

FEMINA

BE THE
CHANGE

*Rakul Preet
Singh hopes
for a better
tomorrow*

*Be
unstoppable*

Bowl-ed
over
Soups for
the soul

VOCAL
FOR
LOCAL
ARE YOU ALL
ABOUT
EVERYTHING
HOMEGROWN?

BUZZWORD
CHECK
Clean
beauty

BREAKING GROUND

WOMEN
MAKING
IT COUNT

SEEDS OF
REVOLUTION
When agriculture
meets technology



EDITOR'S LETTER



The deadly COVID-19 pandemic has taught us a big lesson—go back to our roots, connect with nature and all things natural. Living in our densely-populated urban jungles, we never appreciated nature more than we do now. This virus has also made us realise the importance of being healthy to keep our immunity levels high, and that's how we have all started resorting to organic food and other organic products be it in fashion or skincare. So basically, it is back to the basics!

As India celebrates 73 years of Independence, we have put together a special issue on 'Vocal about Local', which is in keeping with our government's thought process of promoting local

INDIA, WITH ALL ITS DIVERSITY, IS HOUSE TO THE MOST AMAZING LOCAL PRODUCTS. IT IS TIME TO BE HOME PROUD AND REVERT TO WHAT WE ARE BEST AT!

produce, local crafts and craftsmen. This has also been a result of the growing anti-China sentiment amongst the citizens. India, with all its diversity, is house to the most amazing local products, which we as Indians have ignored over the years, and the West has appreciated them. On the contrary, we allowed unabashed inflow of foreign goods and pushed our own produce, back in the shelves. It is time to be home proud and revert to what we are best at! Hence, we

touch upon some the best home-grown stuff across fashion, food and beauty sections, keeping sustainability as the main theme here.

Our cover story celebrates the 'Unstoppable' woman, who has reached the top in some of the most male-dominated areas, be it the defence services, sports like cricket and racing, or banking. From India's only woman Lieutenant General Madhuri Kanitkar, and champion racing driver Alisha Abdullah to the captain of Team India's women's cricket team Harmanpreet Kaur, we have profiled and featured women who have shattered the glass ceiling to reach the top, in fields always been considered the male bastion. They all have sent across just one message—women are not just limited to kitchen and kids; there is nothing a woman can't do. In fact, they can do it better, than a man has been doing.

So, this Independence Day, let's free us from the shackles of societal pressures and restrictions, and chase our dreams. Nothing is impossible. We women are and will always be UNSTOPPABLE!

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FEMINA CONTENTS

VOLUME 61 NUMBER 11



09
The big story
**BREAKING NEW
GROUND**
Women trailblazers who dared to venture into male bastions

ALL ABOUT YOU

33 *Career*

AGRONOMICS 2.0

Exploring the new technological advances in the field of agriculture

36 *Life*

LA VIDA LOCAL

A quiz to identify if you love all things homegrown

FASHION

38 *Front row*

GREEN JEANS

Recycled denims are ruling the roost. >

33 Back to the roots



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42
Sustainable
approach

39 Accessories **TOTE-ALLY ECO**

Get on the conscious fashion bandwagon with these stylish pieces

40 Hotlist **TRENDING**

Femina's round-up of the latest, news, views, and buzz in fashion

42 Feature **A CONSCIOUS WAVE**

Take cue from Rakul Preet Singh and build a chic sustainable wardrobe



40
Fashion
forecast

BEAUTY

50 Wellness **PLANET FIRST**

Prasanthi Gurugubelli, founder of Daughter Earth, sheds light on progressive sustainable practices



52
Best beauty
buys

52 Beauty **HOT RIGHT NOW**

All that's fresh and fun on the beauty shelf

LIVING

56 Food **SPICE BITES**

Feisty recipes for a sumptuous snack

59 Quick bites **A BOWL OF COMFORT**

Soups to keep you warm when it's pouring



59
Wholesome
goodness

IN EVERY ISSUE

02 EDITOR'S LETTER

04 TOMBSTONE

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BIG STORY



STRAIGHT

FROM

THE HEART

HARMANPREET KAUR

FROM BATTING AT THE TAIL-END ON THE LOCAL GROUND TO HITTING SHOTS BEYOND THE BOUNDARY OF INTERNATIONAL STADIUMS, HARMANPREET KAUR'S JOURNEY HAS BEEN INSPIRATIONAL FOR MANY, FINDS RADHIKA SATHE-PATWARDHAN



Hailing from Moga in Punjab, Harmanpreet Kaur had one goal since childhood. *"Bachpan se ek hee thought tha ki cricketer hee banana hai; koi bhi doosra thought aya hee nahi kabhi!"* (Since childhood, I was sure that I want to become a cricketer; I never thought of any other option), says the Indian women's team captain for short-form cricket. Born to a sport-supportive family, she was never stopped by her

parents to play. "My father was my first coach," she tells, "he always believed in equality and never pulled me away from playing with the boys."

