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VIDYA BALAN

20 YEARS IN CINEMA: ICONIC EVOLUTION & AN UNAPOLOGETIC AUTHENTICITY

LEGENDS & ACHIEVERS

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MUKESH RISHI

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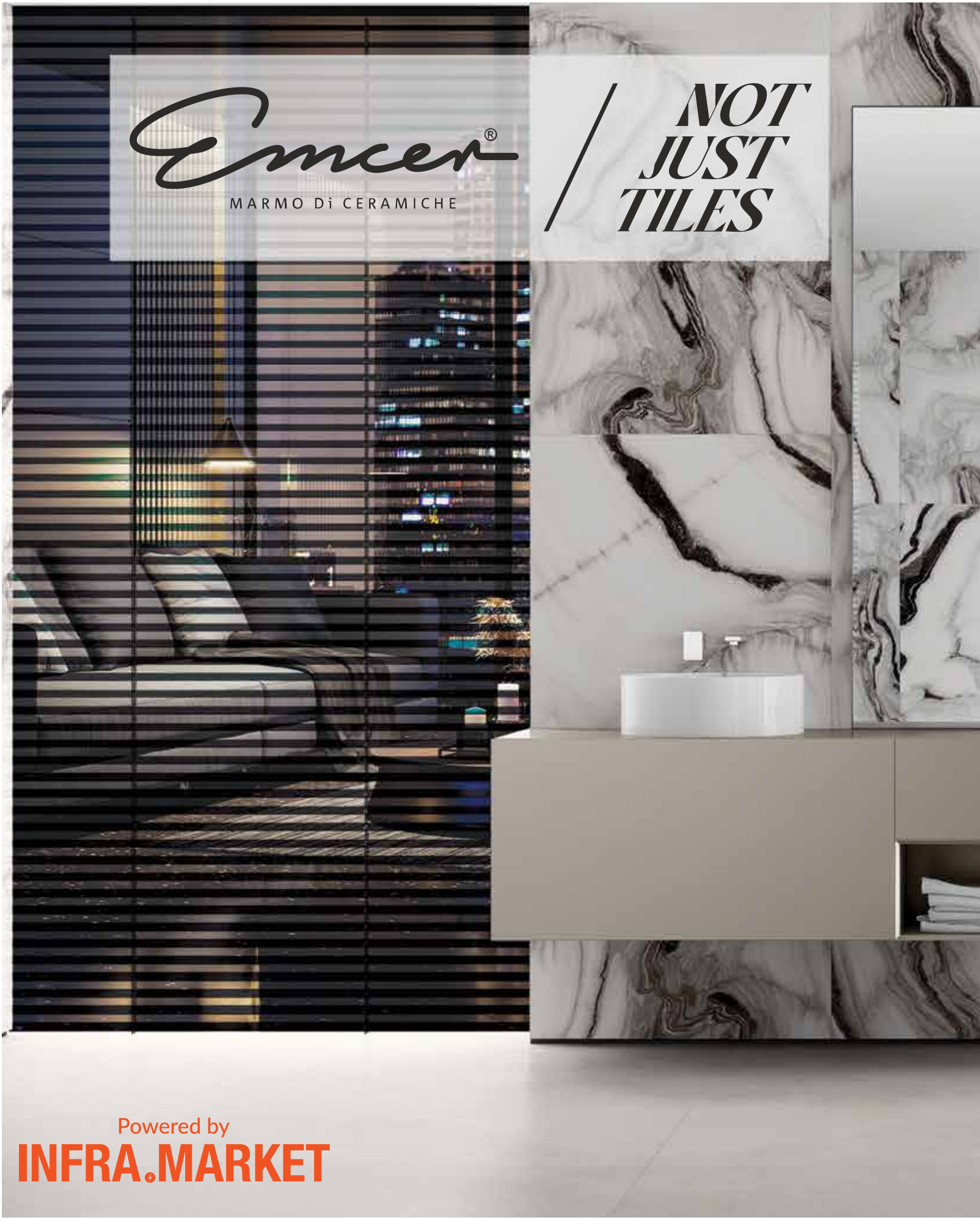
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Insight



Dear Readers,

The response to our May 2025 issue, featuring **Union Cabinet Minister for Road Transport & Highways Nitin Gadkari** on the cover, was nothing short of phenomenal. Citizens across the country were eager to hear more from the man driving India's infrastructural transformation, especially his bold vision for highways and roadways that are not just connecting cities but powering national progress.

This month, we turn the spotlight on the most talented and glamorous **Vidya Balan**. A powerhouse performer and a game-changer in Indian cinema, she continues to inspire with her fierce choices and fearless portrayals. We wish her continued success and joy in the years ahead.

Also featured in this issue is **Prreeti Jaiin Nainutia**, the acclaimed fashion designer whose captivating creations are a favourite among Bollywood's elite. Her work masterfully blends tradition with contemporary flair, cementing her status as one of the most sought-after names in couture.

We also bring you an engaging conversation with film legend **Mukesh Rishi**, who's enjoying a prolific year with multiple film releases and a successful live tour in Australia. With projects spanning several Indian languages, his versatility continues to shine across the industry.

Dr Yogesh Lakhani of Bright Outdoor Media is another standout personality in this issue. A long-time pillar of the film industry, he recently represented India at the Cannes Film Festival. His journey — from humble beginnings to becoming a media mogul — is nothing short of inspirational.

Finally, we spotlight **Utkarsh Sharma**, a rising star in Hindi cinema. While proudly carrying forward the cinematic legacy of his father, acclaimed filmmaker **Anil Sharma**, Utkarsh is forging a unique path and identity all his own.

And that's not all — this issue is packed with power features that promise to inform, inspire and energise you!

It is your continued support that fuels our passion for curating stories that matter. Thank you for being a part of the '**Society Achievers**' family.

Warm regards,

Ashok Dhamankar

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With a career marked by bold choices, compelling performances, and a steadfast refusal to conform to industry norms, Vidya Balan has carved a space entirely her own in Indian cinema. In this exclusive interview, Vidya opens up about her journey, the evolving landscape of storytelling, and what continues to fuel her passion for performance. 12

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Chief Editor's Note



Shaping culture, challenging convention, commanding respect, and clearing the path for others to journey on... This issue appreciates, applauds and celebrates Iconic Individuals who do all this and a lot more!

Our **Cover Story** is a luminous tribute to India's much-loved and applauded powerhouse performer, actress **Vidya Balan**. Unapologetically authentic, Vidya has elevated the art of storytelling with each riveting performance. She unlocks her thoughts and heart in this exclusive interview with Shubarna Mukerji Shu, telling us about her journey from rejection to reverence, and the all-consuming passion that continues to fuel her onward journey.

The **Legends & Achievers** section brings you in-depth insights into the visionaries who are writing the current script of success. From the enduring grace of newly elected **Pope Leo XIV**; to **Melanie Perkins**, the tech prodigy powering creative freedom through Canva; to powerhouse villain **Mukesh Rishi**; to billboard king **Dr Yogesh Lakhani**; to the aesthetic genius of painter **Laila Khan Furniturewala** and fashion designer **Prreeti Jaiin Nainutia** — read the stories of these powerful stalwarts and stay inspired by them.

...Moving across to the **Lifestyle** segment, it's set to inject your life with dazzle and delight – what with stories that energise you! Sample this: Lean into the fitness secrets of our dashing cricketers – **Virat Kohli, Shubman Gill, and Suryakumar Yadav**. Rewind with a retrospective on **Guru Dutt**. Indulge in a plateful of **momos** that are making headlines on India's streets. Toast with **rosé cocktails**. Uncover the sparkle in **modern royal jewellery** for men and women. Train the spotlight on passion, power and poise at the cosy unveiling of '**Society Interiors & Design**' magazine with real estate legend **Dr Niranjan Hiranandani**.

Sparking conversation – yes, that's what '**Society Achievers**' does! Add your own brand of sparkle to the narrative by living with courage and conviction. Cheers!

- Andrea CostaBir

Photograph: Viraj Shirodkar

Cover Story

Vidya Balan: Iconic Evolution, Unapologetic Authenticity

Two decades since her cinematic debut with 'Parineeta', Vidya Balan reflects on a journey that's not just hers alone but also one that has shaped how audiences view women in Indian cinema. From breaking barriers to inspiring generations with her authenticity, Vidya opens up about her greatest achievements, the blessings of unwavering love, and the spiritual journey that has guided her every step of the way.

- By Shubarna Mukerji Shu



20 years in this realm of dreams and lights, and yet, for all the hearts you've touched, for every soul who's crossed your path — these two decades are not merely your journey from 'Parineeta' onward. They are ours as well — our journey of knowing you, of celebrating you, watching you shatter one glass ceiling after another. But tell me, amidst all this, what achievement do you hold closest to your heart?

Firstly, that makes me very emotional, just hearing you say that. But I feel blessed — blessed that people feel like that about me. I don't know about achievements, you know, but I've received so much love over the years. I've achieved success and fame, and thanks to that, I've received this love. Or maybe it goes hand-in-hand, because as an actor, it's the people who make you a success by appreciating and lauding what you do. That's something I always feel very grateful for. I feel grateful for everything — the love I've received – I think that's my greatest achievement. Whether it's from audiences, the media, or the industry, I've just received so much love. It's not quantifiable. I think I've been accepted and embraced through these 20 years, through everything I've been through.

I should tell you this, someone I met recently appreciated the visible transformation in me but, in the same breath, said that in your case, it never really made a difference — even at what one might call your 'biggest'! When I think about it, there was a phase when, physically, I felt extremely big. But I was still getting as much work. Some projects worked, some didn't, but the love has always been there. And that, I think, is my biggest blessing. I don't think I can call it an achievement because, frankly, I didn't set out to achieve that. I just wanted to act. But all these blessings — I can't even describe it.

"What's consistent is the hunger for more. I've seen that hunger in my mother — not as an actor, but just as a woman wanting more, wanting her girls to do more, always appreciating women who went out there and conquered the world."



You've changed the very way actresses are perceived in this industry, haven't you?

I'm credited with being the face of that change. But did I set out to do it? No! I didn't even think it was possible. I was just responding instinctively to what was being offered to me. There was a hunger as an actor. I was getting exciting opportunities, and I was grabbing them with all my might, giving it all I had. That's all I've done — been receptive! Sometimes you want more, and you get much more. Sometimes you get far less than you expect. It works both ways, but I also think it has a lot to do with being in the right place at the right time. And that's where I feel the grace of God.

There were many before me, and I think everyone has done their bit to bring us to where we are today. I mean, it's not just the actors who've played certain kinds of roles — what is the zeitgeist of the times, you know? Depending on that, they've all done the best they could. What's consistent is the hunger for more. I've seen that hunger in my mother — not as an actor, but just as a woman wanting more, wanting her girls to do more, always appreciating women who went out there and conquered the world. Of course, in the bargain, she wasn't valuing herself enough because she was at home. But for her girls, she wanted us to go out and live our dreams.

This outlook is constant in women across generations: "I perhaps didn't do it, but I appreciate that in others, and I want my daughters to go there and get it. For that, they have my support in every way." So, as I said, I might be the face of it for this generation, but over the years, everyone has worked towards it. I'm just blessed because I was at the right place at the right time.

You often speak of God. What is your relationship with spirituality?

I am someone who believes that there is a God. To me, God is a divine force. I don't attribute any one form to God. Yes, I was brought up a Hindu and am a practicing Hindu because those are the tools I grew up with. But my relationship with God has gone far beyond religion. Call it whatever you like — some call it the universe, some call it energy, some call it luck or good fortune — whatever name you want to use, to me, it's my faith that has brought me here. And I have to credit my parents for instilling that in me. My father has always said that no matter what you do in life, do it to the best of your ability and with pride. Nothing is too small. I think that explains my body of work. That's why I could put myself out there fearlessly.

"My relationship with God has gone far beyond religion. Call it whatever you like — some call it the universe, some call it energy, some call it luck or good fortune — whatever name you want to use, to me, it's my faith that has brought me here."





“I think it was around 2007, when I decided I wouldn’t do a film if I didn’t want to do it. I wouldn’t settle for anything — even if it meant saying no to some big films, big directors, big banners, or even my mentor (Pradeep Sarkar). He might have thought I was being ungrateful, but I was just being true to myself and honest. I know to this day that I have all the gratitude for him, but I just couldn’t get myself to do a film I didn’t connect with.”

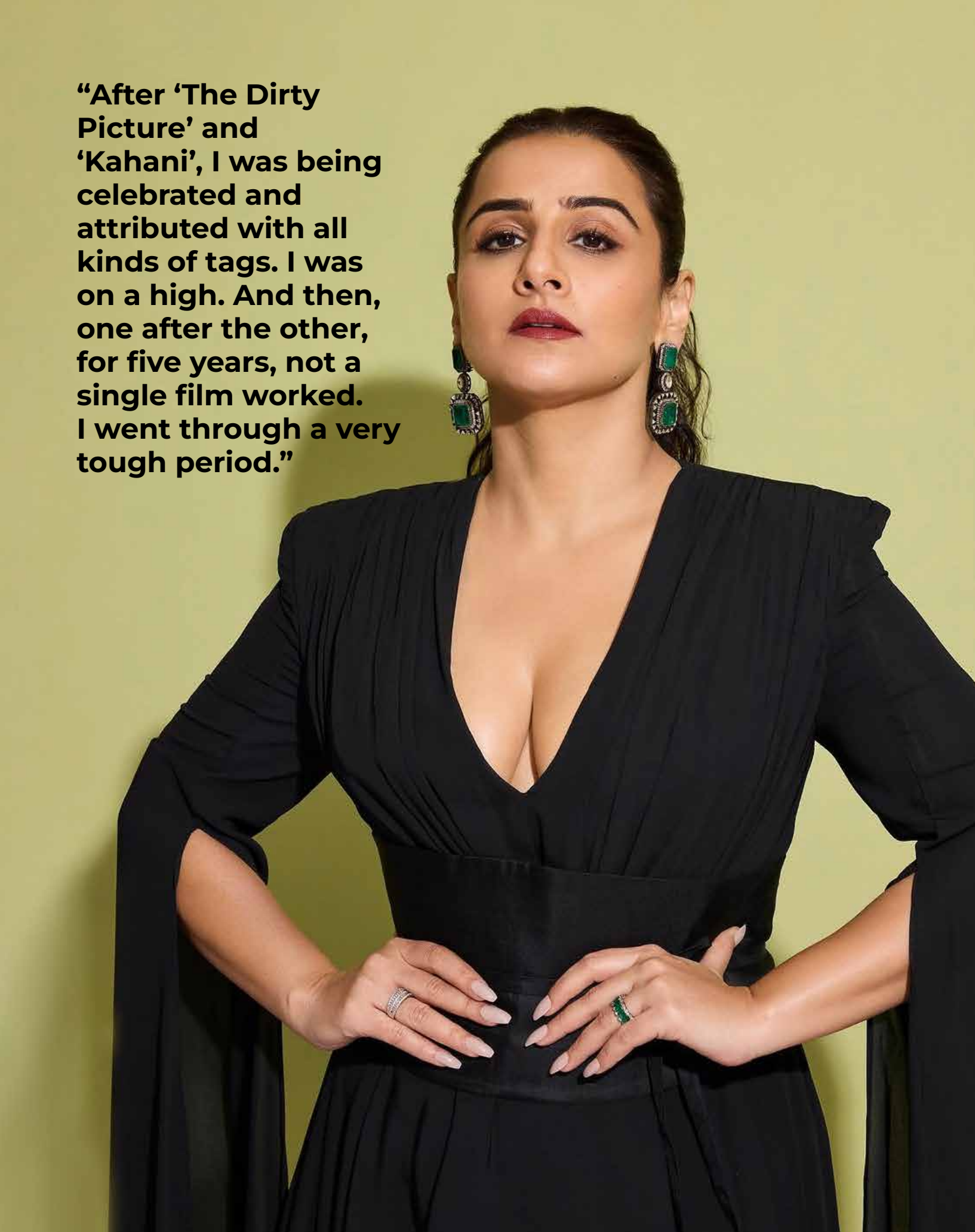
That's something that surprises me a lot. Everyone knows getting started wasn't easy for you. There were rejections and failures before you even put your first foot firmly in the industry. What gave you the confidence that you could do it?

Upbringing, perhaps. From a young age, we were taught that if you fall, you may cry, but then you get up, dust yourself off, and move forward. That has been deeply ingrained in me since childhood. Fearlessness, I think, comes from my father. Faith comes from my mother. So, there's an equal balance.

During that phase you mentioned, when there were a series of rejections, it used to cause a lot of anger. I had a lot of clashes with my mother because she kept telling me to have faith. But that's also what gave me strength. I might have gone to bed crying my eyes out, but the next day I would wake up ready to give it another go. So, as I said, I was raised with equal measures of faith and fearlessness. Later, I figured out that there is no separating them — fearlessness and faith are one and the same thing. Having faith makes you fearless.

"I was raised with equal measures of faith and fearlessness. Later, I figured out that there is no separating them — fearlessness and faith are one and the same thing."





“After ‘The Dirty Picture’ and ‘Kahani’, I was being celebrated and attributed with all kinds of tags. I was on a high. And then, one after the other, for five years, not a single film worked. I went through a very tough period.”

Let's let that sink in — 'faith makes you fearless'. But quite frankly, your mother having faith doesn't automatically instill the same in you. You perhaps would have had a separate journey growing into it. What was that like?

I'm not a parent, but I feel that children don't learn from being told — they learn by example. We learn from what we see, what we feel, what we perceive. I think those are the things I picked up, unconsciously — it's in my subconscious!

Succeeding after a rough start is bliss, but there are times when, after being successful, you fail. Picking up from there is a lot harder. Tell me how you did it.

I remember after 'The Dirty Picture' and 'Kahani', I was being celebrated and attributed with all kinds of tags. I was on a high. And then, one after the other, for five years, not a single film worked. I went through a very tough period. I had gotten married to the man I wanted to be with, even though many doubted my decision. They didn't think I should do that at the peak of my career. So, when the films stopped working, I wondered, "Oh God, maybe I shouldn't have gotten married!" I wanted to be with Siddharth, I wanted to make it work. But I went through all sorts of questions and insecurities. I guess professionally, I was so scared of losing what I thought I had built. But the beauty is even when the films weren't working, I got so much love from people. Whenever I would step outside, I was showered with love and praises. Sometimes I wondered, "If they like me so much, why aren't they going to the theatres to see my films?" But there was no mistaking that love — it was all pure and real. That's why I feel these 20 years have been like a spiritual journey for me. They have taught me to love and accept myself.

Is it easy to love yourself when you're not succeeding in your career? It's definitely easier to love yourself when you're doing well.

Exactly my point. It's when you're at your lowest that life presents you with the opportunity to complete the process of loving yourself for who you are. Loving yourself is a process — there are parts of you that are easy to love, and parts that aren't. It's your lows that help you know accept and love yourself a little more. That's why my journey is so special to me. I wouldn't trade it for anything in the world. It has taught me about myself, about my relationships — and I don't just mean with my husband, but with everyone, even at work. It has helped me see things in perspective.

