

eShe

August 2017
Vol 1 Issue 2

— the female gaze —



THE
IMPORTANCE
OF BEING
*Jennifer
Winget*

MONSOON CHASING

Why would a woman drive across India during the rains?

THE LADY BOSS

Meet Revathy Ashok, the first Indian woman CFO of a NASDAQ-listed firm

NORTHEAST FEAST

Seven traditional recipes from India's seven northeastern sister states



India's Leading Spa
Resort



India's Leading Spa
Resort

Kairali-The Ayurvedic Healing Village
Palakkad, Kerala (India)



World Luxury
Spa
Awards

Winner 2012, India
Best Luxury Destination Spa

Treatment Packages Offered at Kairali-The Ayurvedic Healing Village

Special Ayurvedic Health Programmes for Weight Loss (Duration: 14 to 21 nights)

Unique individualized program's are created, with external herbal treatments and internal ayurvedic medicines to burn excess fat, to tone up muscles and to reduce weight naturally.

Kairali's Special Package to Remove Stress & Strain (Duration: 7, 14 or 21 days)

Special ayurvedic massages with formulated herbal oils and steam bath to remove stress and strain for one to lead a fatigue-free life.

Kairali's Panchakarma Therapy (Five Actions) (Duration: 14 to 21 nights)

Ayurveda's most time tested and well know treatment (5 procedures) to cure major health problems which acts by removing the diseases from the roots. So that the chances of recurrence of that diseases is negligible.

Proven Remedies for Arthritis, Rheumatism & Spondylitis (Duration: 14 or 21 days)

A combination of various treatments & internal medication help regain lost mobility & subsides pain thus assisting one to live a pain free life once again.

WE ALSO SPECIALISE IN TREATMENTS OF

- ✿ Rejuvenation Therapy to Restore Vigor and Vitality
- ✿ Treatment for Sinusitis & Migraine
- ✿ Arthritis & Spondylitis
- ✿ Neurological Disorders
- ✿ Treatment for Diabetes
- ✿ Skin Diseases and Disorders

Kairali-The Ayurvedic Healing Village
One among 50 Top wellness destinations of the world



Our Partners



contents



40 **Return to Roots**
Karishma Shahani Khan on
upcycled Indian fashion

- 12** **My House Caught Fire**
A moving story of love, fear, loss and grief
- 19** **Secrets About Zanzibar**
There's a lot more going on than you think
- 22** **Being Jennifer Winget**
Our cover girl on TV, fame and betrayal
- 27** **Wind Beneath His Wings**
Sweta Chhabria and Aditya Kripalani
- 29** **Lady Boss: Revathy Ashok**
The personal life of a corporate honcho
- 36** **Her Cup of Tea**
Shikha Puri and her boutique Teacupsfull
- 38** **The Fashion Ethic**
Popular Ahmedabad designer Jigna Shah
- 50** **New-Gen Way to Shop**
These tips will save you time and money!
- 54** **Feast from the Northeast**
Seven recipes from the seven sister states

contributors



RITU GOYAL HARISH was a freelance journalist for 17 years and is currently reinventing herself as a travelpreneur with her Pune-based travel company Ease India Travel.

08



SHILLPI A SINGH is a freelance journalist who loves to write about cinema, theatre, fashion, lifestyle, wellness, food, travel, books, anything that tickles her grey matter.

16



SMRITI SAWHNEY JOSHI is one of the first certified telemental health providers in India. She's a clinical psychologist with 15+ years of experience in mental health.

34



ANUPAM DABRAL is a Delhi-based writer on a mission to capture different aspects of fashion and to understand the creative energies that transform a label into a brand.

40

Editor: Aekta Kapoor
Design: Arushi Vohra
Sales: Saurabh Manchanda
Contributors: Purabi Shridhar,
Sanghita Singh, Versha
Malhotra, Argha Kashyap

All rights reserved throughout the world.
Reproduction in any manner is prohibited.
Founder editor: Aekta Kapoor. Printed
and published by Aekta Kapoor on behalf
of the owner Coral Content. Printed at
Modest Graphics (P) Ltd, C-53 DDA Shed,
Okhla Industrial Area Phase 1, New Delhi.
Published at C3/1 GF, Vasant Vihar, New

Delhi 110057. Phone: +91 9818166621.
To subscribe to the digital edition, visit
eShe.in and sign up with your email, or
email mail@coralcontent.com.
To advertise in the print edition or on
the website, call Saurabh Manchanda at
9810024424.
Visit eShe.in for more.

A FINE BALANCE

As a work-from-home mom, I can barely recall moments when I have 'nothing to do'. At any given time, my mind whizzes with thoughts of work, meetings, household needs, family demands, husband's travel schedule, my community commitments, and the general need to 'be there' for everyone and everything.

So it does not surprise me that most of the women I interact with in the course of compiling my magazine share similar narratives – of balancing family and career, and of making difficult decisions. Revathy Ashok, for instance, who was India's first woman CFO of a NASDAQ-listed firm and a mother of two, had to give up her job at the peak when her dad's health began deteriorating rapidly (p.29). Our cover girl this month Jennifer Winget learnt to balance her personal and professional life. Despite the media onslaught after her divorce, she continued to rise in her career to become one of India's best paid TV actors (p.22).

But perhaps there is a reason we are given these challenges. Gayatri Jayaraman wrote a book after her travails as a part of India's poor-rich educated middle class led to deep insight into urban society (p.32). Advertising honcho Shikha Puri started her own boutique tea company after the demands of motherhood forced her to quit her hectic job (p.36). I started *eShe*.

Perhaps, as they say, the obstacle is the path.



Aekta Kapoor
Founder Editor, *eShe*

AROUND THE WORLD

A spotlight on women in the news and news of interest to women

Compiled by Argha Kashyap

SHe-BOX

In a proactive move by the Women and Children Development Ministry, women working in the central government can now file complaints against



sexual harassment at their workplace through the new SHe-box (Sexual Harassment electronic) online portal. According to Union minister Maneka Gandhi, public-sector employees will soon be able to avail of the facility as well. The WCD says this is an effort towards “effective implementation” of the Sexual Harassment of Women Act

2013. The idea is to find a solution in such cases before they escalate to legal action. Soon, a national survey will also be conducted to understand the nature and magnitude of harassment at the workplace.

ALL EYES ON TAAPSEE PANNU

This is definitely Taapsee Pannu's year. After the success of her film *Pink*, co-starring Amitabh Bachchan, she was named Woman of the Year at IIFA 2017 last month. The 2016 film, which highlighted the problems faced by independent single women, was directed by Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury. Taapsee did full justice to the role despite the controversial social issue. Taapsee got her first breakthrough after signing up for Channel V's Get Gorgeous Pageant, after which acting offers began pouring in. She was recently seen at a store launch in Gurgaon.



RISE IN ADOPTION BY SINGLE WOMEN

While we're on the subject of single women, estimates from the Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) under the Women and Children Development ministry have found that more single women have been coming forward to adopt children in India. The 2015 adoption guidelines made online registration mandatory for parents wanting to adopt. It was observed that there were 412 single women registered with CARA of which 75 adopted in 2015, which grew to 93 in 2016, even though the total number of kids went down from 2903 in 2015 to 2671 in 2016. In addition, the ministry has decided that single Indian women over the age of 40, with the financial wherewithal to bring up an adopted child, will be given preference in the adoption process.



PERIOD LEAVE

First, the Mumbai-based digital media company Culture Machine Media announced a "First Day of Period Leave Policy" for all its 75 women employees. They also put up a Change.org petition to the Minister of Women and Child Development Maneka Gandhi and Minister of Human Resource

Development Prakash Javadekar to appeal for a similar leave policy in companies across the country, which has got over 30,000 signatures so far. Following their footsteps, Kerala-based media house Mathrubhumi initiated a similar policy, saying, "This is not empowering women but understanding their needs. It is an attempt to remove the taboo surrounding the biological cycle." Debates soon took over social media and the Internet whether or not women need a leave during their period. At eShe, we believe any step towards inclusivity is welcome, and we hope the next steps are those that consider the needs of the differently abled.

WHY I CHASED THE MONSOON

Childhood experiences can leave a deep impact on you, sometimes urging you towards unknown journeys, or chasing torrential clouds across India

By Ritu Goyal Harish



I've had a long love affair with the monsoon that started when I was a child growing up in Kerala. Invariably, on the first day of school – when I'd be wearing a new uniform, new shoes and socks, possibly even carrying a new school bag with new school books

neatly wrapped in brown paper – it would rain like there was to be no tomorrow. The monsoon hits the Kerala coast on June 1 every year, coinciding with the beginning of a new academic season.

For six months, heavy rains, accompanied by thunder and light-

PHOTO: PIXABAY

ning, would lash the city (Kochi), night and day. This was the kind of rain that uprooted trees and caused power outages for days!

My fondest memory of that time is going up to the terrace with paper boats my mother would help us make, and sailing them in a puddle, sitting on our haunches, protected by an umbrella. I also harbour a deep love for road trips – a legacy from my father, who'd pack us all in his Fiat Padmini and drive across Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Most of these trips were impromptu – my siblings and I would return from school and find our bags packed and the car ready, to go away for the weekend.

We had numerous adventures on our trips— our car would break down or we'd lose our way. This was in the late 1970s and early '80s, a time before paper maps were popular and no one had imagined Google Maps. All my father had for directions were vague recollections of routes from friends and instructions from drivers he spoke to.

Once on the road, we ate at shanties and never had any confirmed reservations at hotels, because we never knew where we'd stay. The most vivid memory of one such drive is when we got stuck in tor-

rential rain a little after midnight. I was about nine. The car broke down in the middle of the highway and its electrical circuitry gave way. It was raining so heavily my father couldn't get out of the car. Later, we were rescued by a lorry driver who recognised the registration number of the car (my father conducted business with the owners) and towed us to Kollam, the nearest town.

As a kid, I didn't know (and neither did my parents) that all these experiences were having an impact on me and that as an adult, I would seek similar experiences. So two years ago, when I decided to drive from Pune to Kasaragod in Kerala, no one was surprised.