Such was her drive towards the game though that she changed schools to ensure time and dedication to the game. She played other sports too, but "none could gather my interest". So, the all-rounder joined the Gyan Jyoti School Academy to train professionally for her favourite, cricket, despite it being 30 km away.

"I didn't know then whether [women played professionally](#) or not, as all I had seen on the television

was men's cricket," recalls the dynamic cricketer. Breaking those barriers has been an uphill task for women cricketers, though times are changing. Kaur talks about how this imbalance is changing for the better, and her journey.

In October 2019, during the series against South Africa, you became the first cricketer for India, male or female, to play in 100 international T20 matches. How did you feel?

To be honest, I did not even know that I was playing my 100th T20 match that day till the time my team organised a meeting session before the game to surprise me with something special. All my teammates had created a music video for me showing love and appreciation. That moment was extremely emotional for me and I realised how much I loved and admired this journey along with the people who supported me throughout this time. >

“THE ROLE OF A CAPTAIN IS TO LEAD, SUPPORT AND BECOME THE MOST RESPONSIBLE PERSON OF THE TEAM, KEEPING IT UNITED.”

You're the captain of the Indian team for short-form cricket. Does the position add pressure to your game, and how do you find a balance?

The role of a captain is to lead, support and become the most responsible person of the team. One major responsibility is to keep my team united and work towards the same goal. The position rarely adds pressure to my performance. Rather, it motivates me to always keep myself positive in the tough situations. A lot relies on how you keep yourself calm even if the conditions are not favourable and keep motivating each other in the team to fight until the end.

You led the team to its very first T20 World Cup final earlier this year. While the outcome might not have been what was intended, what are the takeaways?

Coming that far and not bagging the trophy was disheartening. We were numb at one point of time. With the time passing, I realised that we did

come a long way with such a young team. That deserved appreciation and encouragement. I know we were a step away from creating history, but sometimes all you need to do is give it another chance. As the captain, I was proud of my team. We may have lost the title, but we carried a several good memories back, which will help us grow in many ways.

Have you, owing to your gender, ever felt that you had to work harder to prove yourself at any stage?

I realised this at the beginning of my career that in order to get women's cricket equivalent to men's, we will have to work a lot harder and get people to watch our sport and appreciate it as much. Even as a child, when I thought of playing for the country, I

thought that I would have to play with the boys!

When I started my career at the age of 17, I was probably the only girl to play cricket in my town. I had to take all the initiative, go the whole mile myself.

While times are changing now, women sports teams—even in the country's favourite sport, cricket—were not given



their due credit for a long time. Why do you think the change is happening now?

Considering the current scenario, I feel positive about the changes in the women's cricket over the past few years. The comparison between both male and female sport was visible about a decade ago. The reasons, I feel, are that there was limited coverage when matches were not televised, the media hardly covered the sporting events, therefore people were not aware of women's cricket. In the last few years, the team performance has gone up, which has added to the popularity and, I believe, in the coming years there will be no difference between men's and women's cricket.

How have you coped with the lockdown?

This time during the lockdown has been tough for me, and perhaps for all sports persons across the globe! I have never experienced being indoors for this long and had no clue how one can survive! So taking all the preventive measures, I decided to keep myself physically and mentally fit at home. I tried various new workouts, learnt how to cook and do household work, and most importantly, I got to spend a lot of time with my family which I have not done in the last ten years. I am eagerly waiting to get back on the field.

What are your thoughts on the Women's IPL being played at UAE this year?

+

**"ALWAYS BE
INDEPENDENT, A
GOOD PERSON,
READY TO DO
HARD WORK,
STAND UP FOR
YOURSELF,
NEVER MAKE
EXCUSES, AND
BE DISCIPLINED."**



This is the third edition of the women's T20 challenge. I am looking forward to playing in the country where we have never played before. The wickets and the grounds will be absolute surprise for us and I am already excited about being able to play good cricket.

What are your future plans, after the lockdown ends and games start soon?

To begin with a positive mind-set and take up big challenges. After a long break there is a new essence and freshness in the way I feel about cricket.

