause care that treats hot flashes with dignity, mood-tracking technology integrated into innerwear, cycle-synced apparel that understands hormonal rhythms.

“It’s about life-stage wellness,” she says. “About syncing with every shift, every signal, every season of your body—without shame.”

In this imagined future, NAARICA is no longer just a menstrual brand but an intimate ally for the body’s entire lifespan. Its products will read and respond to the body in real-time—a merging of science, sustainability, and self-sovereignty.

The Currency of Impact

Unlike traditional brands, NAARICA doesn’t separate its commercial and activist wings. Growth is measured not just in sales, but in stories changed. Chand refers to “impact as currency, dignity as return.” It’s an economy where a single smile—like the one she witnessed in that rural swap—outweighs an uptick in quarterly revenue.

Saina Nehwal resonates with that approach. “In sport, you measure success in scores and rankings. But your real legacy is in how many people you inspire. NAARICA has the same philosophy—sales are the scoreboard, but change is the championship.”

Rewriting the Front Page

When asked to imagine the headline five years from now, Chand doesn’t hesitate:

"India Ends the Period Whisper: Menstruation Becomes Mainstream."

In her envisioned future, periods will be discussed in classrooms alongside mathematics, in boardrooms alongside quarterly goals, and in living rooms without anyone lowering their voice.

And perhaps, in a corner of that headline, a photograph: a young girl in rural India holding her first NAARICA pair, grinning without self-consciousness—much like the one that started it all.

Spoken Word for a Revolution

If NAARICA were a performance piece, Chand’s closing line is already written:

“I’m not just stitched to absorb—I’m woven to revolt. I carry blood, yes, but also stories, shame, and strength. So wear me loud, walk leak-free, and remember: every time you choose me, you rewrite the script—for your body, and every body after you.”

The applause would be thunderous—not just for the product, but for the permission it grants.

Epilogue: The Panty as a Political Act

It’s tempting to frame NAARICA as a brand with a conscience, but that’s too modest a box. This is design as dissent, marketing as mobilisation, and commerce as a carrier of cultural change. And in Saina Nehwal, NAARICA has found not just a face, but a force—a woman who understands that the smallest, most personal acts can also be the most revolutionary.

Perhaps, in the end, NAARICA isn’t really underwear at all. Perhaps it’s armor disguised as comfort—cotton and thread that holds not just the body, but a movement.

And like all true revolutions, it began in an unlikely place: by a river, in Paris, with two women daring to speak the unspeakable. ■

DESERT ROYALTY

WHEN COUTURE BECOMES A MIRAGE

CONCEPT ARCHIRAJ KEYAL | STYLIST HARSHAD GADHVI | PHOTOGRAPHER MARAN RAJAPANDIAN |JEWELLERY ANMOL SANDHU | MAKEUP LEEVIEW MAKEUP |TALENT SNEJANA SHAK

CONCEPT ARCHIRAJ KEYAL | STYLIST HARSHAD GADHVI | PHOTOGRAPHER MARAN RAJAPANDIAN |JEWELLERY ANMOL SANDHU | MAKEUP LEEVIEW MAKEUP

The desert is not empty. It remembers. Its sands carry the whispers of caravans, its winds hum a forgotten raga, its sun casts a light so unforgiving that only the most fearless beauty dares to bloom here. In this spectral expanse—where white cliffs rise like ancient palaces and alabaster horses stand still as carved marble—two women arrive like visions: living testaments to the art of bridal couture, sculpted in fabric, light, and heritage.

This is not a bridal lookbook. It is a saga, an operatic overture of embroidery and imagination. Every pleat, every shimmer, every stone sewn into these lehengas is less a garment detail and more a piece of architectural storytelling—ornamented cathedrals of silk and velvet, built not for worshippers, but for the woman herself to reign.

The Queen of Dust and Dawn

The first look is a lesson in contrasts—where the arid white earth meets the deep jewel tones of an intricately embroidered lehenga. The skirt unfurls like the pages of a centuries-old miniature painting: ochre, emerald, maroon, and gold converge in geometric and paisley harmonies, as though the garment itself has been carved from the domes and jalis of Rajasthani palaces. The blouse—structured yet sensuous—frames the wearer's form like a warrior-queen's armour, bejeweled but unyielding.

The styling is an ode to maximalism done with discipline. The bangles, stacked in lustrous ivory, clink like ceremonial bells. The necklace, a green-gold enigma, sits high and deliberate at the collarbone, catching the light in sudden, breathtaking flashes. A nose ring—impossibly delicate yet defiant—draws a sinuous line across her face, framing her gaze in an expression both regal and unapproachable.

