

THE WEEK

SEPTEMBER 2020

SMART *Life*

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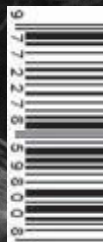
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Handle with care



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Letter from the Editor

Dear Reader,

The pandemic has not only brought about fear but also change. Some call it a hassle while others call it the new normal. Whatever it is, the change has had its set of positive effects on the lifestyle of people. Right from many entering the kitchen for the first time during the lockdown to reaching out for the hand sanitiser every now and then, the fear of the virus has definitely been the beginning of mindful living. Surely, these are troubling times but human beings are resilient, proof of which are the kind of innovative technologies that companies have come up with in order to cope with the crisis. Head to the Inhale section to read about new home installations that have stress-free sanitisation features. From no-contact sanitiser dispenser to germicidal lamps, we have got it all covered.

Mindful living also means being sustainable. Though the idea of sustainable living has been trending much before the pandemic, it got a whole new definition during the crisis. While many environmentalists talk on the lines of growing one's own vegetables or making a shift to green energy, less focus is given to sustainable packaging. That plastic bottle of mineral water is something that most people cannot let go of. But what if we tell you that there are sustainable options even for packaging water? Check out our story 'Time to wrap', in which we have listed some of the best packaging options that are environment-friendly.

In this edition, we have our cover boy Vidyut Jammwal talking about his recent film release and also his journey into the glam industry. The martial artist is the only Indian actor to be part of The Richest's 2020 list of '10 People You Don't Want To Mess With'. The 40-year-old is placed alongside such personalities as Russian President Vladimir Putin and British adventurer and host of *Man vs Wild*, Bear Grylls. "My only dream has been to help bring kalaripayattu global recognition," says Vidyut. "Kalar is not only about fighting, it also involves healing. It is important for one to learn how to heal before getting exposed to harm."

In One Shot, chef Sanjana Patel, who bagged the Indian Pastry Queen title in 2015, shares her story of being denied desserts as a child to becoming a pastry chef. Her patisserie La Folie exemplifies luxurious edible art with a variety of chocolate bonbons in jewel hues and other French desserts designed to wow gourmands with exquisite sensorial experiences. The chocolatier also shares six of her favourite dessert recipes. Did you know that 'stressed' is 'desserts' spelled backwards?

So, get your apron on and whip up something sweet to brighten up your day.

Stay safe, stay healthy and enjoy this issue of *Smart Life*.

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PHOTOGRAPH BY HAIDER KHAN

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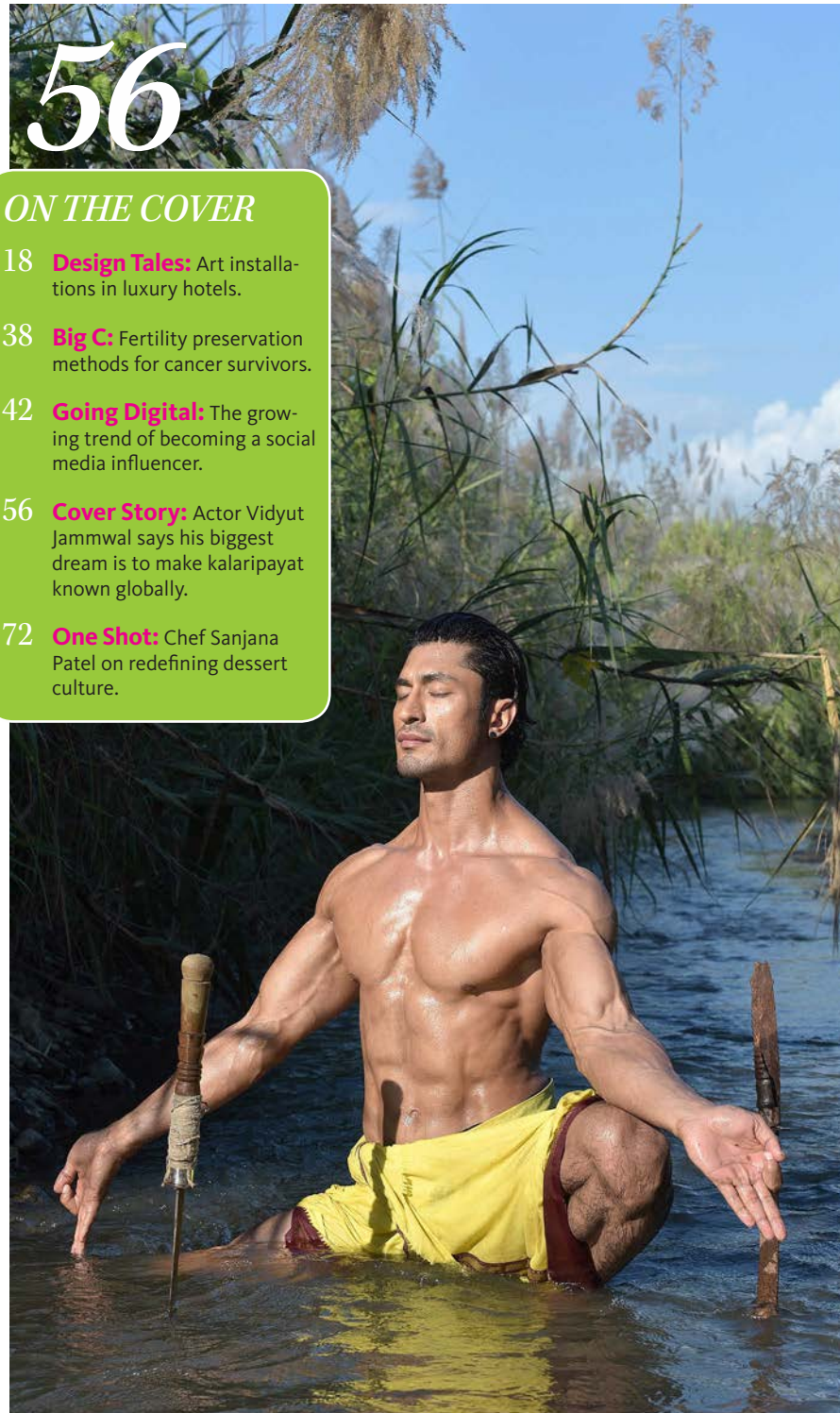
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YOUR BIG DAY

Bridal skincare tips for looking gorgeous on D-day

BY DR DEBRAJ SHOME

Is your special day around the corner? Are you worried about those breakouts, pigmentation, black spots, or visible fine lines on your face? Don't fret, we have got you covered. But it is not all that easy; there is a lot of work to be done to start prepping up your skin in advance. With the hectic work schedule and wedding planning, skincare may be the last thing on your mind, leaving you with acne, breakouts, dull skin, wrinkles and a host of other skin problems. Follow these tips to have a radiant skin on your D-day.

Fillers and botox: In order to reduce the signs of aging and look younger, brides can go for non-surgical procedures that help replace the skin's natural collagen and smoothen facial lines. If you are planning for botox, then do it at least two weeks before your wedding. Botox aids in reducing wrinkles

that are caused by repeated contraction of the muscles when one smiles or frowns. Botox and fillers can improve your skin appearance and make it look smoother. For those with asymmetrical lips with fine lines around the surface of the lips, dermal filler can be a good idea as they can dramatically or subtly enhance your lips too.

Cool-sculpting: It is a non-surgical and an innovative way to get rid of those annoying bumps and bulges of stubborn fat on your body. This revolutionary technology targets and cools unwanted fat cells in the selected area and induces a natural-looking reduction in fat bulges. This does not involve needles, surgery or downtime, unlike other procedures.

Eat right: To get that glowing skin, you will have to keep yourself hydrated by drinking a lot of water. Drink watermelon,

broccoli, and lettuce juice. Add more colours to your diet by including fresh fruits and vegetables. Eat nuts and healthy snacks. Avoid tea or coffee and have green tea. Eliminate sugar and carbohydrates from your diet. Say no to junk, soda, processed and oily foods. Soda can leave you bloated. Also, add protein to your diet. Avoid crash diets in order to cut down those extra kilos. This plan can fail and you may end up gaining more weight.

Sleep well: Insufficient sleep and stress can lead to patchy skin, puffy eyes and dehydration. So, try to stick to a proper sleep schedule and get maximum sleep.

Exfoliate: Want to get rid of dead cells and blackheads? Then, exfoliate your skin from time to time. Exfoliate it before using a mild face wash as a harsh one can cause rashes and

skin irritation. Using homemade scrub made of rice flour or whole wheat flour, or a mixture of both to exfoliate the skin can also be helpful.

Yoga and meditation: Practising relaxation techniques such as yoga and meditation can help you beat anxiety, stress and nervousness by calming you down.

Honey glow: For combination to dry skin types, take one tea-spoon of honey and massage on the skin every day. Leave it on for about 10 minutes and then wash. It not only cleans the skin but also gives you a glow.

Soothing aloe vera: Scrape out the gel from the leaf and massage onto the skin. Wash the skin with cold water after 10 minutes and pat dry. It will soothe and rejuvenate your skin. **Shome is senior cosmetic surgeon and director, The Esthetic Clinics**

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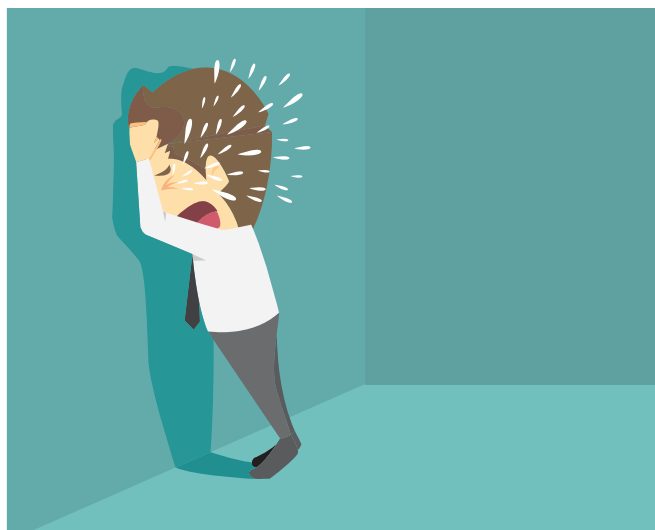
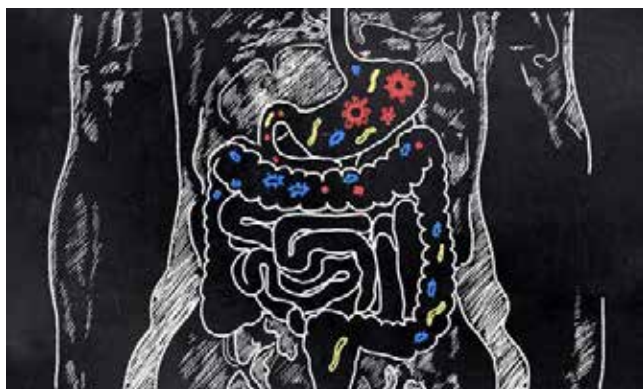


Corona dreams

Since the beginning of the pandemic, many around the world have noticed uncanny changes in the nature of their nightly dreams. It is reported to be stranger, more unsettling and more vivid. People have been reporting the impact that the pandemic and resulting measures have had on their mental health and general wellbeing, but other effects have surfaced as well. One of the most unusual phenomena that people have reported during the pandemic is a change in the nature or intensity of their night-time dreams. This has become widespread enough for it to have gained nicknames such as “quarandreams” or “corona dreams.” These dreams are usually triggered by unknown fears, anxieties, trauma, solution-seeking, post-apocalyptic or post-pandemic scenarios. Researchers suggest a technique called ‘dream incubation’ which can help manage this issue. This involves self-suggestion before going to sleep. According to studies it is better that one avoids the news and don’t think about the virus hours before sleeping instead focus on things that make them happy or excited.

Gut feeling

We cannot stress more on how important the gut health is for overall wellbeing. According to a study by researchers from Flinders University, in Adelaide, Australia, neurons in the gut wall relay sensory information to the spinal cord and brain which may influence mood and well-being. The gut-brain axis performs several functions. The majority of serotonin, a neurotransmitter associated with mood, is found in the gut. Researchers have identified a new way that neurons in the gut wall can activate neurons that connect to those in the spinal cord. They found highly coordinated activity in the gut wall neurons, which they suggest is a powerful mechanism to transmit information about what is going on in the gut to the brain. There is also a well-established connection between the gut and Parkinson’s disease. One study, for example, showed that men who experience constipation are over four times more likely to develop the condition. There is also accumulating evidence to suggest an association between changes in the gut and autism, multiple sclerosis, dementia, and stroke, making studies like this essential in understanding and eventually treating diverse neurological conditions.



Shed some tears

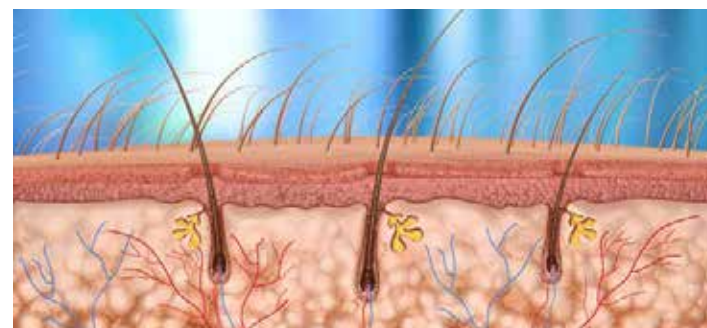
Be it sadness, grief, joy or frustration, crying is a natural response humans have to all these emotions. But did you know that crying has some health benefits? Interestingly, humans are the only animals to cry tears. Most people try to suppress tears as they see it as a sign of weakness but researchers say that one could be missing out on a range of benefits it offers. According to studies, crying may have a direct, self-soothing effect on people. It activates the parasympathetic nervous system (PNS), which helps people relax. In addition to being self-soothing, shedding emotional tears releases oxytocin and endorphins. These chemicals make people feel good and may also ease both physical and emotional pain. In this way, crying can help reduce pain and promote a sense of well-being. Crying not only helps to kill bacteria but also keeps the eyes clean as tears contain a fluid called lysozyme. Maybe, crying is not all that bad after all.

super FOOD of the month



Nutmeg

- Nutmeg is rich in anti-inflammatory compounds; it helps reduce inflammation in the body.
- It is an aphrodisiac and stimulates the nerves in the brain. It enhances sex drive and was commonly used as a brain tonic by the Greek and Romans during the ancient times. It is known to be an effective ingredient for treating depression and anxiety as its essential oil tends to ease fatigue and stress.
- Nutmeg has antibacterial effects against potentially harmful bacteria, including E. coli and Streptococcus mutans.
- According to animal research, nutmeg can enhance blood sugar control and reduce risk factors for heart disease.



3D hair

You may think hair loss is commonly associated with age. However, it can also be due to hormonal changes, environmental and genetic factors. Research typically focuses on encouraging the hair follicles to move from a resting state to an active state. Rather than transplanting hair follicles, which can be costly and relies on a ready supply of donors, more recent research is on stimulating the follicles in the laboratory. Scientists then apply these cells directly to the area of the scalp that is balding. However, hair follicles require culturing in the right conditions. These conditions are best in a 3D sphere rather than a flat 2D environment. The hair follicle cells need to communicate with other cells to shift the hair follicle from a passive to an active state. They do this best in a 3D environment.

PHOTO REUTERS



“Nobody is going to fight for you as much as you fight for yourself.”
—BLAKE LIVELY



Time to rise up



Actor **Shubhaavi Choksey** says she believes in growing together and not belittling anyone

Your journey

I started my journey at the age of 22 and a half, and my first show was *Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi*. Before that I did a short film alongside Amir Bashir which was directed by Anand Rai. After that I got into *Kahani Ghar Ghar Ki*, and there is this talk show that no one really knows about called *Say Na Something*. It was originally hosted by Anupam Kher but I don't know why he could not do it for a couple of months, so I stepped in his shoes for some time. After that I did *Bade Acche Lagte Hai* for 11 months and took a six-year long sabbatical and returned on the TV screens with *Kasautii Zindagii Kay*.

Current projects

As of now, I am only working on *Kasautii Zindagii Kay*. I was offered two commercials but it did not work out as the dates did not match.

Memorable times

There are three memorable moments, the first one was when I got my first pay cheque and my first car. The second memorable moment was when I got married to Harshal and the third one was when we had our son Arhaan.

Greatest challenge

With all modesty, I am not a vamp but I have mostly played negative roles. I have never been able to belittle somebody which my characters have done and that is why I always say that I have never been able to connect to my characters. Before Arhaan was born, I never had a challenge as such. I always had good food on my table, a beautiful house to stay and a driver driving my car. But since Arhaan was born, I have to take



care of all his routine balancing my personal and professional life. But [touch wood] I have my mother-in-law staying in the same building and I also have my mother staying with me sometimes so it is not that big of an issue.