What is your message for our young readers?

Always be inspiring! If you have inspired even one person then that means you have achieved something extremely commendable in life. This feeling is really satisfying knowing that there are people who look up to you. Always be independent, be a good person, be ready to do the hard work, stand up for yourself, never make excuses, be disciplined and do good deeds. These are life mantras that have helped me become positive and satisfied. >

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BIG STORY

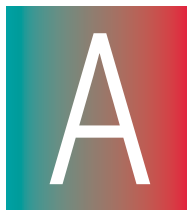


THE BOTTOM

LINE

ADITI KOTHARI DESAI

THE HEAD OF SALES, MARKETING AND E-BUSINESS, DSP INVESTMENT MANAGERS, WHO LAUNCHED A PLATFORM FOR WOMEN TO TAKE CHARGE OF THEIR OWN FINANCES, TALKS TO SHRADDHA KAMDAR



At a young age, Aditi Kothari Desai was taught the value of financial independence by her mother, who told her she needed to have a job when she grows up so she could make her own money. Today, Head of Sales, Marketing and E-Business, DSP Investment Managers, leads financial initiatives at the organisation and was also instrumental in launching Winvestor, an initiative aimed at empowering women with confidence and financial knowledge to plan for their long-term security.

An Economics graduate from Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania Kothari Desai completed her MBA from Harvard Business School, and today is a trustee in the Hemendra Kothari

Foundation as well as the Wildlife Conservation Trust. Over to her.

At any point in life, did you face any resistance from your family owing to your gender?

My parents were always supportive, but they were nervous about me going abroad to study, back in 1994. So, I had to start working on them a few years ahead, since they always refused. When my father agreed to send me if I got into Wharton, I knew this was my only ticket so I focused on getting it.

Did you ever experience that you had to work doubly hard to prove yourself to others?

At DSP, we want the right person for the right job, with gender neutrality. We have women placed at very senior positions as well.

How do you think you approach your work

differently owing to your gender?

Being a woman has its strengths, but no one asks men this question! I am a person who goes to work, and I have to do my best for it. And that's what matters.

With Winvestor you bring out the need for women to take charge of their finances. What made you realise that even the most successful of women lack the knowledge, and are often happy to go along with the advice from the men in their lives?

It started in 2010-11 when a few friends asked me how they should invest. They needed holistic advice and I couldn't do it for them one at a time. They needed someone to constantly attend to their portfolios, so I would pair them with women advisors who thought like me. It went on to become a women helping women situation, and that's how Winvestor started. >



How did you decide to scale it up?

I decided to scale it up by going to campuses and office spaces talking to women, educating them on investments and why they need to take charge of their finances. Over time with these interactions I realised, most working felt financially independent by merely earning the money, not thinking of its investment. They are not fully [financially independent](#) until they know how much money they have. I learnt a few things I could tackle.

1. More women are working, and it is their hard-earned money so they should know what to do with it. This also goes for those who inherit, receive alimony or are beneficiaries of life insurance.
2. Working women today are in a huge dilemma during

maternity since the leave is only six months, and post that they are unsure of whether to take some time off or go back to work since they are so used to earning. If they plan for it this gap, they can get passive income from their investments.

3. Often, when women want to purchase larger things in life, they need to ask multiple

“I REALISED MOST WORKING FELT FINANCIALLY INDEPENDENT BY MERELY EARNING THE MONEY, NOT THINKING OF ITS INVESTMENT.”

questions about their money, they do not even know how much they have. Most don't take interest, they have blind trust. They have a mental block that they are not good at it.

4. Financial independence and investment need to be taught young, so youngsters are prepared when they earn their first salaries.

With the pandemic, financial stability has gone for a toss. Your advice?

We need to look at the past, and how we have recovered. In 1991, India went through a financial issue with a foreign exchange crisis, but we acted and it changed for the better. Then we had the dotcom boom and bust, and we had the 2008 recession. We've emerged victorious each time and will so, now. It takes patience. There is anxiety, but

you need to hold a diversified and balanced portfolio, you have to think long term.

You are also passionate about wildlife, and serve on the board of different institutions. How did that happen?

I fell in love with animals at a young age and visited many sanctuaries with my parents, when we started getting aware about conservation. We knew that we had to do something to save what we have for the generations to come. I liked learning about animal behaviour and studied it. They may not be able to talk, and are exploited by humans, which made me feel very strongly about wanting to be their voice.

A piece of advice that is etched in your memory?