The horses behind her—cream-coated, poised—are not mere background. They are guardians, echoes of a nomadic past where royalty travelled with their steeds, crossing terrains in search of new lands to claim. Here, they seem to acknowledge her as one of their own.

Velvet Against the Sky

The second ensemble arrives like a shift in the wind. Olive velvet—a fabric with its own natural authority—forms the blouse, its surface a galaxy of sequins, crystal drops, and intricate threadwork. Velvet absorbs and reflects light with the paradoxical grace of something that is both shadow and gleam. Paired with a skirt in muted silver-gold, it plays a quieter, more internal music than the first—but no less commanding.

The choli neckline dips into a subtle curve, bordered with precision embroidery that almost reads like an illuminated manuscript. This is bridal wear that doesn't shout across the room—it waits, confident, for those who dare to approach.

On her wrist, bangles in mixed metallics form a deliberate cacophony: gold brushing against oxidised bronze, a flash of antique silver interrupting the rhythm. Her hair is adorned with beaded blooms that appear as if plucked from a mythical garden, their fragility contrasting with the deliberate strength of her silhouette.

Behind her, another queen—this time in rose and wine tones—stands on the cliff edge, skirt billowing as though the wind itself has pledged allegiance to her presence.

The Halo and the Horse

In the third frame, the narrative tightens. The desert light shifts into something otherworldly—an incandescent crown forming where the sun hovers perfectly over the model's head, turning her into a celestial deity mid-descent. A white horse, half in shadow, emerges like an omen. The positioning is surgical: the animal's muzzle brushing the edge of the blouse, their eyes caught in a shared horizon line, their breathing seemingly in sync.

Here, the embroidery becomes more than decorative—it's talismanic. The blouse, with its constellation of mirrorwork, reflects shards of sunlight, each glint a protective amulet. The lehenga below moves like an embroidered tide, each pleat rising and falling with the grace of a story being told in an ancient tongue.

Jewellery here serves as punctuation. The choker—layered, multi-hued, bejewelled—is an emphatic full stop to the neckline, while the nose ring's chain arcs like a comet between cheekbone and ear. There's an almost dangerous softness to her gaze, a reminder that beauty in this world is never without its sharp edges.

Beyond the Bridal Cliché

What makes this editorial remarkable is not merely the opulence—opulence is easy. It's the ability of the garments to converse with the landscape, to breathe within the space they occupy. There's an unspoken truce between fabric and earth here: the silk doesn't attempt to soften the rock; the rock doesn't attempt to mute the silk. Instead, they exist as equals, both forged by time, both impervious to transience.

Too often, bridal couture in photography becomes static—captured in banquet halls or manicured gardens. But here, the wind matters. The texture of sand under embroidered hems matters. The horses matter. Even the slant of the light is integral to the design language, turning every surface into a living mood board.

An Ending Without an End

The final takeaway from this desert odyssey is a paradox: these clothes are timeless because they are unafraid to belong to the present. They could have walked out of a 17th-century court or a 22nd-century fantasy epic, and in both, they would have belonged completely.

The desert will forget many things—footprints will vanish, the horses will wander, the light will shift. But these images, these moments where couture becomes part of a living, breathing myth—those will remain.

Because the desert is not empty. And neither is she.■

CONCEPT **ARCHIRAJ KEYAL** | STYLIST **HARSHAD GADHVI** | PHOTOGRAPHER **MARAN RAJAPANDIAN** |JEWELLERY **ANMOL SANDHU** | MAKEUP **LEEVIEW MAKEUP**

CONCEPT **ARCHIRAJ KEYAL** | STYLIST **HARSHAD GADHVI** | PHOTOGRAPHER **MARAN RAJAPANDIAN** |JEWELLERY **ANMOL SANDHU** | MAKEUP **LEEVIEW MAKEUP**

HUNTING GROUNDS OF OPULENCE

COUTURE MARWAR COUTURE | CONCEPT ARCHIRAJ KEYAL | STYLIST HARSHAD GADHVI | PHOTOGRAPHER MARAN RAJAPANDIAN |JEWELLERY RANIWALA| MAKEUP LEEVIEW MAKEUP | TALENT SNEJANA SHAK

COUTURE **MARWAR COUTURE** | CONCEPT **ARCHIRAJ KEYAL** | STYLIST **HARSHAD GADHVI** | PHOTOGRAPHER **MARAN RAJAPANDIAN** |JEWELLERY **RANIWALA**| MAKEUP **LEEVIEW MAKEUP**

There is a peculiar stillness in the air—one that feels neither modern nor entirely of the past. It is the hush of a forgotten trophy room, where the soft decay of history lingers in the scent of aged wood, taxidermy, and silk. Under the watchful eyes of mounted antelope, lion, and buffalo, a different kind of conquest unfolds—not of wilderness or prey, but of craft, fabric, and form. Here, the hunt is for beauty. And in this wilderness of grandeur, the prey is willingly caught.