Strengths

I guess my biggest strength is one teaching which I believe in even today—don't let people put you down, rise back up with all your strength. Even when someone rubs me in the wrong way I always retaliate with my work. Whenever someone said that I cannot do it, I always do it and show them.

Weaknesses

My weakness is food. If I smell ghee, I just have that irresistible urge of wanting it on my roti and rice. Then if I see my mother frying chicken, then no matter what diet I am on, I just jump on it. And apart from that my weakness is dance and music. When I am alone, I would just dance my heart out. Watches and perfumes are also on the list.

Movies you binge watched.

There are a couple of movies, one is *Dil Chahta Hai*; the second one is *Lagaan*. *Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara*—I must have watched 12-13 times. Then there is *Matrix* which I have watched many times. *Devil Wears Prada* and *Batman* which I can watch all over again. In short, I enjoy watching inspirational and superhero movies.

Lessons learned

Just live your life and let others live.

Diet and fitness regime

I drink about four litres of water. I also have almonds every day, because my grandmother used to give them to me during my entire school life. Then I need to have some or the other form of egg in the morning and a healthy breakfast. The fact is that I keep eating something or the other every two hours. Maybe a fruit or a vegetable like beetroot. Talking about physical exercise, I started playing badminton and I am also very fond of dance so I do jazz and a lot of splits, lunges and squats. I work out in the gym either in the morning or in the evening. I believe in eating right, I do not believe in starvation. For me dieting is 'die-eating-right'.



Typical day

There is no typical day as such. I get up at 5:30 in the morning and go to the gym. When I get back, I wake up Arhaan, go for my shoot and get back home around 8pm. I have my dinner and then meditate before going to sleep.

Ways to unwind

Hugging Arhaan and Harshal. And some nice meditation music.

Dream for the future

To be happy, mentally, physically and innately.

Why do you think your life is smart?

My life is smart because I don't believe in belittling people. I believe in growing together. People might have their own perspective of having a smart life but for me, it is simple—I am driven by my will and passion. Secondly, if you don't treat people in an appropriate manner, no matter who you are or what you possess you don't exist for me. I have never belonged to a megalomaniacal crowd. Materialistic things don't attract me as much as honesty and a positive vibe.

As told to Oshin Grace Daniell



Birthing plan

Most women often focus on nourishment during pregnancy but what about the stages before and after birth?

BY NAINI SETALVAD

Only when the soil is nourished, will the seeds grow. Only when the sapling receives water and adequate sunlight, will the buds bloom and only when the flowers are well looked after, the bees would come buzzing to turn the nectar into sweet honey. Such is the beautiful cycle of flora in nature. This representation is relevant in the case of a human beings as well, especially pregnant mothers. At every stage of pregnancy, it is important for the woman to be nurtured with good food

and care. The questions that pregnant women usually have are in the tune of what to eat and when to eat it.

Look at it one stage at a time. Though the required dosage may vary from person to person and with different stages, nourishment is crucial when it comes to changing genetic codes and giving your child the best blueprint for life.

Phase 1: Pre-pregnancy

Low glycemic food: Obesity is a common detractor for women try-

ing to conceive. Food items that spike blood sugar are major culprits. Wholegrain carbohydrates that are low on the glycemic scale such as whole wheat, jowar, bajra, jav and nachni should be substituted for refined and processed goods.

Cut back on caffeine: Excessive caffeine from coffee, carbonated drinks and chocolate can send your hormones into a whirlwind. It induces undue stress which can be a hurdle. Stick to green tea and herbal infusions like tulsi and peppermint that are

known to boost fertility.

Go for iron: Iron is vital as the body demands an increased supply of it for the growing foetus during the gestational period. It is easier to build up iron stores before pregnancy rather than during. Rajgirah flour, dry coconut, sesame seeds, drumstick leaves, fenugreek leaves and dill are few of the foods that provide sufficient iron and can be included in the daily diet.

Don't be frugal with folic acid: This vitamin is responsible for neurodevelopment of foetus. It is an essential

requirement before conception, during pregnancy and while lactating. Low levels of folic acid are linked to premature death of the foetus and neural tube defect. Folic acid can be sourced from vegetables like okra, French beans, tomato, cucumber and spinach; it is also found in whole-grains like wheat, jowar and commonly used pulses like moth beans, kala channa, chickpeas and roasted Bengal gram flour.

Phase 2: Pregnancy

Weight watch: Pregnancy is not a free pass for you to consume double your regular intake of food or eat high-fat food. Any food that is harmful for you is harmful for the baby. One needs to have a systemic increase in weight each trimester as it is an indication of a healthy growing life. Wholesome, balanced meals with fresh plant-based ingredients will ensure the baby gets maximum nutrition.

Plant protein power: When I chart out diet plans for pregnant mothers, I add on extra 300kcal from proteins as it is required for the uterine muscles, the growing tissues and organs of the foetus. I normally add nuts and seeds which gives one protein as well as good quality fat. I ask the mother to stick to the plant-based lean proteins like moong dal, chickpeas and moth beans during their gestational period.

Calcium call: There are no qualms about the fact that calcium is an absolute necessity at this stage. Without adequate calcium reserves in place, the growing foetus leaches calcium from the mother's bones putting her at risk of osteoporosis. Don't fret, just include ragi atta, sesame seeds, dark leafy greens like spinach, rajgirah and almonds in your diet for your calcium fix. Try consuming A2 desi cow's milk. **Consume good quality fats:** I always say fear not the fat as it is not always fatal. Good fats like desi ghee, coconut oil, almonds, walnuts, mustard oil and flax seeds are essential carriers of phytochemicals in spices and fat-soluble vitamins. These are a must to help in

neural development of the foetus and management of insulin levels in pregnant women.

Say no to nausea: The joyous feeling of having a baby is clouded when the morning sickness kicks in. Spices like ginger, cumin and fennel are useful in alleviating nausea. A trick I keep up my sleeve for expecting mothers in case of nausea is having a dry wheat cracker or toast.

Cure constipation: One of the most common problems expecting mothers face is constipation. It is important to drink lots of water in order to cure it. I also recommend soaked prunes and dry figs to help relieve constipation; it is also a good source of iron and calcium.

Phase 3: Lactation

Improve milk production: New mothers are always concerned that they won't be able to provide enough milk for their newborns. Adding spices like ginger, fennel, fenugreek, cinnamon, garlic, saffron and star-anise help regularise milk flow and improve production and quality.

Colic control: Colic is a common condition many newborns suffer. Abdominal discomfort causes them to cry for hours leaving mothers feeling helpless. As the mother's milk is their only nutrition, following an anti-colic diet can aid the infant. Cruciferous vegetables like cauliflower, cabbage and broccoli causes flatulence in newborns and should be avoided. Carbohydrates come in many forms. Some are easily digestible, whereas some cause flatulence and bloating. Reducing the intake of foods with such carbohydrates has been proven beneficial for newborns. One needs to reduce quantity of high fructose fruits like apple and mango. Also avoid fructan-rich onions, garlic and watermelon, polyol-packed berries, plums, peaches, sweet corn, galactan-heavy legumes and pulses and lactose-rich dairy products.

Setalvad is a nutritionist based in Mumbai.

Got a question for Naini? Write to us at slife.theweek@gmail.com



Beyond the screen


Practices for safe online learning for children

BY DIVYA NATARAJAN

With the lockdown shutting classroom doors, most schools have shifted to online classes. All the teaching happens through virtual platforms. Homework has become digital. Children are required to spend long hours indoors, focusing on their mobile phone, tablets or laptop. This raises many concerns regarding their long-term health.

Increasing use of electronic gadgets, prolonged near work and lack of daylight exposure can result in progression of myopia or near-sightedness in children. Electronic devices are known to emit short wavelength blue light, suppressing the hormone melatonin, which maintains the circadian rhythm in the body. Prolonged exposure to blue light, especially before bedtime can cause sleep disturbances in children. Too much screen time can also result in dry eye, headache, stress, anxiety, behavioural and mental issues.

It is important to strike a balance between academic learning via digital technology and good physical, mental and personality development in children. Hence, restricted use of electronic devices for studying has been advocated by doctors. Here are some practices that should be followed routinely by teachers and parents to ensure better lifestyle for children.

 The amount of time the child spends using digital devices should be proportionate to the child's age. While 12 to 16-year-olds can be allowed eight hours of online study, the hours of screen time for younger children should be restricted to less than four hours. Toddlers (younger than three years) must be restricted from using any digital device.



- ✎ Teachers must give breaks during classes; a short break every 45 minutes and a long break of one to two hours during long sessions.
- ✎ Online classes should be scheduled in the morning and afternoon hours only, ensuring that children do not use these devices in the evening and night time.
- ✎ It is important that the child sits on a straight-backed chair with arm rests, with the screen placed about two feet away at eye level. This ensures good posture and avoids back and neck problems in future. Larger screen devices like desktop, laptop or TV are preferable.
- ✎ Room lighting should be good and screen brightness should be optimum. Screen protectors can be used to reduce excessive reflection.
- ✎ There should be good ventilation in the room. Sitting for long hours

directly in front of the fan or air conditioning can cause the eyes to dry up quickly. This adds to the strain. They should be encouraged to consciously blink frequently. An easy method to follow is the 20-20-20 rule, where every 20 minutes, the child should take a 20 second break and look at any object 20 feet away. This will relax the ciliary muscles of the eyes and ease the strain due to prolonged near work. At times, preservative-free lubricating eye drops can be used to ease mild symptoms of dry eye. Also, children who usually wear glasses must continue to wear them during classes.

- ✎ Each day, there should be at least one session of physical exercise, yoga, dance class or virtual workout, intercepting the online teaching schedule. This will be fun as well as healthy for children.
- ✎ For homework, they should be encouraged to use textbooks and

notebooks and avoid digital devices.

- ✎ Parents must set a good example by staying away from mobile phones and TV as much as possible. They can also develop quality family time, encouraging children to interact, play games and connect with family members during leisure time. It should be emphasised that use of electronic gadgets is only during classes and for learning. Children must be taught to accept and acclimatise to these new practices and to follow them effectively.

Children's health and well-being must be the collective responsibility of families, teachers and doctors. Adapting to changing times, using technology to our advantage, but following safe measures can give better and healthier life to our children.

Natarajan is consultant,
Miriam Hyman Children's Eye Care Centre,
Mithu Tulsi Chanrai Campus,
L.V. Prasad Eye Institute, Bhubaneswar.

▶ inhale

ABREAST OF LATEST TRENDS, DEVELOPMENTS

Smoking and tobacco use involves both a psychological and physical addiction. The body's need and craving for nicotine is it being physically addicted to smoking and tobacco use. When nicotine is inhaled or chewed, it activates the part in the brain that releases neurotransmitters; one of which is the serotonin, the "feel-good" hormone. It causes unpleasant symptoms when the body does not get its daily dose. Black pepper essential oil helps people quit smoking and e-cigarettes help tackle both the psychological as well as physical addiction to nicotine. When inhaled, black pepper can alleviate the negative side effects and symptoms of anxiety. It also has bio-transformative effects that naturally detoxify the body. This is mainly because the oil mimics the warm sensation in the chest while also providing a unique pungent taste similar to cigarettes.



Stories untold

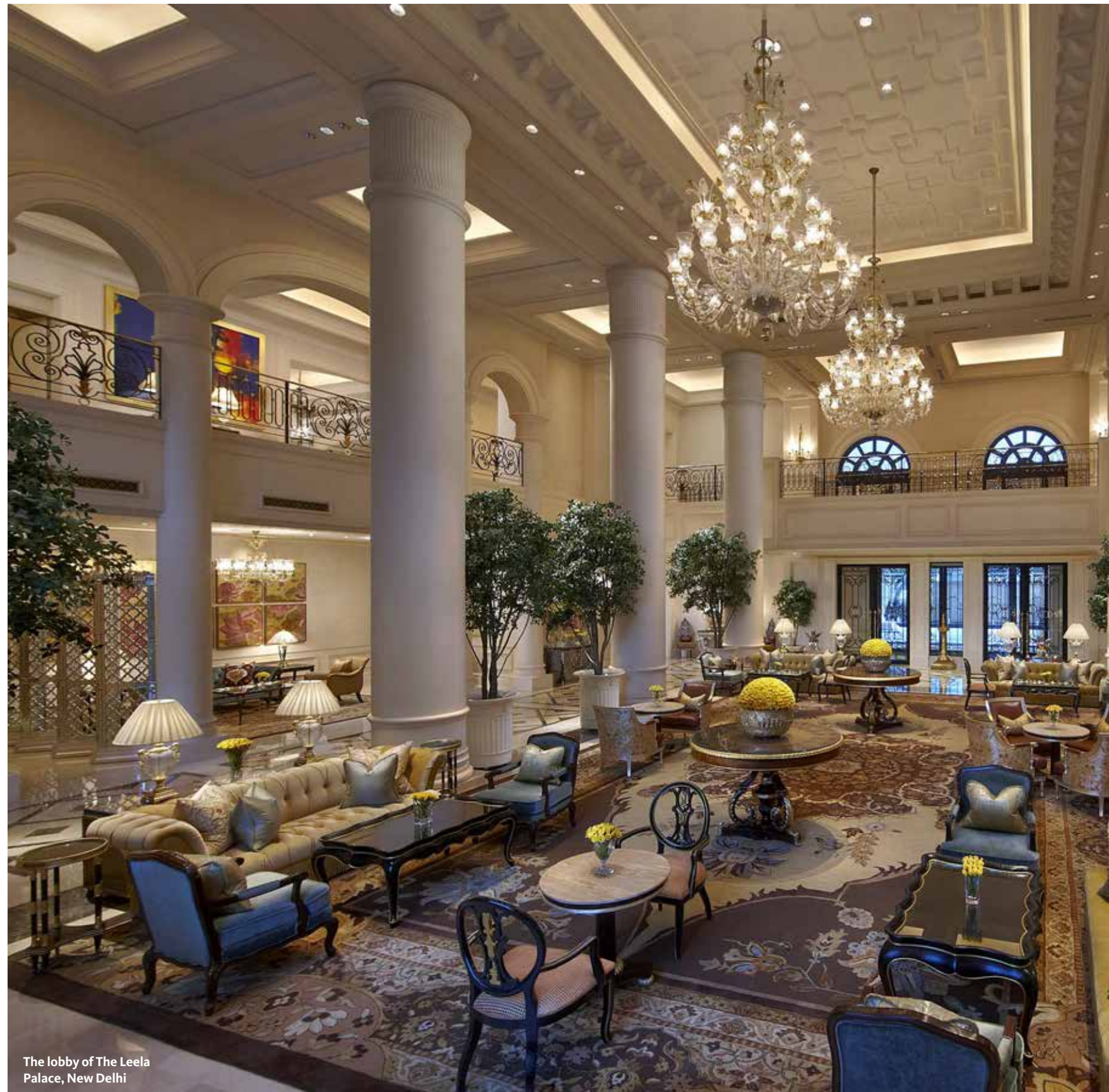
Art in hotels has moved beyond aesthetics; it is now a reflection of folklore and culture

BY RUPALI DEAN

THERE IS AN INSPIRING link between art and travel and, increasingly, hotels are embracing this extraordinary association to offer its guests an enriching experience. Here are some of the top hotels in India that can easily double as museums.



Devi by Satish Gupta, Inner Courtyard, The Leela Palace, New Delhi



The lobby of The Leela Palace, New Delhi



The golden womb by Seema Kohli

The Leela Palace, New Delhi Diplomatic Enclave, Chanakyapuri

The Leela Palace perfectly exemplifies the magnificent architecture, grace and elegance of Lutyens Delhi, showcasing some extraordinary regal designs that adorn the modern palace by renowned artists from different parts of the world.

ART PHILOSOPHY

The artwork varies from corridor to wall, restaurant to guestroom and spa to lobby. Innovative and opulent; traditional and contemporary. The hotel has helped in the revival of miniature painting by master craftsmen from Rajasthan and Bidri work from Uttar Pradesh. Also, adorning the walls of the central courtyard are two golden mosaics, which depict the blooming of 1,000 lotus buds. All guestrooms and suites feature limited edition lithographs, embedded with gold leaf and semi-precious stones by photographer Rohan Shreshta depicting Indian kings and queens in their regal attire.

HIGHLIGHT

Artist Satish Gupta's 10-foot-tall statue Devi graces the central courtyard at the palace. Inspired by the Chola bronzes of the 11th-13th century in south India, Devi, as the artist describes, is "a combination of different energies of the mother." Goddess Durga is represented by the lion at the base, Lakshmi and Saraswati are represented by the lotus on the crown and Kali is symbolised by her crown, which are both fire and the lotus.