One perspective of success is knowing that it's not permanent...

Success, fame — they say these things aren't permanent. I beg to differ. I think nothing is permanent. Today, you might be feeling great about everything, and tomorrow you might wake up with a headache and feel everything is tedious and irritating. You wonder what you did differently, what caused the headache, but often there's no explanation for it. Some things are here today, and tomorrow they might not be. Life goes on.

"Sometimes I wondered, 'If they like me so much, why aren't they going to the theatres to see my films?' But there was no mistaking that love — it was all pure and real."



Among the many moments of success, which was the one that made you feel like you had truly, absolutely made it?

Oddly, it's not the money your film made or the awards, but the much smaller, seemingly insignificant things that hit home. Like someone walking up to you and telling you how one of your roles changed their life, how a certain performance hit so deeply.

Of course, there are the trappings most people associate with success — like a bigger car coming to pick you up, a better room given to you, more money — but those are external. I think it's your loved ones' reactions that really touch you. I remember this incident with my nephew Ruhaan. He knew I was an actor but didn't really grasp much until he saw 'Mission Mangal'. He was so shocked — "Abida" (when they were kids, they couldn't say "Vidya" and the name stuck), "you were the main character?" Until then, he must've thought I just did a song here and a dance there. Also, when hen my niece quietly let it slip that Manjulika really scared her classmates — you know you're doing something right.

One striking memory stands out from the sets of 'Te3n', when I was at my lowest, surrounded by self-doubt and wondering if everything I had achieved was a fluke — imposter syndrome, because where I come from, people don't become movie stars. But there we were, on a Christmas night at a railway station called Santragachi, and I looked up to see hordes of people gathered just to see me. You can't help but feel touched.

"I wanted to be with Siddharth, I wanted to make it work. But I went through all sorts of questions and insecurities. I guess professionally, I was so scared of losing what I thought I had built."



Having already achieved so much success, what keeps you on your toes still? What makes you hunger for more?

I might feel satiated today, but that doesn't mean I won't get hungry tomorrow, right? I still get very excited to get up and explore a new character, a new story. It's a lovely process. But I've also realised that I work according to the mental state I'm in. Recently, I read a wonderful script but didn't see myself doing it. Because at this point I just wanted to let my hair down and have fun. Yesterday, I was offered a completely different genre, and that excited me. I love talking to people, knowing their stories, understanding them. That always drives me. Acting, for me, is like knowing yet another person, inhabiting their character, and spending time with them.

If there's one thing you'd want to tell your eight-year-old self and your 80-year-old self, what would it be?

To my eight-year-old self: "You are perfect just the way you are. You are lovable just the way you are."

And to my 80-year-old self — I don't know; what would it be?

No regrets, perhaps?

I don't have any regrets. And if someone tells me that's not possible, I'll argue! Because once you realise you did your best, there's no room for regret.



"Spending time with my family brings me joy. Of course, books, a good meal, watching something exciting... So many things bring me joy."



"I don't have any regrets. And if someone tells me that's not possible, I'll argue! Because once you realise you did your best, there's no room for regret."

“I don’t want to tell anyone how to live their life, and I don’t want anyone telling me how to live mine. Let’s all just have fun, live our lives, and when it’s time to go, say goodbye with a smile.”

Wow — truly enviable to be able to achieve that. Despite the no-regrets bit, has there ever been a professional decision that thoroughly impacted your personal life?

I think it was around 2007, very early on, when I decided I wouldn’t do a film if I didn’t want to do it. I wouldn’t settle for anything — even if it meant saying no to some big films, big directors, big banners, or even my mentor (Pradeep Sarkar). He might have thought I was being ungrateful, but I was just being true to myself and honest. I know to this day that I have all the gratitude for him, but I just couldn’t get myself to do a film I didn’t connect with. It has rubbed people the wrong way, but that wasn’t the intent. I just wanted to be true to myself.

You feel so strongly about your work — I wonder if it surrounds you completely. Are there things other than work that bring you joy?

Spending time with Siddharth, my family, my niece and nephew, Siddharth’s family! I guess I love being around my people. I have two dear friends, but they’re both not in the country. So, it’s basically me spending time with my family that brings me joy. Of course, books, a good meal, watching something exciting, a good night’s sleep, playing with my little neighbour — we did a nice puzzle the other day. So many things bring me joy.

You’re someone who cares deeply about the things that mean something to you, but you hardly ever speak about the causes you care about, or what you’re doing about them.

I think we live in a world where everyone is talking too much and doing absolutely nothing. I don’t want to be part of the armchair philosopher gang! Also, for films, we have a whole censor board, but today everyone with a phone thinks they’re the censor board. I’d much rather speak about myself, my work, and do whatever I want to do for whatever cause I choose — without making declarations.

Something tells me it’s these armchair philosophers that made you reluctant to join social media, initially!

I just don’t want people telling me I have to make a reel today because it will get me traction. I haven’t made one for a month-and-a-half, and I’m totally okay with that. Tomorrow I might make 12 if I feel like it. Frankly, I don’t want to tell anyone how to live their life, and I don’t want anyone telling me how to live mine. Let’s all just have fun, live our lives, and when it’s time to go, say goodbye with a smile. I hate anyone attempting to be controlling. Long ago, I read a book on the life of Sai Baba. It said surrendering is not losing control — it’s realising you never had any.





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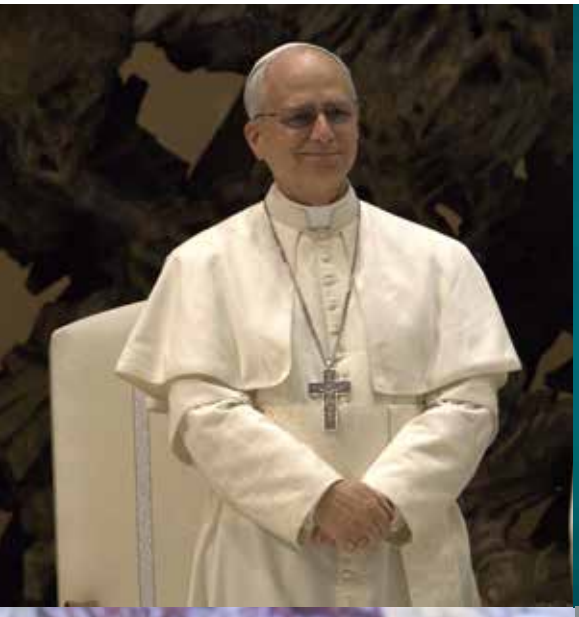
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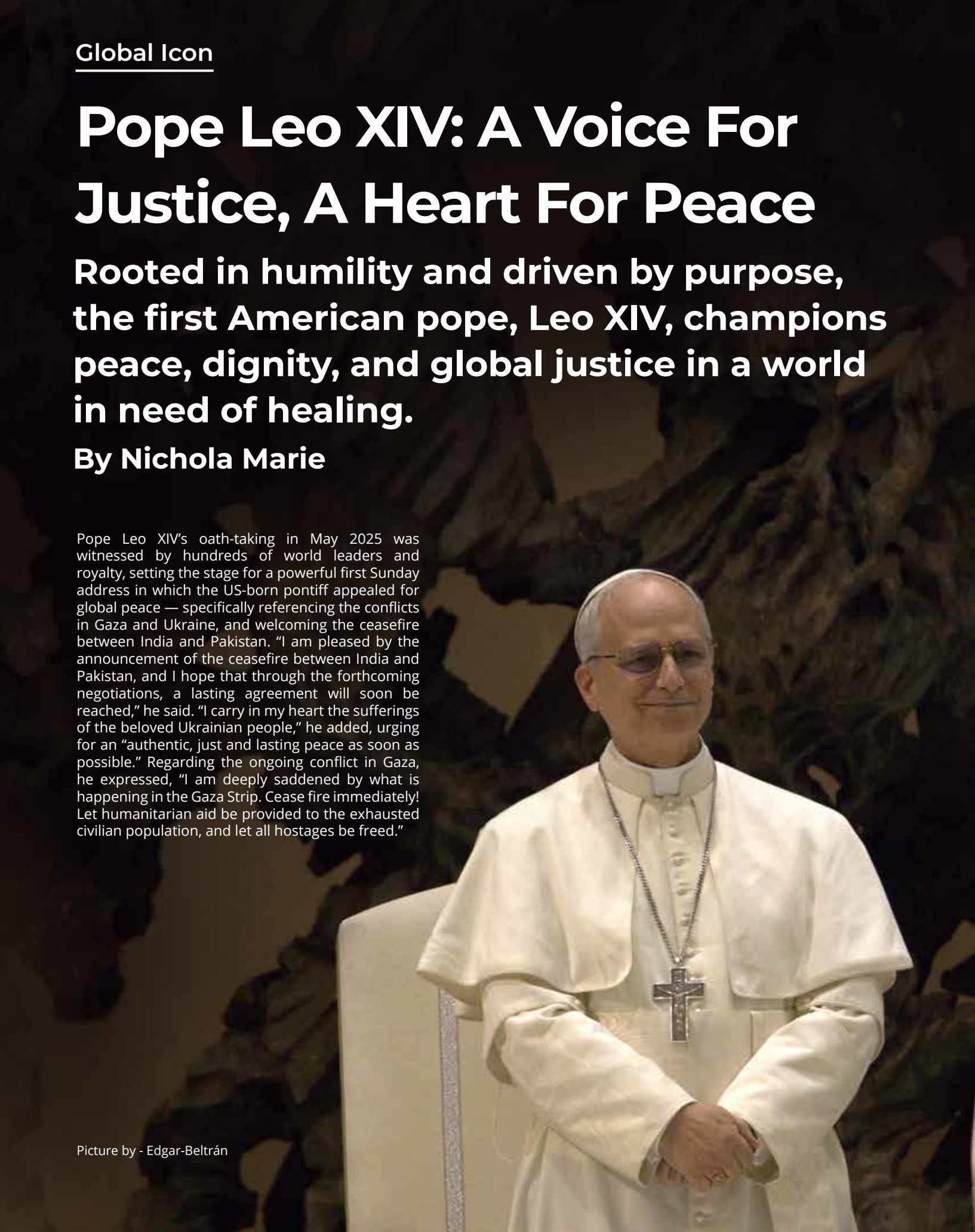



Pope Leo XIV: A Voice For Justice, A Heart For Peace

Rooted in humility and driven by purpose, the first American pope, Leo XIV, champions peace, dignity, and global justice in a world in need of healing.

By Nichola Marie

Pope Leo XIV's oath-taking in May 2025 was witnessed by hundreds of world leaders and royalty, setting the stage for a powerful first Sunday address in which the US-born pontiff appealed for global peace — specifically referencing the conflicts in Gaza and Ukraine, and welcoming the ceasefire between India and Pakistan. "I am pleased by the announcement of the ceasefire between India and Pakistan, and I hope that through the forthcoming negotiations, a lasting agreement will soon be reached," he said. "I carry in my heart the sufferings of the beloved Ukrainian people," he added, urging for an "authentic, just and lasting peace as soon as possible." Regarding the ongoing conflict in Gaza, he expressed, "I am deeply saddened by what is happening in the Gaza Strip. Cease fire immediately! Let humanitarian aid be provided to the exhausted civilian population, and let all hostages be freed."



Picture by - Edgar-Beltrán

This is a pope who speaks strongly for peace in a world increasingly fractured by conflict. Indeed, the American-born Robert Francis Prevost's journey from an Augustinian missionary in Peru to the papacy emphasises social justice, inclusivity, and global solidarity. Reflecting a blend of tradition and modernity, his election ushers in a new chapter for the church and the world at large.

A New Era

The 1955-born Pope Leo XIV's choice of the name "Leo" honours Pope Leo XIII, renowned for his advocacy of social justice and labour rights. This decision underscores the new pope's commitment to addressing contemporary societal issues. His extensive experience as a missionary in Peru and his leadership within the Augustinian order provide him with a unique perspective on global challenges. Fluent in five languages and holding dual citizenship in the United States and Peru, Pope Leo XIV is well-positioned to bridge diverse cultures and communities.

Advocacy & Global Influence

Pope Leo XIV's papacy is characterised by a strong commitment to social justice, human dignity, and inclusivity. He has been vocal in opposing nativist policies, emphasising the Church's role in advocating for immigrants and marginalised communities. His stance challenges rising xenophobia and aligns with the Church's long-standing tradition of compassion and solidarity.

In his inaugural address, Pope Leo XIV declared, "A united church, always seeking peace and justice," setting the tone for his leadership. His actions reflect this commitment, as he engages with global leaders and institutions to promote dialogue, understanding, and cooperation. His influence extends into international diplomacy, where his voice carries weight on issues such as climate change, poverty alleviation, and human rights.

The American-born Robert Francis Prevost's journey from an Augustinian missionary in Peru to the papacy emphasises social justice, inclusivity, and global solidarity. Reflecting a blend of tradition and modernity, his election ushers in a new chapter for the church and the world at large.



Picture by - Fotografía oficial de la Presidencia de Colombia

Significance Of An American Pope

The election of an American pope is a landmark event with profound implications. It challenges traditional perceptions of the papacy and reflects the Church's adaptability in a globalised world. Pope Leo XIV's American identity allows him to connect with a diverse audience, offering a model of leadership that blends faith with civic responsibility. His approach resonates with those seeking a Church that is both rooted in tradition and responsive to contemporary issues.

Voice For The Marginalised

Throughout his career, Pope Leo XIV has demonstrated a deep commitment to serving the marginalised. His missionary work in Peru exposed him to the challenges faced by impoverished communities, shaping his pastoral approach. He has been an advocate for the poor, emphasising the Church's duty to address systemic inequalities and promote social justice. His leadership is characterised by humility, empathy, and a focus on the common good.



Picture by - U.S. Department of State

First Augustinian Pope

Born on September 14, 1955, in Chicago, Illinois, Pope Leo XIV is the first pope from the Order of Saint Augustine. His parents, Louis Marius Prevost and Mildred Martínez, provided him with a diverse cultural heritage. Raised alongside his two brothers, Louis Martín and John Joseph, he began his religious education at the Minor Seminary operated by the Augustinian Fathers. He later enrolled at Villanova University in Pennsylvania, where he completed a degree in Mathematics in 1977 and also pursued studies in Philosophy.

In September 1977, he entered the novitiate of the Order of Saint Augustine in Saint Louis, under the Province of Our Lady of Good Counsel based in Chicago. He professed his initial vows on September 2, 1978, and committed to his solemn vows on August 29, 1981. He pursued theological studies at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago and was assigned to Rome to continue his education in Canon Law at the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas.

Ordained a priest on June 19, 1982, Pope Leo XIV's early ministry took him to Peru, where he served in various capacities, including as prior, formation director, and judicial vicar. His experiences in Peru deepened his understanding of the Church's mission to serve the poor and marginalised.

The 1955-born Pope Leo XIV's choice of the name "Leo" honours Pope Leo XIII, renowned for his advocacy of social justice and labour rights.



Picture by - Fotografía oficial de la Presidencia de Colombia



Picture by - U.S. Department of State

Mission In Peru

Pope Leo XIV's missionary work in Peru was transformative. He served in the Augustinian mission in Chulucanas and later in Trujillo, where he held several leadership roles. Over the course of 11 years, he served as prior of the community, formation director, and instructor for professed members. In the Archdiocese of Trujillo, he served as judicial vicar and professor of Canon Law, Patristics, and Moral Theology at the Major Seminary San Carlos y San Marcelo. He also provided pastoral care to Our Lady Mother of the Church, later established as the parish of Saint Rita, in a poor suburb of the city.

His time in Peru exposed him to the challenges faced by impoverished communities, shaping his pastoral approach and commitment to social justice.

Bishop Of Chiclayo, Peru

In 2015, Pope Leo XIV was appointed Bishop of Chiclayo by Pope Francis. In March 2018, he was elected second Vice-President of the Peruvian Episcopal Conference, where he also served as a member of the Economic Council and President of the Commission for Culture and Education. His leadership in the Peruvian Church was marked by a focus on education, culture, and economic justice.

Prefect Of The Dicastery For Bishops

In January 2023, Pope Francis appointed him as Prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops and President of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America, promoting him to the rank of Archbishop. In September 2023, he was made Cardinal and assigned the Diaconate of Saint Monica. As head of the Dicastery, he participated in the Pope's most recent Apostolic Journeys and in both sessions of the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on synodality.

His influence extends into international diplomacy, where his voice carries weight on issues such as climate change, poverty alleviation, and human rights.



Picture by - U.S. Department of State



Picture by - U.S. Department of State

Did you know...

- **Pope Leo grew up alongside his two older siblings, Louis and John, who are especially proud of their brother. Louis said in an interview, "He was elected, I got up immediately, got dressed, dancing around like an idiot, just because it's incredible."**
- **Growing up, while the other boys would play with bows and arrows, he "would play priest," asking his brothers, "Can I give you Communion?" He knew from an early stage that he wanted to be a priest — and he did, his brother said.**
- **A Chicago White Sox baseball fan, he once revealed that he considered himself "quite the amateur tennis player" and enjoys picking up a racquet if and when time permits.**
- **He is fluent in five languages, namely English, Spanish, Italian, French and Portuguese.**
- **He has a soft spot for word games and regularly plays Wordle and Words With Friends.**
- **Reading, going on long walks, travelling, discovering new places and taking in the countryside are pursuits he enjoys in his free time. In an interview in 2023 he said, "I enjoy relaxing with friends and meeting a diverse range of people whose gifts I learn from and appreciate greatly."**

Pope Leo XIV's American identity allows him to connect with a diverse audience, offering a model of leadership that blends faith with civic responsibility.

A Global Perspective

Pope Leo XIV's diverse background and experiences have equipped him with a global perspective on the Church's mission. His fluency in multiple languages and dual citizenship in the United States and Peru enable him to connect with a wide range of communities. His leadership emphasises the importance of dialogue, understanding, and cooperation in addressing global challenges.

A New Beginning

Pope Leo XIV's election represents a convergence of tradition and modernity. His commitment to social justice, inclusivity, and global solidarity offers a vision of the Church that is engaged with the world and responsive to contemporary issues. As the first American pope, he brings a unique perspective to the papacy, embodying the values of service, humility, and compassion. His leadership promises to guide the Church into a new era of unity and purpose.



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Mukesh Rishi: “Hard work and honesty will always carry you forward”

Films of epic proportions, a gathering of villains and more... not one to rest on his laurels, actor and producer Mukesh Rishi continues to push boundaries and take on new challenges.

By Amber Dias

Mukesh Rishi, the towering screen presence known for his intense and unforgettable portrayals of villains, reflects on the remarkable journey of his four-decade-long career — spanning Hindi, Punjabi, Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, and Malayalam cinema. From his breakthrough as a menacing figure in ‘Gardish’ (1993) and cult role as Bulla in ‘Gunda’ (1998), to his acclaimed performance as Inspector Salim in ‘Sarfarosh’ (1999), Rishi has continually reinvented himself. Not one to be confined by language or region, he has taken roles in different film industries. In a year that’s packed with new film releases and live shows in Australia, we sat down with the actor for a quick chat about his enduring legacy and the charisma he continues to bring to the screen and beyond.