The set is a collision of worlds—Edwardian hunting lodge and subcontinental bridal atelier—where narratives of power, preservation, and decadence tangle themselves into every embroidered seam. The models are not posed; they are enthroned. Every stance, every languid tilt of the head, every calculated stillness radiates the self-assured dominion of women who know they are not merely wearing garments—they are commanding them.

The Throne Between Tusks

The first frame strikes like a portrait from an imperial folio—our protagonist seated at the very heart of a carved wooden divan, framed by colossal ivory tusks arching into a perfect halo. Her lehenga is a masterpiece of excess, its deep maroon fabric a canvas for paisleys blooming in metallic threadwork, sequins catching light like the glint of a predator's gaze. It is ornamentation not for mere adornment, but for intimidation. The blouse—short-sleeved, midriff-baring—anchors the look in a deliberate sensuality, while the dupatta drapes like a coronation robe.

The background whispers colonial nostalgia, but the woman herself rewrites the power dynamic. This is not a muse awaiting a painter's brush; this is the sovereign who owns the palace. The chandeliers may be absent, replaced by fringed lamps, but the glow is the same—warm, golden, suggestive of secrets and spoils.

Dual Monarchies

The second tableau expands the kingdom. Two women stand and sit like co-regents, each ruling her own dominion of fabric and form. The standing figure is robed in a deep navy and crimson lehenga, a vertical geometry of zari chevrons broken by floral bursts in velvet—a textile language that speaks of both architectural precision and garden bloom. Her blouse, cut to reveal the curve of the ribcage, is balanced by a sheer red organza shrug, an element that injects softness into her warrior-like silhouette. The jewellery—matha patti, layered necklaces, rings that resemble miniature weaponry—cements her presence as someone not to be trifled with.

Beside her, the seated queen wears a lehenga in shades of burnished gold and wine, the skirt a tapestry of velvet flowers framed by metallic arcs. Her shoulders are draped in silver tissue that catches light like liquid mercury, her blouse embroidered but restrained, a foil to the theatricality of her skirt. Together, they become a study in complementary sovereignty—one vertical and angular, the other horizontal and sprawling. Behind them, a lion bares its teeth mid-snarl. The symbolism is unsubtle yet perfect: danger is not absent here—it is simply tamed.

The Close-Up of Conquest

The third scene brings us almost uncomfortably close to our subject. Here, the gaze is direct—blue eyes framed by kohl, lips barely parted, the skin luminescent under the weight of jewels. Her necklace, a staggering composition of uncut diamonds and emerald drops, sits not as an accessory but as an assertion. The lehenga beneath—terracotta and gold, its panels patterned in regal paisleys—speaks of painstaking hours at the loom, each thread placed with the patience of an artisan's prayer.

The dupatta, edged in gold and embroidered with miniature floral vines, is caught in a calculated drape over the shoulder, revealing the blouse's sweetheart neckline and beadwork. The silver shawl, cradling her arms, is an armor of shimmer. Her hand rests casually at her waist, a ring the size of a coin catching the dim light. In the blurred background, another woman—clad in crimson and bronze—becomes part of the mise en scène, her form almost spectral, like a portrait in oil.

Jewellery as Battle Regalia

Every piece of jewellery is selected with the precision of military strategy. The matha pattis split the forehead like ceremonial crests, their chains disappearing into the hairline. The nose rings—oversized, with delicate chains tethering them to the ear—are both alluring and faintly dangerous, reminiscent of warriors who wore nose armour. Chokers and bib necklaces layer into a visual weight at the collarbones, creating an armour-like barricade of gems. Bangles and haathphools trace the anatomy of the wrist and hand with metallic vines. Nothing here is subtle; the jewellery is not about adornment but about staking claim. To wear such magnitude is to declare the body a sovereign territory.

The Narrative Underneath

If you strip away the embroidery, the set design, the jewellery—what remains is an attitude. These women, through lens and styling, refuse the passivity historically assigned to bridal imagery. They are not shy brides-to-be or ornamental muses; they are avatars of self-possession. The clothing does not wear them—they command it as part of their arsenal. The story told across these frames is one of reclamation—of space, of narrative, of legacy. The garments may nod to centuries of craft, but they stand firmly in the present, in a fashion world where tradition can be wielded like a weapon rather than worn like a chain.