Fairmont, Jaipur



Fairmont, Jaipur

2-RIICO, Kukas

Luminous under the vigilant eyes of the Aravalli hills, sparkling with history and culture of Rajasthan, Fairmont is a refined chateau that elegantly combines the splendours of the past with the present. It is a subtle reimagination of a traditional Mughal palace.

ART PHILOSOPHY

Designed by architect Clive Gray, Fairmont boasts grand spaces, vibrant gardens and pavilions. The art influence reverberates in the form of elaborate frescos in hues of blue, gold and red that embellishes the walls. Treasures such as the vintage Shekhawati furniture, carved silver antiques, the large velvet *pankha* in the lobby and the rich upholstery make you feel like a part of a primeval love

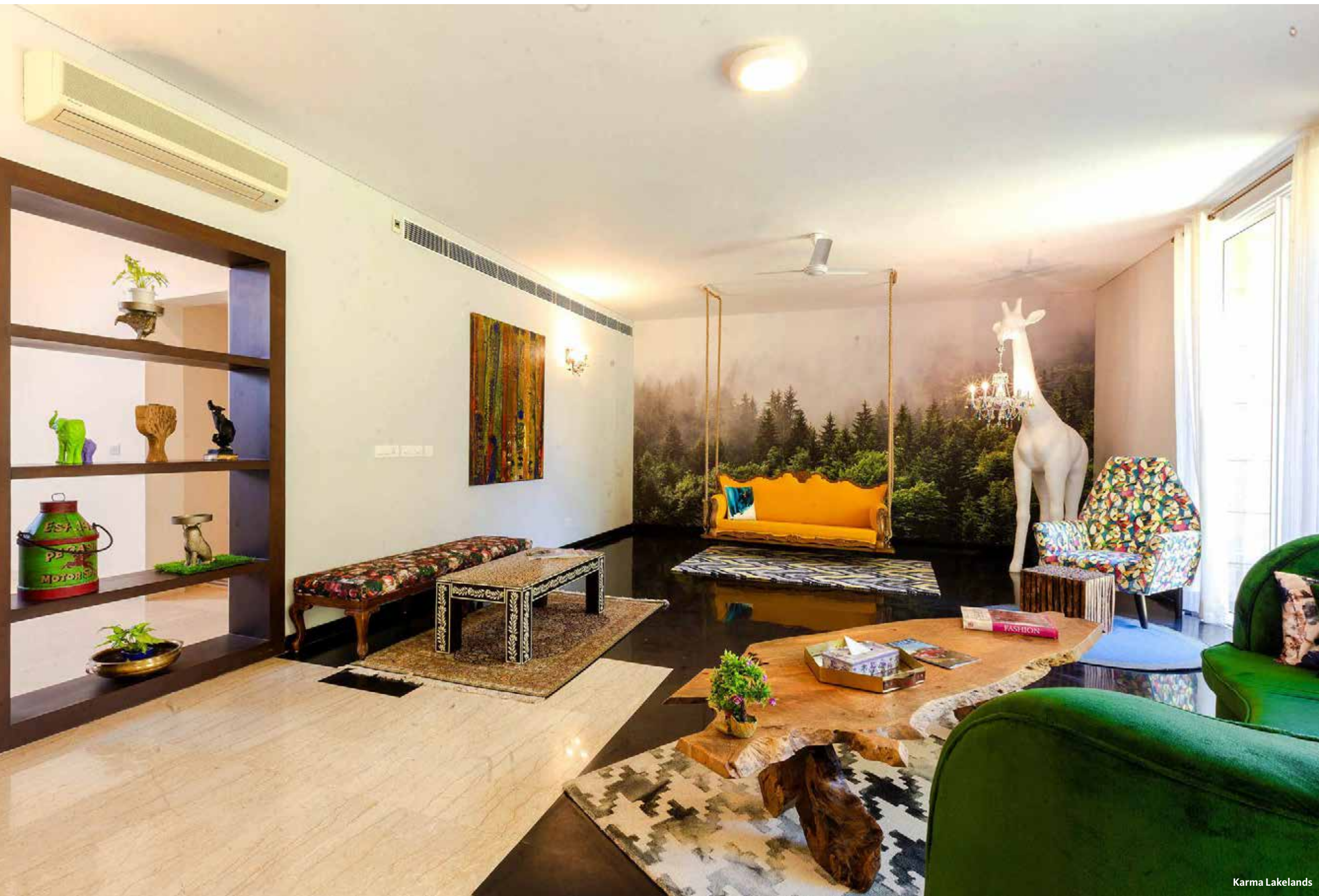
story. The guest rooms are tailored residences that radiate classic heritage effects with four- poster beds, camel bone inlaid furniture, walk-in bathrooms with the distinctive pink city stone hamam style bath tubs, Mughal styled low-seating day beds and subtle arched windows overlooking the Aravalli hills.

HIGHLIGHT

A magnificent historic door welcomes guests to the palace resort. The door has a history dating back to almost four centuries ago. Originally from one of the Royal Palaces of Jodhpur, the 400-year-old Sagun wooden door has handcrafted intricate designs that display the fragile beauty and aura of an era long forgotten and yet enduring to survive through the sands of time. The historic door embellishes the picturesque corner of the hotel and stands as a quiet sentinel of time and royals of yore.

The 400 -year-old royal door at Fairmont, Jaipur





Karma Lakelands,

Gurugram
NH - 8, Sector 80

Artistic luxury villas act as stylishly designed modified space for guests at Karma Lakelands. The art in the villas is inspired by current life situations with an underlining effect of nostalgia art tends to create. The USP is eco-responsible luxury living and the art reflects this aspect perfectly. For instance, two of their newest villas are inspired by life above and below water and symbolise 'nature zen'—the harmony created by the delicate balance that nature maintains in all its life forms. While one showcases the forest theme, the other brings to life a marine world.

ART PHILOSOPHY

The idea of placing the art concept above the decorative requirements ensures that guests feel as if they are visiting a coherent exhibit, with every room revealing new perspectives on the main theme. The aim is to strengthen its mission statement of harmoniously co-existing with nature by adopting responsible practices.

HIGHLIGHT

With every villa based on a unique theme and its own distinct art, it is difficult to pick out one. A giraffe sculptor in the forest-themed villa and a colour splash painting lit with backlights to bring the colours to life are some the prominent pieces. There is an art villa where the central focus is photography and it showcases some unique clicks.

Karma Lakelands



Grand Mercure, Bengaluru
Gopalan Mall, opposite RMZ Infinity Techpark,
Swamy Vivekananda Road

Recently opened in Bengaluru, Grand Mercure celebrates the art and culture of Karnataka, with a matchless sense of global hospitality. Inspired by the Hoysala Dynasty's influence on art, the hotel celebrates the art and culture of Karnataka in all its vibrancy.

ART PHILOSOPHY

The design pays homage to the architectural brilliance of one of the most significant periods of historic Karnataka, the Hoysala Dynasty. The dynasty's contributions to art and culture have deeply influenced not just Karnataka, but the whole of south India. Vasundhara art gallery, the in-house art gallery, features a curated collection of fading art forms from all across the country.

HIGHLIGHT

You cannot miss out on the 10-feet-tall, grand sculpture carved out of a single stone of onyx. Right by its side is a 100-year-old sculpture ornately carved in wood, symbolising the Hoysala Dynasty. The sculpture depicts King Sala striking the tiger. The word 'strike' literally translates to 'hoy' in old Kannada, and the incident became quintessential in the naming of the dynasty. Some say that the folklore is also an interpretation of King Vishnuvardhana's victory over the Cholas at Talakadu, as the Hoysala emblem depicts the fight between the mythical warrior Sala and a tiger, the tiger being the emblem of the Cholas.

The Hoysala sculpture at
Grand Mercure, Bengaluru



Art by Ranbir Kaleka at
The Ritz-Carlton, Pune



The lobby of The
Ritz-Carlton Pune

The Ritz-Carlton, Pune Golf Course Square, Airport Road, Yerawada

One is immediately drawn to the hotel's arresting architecture, art collection, extravagant ornamental details and golf course. The rest of the senses are invigorated as the experience unfolds, showcasing a business hotel built upon a base of luxury. The property is an exciting association of definitive splendour and contemporary sophistication with spaciouly appointed suites that offer an inviting urban retreat.

ART PHILOSOPHY

The art collection revels in heritage celebrated throughout history. Supporting the visual storytelling are doses of classic design pieces that echo throughout the property's permanent collection.

HIGHLIGHT

Art by Ranbir Kaleka. In this artwork, the floor pattern and the arch of The Ritz-Carlton has been transformed and modified to suit its architecture. A bioscope is intentionally placed, bringing a varied world of people and animals in the picture frame. A European child in the forefront signifies the dreamy lure towards travelling of late 19th- and early 20th-century. There is a secret behind the men clustering next to a wall. This and other details, such as the two gold rings on a handkerchief, are yours to interpret. Behind the adapted architectural structures of the city with chimneys, one can see a merchant ship of the British East India Company. The crane and the workmen symbolise the unceasing development that Pune has witnessed. A playful inclusion of the artist and the patron woven into the composition has a running strand, both in Indian miniature paintings and the European renaissance.



The Big Mama sculpture just outside The Park, Holiday Beach, Goa



The Park, Holiday Beach, Goa

Holiday Street, Lane Opposite Calangute Mall

This chic property is truly the reflection of The Park Hotel's design sensibility and eye for detailing. A white contemporary hotel right on the beach, The Park on Holiday Beach is a Mecca for creative people. The stylish and relaxed mood of the hotel blends delightfully with the light and contemporary décor of the accommodations, where a primarily white canvas is accented with dramatic splashes of purple and custom furnishings.

ART PHILOSOPHY

The hotel co-exists in splendid harmony with nature and pampers guests while maintaining a serene and restful environment. Artwork in the rooms and corridors are based on musicians of Goa and bring to life the vibrant energy of the destination.

HIGHLIGHT

The stunning glass-mosaic fish by Goan artist Yahel Chirinian which hangs above the reception desk, gives the whole space a speckled with kitsch look. □

Artwork based on Goan musicians at The Park on Holiday Beach, Goa

Two good

Check out this anti-inflammatory diet that also boosts immunity

BY MINAL SHAH



Inflammation is body's response to an injury or infection; it can be an irritant, bacteria, virus or any such disease-causing organisms. Recurrent or persistent inflammation can lead to various diseases like heart disease, cancer, rheumatoid arthritis and asthma. There are certain food items that trigger such inflammations and another category of food that has anti-inflammatory effect. Including anti-inflammatory food in our diet helps combat silent inflammation, reducing the risk of diseases. It also helps build immunity. Diet is not only a source of calories, but it can also become an essential therapy to treat and prevent diseases. Best example of anti-inflammatory diet is the Mediterranean diet and DASH (Diet Approaches to Stop Hypertension).

The anti-inflammatory diet is supported by experimental evidence, capable of boosting immune systems, resulting in improved quality of life. Food sources that have anti-inflammatory properties include:

Omega-3 and Omega-6 fatty acids:

Supplementing Omega-3 fatty acids like Eicosapentaenoic Acid (EPA) and Docosahexaenoic Acid (DHA), with mild calorie restriction has immune modulatory effect.

Nuts: Walnuts, almonds, pistachios and peanuts help reduce inflammation.

Oil and oil seeds: Olive, flaxseed, cod liver, mustard, peanut and sesame oil are the best when it comes to

anti-inflammatory properties. Flax seeds and chia seeds can be included in the diet regularly for their health benefits. Be careful with the portion size though, one to two tablespoons of these seeds are all we need.

Phytochemicals: Different colours of fruits and vegetables are attributed to the presence of different phytochemicals like flavonoids—present

in citrus fruits, green tea, berries, apple, dark chocolate, whole grains, coffee, soya bean and walnuts—which fights inflammation. Then there are carotenoids present in red, orange, yellow and green coloured fruits and vegetables which boost immunity. Our body turns these carotenoids into Vitamin A that has antioxidant properties and enhances immune response. Anthocyanins are found in blue, red or

purple pigments found in grapes, blueberries, raspberries, cranberries which again possess anti-inflammatory properties. Sulphides present in garlic and onion also have similar functions.

Vitamin C: This vitamin helps in preventing and treating respiratory and systemic infections. Ensuring adequate intake of Vitamin C through diet or supplementation is required for proper

immune function and resistance to infections. Vitamin C also helps in iron absorption which is essential for haemoglobin synthesis. It is a water-soluble vitamin that is not stored in the body, so it has to be consumed on regular basis for getting maximum benefits. It may not prevent sickness but one would definitely have milder symptoms and faster recovery. Easy way to identify the sources of Vitamin

C would be to include red, orange and yellow coloured fruits and vegetables. Highest source of Vitamin C are amla (gooseberry), lemon, guava, capsicum, drumstick leaves, blackcurrants, kiwi, broccoli and amaranth leaves. Important points to consider is that the Vitamin C content of our food may be reduced by prolonged storage, cooking and heat. Food should be consumed in the natural form like fresh fruits and vegetables, and as quickly as possible to ensure maximum retention of Vitamin C.

Vitamin D: Adults who have low levels of Vitamin D are more likely to have cold, cough or upper respiratory tract infections. Supplementation with 1000-2000IU per day is reasonable but consult a doctor before beginning supplementation. Dietary sources of Vitamin D include egg yolk, cheese, fatty fish and fortified food.

Zinc: Crucial for maintaining the integrity of immune response. Even marginal deficiency of zinc can suppress immunity and mild supplementation can improve several aspects of immune function. Total 10-40mg of zinc/day can be considered safe; consult a doctor before taking supplements.

Proteins: Required for antibody, immune response and to tackle the wear and tear of the body. Low protein intake can weaken the immune response and increase susceptibility to infections, it can also increase muscle protein breakdown thus resulting in weakness and delayed recovery. Choose first class proteins like milk and dairy products, animal sources like egg, chicken and fish. Soya protein is also a good source of plant-based protein followed by lentils, pulses and legumes. Protein should be divided through the day, making it a must-have in every meal.

Shah is a senior nutrition therapist at Fortis Hospital, Mulund



Spick and span

With no signs of the global health crisis abating, prevention through sanitisation is the only way to go

BY OSHIN GRACE DANIELL

The pandemic may have brought in a sense of fear among people—the fear of germs. With this fear came a sense of responsibility as well. As a matter of fact, the whole concept of sanitisation got another definition altogether. From rarely washing hands to reaching out for a bottle of sanitiser every time one's hand touches a possibly contaminated space, there has been a dramatic change in habits and practices. Although everyone is hopeful of a pathbreaking discovery that would neutralise the virus, there is an uncertainty associated with when a vaccine or medicine would be made available. All that can be done at the moment is prevention and this can be done only through sanitisation. But the question is, can it be hassle-free? They say, necessity is the mother of all the invention. This aphorism springs to life in these troubling times as inventors around the globe have come up with devices that make sanitisation less stressful. Here are some appliances that would make our lives not just easy but also germ-free.

Germicidal lamp

According to several studies across the globe, ultraviolet light (UV-C light) in the range of 200nm to 280nm eradicates viruses, bacteria, mold, fungi and microorganisms on food products, surfaces, air and liquid. The UV spectrum is capable of killing 99.99 per cent of all pathogens

within seconds. Elanpro's second offering under its Safe series is the Safe Germicidal Lamp which is an intelligent UV-C based virus steriliser. The product is a logical solution for an ecological disinfection. The unique sterile approach eliminates the use of hand, heat and toxin in the decontamination process. It has a radar motion sensor which detects the presence of human beings and pets within a range of 5m, shutting it down immediately for protection. The product has a remote-control access of 10m and a delay timer of 10 seconds. Equipped with a powerful 36-watt quartz lamp, it effectively prevents the spread of virus in an area 60sqm. The product can be used to clean things like mobile phones, laptops, clothes, shoes, masks, currency notes, stationary items, water bottles, bags, baby products along with fruits, vegetables and daily grocery and many more items that should not be subjected to liquids or aerosol chemicals.

In the same family of germicidal lamps is a product by a leading Indian manufacturing company Alfaa UV. Its recently launched product Stero-360 is a high-performance mobile UV sanitiser for touchless and non-chemical disinfection. Stero-360 uses Ultraviolet Germicidal Irradiation (UVGI) disinfection method in which the sanitiser emits short-wavelength UV light to inactivate microorganisms by disrupting their DNA, hence destroying the ability of the microorganisms to

Elan Safe germicidal lamp



Hands-free sanitiser dispenser by Elanpro

reproduce and thereby effectively killing them. It targets surface at a distance of 1.8m and height up to 2.5m within two minutes. Ergonomically designed, Stero-360 exhibits six high-intensity UVGI emitters that are ozone free. It has a high-efficiency energy distribution system to increase the irradiated UV dose on target surfaces. It comes equipped with an app-based control for remote operation. It has preset functions which ensures elimination of operational errors. It is ideal for all commercial spaces as it is compact and user-friendly.