To me, there was no better way to combine my love for the road and the rains than on a trip chasing the monsoon! I longed for the heavens-coming-down kind of downpours, and had also heard a great deal about the highway from Goa to Kerala and that it traversed along the Konkan coastline.

I set off from Pune one rainy evening in a borrowed Mahindra XUV 500. The route I followed was Pune-Belgaum-Goa-Gokarna-Udupi-Kasaragod-Mangaluru-Yellapur-Belgaum-Pune: 1700

"It was raining so heavily we couldn't get out of the car. We were rescued by a lorry driver later"

kilometres in all, over four days.

There wasn't a drop of rain for the first 600 kilometres but by the time I touched a town called Kundapur, it began drizzling. Soon, rain, glorious rain, lashed down in buckets! The rain was so heavy that I couldn't hear the music playing in the car. From Kundapur to Udupi

where truckers were eating, driving into towns looking for a place for the night and never knowing when the rain would hit and how!

For most part of the trip, I couldn't take photos or stop by the side of the road to admire the beauty of the landscape, but I returned with memories and intense nostal-



and then to Kasaragod, it rained almost non-stop.

I will admit that there were challenges, as there are on any road trip. There were some very bad patches of roads that slowed me down considerably. But I choose to remember the fun parts – stopping at tapris for chai, devouring Kerala parottas with a curry (called kurma) at a shanty

gia. And, I'm raring to go again.

I intend to chase the monsoon in mid-August this year and barring for the detour I want to take to explore the jungles of Dandeli in Karnataka, the route will remain the same. Other than that, the plan is to not have a plan, just the way I travelled with mum, dad and brothers all those years ago. ■

PHOTO: MIKE KOTSCH ON UNSPASH

Art in Silence

MONA SINGH, 40, DELHI



I was born deaf at a time when there was very little support available to the deaf in India. I joined a school for the deaf run by an ENT specialist where the emphasis was on vocalising, not sign language. At 13, I learnt painting from artist Vasundhara Tewari. Then my father, an officer in RBI, was transferred to Mumbai. I studied art at B.D. Somani Institute of Art and Fashion Technology, and won several awards, including Student of the Year. I also got a diploma in computer art and multimedia. We returned to Delhi after dad retired. I held several art exhibitions, group and solo, and make a little money by selling paintings. I am now honing my skills under artist Rajesh K Sharma.

My mother and her sister passed away three years ago, and it hasn't been a good time for me and my dad. Delhi is not a friendly city. I cannot go out without my dad, and no one visits us. There aren't too many jobs for the differently abled either. I look forward to my painting classes where I can meet other people. It lifts my loneliness a bit. And I like to stay fit. I exercise at home and at the gym, and go for swimming daily. I did 110 laps yesterday at the pool.

I miss my mom's food. She was a fantastic cook. ■

THE NIGHT MY HOUSE CAUGHT FIRE

*A devastating fire that gutted the entire house taught me
invaluable lessons in life and loss*

By Versha Malhotra

Life has not been easy. I lost my husband when I was just 21, and then my father who was my pillar of strength, and then my younger sister nine years ago, who left her body after many years of physical suffering. I have been my family's sole breadwinner almost all of my adult life, running a successful business in Delhi. But when I look back now – at the age of 58 – I feel there was a purpose for everything.

After my sister's death, I had just my mother left, and she too was a heart patient. Doctors had advanced her life by a few years after a heart attack by planting a pacemaker. But she had asthma and her condition was always tenuous. We had to take extra care.

One night in May a few years ago, just after the clock struck 12, the curtain in my mom's room caught fire from sparks from the AC wire.

She and I lived on the ground floor of our three-storey house in Vasant Vihar. My mother's nurse Shakuntala woke me up and alerted me. I rushed to my mom's room to see the curtains ablaze, but my septuagenarian mom was still on her bed, hardly four feet away. She was unable to move – at that time, her left arm was in a plaster as she had broken a bone in a fall.

With great difficulty I half-dragged her to the living room and went back to my mother's room to see if the fire could be controlled. But the moment I opened the door, heavy smoke and heat engulfed the little lobby, nearly choking me. I ran to the living room with just one thought in my head: we had to get out of the building.

Shakuntala showed amazing presence of mind and strength. After giving me the keys to the verandah in the front of the house, she ran

up holding my dog Tommy to wake my brother and his wife who lived on the first floor.

In the meantime, I brought my mother out from the living room to the verandah. I tried to open the lock on the verandah grill but I could not – the metal was burning

guards standing outside the boundary wall, put my arms around my mother's abdomen and lifted her in the air effortlessly to put her across the four-foot high wall. I remember thinking, "Mom is so light." I handed her to the two guards outside, cautioning them that she had



hot. The flames were now reaching out of the doors. I took a step towards my mom, and suddenly, the window glass shattered as the AC compressor burst. Metal, glass and wood pieces missed me by inches. My mom began screaming in fear.

What followed is inexplicable. I have just a flash of memory of those few seconds. I called one of the night

a broken arm. And then, just as effortlessly, I jumped the wall as well.

My mom weighs 92 kg. I cannot explain how it all happened but the incident made me realise that if you are totally focused and believe in yourself, nothing is impossible.

All others in the building – along with little Tommy who had fainted – managed to escape totally

unharméd, minutes before the glass panes started blasting. It was as though an unseen shield had formed for our protection and was saving us. I ran in bare feet to our neighbours' homes, asking for an inhaler for my mother who was breathless with asthma, and within minutes I found one being placed in my hand.

We stood gazing at the burning house. My sister-in-law stood crying, but I remember being calm and told her, "Look, we are safe. It's a miracle." The fire brigade reached us only after 90 minutes. By then the whole ground floor was gutted, we could not see any doors or window panes; all the furniture and fittings had turned to ashes. After the fire brigades left around 4 am, we all went to my uncle's place for the night.

Everything was gone. My mother was 74, and her whole life's collection of personal goods and household items was destroyed. We did not even have one item of clothing left for the next morning. I told mom to never look back. All mate-

rial things are replaceable; I could only feel complete gratitude that we were all alive, totally unharméd and protected.

I was also blessed to quickly find a new home on rent within the same neighbourhood. My mom and I shifted there, and we furnished the rented flat starting from the very basics. In the meantime, we gave our

home to a builder for reconstruction.

My mother was always a very social, gregarious person, always surrounded by friends and relatives, always a giver of love. But after we shifted to the new rented apartment, she gradually became weaker. Exactly six months after the fire, she passed away peacefully arranging a game

on the table, which I played with her every night. She just rested her head on the cushion and passed away in my arms even as I tried to revive her.

Now I live alone.

But life is full. I am part of a Buddhist community that keeps me purposeful and on my toes. I have my business to handle, and I am



Versha and her mother Ramesh Khanna

trying to raise awareness about fire safety among my family and friends. These are some lessons you can learn from my experience:

- 1.** Always keep a fire extinguisher at home and in the car, and teach everyone at home how to use it.
- 2.** Don't neglect old, fraying wires.
- 3.** Don't keep electrical gadgets near flammable objects like curtains.

Also, make sure any fabric-covered furniture is kept at a distance from electrical wall sockets.

- 4.** Find the number of the nearest fire station and keep it handy

5. The reason the fire engine took over 90 minutes to reach our home was because of bad civic planning and avoidable obstacles. Like most residential localities, ours too keeps most gates closed at night. The fire engine could not locate the one that was open. Make sure the local fire station knows which gate to enter the locality at night. Secondly, the cars on the road were parked so badly that the fire engine could not pass through, and had to go and ring the bells of the homes to get residents

to move their cars. This wasted precious time in an emergency situation. Speak to your neighbours and ensure that they park their cars in such a way that leaves enough room for an emergency vehicle to pass through.

- 6.** Get fire insurance on your home and keep the documents elsewhere. I did have home insurance, but the

documents were lost in the fire, and the insurance company did not accept my claim.

7. We also lost valuable property papers, jewellery, locker keys, identity cards, passports and innumerable other documents that took me over two years to sort out. Always keep a backup elsewhere.

- 8.** Make sure your building has a separate fire escape.

My family on the first floor could escape only because our stairs were outside the main house.

9. Most of all, develop an attitude of gratitude and a healthy detachment for material possessions in life. We can't take these things with us when we die. Invest instead in love and faith. Those are all that matter in the end. ■



Versha believes that loss teaches you to grow

THE VILLAGE SCHOOLMISTRESS

Vimla Kaul set up Guldasta so that she didn't have to feed the underprivileged – she could teach them to feed themselves instead

By Shillpi A Singh



Born in Shimla, Vimla Kaul (centre) did her post-graduation from Miranda House in Delhi University and worked as a teacher in Dhanbad before setting up her school Guldasta for underprivileged children

When Vimla Kaul and her husband Hari Mohan Kaul moved to Sarita Vihar in Delhi after their superannuation in 1993, they were keen to do something for the villagers next door. As a part of a Rotary Club drive, they once went to Madanpur Khadar village with some biscuits for village kids. A

woman in the village praised their efforts but remarked that “instead of giving food to children, they should teach them how to earn their livelihood.” It was a thought-provoking comment that made the couple ponder over ways and means to make a difference in the lives of village children.

An engineering graduate from



L-R: Vimla as a young girl and now

BITS Pilani, Hari had retired as chief engineer in the Central Ground Water Board. After thinking over the villager's comment, they decided to start a school. The idea gave a new lease of life to the childless couple, who always wanted to do something for society in general and children in particular. "We named it Guldasta because we wanted it to be a bouquet of underprivileged children's hopes, dreams and aspirations of a brighter future and better life ahead," Vimla says. They started Guldasta under a banyan tree at the village chaupal in Madanpur Khadar in 1995.

The first batch of the school had only five students and a teacher. The couple soon shifted Guldasta to their housing colony in Sarita Vihar where around 150 students enrolled. But the initial years were fraught with trouble for the Kauls. Their neighbours forced the school out of the colony; undaunted, they tried to start the school in the local community centre but were denied permission. They moved Guldasta to a park inside the housing complex but were asked to vacate the area. The couple finally moved the school to the municipal park and ran it from there until an NGO,

Mahamana Malaviya Mission, adopted it in October 2011. The financial aid helped Vimla rent a three-room building for the school. After Hari's death in 2009, Vimla has been running the project single-handedly.