Closing Frame

As the series fades from the mind's eye, what lingers is not just the sumptuousness of the lehengas or the gleam of the jewels—it is the unsettling awareness that power, when dressed this beautifully, can seduce as much as it can conquer. In the hunting lodge of history, these women have turned the tables. The trophies on the wall will forever be frozen in their silent roars, while the women, clothed in fabric that outshines fur and fang, remain in motion—alive, commanding, and untouchable.

This is not a bridal spread. This is a coronation. And the crown, though invisible, has never gleamed brighter.■

COUTURE **MARWAR COUTURE** | CONCEPT **ARCHIRAJ KEYAL** | STYLIST **HARSHAD GADHVI** | PHOTOGRAPHER **MARAN RAJAPANDIAN** |JEWELLERY **RANIWALA**| MAKEUP **LEEVIEW MAKEUP**

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THE QUIET ARCHITECTURE OF FANTASY

Some designers chase trends; others build worlds.

Smita Srinivas does both and neither. Her fashion is not a reaction to the moment—it is a distillation of mood, memory, and the subtlest fragments of lived experience. A petal in sunlight. The way a breeze turns sheer fabric into a shadow play. A fragment of music from a vinyl crackle.












Her latest collection, Garden Martini, arrives like a whispered secret—part bloom, part intoxication. The name itself straddles contradiction: a garden suggests innocence, a martini, seduction. Srinivas imagined it during a solitary walk, when the sunlight sifted through an unruly tangle of wildflowers. “There was something so poetic and untouched about that scene,” she recalls. “I remember thinking, ‘What would this feel like if it were a dress?’”

She didn’t forget the question. Instead, she translated it into sheer overlays that move like breath, floral textures delicate enough to seem remembered rather than sewn, and silhouettes softened at the edges—garments that feel like half-dreamed stories.

A Mood You Can Wear

For Srinivas, Garden Martini is not merely a collection—it’s a sensory world. If it were a scent, she says, it would be “fresh jasmine with a hint of muddled mint—nostalgic but not dated.” Sonically, it would be the warm crackle of vinyl before a Norah Jones ballad or an old Sufi refrain. And if one could touch its essence? “Crushed tulle kissed with shimmer—imperfect, dreamy, and tactile.”

This trinity—scent, sound, texture—reflects the duality she sought: calm yet complex, familiar yet unexpected. It’s clothing as synesthesia, where wearing a dress might feel like catching the tail end of a memory just before it slips away.

The Counterpoint to the Algorithm

In an era where ‘cuteness’ has become a coping mechanism and fast fashion saturates every scroll, Srinivas defends slowness. “Slow fashion is like a long conversation—you listen, you reflect, you respond with care,” she says. In her view, garments should hold space not only for the body but for memory, value, and belonging. This is not nostalgia masquerading as business model; it’s a deliberate strategy to build trust. “It’s the kind of trust,” she notes, “that doesn’t expire with seasons.” Her clients don’t simply buy clothes—they collect them, live in them, and, in some cases, pass them down like heirlooms.

Whimsy with Structure

While Srinivas often dresses her models in silhouettes that seem soft at first glance, there’s steel beneath the silk. Her fondness for whimsical proportions doesn’t follow “cartooncore” theatrics for spectacle’s sake. “Fantasy, for me, is a form of resistance—a refusal to conform to dull or one-dimensional design,” she explains.

Her exaggerated shapes have intent: a sleeve that blooms to the wrist, a skirt that moves as though it remembers water. “Femininity isn’t fragile,” she says. “It’s deliberate.”

Designing for the Dreamers & the Doers

Srinivas often refers to her clientele as “dreamers and doers”—two archetypes she dresses with equal devotion. Dreamers, she says, need clothes that give them “permission to imagine”: fabrics that float, seams that tell quiet stories, details you notice on the second glance.

Doers, meanwhile, require a different intimacy from their wardrobe—garments that “hold space for softness without asking them to shrink their power.” In her 2025 vision, both groups want emotional utility: clothes that stand with them, rather than simply cover them.

Boudoir Meets Boardroom

If Srinivas has a signature beyond her technical hand, it might be her ability to entwine softness and power in the same garment. Her clothes often embody what she calls “boudoir meets boardroom”—the whisper of lace under a sharply tailored blazer, a satin slip cut with the geometry of armor.