Infrared sensor-based hand sanitiser dispenser

One can now find a sanitiser dispenser in front of stores, buildings and other public spaces. With many touching the bottle, the surface of the dispenser may turn into a breeding ground for germs. Keeping this concern in mind, Elanpro, a commercial refrigeration company, recently launched their product Elan Safe Sani Dispenser which is an infrared sensor-based hand sanitiser dispenser. The design addresses the need for rigorous hand hygiene and



Disinfection cabinet by MG Pro

and this can be achieved by maintaining clean and hygienic Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems especially in closed-environment and high-risk structures like centrally air-conditioned hospitals, malls and hotels. In a bid to address the current need of labour-intensive traditional maintenance, Alfaa UV has introduced UltraCoil and UltraDuct UVGI air disinfection modules that ensure fool-proof efficient cleansing of the target surface without harming the UV-sensitive material like cables, gaskets and rubber material on the HVAC system. While conventional and periodic cleaning drives do offer some respite to maintain the equipment, these processes have their own drawbacks, because of which businesses for quite some time now, have been turning towards UV-based cleaning of HVAC systems given its advantages: no-chemical residue, no need for periodic cleaning, 99 per cent reduction in the growth of biofilm, and cost-efficiency, among others.

Disinfection cabinets

With food delivery services on full-swing during the lockdown, the necessity to disinfect fruits, vegetables and other edible things is of high priority. MG Pro, a foodservice equipment manufacturer and supplier, launched a UV-C disinfection cabinet to curb the growth and spread of bacteria and viruses via food articles. The cabinet kills 99 per cent of microorganisms from the surface of the objects placed in it within five minutes. The cabinets come equipped with a controller and a variable timer for diverse user applications. It is made up of stainless steel and designed to meet user safety at all points, for which it has a safety switch to trip the UV-C emission in case of someone abruptly opening the door during the disinfection process. Apart from food, it can also be used to disinfect high-touch daily-use objects like utensils, keys and wallets. □



Stero-360 germicidal lamp

also focuses on zero wastage. It is easily mountable on a wall or stand and it automatically detects hands kept at a distance of three to five inches from the surface. It has a sensor that dispenses just 1ml at a time, cutting down the wastage because of spilling and leakage. The dispenser is easy to install, refill and operate. There is a key to unlock the reservoir and it can run of four batteries that can last up to six months or 6v DC adapter.

Air disinfection modules

In July, the WHO published an update that the Covid-19 virus can remain suspended in the air in crowded indoor spaces with short-range aerosol transmissions. The need for optimum indoor air quality is necessary



Air disinfection module by Alfaa UV

New hope

With the increase in number of young cancer survivors, fertility preservation is an aspect that needs to be discussed prior to treatments

BY DR SNEHA SATHE

The pandemic has put life on a pause. In many parts of the world, routine fertility care, elective surgeries and fertility treatments such as intrauterine insemination (IUI) and in-vitro fertilisation (IVF) have been put on hold due to the pandemic.

Pandemic or not, people are being diagnosed with cancer, including many young patients. Over the past few decades, the number of young, reproductive age cancer survivors has increased as a result of improved and less destructive cancer treatments. Certain types of cancers are predominantly diagnosed among reproductive age women and a small proportion of cancers originating in the reproductive tract are also detected in this age group. For young patients, the diagnosis of cancer is a shock in itself and then the risk of infertility. Unfortunately, fertility preservation services are rarely discussed with the patient before starting cancer therapy. At the end of the cancer treatment, patients are shocked by the loss of their fertility and there are many studies showing this as one of the most pervasive regrets for these patients. Patients often consider the negative impact of cancer on their fertility as the most traumatic part of their diagnosis.

If you or some young person you know has been diagnosed with cancer, read on to know how cancer treatments can affect fertility and the

various fertility preserving options available today which can help cancer survivors fulfil their dreams of parenthood.

How does cancer affect fertility?

Cancer surgery or treatments and sometimes the cancer itself can interfere with some parts of the reproductive process and affect the ability to have children. The effects might be temporary or permanent. The risk that the cancer treatment will harm fertility depends on the patient's age, the type and stage of cancer and the type of treatment.

Surgery: Surgical removal of the testicles (orchidectomy), uterus (hysterectomy) or ovaries (oophorectomy) have an obvious negative impact on future fertility. Also, cancer surgery for other tumours in the abdomen or pelvis can cause scarring (adhesions) in and around the reproductive organs. These adhesions might block the fallopian tubes preventing the egg from travelling to the sperm or preventing the implantation and growth of a fertilised egg.

Chemotherapy: The effect of chemotherapy on fertility depends on the drug and the dose. Alkylating agents and the drug cisplatin are known to cause the maximum damage. Women who require higher doses, combination regimens or both chemo and radiation

therapy to the abdomen or pelvis are at higher risk of permanent damage to fertility.

Radiation: The damage caused by radiation depends on the location and size of the radiation field and the dose given. High doses of radiation can destroy many or all of the eggs in the ovaries leading to infertility and early menopause. Radiation damage to the uterus can increase the risk of miscarriage, preterm birth and low birth weight babies.

Other cancer medications

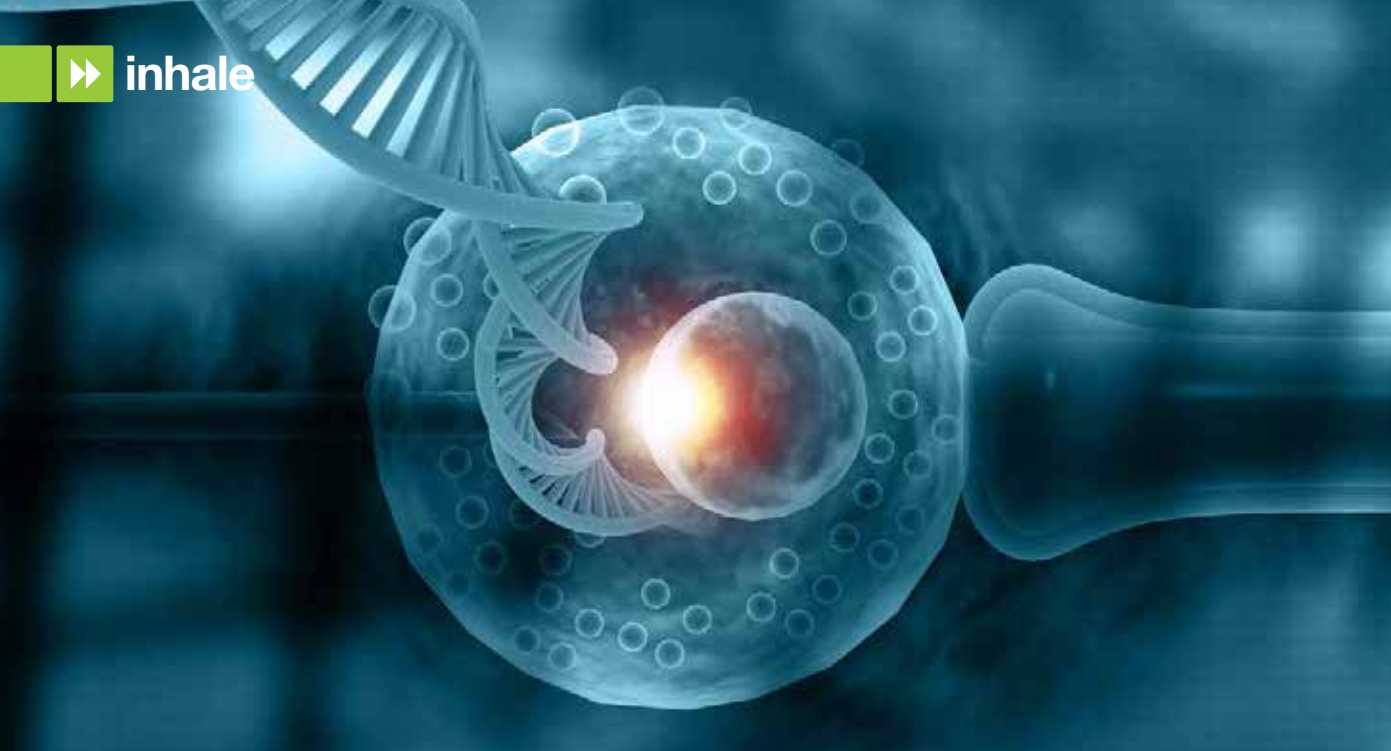
Hormone therapies used to treat certain cancers, including breast cancer in women, can affect fertility. The effects are often reversible and fertility may be restored after the end of treatment.

Fertility preservation means preserving the ability of a person or a couple to start a family at a time of their choosing. Oncofertility is a term coined for fertility preservation in cancer patients. Current data suggests that for most tumours, pregnancy after cancer treatment does not increase the risk of cancer progression or of poor obstetric or neonatal outcome. With improved survival after cancer treatment, the emphasis has moved from providing life to providing quality of life.

Fertility preservation options for women

The mainstay of fertility preservation





for women is freezing of eggs or embryos generated through the IVF process.

Embryo cryopreservation: For this procedure, the patient needs to undergo an IVF cycle which involves ovarian stimulation, egg retrieval and fertilisation in the IVF laboratory followed by freezing of the embryos. The frozen embryos can be transferred to the womb at a later date. Embryo cryopreservation is a well-established technology that provides a good success rate depending on the number and quality of embryos.

Oocyte cryopreservation (egg freezing): In this procedure, eggs are retrieved after ovarian stimulation and the unfertilised eggs are frozen. This is the standard method for preserving fertility for young single women with cancer.

Egg or embryo freezing procedures require controlled ovarian stimulation, which takes approximately two weeks. The usual ovarian stimulation protocols for routine IVF begin from the second day of the menstrual cycle, but today random start protocols (where ovarian stimulation can be started on any day of the menstrual cycle) are possible to avoid delay in cancer treatment.

Oophoropexy (ovarian transposition): For women who undergo radiation therapy to the pelvic area, the ovaries are surgically repositioned in the pelvis so that they are out of the radiation field.

Radiation shielding: In this procedure, small lead shields are placed to reduce the amount of radiation exposure to the ovaries.

Fertility sparing surgery: Fertility sparing surgery is the technique to retain the patient's uterus and ovarian tissue enough to allow future conception. This may be an option for young women with early stage cervical cancer and some types of ovarian and endometrial tumours.

Fertility preservation options for men
Sperm cryopreservation (semen freezing): This procedure involves freezing and storing sperm at a fertility clinic or sperm bank for use at a later date.

Radiation shielding: In this procedure, small lead shields are placed over the testicles to reduce the amount of radiation exposure.

Fertility preservation can increase

the likelihood of future pregnancy for young cancer survivors. More importantly, it provides patients with hope and a positivity during a very negative time in their lives.

The current unpredictable pandemic situation has certainly made cancer care and fertility preservation even more challenging. On the one hand, fertility treatment is considered an elective procedure and hence not a priority during a pandemic. On the other hand, urgent fertility preservation is needed and should be offered to young cancer patients. With utmost caution and strict adherence to the safety protocols and local guidelines, oncofertility is a feasible option, giving hope for young patients with cancer.

The damage caused by cancer treatment to fertility is often irreversible and fertility preservation prior to cancer treatment can help young cancer survivors fulfil their dream of parenthood. In spite of the threat from the pandemic, it is important for young cancer patients to seek guidance and counselling from fertility specialists regarding the options available to them.

Sathe is a fertility consultant at Nova IVF Fertility, Mumbai.

|| pause

HOLD THAT THOUGHT, INTROSPECT, QUESTION



Did those grass stains spoil your favourite pair of jeans? Fret not, it can be easily removed with hydrogen peroxide. All you have got to do is follow these steps:

- ◆ Rinse the stain with warm water.
- ◆ Apply a generous amount of peroxide to the stain.
- ◆ Allow the hydrogen peroxide to sit on the stain for at least half an hour.
- ◆ Take a wet soft brush or towel and gently rub the stain to work in the peroxide. Rubbing the fabric will wear it out. So, you only want to do this as long as necessary.
- ◆ Rinse the stain with normal water. If the stain remains, repeat the process.

Online squad

Social media influencers on the what and the how of digital content creation

BY OSHIN GRACE DANIELL

Digital content creation has had a growth surge, especially during the lockdown. Cooped up at home, people have been spending more time on social media and engaging actively with content creators. To match the insatiable demand for content, there has been an explosion of content creators. Social media definitely saw many creators who have been a source of constant entertainment and information, and a few others who raked in followers with their toxic content. Nevertheless, digital content has been food for many homebound consumers. The big question is how does one create content that resonates with the audience? They say, it is best to learn from the ones who came before. Here is what some top social media influencers from south India say about the content creation ecosystem.

Anto Philip V for visionary

"Do small things with great love."

"Irrational optimist" is what Anto Philip calls himself. Considering that he started his first company when he was 18, the title is quite apt. He started his journey as an influencer early on but his story is very different from the

others. In 2014, he along with his friend founded the 'Under-25 Club' which is considered to be India's largest platform of, by and for the youth. "For me, all the things I do are part of my core belief that young people are the truest potential of a country. And I want to unlock as much potential as I can," he says.

Anto says he is constantly on a quest to find new things to make an impact in the creative landscape. "I firmly believe that one should use the camera to be relevant and impactful. It is important to value your audience. Your story can be anything but it should make sense to you. The mind is a crazy place, it allows you to create almost anything," says the 25-year-old storyteller.

According to him, there is no such thing as good or bad content. "You never know what interests the audience. I feel all kinds of content are out there to entertain the public. The choice of content is extremely personal," he says. "I would be lying if I said I know what kind of content gets applause. I always try to make my content in a way that it makes people laugh or feel the emotion that I try to pass on through the video. I think it is truth in your work that makes content travel. Viewers have a low attention span so it is important to not even have two unimpressive



seconds in your video.”

But his advice to people is to not become content creators. “It is a lot of hard work. You should tell stories because you love them, without expecting the viewers to feel the same. If it has a foundation based on the validation of others, then it is likely to be short-lived. Also, it is important to understand that you should never tell stories that you don’t believe in,” he says.

Anto also emphasises on the importance of owning one’s identity. “All of us are going through an identity crisis one way or another but there is no need to worry about it. People should be able to wake up and say what they strongly feel,” he says. “I owned my identity as a middle-class Malayali boy and I try to bring out things that I relate to in my stories.”

As for Anto’s parents, they were concerned in the beginning but soon came around. He asked them for a year after graduation to figure out things and although they were apprehensive about the idea, they gave him nod. “My parents were hoping that I would get an MBA and be the poster boy for a matrimony site, but I turned out to be way different. Fortunately, I figured out my passion in that one year,” he says.

For Anto, one of the biggest challenges was building a team. “You can be the best player on the field but if you have to win a championship, you need a team,” he says. “Right now, I have immense comfort in knowing that I have a great set of minds at work.”

It all starts with a thought for Anto. “I don’t get a lot of time to sit and write as I attend a lot of meetings. But I try to create a thought board and start jotting down points on it. It sits with me for a couple of days and then I make two or three drafts,” he says. His favourite bit in the process is the discussion on the edit table which he calls a learning ground. After the script is revised, the team prepares for the shoot. “Sometimes shoots are long. That is mostly because I try to get the best version. I don’t suggest it for

every content creator though. Then the video editing team start their work. By the time the video is out, we would have already started work for our next project,” Anto says.

However, he does not believe in posting regularly or every day for that matter. “When I post, I want to deliver my best. Many people can create everyday but it is important to create something that stays with people for more than 24 hours,” he says. “Being a content creator is more than just a profession; it is a mindset. You cannot joke about being a storyteller.” Anto strongly feels that content creation is all about convenience and comfort. “Don’t do anything that you are not comfortable doing. Be yourself and use your best skills to your interest. Upgrade with time. All that you need to remember is to make your story powerful. Do small things with great love.”

The visionary also tells aspiring storytellers to not beat themselves up and to give themselves a pat every now and then. “Trust in the process and do not listen to the ones who profusely shout negative things. Nobody knows what you do better than you.”

Ahmad Al Kaashekh, One-man army

“Never buy likes or followers.”

It was a YouTube video called ‘Indian guy speaking Arabic in 10 different accents’ that got the Dubai-based digital content creator his shot to fame. “I think people found it amusing to watch a Malayali boy speak fluent Arabic,” says Ahmad Al Kaashekh. “Back then, getting 50,000 views was a big deal. I remember how I shot the video in one go as I did not have the tools or knowledge to edit videos that time. I kept shooting till I got a version that was clean. Imagine getting content, over 10 minutes long, right in one stretch!”