Today, the school that held classes in a municipal park for 16 years has grades from kindergarten to four. The classes at the school-cum-learning centre are conducted in two shifts in the morning, daily. "The class for children of other schools, who come here for guidance, is held from 9 am to 11 am. The computer class is conducted at the same time. The next shift is for children who are not enrolled in any other school. Children in these classes follow the same syllabus according to their classes as other formal schools," says Naaz Syeda, who was a former student of the Kauls and now teaches here.

Guldasta also runs tailoring classes, a basic computer course, a beautician's course, a henna application course and dance classes. The main beneficiaries of these vocational courses are women and girls from the village who get an opportunity to learn new skills and improve their earnings. For instance, Vimla started training local girls in henna application in 2010. Since then, every year, the girls trained by the NGO organise a camp in the Senior Citizens' Park in Sarita Vihar



A postage stamp presented to Vimla by a former student on July 7 this year, her 83rd birthday

two days before the festival of Karwa Chauth. Women throng their stalls in hordes, waiting patiently for their turn to get their hands and feet adorned with exquisite henna designs. "The girls keep all their earnings and donate a part of it to the NGO. So while henna adds a dash of colour to the festivities, the money collected at the two-day camp fills shades of joy in the life of someone, unserved and unreachd," says Vimla, who has authored five books and received numerous awards including CNN IBN Real Heroes Award 2010 and the Jijabai Women Achievers' Award 2014.

The number of girl students is more than that of boys, and so the NGO also sponsors academically gifted girls by mentoring them and funding their education. Vimla's plans include expanding Guldasta across the city and even country. At 83, she still attends to the school's day-to-day activities and takes classes. May her tribe increase. ■



What guide books *won't tell you about Zanzibar*

A visit to an old land like Zanzibar is a feast for the senses and a wondrous opening of the mind. But like other developing countries, there are changes taking place at all levels of society

By Kay Newton

I have lived in Zanzibar, East Africa, for over two years, and I learn something new each day. I am often asked for Zanzibari information from my peeps; everyone sees my photos on social media and wants to come on holiday! But the guide books won't tell you everything. Zanzibar, a semi-au-

tonomous island in Tanzania, has a growing tourist trade and with it come issues that are tolerated yet simmer below the surface. Whenever you go to a new country you notice cultural differences. Unguja, the main island, is a fascinating place and there are many juxtapositions. Here are some of them.

POVERTY & WEALTH

As a tourist staying at a hotel or beach lodge, you will see luxury paradise. There are many hotels dotted along the coast, from five-star resorts to backpackers' hostels. Most of these hotels employ some local staff, yet the majority of their profits do not go back into the local economy.

The majority of the island's population of 1 million live below the poverty line, surviving on less than \$5 per day, living in basic housing, without running water or electricity. Step a few hundred metres behind the hotel complex and you will see this. (Expect to be accosted by the local kids begging you for dollars too!)

How you deal with this is a difficult and personal dilemma. To give

or not to give? That is the question. There are also many charities looking for donations.

My recommendation: Pass on some piece of knowledge, rather than money.

BEACH BOY SEX

Here in Zanzibar, there is a growing trade in beach boy sex, where older foreign women buy the services of younger men. It is a socially taboo subject, just as homosexuality is.

Beach boys or touts are known in the local Swahili language as *Papasi* (ticks). They are frowned upon but tolerated by the locals. Many come from the mainland; some have issues with drug or alcohol abuse.

As on the beach, you may find the *Papasi* at Stone Town ferry port awaiting the arrival of the *Mzu-*



*nguu*s (white people). Some have numerous past girlfriends who send them money regularly. (I am sure these girlfriends don't know about each other!)

Not all white single women of a certain age arriving in Zanzibar are looking for sex, and not all beach boys want sex, yet that is becoming the reputation of the island. With Hepatitis B and HIV prevalent, it is worth doing your own due diligence before arriving on holiday and getting more than you bargained for.



Above: Zanzibar markets are full of colourful clothing; previous page: Kay teaching local children Tai-Chi on the beach

Most beach boys do offer some type of service in exchange for payment. Whether it is to show you around their local village, entice you to buy trinkets and gifts, go on a boat trip or snorkel-dive. What-

ever service you decide to go for, make sure you do not pay in advance! Touts are insistent and many tourists feel they spoil their holiday, often being rude to these people who at the end of the day are only attempting to make a living.

My recommendation: Smile and say no politely if you're not interested.

DRESS CODE

Ninety-eight percent of the local population is Muslim. There is an expected 'Muslim' dress code for foreign visitors in Zanzibar, which many female tourists refuse to take note of. It is not law, yet if you don't want attention, it is best to follow. Thank goodness it doesn't include having to wear a burkini on the beach!

Bikinis are fine by the hotel pool or beach. Everywhere else, women are expected to cover their shoulders, backs, arms, and above the knee. In 35°C it may feel uncomfortable to wear so much clothing, yet pack light cotton long trousers and carry a light shawl.

My recommendation: Buy a gorgeous kikoy or a traditional Swahili dress when you first arrive.

Where ever you go in the world, there is always something you can learn and something you can share. If you're visiting Zanzibar, drop in and say hello! ■

For more, follow Kay on www.Kay-Newton.com

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING JENNIFER

Her unconventional life and career choices mark Jennifer Winget as a woman to watch out for. The television icon talks about childhood, stardom and dealing with betrayal

By Aekta Kapoor



She has the friendly, instantly intimate manner of someone who is used to being a household name, who knows she is like extended family for the common girl or boy on the street. As someone who has been on television and the big screen since she was an adolescent, Jennifer Winget is at ease with fame. It

comes as naturally to her as the cup of coffee she craves – and demands – the moment she gets up every morning. It feels like home.

An entire generation grew up watching her face every evening – first as a round-faced teen in the kids' series *Shaka Laka Boom Boom*, then in India's third longest running TV show *Kasautii Zindagii Kay*, and

"I NEVER HAD TO STRUGGLE FOR ROLES. EVERYTHING
WORKED OUT WHEN THE TIMING WAS RIGHT."

JENNIFER WINGET





Jennifer plays a love-obsessed Maya in the popular series *Beyhadh* on Sony Entertainment Television

later the hugely popular TV romance *Dill Mill Gayye*. In between she appeared in about 20 other serials and reality TV shows, and won a critics' award by the Indian Television Academy for her role in *Saraswatichandra*. But Hindi-speaking India has known her even before that; she made her debut as a child star in the Bollywood hit *Raja Ko Rani Se Pyar Ho Gaya*, and has appeared in four other Hindi films since.

"I grew up on TV," says Jennifer. She's just had her lunch break while on set shooting for her psycho-thriller *Beyhadh*. Launched late last year on Sony Entertainment Television, the daily TV drama has a huge fan following with web views crossing millions every day. Her intense role, in fact, won her a pay

hike from Sony last month and catapulted Jennifer into the category of the highest paid TV serial actors. She's also recently been announced the brand ambassador for international cosmetics brand Paese.

Born and raised in Mumbai, Jennifer and her brother, who is older by five years, learnt to be independent early on. "We were a regular middle-class family," says Jennifer. Their mother worked in film production, and it was through her that Jennifer got her first offer to work as a child artiste. "I used to accompany her to work during my summer holidays, and someone asked mum if I could be one of the child stars on a film. That's how it began," she recalls, adding she didn't really have to struggle for roles. Every-

thing “just worked out when the timing was right”.

Her parents played an important role in Jennifer’s childhood and early career. In light of the recent controversy triggered by filmmaker Shoojit Sircar, who called for a ban on reality TV shows featuring children, Jennifer admits she has to agree. “My childhood was balanced between career and curriculum, and my parents made sure that I was grounded in reality. I was fortunate not to miss a ‘regular’ childhood. Having said that, there’s a huge change in recent years, and there’s a lot of pressure to fit into the stereotype of ‘star kid’. Even

adults can’t handle such pressure, let alone children. The parents play a very important role here,” says the 32-year-old, who has a huge social media following among the youth, with 3.3 million followers on Instagram alone.

Extroverted and down-to-earth, Jennifer is candid about her personal journey. Briefly married to fellow small-screen star Karan Singh Grover from 2012–14, their relationship was raked up again in early 2016

**“MY CHILDHOOD WAS
BALANCED BETWEEN
CAREER AND CURRICULUM,
AND MY PARENTS
MADE SURE THAT I WAS
GROUNDED IN REALITY.”**

when Karan married Bollywood actor Bipasha Basu in a much publicised wedding. But Jennifer dealt with the media onslaught with poise. “My father always said,



‘Believe in the word grace. Whatever you do, do it with grace,’” says Jennifer, whose responses to intrusive personal questions have been controlled, honest and, yes, graceful. “Everyone faces betrayal, men and women. The only way to deal with it is to not take life so seriously. Accept it as part of the deal, and face it head on,” she says, adding that adversity is a great teacher. “Failures are good. Battles make you stronger.”

The challenges of living in the limelight almost 24x7 have not taken a toll on Jennifer. “This is all I know to do,” she shrugs. “There are pros and cons in every profession and I am blessed to do something I love. I don’t mind hard work – it’s fun for me. No other profession has so many perks – you get to play so many characters and experience so many fictional lives,” she says, referring to her nuanced lead role in *Beyhadh*, for which she’s had to don an unconventional appearance of late. She first shared her new bald look on social media in mid-July, and it went viral as fans and media speculated whether it

was for real. Later, she showed off her new short (real-life) haircut by b:blunt, the popular hair studio run by Adhuna Akhtar.

“It inspires me to see passion in others. It makes me want to do better too,” says Jennifer, who loves unwinding with a light book at the end of the day. Her favourite book is *Illusions: The Adventures of a Reluctant Messiah*, by Richard Bach, though she admits that, being a true Gemini, she often reads two or more books at a time.