“When the promoters approached me, they said they wanted to do a ‘Villain Night with a Diva’ — a show celebrating iconic villains. We took the event to Australia and did three shows in Melbourne, Sydney, and Perth. It was a one-of-a-kind experience, especially sharing the stage with Gulshan Grover and Ashish Vidyarthi.”





Excerpts from the interview...

You've had a long and illustrious career in Indian cinema, from Bollywood to regional films. When you look back, what do you think has kept you going and given you such a steady presence across decades?

Whatever you do, if there's no honesty, it won't last very long. In my case, I've always tried to let my honesty, sincerity and dedication lead the way. Hard work has also played a big role. I believe when you're disciplined and committed, hard work always pays off. Even today, I live by that — be honest, work hard, and something good will always come of it.

You've played everything from villains to father figures across decades. How has your process as an actor evolved?

If you put in the effort and take your work seriously, you start to see gradual improvement within yourself. Sometimes, directors give us valuable feedback and guidance, and we work on that. That's how growth and progress happen.

You also had the opportunity to work alongside your son in 'Nidarr'. What was that like for you?

I worked with my son Raghav in 'Nidarr' and also produced the film. It was a wonderful experience because I never imagined the two of us would actually do a film together. There was a lot of preparation before the shoot, we rehearsed together, so by the time filming began, Raghav was completely comfortable working with me. As a producer, I learnt so many new things, because producing is a whole different ball game. But the real highlight will always be that I made a film with my son. That will always remain something very special to me.

"I learnt so many new things, because producing is a whole different ball game. But the real highlight will always be that I made a film with my son. That will always remain something very special to me."

2025 has been an exciting year for you thus far, with 'Badnaam' coming out earlier this year and 'Kanappa' coming out this June. Can you talk to us about these films and the characters you play?

'Badnaam' is a Punjabi film, it reminded me of the kind of roles where I've done a bit of villain*giri* — so when I heard about this character, I felt I had to be a part of it. 'Kanappa' is a grand film produced by Mohan Babu, with his son Vishnu in the lead. It's a very special project. It is based on the story of a devotee of Lord Shiva and how his life transforms. When I first heard the full story, I realised there was so much I didn't know. We shot the film in New Zealand, and it's a large-scale production that will release across India. I truly hope audiences everywhere will connect with it.

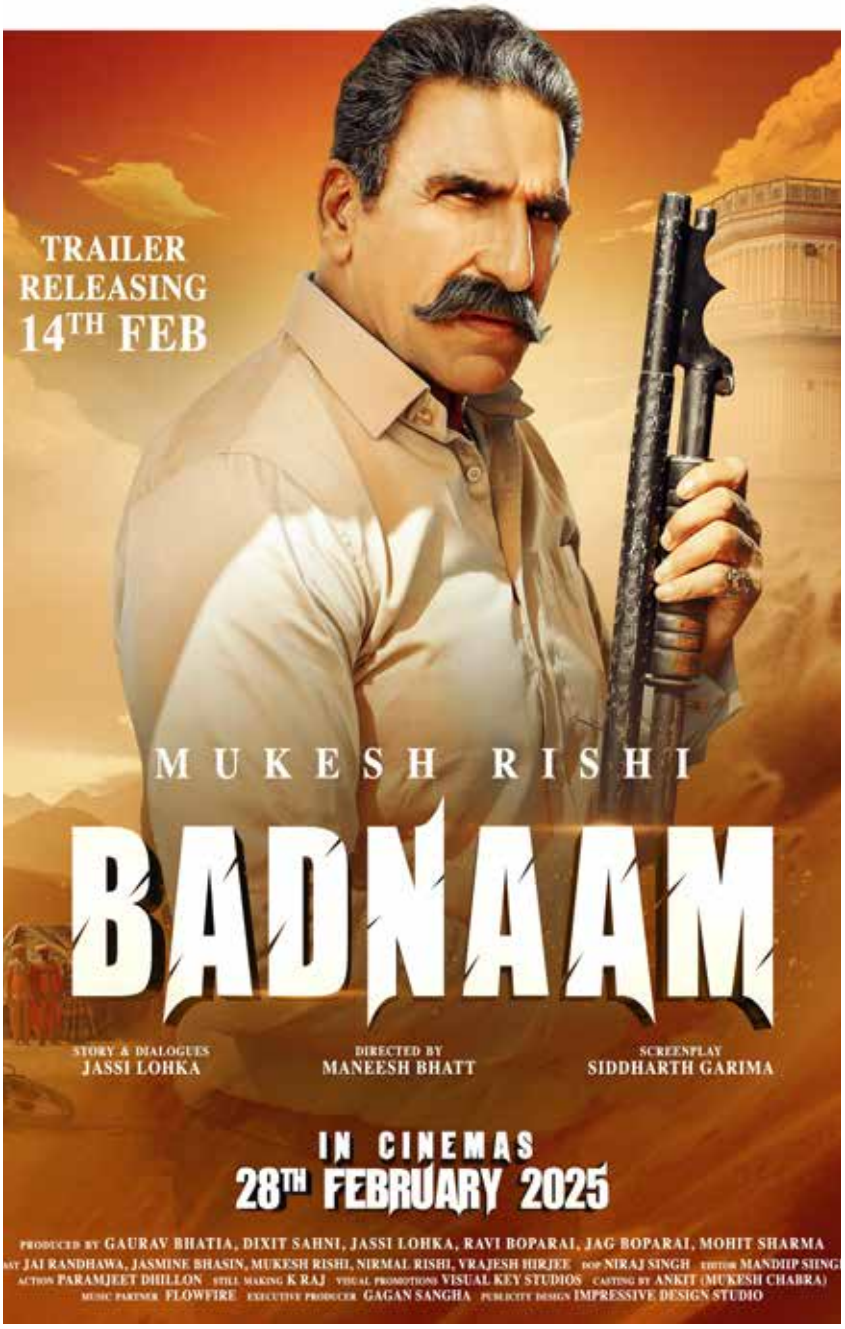
'Kanappa' falls into mythology-fantasy territory, which you are not a stranger to. What was it like working with the cast to bring this story to life? Were there any particular challenges you had to deal with while filming a story of this magnitude?

Yes, making 'Kanappa' came with a set of challenges because the film required locations that felt pure and untouched. I'm sure the team initially tried to find suitable spots in India, but sometimes those places are too remote or hard to access. Eventually, they shortlisted some breathtaking locations in New Zealand, where many major films have been shot. Even then, the locations themselves presented challenges, the temperature, for one. We shot on a massive property; some days we were filming at the top, and on others, we had to go all the way down into the valley, where it was just 2–3 degrees. Sometimes it rained as well. But despite these challenges, every place we shot in was incredibly beautiful. The producers put in a lot of effort, and I'm sure audiences will appreciate that when they watch the film.

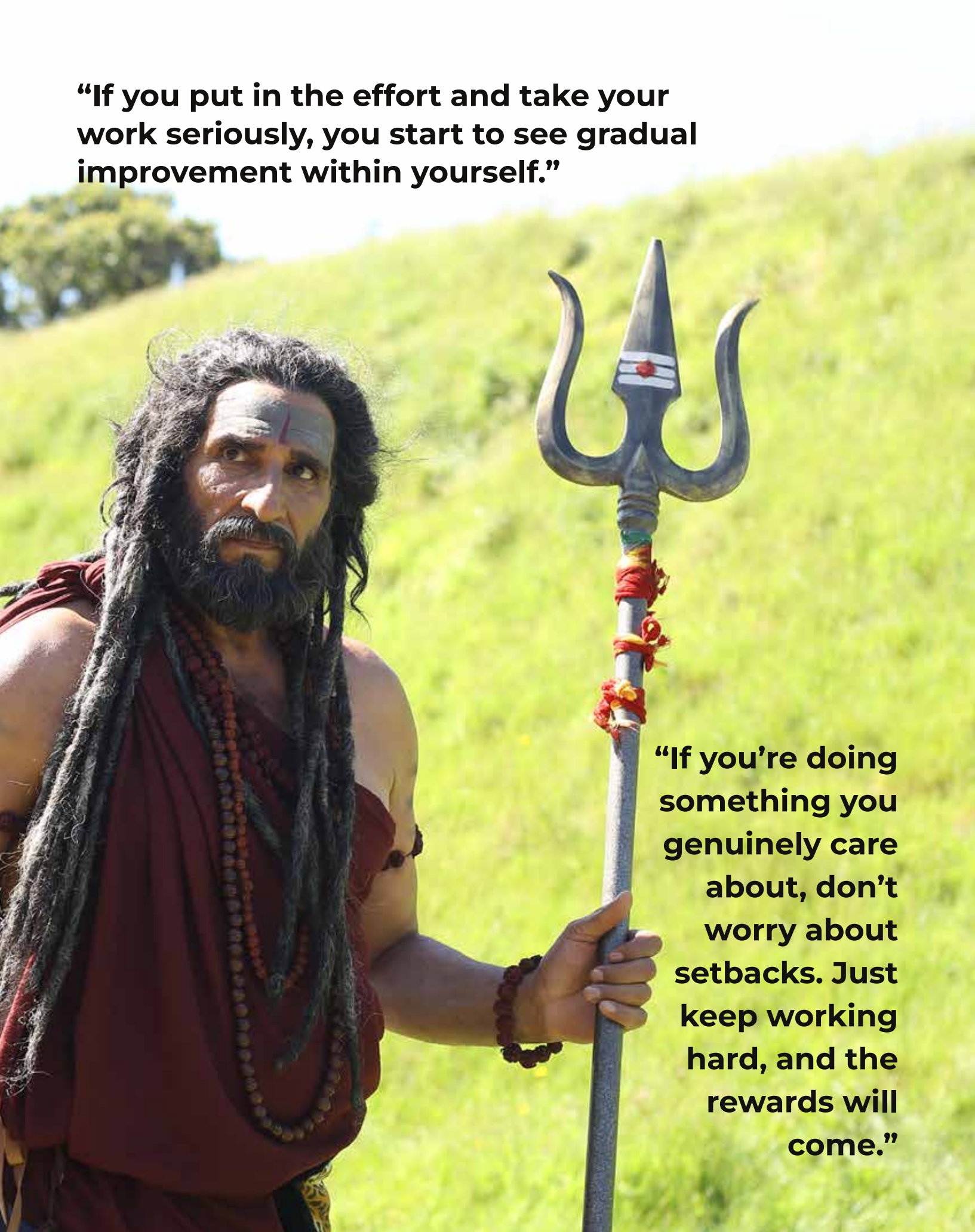
Tell us a little about the role you are playing.

My character, Kampadu, isn't exactly a villain. The story is set nearly 5,000 years ago, during a time when many different clans existed. Back then, whenever a major issue arose, the clan heads would come together to discuss and find a collective solution. In 'Kanappa', there's a pivotal situation where such a united decision needs to be made. This aspect of collaboration and leadership is central to the story and, in my opinion, one of its greatest strengths.

"'Badnaam' is a Punjabi film, it reminded me of the kind of roles where I've done a bit of villaingiri — so when I heard about this character, I felt I had to be a part of it."



“If you put in the effort and take your work seriously, you start to see gradual improvement within yourself.”



“If you’re doing something you genuinely care about, don’t worry about setbacks. Just keep working hard, and the rewards will come.”



You recently did a tour in Australia with the live show 'Villain Night with a Diva', alongside fellow veterans Gulshan Grover and Ashish Vidyarthi. Can you tell us more about this show?

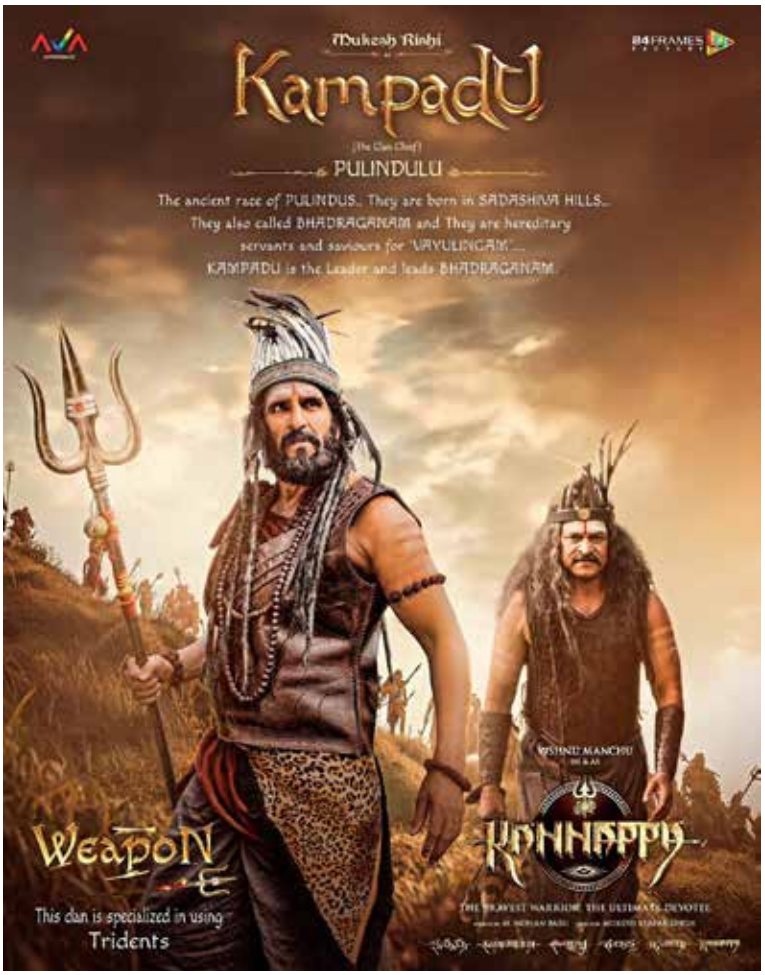
This was a truly unique concept. When the promoters approached me, they said they wanted to do a 'Villain Night with a Diva' — a show celebrating iconic villains. We took the event to Australia and did three shows in Melbourne, Sydney, and Perth. It was a one-of-a-kind experience, especially sharing the stage with Gulshan Grover and Ashish Vidyarthi. We've all worked together in films, but it had been a long time since we last met.

Performing live was a lot of fun, each of us brought our own style and energy to the stage. The audience seemed to really enjoy it: Three villains coming together to entertain in their own way. It was a new format for us, and that's what made it exciting. I've never done a show like this before, and I truly enjoyed myself. Australia was a beautiful place to visit, and I'm grateful to the promoters for bringing this idea to life.

What has the experience of doing a live show tour been like for you? Is this something you are excited to explore further?

Yes, this was a very unique experience. Our promoters were enthusiastic and excited, and they should also feel encouraged by the response and the benefits they gained. Now that the shows are over, they'll assess how things played out financially and evaluate what it would take to do something like this again. They're keen on taking this kind of concept to other countries as well, and I'm sure they'll come up with even more creative ideas. There's a strong possibility that shows like this will happen again and I truly look forward to it.

"Fitness also helps with my performance, especially when playing a villain — there's running, jumping, and fight scenes, and my physical conditioning gives me an edge in handling all that."



“‘Kanappa’ is a grand film produced by Mohan Babu, with his son Vishnu in the lead. It’s a very special project. It is based on the story of a devotee of Lord Shiva and how his life transforms.”



You've remained physicall y fit and commanding on screen. What goes into maintaining that presence, especially for action-heavy or intense roles today?

Exercise has always been a part of my life. I used to play cricket and other sports and in college, I also trained in karate. I've never given up on fitness, it's in my blood. I always make time for it, and I genuinely enjoy it. Fitness also helps with my performance, especially when playing a villain — there's running, jumping, and fight scenes, and my physical conditioning gives me an edge in handling all that. The form of exercise may change over time, but I've always stayed disciplined about it. I believe everyone should dedicate at least one or two hours a day to themselves. Fitness is something that pays off in the long run.

You've seen the highs and challenges of a long career. What advice would you give your younger self if you could go back in time?

Everyone experiences highs and lows in life and we shouldn't be afraid of that. What matters most is doing work that you truly love. When you're passionate about what you do, the ups and downs don't affect you as much. That's always been my philosophy. The moment I chose this path, I made up my mind to give it everything I had and to accept all the challenges that come with it. No journey in life is ever smooth or without obstacles. But when you love something, you also find the strength to face whatever comes your way.

My advice is simple: If you're doing something you genuinely care about, don't worry about setbacks. Just keep working hard, and the rewards will come. Even if you face a downfall, it's okay, because you love what you do. Whether you're an engineer, a doctor, or anything else, don't be afraid of failure. Hard work and honesty will always carry you forward.





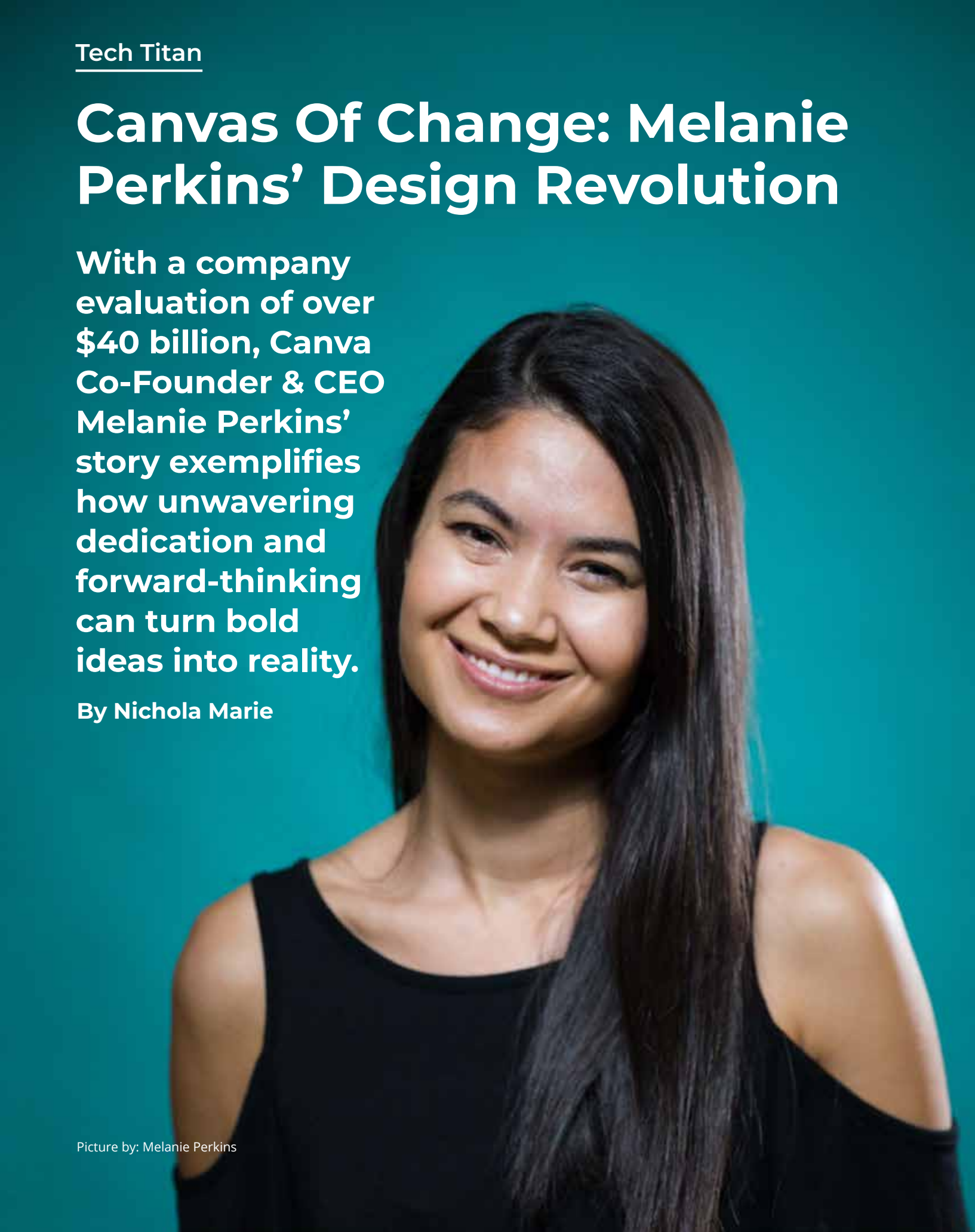
"The moment I chose this path, I made up my mind to give it everything I had and to accept all the challenges that come with it. No journey in life is ever smooth or without obstacles. But when you love something, you also find the strength to face whatever comes your way."