But years into this field, Ahmad stepped up his digital content game. “I initially used iMovie to edit my videos but now I use Final Cut Pro. I also



invested in a camera (Canon EOS M50) and two studio lights—8-inch phone holder lights and an 18-inch wing light—which have different tones like white, warm and blue.

But Ahmad says that it is not important to have fancy equipment for one to get into digital content creation. “I started off shooting and editing on my phone. I couldn’t afford a laptop then. I used free apps, which are not completely free—some have in-app purchases while some others have a huge watermark. There were times when I even used my friend’s work laptop to make the edits,” says Ahmad. “I did not start off thinking I would make it big or build a career out of it. I had access to internet and a camera, so I thought why not?” It is not his full-time job though. He produces his videos while keeping a day job as a science communicator. “My day job also involves interacting with the public. It is mechanical at some point but there is a lot of talking in both my jobs so I don’t really find it difficult to transition between the two roles,” he says. While finding a niche area is crucial for every content creator, Ahmad believes that it can be done only through trial and error. “It is important to keep trying and see what works. In my case, there was a lot of hate in the beginning. I was mocked for the way I look and speak. But I never thought of stopping. One should learn to value people who encourage and support your work. I recently got a message from a follower saying how that person used to hate my videos before but enjoys my work now. Time changes a lot of things,” says the 28-year-old YouTuber.

However, he emphasises on how being a social media influencer is more of a responsibility than a job. “Anyone can make anything and become famous now. And most aspiring content creators are on a lookout for shortcuts. The trend wagon in social media is a real thing. Even if people don’t like it, they try to get on it,” Ahmad says.

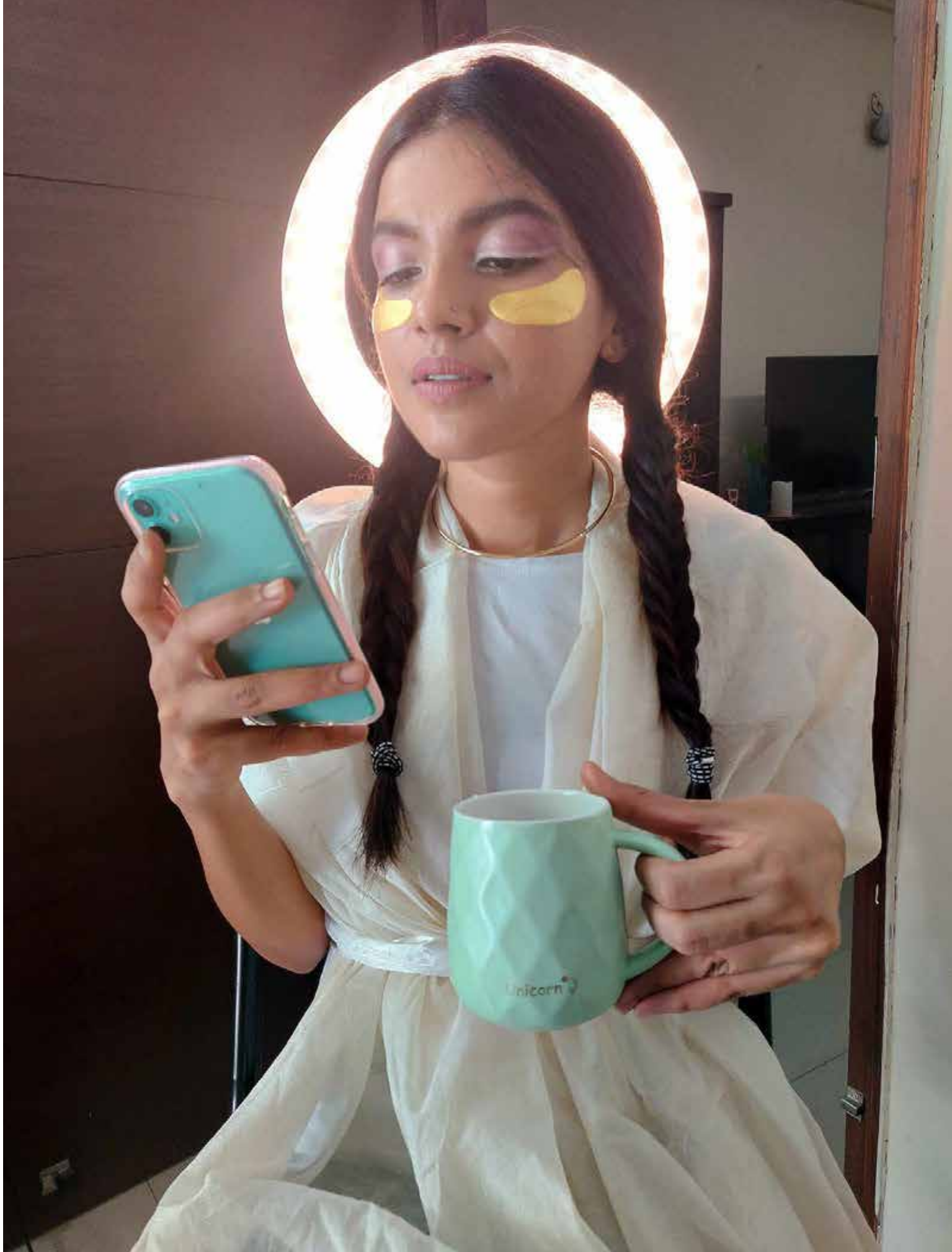
Commenting on the roasting cul-

ture in social media, he says, one does not have to body shame or racially abuse another in order to get some attention. “When I do reaction videos, I focus on what the person says. It is ideologies that need repair not a person’s appearance or talking style. Most content creators forget that YouTube has a dislike button,” he says.

His advice to aspiring social media influencers is to figure out what they want to do quickly. He also strongly warns against the practice of buying likes and followers. “Don’t depend on other people to share your content or indulge in buying likes or followers,” he says.

The process of creating content is quite straightforward in his case. It starts with scripting the idea. “I think about the scenario of the video. If it is a lot of content, I write it down otherwise I just let the idea play in my head. I never start shooting a video in the evening as the light entering my apartment changes during sunset. I wait for it to get dark so that I can adjust the lighting,” he says. Post shooting, he gets on with the editing work which he does by himself. Sounds like a one-man army! “I shoot one day and edit on the next day. I trim the video first and then add sound effects and background music,” he says. Ahmad calls editing a tiresome process as he does not like sitting in place and working for a long time. “More than editing, I think adding subtitles is the most annoying bit for me but it is important as I have viewers from different parts of the world,” he says. Post a copyright check, he packages the video. He then schedules the upload by announcing it on his social media handles and finally posts it on his Instagram account as well as YouTube channel.

While some of Ahmad’s videos are sponsored, most of it gets money based on the viewership. “Earnings are not fixed. Some months are good while some others are not.” Moving forward, Ahmad hopes to expand content-wide as well as in terms of technology. “I want to get into doing travel vlogs. But



I want to do it differently by going to off-tourist spots, deep into the cities. Explore unexplored regions and introduce interesting people to the world,” he says.

Prapti Elizabeth Witty Betty

“Take action instead of waiting for motivation.”

Clad in an elegant saree, ‘Mrinalini’ has her head held high and legs crossed. As the 1964 K. J. Yeshudas song (Mrinalini Mizhiyithalil) from the Malayalam movie *Aval* plays in the background, she breaks into a wide smile. For Instagram influencer Prapti Elizabeth, Mrinalini is like her ventriloquist figure that voices out opinions on current issues with a dash of humour. “With Mrinalini, I have tried to subvert the entire idea of gossip,” Prapti says. “It was initially supposed to be ‘Rendezvous with Renatta’. The idea of Mrinalini happened after I had a fight with my friend whose name happens to be Mrinalini. When I first mentioned this name to my father, he started singing the evergreen Malayalam song which is the intro music. So, this was also a perpetual apology to my friend.”

Prapti broke into the internet world with a series of videos on stereotypical Malayali mother problems. But, little did she think that her videos would blow up. With no history of acting or even being part of school plays, the witty Delhi-based Malayali girl created a wave on social media.

She was not always an Instagram influencer though. She started her career as a senior writer at various web publication firms like Bluepage, Wadi and ScoopWhoop. It was during her stint at *India Today* that she took on multiple roles—script writer, actor, director and producer. “It was more like the need of the hour. The segment I was working for as a writer was shutting down and I had to move to another team. I wrote a script which was liked by the video team and they

took me in. That is how that part of it happened and I joined as a scriptwriter. It was a very new team and they were yet to hire actors. That is how the whole thing with video making began but it was interesting so I stuck with it,” she says.

Commenting on the mushrooming of digital content creators, Prapti feels it is important for people to keep content as well as comments very civil. “I am okay with mockery, sarcasm and satire. What bothers me is abusive commenting,” she says. “Even when it comes to roasting, it is fine as long as one keeps it civil. In my videos, I react to things that I feel is not okay. As a matter of fact, I react to the content not the creator. I am against picking on people. You can’t diss someone and call it creative criticism neither should you propagate hatred among your followers towards that particular person,” says the 29-year-old.

According to her, there is a tendency among budding content creators to copy a pattern. “I have seen that whenever there is a set pattern that just seems to work all the time, people tend to follow it; almost blindly. The best example is how parents force their children to take up science in high school or go for engineering. Most people go by this notion that after doing a particular course in a particular way and then joining a particular firm, a person’s life is sorted. Similarly, when one sees a lot of validating comments for a particular kind of video, there is a tendency to replicate it,” she says. “Nobody knows what kind of videos do well. Whenever I think one of my videos would do well, it never does almost all the time.”

The Instagrammer strongly emphasises the importance of relatability and originality while producing content. She also says it is key for creators to develop a unique style and give their own twist to things. “My advice to aspiring content creators is to just go for it. Take action instead of waiting for motivation. But always remember that consistency is key. It took me

more than a year to build my profile on Instagram,” she says.

During the lockdown, Prapti has been shooting videos on her own. “I use my phone, tripod and a wing light for shooting. When I shoot in the office, things are different. Everything from camera setting to makeup is taken care of but at home I do it on my own,” she says. The only complain she has is about the humid weather in Delhi. “While shooting I don’t turn on the fan or AC and I sweat a lot. If the shoot goes longer, I take breaks in between wipe my face and sit under fan before I get back to shooting,” says Prapti. The editing bit is always outsourced but she works on the subtitles as she tends to switch from English to regional languages like Hindi and Malayalam.

Sharan Nair Master of pranks

“Anything and everything can be good content.”

As a teenager, Sharan Nair enjoyed taking videos of every little thing that happens around him. But it was only later that he started posting these videos on social media. “I used to record anything and everything. I did not do it thinking that somebody would watch it and like it. I did it because I like shooting. Whenever I am with an interesting group of people or when I find a scenario amusing, there is an automatic instinct to take my phone out and record,” he says. It was in 2017 that he started uploading online content more. “Growing up, my parents kept on telling me to work hard but they never told me what to work hard on. I am glad I found something I love doing and I work really hard on it,” says the 26-year-old.

According to him, initially most digital content creators start off their work based on some others on the social media circuit. “I don’t see that as an issue. Everybody does it, even the ones who say that they don’t. It is the

process of getting started. But once you get into the groove, it is crucial to develop radically distinctive content,” he says.

It was a video with his grandmother on *Game of Thrones* dialogues that got the 26-year-old attention on social media. “The series was the talk of the town then and I wanted to get my grandmother’s version of the dialogues. It was hilarious. As a matter of fact, it blew up on Instagram,” Sharan says. Netflix liked the duo so much that it began a series called ‘Indian Grandma Reacts To’ followed by the movie name. “The videos that I make with my grandma are not scripted. I try to keep it raw,” he says.

Sharan believes consistency is key in the digital content game. “You are not answerable to anyone if you don’t make content regularly but it is important to put yourself out there and grow in the process. Recently, I promised myself that I would make a video every alternate day. Surely, there is pressure but nothing makes me happier than producing videos,” says the Kochi-based Instagram influencer.

All the videos by Sharan have a distinct comical element that differentiates him from the rest of the creators in the circuit. He mostly uploads his videos on Instagram as he finds the platform to have a better algorithm. His recent series of videos called ‘This is not a vlog’ which is on his everyday life not only got him laughs but also a huge following. “I find content almost everywhere. I was out with my friends the other day and I saw those black and white cows on the road. I wasted no time and quickly ran home to get my cow costume. The owner of the cows was confused when he saw me dressed up but by now most people in my city know that there is a crazy person walking around on the streets,” he says.

Sharan says his family and friends are always vigilant when he is around. “They keep checking if I am holding a camera and shooting them. So, sometimes, I keep the camera hidden



to record them,” he says. “For me the moment is important not the equipment I use. My frames are not the best. I don’t use a fancy camera or lighting either. But I believe in making my content funny.”

Sharan has a team of friends who help him out with content, shooting and editing. “It is never a one-person thing. You need people around you who give ideas and also constructive criticism. Whenever I finish a video, I run it through my team to get their opinion. It is important that you like your video but also understand the perspective of the ones around you,” he says.

Sharan stresses on how important it is for content creators to find a balance between what they like and what their viewers like. “It is important for you to be flexible to move away from the DNA of what you like. However, it shouldn’t be always about what your followers like,” he says.

Prank videos are his favourite. “I started off with my own pranks but now people send me ideas.” Most digital content creators start off with the sole objective of earning money. But Sharan says that money comes in only later. “There will not be any money in your initial days. One needs a certain number of followers and subscribers to start earning. In the case of brand endorsements, it is agencies that contact you. They may have a list of social media content creators from which they choose. There are times when all of us get the same endorsement,” he says.

His videos may be around 1-2 minutes long but it is a result of hours of editing and shooting. “Mostly, I try to keep it simple but there are some videos which take hours to edit. Imagine editing four to five hours long footage to make a 2-minute video!” he says. His biggest advice to aspiring content producers is to be consistent. “Just use your phone, don’t think about other creators or be affected by people’s comments, work really hard and, most of all, have fun.” □

Time to wrap

Top picks for the drive towards sustainability in packaging

BY OSHIN GRACE DANIELL

Call it the pandemic effect or the fear of uncertainty, people are more mindful now than they were ever before. And this is not just to keep the virus away. The unprecedented halt to our fast-paced lives not only brought those dinner table conversations back but has also ignited a desire to bring about a lifestyle change. However, this change is not only associated with physical health but also the health of the ecosystem. It is important to understand that our actions have a direct impact on the environment; it may be subtle or drastic, but there is always an effect. So, why not make a positive impact?

With a vision to promote products that are environment-friendly, several companies across the country have come up with innovative changes to existing products. Maybe not directly to the product but the way it is produced and packaged. From juice cartons to takeaway food, packaging is ubiquitous in our daily lives. Most people tend to overlook the aspect of sustainable packaging which plays a pivotal role in solving landfill problems. The throw-away culture is rampant in our country and hence there is a need for zero-waste packaging where all the materials are reused or recycled. Here is a list of brands that have taken sustainable packaging way too seriously.



Responsible Whatr

Straight from a natural spring in Solan, Himachal Pradesh, Responsible Whatr is India's first natural spring water beverage offered in a sustainable and endlessly recyclable aluminium can. It is a non-alcoholic beverage that was launched with a vision for a sustainable future and an agenda to reduce single-use plastic pollution. According to Ankur Chawla, CEO and co-founder of Responsible Whatr, the cans are made up of around 70 per cent recycled aluminium. "The material is a natural choice for packaging as it does not contribute to heaps of landfills. It does not alter the freshness of the water when exposed to light or heat. But when water in a plastic bottle is exposed to heat or sunlight, it has a tendency to become a carcinogen. A lot of research has been put into our product to make it highly sustainable," says the 32-year-old who believes that sustainable packaging is serious business. He elaborates on a 2016 study by ICF International which found that the combined greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with the transportation and refrigeration of beverages in aluminium cans are lower than those associated with beverages in glass or plastic bottles under the same conditions. "On a per litre beverage basis, emissions associated with transporting and cooling aluminium cans are 7 to 21 per cent lower than plastic bottles and 35 to 49 per cent lower than glass bottles, depending on the size of the comparative bottles as well as the types of refrigerators in which beverage is cooled prior to consumption," he says. "An internal industry study done in India shows, in case of refrigeration, if the capacity of the refrigerator is 285l, 186 cans of 500ml could be accommodated vis-a-vis 86 bottles of 650ml. The approximate time required to reach 6°C is 11.5 hours for cans vis-a-vis 20.5 hours for bottles. In case of logistics, about double the number of cans are transported in a single consignment when compared to bottles."