In an industry where appearances rule, Jennifer has found it to her advantage to lay her truth bare, however difficult that may have been. There is

something refreshing about her earthy personality and peppy spirit. Instead of settling for less, she took up challenging roles and has been fearless in taking risks. And instead of letting divorce embitter her, she retained her zest for life and a sense of gratitude for her blessings.

Jennifer’s huge popularity stands testament to the importance of being ‘genuine’. Easy lies the head that is unafraid to go bald. ■

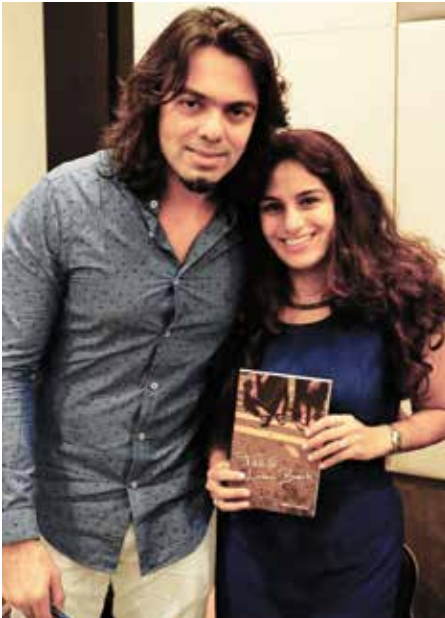


Jennifer posted this picture of her bald look for *Beyhadh* on social media; it went viral instantly

THE WIND BENEATH HIS WINGS

Being the woman behind a creative hotshot is a role that takes faith, sacrifice and oodles of love. But it's a rewarding one too

By Sweta Chhabria



Aditya and I met in college when we were just 17. We were moving in opposite directions when it came to our careers: I wanted to pursue the corporate world. He was highly creative. And yet we were drawn together. I did my MBA and joined the banking sector, and we dated for eight memorable years. We

finally got married in 2008.

Life with a man like Aditya Kripalani has been eventful to put it mildly. Though I was always a fan of Bollywood – well, it is hard to be immune if you live in Mumbai – Aditya helped me to appreciate different forms of art and to really look beyond the glamour of cinema. We visited museums and attended music concerts. He opened my mind.

Soon after we got married, Aditya wrote a book called *Back Seat* and decided to self-publish it. I remember standing at Bandstand and Carter Road, approaching people outside restaurants, requesting them to buy the book. We sold almost one thousand copies that way! It was later picked up by a publisher, and we had no trouble finding a distributor for his second book.

Around 2011, we moved to Singapore, where I got a job as an investment banker, but Aditya continued on his wacky creative journey. He became a singer and music composer, and made several videos. He also worked as script consultant,



Sweta helped promote Aditya's books and even set up a crowdfunding programme in Singapore to turn his third book *Tikli and Laxmi Bomb* into a film

screenplay writer or assistant director in six movies. Two years ago, he wrote an album of songs that he decided to release to the general public instead of the usual route. He would sit in local Mumbai trains at a certain hour every day, and sing his songs, strumming his guitar.

I visited Mumbai and travelled along with him on the train to see what exactly he was up to. And I was blown away by the reception I received. The older men referred to me as 'bahu', others gifted me chocolates. They talked to me very fondly, and seemed to enjoy every song of his. It was quite mind-blowing.

Then he wrote his third book *Tikli and Laxmi Bomb*. It's about two sex-workers who decide to take their business into their own hands, and do away with predatory pimps. Together they spark off a mini revolution to set up a system for women, run by women. I was moved by the book. What I re-

spected is that Aditya viewed these women through the lens of empathy not sexuality. I decided to help him turn it into a film. I launched a crowd-funding campaign in Singapore, sent out emails requesting people to donate funds, and hosted an event. I also helped him co-produce the film, handling all aspects of film budgeting and finances, while continuing with my full-time job, travelling back and forth for two years from Singapore. It's due for release by the end of this year.

I feel happy that I have been a true partner for Aditya in all his endeavours – my fixed salary and corporate thinking have given him the wings to follow his dreams, and my hands-on work has helped him execute his projects. We have balanced each other out, emotionally and professionally, and have enriched each other's lives in the process. That's the thing about marriage: if one of us wins, both of us win. ■

LADY BOSS

From being an IIM gold medallist to the CFO of a NASDAQ-listed company and now an investor and mentor to startups, Revathy Ashok has achieved milestones beyond the reach of most women

Rising in the corporate world has been something of a habit for Revathy Ashok. At 34, she became the CFO of a multinational leader in electronics, got elevated to the board soon after, then moved on to a leading IT services company as the Group CFO, and then as CFO of a NASDAQ-listed IT major, becoming the first Indian woman to reach that position. She was voted one of the 10 most powerful women in the Indian IT industry and was nominat-

ed by CII as one of the top women achievers in business in South India. From infrastructure and real estate, electronics and manufacturing, to software and private equity, she has seen it all. She's on the board of various listed Indian and multinational companies, and has invested in 15 startups. Her experience in global finance, strategy and joint ventures helped her successfully negotiate funding rounds of millions of dollars, besides investing hundreds of millions through the private-equity fund she was associated with.

And it all began in a small mofus-sil town called Sindri.

Born in an educated middle-class South Indian family, Revathy was brought up with two younger siblings in this little industrial township, now in Jharkhand, where her father worked in the public sector. "It was a humble childhood, but we got the best education even then," says Revathy. Sindri saw a burst of activity after it became a hub for India's early industrial investment. Though Revathy and her peers were cocooned in a convent school,



Revathy Ashok

the world outside was harsh. Mafia murders and kidnappings were all par for the course outside their sheltered townships.

Revathy left home at the age of 16 for Bangalore, graduating in science from Mount Carmel College, and an MBA from IIM Bangalore with a gold medal. “It was a big change from a small town to a big city. My father sent me a princely sum of Rs 150 per month for all my expenses. The experience taught me to be a fighter,” she reminisces.

She married her classmate from IIM and, at 23, was the mother of a baby girl. But that didn’t come in the way of her career plans. “It truly takes a village to bring up a child

and my parents and in-laws played a big role in being there for my children,” she says.

She believes that the government has had a long tradition of hiring women based on merit. The country has seen several top notch lady officers in the administrative services, foreign services and banking, all belonging to the pre-diversity era. The trend caught on with the private sector much later. “I was the only lady executive at my first job at Sony’s JV in India, and at my next job at Dodsai,” she says. As part of her work, she travelled and participated in the Durgapur and Rourkela steel-plant modernization projects and Narmada Valley proj-



PHOTO: PIXABAY

ect in the late 1980s. Then she got an opportunity to go to Iraq for a project in Tikrit, the birthplace of Saddam Hussein. She didn't think twice before signing up "Yes, it was a male-dominated industry. We had to stay in caravans in the desert, and, yes, I had a young daughter back home. But I was always perceived as an equal," avers Revathy.

Now things are different, she concedes. "24x7 connectivity has blurred the lines between family time and work; it has made job roles more complex. My family has been a pillar of strength for me," she says, "but even so, sometimes, there are tough decisions to make." When she got an offer as CFO of Syntel Inc., a NASDAQ-listed firm headquartered in Detroit with a large offshore centre in Mumbai, it was a disruptive decision. With her daughter then in Wharton, and her husband and son in Bangalore, she shuttled between Mumbai and Detroit and became a weekend mom.

But an even tougher decision awaited when her father took ill, and Revathy decided to move back to Bangalore to be with him. "I felt I could not traipse around the world watching his health decline day by day," she explains. Though her father didn't want her to give up her job, he nevertheless waited to see every weekend. He died six months later and her mother too passed away just a few months

thereafter. "Quitting my job at that point was probably the hardest but the best decision I ever made in my 37-year career," says Revathy.

After her dual loss, Revathy immersed herself at work and for the next four years, she ran a private equity fund and since then has been an angel investor investing in early stage technology startups. She also runs B.PAC, a political incubator that trains aspiring councilors and leaders in governance, women's

"IT WAS A MALE-DOMINATED INDUSTRY. WE HAD TO STAY IN CARAVANS IN THE DESERT, AND I HAD A YOUNG DAUGHTER BACK HOME. BUT I WAS ALWAYS PERCEIVED AS AN EQUAL"

safety and environmental issues.

From corporate boards to startups and non-profits, she juggles all of these with ease alongside her latest role: that of grandmom. Her daughter, now a VP at a global investment bank, delivered twins and Revathy and her husband share grandparenting duties. For a woman who led corporations of thousands of people, and yet thought nothing before giving it up for family, her new role should be a piece of cake. ■

By AK

THE POOR RICH URBAN INDIA

A new book Who Me, Poor? by veteran journalist Gayatri Jayaraman is a fascinating exploration of the socio-economic compulsions that keep urban educated populations mired in poverty even after landing plum jobs in big cities. In this excerpt, Jayaraman shares her personal experience

In the summer of 2000, I joined a fashion magazine as the chief of the Hyderabad bureau. When a decomposing marriage brought me back to Mumbai, I transferred to the Mumbai office and was now working at a Hyderabad remuneration in a much more expensive city. My salary before taxes was Rs 10,000.

The editor, then a monopolist in the trade, would induct me into her entourage while she did the rounds of major fashion designers' stores. At Ritu Kumar's at the Oberoi shopping centre, she would point to a small shelf in the corner and breezily suggest I pick out one from the discount section. Even with a 40 per cent discount, the Ritu Kumar pant suit—a fashionable orange and green outfit with a matching silk scarf was ill-suited to a 26-year-old mother with financial and marriage pressures and commuting by local train from Thane. An ensemble that cost Rs 4,000 was more than



three quarters of my monthly salary. In the days of Shopper's Stop mix-and-match kurtas being the only upgrade you hit after Fashion Street, this was quite the monetary leap in terms of apparel.