Tech Titan

Canvas Of Change: Melanie Perkins' Design Revolution

With a company evaluation of over $40 billion, Canva Co-Founder & CEO Melanie Perkins' story exemplifies how unwavering dedication and forward-thinking can turn bold ideas into reality.

By Nichola Marie



Picture by: Melanie Perkins

'Working with an incredible team to empower the world to design with Canva' – reads the LinkedIn bio of Melanie Perkins, Co-Founder & CEO at Canva. A large chunk of the world has indeed been empowered to design thanks to the widely popular online design platform Canva. Globally, Canva reportedly has over 220 million monthly active users in more than 190 countries, speaking over 100 languages. Over 24 million users pay for Canva, and the company churns out more than $2.5 billion annualised revenue on year-over-year basis. Impressive is an understatement!

The woman behind it - 1987-born Australian technology entrepreneur, who owns 18% of the company, and one of the youngest female CEOs of a tech start-up valued at over A$1 billion. With a personal net worth exceeding $5.8 billion, Perkins is also one of Australia's richest women, ranking 89th on the 'Forbes' list of the 'World's 100 Most Powerful Women' and 92nd in 'Fortune's' list of Most Powerful Women.

And to think that the company, now valued at a staggering $26 billion, had its roots in the time the 19-year-old Perkins had an idea to solve a fundamental problem in design software...

Entrepreneur At 14

Born in Perth, Western Australia, the daughter of an Australian-born teacher and a Malaysian engineer of Filipino and Sri Lankan descent, Perkins attended Sacred Heart College. While in high school, she aspired to become a professional figure skater, routinely waking up at 4:30 a.m. to train. She was 14 when she started her first business, selling handmade scarves at shops and markets in Perth. This experience would give her a taste of the "freedom and excitement from building a business" – an experience she would not forget.

Majoring in communications, psychology and commerce at The University of Western Australia, Perkins also privately tutored students in graphic design. Noting the difficulties students experienced in learning design programs such as Adobe Photoshop — often spending entire semesters simply figuring out where the buttons were — she sensed a business opportunity in simplifying the design process. Her plan: To create an online all-in-one design platform that required no technical experience or long tutorials, "where design was not just easy, but intuitive, and collaborative."

In 2006, aged 19, she dropped out of university to pursue her first business with her boyfriend and later husband, Cliff Obrecht - Fusion Books.


Picture by: Village Global

Perkins is one of the youngest female CEOs of a tech start-up valued at over A$1 billion. With a personal net worth exceeding $5.8 billion, she is also one of Australia's richest women, also ranking in Forbes list of 'World's 100 Most Powerful Women'.


Picture by: bastamanography

Slow & Steady

Taking the gradual route — given the scarcity of resources and lack of business experience, Perkins and her partner Obrecht started off with a modest pilot run, so to speak, building Fusion Books. Launched in 2007, this was an online platform that enabled students to create and design their school yearbooks using a simple drag-and-drop tool.

Her mother, a teacher who also coordinated school yearbooks, had served as a key inspiration for the platform. Watching the time-consuming process firsthand, Perkins recognised the high level of difficulty involved and identified yearbooks as a niche market with strong potential to test her design platform concept. In fact, her mother's living room in Duncraig was where Fusion Books began, as Perkins and Obrecht worked to develop the platform whose software featured a library of design templates that users could customise with photos, illustrations, and fonts. As schools came on board, Fusion Books found favour, growing, over the next five years, into Australia's largest yearbook company.

Dreaming Bigger

As the business took off, Perkins returned to her earlier dream, which had been impractical at the time due to the combination of limited resources and the presence of dominant players: To build a broader design software solution.

Embarking on a fundraising journey, the big leap forward came in 2010 when she chanced to meet Silicon Valley investor Bill Tai at a conference in Perth, where he was judging a start-up competition. Tai was impressed enough by what he heard to invite Perkins to pitch her idea in San Francisco. In an exclusive interview with CNBC, Perkins revealed that she thought the meeting was a failure, given that Tai seemed distracted by his phone and disengaged from the conversation about the future of publishing. In reality, the reason Tai seemed preoccupied was that he was actually reaching out to key contacts to help turn her vision into reality.

Perkins and Obrecht met investors and start-up founders at gatherings hosted by Tai. Eventually, in 2012, after securing a tech advisor in Google Maps Co-Founder Lars Rasmussen, she and Obrecht found a tech Co-Founder in Cameron Adams, an engineer with strong technical know-how, who once worked at Google. Though initially hesitant to join the business due to his focus on launching a start-up aimed at disrupting email, Adams reconsidered and took up Perkins' offer.

In 2012, following several months of intense effort, Canva secured more investor interest than expected in its first funding round. The company raised $1.6 million from private backers, along with an additional $1.4 million in matching funds from the Australian Government, which saw promise in Melanie's vision and its potential economic impact.

The following year, the website was launched, allowing users to generate diverse online designs at no cost. Conceptualised by Perkins in 2007, Canva eventually launched in 2013, an online resource hub, free to use, delivering everything from presentation slides to custom logos. The aim: To put the power of design in everyone's hands. In a single decisive action, Perkins and Co-Founder Obrecht revolutionised the design game, impacting millions of users across the world.



Picture by: Village Global

Perkins was 14 when she started her first business, selling handmade scarves at shops and markets in Perth. This experience would give her a taste of the "freedom and excitement from building a business."

Global Success

Canva's easy-to-use drag-and-drop interface, combined with a vast collection of templates and design assets, quickly caught on. In just a few months, the platform had drawn in millions of users across the globe. It also secured multiple investment rounds from investors such as Felices, Blackbird Ventures, Sequoia Capital China, and T Rowe Price, among others.

Perkins believes that Canva's remarkable growth stems from a long-term vision and years of focused, strategic work. At the heart of this success is the platform's massive community of enthusiastic users, who not only rely on Canva but also actively promote it to their networks — friends, co-workers, and family. This grassroots advocacy has been a powerful catalyst for Canva's rapid expansion.

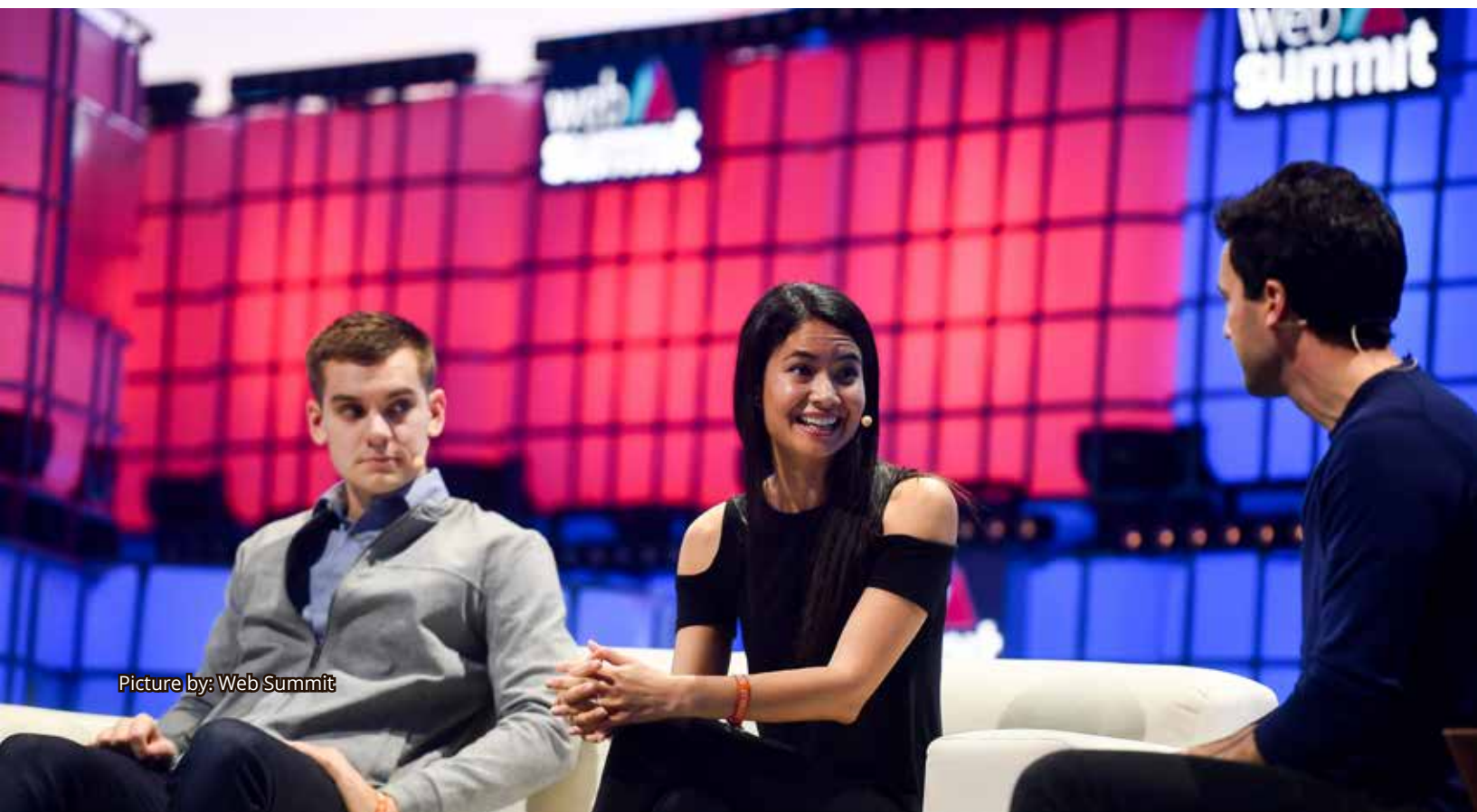
A significant contributor to Canva's growth is its thoughtfully designed product ecosystem. By offering a robust, free version alongside premium and team-oriented plans, the platform appeals to a wide range of users. This inclusive approach ensures value at every level, fostering user loyalty and encouraging organic promotion through a smooth and satisfying experience.

Canva's growth strategy also leans heavily into virality. According to Perkins, each new feature is crafted with the intent to be shared, maximising visibility and reach.

At the heart of its success is the platform's massive community of enthusiastic users, who not only rely on Canva but also actively promote it to their networks — friends, co-workers, and family. This grassroots advocacy has been a powerful catalyst for Canva's rapid expansion.



Picture by: Web Summit



Picture by: Web Summit

Looking Forward

Today, with millions of monthly active users, the company has a valuation of over $40 billion. Canva has also been honoured with numerous industry awards, such as Overall Design Collaboration Company of the Year at the 2021 RemoteTech Breakthrough Awards; ranked 3rd on the 'Forbes' Cloud 100 list; ranked 4th on CNBC's Disruptor 50 list in 2022; and was recognised as the 10th most innovative company in the world by Fast Company, joining other top companies like SpaceX, Microsoft, and Stripe.

But Perkins isn't slowing down. As she said in a conversation with Goldman Sachs' Ryan Nolan, "We want to empower literally every person to design literally everything with every ingredient in every language on every device. And that's what we're going to be working towards for the decade to come."

The company is actively growing its workforce, launching innovative features, and strengthening its position as an essential part of users' daily routines across the globe. With an expanding range of creative tools and a broad international presence, Canva is reshaping the way people design, work together, and bring ideas to life.

"We want to empower literally every person to design literally everything with every ingredient in every language on every device. And that's what we're going to be working towards for the decade to come."

- Melanie Perkins



Picture by: Village Global

Beyond The Boardroom

A strong voice for gender equity in the tech industry, she serves as a role model for women pursuing their own ventures. Under her guidance, Canva has embraced a mission-driven approach, supporting social good by offering free access to its tools for nonprofits and educational organisations.

Through its 1% Pledge, Canva contributes 1% of its product, time, profit, and equity to global causes. This initiative is championed by Perkins and Co-Founder Obrecht, who have also committed 30% of their personal equity in Canva to help eradicate extreme poverty.

Among their more impactful efforts is the provision of direct cash transfers to individuals in Malawi, enabling access to essential needs such as healthcare, food, and education. As Perkins notes, "Cash gives people the freedom to choose what matters most to them," emphasising the importance of autonomy in driving meaningful change. As Canva continues to grow, the company hopes to use its success to fight poverty on a global scale, launching a $30 million pilot programme to uplift communities.

Did you know?

Obrecht proposed to Perkins while on a holiday in Turkey's Cappadocia region in 2019. Worth of the engagement ring: $30. They married in 2021 on Rottnest Island. They are said to reside in Sydney, living in a modest home in Surry Hills, a trendy inner-city suburb known for its design scene.



Picture by: Village Global

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Picture by: Web Summit

Dr Yogesh Lakhani: Billboards, Bollywood, Big Dreams, Bigger Achievements!

If you've ever looked up at a billboard in Mumbai and seen a Bollywood superstar staring back at you, chances are Dr Yogesh Lakhani had a hand in it. As the Chairman and Managing Director of Bright Outdoor Media Limited, he has transformed Mumbai's skyline into a canvas for cinema, glamour, and celebration.

By Andrea CostaBir





From humble beginnings to taking his company public, Dr Yogesh Lakhani's journey is a masterclass in vision, resilience, and relationship-building. Whether it's launching the latest blockbuster campaign or supporting stars behind the scenes, his deep-rooted friendships in Bollywood have made him an integral part of the industry's ecosystem.

This year, his presence at Cannes 2025 was more than just a red-carpet moment — it marked the global recognition of a man who's quietly shaped the visual identity of Indian entertainment. Now embracing digital displays, expanding his footprint, and staying grounded by strong family values, Lakhani speaks to us about the evolution of outdoor media, the power of personal connections, and what it truly takes to light up a city — and a career — with your name on it!

Excerpts from the interview...

You made a striking impression at Cannes 2025 this year. How did it feel to represent India on such a prestigious global platform, and what does Cannes mean to you personally?

Walking the red carpet at the 78th Cannes Film Festival was a surreal and deeply humbling experience. Invited by NFDC and FICCI to represent India, I stood among global cinematic figures in a classic tuxedo — truly a reflection of "from the streets of Mumbai to the red carpet at Cannes." Personally, it wasn't just about glamour, it was a validation of decades of storytelling, media innovation, and the resilience behind Bright Outdoor Media.

Beyond the red carpet, what did you take away from Cannes in terms of global media trends or creative inspiration that you hope to bring back to Bright Outdoor Media Limited?

Beyond the glitz, Cannes reaffirmed that storytelling remains central — even in media and advertising. I absorbed global trends in brand-cinema collaborations, immersively produced campaigns, and creative tech-backed innovations. I aim to bring back this synergy — integrating cinematic creativity with OOH (out-of-home) and DOOH (digital-out-of-home) strategies at Bright.

Your bond with Bollywood is legendary. From Shah Rukh Khan to Salman Khan to Akshay Kumar, nearly every star seems to call you a friend. How did those relationships begin, and what has sustained them over the years?

My connections with superstars like Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan, and Akshay Kumar date back to early film campaign work and friendship-rooted professional collaborations. Over time, these relationships have been built on mutual respect, trust, and shared creativity. Beyond campaigns, we've grown together as peers and supporters in a tight-knit industry.

"I stood among global cinematic figures in a classic tuxedo — truly a reflection of 'from the streets of Mumbai to the red carpet at Cannes'."



Your company has been instrumental in launching massive outdoor campaigns across Mumbai for film promotions. What's the behind-the-scenes process like for executing a campaign at that scale?

Campaigns like 'Singham Again' or 'Pushpa 2' often involve multi-format activation — local train branding, full train-wraps on BEST buses, digital metro panels, and station branding. The scale demands close coordination – track and tender-based rights (often under our stewardship), custom creative design scaled for city transit infrastructure, real-time execution monitoring, and strong regional agency coordination.

"My connections with superstars like Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan, and Akshay Kumar date back to early film campaign work and friendship-rooted professional collaborations."





In recent years, you've embraced digital transformation, replacing traditional billboards with dynamic digital screens. What prompted that shift, and how do you see the future of OOH advertising evolving?

Our push into DOOH wasn't just trend-chasing — it was strategic. Visiting places like New York's Times Square and interactive 3D LED installations inspired us. As early adopters, we've complemented static billboards with digital ones across Mumbai (e.g. BKC, Airport, Bandra-Worli Sea Link). I believe the future of OOH is hybrid, interactive, measurable, and responsive — driven by DOOH, AI-driven real-time content, and experiential eco-friendly design.

Taking Bright Outdoor Media Limited public was a major milestone. What led to that decision, and how has it changed your approach to growth, accountability, and expansion?

Taking Bright public in March 2023 was a pivotal move that introduced institutional discipline and accountability. With accountability comes sharper governance, transparency, and investor scrutiny — an impetus to scale responsibly. It turbocharged our expansion into experiential formats, digital integration, and geographic diversification while reinforcing trust among stakeholders.









"Business may come through networking, but lasting bonds are always built on sincerity and mutual respect, not transactions."

“Campaigns like ‘Singham Again’ or ‘Pushpa 2’ often involve multi-format activation — local train branding, full train-wraps on BEST buses, digital metro panels, and station branding.”









Your professional journey is often described as self-made. Looking back, what were some defining moments or early struggles that shaped your path as an entrepreneur?