The spring water, which is purified without changing its natural properties and has a pH of 7.4. Starting from not pumping the water out from the ground and utilising only the free flow water, to using the aluminium in the cans made from 70 per cent recycled aluminium, the brand stands for being truly responsible. In addition to this, the entire production facility also harvests rainwater, which is used for irrigation.

The design of the can is clean yet elegant and luxurious-looking. "The story behind the brand name is a simple one. Usually, one does not expect water to come in a can so for clear communication we did play with the word 'water'. Since we have always been speaking about taking the responsibility of bringing in a revolution and a solution to the enormous problem of landfill, the word 'responsible' came naturally handy. Both the words together convey a deeper and impactful purpose of the brand," Ankur says. "We have come to realise that it (sustainable packaging) is more a necessity and not trend anymore. We at Responsible

Whatr have made this a part of the culture for the organisation.” Ankur feels that it would not take long for everyone in India to adopt this new and improved lifestyle change initiated by Whatr. “Since we are a newly launched brand, the impact on customers and society will only be seen in a few months. We believe that little drops make the mighty ocean,” he says.

TöpCare, SOLO

While there is no harm in storage in aluminium cans, wrapping food in aluminium foil can be dangerous to health. Yes, the foil paper that has been an essential part of our daily lives—from packing our lunch to cooking grilled fish, vegetable or meat in

the wrap—has adverse effects on the growth of human brain cells along with causing harm to one’s kidney, liver and could even prove fatal in the longer run. It reacts with salt, spices and other ingredient in the food and black spots often seen on the surface of food is the effect of this reaction. And worse, it is not biodegradable in the true sense. Although over a long period of time, it will break in to smaller pieces in landfill through oxidation, many recycling facilities do not take it as it is difficult to recycle when covered in food materials. For 24-year-old Naman Gupta, it was the concern for the health aspect that got him thinking of an alternative. “We (his family) are a bunch of avid readers and it was the knowledge of the harmful effects of the foil paper that triggered the idea of coming up

with a better wrapping paper that is not only healthy for the body but also the environment,” Naman says. TöpCare wrapping and baking paper hit the market 12 months back under the mother brand SOLO, which has been in the office stationery business for over three decades. The paper is made of wood fibre which is processed in a mill in Europe. “My family travels a lot internationally and we got our inspiration in Europe. We tied-up with a mill there that has been working in the paper domain for over 100 years. Although we call the health concern as our initial push, we also wanted to produce something that is completely natural and sustainable. This product is a new vertical for us and it definitely pushed us out of our comfort zone. But it is worth it” he says. The biggest challenge according to Naman is consumer awareness. “People still don’t know the side-effects of aluminium foil and educating them is going to take some time,” he says. The brand offers



two products as of now—baking and cooking paper, and food wrapping paper. Both are versatile in nature, environment-friendly and sustainable. “We wanted to explore how to work around paper and its properties. Our baking and cooking paper can be reused up to five times. Even our wrapping paper can be reused but sometimes it gets coated with curry or sauce making it hard to reuse it. The papers are chlorine-free too,” says the Delhi-based entrepreneur.

The paper used by the brand is certified for adhering to US FDA and European Parliaments standards for coming in direct contact with dry, moist and fatty foodstuff. It is also tailored to meet the Indian requirements. The paper is priced slightly on the higher side but it is a very small price one pays considering its impact on health and environment. “Food, in our country, is something that is traditionally prepared by a mother. Every day when food is packed for the family, it is done with a lot of love and care.

And this affection deserves top quality packaging. That is how we came up with our brand name,” Naman says. With a vision to expand and better existing products, he is on a mission to bring more sustainable products to the market.

Drunken Monkey

Samrat Reddy, founder of Drunken Monkey, was never a tea or a coffee lover. Whenever he went out with his friends during his college days in Chennai, he used to be on a lookout for smoothie or juice shops. “I always wondered why there are so many tea and coffee stalls and almost no smoothie shops,” he says. It was this thought that got him to do his own research on the reason why there aren’t many juice bars. “When I did my research while doing my MBA, I found that it is mainly because logistics are difficult and the margins are less,” Samrat says. Despite understanding the risks involved, he charted a plan for his business. “I spoke to many experts who gave me a

negative response. They said a dosa or biriyani outlet would fetch money and not a smoothie store. But my vision was not just one store, I had a multi-store concept in my head. Therefore, I decided to come up with a plan that would negate all the flaws. It was definitely a difficult and money-taking process but I was in this for the long-haul and there was no turning back,” says the 35-year-old risktaker.

When Drunken Monkey opened its first outlet in 2015, the brand used plastic bottles to store and serve the smoothies. But within two months of its conception, Samrat decided that the brand would be completely plastic-free. “We took off the plastic straws and offered paper straws instead. We also switched to glass bottles that were specially designed for our brand. We as a brand strongly believe in everything being natural and our core product is also natural and fresh fruit smoothies,” says the Hyderabad-based entrepreneur. “It definitely increases the cost which varies with different material.

Generally, we can say that there would be a minimum of 30 per cent increase in the cost of packaging. It does put some amount of burden, but it is a choice a brand has to make on the basis of their ethics.”

The glass bottle has a classy design with a wide neck which is ideal for serving and consuming thick smoothies. “The idea is to avoid the use of paper straws as well. The wide neck allows customers to drink the smoothies off the bottle. But we had a few people requesting us to keep the straws,” Samrat says. He believes that packaging is an important factor to accentuate the look, feel and the branding of the product. “In most cases there is a choice a brand needs to make between sustainable and non-sustainable packaging materials. This choice depends on both the cost and the convenience,” says Samrat. Drunken Monkey also educates its customers on how to reuse the bottles. From using it for storage and growing plants to doing artwork, the bottles can be used creatively for different purposes.

One may ask why the name ‘Drunken Monkey’ when the brand serves no alcohol. “The tag line of our brand is ‘naturally high’. What we mean by ‘drunken’ is that one does not need alcohol to get high; there are a lot of other ways to enjoy life. And monkey is an animal that is always happy. It also symbolises our core value of preserving nature and its elements,” Samrat says.

Currently, the brand is planning on getting environment-friendly paper cups. It also wants to convert to a subscription model where people would order for a month or a week.

Kocoatrait

For Chennai-based L. Nitin Chordia, who is India’s first certified chocolate taster, packaging is more than just being sustainable, it should be zero-waste. And this is the culture in his premium bean to bar chocolate brand Kocoatrait.



“We have been working on the sustainability side of our business for over two years now. And, I am proud to say that Kocoatrait is the world’s first and only brand with no plastic or paper packaging—the best part is that the brand is proudly Indian,” he says.

The packaging material is a fabric made of reclaimed cotton and cocoa husk. “The inner side of the packaging has mandala art templates, greetings, emergency contact list and habit trackers which make the wrapper reusable. Even when it comes to machinery, we have developed our own designs which are energy efficient,” says the chocolatier. But it does not stop here for Kocoatrait. Recently, the brand has switched from plastic-based ink for printing to water-based ink which is more eco-friendly. “This might be a small aspect for several consumers but for people who have taken sustainable living seriously, this is a big deal. It is a big change for us as well considering the changes in the back-end operations,” says Nitin. The brand has also made changes to the outer packaging from tin to palm-leaf based boxes. “We have tied-up with a Chettinadu-based self-

help group for this project. The group not helps women in villages to earn a livelihood but also uses the proceeds for the development of villages. The group also has designers who have studied at prestigious institutes like NIFT,” he says.

Apart from retail chocolate bars, the brand has also come up with baking chocolate blocks. “The normal compound chocolate has vegetable oil in it while our brand offers organic chocolate with coco butter. The packaging for this product is also sustainable and zero-waste as we have recipes printed on the back of the cover. We are working closely with several home bakers as we feel it is important to encourage them,” says the 41-year-old chocolate sommelier. “One thing that I can boldly say is that consumers love zero-waste products. We, as a brand, are actually doing most of the job for their sustainable lifestyle. I think choosing the right products is the first step to sustainable living.” Kocoatrait plans on bringing out more novel packaging concepts in the future which would go beyond the conventional idea of sustainability. Looks like we are in for a treat! □

◀ exhale

CELEBRATE LIFE, CHOICES AND CHALLENGES



Nobody likes a pair of wet shoes. While tossing it into the dryer sounds like the most convenient option, you could end up shrinking the shoes and also damaging the dryer in the process. The easiest, most effective and least damaging way to dry wet shoes is with newspaper. There is also an added bonus—newspaper removes odour. Follow these steps for dry and odour-free shoes:

- ◆ Stuff the shoe from toe to heel with crumpled up newspaper. Let this sit for 1-hour.
- ◆ Remove the newspaper and stuff again with dry newspaper. Let this sit again for a few hours.
- ◆ Remove that round of newspaper and stuff again with dry newspaper and let it sit for 8-12 hours.

For the best results, wrap a few rubber bands around the newspaper to keep them in close contact with the shoes. The newspaper will absorb the water pretty quickly, but depending on how drenched your shoes are, you may need to change newspaper once or twice. You may want to remove the insole, too.



The way of the warrior

Action star **Vidyut Jammwal** on kalaripayat, his new movie *Khuda Haafiz*, battle with injuries and much more

BY OSHIN GRACE DANIELL
PHOTOGRAPHS BY HAIDER KHAN



actor Vidyut Jammwal is not someone to be messed with. As

a matter of fact, it is official now. He is the only Indian actor to be part of TheRichest's 2020 list of '10 People You Don't Want To Mess With'. The 40-year-old shares space with the likes of Russian President Vladimir Putin and British adventurer and host of *Man vs Wild*, Bear Grylls.

"We're about to show you guys who sport biceps the size of tree-trunks, multi-skilled fighters who could take down any opponent, and yep, even one particular president with a black belt in Tae Kwon Do," says the YouTube channel of TheRichest. Though Vidyut saw the thumbnail of the video, he was initially unaware that he was a part of it. "I saw the cover picture, and I was like, 'There must be some very crazy people on that list'. I didn't watch the entire video. Three days later, a fan tweeted saying I was on the list. I saw it, and I was like, 'That is very cool'," he says. "The funny bit is when I sent it to my mother, she said, 'You are the weakest in the list! You are so thin! How come you are on it?'"

Vidyut is considered one of the most dangerous and highly skilled martial artists in the world. Well versed in kalaripayat, which is believed to be one of the oldest surviving martial arts in world, he is on the Looper's list of top 10 martial artists in the world. "My only dream has been to help bring kalaripayat global recognition," he says.





Every martial artist gets injured but a true warrior knows how to cope with that injury and recover. It is these injuries that have taught me some great lessons.



His Kalari journey started at the age of three when he was living in Kerala. “I lived in an ashram in Palakkad, where the martial art form was taught. My mother was a part of it. She learnt the art from the gurus in the ashram. She is an exponential healer and I inherited that trait from her,” he says. It was his mother who gave Vidyut his name, which means electricity. Vidyut gives credit to his mother for not only teaching him Kalari, but also for making him understand the true essence of the martial art form. “It is so important to understand the true essence of this art form, as there are times when people tend to limit its possibilities,” he says. “There is no set style of Kalari. We have two legs and arms and all of these parts are used while fighting. I don’t believe in a differentiation like north or south style. The real style is Lord Shiva style who is the destroyer and protector. When I went to the Shaolin temple, I got to see some monks who use just a sword. Then there were some who engaged in acrobatics only. And then others

who focussed on healing. In kalaripayat, one should know all of these aspects; not just one,” he says. He goes on and on about Kalari and then pauses for a bit and says, “I get very excited when I talk about my art. Actually, I am really proud to be associated with it.”

Although Kalari is one of the oldest martial art forms, Vidyut feels that most people have a limited understanding of it. “It is like saying the only highlight of India is the Taj Mahal whereas there are many beautiful monuments in our country. Similarly, Kalari is not only about fighting, it also involves healing—healing linked with the combat arena. It is important for one to learn how to heal before getting exposed to harm,” he says. He claims to have healed many people with perennial problems. “I feel it is important for one to go through that particular suffering in order to heal people. If you want to get healed of a particular condition, go to someone who has experienced it or recovered from it. The knowledge that you find on the internet is less compared to what your body can teach you. Once you get into the groove of finding knowledge within, you will be surprised by what you learn,” he says.

When it comes to injuries, Vidyut has had several growing up. “It is inevitable. Every martial artist gets injured but a true warrior knows how to cope with that injury and recover,” he says. “It is these injuries that have taught me some great lessons.” Apart from teaching him lessons, the injuries have also left scars. He calls it the tattoos of the warriors. “I love my scars. From my chest to my knees, my ribs and my back, I have several scars. Although I love tattoos I would never want to hide my scars with it. My honour scars,” he says.

An injury that may not have left a scar but he distinctly remembers is a bicep tear which happened two years ago while shooting for an advertisement. “Distal biceps tendon tear! I might be the only person on planet earth who has not got a surgery done for this kind of injury. Yes, the bicep looks a bit crooked but that is fine. A doctor is actually doing his PhD on my case,” he says.



At a glance

A hobby you once had but not anymore.

There is no hobby that I left behind. I practise everything. I used to love skipping. I still skip but maybe not as much as before.

An action star you admire.

There are many. Jackie Chan and this actor called Buster Keaton top the list.

A show you binge-watched.

Indian Matchmaking.

Midnight indulgence.

Chips.

Biggest dream.

My dream is to make the whole world know that kalaripayat is the mother of all martial arts.

Worst nightmare.

I am people's nightmare.

If you got three wishes...

I would ask for 500 wishes and then take it easy.

A lie you told your parents that you distinctly remember.

There are so many. One that I remember is that I used to steal money from our house temple promising God that I would return it one day. My mother used to keep wondering where the money went.

If you get only a day to live, where would you go and what would you do?

I would just be where I am and relax.

If you were to change your name, what would it be?

Anything. I would just change it.

A memorable fan moment.

I took a road trip to the northeast. The seven sisters. A fan travelled throughout the northeast just to meet. I was in my car but she took the pain of boarding different buses. When I came to know about it, I made sure that I spent a lot of time with her.

Celebrity crush.

Bebe Rexha.

If you had the power to bring back one person from the dead, who would it be?

Bodhidharma

An advice for someone who wants to take up martial arts.

Watch my videos!

A fascinating social media post on you.

I am not sure whether to call it a hack on my Instagram account but somebody made an exact replica of my account. The interesting bit was that he asked people to watch Khuda Haafiz. I was surprised and impressed. As a matter of fact, I congratulated him on social media.

Romcoms or horror movies.

Romcoms. I do not like horror movies.

If not an actor, then.

Anything. I would be excellent at whatever I do.

If you won a lottery, what would you do with the money?

Wow, there is so much to do. I would donate a chunk of it for the welfare of animals. Look at how happy the animals are during this lockdown. Thank God none of the animals got the virus.

Interestingly, he does not trust doctors at all. “I feel all of them are experimenting on us. Self-healing is the only healing. I heal people because I heal myself. I know about my kidneys, my lungs and every part of my body. I understand reverse breathing because I practise it. A true warrior is someone who knows how to heal oneself,” he says.

According to him, every cell in the body has divine intelligence. One needs to learn how to listen to it. “We are always busy diagnosing our disease on the internet. Checking up symptoms and matching it with a disease. While the internet informs us of several possible conditions the symptoms may be pointing to, it does not really give a solution. Our body has the power to heal,” he says.

He has also done healing sessions through his social media platforms where he has claimed to help many with mobility, and lung and liver cleansing. The super-fit actor has a huge fan following for his country boy exercises that can be easily done at home with no special equipment. “Whenever I give ‘Jammwalions’ (what Vidyut’s fans are called) a task on social media, I have seen people from even some of the smallest towns in India responding with videos where they exactly follow my steps. Our country has a lot of talent. I always make it a point to highlight and congratulate these people,” Vidyut says.

According to him, a real martial artist does not always pick fights. “Your weapon is not always your hands and feet; your words are also a weapon.”

Born in Jammu and brought up in different parts of the country, thanks to his Army dad’s regular transfers, Vidyut calls himself a true Indian. “I have lived in every part of India and I know all the cultures. When people ask me my origin, I tell them that I am a ‘country boy’,” he says. But it is not just regional cultures that he knows, Vidyut has made it a point to learn other martial art forms like ‘Thang Ta’ (Manipuri) from a training centre in Kolkata and ‘Gatka’, which is associated with the Sikhs of



I have lived in every part of India and I know all the cultures. When people ask me my origin, I tell them that I am a ‘country boy’.



Punjab. “All of these forms have their roots in kalari. This is the reason why kalaripayat is called the mother of all martial arts,” says the man with the sculpted body. “The Hindu push-ups are actually kalari push-ups taken directly from the ancient scriptures. The word ‘Hindu’ came long after the martial art. This art has come from Lord Shiva to Parashurama to Bodhidharma and, now, I am doing my bit to pass it on to the new generation.”