The conversation would quickly go from “it’s lovely, but it’s not for me” to “I can’t quite afford it” and landslide into “I’ll pay for it, you pay me when you have the money” behind forced plastic smiles. When your boss in your first or second job piles the pressure on like that, whether you have the money or not and whether your husband is

yelling bloody murder or not about the finances, you go home, pull the Rs 4,000 out and fork it over.

It happened twice by the time I began to search for another job, with other factors than needing to shop accelerating my need for better pay. My next job gave me a 150 per cent hike in salary, bumping it up to Rs 25,000. But the damage had already been done. Several items I would never need again, from clothes and jewellery to expensive lunches, taken to fit in to a field where earning a salary seemed incidental to most thriving in it, were already on my credit card and had dented any potential savings. By this time, I had moved out on my own, which also meant taking a personal loan to put down a deposit, which meant an Equated Monthly Installment (EMI) equal to rent, childcare, a new office in Andheri, which meant commute costs, sometimes exacerbated by the need to rush back home through Saki Naka traffic before the crèche closed, besides utility bills and groceries.

The rolled over credit card bills were denting me. I had no furniture but two mattresses on the ground, a

small radio, and a few kitchen utensils that included a knife with which to flip dosas. My limited gold stash was long sold, but thank God, there were two Ritu Kumars in the suitcase I was living out of. As the minimum amount due mounted, and I scrimped on the oil and wheat, so did the farce of hope.

"My limited gold stash was long sold, but thank God there were two Ritu Kumars in the suitcase I was living out of"

The episode left me with a healthy disrespect for insidious ways in which people in positions of power induct you consciously or thoughtlessly into their own financial agendas and spending patterns. It also taught me that what you assume to be just a matter of stretching your income to meet your ends—most young people who find themselves severely in debt will tell you they started out assuming it was 'a phase' that would end once their income rose as it inevitably would—doesn't quite even itself out as salaries rise. The more income rises, the higher the expenses to earn it become. A financial backlog, much like a few grams of chocolate that miraculously become kilograms of love handles, stretches itself out. ■

Excerpted with permission from Bloomsbury

GET THE *LOAD OFF*

*Have something on your mind? Ask clinical psychologist
Smriti Sawhney Joshi what to do about it*



I am a 25-year-old girl from Indore. I lived for three years in Mumbai, and got into the habit of wearing Western clothes there. Now that I am back home, it is difficult to do so. Men stare a lot if I step out in sleeveless tops and jeans, or in dresses. My family tells me not to get into trouble and to keep myself covered. But I feel that more girls should wear such clothes, that too with confidence, so that the men around us get used to it. There are huge scenes at home every day when I go out. Am I right or wrong?

Dear reader, thanks for reaching out to us. Being a woman and a mother of two young girls, I can relate to the kind of “suffocated feeling” you are going through as well as the “protective instincts” of your family for you. I feel sorry that a young independent woman in our country is questioned on her choice of clothes because of the danger that lurks outside the boundaries of her home. It’s indeed a sad state of affairs with regards to safety of women and children in our country.

In most probability, the intentions of your family are not to hurt you but to be protective towards you. Dressing should be for comfort and to give you a sense of confidence about yourself. You do mention you get stared at a lot; does that make you feel uncomfortable about your dressing style? If you feel confident and comfortable in your choice of clothes and can assure your family that you would be alert and stay in touch with them while you are out as a safety measure, it would work well for you and your family.

PHOTO CREDIT: SAYAN NATH ON UNSPLASH

Be more aware of the places where you may attract undue attention, say while travelling alone, and dress wisely. Also, I always recommend women get trained for self-defence. Whether they wear Western clothes or a hijab, the problem is not with what you wear; it's the mindset of those around us.



I had an arranged marriage 11 years ago when I was 19, and moved from Patna to Delhi. I have two kids. My businessman husband and his parents were indifferent towards me in the early years and I fell in love with a much younger man. Last month, I told my husband about it and asked for a divorce. I thought he would be furious, but instead he pretended not to hear it and changed the subject. I am caught in a trap. Divorce means becoming social outcasts. But I don't want to live an empty life any more. I am being propelled only by the wishes of my heart. What can I do?

Dear reader, I appreciate your strength in sharing your concerns; it takes courage to speak about a loveless marriage or an extramarital relationship or seeking divorce. I feel your pain. A marriage is often considered a lifelong bond to be fulfilled under all circumstances, even if the emotional or companionship needs are unmet for either partner. There's also a lot to be considered when seeking divorce – financial security post-divorce; children, if you have; the stigma associated with a divorcee, especially if it's a woman.

Since you've been married 11 years, it would be difficult for your husband to believe that you wish for a separation. It's often seen in such scenarios that the other partner may not even realise something's amiss or wrong with the marriage since more tangible needs like food, clothing, travel, et cetera, may be taken care of. Often, people feel that this is an adequate expression of their affection for their partner.

Sit with your husband when he's not distracted and speak about how you feel about your relationship, what's missing and that you are looking at parting ways now. Is there any scope of giving him another chance if he wishes to work on the marriage? I leave that question for you to reflect on.

If this doesn't help, consider seeking a professional marriage counselor's assistance to sort your life. ■



Her Cup of Tea

India is ready to make and drink its own best-quality teas, thought Shikha Puri, who set out to do just that

Shikha Puri is a bit obsessed with tea. “Mist is good. Altitude is important,” she says, seated at the DLF Club in Gurgaon where we are the only two guests this summer afternoon. Over tea (but naturally), she explains how the first flush of the plants yields the longest leaves, and though India has a treasure trove of tea plantations, the best leaves are exported because they can sell at a very high premium in the First World. “But why shouldn’t Indians enjoy the best of their own teas?” she asks.

Why, indeed.

The question is what drove Shikha to give up her high-flying corporate job at J Walter Thompson – where she handled the advertising portfolios for clients such as Airtel, Microsoft and the World Bank – and jump into entrepreneurship two years ago. She had three major impetuses. The first was the wealth of knowledge about tea production in her husband’s family. Her father-in-law NK Puri is considered one of India’s leading tea experts and had worked on the largest plantations all his life before retiring a few years earlier. Shikha’s husband was

born in a tea garden, and had also worked as a tea taster before joining a large real-estate firm. The family often travelled to their own estate in Darjeeling – the tea hub of India – and doing business there would not alter their travel plans too much.

The other thing that pushed Shikha was her little boy Parth, who was becoming a handful. Giving up a 9-to-9 job and working at her own pace was a tempting idea. To top it all, the demand for green tea was growing at 30% every year.

It seemed as if the heavens were aligned for a brave new boutique tea that would bring the best Indian teas to Indian homes at last. And so, in 2015, Teacupsfull was born.

“You’ll be surprised how many food or beverage businesses don’t have the required certification in India,” says Shikha. Her company is registered with the Tea Board of India, and is licensed to export. She tied up with FedEx for logistics after learning of their special schemes for startups such as hers. Her firm developed a range of teas – green, white, black, oolong – and a variety of flavours – tulsi, masala, cinnamon. They designed attractive packaging and began offering corporate gifting and festive

hampers. They set up an online store *teacupsfull.com* and began retailing from other online and offline outlets. They also began offering tea accessories such as special pots and mugs that facilitate brewing.

Soon, the 35-year-old became quite the tea expert herself. “You can add milk in Assam tea, but not in Darjeeling tea. Pour boiling water on the leaves in a pot. Let it brew, then strain it,” she goes on, expounding on the variations of

English Breakfast Tea (it’s a blend of long-leaf teas from Assam), the best way to pack tea leaves (in a zip-locked foil pouch inside an air-tight tin), why she sources from the Halmari garden in Assam (they have the best CTC

– crush, tear and curl – tea in the world), and adds spices from Kerala to make a blend (it’s plain delicious).

We head to her tea store in Gurgaon. “Here, smell this,” she says, offering me a glass jar of jasmine tea. I am impressed with its aroma so she calls for boiled water and offers me a cup. It’s pretty good. And then I look up to see Shikha’s face as she sniffs it like a connoisseur holding a glass of wine. She sips, satisfied. It’s the face of a job well done. ■

By AK



THE FASHION ETHIC

Being a fashion entrepreneur comes with a lifetime of learning, and no matter what your personal situation is, the work must go on

By Jigna Shah



My chartered accountant father was very particular about academic excellence. He pushed me into doing my Master's in commerce and taking up a position teaching economics in Ahmedabad. But after he passed away, I didn't see any reason to continue in a profession I wasn't fit for. My heart was in fashion design, so I left my steady job without telling anyone, and joined NIFT to study textile design.

My mom wasn't happy about it.

But after that there was no stopping me. I started my own label Revé Fashions, participated in trade shows, held exhibitions, and was invited to panels at Lakme Fashion Week. I set up a store on the ground floor of The Pride Hotel in a tony part of Ahmedabad, and was the first place Bollywood stars shopped from when they came to town for movie launches. I am patronised by all the industrialists' wives here.

I was covered widely by the media and several online voting polls have declared me the most popular fashion designer in Gujarat. The hotel brought me foreign customers and airlines staff, so I branched out into Indo-Western clothing with superlative international standards.

I married my life partner in my late 30s and days later, my mom passed away. I broke the news to people about my wedding and my

"WE STICK TO OUR PROFESSIONAL VALUES, AND CUSTOMERS SEND US MORE CLIENTS LATER BECAUSE THEY TRUST US. SHORT-TERM GAIN BASED ON A LIE IS A LONG-TERM LOSS"

loss in the same phone call. My husband is an industrialist from Mumbai, so I moved here. He taught me to think big and to go global. We started promoting 'ahimsa' silk (non-violent silk) and are opening a store in Ahmedabad for VIP customers. I am also working on an organic wellness range.

I'm in my mid-40s now and we married too late to have kids. Instead, we are focused on helping less privileged sections of society by teaching skills, generating employment, and helping them grow.

Over the years, this is what I've learnt about life and business:

Daydream with abandon: Nurture those dreams and allow yourself to break your own barriers.

Be patient: You have to persevere and be at it for many years before the results start to show. I am not from a wealthy background. It took me 20 years to reach this point when tycoons wear my products.