Starting Bright in 1980 as a traditional OOH player, we climbed through hands-on learning — from securing crucial transit tenders to pioneering digital ad formats. Moments like winning the Western Railways or Navi Mumbai Metro tender, and pushing Mumbai’s first large-scale DOOH screens, shaped a no-shortcuts entrepreneurial ethic.

Behind the success is a family man. Can you tell us about your family’s role in your journey — and how they’ve kept you grounded in a high-profile, high-pressure business?

My family has been my sounding board, my anchor. Their unwavering support — especially during the hustle of tender wins, tech investments, and the listing process — kept me grounded. Their presence reminds me that behind every professional milestone, emotional and relational strength sustained me.









“Our coveted tenders in metro systems, local railways, and transit corridors make us uniquely poised to scale.”



You’re a regular at industry events, Bollywood parties, and film launches. How do you strike a balance between business networking and genuine friendships in such a close-knit yet competitive industry?

I cherish every opportunity — from Bollywood launches to media events — as long as the connection is genuine. I focus on shared values, mutual growth, and authenticity. Business may come through networking, but lasting bonds are always built on sincerity and mutual respect, not transactions.

From lighting up a single hoarding to leading a national brand, what’s next for you and Bright Outdoor Media Limited? Any new ventures, cities, or creative innovations on the horizon?

We’re set to deepen our digital and experiential footprint, deploying AI-enabled DOOH, solar-powered eco-screens, and immersive formats in new geographies. Our coveted tenders in metro systems, local railways, and transit corridors make us uniquely poised to scale. Expect expansion into additional Indian cities, smarter OOH solutions, and deeper brand integrations — while maintaining our ethos of ‘People before profit’.

Fashion

Prreeti Jaiin Nainutia: A Luxurious Legacy

Since its inception in 2017, Nirmooha has become synonymous with reimagining Indian craftsmanship for the contemporary wardrobe. At the heart of this evolution is Prreeti Jaiin Nainutia, whose intuitive design sensibility, love for heritage, and forward-thinking approach continue to define the brand's trajectory.

By Andrea CostaBir



When Prreeti Jaiin Nainutia launched Nirmooha nearly a decade ago, she set out to build more than just a fashion label — she set out to create a living, breathing homage to Indian artistry, narrated through the lens of contemporary design. A luxury prêt brand headquartered in Mumbai, Nirmooha has swiftly carved a niche for itself by marrying the intricate legacy of traditional embroidery with modern silhouettes, earning a loyal clientele across the world.

"Fashion, for me, is storytelling," says Prreeti, whose collections often feel like poetic expressions of identity, memory, and cultural roots. Her journey has been marked by deep collaborations with artisans, an uncompromising design philosophy rooted in emotion, and an ever-evolving exploration of Indian techniques tailored for today's world.

Nirmooha's recent showcases — from Paris Fashion Week and Arab Fashion Week to over a dozen seasons with FDCI and Lakmé Fashion Week — are a testament to its growing international footprint and cultural relevance. Whether it's the delicate cording or hand-embroidered textures, every piece is a bridge between the past and the present.

In this conversation, Prreeti opens up about the inspiration behind Nirmooha, her approach to preserving craft while pushing boundaries, the lessons learnt as a woman entrepreneur in India's luxury fashion space, and what's next for her ever-evolving brand.

Excerpts from the interview...

"I felt a deep urge to build something of my own, something that reflected who I am creatively and personally. That's when Nirmooha was born."



“Craftsmanship is central to Nirmooha’s identity, and the brand works closely with a diverse network of skilled artisans to preserve and reinterpret traditional techniques.”



Prreeti, what was the spark that led you to launch Nirmooha in 2017?

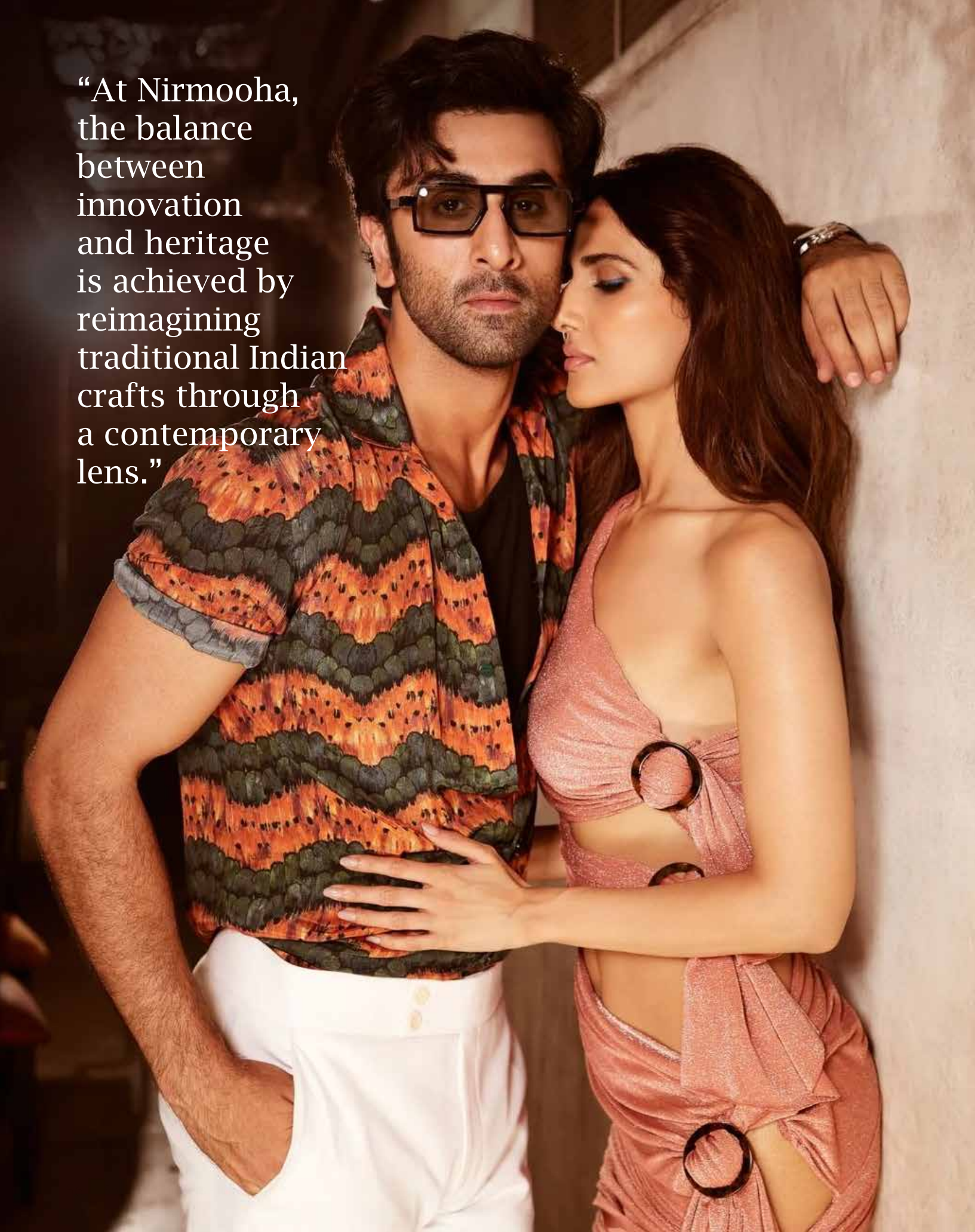
Ever since I was a child, I’ve been fascinated by clothes and design — I used to love creating outfits for my family and would find so much joy in the process. That passion for fashion only grew stronger with time. When my kids started growing up, I felt a deep urge to build something of my own, something that reflected who I am creatively and personally. That’s when Nirmooha was born. It felt like the perfect step — an extension of my love for design, a platform to express my vision, and a way to contribute meaningfully to the world of fashion while staying true to my roots.



“Every collection is deeply personal, reflecting my journey, inspirations, and the beauty I find in craftsmanship.”

Nirmooha is known for its fusion of contemporary silhouettes with traditional Indian embroidery. How do you strike that balance between innovation and heritage?

At Nirmooha, fashion is a vivid form of self-expression, a mirror to the designer’s evolving spirit and the natural world around her. Inspired by flora, fauna, underwater dreams, and the wild poetry of nature, each piece channels comfort and luxury in equal measure. Edgy yet effortlessly feminine, the women’s styles celebrate strength, sensuality, and soul. For men, it’s about vibrant, unfiltered fashion that’s bold, playful, and free. With glamour rooted in ease, Nirmooha creates clothing that moves like nature — fluid, fearless, and alive.



“At Nirmooha, the balance between innovation and heritage is achieved by reimagining traditional Indian crafts through a contemporary lens.”

Craftsmanship is clearly at the core of Nirmooha. How do you collaborate with artisans to preserve and reinterpret traditional techniques for the modern wardrobe?

Craftsmanship is central to Nirmooha's identity, and the brand works closely with a diverse network of skilled artisans to preserve and reinterpret traditional techniques. Through ongoing collaboration and creative exchange, time-honoured methods such as cording, hand embroidery, and surface texturing are thoughtfully adapted for contemporary silhouettes. These partnerships allow for a blend of innovation and authenticity, where artisanal heritage is celebrated while seamlessly integrating into the modern wardrobe.

What is your design philosophy?

For me, design has always been about emotion and storytelling. I see clothing as a canvas to express culture, memory, and identity. The design philosophy at Nirmooha is to create pieces rooted in tradition but shaped for the modern world, where heritage techniques meet contemporary silhouettes in a seamless blend. Every collection is deeply personal, reflecting my journey, inspirations, and the beauty I find in craftsmanship.



“Through ongoing collaboration and creative exchange, time-honoured methods such as cording, hand embroidery, and surface texturing are thoughtfully adapted for contemporary silhouettes.”



You’ve showcased at global platforms like Paris and Arab Fashion Week, along with multiple seasons at Lakmé and FDCI. How has this national and international exposure shaped your creative direction?

Each showcase — whether in Paris, at Arab Fashion Week, or with Lakmé and FDCI — has been a learning curve and a source of immense inspiration. Being on such diverse platforms has pushed me to think more globally while staying rooted in who I am as a designer. It has helped me refine my voice and understand how Indian craftsmanship can translate across borders without losing its soul. The exposure has encouraged me to take bolder, creative risks, be more experimental with techniques, and continue evolving while honouring the essence of Nirmooha.



"Being on such diverse platforms has pushed me to think more globally while staying rooted in who I am as a designer."

"Being a woman in this space has opened doors for me in ways I hadn't imagined, allowing me to connect, collaborate, and grow in diverse and meaningful spaces beyond fashion."

As a woman entrepreneur in the Indian luxury fashion space, what have been some of your biggest learnings — creatively and personally?

Being a woman entrepreneur in the Indian luxury fashion space has been an incredibly rewarding and eye-opening journey. Creatively, I've learnt that staying true to your vision — even when trends shift — is what truly builds a lasting brand. Personally, I've discovered the importance of resilience, patience, and trusting the process. It hasn't always been easy to balance creativity with the demands of running a business, but every challenge has taught me to lead with strength and empathy. At the same time, being a woman in this space has opened doors for me in ways I hadn't imagined, allowing me to connect, collaborate, and grow in diverse and meaningful spaces beyond fashion. It's been about more than just building a label; it's been about creating a voice.

"The exposure has encouraged me to take bolder, creative risks, be more experimental with techniques, and continue evolving while honouring the essence of Nirmooha."



“There’s a lot brewing behind the scenes at Nirmooha right now. We’re entering a very dynamic phase, especially after the launch of our first flagship store at Fort, Mumbai, which has been a huge milestone for us. It’s an exciting time for the brand!”

Finally, what’s next for Nirmooha? Any collaborations, markets, or creative frontiers you’re excited to explore?

There’s a lot brewing behind the scenes at Nirmooha right now. We’re entering a very dynamic phase, especially after the launch of our first flagship store at Fort, Mumbai, which has been a huge milestone for us. It’s an exciting time for the brand!

Laila Khan Furniturewala: “I value solitude, I thrive in it”

Work, family and passion - Laila Khan Furniturewala shows us how a true artist balances it all.

By Amber Dias

Laila Khan Furniturewalla, Mumbai-based artist and scion of a legendary Indian film family, blends legacy with innovation in her contemporary abstract art. She draws on her creative lineage to explore themes of spirituality and tradition. Exhibiting globally since 2001, her work has been featured in London, New York, and across India, reflecting a deep, evolving dialogue between ancient wisdom and modern expression.



Excerpts from the interview...

What drew you to art and painting? Could you give us a glimpse into your journey? How has your style evolved over the years?

I come from an artistic family. Growing up, I was surrounded by artists, poets, and filmmakers. My parents loved art and enjoyed collecting it. My mother [Sundri Khan] recognised early on that I was going to be an artist. She encouraged and supported me a great deal. Without her support, I don’t think I would have become a practicing, exhibiting artist - I owe that to her. When I first started out, the female form absolutely enamoured me. I went on to study at the Slade School of Fine Art in London, where I worked from life. From there, I moved toward portraiture. I was very involved with form. But over time, I’ve been gradually shifting toward formlessness.

Your latest solo exhibition, ‘Untamed Heart’, comes after an 18-year hiatus. What led you back to the canvas?

The gap wasn’t planned; it just unfolded. After my last solo exhibition, life took over in different ways. I became involved in my husband’s [Farhan Furtinurewala] design and furniture business - Furniturewalla, which was growing rapidly. At the same time, I was raising my son and building our home, which required my full presence.

“My mother [Sundri Khan] recognised early on that I was going to be an artist. She encouraged and supported me a great deal. Without her support, I don’t think I would have become a practicing, exhibiting artist.”



Through all those years, I never stopped painting. It remained a private space, something deeply personal and grounding. 'Untamed Heart' is the result of years of living, observing, creating in quiet and finally feeling the time was right to share again.

What does 'Untamed Heart' mean to you personally, not just as an exhibition, but as a turning point in your creative journey?

With this body of work, I reflected on a journey of breaking free. I wanted my expression to be completely unfiltered - free from any boundaries, expectations, or limitations I had placed on myself.

There was a newfound exploration of colour in this series. I wanted to invite viewers into a space that held both vulnerability and strength, chaos and beauty. My goal was to speak from the heart, in its purest form. The approach to this show was deeply personal and emotive.

You've contributed your artistic eye to Furniturewalla as well. How do you bring your fine art sensibility into design curation and brand building?

My husband and I reinvented his brand, Furniturewalla, in 2010, which focuses on luxury furniture, lighting, and home decor. We repositioned the brand, and I was deeply involved in the creative direction. I travelled extensively with him, handpicking beautiful pieces from around the world that reflected both value and quality. I also sourced affordable art that complemented our furniture collections - art that was accessible yet stylish, for design-conscious individuals who may not be able to invest in high-priced pieces. I truly enjoyed that phase, as I'm very passionate about interiors. It was incredibly fulfilling to curate and bring together beautiful things from across the globe.

"'Untamed Heart' is the result of years of living, observing, creating in quiet and finally feeling the time was right to share again."







“There was a time when I received many offers to act in films. But what drew me to art was the complete creative autonomy it offers. The process is raw, personal, and unfiltered, and I found that kind of truth-telling both powerful and deeply challenging.”



Coming from one of India's most iconic film families, how has that creative legacy shaped your identity as an artist?

My father [Feroz Khan] was a renowned filmmaker in India, deeply modern and far ahead of his time, and he's still considered one of the legends of Indian cinema. His films and music continue to be watched and appreciated even today, which to me is the ultimate test of true art: when something endures across generations and still holds meaning. That legacy has been incredibly inspiring to me. My father was also very critical of my work, his feedback was always honest and uncompromising. It challenged me to push myself, to grow continuously, and to approach my art from a place of truth and introspection.

Was there a moment growing up that made you realise you wanted to carve your own creative path, albeit in a different medium?

Yes, there was a time when I received many offers to act in films. I grew up surrounded by the influence and magic of cinema, it has always inspired me. But what drew me to art was the complete creative autonomy it offers. The process is raw, personal, and unfiltered, and I found that kind of truth-telling both powerful and deeply challenging. I also value solitude, I thrive in it. That space of being alone with my thoughts and creativity became sacred to me.

At a young age, when people started appreciating and even buying my work, I realised that this wasn't just a passion, it was a path. A very personal one. And over time, I knew this was where I was meant to be.





"I believe children have a beautiful way of pulling you outside yourself. That shift happened for me in 2015, when I had my son. It was a profound change, he taught me what it means to love unconditionally."

How do you and your family stay connected through such dynamic and global lives? Are there rituals or habits you hold onto?

As a family - my husband, my son, my mother, my brother, and I - we've always been deeply aware of how important family connections are. We're all intense individuals in our own ways, but there's a shared understanding and appreciation for staying connected. My husband is a true family man who loves being at home, and we try to involve our son in most of our travels and daily routines. Sharing at least one meal together is non-negotiable - it grounds us.

When choosing my studio space, I intentionally located it within our family home so I could remain close to my mother and brother. In a city like Mumbai, geography matters, and I even chose my son's school based on proximity to his grandmother, so they could build a strong bond. These choices may seem small, but they shape the fabric of our lives.

What has nurturing your child taught you? And how has that journey evolved?

Artists often tend to be deeply introspective - immersed in their inner worlds, constantly mining emotion and memory to create. But I believe children have a beautiful way of pulling you outside yourself. That shift happened for me in 2015, when I had my son. It was a profound change, he taught me what it means to love unconditionally, in a world that's otherwise often so transactional. Motherhood also brought a new stillness into my life, a quiet grounding that subtly influenced my art. I began to use more colour, there was a softness and openness that emerged in my work after he was born. These are the quiet transformations that happen when children enter your life. They don't just change your routine; they change your emotional language.

What values from your family heritage do you find yourself carrying forward, both in life and in your work?

Both my parents are entirely self-made. My father came to Bombay (Mumbai) with no money, no godfather, no contacts - only his work, passion, and a deep belief in himself. He built everything from the ground up, and that spirit shaped me. He instilled in me a strong sense of value for what we have, for money, and for effort. I was never spoiled, and that grounding has served me well.

What's next on the horizon for you? Any new show, collaboration or adventure you're excited about?

One project very close to my heart and something I've quietly nurtured for some time is the idea of creating a coffee table book on my father. Alongside this, I'm now preparing for my next show. A part of me feels content after the recent exhibition. To hear that it resonated with people on a spiritual level, that it touched something within them, is the most fulfilling validation I could ask for.

"My father [Feroz Khan] instilled in me a strong sense of value for what we have, for money, and for effort. I was never spoiled, and that grounding has served me well."







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Lifestyle

A retrospective on legendary filmmaker Guru Dutt in Cannes. Actor Utkarsh Sharma's riveting journey. Scrumptious and aromatic momos. Chilling rosé cocktails. Versatile designs from Morphogenesis. Fitness secrets from your fave cricketers. And much more!