A graduate in economics from Delhi University, all that the warrior wanted to do was pursue martial arts. According to Vidyut, what he has achieved in martial arts is beyond any degree. Tinsel ville was never in his plan. “I just wanted to do martial arts and action. For most people, Mumbai is the best place to start a new phase. It has been a university for me. It is where I started modelling. Before that I did not know how to dress well or carry myself. I learnt everything here,” he says.

After a short run in the modelling circuit, Vidyut landed his debut role in the Telugu film *Sakthi*. He does not consider any role as small or big. “I would not call it struggle; there is no such thing as struggle. Most people misuse that word. A failure is not



Vidyut’s favourites

Co-star
Adah Sharma

Movie
Khuda Haafiz

Action star
Me!

Sport
Squash

Breakfast
Idli with sambhar

Holiday spot
Rishikesh

Exercise
Any form of movement

Car
Porsche

Clothing
Warrior wear

Colour
VIBGYOR

struggle; it is learning. I did not keep high demands. I took anything that was offered to me. I started off with a five-minute role, then 30 and eventually got more important roles,” he says.

The actor sure did have his share of lows, but he still does not call it a hard time or a struggle. “There have been times when people have pulled me down. People are meant for that; they are supposed to pull you down. I feel it is a good thing. The learning out of it is how we pull ourselves up. Once you do that, they call you a success story,” he says. “It is important to learn how to deal with negative people. If you feel an association is negative, please disconnect. That is the biggest service you can do to yourself and others. Self-healing tip number one!”

True to his word, Vidyut pulled himself up despite many bad experiences. In 2011, he made his Bollywood debut with the John Abraham starrer *Force*. His anti-hero role in the film won the Filmfare Award for Best Male Debut that year. The following year he

Diet mantra

I am a vegetarian. I used to be a hardcore meat-eater but about 12 years ago I decided to be a vegetarian and it worked just fine for me. It feels great actually. It helps body and mind to operate with a certain amount of agility and lightness ensuring one's overall health is at its optimum. I consume a lot of carbohydrates, the right amount of sugar and salt and I don't suppress my cravings. I tried veganism for a year just to understand what it feels like; it was nice but I prefer being a vegetarian. Some people think we need meat to buff up. But have you seen a horse? One of the most muscular animals—vegetarian! Have you seen a deer? One of the most agile animals—vegetarian.

You should eat everything. If you don't satisfy your cravings, you'll be an unhappy being. I am a happy being. If you feel like eating chips, please eat them. Don't finish off a packet. Three or four pieces. But don't be too hard on yourself. I don't understand this concept of cheat days. What are they? Whom are you cheating? I believe in treating the body well; being truthful to it. I feel like people are doing too little and thinking too much.

I eat carbs in the morning, so that I can give myself strength. On the days I have to wake up early I eat carbs at night. When it comes to food, I think people should just stop taking advice from nutritionists and dieticians unless one wants to make a massive change. The key is to know your body.

“I don't think too much or plan. I let destiny lead my journey. I just choose what works best for me. My only objective is to consistently grow and evolve with every film as a performer.”



entered the Tamil cinema industry with yet another negative role in the film *Billa II*, opposite Ajith Kumar, which got him a lot of critical appreciation. The same year he played another anti-hero role in the blockbuster movie *Thuppakki*, opposite Vijay. He got typecast as a villain, but all the same his body got attention. Perfect for the poster of *Commando*, in which Vidyut played the protagonist. He performed real-world combat-based action in the film without the aid of stuntmen. This got him into the list of action directors' go-to men. It did not stop with that, though. The film was showcased internationally at the Fantasia Film Fest in Montreal in 2013, which got Vidyut global limelight. Even its sequel *Commando 2* was a box office success. “I don't think too much or plan. I let destiny lead my journey. I just choose what works best for me. My only objective is to consistently grow and evolve with every film as a performer,” Vidyut says.

When American director Chuck Russell decided to make his first

Bollywood film, he had the country boy in mind. *Jungle*, a flick based on wildlife conservation, won two awards at the Jackie Chan International Film Week in China in 2019. “Jackie Chan called me onto the stage and announced ‘Vidyut Jammwal, kalari-payat.’ I felt so honoured. The fact that my name is linked with the martial art is bigger than any award or accolade,” Vidyut says. In the same year, he was seen returning to the *Commando* series, which became the most successful film in the franchise. He made his acting presence felt even during the lockdown with projects like *Yaara* and, his recent release, *Khuda Haafiz*. The interesting bit is that the actor who is known for his death-defying stunts is seen in a new role in the recent movie. Although Vidyut is a common man pulling out all the stops in the damsel-in-distress-drama, there are bits in the movie where he is seen doing what he does best—breaking a few bones. “It is different from the roles I have done before. I had to completely unlearn everything I had learnt all these years. Samir [protagonist in *Khuda Haafiz*] is not a fighter. He is an engineer who has never got into a brawl. Being a trained martial artist, I forgot at times that my role is that of a completely untrained fighter,” Vidyut says. “There were times when the director had to remind me, ‘Vidyut, Samir does not know how to fight!’ It was like trying to teach someone to balance, but through the method of complete unbalance. Previously, I have trained in the drunken master style of fighting, prevalent in India and China, where if you fight with a drunkard, it is almost impossible to bring him down because you can't connect with his movements. I think that helped a lot in *Khuda Haafiz*. I really enjoyed working for it.” Streaming on Disney+ Hotstar, it has won him a new set of fans.

“I just had to understand the pain Samir was going through. If someone close to me was going through a situation like that, even if I didn't know martial arts, I would kill to save the person, right?” he asks. “It is about, ‘Dude, I will do anything to get my wife back’. It is about our natural instincts as



Fit bit

I had a history of being thin. Now that I think of it, thin is good. People ask whether being fat is healthy. My question is, is being thin healthy? These body-builders with six packs are not really healthy. They have several diseases. They are always depressed and angry. Being fit manifests in the form of happiness. Most people don't understand that actors don't look like the way they do all year long. Body-builders aren't all that toned throughout the year. They train before the competition, the rest of the months they are fat.

In a week, I train in martial arts for five days and then two days of weight training. Even though I train every day, I don't follow a set regimen. I follow what my heart and my body say, and do what I want to. The days I feel like my body needs rest, I ensure I take that little time out.



I want to talk to people around the world who promote martial art forms that are indigenous. It is so important to sensitise young people about this rich art form so that it is carried on to the next generation.



human beings. I once read an article about a mother driving a car with her kid and it toppled. The mother actually picked up and turned the car around. I experienced similar kind of emotions while working on this movie.”

Apart from acting projects, he has started a series on his YouTube channel called ‘X-rayed by Vidyut’ where he interviews top martial artists around the world. From English action icon Scott Adkins to Muay Thai warrior Tony Jaa, Vidyut has covered some of the top action stars in the world and has lined up a few more for his upcoming shows. “My only objective is to make viewers understand what martial arts really is. I want to talk to people around the world who promote martial art forms that are indigenous. It is so important to sensitise young people about this rich art form so that it is carried on to the next generation,” he says. “I want the whole world to know about kalaripayat.” Sounds like a battle cry! □



what
I ate
today

Paratha lover

Actor **Rose Sardana** on her diet and fitness regime

Before stepping into the glamour industry, I was a project engineer at an IT company in Bengaluru for a year. I was not very happy working there so I left and flew back to my home in Chandigarh. It was in 2014 that I got into showbiz as an anchor. Then I moved to Mumbai to pursue my passion in acting. As an anchor I got the opportunity to work with many Bollywood celebrities such as Ranveer Singh, Deepika Padukone, Shahid Kapoor and many others. I also worked with many playback singers like Arijit Singh, Mohammad Irfan, Javed Ali, Master Salim, Hans

Raj Hans, Gurdas Mann and Diljit Dosanjh.

It was a show called *Meri Aashiqui Tumse Hi* that kickstarted my acting career. Later I acted in many television serials such as *Badi Devrani*, *Hum Aapke Ghar Mein Rehate Hain*, *Ek Tha Raja Ek Thi Rani* and also a Punjabi movie in 2019. Currently, I am working on *Akbar Birbal*, a show on Star Bharat channel.

When it comes to hobbies, I absolutely enjoy dancing and travelling. I also try to play badminton whenever I get time. I would not call myself a fitness fanatic. As a matter of fact, I

eat a lot. I believe in giving a lot of food and water to my skin and body. But it is important to exercise regularly. I eat whenever I am hungry. I am a pure Punjabi girl and I cannot stay away from my parathas and desi ghee. I usually consume seven to eight meals a day. So, after every two or three hours I keep on munching on something. I eat anything that is kept in front of me. But when it comes to midnight indulgence, I always stick to dry fruits and a cup of hot milk.

I firmly believe that one should maintain a balance between family and work. I am a family girl and I make sure that whatever I do with my career does not adversely affect my family in any way. I have seen a lot of actors sever relationships with their families while pursuing their career. Personally, both

Rose's diet

Coconut water is the first thing that I have in the morning.

Breakfast: Parathas with butter and tea.

Lunch: I have rice and a salad.

Evening: I have a coffee with cookies or poha

Dinner: Roti with vegetables. I also drink a glass of milk before sleeping

A glass of milk is good before sleep. Add some turmeric to it as it makes it an anti-inflammatory drink with several health benefits.

Karishma Chawla, nutritionist and lifestyle educator.



Nutrition advice

- * Include cinnamon water before breakfast to stabilise blood sugar levels and also to avoid cravings.
- * Being a Punjabi girl myself, I can relate to the love for paratha and butter. Don't fret, fats consumed in moderation is not a bad idea at all.
- * Try including a mid-morning smoothie made of greens, an apple or berries along with some protein powder mixed in almond milk. Make it a supercharge smoothie with a teaspoon of spirulina.
- * Lunch can be a vegetarian meal like jowar roti with green vegetables rich in iron and a bowl of dal with some salad and buttermilk.
- * Consume red or brown rice poha in the evening. Other snack options are sprouts or peanut salad.
- * Add some protein like palm-size chicken, fish, paneer or eggs for dinner.
- * Consume herbs like turmeric, ginger, rosemary and cinnamon regularly as it helps in maintaining healthy gut and also aids immunity.

are important to me and I always try to make it work smoothly.

The art of balance!

As told to Oshin Grace Daniell

smile

INDULGE YOUR SENSES, HAVE FUN



They say, laughter is the best medicine. Indeed. Each time you laugh or smile, you throw a little feel-good party in your brain. The act of smiling activates neural messaging that benefits one's health and happiness. For starters, it activates the release of neuropeptides that work toward fighting off stress. Neuropeptides are tiny molecules that allow neurons to communicate. They facilitate messaging to the whole body when we are happy, sad, angry, depressed or excited. The feel-good neurotransmitters—dopamine, endorphins and serotonin—are all released when a smile flashes across your face as well. This not only relaxes your body, but it can also lower your heart rate and blood pressure. So don't hold it back, let out that smile.



Sweet things

Chef **Sanjana Patel** on her journey of experimenting, evolving and expanding her passion for pastries and chocolates

BY OSHIN GRACE DANIELL

For chef Sanjana Patel, it was her childhood experience of being denied chocolates that got her curious about the world of sugar, spice and everything nice. “I had thyroid issues and my overall health was not that great so my parents always said no to giving me chocolates or sweets. The best part is that my parents, especially my father, enjoyed eating chocolates. He used to go abroad and get these big bars of flavoured chocolates,” Sanjana says. She also gives credit to her grandmother who taught her how to bake. “I used to spend my holidays with her. I would not call her an avid baker but she taught me a couple of hacks related to it,” she says. Although Sanjana was not allowed to consume a lot of desserts, the whole concept of these sugary packets of joy caught her attention. Her curiosity in the subject grew with time and after she finished her Class X, she requested her parents to let her go for a short course at Le Cordon Blu in London. “By this time my parents had identified my interest in confectionary and allowed me to go for the pastry course in London. I could say that I formally got into confectionary in 2002. But then I had to come back and take a break from it to pursue my higher secondary education,” she says.

Sanjana got her degree in food science with a specialisation in confectionary. She also did a course in chocolate

technology in Germany before she moved to France to explore her creative side and passion. “I knew the art, the science and the ingredients and I thought why not incorporate it together? I wanted to delve deeper in this field and this took me to Ecole Grégoire Ferrandi –Paris, one of the most respected pastry and chocolate art schools in the world,” she says.

Sanjana started her career as an apprentice under Pierre Hermé who is often referred to as the ‘Picasso of Pastry’. Over the years she worked with chocolateries and patisseries such as Jean-Charles Rochoux, Patrick Roger and Olivier Bajard. She also had the privilege of working at Le Meurice Hotel under chef Camile Lesecq and then at Plaza Athénée of the The Dorchester Group Collection, under chef Christophe Michalak.

“In 2012, my husband and I moved to India and we wanted to explore opportunities in our home country. We had nothing major in mind; our goal was to open a small boutique just to know if people would like to try French desserts, new concoctions, infusion of herbs in desserts and other interesting delicacies,” the 34-year-old chef says.

The husband-wife duo set up a patisserie called La Folie in one of the alleys of Kala Ghoda—a crescent-shaped art district in Downtown Mumbai. “La Folie



is a phrase that stuck with me. When I was in France, whenever the chefs see something beautiful or tastes something good, they say ‘se la folie’ which mean ‘oh wow, this is beautiful’ or ‘out of this world,’” she says. True to the name, the patisserie became popular for its radically distinctive French delicacies. “We got great reviews but we sure did have our ups and downs. Over the years we understood our customers better and started designing unique recipes and menus for them. We focused on fresh produce and preparing fresh desserts. Something like make a fresh lemon tart or mousse in front of customer and serve it to them. What we started out small soon became a larger concept,” she says. “We also have a chocolate factory café at Mahalakshmi, which is like a studio where people can come and see us make chocolate through the glass window. They can also do a short course with us as well.”

In 2015, Sanjana was crowned ‘The Pastry Queen of India’ at the national championship held in Gurugram. For the theme, Art of Dance, she created an artistic guitar showpiece made out of glistening blown sugar which is one of the most difficult techniques used in sculpting.

In 2016, she represented India at the World Lady Pastry Championship in Italy for the title of The Pastry Queen. That was the first time India was invited to participate in the world championship. And she made her country proud by bagging the fourth place in the competition. Her unique avant-garde destructive yet couture style in creating French delicacies has also fetched her titles like ‘The Scientist’, ‘Game Changer’ and ‘The Original’.

“Three years back, I had a fall. I had several ligament tears and had dislocated my knee; it got me on a wheel-chair. It gave me time to think about my long-term vision. It was chocolate—the whole concept of bean to bar. I was surprised how transparent the trade cacao had become. I started looking into ethical trading and different practices of fermentation of beans,” she says. This vision of making her own chocolate got the her on a journey with her husband to different parts of the world. From Peru to Ecuador, Tanzania and Guatemala, the couple travelled seeking answers for their cacao-related questions. “We approached a couple of NGOs and other cooperatives that are linked to farmers. The whole journey was



interesting. We also explored the south of India—Pollachi in Tamil Nadu and Idukki in Kerala. There is an Italian family in Idukki who works with the farmers there. They started a central trading platform which ensures that the farmers get a fair price for the beans. Interesting, Indian cacao is quite popular in the world; it is even winning awards,” Sanjana says.

When the duo got back from their tour, they decided to start the set up for chocolate making right away. Sanjana’s husband, who is a mechanical engineer by profession, started to fabricate machines for the setup. “We tweaked the settings of our coffee roaster to roast cacao beans. We used the dosa grinder for grinding the beans and we got food grade rollers for the refining machine usually used in paint industries to make the chocolate less gritty. We use unrefined sugar or black jaggery in our chocolate and hence it is important to get it real smooth,” she says. “We are proud of what we have achieved and I can boldly call us real chocolate makers.”

Apart from gathering titles and creating new flavours, the passionate chef is all about responsible indulgence. “We have had a change of vision in the past couple of years. I focus a lot on sustainability. We try to minimise wastage and use everything that we can. The coco husks are sent to places where they make scrubs and soaps, we try to source local produce and we take part in ethical and fair trade when it comes to procuring the cacao beans. Also, we firmly believe in the idea of affordable luxury,” she says.

Although the craftswoman is careful about operations, mess-ups are an inevitable part of this business. “Recently, we had asked a person to clean the chocolate grinder with hot water. He put the water while the chocolate was being grinded in it. As soon as the water touched the chocolate, it hardened and restricted the movement of the blades; it also damaged the engine. Although it took us some time to figure things out, we got it fixed within a week. But we could not use the chocolate,” Sanjana says. “But we always try to turn things around. When our intern burnt coffee beans which was supposed to be used in a ganache, we got it transformed into coffee butter and used it in our croissants.”