Reassess and restart: Sometimes you have to cut your losses and start again. At one point, I began facing factory losses. I had to completely restructure my way of doing things and move my factory to Sri Lanka. Then things picked up again. Don't hesitate to change direction.

Be solution-oriented: If you keep focusing only on the problems, you'll never start or do anything.

Be scrupulous: This goes without saying. Many male tourists visit my store to buy clothes for their wives back home. These men are easy to dupe because they have no idea of Indian sizes or prices. But my entire team sticks to professional values, and these customers send us more clients later because they trust us. Short-term gain based on a lie is a long-term loss.

All work is your own work: No work is too small for a businessperson. It is a habit, not a job for me. ■

RETURN TO ROOTS

Inspired by her family of freedom fighters, academicians and craft lovers, Karishma Shahani Khan reinterprets India through her label Ka-Sha

By Anupam Dabral

When Karishma was a little girl, her father gifted her a scrapbook, which soon became a bearing ground of all her fantasies. Seeing their daughter intrigued by the beauty of her surroundings, Karishma's parents recognised her passion for fashion early on, and fuelled it by introducing her to a variety of influences. Primary among them was her art-historian and educationist aunt, Madhavi Kapoor who, with her beautiful saris and love for Indian crafts, can be credited for introducing Karishma Shahani Khan to different textiles as a child.

"Fashion was never a part of the plan" says Karishma, adding, "I am not a fashion designer per se; I am an artist who creates clothes." Today her understanding of fashion as an art form manifests in her creations. Unapologetic use of bright colours, dupattas with pom-poms, and ensembles that tell a tale of India's rich craft heritage have become her signature. This year, Karishma

was a part of an award-winning, five-member team to represent India at London Fashion Week. Each designer had to create pieces befitting the theme 'Indian Pastoralists'. And Karishma looked back at India for her inspiration. She reinterpreted the crafts of Rabari tribe of the Kutch region and gave them a contemporary appeal.

Karishma, who has won several national and international accolades, is not new to the 'Made in India' philosophy. Her great-grandparents were freedom fighters, and her great-grandfather had only donned handspun khadi throughout his life. Karishma's grandmother, who was a poet and an author, fed her some rich familial history through her writings.

Today, the 30-year-old mother of one takes pride in her roots and returns to them again and again in her moodboards. "While a student of design at London College of Fashion, I realised how much I missed India and its eclectic design




elements,” she says. As an intern in London, she would fly to India to work with a craft-based organisation in Kutch. There, she met a number of weavers and dyers, and noticed the self-sufficiency and sustainable nature of their business. She also observed details such as tarpaulin-covered slums and street-dwellers wearing layers of clothes, which prompted her to create pieces that not only represented India but made a social statement too. Keeping reversibility, multiple layering and sustainable fashion in focus, she launched her label Ka-Sha in 2011.

“Our aim is to create responsible fashion,” informs the Pune-based designer. Her sub-brand ‘Heart to Haat’ is an extension of the cause. With 100 percent upcycling being at the core, she makes sure that nothing goes waste in the production process.


Her beautiful cotton separates, comfortable multiple paneled trousers and slouchy shirts might represent a modern facet of her thinking, but in reality, she is a true daughter of the soil, who believes in giving back to nature and her tradition, and retaining its glory. ■

Karishma Shahani Khan's knack for colour, commitment to sustainability and love for everything Indian is rooted in her childhood.





Being born and brought up in a family of academicians and freedom fighters had a profound influence on Karishma's work and her thought process.

A woman with dark hair is standing in a dry, hilly landscape with tall grass. She is wearing a pink ka-sha with red floral patterns and a blue and white striped border. The garment has yellow tassels hanging from the bottom. She is holding a small object in her hands.

The fabric for Ka-Sha collections is bought directly from a number of NGOs eliminating middlemen, so that the entire remuneration goes to the craftsmen.



Ka-Sha, the label,
operates with a
commitment to zero-
waste policy: everything
is used and reused.

Waste is reinvented
as patchwork jackets,
material for embroidery
and even footwear.



**In all her collections, be it 'Yatra', 'Khoj' or 'Chauraha',
Karishma has positioned India as a focal point.**



Photographer: Manasi Sawant
Hair and makeup: Kritika Gill
Stylist: Nidhi Jacob

YOUR AUGUST STYLE UPDATE

*Anupam Dabral compiles the latest from the
world of fashion*



DEEPIKA FOR TANISHQ

Tanishq has launched a range called 'Jewels of Royalty' with the international face of Bollywood, Deepika Padukone as its brand ambassador. The campaign was styled by celebrity stylist Shaleena Naithani. The exclusive collection offers a range of danglers, necklaces and rings set in diamonds and open polki.

ANITA DONGRE TAKES GRASSROOT TO NEW YORK

Arguably India's most successful designer, Anita Dongre has become the first Indian designer to open her flagship store in New York City. Anita's youngest label Grassroot finds inspiration in its global approach and now has a new address in the heart of New York's Soho district. The store was designed by architect Shonan Trehan.



RUTU NEEVA'S NEW COLLECTION

Designers Rutu Shah and Neeva Sheth of the label Rutu Neeva recently launched their Fall 2017 collection. The line is replete with androgynous silhouettes and sharp detailed lines. From dresses to free-flowing gowns, the collection showcases a number of details such as intricate gatherings, a multitude of pleats, flared-bottom pants, and subtle overlays.



SPRINGFIELD NOW IN INDIA

Spanish high-street brand Springfield is now in India. The first store was unveiled by Tablez India, a part of LuLu Group International, at Phoenix Market-City in Bangalore last month, and will soon be available in six other cities. Springfield belongs to Grupo Cortefiel, and offers international fashion for both

men and women between the age of 25 – 35, who are looking for urban casual and trendy wear. Check out their linen shirts for men and sequinned knit tops for women. You'll love their use of colour.

NEETA LULLA LAUNCHES N BRIDE

Adding a new dimension to her bridal wear, veteran Mumbai-based designer Neeta Lulla recently launched N Bride, an affordable line of bridal pieces meant for the millennials. Sticking to her signature intricate embroideries, a rich colour palette with hints of fusion silhouettes, you'll find pieces priced between Rs 30,000 to Rs 1 lakh at stores such as Aza, Ensemble and Angasutra to name a few.



THE NEW-GEN WAY TO *Shop Fashion*

Changes in urban lifestyle call for changes in shopping patterns. Adopt these tips and get with it.

By Zarine Bajaj



Zarine Bajaj is the founder of Findow fashion app

I worked in the media industry for more than a decade, mostly with NDTV on entertainment, lifestyle and fashion programming. But my interest in style and design finally landed me at the studio of India's ace designer Gaurav Gupta, heading his PR and marketing. Surrounded by designers and seeing the fashion market at work, I felt something was not quite right.

I set out to find must-have pieces in Delhi but was at a loss where to start. However, when I was ready for lunch, my iPhone enabled me to seamlessly discover places to eat on Zomato. Why not the same for fashion, I thought.

That's when I decided to create a fashion discovery website and mobile app that uses geolocation services to help a shopper find, by simple clicks, what designers, boutiques and brands are around and who sells merchandise of her interest.

Over the last few years of being a fashion-app developer and a fashion addict, this is how I've streamlined my shopping, and you can too.

MAKE A LIST

Don't wait until you're at the store to figure out what you need. Do the research, take stock of your closet. Prioritize your wish list in case you run out of time. A list helps you stick to your budget, and stops you from buying things you don't really need – even if they scream 'sale'.

PRE-SHOP

Prior to your shopping trip, visit the store's website and get an idea of their styles and prices. Make a note of what interests you, and read reviews to get a sense of whether other customers have found those items to be well-made, appropriately sized, and so on. But be flexible too. Sometimes, items don't look as good as we'd imagined or we make unexpected discoveries.

BE COMFORTABLE

Don't wear clothes that are hard to get on and off. A pair of jeans may be effortless, but banded pants or shorts that don't need buttoning up are more practical. You might want to consider a nice-fitting dress that's comfortable and easy to slip on.

CONSIDER TIMING

If you shop during peak times or weekends, you may be exhausted even by the time you've found a parking spot. To avoid unsettling crowds, shop first thing in the morning or right before a shop closes, and you'll enjoy shorter lines and easier parking. Take mini-breaks for water, snacks, or simply a quiet moment away from the fray.

TRY IT ON

It's true! Sometimes a piece is stunning on the hanger but just doesn't look right on your frame and sometimes it's the other way around. It's



Above: The new **women's secret** store that has been launched at Phonix MarketCity Mall, Bangalore

also important to try on a variety of silhouettes (midi skirts, high-waisted trousers, boxy tees, crop tops, shift dresses) to know which styles work best for you. This will help later when you shop online too.

USE FINDOW TO SAVE TIME

My app Findow helps you discover fashion nearby and across the country. You can not only locate and identify styles, stores and designers but also create your personal style diaries, review labels, and search for trend-setting products by leading designers and stylists. You can also browse categories such as “popular” or “bridal” and like, share or comment on your favourite snaps.

SHOP BACKWARDS

Always choose your wedding outfit first, then move to the other functions. Say you find a brilliant outfit for the *sangeet* in fuchsia pink. But then you find a perfect wedding outfit in the same colour, and you can't buy it! Once the outfits are sorted, go for the accessories, shoes, jewellery, makeup, and so on.

DON'T BRING AN ENTOURAGE

Opinions are usually all over the place, and can overwhelm you. Just pick one or two key persons to go with you. By keeping your support system small, you will get the most honest opinions because these people know you best. ■

The Seed of an Idea

NEETI MEHRA, DELHI



I was born in Bombay and we moved to Delhi when I was really young. Though I studied to become a bean counter, since childhood I had secretly nurtured a dream of becoming a writer. Over the years I've observed that however much you try and scupper your dreams, they have a way of wriggling their way into reality. I did become an editor; I travelled the world and explored my creativity as a food stylist, a photographer, and then, a stationery designer.

My first brush with sustainability came when I created my own line of India-inspired stationery, Chamku, created from recycled paper – wacky, eco-friendly, and very Indian. At the same time, as the editor of a luxury magazine, I explored how premium brands were consciously embracing sustainability. How we live is deeply entwined with our and our children's future.