Legacy, Passion & Star Power

Utkarsh Sharma reflects on growing up under the wings of his celebrated filmmaker father Anil Sharma and carving his own identity. Andrea CostaBir digs deeper.

Being the son of Anil Sharma, a celebrated filmmaker, how has his guidance shaped your career? What are the most valuable lessons you've learnt from him, both personally and professionally?

My dad's passion for filmmaking is absolutely infectious. That's the first thing I noticed growing up. Even when he's home, he's constantly thinking about stories, rewriting scenes, mentally living in the world of his characters. Filmmaking isn't just a profession for him — it's his life. And that level of dedication is something I absorbed early on. I realised that if I wanted to pursue a career in film, I couldn't treat it like a part-time job. It requires 24/7 commitment, and I've tried to bring that same level of discipline to everything I do.

Beyond his tireless work ethic, one of the most important lessons I've learned from him is to be original. He always creates his own material, writes his own scenes, and sticks to his distinct style, no matter what's trending. He's very unapologetic about it — blunt, even — but that's what I admire. As an artiste, you must have your own voice. That's something I carry with me as an actor: Originality above all. Whether it works or not is secondary — what matters is that it comes from an honest place.





“I realised that if I wanted to pursue a career in film, I couldn’t treat it like a part-time job. It requires 24/7 commitment, and I’ve tried to bring that same level of discipline to everything I do.”

From ‘Gadar’ to ‘Genius’ — you began your journey as a child actor in ‘Gadar: Ek Prem Katha’ and then took on the lead in ‘Genius’. How do you reflect on your growth, and what challenges did you face transitioning from a child artiste to a lead actor?

Honestly, there was never a plan to be a child actor. It happened completely by chance. The role required a child actor for a long and intense shoot schedule, and most parents weren’t too keen on that. I just happened to be the right age, and since I was around the set anyway, I landed the part.

But after ‘Gadar’, I stepped away from acting. My parents always prioritised my education and never pushed me into the industry. They let me figure out my path. It wasn’t until I was a teenager, assisting dad on the sets of ‘Veer’, that I realised how much I loved the process. That’s when the spark was lit.

I started taking acting classes and doing theatre. I fell in love with performing — there was a peace and happiness I found on stage that I hadn’t felt anywhere else. That joy is what still drives me today. I wanted to understand filmmaking from all angles, so I went to the US, studied the craft, worked on short films, and returned home with clarity. When dad saw what I’d been working on, he was happy, and soon we started developing ‘Genius’ together. One thing led to another, and that became my debut as a lead.

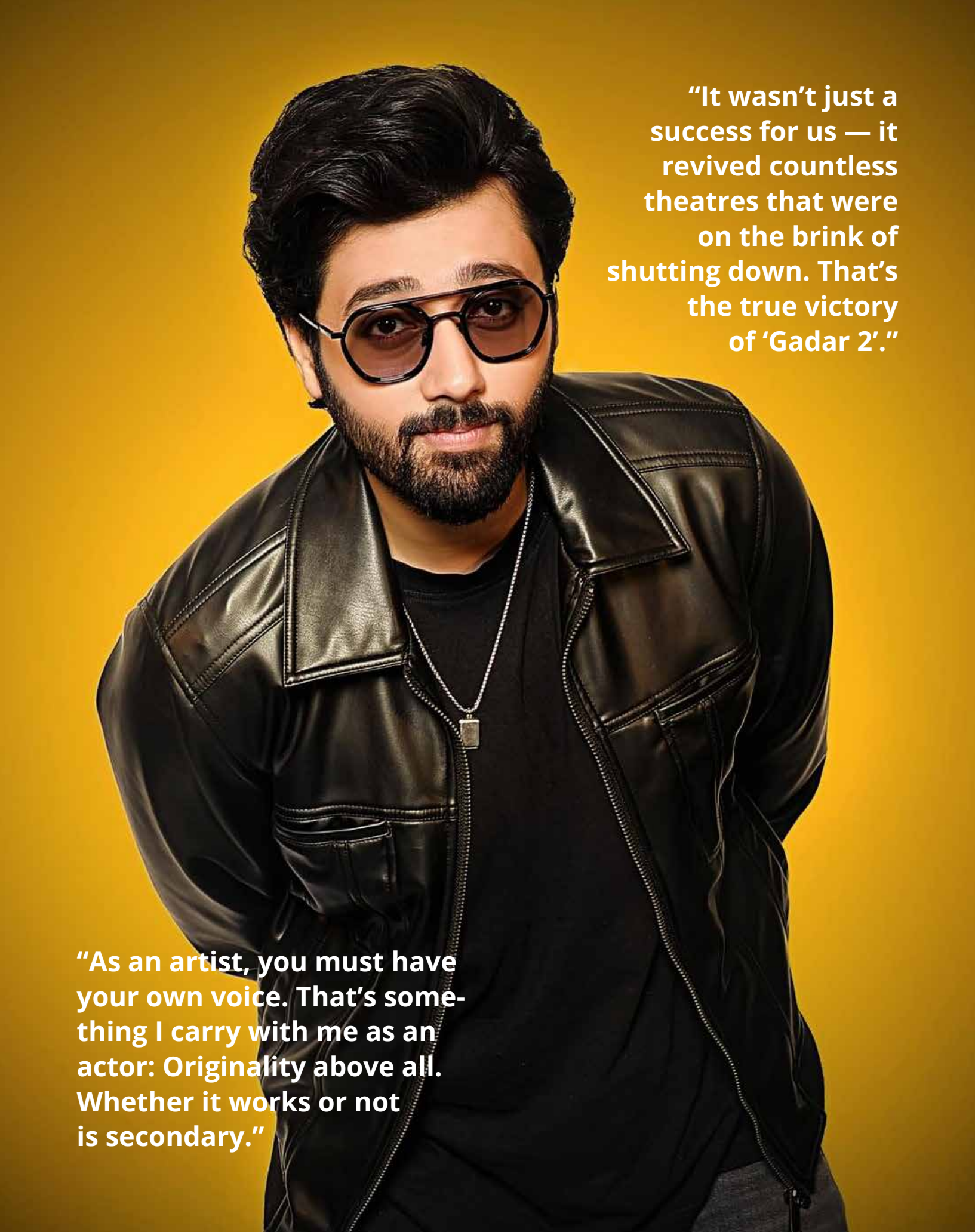
What was it like reprising the role of Jeete in ‘Gadar 2’? How did you prep for the action scenes, and what was your most memorable experience from the film? Also, how has the ‘Gadar 2’ phenomenon impacted your career?

‘Gadar 2’ came about in the most unexpected way. I was working on another project, and dad was busy with something else when the lockdown happened. Suddenly, everything in the industry came to a standstill. That’s when the idea of ‘Gadar 2’ struck dad and our writer. When they narrated it to me, I was stunned. I mean, ‘Gadar’ is a classic. How do you follow that up 20 years later without risking its legacy?

But the story had this raw emotion, something powerful, something real — and that’s what convinced us to move ahead. We faced so many challenges – the lockdown, a tight budget, and a commitment to keeping things as real as possible without over-relying on CGI (computer-generated imagery). There were moments in post-production where we were working round the clock — literally pulling all-nighters until the film was ready.

It felt like we were fighting a frontline battle. But eventually, hard work paid off. The film resonated deeply, especially with audiences in smaller towns and rural areas. People came in trucks to watch it in single-screen theatres. That’s the kind of impact you dream of. And it wasn’t just a success for us — it revived countless theatres that were on the brink of shutting down. That’s the true victory of ‘Gadar 2’.

Personally, it helped me reach the audiences I’ve always wanted to connect with — the heartland. I’ve always resonated with mass commercial cinema, and ‘Gadar 2’ gave me that platform. It brought families back to the theatres, and that’s a kind of magic I’ll always cherish.



“It wasn’t just a success for us — it revived countless theatres that were on the brink of shutting down. That’s the true victory of ‘Gadar 2’.”

“As an artist, you must have your own voice. That’s something I carry with me as an actor: Originality above all. Whether it works or not is secondary.”

Are there any actors or filmmakers — Indian or international — who've inspired your craft?

Oh, definitely. My all-time favourite will always be Dilip Kumar*ji*. His work is pure gold. I still binge-watch his films whenever I get the chance. Among international artistes, I really admire Leonardo DiCaprio and Charlie Chaplin — such range, such conviction. Closer home, legends like Amitabh Bachchan*ji*, Dharmendra*ji*, Aamir Khan, Shah Rukh Khan, and Salman Khan have all influenced me in different ways. Each of them brings something unique to the table, and I constantly learn from their work.

Being part of a film family comes with its own expectations. How do you manage to balance that legacy while crafting your own path?

To be honest, I don't think too much about the legacy or expectations. For me, the primary focus is always the audience. I want to make films where the viewers feel like their ticket money was well spent — where they leave the theatre smiling, thinking, feeling.

What matters most to me is storytelling rooted in emotion and culture. I'm not preoccupied with proving anything because once you're in a theatre watching a movie, you're not thinking about the actor's background — you're thinking about whether the story connects. So, my aim is to create work that speaks for itself, regardless of the name attached to it.

What is your relationship like with your parents? How do they support and influence you?

Everything I've achieved — every step I've taken — is because of my parents. They've always been my biggest guides. They've never pushed material goals on me. Their advice has always been to be a good person, to stay happy, and to remain grounded. That perspective helps in an industry like ours. Even today, when I'm facing dilemmas or feeling stuck, I turn to them. Their wisdom and unwavering support are something I hold very dear.

How do you handle the pressure of the industry and stay grounded?

I genuinely don't feel pressured by the industry. That kind of pressure is self-imposed. The only real pressure I acknowledge is the responsibility toward the audience. That's who we make films for. That's who we answer to. You don't work for the industry — you work for the people who are buying the ticket. If anything should keep you up at night, it's whether your work is making them happy.

Do you have any upcoming films or OTT ventures? What kind of roles are you excited about taking on next?

Yes, I have a few films lined up — each in a different genre. I'm excited because I feel like I've managed to carve a little space in each of these worlds. Once the announcements are official, I'll be able to share more, but all I can say is, these are films packed with emotion, entertainment, and rooted storytelling.

As far as OTT goes, I'm a bit more selective. My heart lies in theatre releases — that shared, cinematic experience is irreplaceable. But if something really exciting or unconventional comes up on OTT, I'd be open to exploring it.

"You don't work for the industry — you work for the people who are buying the ticket. If anything should keep you up at night, it's whether your work is making them happy."



Do you see yourself stepping into direction, like your father, someday?

Definitely. I love every aspect of filmmaking. I've worked as a grip, a gaffer, even as an editor. I enjoy writing too — I've got a few screenplays I've written that I'm holding onto for now. Direction is something I'll consider eventually. Acting, unfortunately, has an age limit — certain roles suit certain phases of life. But direction has no age. So yes, someday, when the time is right, I'd love to direct. For now, my focus is acting, but the filmmaker in me is always alive.

In Top Form

Ishaan Roy takes a sneak peek at what's powering some of the top performers of the IPL 2025.

The 2025 Indian Premier League had fans on the edge of their seats. However, on-field brilliance relies heavily on off-field discipline, especially in a format where split-second decisions and sustained intensity can make or break a match. From seasoned veterans to emerging stars, many of this season's top performers have credited their rigorous fitness regimens for their consistency and resilience. Here's a closer look at how seven standout players are pushing boundaries, one workout at a time.

Suryakumar Yadav, Mumbai Indians

Suryakumar Yadav has been a beacon of consistency and innovation. His fitness regimen incorporates strength training, as well as running, cycling and interval training to improve endurance. Fruits, vegetables, nuts, and seeds are staples in his diet, providing essential vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants for overall health and immunity. His disciplined lifestyle and mental conditioning have been pivotal in his ascent to the top of the Orange Cap standings.



Shubman Gill, Gujarat Titans

Shubman Gill's training encompasses strength training with compound exercises like deadlifts, squats, and bench presses to build explosive power. He incorporates high-intensity interval training (HIIT) and distance running to enhance cardiovascular endurance. Agility drills, including ladder and cone exercises, sharpen his reflexes and footwork. His nutrition plan focuses on lean proteins, complex carbohydrates, and proper hydration, fueling his body for peak performance.





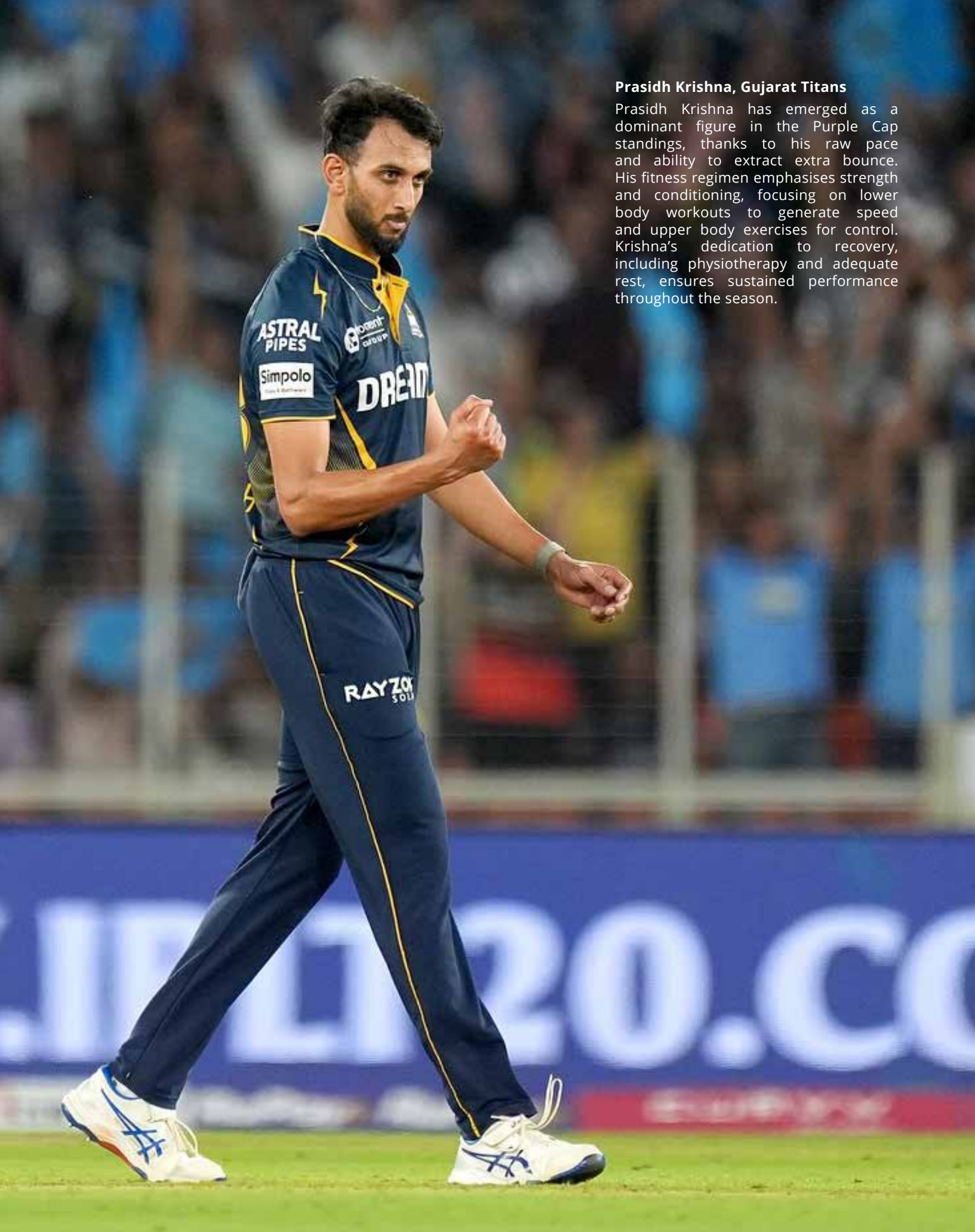
Virat Kohli,
Royal Challengers Bengaluru

Virat Kohli's commitment to fitness has revolutionised Indian cricket's approach to physical conditioning. His regimen includes weight training, running, and leg exercises to enhance strength and endurance. Kohli's dedication is evident as he maintains his routine even during breaks, emphasising the importance of consistency. He also prioritises hydration with alkaline-rich water to boost metabolism; clean eating, opting for a nutrient-rich, plant-based diet and mental fitness.



Sai Sudharsan, Gujarat Titans

Sai Sudharsan's stellar performance in IPL 2025 is a testament to his unwavering commitment to fitness. This includes rigorous off-season training focusing on explosive strength without compromising flexibility. He attributes going from slightly overweight at the beginning of his career to peak condition by focusing on small things like adjusting his diet and focusing on his training, inclusive of yoga, meditation, sprints, and long runs, with guidance from his parents. He also maintains a daily to-do list – including his fitness goals and areas for improvement.



Prasidh Krishna, Gujarat Titans

Prasidh Krishna has emerged as a dominant figure in the Purple Cap standings, thanks to his raw pace and ability to extract extra bounce. His fitness regimen emphasises strength and conditioning, focusing on lower body workouts to generate speed and upper body exercises for control. Krishna's dedication to recovery, including physiotherapy and adequate rest, ensures sustained performance throughout the season.



Josh Hazlewood,
Royal Challengers Bengaluru

Josh Hazlewood's fitness routine emphasises a balanced approach to strength, endurance, and injury prevention. Like most players, strength training is key to his fitness regimen. He has also previously revealed that he incorporates exercises like mountain climbers to improve stamina and steers his diet towards protein-rich meals like bacon, eggs and avocado for breakfast.

Hot, Steaming & Irresistible!

Sahaj Chopra, Co-Founder & Director, Fat Tiger, deconstructs how momos have taken over the heart of urban food scenes.

Momos have journeyed far – from being a simple snack rooted in the Himalayan region to becoming a beloved street food staple across India. Their culinary charm lies in their succulent flavour, enhanced by steaming, a technique that preserves both texture and taste, while also offering ease of preparation. Today, momos serve as a go-to meal for many seeking something both wholesome and inexpensive.





Momos have secured their place among other popular street-side delicacies, catering perfectly to busy commuters, students, and shoppers.

The Rise Of Momo Culture

With the addition of flavourful sauces and a choice between steaming or deep-frying, the once-humble momo has blossomed into a star of the street food scene. As urban lifestyles grow more fast-paced, the demand for quick, tasty, and economical snacking options has surged. In response, momos have secured their place among other popular street-side delicacies, catering perfectly to busy commuters, students, and shoppers.

The Evolution Of The Momo

No longer restricted to the classic steamed, stuffed dumpling, momos have undergone a transformation. Today's vendors are innovating with their own techniques — experimenting with rolling, filling, slicing, and even toppings — to cater to the modern palate. These 'incredibly traditional' yet creatively adapted versions combine heritage with contemporary flair, resulting in momos that reflect regional influences and global inspirations.