Her generation of designers, she argues, is dismantling outdated binaries: “Sensuality isn’t about showing skin—it’s about presence. Softness isn’t weakness—it’s a choice. Strength isn’t loud—it’s layered.” In her hands, power dressing becomes less about uniformity and more about autobiography.

Guarding the Soul of Originality

The encroachment of AI-driven trend forecasting and the dominance of luxury giants on the red carpet have left many wondering if originality can survive. Srinivas doesn’t just wonder—she takes active steps to protect it.

“I switch off—literally and metaphorically,” she says. She sketches by hand, curates moodboards from weathered books, collects leaves, scribbles song lyrics in the margins. “That’s where originality lives—in places untouched by metrics.” Her resistance is not just anti-algorithm; it is pro-human. She champions the “slowness, intuition, and human messiness” that machines cannot replicate, seeing imperfection as an essential element of beauty.

The Mumbai Moodboard

Ask her to describe Mumbai’s fashion psyche and her answer feels like a poem. “Ruffled saris over sneakers, spilled coffee on pastel organza, boardroom blazers with a sindoor line,” she lists. It’s a patchwork city where tradition collides with improvisation, where style is survival as much as self-expression. If she had to name it? “Monsoon Maximalism,” she says, a term that captures the city’s contradictions—chaos, charm, damp hems, and the kind of resilience that never asks for applause.

Why Smita Srinivas Matters Now

Srinivas’s work is not simply beautiful; it’s restorative. In a fashion climate driven by speed, novelty, and algorithmic manipulation, she offers a counterpoint—a reminder that style can be intentional, emotional, and even defiant. Garden Martini doesn’t simply invite you to wear it; it asks you to inhabit it, to remember where you were when you first put it on, to hold its memory long after the season changes.

She creates not for the scroll but for the linger, for the people who understand that a well-made dress can be both shelter and statement. And while the industry grapples with the commodification of aesthetics, Srinivas quietly tends her garden—growing something rooted, fragrant, and immune to the churn.■

There is a certain precision in the way **Shivangi Desai** speaks—like the click of a perfectly engineered watch. Her words are deliberate, sculpted, and yet wrapped in a warmth that makes them instantly human. It’s the same balance she embodies in her work: the measured rigor of science, offset by the soulful grace of India’s ancient wellness wisdom.

REWRITING INDIA’S HEALTH & STYLE NARRATIVE









To a casual scroll, Shivangi might look like just another digital-era health influencer—millions of followers, polished videos, and the occasional viral reel. But those who've walked alongside her—through the Fit Bharat Mission, the RHN supplements brand, or under the mentorship of the 1,450 health coaches she's trained—know her as something else entirely: an architect of transformation. A bridge-builder. A woman determined to carry a nation toward a future where health is not a luxury, but a birthright.

The Mission: Fit Bharat, Free Bharat

If India's independence in 1947 freed its land, Shivangi's vision for 2047 is to free its people from the tyranny of lifestyle diseases. "Freedom from illness," she says with the authority of someone who has healed herself at the cellular level. Born with thalassemia minor and chronically low haemoglobin—hovering around 7 or 8—she was told she might never cross 10. She battled fatigue, gut issues, and stubborn acne. But she refused the ceiling doctors placed above her. Through study, experimentation, and relentless application, she raised her haemoglobin to 14.2 naturally in just 18 months—and has sustained it for over eight years. That transformation birthed her methodology: a fusion of circadian eating, yoga-inspired movement, seasonal nutrition, genetic testing, functional nutrition, and strength training. "This isn't nostalgia," she says. "It's ancient intelligence, adapted and evidence-backed for modern life."

Authenticity at Scale

Shivangi's social media reach—3.7 million and counting—is not built on quick-fix hacks. Her feed is a classroom where insulin resistance is explained through relatable metaphors, and gut health advice is grounded in personal stories. "Authenticity and scientific integrity come first," she says. She shares only what she has lived, tested, or applied with her community. Her formula is elegant: science plus storytelling. She reveals her own vulnerabilities—late-night cravings, the discipline to deadlift 90 kilos at a bodyweight of 50, the anxiety before releasing her lab reports online. In an industry saturated with curated perfection, this transparency makes her stand apart.

The Art of Coaching Transformation

For Shivangi, the difference between an average health coach and a transformative one lies not in the meal plan, but in the mindset. "Advice is easy. Transformation requires vision," she explains. Exceptional coaches, in her view, are those who hold a vision of their client's potential even before the client can see it. Empathy, accountability, and constant learning form her gold standard. "Science evolves. People evolve. A coach must too."