I finally took a plunge to start *beejliving.com*, a curated platform for slow living in India. With workshops, content and a lot of information planned, I hope to make an impact, however small, by helping people lead fuller lives.

Life is short. We owe it to ourselves to make it rich and meaningful. ■

FEAST FROM THE NORTHEAST

Savour India's rich gastronomical heritage with these seven simple, rooted-in-tradition recipes from the seven northeastern states of India

By Purabi Shridhar and Sanghita Singh

Open an atlas and trace out the shape of North East India – it's like a graceful bird caught in a dance step. Sure, some North Easterners will tell you that the bird is in their stomach and was very tasty too, thank you! Look again, and there are the seven sisters, each with a distinct identity, terrain, communities, languages and dialects, and an amazing and unusual food history and heritage. Look again and there is a common link – that of simple humanity.

Look again, this time into the kitchens. They speak an easy-to-understand language – rejoice in the bounty that nature has given you in the land, air and water, and celebrate. For those far away from their kitchens, sometimes the urge to get just a whiff of familiar aromas, a taste of distinct flavours, can lead to a gnawing ache within. For how can the senses forget the tart-sweetness of the small taut orange from a family garden, or the description-defying rich taste of Doh Khleh of Meghalaya, the intoxicating whiff of axonhe from a home in Kohima, the melt-in-the mouth deliciousness of Sungat Diya Misa Maas or the peppiness of Khangkhrai Arw Bilahi Megong from a home in Assam, the unpretentiousness of a Bai from Aizawl, the appetizing Iromba from Imphal, the simple but rocking Godok from Tripura and the redolent Paa Chauu from Arunachal Pradesh – simple, rooted-in-tradition dishes that uplift the body and mind.

Our book *THE SEVEN SISTERS: Kitchen Tales From The North East* (Westland) is a from-the-heart effort to put together recipes straight from the kitchens of family and friends in the North East and of North Easterners living elsewhere. Come, walk with us on our culinary journey.

MIZORAM: BAI

Mizo Vegetable Stew (2-3 servings)

Ingredients:

1 cauliflower (stalks, leaves and a few florets)

1 tsp fermented soya bean paste or sodium bicarbonate

1 large potato, cubed

1 large green chilli, sliced (deseeded if desired)

50 gm French beans, trimmed, sliced

A fistful of rice

Salt to taste

Instructions:

1. Cut the cauliflower stalks into two pieces each, tear the leaves roughly and break the florets into medium-sized pieces

2. Bring 1 litre of water to a boil in a pan on moderate heat. Reduce the heat and add the fermented soya bean paste or sodium bicarbonate and salt.

3. Once the frothing subsides, add the cauliflower and the potato and stir.

4. Add the green chilli and beans and stir again

5. Throw in the rice and stir once again. Raise the heat to high and bring to a boil.

6. Reduce the heat to a simmer and cook for about 15 minutes, stirring frequently, till the rice has absorbed the water and the vegetables and rice are tender. Serve hot.





NAGALAND: KALHANG PORK

Ingredients (4-5 servings):

1 kg pork
5 tsp red chilli powder
1 cup water
3 dried red chillies (preferably Naga Raja Mirchi)
Salt to taste

Instructions:

1. Wash the pork and cut into medium-sized pieces.
2. Put a large wok on low heat and add the pork pieces.
3. Add 2 tsp of chilli powder and let the meat cook till its juices dry up.
4. Add 1 cup of water and continue

to cook on low heat. Keep adding the rest of the chilli powder gradually and let the pork cook. Toss the meat gently by holding the sides of the wok and shaking it. This is essential to prevent the pork pieces from sticking to the wok bottom.

5. Do not stir. Sprinkle in the salt.

6. When the meat is nearly tender, roast the red chillies on a dry tava or griddle and crush them to make a coarse powder. Sprinkle the crushed powder over the pork pieces and let the meat cook for a few minutes longer, till tender.

7. Serve hot with steamed rice.

TRIPURA: GODOK

Tripuri Mixed Vegetables (2-3 servings)

Ingredients:

¼ cup black-eyed beans, soaked overnight (optional)
2 medium-sized potatoes
100 gm French beans
100 gm sheet beans
100 gm bamboo shoot (fresh or dried)
6-8 mushrooms (optional)
A pinch of turmeric powder
2 small pieces berma (dried fish)
Salt to taste

Instructions:

1. Drain the beans and rinse thoroughly. Put them into a pan

with enough water to cover and boil on high to moderate heat, till tender.

2. Chop all the vegetables, add them to the pan and bring to a boil. Add the turmeric powder, dried fish and salt. Cook, till the vegetables are tender and remove from heat.

3. Strain the broth from the vegetables and set aside.

4. Put the vegetables in a bowl and mash them coarsely. Now add the reserved broth gradually, stirring all the while, till it has a thick consistency.

5. Serve hot with steamed rice.





ASSAM: SARIYAH DIYA MASOR TENGA

Fish Curry with Mustard (2-3 servings)

Ingredients:

500 gm freshwater fish (rohu or rawas),
cut into medium-sized pieces

1 tsp turmeric powder

2 tbsp mustard oil for frying the fish +

1 tbsp for the curry

½ tsp mustard seeds

6 ripe tomatoes, finely chopped

1 medium-sized potato, boiled,
mashed

1 tbsp mustard seeds, ground to a
paste

1 tbsp sugar

Juice of 1 lemon

2 green chillies, slit at the tip

2 tbsp fresh coriander leaves, chopped

Salt to taste

Instructions:

1. Wash the fish and pat dry. Marinate it with a pinch of salt and a pinch of turmeric powder for about 10 minutes.

2. Heat 2 tbsp of mustard oil in a

non-stick frying pan and fry the fish for about 2-3 minutes on each side, taking care not to break the pieces. Remove from the pan and set aside.

3. Put a kadhai on moderate heat and add 1 tbsp of mustard oil. When the oil is smoking hot, add the mustard seeds.

4. When the seeds start spluttering, stir in the finely chopped tomatoes and mashed potato.

5. Add the remaining turmeric powder and salt, stirring continuously. Fry the mixture for about 10 minutes or till it begins to dry up.

6. Pour in 2 cups of water, stir once and bring to a boil. Gently add the fried fish pieces. Mix the mustard paste with the sugar and add it to the curry.

7. Sprinkle in the lemon juice, stir and let it boil for about 30 seconds. Remove from heat and mix in the green chillies and coriander leaves. Serve hot with steamed rice.

MANIPUR: NGA TAOBA THONGBA

Fried Fish Curry (4-5 servings)

Ingredients:

1 kg fish (rohu)
 Mustard oil – for frying
 A pinch of asafoetida powder
 2 bay leaves
 A pinch of fenugreek seeds
 100 gm maroi nakuppi (Chinese or garlic chives), chopped
 2 onions, finely sliced
 1 tsp garam masala powder
 ½ tsp ginger, coarsely crushed
 ½ tsp garlic, coarsely crushed
 ½ tsp turmeric powder
 2 tomatoes, diced in cubes
 1 tsp black peppercorn and cumin seeds, ground
 1 cup shelled green peas
 2 potatoes, cut into small cubes
 Salt to taste
 25 gm fresh coriander leaves, finely chopped (optional, for garnishing)

Instructions:

1. Clean the fish, wash and cut it into medium-sized pieces.
2. Heat some mustard oil in a frying pan and lightly fry the fish pieces on both sides. Drain and set aside.
3. Pour 4 tbsp of mustard oil into another pan and heat till it smokes.
4. Add the asafoetida powder, bay leaves and fenugreek seeds. Add the chives, onions, garam masala powder (optional), ginger, garlic and turmeric powder and fry on moderate heat, till fragrant.
5. Mix in the tomatoes and cook for a few seconds.
6. Stir in the pepper-cumin powder and cook till fragrant.
7. Add the green peas, potatoes and salt. Simmer on low-moderate heat, till the tomatoes are slightly tender and the potatoes are nearly cooked.
8. Pour in three cups of water and bring to a boil. Gently immerse the fish pieces into the curry and cook for 6-7 minutes.
9. Garnish with coriander leaves just before serving. Serve hot with steamed rice.



ARUNACHAL PRADESH: HOT CHICKEN AND MUSHROOM

Steamed with Bamboo Shoot (4 servings)

Ingredients:

5-6 dried red chillies
 1 kg chicken, cut into small pieces
 3 tbsp bamboo shoot (fresh or dried)
 ½ tsp North Eastern or Szechuan pepper, crushed
 1 tsp red chilli powder
 5 cloves garlic, finely chopped
 ½ tsp ajinomoto (optional)
 250 gm green beans, trimmed (optional), cut into 2" pieces
 200 gm mushrooms, sliced
 2 bunches bok choy, washed, leaves separated (optional)
 Salt to taste

Instructions:

1. Boil the red chillies in 1 cup of water in a small pan on high heat, till they

are soft. Drain the excess water and crush the boiled chillies in a mortar and pestle. Set aside.

2. Put the chicken in another pan and pour in just enough water to cover. Boil the chicken on high heat, till tender.

3. Add the bamboo shoot, pepper, chilli powder, garlic and the reserved red chilli paste and cook on low heat, till all the ingredients are well mixed.

4. Stir in the salt and add ajinomoto for that extra dash of flavour.

5. Next, add the beans, mushrooms and bok choy and cook, till the vegetables are tender, but crisp. Keep adding a little water intermittently so that the mixture is not completely dry.

6. The chicken should have a fiery red colour. Serve hot.

MEGHALAYA: BRENGNA

Chicken Steamed in Bamboo (4-5 servings)

Ingredients:

1 kg chicken (or 4 small chicks)
2 large onions, finely minced
2" piece ginger, finely shredded
5-6 green chillies (preferably aaba chillies from Meghalaya), minced
1 tbsp mustard oil
1 fresh bamboo tube, about 10" long, 3" in diameter
Wholewheat dough, for sealing
Salt to taste

Instructions:

1. Clean the chicken and remove the bones. Cut the flesh into very small pieces and smash with a fork to make a coarse mince.