The baozi momo offers a soft, fluffy experience reminiscent of Chinese bao, while the pan-fried, Schezwan momo adds a fiery kick for spice enthusiasts. The juicy steamed momo delivers a classic bite with tender, flavourful fillings, while the Kurkure momo entices with its crispy, golden shell, perfect for those craving something crunchy yet comforting.



These 'incredibly traditional' yet creatively adapted versions combine heritage with contemporary flair, resulting in momos that reflect regional influences and global inspirations.





Global food trends have inspired momo fusion dishes that blend the familiar with the exotic. The Korean BBQ momo brings smokey, grilled richness, while the Korean sweet chilli momo offers a perfect balance of sweetness and heat. For a tangy twist, the Korean kimchi momo infuses traditional dumplings with the zing of fermented vegetables.

A Global Phenomenon

The popularity of momos has now transcended borders. Once limited to local vendors, these dumplings have found a place in international street food markets, food trucks, and global kitchens. Their ability to blend into diverse cuisines makes them the ultimate culinary chameleon — adaptable, versatile, and universally loved.

“This is our homage to the great Guru Dutt”

Rajat Agrawal, COO, Ultra Media and Entertainment Group, discusses the grand restoration of Guru Dutt’s films for Cannes 2025 — a global tribute to one of Indian cinema’s most revered auteurs, with Nichola Marie.

Honouring A Visionary

“For us, this is not just a project — it’s a personal tribute,” says Rajat Agrawal. “Guru Dutt is one of the towering figures of Indian cinema, and we wanted to celebrate his artistry ahead of his 100th birth anniversary in a meaningful, global way.”

Ultra Media & Entertainment, under Agrawal’s leadership, has been quietly but diligently working for years to restore Guru Dutt’s films with the care and reverence they deserve. The result: A full digital revival of his landmark works — including ‘Pyaasa’ (1957), ‘Kaagaz Ke Phool’ (1959), ‘Sahib Bibi Aur Ghulam’ (1962), and more — now being showcased at Cannes 2025.

The project isn’t just technical, Agrawal emphasises. It’s emotional. “Guru Dutt’s cinema speaks to the soul. It transcends language and time. We wanted to do it thoroughly and respectfully, so that audiences around the world can rediscover him as he was meant to be seen.”



The Restoration: A Labour Of Love

The restoration process was neither short nor simple. Ultra’s team began by assessing existing film prints and negatives, some of which had suffered significant damage over the decades.

“Old reels can be incredibly fragile — brittle, faded, torn, or warped. In some cases, the audio was so degraded that we had to rebuild it almost from scratch,” Agrawal explains. Each frame of each film — sometimes over 150,000 per title — was digitally scanned at 2K or 4K resolution to capture every nuance of grain and light.



“Guru Dutt’s cinema speaks to the soul. It transcends language and time. We wanted to do it thoroughly and respectfully, so that audiences around the world can rediscover him as he was meant to be seen.”

Using in-house technology and industry-standard software, technicians meticulously removed dust, scratches, flicker, and sound hiss. Colour correction was another significant step. “Restoring the colour tones of a black-and-white film like ‘Pyaasa’ is a subtle art. It’s not about adding colour, but ensuring that the shadows and contrasts reflect the director’s original intention.”

The team also restored the audio, often using advanced software to clean out distortions while preserving tonal depth. “We didn’t want a clean but soulless output,” says Agrawal. “It had to feel alive.”

Collaborations with film historians and archivists helped ensure fidelity to Guru Dutt’s vision. “Restoration can become overzealous. We wanted to avoid that. Our job was to preserve, not reinterpret.”

Why Guru Dutt Still Matters

Guru Dutt's reputation as a cinematic genius is built not only on technique but also on emotional resonance. His films navigated themes like artistic failure, societal hypocrisy, love, and loneliness with poetic sensitivity.

"He made deeply personal films that felt universal," says Agrawal. "His characters weren't heroes in the traditional sense — they were vulnerable, broken, searching. That humanity is what endures."

Dutt's visual style was ahead of his time. With the help of cinematographer VK Murthy, he pioneered expressive lighting, dynamic composition, and innovative camera angles that blended Indian aesthetics with European influences. "You can freeze almost any frame from 'Kaagaz Ke Phool' and hang it in a gallery," Agrawal says.

But it wasn't just about beauty — it was about atmosphere and emotion. "He had this rare ability to use visuals to convey longing, despair, and fleeting hope," Agrawal adds. "That's why even filmmakers today cite him as a master."

Cannes 2025: A Global Stage

Ultra's showcase of Guru Dutt's films at Cannes is part of the festival's heritage cinema section. But the response has already gone beyond archival interest. Curators, programmers, and streaming platforms from Europe, Latin America, and Asia have expressed interest in distributing the restored works.

"International audiences are responding not just to the aesthetics but to the storytelling," Agrawal says. "The themes Guru Dutt explored — identity, creative struggle, societal expectations — are universal. People relate, whether they're watching from Paris or São Paulo."

Subtitled, digitally remastered, and globally accessible, Guru Dutt's films now have a second life. The timing couldn't be better, as world cinema continues to celebrate retrospectives and restorations of classic auteurs.

Reconnecting India With Its Film Heritage

While international audiences are being introduced — or reintroduced — to Guru Dutt, Ultra Media has plans for an equally ambitious domestic rollout. July 2025 will see a month-long tribute to the filmmaker across India, including theatrical re-releases of his major works.

"This isn't just for cinephiles," Agrawal explains. "We're working with universities, cultural institutions, and even streaming platforms to bring his films to young viewers who may never have seen them on a big screen."

Alongside the films, curated exhibitions and panel discussions featuring directors, critics, and artists will explore Dutt's legacy. "We want the next generation to understand not just the films, but the person behind them — the passion, the pain, the poetry," says Agrawal.

In a digital age where content is fleeting and attention spans are short, this reintroduction of a classic auteur serves as a cultural anchor.

"Restoration can become overzealous. We wanted to avoid that. Our job was to preserve, not reinterpret — so the emotional and visual integrity of Guru Dutt's work stays intact."



"The themes Guru Dutt explored — identity, creative struggle, societal expectations — are universal. International audiences are responding not just to the aesthetics but to the storytelling."

The Broader Case For Heritage Cinema

Agrawal sees Ultra's work as part of a wider responsibility: Preserving India's rich cinematic history. "There's a growing global appetite for classic films — if we don't restore and curate ours, we risk losing them forever."

Film festivals like Cannes have become important allies in this mission, providing a platform for restored works and sparking renewed interest in non-Western film histories. For India, this moment presents both a challenge and an opportunity.

"We have such a deep archive — but most of it is deteriorating or unavailable. There's an urgent need for public-private partnerships, funding, and awareness around film preservation," Agrawal urges.

He believes the restored Guru Dutt collection could serve as a model for similar initiatives around directors like Ritwik Ghatak, Bimal Roy, or Mehboob Khan. "It's about reclaiming our cinematic heritage — and making it available, in high quality, to the world."





"Guru Dutt's films often touched on depression, alienation, and existential crises. These themes are incredibly relevant today, especially as audiences become more attuned to mental health and emotional complexity."

A Legacy That Lives On

Ask Agrawal what aspect of Guru Dutt's work he personally finds most inspiring, and he doesn't hesitate. "It's his honesty. There's no pretension in his films. Even when they deal with artifice — as in 'Kaagaz Ke Phool' — they're rooted in real emotion."

Through A Modern Lens

Today's audiences are discovering and appreciating new interpretations and themes in the auteur's films. "Guru Dutt's films continue to captivate modern audiences with their timeless themes and complex characters," points out Agrawal. "His films often touched on themes of depression, alienation, and existential crises, which are highly relatable in today's context. Films like 'Pyaasa' and 'Kaagaz Ke Phool' showcase protagonists struggling with inner turmoil, resonating with contemporary audiences, who are more aware of mental health issues. Guru Dutt's works often critiqued the societal norms of his time, and these themes remain relevant even today."

Agrawal believes that Guru Dutt's films questioned the status quo, challenging viewers to think critically about the world around them. Additionally, his films explored universal human emotions like love, loss, and longing, making them relatable across generations. His characters in the films showed struggle and triumph, hence continuing to evoke empathy and understanding in modern audiences.

"Guru Dutt's films were influenced by Western modernist styles, particularly German Expressionism. This blend of Eastern and Western storytelling techniques adds a unique layer of complexity to his films, making them appealing to modern viewers who appreciate diverse cinematic styles. His films often highlighted class differences and the struggles of the marginalised. These themes remain pertinent today, and modern audiences can appreciate the social commentary in his works," he adds.

In many ways, this restoration isn't about nostalgia — it's about renewal. It's about making sure Guru Dutt isn't just remembered, but seen, heard, and felt all over again.

Versatile Architecture

Morphogenesis is a prominent architecture firm known for its groundbreaking work. Their projects reflect a unique blend of creativity, practicality, and visual appeal, illustrating the firm's talent for turning ambitious architectural ideas into influential and functional spaces.

Morphogenesis is India's leading Architecture and Urban Design practice with offices in Mumbai, Pune, Bengaluru, and New Delhi. The firm was set up by Sonali and Manit Rastogi in 1996 with a vision of defining sustainable architecture for contemporary India.

"Our design approach has often been inspired by the vast repository of historical wealth of building knowledge and the strong arts and crafts traditions of the region. We understand that we often work in an environment with limited resources, and therefore, we deploy passive strategies by responding to the local climate and ecology while addressing comfort, safety, and liveability parameters. Further, we believe each project must establish itself as a benchmark for innovative design by thinking systemically about sustainability. Architecturally, we celebrate identity and diversity versus visual homogeneity," says Sonali.

Here are some handpicked projects from the firm's vast portfolio.



Infosys Campus, Nagpur

The Infosys Campus' efficient layout strategically places Offshore Development Centers (ODCs), optimising workflows and promoting productivity. The building's distinct X-shaped plan maximises diffused daylight penetration and limits heat gain. The narrow depth of each of the wings further ensures that 90% of the workspaces are completely day-lit.

The vibrant facade is inspired by swaras (Indian classical music notes) and tiger's skin grooves. It features vertical fins strategically oriented at varying angles to serve as shading devices while simultaneously adding a sense of visual dynamism. Orange forms the base hue, and earthy tones are added to develop a gradient, establishing a sense of play and rhythm.





“Our design approach has often been inspired by the vast repository of historical wealth of building knowledge and the strong arts and crafts traditions of the region.”

- Sonali Rastogi

Along with a radiant waffle cooling system that harnesses the thermal mass of concrete slabs for natural temperature reguation, these design interventions dramatically reduce energy consumption. The design also prioritises employee well-being with amenities and diverse workspaces, while seamlessly integrating local art and culture into the architectural fabric. The Infosys Campus stands as an exemplary model for future sustainable workspaces in India, demonstrating how innovative design can harmoniously address environmental, functional, and cultural imperatives.

Orange forms the base hue, and earthy tones are added to develop a gradient, establishing a sense of play and rhythm.





The building seamlessly merges with the surrounding landscape, achieving a zero-tree-cutting goal while incorporating landscaped courtyards and locally sourced brick construction.

Lalit Suri Hospitality School, Faridabad

The Lalit Suri Hospitality School is a testament to sustainable and innovative design. The building seamlessly merges with the surrounding landscape, achieving a zero-tree-cutting goal while incorporating landscaped courtyards and locally sourced brick construction. Spaces within the school are designed for flexibility, serving dual purposes for education and hands-on hospitality training. This is exemplified by stepwells transforming into open-air theatres, cafeterias functioning as F&B training outlets, and hostel accommodations adopting a hotel format, offering students real-world experience.

Furthering its sustainable commitment, the design employs brick cavity walls, terrace gardens, and cantilever projections to reduce heat gain, and is partially sunken for thermal banking and noise reduction. This holistic approach establishes the Lalit Suri Hospitality School as a pioneering model for sustainable education, seamlessly integrating environmental responsibility, innovative design, and hands-on learning.



The design employs brick cavity walls, terrace gardens, and cantilever projections to reduce heat gain, and is partially sunken for thermal banking and noise reduction.







A robust monolith with a peaked profile, the building's fortress-like form references medieval-era monuments from the walled city of Ahmedabad.





The building incorporates a passive design and climate-responsive strategies, resulting in a significant reduction in energy consumption.

Zydus Corporate Park, Ahmedabad

Zydus Corporate Park in Ahmedabad is a modern workplace inspired by Gujarat's architectural heritage. A robust monolith with a peaked profile, the building's fortress-like form references medieval-era monuments from the walled city of Ahmedabad: the Bhadra Fort, the Pavagadh Fort, the stepped courts of Adalaj, as well as from the traditional 'Bhunga' architecture of Kutch.

The Pavagadh Fort provided key contextual cues for the three rampart-like walls forming the western facade, effectively screening the interiors from the harsh summer sun and providing a thermal buffer against extreme temperatures. These doubly-curved Corten steel bulwarks are articulated in the intricate geometries of Ahmedabad's traditional metal craft of the 'Kansaras', translated parametrically through computational design.

The building incorporates a passive design and climate-responsive strategies, resulting in a significant reduction in energy consumption. Inside, the layout prioritises employee interaction with a central spine housing social spaces and connecting formal work areas.

This article has been excerpted from our sister publication 'Society Interiors & Design'.

Making A Splash

Nichola Marie shines the spotlight on trailblazers making waves and grabbing headlines.

Winning Hearts

The 19-year-old reigning World Champion won as much applause for his calm, respectful manner as he did for notching a breakthrough win in classical chess against longtime titan Magnus Carlsen. Playing the 2025 Norway Chess tournament, D Gukesh was largely on the defensive for much of round 6. But when Carlsen committed an unexpected mistake during a tense time crunch, Gukesh seized it like a champ and went in for the kill. Even as an agitated Carlsen banged his balled fist on the table in frustration, Gukesh remained composed. Taking his famous opponent's outburst sportingly, he would reveal that it was heartbreaking how Carlsen lost and that he had also banged many tables in his career.



Picture by: Frans Peeters Photography

Picture by: Frans Peeters Photography

Now ranked third in the FIDE classical ratings with an impressive 2,787, Gukesh stands just behind legends Magnus Carlsen and Hikaru Nakamura. His steady climb through the ranks reflects not only technical brilliance and strategic depth, but also a quiet confidence and humility that continue to endear him to fans around the world.

Gukesh's chess journey began at the age of seven. Quickly progressing through the ranks, by 2019, he became a grandmaster at just 12 years, 7 months, and 17 days, making him the second-youngest grandmaster in history at that time.

Known for his reactive and counter-attacking style, his ability to calculate under time pressure and avoid inferior positions makes Gukesh a formidable opponent. In the past, while mentor Viswanathan Anand has praised his "incredible calculating abilities," Carlsen has described him as "an extremely dangerous opponent under any circumstances."

Marching Forward

In a landmark moment for gender inclusion in the Indian Armed Forces, 17 pioneering women cadets graduated from the prestigious National Defence Academy (NDA) in Pune, becoming part of its first-ever female cohort to complete the rigorous three-year training programme. Marching in unison with over 300 male cadets at the Arun Khetarpal Parade Ground, they stood shoulder-to-shoulder — indistinguishable in appearance, spirit and discipline.

Their passing-out parade (PoP) symbolised not just the end of an intensive journey marked by academic rigour, physical endurance, and leadership training, but also the beginning of a more inclusive chapter in India's defence forces. The event was reviewed by former Army Chief and current Mizoram Governor, VK Singh, who lauded the cadets as a shining embodiment of nari shakti — women-led strength and progress. He called the occasion a "milestone in the NDA's history."

Following the formalities, the cadets celebrated with light-hearted camaraderie — including a spirited push-up challenge, underscoring their unity and competitive energy.

The NDA trains cadets for all three wings of the Indian Armed Forces — Army, Navy, and Air Force — offering a demanding curriculum that combines academics with physical training and leadership development. After graduating from NDA, cadets proceed to their respective service academies — IMA in Dehradun, INA in Ezhimala, and AFA in Dundigal — for specialised pre-commission training.

With these 17 trailblazers now in its alumni ranks, the NDA reinforces its role as a cradle for future leaders — regardless of gender.





Courageous Creator

Amidst the flurry of red carpet gowns and air kisses, Neeraj Ghaywan stood out — not for a designer tuxedo, but for his powerful storytelling. His film 'Homebound' premiered in the 2025 Cannes Film Festival's Un Certain Regard section, the only Indian film to do so, and received a resounding nine-minute standing ovation.

Set during India's Covid-19 lockdown, 'Homebound' follows two migrant workers — a Dalit and a Muslim — as they undertake a gruelling journey across Madhya Pradesh to return home. It's a poignant exploration of friendship, marginalisation and survival, capturing the human cost of the crisis. Starring Ishaan Khatter, Vishal Jethwa and Janhvi Kapoor, the film's emotional depth and social relevance have further cemented Ghaywan's reputation for spotlighting stories often overlooked in mainstream cinema.

Ghaywan's personal narrative resonates deeply with his work. For years, he concealed his Dalit identity, fearing bias within the film industry. Using a different surname, he navigated the industry quietly — until he chose to speak out, challenging stigma and embracing his roots. His honesty has inspired others from marginalised backgrounds to reclaim their voices.

With 'Homebound', Ghaywan builds on a body of work that includes his acclaimed debut 'Masaan' (2015), which won accolades at Cannes, and follow-up pieces like the short film 'Juice' (2017) and 'Geeli Pucchi' (2021), part of the anthology 'Ajeeb Daastaans'. Across these projects, Ghaywan has proven himself a bold, empathetic filmmaker — unafraid to examine caste, identity and power with rare honesty.

Regal Roots, Modern Moods

Rhea Poddar Loyalka, gemologist and Director, Ma Passion, decodes jewellery pieces for the millennial man and new-age Maharani.

Gemstone jewellery is witnessing a bold resurgence, redefining gendered traditions with contemporary flair. Today's Indian men and women are embracing jewels not just as adornment, but as powerful expressions of identity, heritage, and style.



The Millennial Man

From rings to brooches, the modern man is redefining masculinity with gemstone jewellery that is deeply rooted in tradition. Uncut stones with rugged textures, earthy tones and understated settings radiate a raw, natural energy. These pieces don't clamour for attention, they command it with quiet, masculine confidence. With their timeless appeal, such jewellery is becoming increasingly popular among contemporary Indian men.

Historically, Indian royalty embraced gemstone adornment with unreserved grandeur. Maharajas were known for their ornate *sarpechs*, *bazubands*, and layered necklaces, each piece a statement of power and prestige. Today's Indian man draws from this regal legacy and infuses it with personal flair. A prime example is Indian singer and actor Diljit Dosanjh's Met Gala 2025 appearance, where his jewellery paid homage to Maharaja Yadavindra Singh of Patiala.

Styling plays a key role in modernising heritage pieces. Whether it's a single-stone bracelet peeking from beneath a *kurta* sleeve, a lapel pin accenting a summer linen suit, or a minimalist pendant resting against a crew-neck T-shirt, gemstone jewellery today offers unexpected versatility.