A Bridge Between East and West

Her résumé reads like two lives in one—Harvard Medical School training alongside Yogacharya, Reiki, Pranic Healing, and Neuro-linguistic Programming certifications. But for Shivangi, East and West are not opposing forces. "Health isn't East versus West—it's about building a bridge that works." This bridge pairs Western research on intermittent fasting with India's upvaas tradition, or combines yoga mobility with strength training. Cognitive behavioural therapy meets pranayama; genetic testing coexists with meditation. The result is a health philosophy that's culturally resonant, scientifically grounded, and sustainable.

The Dance Between AI and Human Touch

Shivangi sees AI diagnostics as a revolution—especially when paired with genetic testing through her role at Welocity Genetics. But she's clear: technology can deliver data, not empathy. "The more AI grows, the more human connection will matter," she says. In her Fit Bharat model, tech collects metrics, while coaches turn those numbers into mindset shifts and sustainable habits.

RHN: Beyond Supplements

Her RHN—Right Human Nutrition—brand aims to be a "complete health partner." Supplements are simply the entry point, supported by personalised guidance, AI recommendations, genetic insights, and lifestyle coaching. Her goal is to shift health care from reactive treatment to proactive, predictive care. "The future of health is personal, preventive, and predictive," she says.

Reclaiming the Feminine

In women's health, Shivangi sees a paradox: striving to "be equal to men" has, for many, meant abandoning their own rhythms—leading to hormonal imbalance. "Women are already powerful," she says. "The feminine is intuitive, compassionate, in flow. When we reject that, imbalance follows." Her prescription is both medical and philosophical: honour your unique cycles and energy patterns.

Real Health, Redefined

For Shivangi, health in 2025 is freedom—the energy to do what you love, the emotional stability to handle life's storms, and liberation from lifestyle diseases. Her FMS system—Food, Movement, Sleep—is deceptively simple: Food: Seasonal, home-cooked, on-time, eaten mindfully. Movement: Walk, lift, stretch, play—daily. Sleep: 7–8 hours, ideally before 11 pm, for full hormonal and cellular repair. These are not Instagram-friendly gimmicks, but what she calls "timeless, unglamorous, and profoundly transformative" habits.

The Legacy She's Building

Shivangi's mission is not a sprint but a generational project—a redesign of India's relationship with health. She blends Ayurveda with Harvard-level research, the adrenaline of skydiving with the stillness of pranayama. Her online presence may be slick and engaging, but beneath every post lies the same unwavering goal: a Fit Bharat by 2047.

And if her own journey—from chronic fatigue to peak vitality—is any measure, she's building not just a health movement, but a runway for millions to take flight.■

ART OF BECOMING MORE THAN ONE THING

There are women who return to work after motherhood quietly, folding back into their careers as though nothing happened. And then there is **Pankhuri Awasthy Rode**—actress, writer, entrepreneur, mother of twins—who reenters the spotlight with the assured presence of someone who has lived several lifetimes in just a few years. Her cameo in Dhakad Beera wasn't simply a role. It was, as she calls it, "the missing puzzle piece" in her life—a fragment of herself she knew she had to reclaim.

"I think timing is intuitive," she tells Popp Dapp. "When I read this role, I felt the pull immediately. It was an emotional chord, one I couldn't ignore." The filming took her deep into Punjab's rural heartlands, far from the polished comforts of a Mumbai set. And yet, she says, "the very fact that it was challenging felt right. If I was going to come back, it had to be something that asked something of me."

The Motherhood Equation

The cinematic comeback was never going to be the only story. Pankhuri's transition from celebrated television and film actress to mother of twins was both exhilarating and dismantling. "Mom guilt," she admits, "doesn't just appear when you leave for work. It's there if I step out for dinner with my husband without the babies. It's there at night, when I think—have I done enough with them today?"

Her honesty is disarming. Twin toddlers, she points out, don't just double the joy—they double the logistics. "They have different likes, different curiosities, and yes, different tantrums. It's like running parallel marathons every single day." A support system—what she calls "a bigger village for two kids"—has been the scaffolding behind her balance. Her mother and mother-in-law fly in without hesitation; her husband, actor Gautam Rode, shares parenting duties with an intuitive rhythm. "We've built an unspoken agreement—if one is working, the other is home with the kids," she says. "That continuity means they always feel anchored."