The Punjabi tastemaker’s go-to dish is sourdough bread. “I just love to bake my own bread. Toast it, drizzle a little oil, get some cherry tomatoes and balsamic and relax,” she says. □



Pistachio dried cherry cake base

Ingredients:

- Almond flour-108g
- Pistachio nuts- 90g
- Icing sugar- 198g
- Potato starch- 24g
- Pistachio butter or almond butter- 54g
- Egg whites (1)- 144g (5 eggs)
- Egg yolks- 18g (Approx. 1-2 yolks)
- Unsalted, melted butter- 156g
- Egg whites (2)- 135g (4-5 eggs)
- Castor sugar- 81g
- Chopped dried cherries- 50g
- Chopped pistachios- 50g

Method:

- Line a 1/2 baking tray with a silicone mat or baking paper & keep aside.
- Sieve the dry ingredients and keep aside.
- In a grinder, take whole pistachios, almond flour and icing sugar and blend together. Add in the other dry ingredients and mix well.
- Start adding the egg white (1), egg yolk and pistachio butter and blend well. Simultaneously start making a meringue of the egg whites (2) and castor sugar to firm peaks.
- Avoid overmixing the batter or it will lose its volume completely.
- Meanwhile, warm the unsalted butter in a saucepan.
- Fold in the meringue into the base in three parts.
- Once the meringue is folded, take little batter and mix it in the butter to temper it and then fold all the cake batter in two parts properly, without overmixing it to lose volume of the

cake batter.

- Add the chopped pistachios and chopped dried cherries. Avoid over mixing.
- Bake at 170°C for 13-15 minutes.
- Remove from the oven and let it cool down. Reserve until further use.

Ingredients for cherry compote:

- Cherries (without seeds)- 450g
- Light corn syrup- 65g
- Pectin- 6.5g
- Castor sugar- 65g

Method:

- Blend the cherries in a mixer grinder to make cherry puree/pulp.
- Take a saucepan and warm the cherry pulp with light corn syrup.
- Add the castor sugar with pectin when the puree is warm and give it a boil. Cook for 2 minutes while it is boiling.
- Stop cooking and let it set outside. Blend with a hand blender to smoothen the compote.

Assembly:

- Cool the pistachio tea cake. Slice the cake into two halves with a bread knife.
- Add the compote on the first layer and even it out with a palette knife. Add the second layer of tea cake. Cool it down and trim the edges for a clean, neat look.
- Decorate with half fresh cherries, chopped pistachios and fresh whipped cream along with dewdrops of cherry compote.



Chocolate cookie shortbread (Sablé)

Ingredients:

- All-purpose flour- 105g
- Dark coco powder- 15g
- Baking soda- 3g
- Butter- 90g
- Brown sugar- 75g
- Castor sugar- 30g
- 70 per cent chocolate chips- 90g
- Sea salt- 1g

Method:

- Take room temperature butter that is slightly soft, not too soft.
- Cream butter with brown sugar and castor sugar, until mixed well and creamed well with not lumps.
- Add dry sifted ingredients—cocoa powder, flour and baking soda.
- Knead well to make a dough, add the chocolate chips and sea salt.
- Roll the dough into 15 gms round balls and press them in the centre (Cool the dough in the fridge for 10 minutes in case the dough is too soft).
- Bake them in silicone moulds or on a lined baking tray with foil or parchment baking paper.
- Bake at 150°C C for 12-13 minutes (They should develop cracks and be fudgy and moist in the centre).

Keto hot chocolate

Ingredients:

- Elle & Vire whipping cream- 60g
- Water or brewed coffee- 60g
- Stevia- 1g
- Natural unsweetened cocoa powder- 15g
- 85 per cent dark chocolate- 20g
- Vanilla extract or cinnamon for spice- 2g

Method:

- Combine all ingredients in a saucepan. Give it a gentle boil and whisk till it thickens.
- Pour in a mug. Relax.
- Optional: Dust with extra cocoa or shavings of chocolate



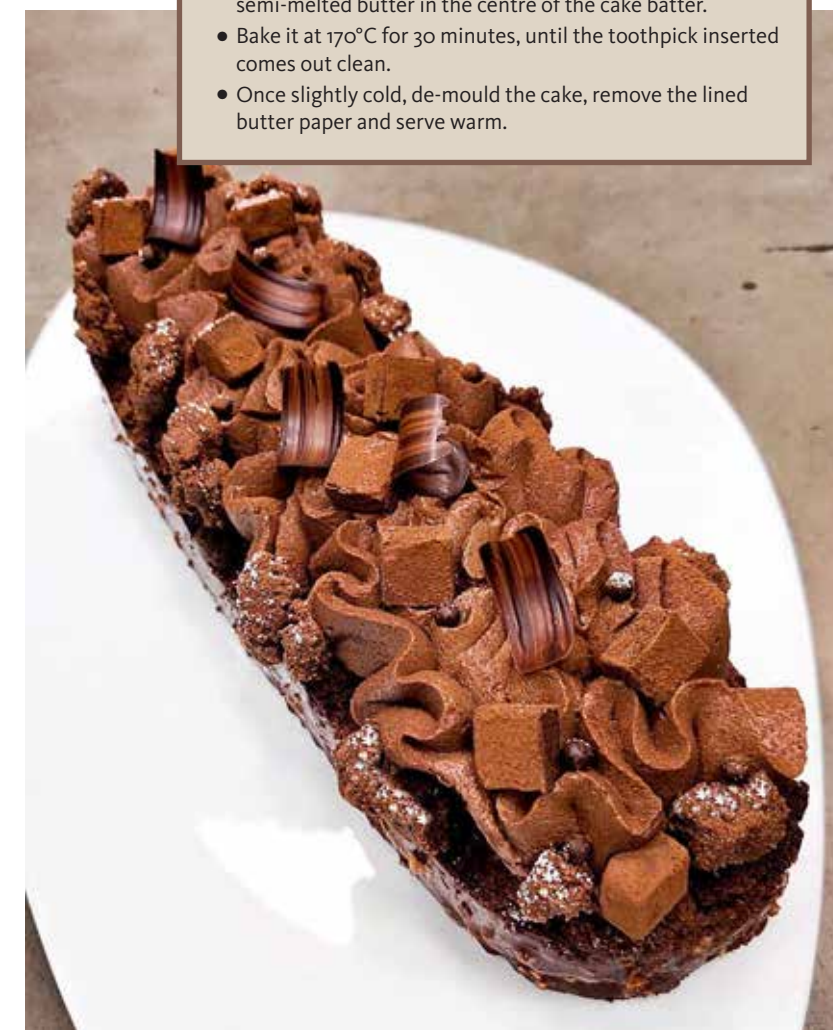
Oreo chocolate moelleux cake

Ingredients:

- Butter- 155g
- Unrefined sugar- 140g
- 70 per cent dark chocolate-155g
- Eggs- 125g
- Flour- 45g
- Chopped oreo cookie- 40g

Method:

- All ingredients should be at room temperature. Teacake tin should be lined with butter paper and oil spray.
- Melt the chocolate and bring it to lukewarm temperature.
- Take a bowl and whisk eggs with sugar, vigorously to create thick ribbons. This will take a good 10-15 minutes.
- Melt the butter and mix it with chocolate.
- Add the melted chocolate-butter mixture to the beaten eggs and fold well, add in two parts.
- Add the sieved flour and fold well. Scrape the bottom of the bowl once again.
- Take a piping bag and pipe the cake batter into the cake tin.
- Add crushed Oreo cookies on the surface and pipe a line of semi-melted butter in the centre of the cake batter.
- Bake it at 170°C for 30 minutes, until the toothpick inserted comes out clean.
- Once slightly cold, de-mould the cake, remove the lined butter paper and serve warm.



Honey coffee almond cake

Ingredients:

- Eggs-140g
- Honey- 70g
- Salt- 1g
- Brown sugar- 70g
- Gluten-free flour- 70g
- Baking powder- 5g
- Coffee powder- 15g
- Ground almond powder- 70g
- Melted warm butter- 140g

Garnish Ingredients:

- Honey drizzle- 15g
- Coffee Dust- 1g
- Icing Dust- 1g

Method:

- Sieve the gluten free flour, almond powder and baking powder and keep aside.
- Add the melted warm butter and the coffee granules to it.
- With the help of a whisk mix in the eggs, honey, sugar in the dry ingredients and whisk till incorporated.
- Add the butter/coffee mixture and whisk by hand till completely incorporated.
- Rest the batter in the fridge for 5-10 minutes.
- Pour the batter in cake molds or cake tin.
- Bake at 170°C for 25-30mins for a tea cake loaf or bake at 170°C for 12mins in a mini cupcake liner or madeleine cake mold.

Garnish:

- Once the cake is cool; garnish with a drizzle of honey on the surface of the cake to glaze the cake and dust coffee powder and icing sugar.
- Serve at room temperature.

Dark chocolate chip quinoa cookies

(vegan and gluten-free)

Ingredients:

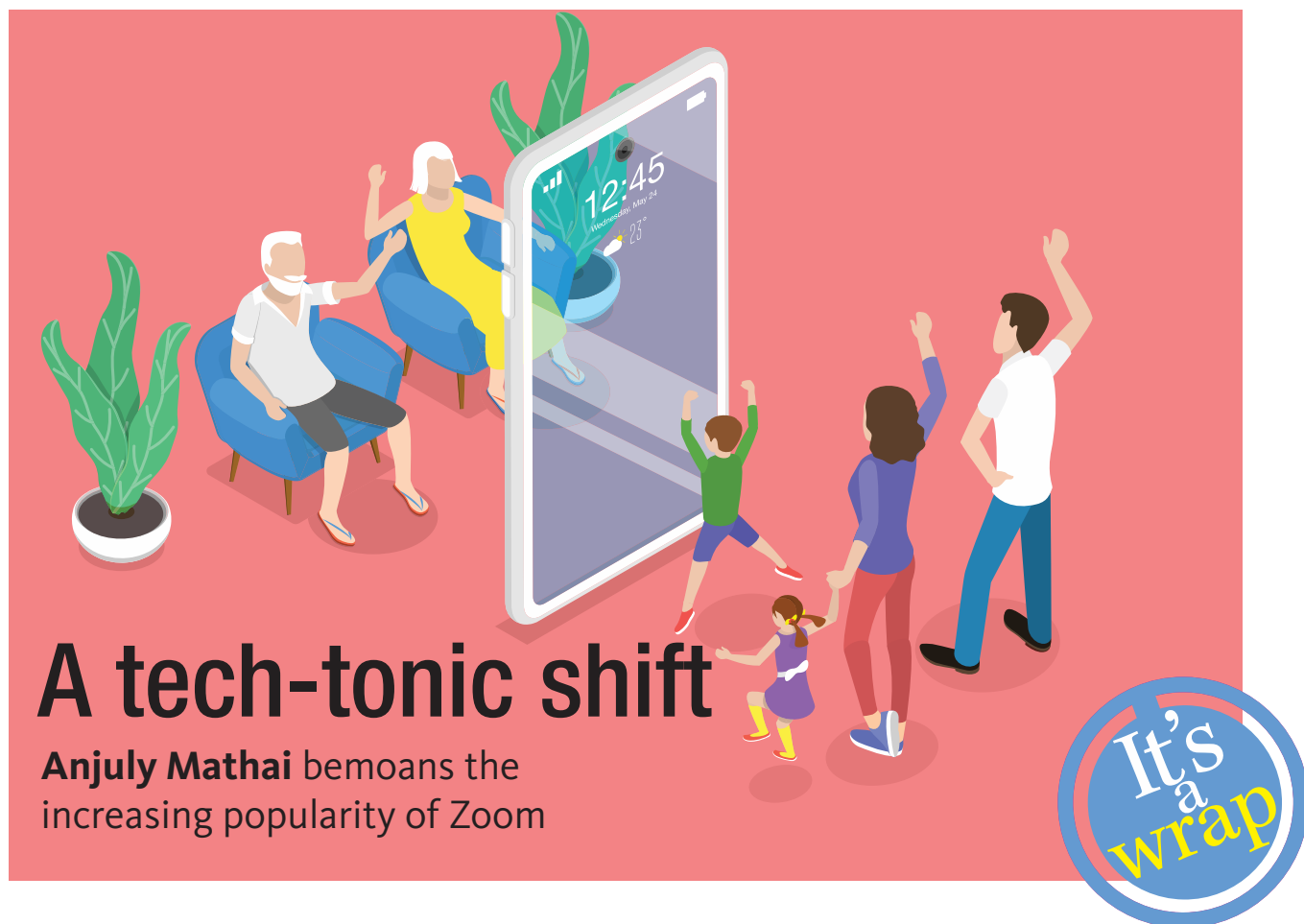
- Castor sugar- ½ cup (100g)
- Brown sugar- ¾ cup (165g)
- Sea Salt- 1tsp (4g)
- Coconut oil- ½ cup (110g)
- Almond milk- 1/3rd cup (75ml)
- Vanilla extract- 1 tsp (4g)
- Quinoa flour- ¾ cup (100g)
- Almond powder- ½ cup (65g)
- Organic cocoa powder- 2tbsp (20g)
- Baking soda- ½ tsp (2.5g)
- 70 per cent chocolate chips- 1 cup (115g)

Method:

- In a round bottom bowl mix the sugars with the almond milk, coconut oil, vanilla extract.
- Sift the dry ingredients i.e. quinoa flour, almond powder, cocoa powder and baking soda and add in small parts to the liquids.
- Mix with a spatula till it forms a dough.
- Add the chopped chocolate and fold in gently.
- Rest and cool the dough down in the fridge until nice and firm for 30-45minutes.
- Scoop the dough and place on an aluminium or baking paper-lined baking tray.
- Bake the cookies at 160°C for 15-18 minutes until soft and chewy in the middle and crusted on the sides. Post baking, place them to cool on a wire rack.

Tips:

- You can use coconut sugar or muscovado sugar instead of brown sugar.
- You can bake these cookies in a tartlet ring or muffin mould that is well greased as these tend to spread a little.



A tech-tonic shift

Anjuly Mathai bemoans the increasing popularity of Zoom

The internet is full of funny Zoom stories. I read about a man who stopped shaving during the lockdown and can now no longer chat with his grandson on Zoom for fear of scaring the boy with his “worn-out bottle brush”. There was the group of men who decided to move their Scotch party online. But they found that virtually clinking glasses on Zoom and hollering ‘Cheers’ to each other could not really replace the real deal. Then there was my uncle who wore boxer shorts beneath his shirt and tie for an official meeting. Everything was going fine until everyone was made to stand up for the national anthem.

Personally, I find the app bothersome. Mostly because I loathe social gatherings of any sort and that includes virtual ones. Here I was, feeling like clinking my invisible glass at the government’s social distanc-

ing norms, perfectly tailored to my anti-social personality, when a message pops up on a WhatsApp family group. Who wants to meet on Zoom tonight? What in heaven’s name was Zoom, I wondered. Being sure that it was some complicated technology that a majority of my antiquated family members would not be able to master, I happily ignored the link sent by a cousin to the Zoom meeting. To my shock, there was a volley of back-and-forth messages during the session, people asking where others were, sharing inside jokes, telling each other to mute themselves, posting screen shots on WhatsApp. The next day, I was astounded to learn that my whole family of nearly 30 cousins had attended the meeting, each and every one of them, except for another cousin and me. Didn’t these people have a life?

To make things worse, my cousin

asked me where I had been and then had the effrontery to post the question in the family group. Now, everyone knew what a socially-backward person I was. It is not that I don’t love my family. I can even manage handling them one by one, in a decent sequential order. It is just that, when they appear simultaneously as a pack, I become overwhelmed and don’t know what to say. And the situation is worse on Zoom, which is a marketplace of opinions, just with poor audio quality.

Of course, man is a social animal and needs human interaction, but what Zoom aims to do is try to replace a human quality by simulating it as closely as possible. That is like showing a picture of a glass of water to a man dying of thirst. As for me, I get my dose of human interaction watching good-looking people sing and dance in old rom-coms on Netflix, even if the interaction is completely one-sided. □

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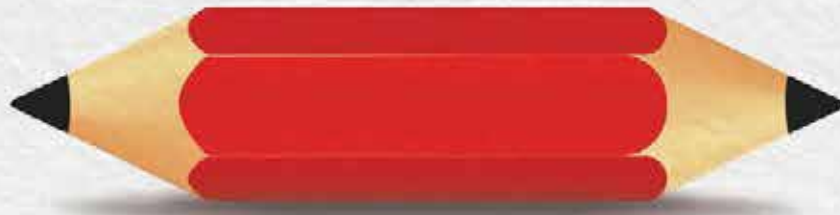


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