2. Add the onions, ginger and green chillies to the chicken. Mix in the salt.

3. Pour the mustard oil all over the mix and knead thoroughly with your hand.

4. Stuff the chicken mix into the bamboo tube and seal the opening with the dough. Put the bamboo tube on a gentle wood or coal fire and roast for about 30 minutes.

Note: If bamboo tubes are not available, make small dumplings of the chicken mince and steam them for about 10-12 minutes in a steamer, preferably a bamboo steamer for an enhanced flavour. Serve hot. ■



RAIN AND SHINE

Don't let the monsoon dampen your skin's glow. Here's how to shine even in the rain.

By Argha Kashyap



Humidity + heat + urban pollution = skin nightmare. Follow these time-tested facial care regimes to stay fresh and glowing.

HONEY, LEMON AND YOGURT PACK

Mix equal amounts of all three for an anti-tanning, deep-cleansing and moisturising pack. Keep it for 15–20 minutes and rinse with lukewarm water.

REPLACE WATER WITH ROSE WATER

And especially if you have oily, sticky skin. Cleaning your face with rose water will hydrate your skin, relieve irritation caused by pimples and reduce breakouts. You can also spray your face with refrigerated rose water at regular intervals to stay fresh and cool.

USE ALCOHOL-FREE TONERS

Your oily skin will thank you for this. Alcohol strips the moisture off your skin, which then starts secreting more oil as a counter-reaction. Use rose water or homemade toners instead.

GO FOR AYURVEDIC SOAPS

Gentle and chemical-free soaps help in retaining the skin's natural moisture. You can also use natural scrubs such as apricot or charcoal soap instead of face wash.

USE SUNSCREEN

UV rays are responsible for skin damage, pigmentation, freckles and yes, they DO penetrate through clouds, so don't skip sunscreen just because it's cloudy. SPF 15 is ideal for Indian skin. ■

ANUJA CHANDRAMOULI

The author of Yama's Lieutenant and the Stone Witch talks about mythology, women and writing dark fiction

eShe: How did the idea for this new book come about?

Anuja Chandramouli: Being a horror movie aficionado, a topper in abnormal psychology and one of those people with a morbid fascination for all things dark and disturbing, I wanted to write a book that was intense, more than a little messed up and wildly entertaining. After chewing on it for a bit, *Yama's Lieutenant* took shape. Even while writing it, I toyed with the idea of developing it into a series, because it was hard to let go of the characters who had become such a big part of my life. My editor thought it was a good idea too and *Yama's Lieutenant and the Stone Witch* happened. Hopefully, George RR Martin will be inspired by my example and quit his dillydallying when it comes to delivering *The Winds of Winter*.

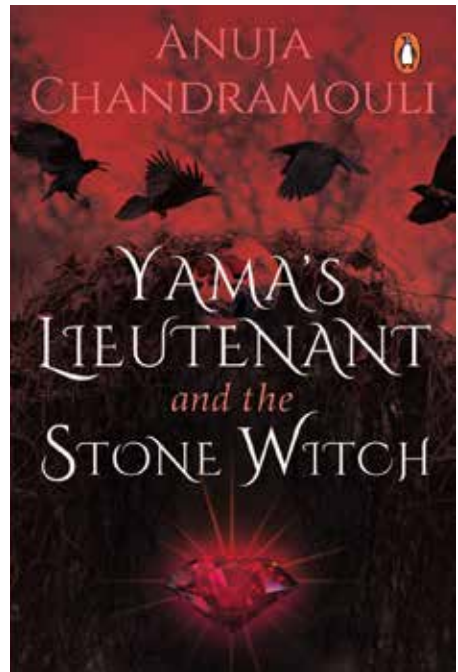
Which is your favourite character in the new book?

That's a tough one because after a point you grow attached to the lot of them, including the antagonists who have mass murder and destruction on an apocalyptic scale in mind for the rest of the world. But I guess my favourite is the protagon-

ist, Agni Prakash. He somehow manages to combine the qualities of a sweetheart and badass both.

So what draws you to Indian mythology?

There is always a sense of discovery, fresh insights, the feeling that you are catching up with friends you have grown up with and always the possibility of meeting someone new. It is one hell of a romance. Mythology and me forever!



What was the portrayal of women like in the old texts? And how would it compare with women's social standing in India today?

There is no dearth of strong women characters in the old texts. Contrary to what misguided folks seem to think nowadays, the ladies were not shrinking violets who cowered behind yards of fabric, allowing their fathers, brothers, husbands or sons to run their lives while they popped out babies and tended to home and hearth. Then, as it is now, there were certain restrictions that bound women (and, to be fair, men as well) but resourceful women seldom let that sort of thing get in the way of pursuing their ambitions.

Women were always active players, unafraid of wielding power and taking up challenging roles that played a crucial part in shaping the present world we have inherited. We would do well in this day and age to take a leaf out of their scrolls, quit it with the endless whining and complaining, so that we can all just get on with it,

What's the role of humour in Indian mythology?

Humour is a big part of mythology and it is needed to make the harsh truths contained within the stories a lot more palatable.

In my opinion at least, it is not love but laughter which truly makes the world go round.



"There is no dearth of strong women characters in the old texts, contrary to what misguided folks think nowadays"

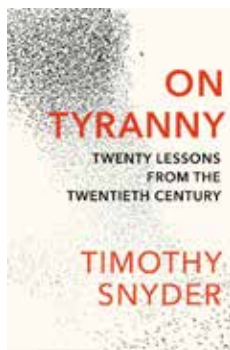
What are your other passions in life, besides writing?

The most important thing in my life aside from writing is my family. Hubby is my muse and my two little girls are amazing! I learn so much from them about living life with grace, generosity of spirit and heavy helpings of toilet humour.

Yoga, reading, coffee, classical dance and yummy desserts are my other passions, though not necessarily in that order. ■

ON THE BOOKSHELF

This is what the editor loved reading this month



On Tyranny

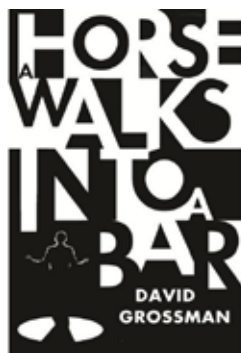
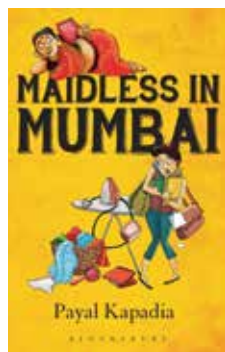
Timothy Snyder (Penguin Random House UK, Rs 499)

This book is a warning: if we believe what our politicians want us to believe, we're going to go pretty much the way the world went in the 20th century, when humankind saw its worst wars ever. With anecdotes and lessons from history and philosophy, American academic Snyder shows how today's world leaders – from Donald Trump in the US to 'authoritarian' regimes in India – are pulling a fast one on the common people, who will end up trading liberty for fictional 'greatness' if they aren't careful. Brr.

Maidless in Mumbai

Payal Kapadia (Bloomsbury, Rs 299)

Written by a former journalist, this is the diary of a Mumbai mom who wants only one thing: a perfect maid. But, of course, that is the stuff of fairy tales. Kapadia's novel comes in a context when a housing complex in Noida saw an 'uprising' by a community of domestic helpers for alleged abuse, and a rise in crime by hired help. For sure, India is on the cusp of social change, and this class of people will soon cease to exist, at least on the old terms. The book's protagonist may yet have more agony in store.



A Horse Walks Into a Bar

David Grossman (Penguin Random House, Rs 499)

Grossman's latest novel – ably translated by Jessica Cohen – is about a standup comedian, but don't expect to roll about in laughter. The book immerses you in modern Israeli society, drags you through a child's experience of loss in a land where even children are groomed to fight, and leaves you emotionally bereft at the vacuum in urban lives. To ease your pain, there are a few good Jew jokes thrown in. This is masterful story-telling by a writer with deep insight into human psychology.

The Travelling Bookworm

SUNITA PANDEY, 52, LUCKNOW



I spent most of my youth in Lucknow in a family of voracious readers. Doing well in exams meant five second-hand books or one new one. Dad was deeply disappointed when I refused the offer of Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* as a 13th birthday present. At 18, I loved it.

The one constant in my life as wife to a forest officer and mom to two children, as we moved from place to place, was books. In Ramnagar, it was crumbling tomes in forest rest-houses. In Moradabad, it was AH Wheelers at the railway station. In Agra, I remember Vikram Seth's *A Suitable Boy* the most; spending Rs 500 on it was a big decision. Hardoi was a book desert; the few officers who were fond of reading kept a hawk's eye on who was buying what from outstation trips and then borrowed shamelessly.

Dehradun, in contrast, was an oasis. We went book shopping at the end of every exam. The happiest memory of a three-month stay in Bangor in Wales is of the free library. Eight books at a time. Pure bliss.

I am back in Lucknow. From the first book *In Other Words* by Jhumpa Lahiri, I've been hooked to Kindle. Reading *Banaras* by Diana L. Eck, a gift, in paperback is almost odd. ■

WANT MORE? VISIT
eShe.in

July 2017
Vol 1 Issue 1

eS! **eShe**
— the female gaze —

August 2017
Vol 1 Issue 2

**Alankrita
Shrivastava**

The director
of the controversial
film *Lipstick Under
My Burkha* ignites
discussion around
female sexuality



THE
IMPORTANCE
OF BEING
*Jennifer
Winget*

LIFE
in
ST

MONSOON CHASING

Why would a woman
drive across India
during the rains?

THE LADY BOSS

Meet Revathy Ashok, the
first Indian woman CFO
of a NASDAQ-listed firm

NORTHEAST FEAST

Seven traditional recipes
from India's seven
northeastern sister states

FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION ONLY

eShe.in

BROUGHT
TO YOU BY



Read the digital magazine
on www.eShe.in



Follow @esheworld



ROHINI DEZINES

 @rohinidezines