On Losing, and Finding, the Self

Motherhood, she insists, is not just a role—it's a "new life" that can easily eclipse all others. "You almost mourn your old self," she confides. "The one who could just decide to do something without calculating childcare or feeding schedules." But she is deliberate about protecting her individuality. "Acting fuels me. Writing fuels me. Designing for my jewellery brand fuels me. If I keep that fire alive, I can give more to everyone else."

The Quiet Storm of Postpartum

Pankhuri speaks about postpartum changes with the same unvarnished clarity she brings to her roles. "I wouldn't call my case full postpartum depression—it was a lighter version. But those first one and a half months after delivery were… unrecognizable. I was happy, yet I'd find myself crying without knowing why." Part of it began in the hospital, when one of her twins was placed in the NICU for five days. "The image of him there alone—it broke something in me." Add to that the relentless rhythm of feeding every two hours, the uncertainty about milk supply, the debates over formula supplementation, and the question that shadows every new mother: Am I enough? Her openness in sharing those feelings—on Instagram and in interviews—has challenged the polished veneer often expected of public figures. "We can't normalize something if we don't talk about it," she says firmly. "Mental health, breastfeeding, postpartum realities—they're all part of the motherhood experience."

Motherhood's Emotional Vocabulary

Does becoming a mother shape the roles she gravitates toward? "Not exclusively," she says, "but it's added an emotional layer I didn't have before. If I'm playing a mother now, I understand that bond from the inside out." Even in roles that don't involve children, she finds herself drawing on the expanded empathy motherhood has given her.

The House That Holds Her

Her home in Mumbai is a lived-in poem of warm woods, leafy greens, and soft light. "We wanted a space that feels like us—homely, earthy, Indian. Not hyper-modern." It's a sanctuary that anchors her family, though she insists her aesthetic doesn't dictate her acting choices. "Set life is a different universe. But yes—who you are will always find a way into your characters."

Fashion as Extension, Not Disguise

On Instagram, Pankhuri's fashion narrative unfolds with fluid ease. There are flowing saris in jewel tones, breezy cotton kurtas, off-duty denim days, and the occasional high-octane gown. Each frame feels rooted in comfort, not performance. "Clothes are like roles," she muses. "If you're comfortable in them, they give you a certain freedom. I've never been drawn to fashion that hides the person wearing it." Her post-pregnancy fitness journey—returning to her pre-baby form in seven months—wasn't about meeting an arbitrary aesthetic standard. "It was about feeling strong in my body again. Wellness isn't about ticking a size chart; it's about resilience."

Where Digital Meets Destiny

Pankhuri is acutely aware of the shifting landscape. "OTT is the new frontier," she says, eyes brightening. "It offers a different kind of storytelling—more nuanced, more real. I'd love to do a rom-com for the web. Or a series that explores women's inner worlds with honesty." She speaks of the global content she admires, hinting at a growing appetite for collaboration across borders. Her dream projects? "Genre-defying stories. Roles that scare me a little. Maybe even something behind the camera one day." As for collaborators, she rattles off a mix of Indian auteurs and international visionaries—proof that her gaze is set far beyond the familiar.

The Woman in Motion

If Pankhuri's story has a single thread, it's the refusal to be reduced to a singular identity. She is actress and mother, entrepreneur and homemaker, realist and dreamer. "Life isn't about balance," she says finally. "It's about flow. Some days the current pulls you toward work, some days toward family. I've learned to stop fighting the tide." On screen, she can be a queen, a rebel, an AI creation, or the woman next door. Off screen, she is still playing roles—just ones without scripts. And perhaps that's where her greatest performance lies: in living a life expansive enough to contain all of them.

As she prepares for her next chapter—whether that's an OTT rom-com, a physically demanding action role, or a quiet character study—Pankhuri seems less interested in choosing one lane than in building her own intersection. "The world keeps asking women to be one thing," she says with a wry smile. "I'd rather be many. I'd rather be all." ■

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Weaving Myth, Motion, & Memory

CHHAU BY SHANTI

Some stories are not merely told—they are danced, breathed into being through centuries of ritual, rhythm, and reverence. In eastern India, where the air is thick with folklore and the ground remembers the cadence of ancient feet, Chhau has long stood as a living testament to cultural resilience. Today, under the luminous vision of Shanti, this martial-rooted, myth-infused dance form is reborn in the language of fashion—fluid silks and diaphanous georgettes replacing the battlefield's dust, yet carrying the same pulse of defiance, artistry, and grace.