Signature stones have also become meaningful forms of self-expression, green jade for calm and focus, ruby for passion and power. Increasingly, men are opting for custom-made pieces that tell personal stories, hold emotional significance, and are designed to be passed down through generations.

Women are now embracing gemstones in their everyday wardrobes, effortlessly pairing emerald studs with a structured blazer, or layering rubies over a simple cotton *kurta*.





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The Modern Maharani

The modern Maharani is breathing new life into traditional jewellery, blending the opulence of Indian royalty with her own strength and contemporary style. She understands how the right accessory can instantly add a certain *je ne sais quoi* that turns an ordinary outfit into something refined and striking. Intentional about her style, today's Indian woman curates a look that is both regal and refreshingly modern.

Traditionally, gemstone jewellery in India was reserved for festive occasions and weddings. But times have changed. Women are now embracing gemstones in their everyday wardrobes, effortlessly pairing emerald studs with a structured blazer, or layering rubies over a simple cotton *kurta*. The result is a celebration of jewellery that is versatile, meaningful, and deeply personal. Whether it's a birthstone, a cherished heirloom, or a bespoke creation symbolising a personal journey, each gemstone tells a story.

Among Gen Z, a playful, bold spirit is reshaping how jewellery is worn. Contrasting combinations like coral with emerald, or turquoise with rose quartz are gaining popularity, injecting vibrant energy into classic designs. Contemporary Indian jewellery designers are also responding to this shift, experimenting with unconventional cuts, lighter forms, and daring colour palettes that reimagine tradition through a modern lens.

Women today are confidently mixing statement gemstone pieces with modern silhouettes — think *haath phools* worn with tailored jumpsuits, or a *navratna* choker styled with a sari-gown. This fusion of classic and contemporary creates looks that are fearless, expressive, and unmistakably individual.

Yes Way, Rosé!

Pink is in, when it comes to cocktails this season. Amber Dias finds out more.



There's something magical about sipping on a cocktail that's refreshing, light, and just a little bit glamorous, especially when the weather goes from hot to humid to wet in the blink of an eye. Enter rosé-based cocktails, drinks that strike the perfect balance between sophistication and fun.

The Pink Revolution

From the pale blush of rosé to candy-pink gins, the delightful flavours, chilled luxury vibe and, of course, endless social media potential mean that the 'pink drink' trend is not going anywhere. Here, we're shining the spotlight on rosé - which has been around since the sixth century BC. And while it enjoyed a steady reign of being much-sought-after, its popularity has dipped and risen over the years, going on quite the rollercoaster ride. Speaking to a publication, Richard Ryan, co-founder of liquid development at Drinksology Kirker Greer, stated, "It once was regarded as a super-sweet wine for those who didn't actually like wine. But now, there are more variations of great-quality rosé wines... a midpoint between the freshness of whites and the depth of reds." Rosé became the toast of the town around the 2000s and thanks to some insightful marketing strategies, what was at one point considered a "feminine" drink, found its way into the parties of the rich and famous and gained favour with millennials for its easy, no wine knowledge required to enjoy, consumer-friendly vibe. Over the last decade, rosé has experienced a meteoric rise in popularity. In fact, reports suggest, in 2021, the global market for rosé wine was valued at over $17 billion and is expected to continue growing.

Rosé Tinted Cocktails

Rosé wines are known for their delicate, fruity flavours but when used in a cocktail, they create drinks that are light and lively, yet full of depth and personality. One reason rosé-based cocktails are so popular is their versatility. Rosé, with its balance of fruitiness and crisp acidity, serves as a perfect base for a wide variety of flavours. Its subtle hints of berries, citrus, and even floral notes make it adaptable, complementing both fresh fruits and herbs in the warmer months, and richer ingredients like honey or spices when the weather cools down.

Rosé-based cocktails have a certain charm about them that makes them feel elevated yet effortless. They look gorgeous in any glass, from a classic coupe to a wine glass or a mason jar. Add a splash of vibrant fruit or a sprig of rosemary, and you've got yourself a drink that's just as pleasing to the eye as it is to the palate. This elegance, paired with their refreshing nature, makes them perfect for everything from casual afternoons to festive evenings.







Pour 'Em Out

The fun part of rosé-based cocktails is that there's no need for complex ingredients or expert bartending skills — just grab a bottle of rosé and a few other basic ingredients to create something refreshing and fun!

Rosé Spritzer
A rosé spritzer is as simple as it sounds: Crisp, refreshing, and utterly satisfying. Simply pour some chilled rosé into a glass over ice, then top with sparkling water or soda.
You can add a slice of citrus, like lemon or orange, for a little extra zing.

Rosé Lemonade
If you want something a little sweeter, a rosé lemonade is a perfect choice. Combine chilled rosé with lemonade (store-bought or fresh-squeezed) in a glass with ice. Garnish with a sprig of mint or a few raspberries for added flair.
This cocktail strikes the perfect balance between the tartness of lemonade and the smooth fruitiness of rosé.

Wine Facts

- While rosé is often associated with summer, it's actually a year-round wine. It's light enough to be refreshing in the heat, but has enough body to complement heavier dishes in cooler weather.
- Rosé develops its attractive pink hue from the brief contact of red grape skins with the juice during the fermentation process. Unlike red wines, which ferment with the skins for extended periods, rosé is typically pressed off the skins after only a few hours, resulting in a lighter, pink hue.
- France produces and consumes more rosé than any region.
- Spain exports more rosé than any region.
- Most rosé should be opened and enjoyed within two to three years of bottling.

Cocktail Cues

- Choose your rosé wisely: For fresh and light cocktails, opt for a young rosé wine with good acidity, while a rosé with a little more body works well for complex concoctions.
- Rosé should be served chilled (between 7°C - 13°C) so that it retains all its freshness without hiding its aromatic nuances.
- Fresh fruits like raspberries, citrus fruits and herbs like mint or basil are perfect complements to enhance the flavours of the wine.



Rosé Sangria
Rosé sangria is a lighter and more vibrant twist on the classic. Combine rosé wine with a splash of brandy, a bit of orange juice, and slices of citrus fruits like oranges, lemons, and limes. Refrigerate for a few hours and voilà!

The Rosé Mule
For those who enjoy a bit of spice, the rosé mule is a fantastic alternative to the classic Moscow mule. Combine rosé with ginger beer and a squeeze of lime juice. The effervescence of the ginger beer pairs wonderfully with the smoothness of the rosé, and the lime gives the drink a citrusy punch. Serve over ice and garnish with a sprig of mint.

Say Cheers!

Rosé-based cocktails aren't just about the taste, they're about the vibe they create. The beauty of the wine is that it can be dressed up or down, depending on your mood or the occasion. From the casual, refreshing spritzer to the more decadent sangria, rosé cocktails are an easy and delightful way to elevate any gathering, turning an ordinary moment into something special.



Escape To Luxury

A peek at some of the most indulgent and extraordinary experiences around the world.

Across the world, the finest hotels curate bespoke offerings that blend opulence, adventure, and personalisation, ensuring that no two stays are ever the same. Whether it's an immersive wellness retreat, a private dining affair in an extraordinary setting, or a rare cultural encounter, these experiences are designed to thrill and amaze – for those looking for more than just a lounge-by-the-pool vacation.



Underwater Dining at Conrad Maldives Rangali Island, Maldives

Experience a private dinner at Ithaa Undersea Restaurant, located 16 feet below sea level, surrounded by marine life.

Approximately ₹36,753 per person for a six-course dinner.



Hot Air Balloon Safari at Four Seasons Safari Lodge Serengeti, Tanzania

Take in the African savannah from above with a sunrise hot air balloon ride, followed by a champagne breakfast in the wild.

Approximately ₹64,018 per person



Château Wine Experience at Les Sources de Caudalie, France

Immerse yourself in the Bordeaux wine region with vineyard tours, wine tastings, and vinotherapy spa treatments using grape extracts with the Grand Cru Experience Package.

Approximately ₹11,05,603 for two adults



Polar Expedition with The Lodge at Blue Sky, Auberge Resorts Collection, USA

Enjoy a luxury heli-skiing adventure across untouched snow-capped peaks, followed by a fireside gourmet dining experience.

Approximately ₹1,88,039 - ₹4,27,361 per night



Northern Lights Viewing at Arctic TreeHouse Hotel, Finland

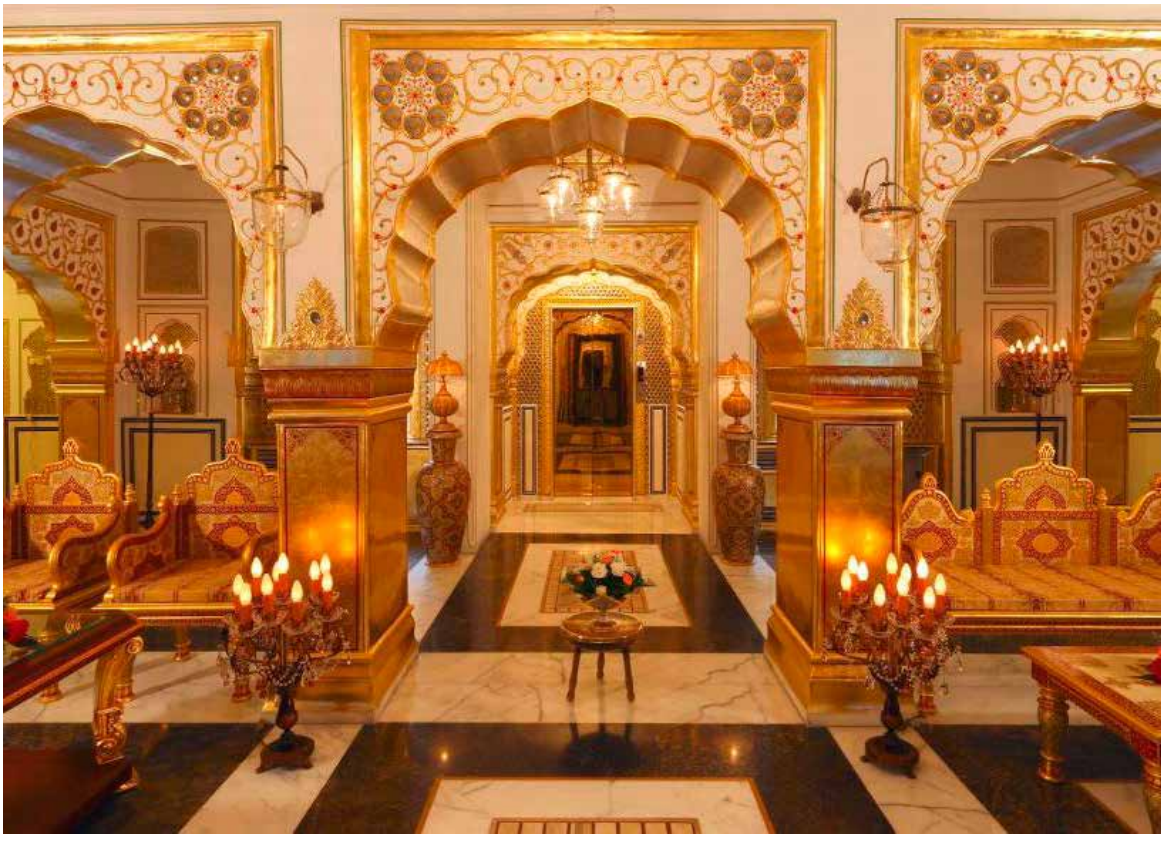
Cosy up in a private glass-walled suite and watch the Northern Lights dance across the Arctic sky.

Approximately ₹27,368 per night

Maharajah's Pavilion at The Raj Palace, India

Step into a whole new world with a four-floor apartment suite featuring a private lobby, spa, swimming pool, dining room, and museum, adorned with gold furniture and rich decor.

Approximately ₹29,00,000 per night



*Prices may vary

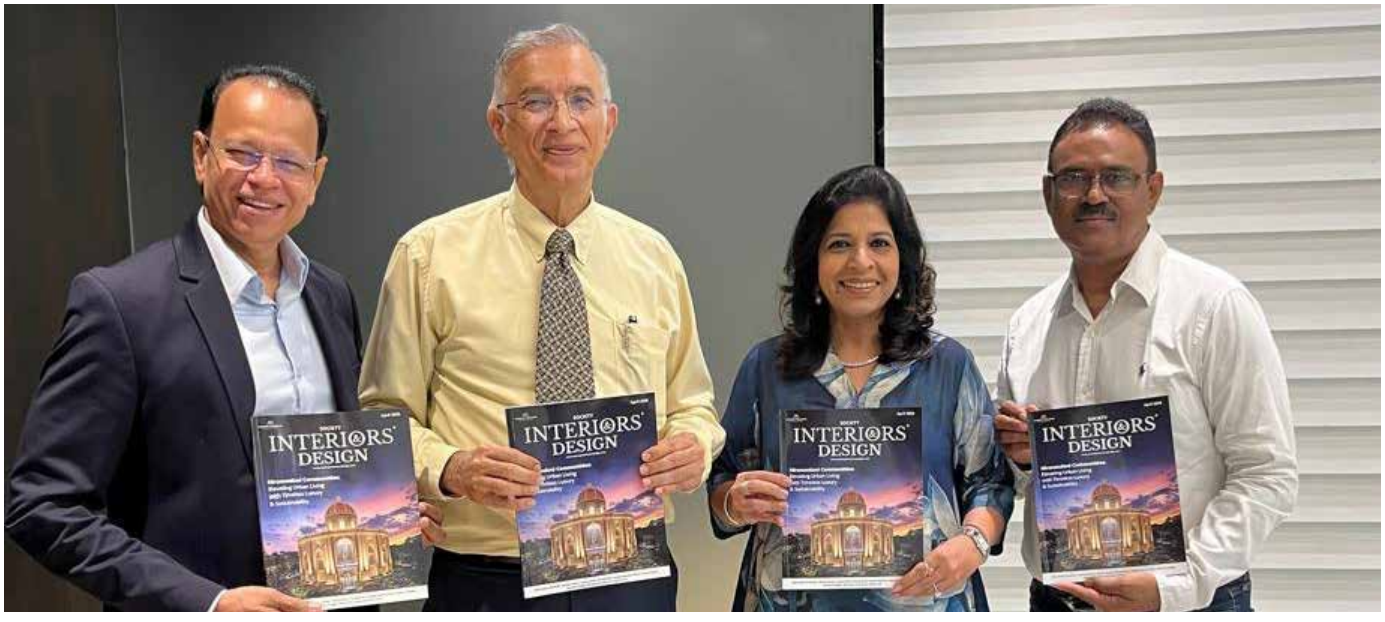
Designing Excellence

‘Society Interiors & Design’ unveiled its latest issue with the legendary Dr Niranjan Hiranandani.

The latest edition of ‘Society Interiors & Design’ featured the awe-inspiring Hiranandani Communities on the cover. To mark the occasion, Dr Niranjan Hiranandani, Founder & Chairman, Hiranandani Group, and Gunisha Sanyal, Principal Design Architect, Hiranandani Communities, joined Ashok Dhamankar, Head of Magnate Publishing, and Sunil Khavnekar, Director, Magnate Publishing, in unveiling the issue, in Mumbai.

It was a celebration of creativity, innovation and design excellence, with the cover story spotlighting the incredible projects of Hiranandani Communities. The warm exchange was marked by engaging conversations, shared admiration for the feature, and a delightful cake-cutting ceremony.

Dr Hiranandani expressed his appreciation for the honour and lauded Ashok Dhamankar and his team at ‘Society Interiors & Design’ for the thoughtful and impactful coverage.







Product Reviews

Off The Rack

A peek at some of our favourite things.



Breezy Chic

Eliza J Embroidered Puff Sleeve Cotton Shirtdress

This shirtdress is a chic blend of structure and femininity. Bold embroidery adds a vibrant touch to its crisp cotton fabric, while the puff sleeves and removable belt enhance the silhouette. With a band collar and elegant button-down front, it transitions effortlessly from day to evening. Stylish, breathable, and flattering — a standout summer staple.

₹ 14,770 **Check it out at: nordstrom.com**



Cool Dude

Rodd & Gunn Gebbies Valley Gingham Button-Up Cotton & Linen Shirt

This shirt offers timeless style with a modern touch. Crafted from a soft cotton-French linen blend, it features a refined navy and brown gingham pattern. The spread collar with removable stays and adjustable cuffs adds versatility, while the pre-washed finish ensures all-day comfort. A smart, breathable staple perfect for both casual and semi-formal looks.

₹13,012 **Check it out at: roddandgunn.com**

Hot Stepper

Stuart Weitzman Dayna Espadrille Wedge Sandal

This pair of wedges exudes effortless summer elegance. Crafted in Spain, it features smooth leather straps and a classic espadrille-inspired wedge for chic, all-day wear. The 2.5-inch heel with a gentle slope offers height without compromising comfort. With its adjustable buckle and quality craftsmanship, it's a stylish, versatile pick for warm-weather outings.



₹37,365 **Check it out at: stuartweitzman.com**

Keepin' It Casual

Cole Haan American Classics Hampton Loafer



This pair of loafers blends timeless style with modern comfort. Crafted with a rich leather upper, it features a cushioned EVA footbed and arch support for all-day ease. The flexible rubber sole provides excellent traction, making it ideal for both work and casual wear. A refined, reliable choice for the modern gentleman.

₹37,365 **Check it out at: colehann.com**

Eyewitching!

Tom Ford Colette Oversized Sunglasses



These sunglasses are a bold statement in luxury eyewear. With their exotic butterfly silhouette and gradient lenses, they exude high-fashion glamour. Crafted in Italy with slim metal frames and 100% UV protection, they offer both style and substance. A chic, oversized design that elevates any look with effortless sophistication.

₹33,034 **Check it out at: amazon.in**

Spectacular

Cartier Aviator Sunglasses



This pair of sunglasses blend retro-cool design with everyday luxury. Featuring sleek silver-hued lenses and a classic metal frame, they offer a timeless aviator silhouette. Adjustable nose pads ensure a comfortable, customised fit, while 100% UV protection adds essential functionality. A sophisticated accessory that elevates daily wear with Cartier's signature elegance and craftsmanship.

₹1,49,315 **Check it out at: cartier.com**

Sound Off

Uncommon Goods Acoustic Frog Amplifying Phone Speaker



This speaker is a charming blend of whimsy and function. Handmade and painted, this ceramic critter amplifies your smartphone's sound without cords or power. Its playful design adds personality to any space, while being microwave and dishwasher safe. A delightful, eco-friendly gift that proves good things really do come in quirky packages.

₹4,845 **Check it out at: uncommongoods.com**



Pack It Up

Ivation 24L Electric Cooler/ Warmer

This is the ultimate travel companion for food and drink on the go. With precise temperature control, it's perfect for road trips or picnics. The airtight lid, built-in fans, and one-button operation ensure ease and efficiency. Compact, low-maintenance, and car-ready, it is convenience and versatility in one smart design.

₹8,808 **Check it out at: amazon.in**

*Prices may vary


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