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Titled Chhau by Shanti, the collection is less a seasonal release and more a choreographed homage—twelve sarees for twelve guardians of the art, each a custodian of movement and myth from Saraikela in Jharkhand, Purulia in West Bengal, and Mayurbhanj in Odisha. It is in these villages—where morning light spills over terracotta rooftops and drumbeats punctuate the twilight—that Creative Director Khushi Shah and her team found the heartbeat of their vision.

Shanti's reputation for marrying heritage with haute couture has always been anchored in sincerity. But here, the brand ventures deeper than ever before—into the personal histories of dancers whose craft is their inheritance, their offering, and their shield. Each saree in this series becomes a wearable vignette: high-contrast palettes mirroring the theatrical masks of Chhau, intricate real-zari weaves carrying whispers of gods and warriors, and fabric—crepe, georgette—chosen for its ability to move with the dancer's body, to tell a story in motion.

The Choreography of Design

At the core of this collaboration are three thematic pillars that braid the worlds of Shanti and Chhau into a seamless narrative:

Nature as the Teacher – In the lives of these performers, art does not happen apart from nature; it is an echo of it. Movements mirror monsoon rains, postures mimic the grace of cranes, and battle sequences channel the ferocity of tigers. This communion with the land is mirrored in Shanti's devotion to sustainable practices, where design follows the slow rhythms of craft rather than the breakneck pace of trends.

Community as the Strength – Chhau is not a solitary art. It is rehearsed in open courtyards, learned knee-to-knee, passed from elders to youth in gestures as sacred as prayer. Shanti embraces this collective identity, sustaining artisan clusters across India and building fair-trade partnerships that keep both skill and dignity intact.

Heritage as the Resistance – Born from martial training, Chhau became an artform that disguised combat within beauty, turning war into theatre. Today, in a digital era that risks erasing the granular textures of regional art, Chhau stands as cultural armor. Likewise, Shanti's very purpose has been to preserve the integrity of India's textile traditions against the flattening forces of mass production.

A Campaign Rooted in Place

To honour these connections, Shanti's campaign does not transplant the dancers into sterile studios or urban sets. Photographer Pranoy Sarkar shot them in their own villages, framed by the landscapes that shaped their art—mud-walled homes, fields trembling in the wind, and skies that seem to hum with the memory of festivals past. The images are not costume dramas; they are acts of cultural witness.

In one frame, a dancer from Purulia stands poised at dusk, her saree's bold vermillion border catching the last light, the pleats rippling like the wings of the peacock she will soon embody on stage. In another, a Mayurbhanj artist's crepe-draped form bends into a warrior's lunge, the fluid fall of the fabric both softening and amplifying the power of her stance.

This is fashion that refuses to divorce the garment from the gesture. The sarees are designed not merely to be worn, but to move, to breathe, to perform.

The Craft of Continuity

"We believe that true fashion transcends aesthetics," says Khushi Shah, her tone equal parts conviction and poetry. "It carries stories, preserves memory, and honours those who dedicate their lives to keeping culture alive."

In Chhau by Shanti, the real zari work—a hallmark of the brand—becomes a bridge between the ceremonial grandeur of the stage and the tactile intimacy of handloom. Authentic gold and silver threads, traditionally used in Banarasi weaving, are here adapted to reference the glints of Chhau's elaborate masks and weaponry. It's a subtle but deliberate act of cross-pollination, reinforcing the idea that heritage thrives not in isolation, but in conversation.

Shanti's work with Banarasi weavers has always been rooted in preservation, but this project expands the circle—bringing dancers into the fold as co-narrators of the brand's story. Each saree is thus both a design object and a living archive.

The Legacy of Shanti

Founded in 2019 by siblings Khushi and Amrit Shah, Shanti takes its name from their grandmother, whose appreciation for fine saris seeded the brand's ethos. From its base in Varanasi, the label has built a reputation for heirloom-quality Banarasi sarees woven with authentic real zari. With flagship stores in Varanasi, Delhi, and Mumbai, it continues to draw on centuries-old techniques while introducing silhouettes and palettes attuned to the contemporary eye.

In Chhau by Shanti, that philosophy reaches a rare clarity. The collection affirms that fashion can serve as a vessel for cultural storytelling—one in which every fold of fabric holds the echo of a drumbeat, every border remembers the sweep of a dancer's arm.

It is easy to see this as a limited edition, a beautiful collaboration that will live on in campaign books and private wardrobes. But to frame it so narrowly is to miss the point. This is not an ending; it is a living dialogue. As long as Chhau dancers keep moving—feet pounding the dust, hands painting the air—Shanti's sarees will be there, carrying those stories forward, one graceful pleat at a time.■

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VOL VI ISSUE IV (AUG 2025) English Quarterly