When there's a will there's a way. You just have to put your full focus and drive into it.

If you were to leave our readers with one thought, what would it be?

Be a student for life. That way you learn every day. Never think you have had enough. And yes, learn to be a better person every day.

What are some of your other interests, how do you unwind?

Besides wildlife and reading, I deeply follow the *Bhagawad Gita*, and am taking a class on it twice a week. Besides, I love to travel and explore cities and often watch shows and read about travel. My husband and I watch a lot of detective shows. >

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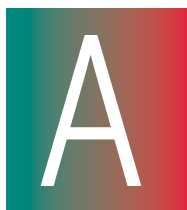
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NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE

DR MADHURI KANITKAR

LIEUTENANT GENERAL MADHURI KANITKAR HAS MADE IT TO THE TOP RANKS IN THE ARMED FORCES WITH HER PERSEVERANCE AND DEDICATION. THE DYNAMIC LADY SPEAKS TO RADHIKA SATHE-PATWARDHAN ON HOW THE INDIAN ARMED FORCES HAVE NOT BEEN DOMINATED BY GENDER STEREOTYPES



A soldier. A doctor. A teacher. She has taken on all these roles with determination and pride. Lieutenant General Madhuri Kanitkar has taken great strides in being on the forefront, in whatever she undertakes. As the third female Lieutenant General in the history of India, she has broken society-perceived stereotypes. “My parents and teachers never considered gender an obstacle to achieve

dreams. My parents taught me and my two sisters that nothing is impossible,” she informs.

Speaking of [society-perceived](#) stereotypes, one of those has been that the armed forces are male dominated. Lt Gen Kanitkar is quick in debunking that myth. “The armed forces predominantly have male workers, but not dominated by gender stereotypes. All my roles, be it a soldier, a teacher, a doctor or for that matter, my appointment today as Deputy Chief Integrated Defence Staff (Medical) has nothing to do with gender,” she notes. She mentions that she cannot

remember a single instance where she had to fight for her ‘rights’ on grounds of gender. Any person required to wear multiple hats needs to be tough to scale the heights of success, she says. “The journey itself has thrown up many challenges and turning them into opportunities has helped me grow as an individual.” Excerpts from an interview:

You were the Dean of Armed Forces Medical College (AFMC) in Pune for several years. Can you tell us a little about your journey?

At AFMC I felt I had achieved >

a high rung of success in heading my alma mater and had a sense of deep satisfaction as a teacher. As a doctor, I am extremely sanguine in having had the opportunity to set up the first Armed Forces Medical Services' Paediatric Nephrology Centre, and caring for children over the past 30 years. As a soldier, my great desire to contribute towards the health of troops in an operational command was largely fulfilled when I got posted to an Operational Command in Jammu. As a woman, I may have been the first to get an opportunity to serve in all the above mentioned three roles in the Armed Forces Medical Services. However, I have never considered this to be anything special as I felt our balanced organisation lets one achieve these on the basis of pure competence.

You and your husband, Lt Gen Rajeev Kanitkar, are the only couple in the Indian Armed Forces' history to have reached this rank. How differently do you think you approached your duties owing to your gender?

The goal and journey has been the same. The journey started on a similar platform. Both of us won the President Gold Medal—him at the National Defence Academy on being at the top of his course, and I, for standing first in my batch at AFMC. The path taken has been similar. The pace of walking and the stages may have been different; but then men are from Mars and women from Venus. As

"I FEEL A WOMAN HAS A BETTER NATURAL CAPABILITY TO MULTITASK AND COMMUNICATE, AS WELL AS CARRY A TEAM ALONG."

long as both perspectives seek the same destination within the framework of an appropriate value system, the journey is streamlined, enjoyable and interesting. It was important to support each other even when being located in two different parts of the country and 'grow together without growing apart'. I feel a woman has a better natural capability to multitask and communicate, as well as carry a team along by expressing her concerns and appreciation. The man also feels in a similar manner but probably does not express himself in the same way.

When you joined the Army, what was the male/female ratio? You joined at a time when the field was still predominantly male. Did you have trouble being taken seriously?

When I joined the Armed Forces Medical Services, the ratio of girls to boys was 20:100 at AFMC. Today it is 30:120, which is not a great difference, but this is in keeping with the organisational requirement and employability. I have never faced any trouble being taken seriously; in fact, I was taken even more seriously whenever I wanted





to get anything done in a mission mode. In the Army Medical Corps, women have been around for years. We train and serve together, shoulder to shoulder. So gender is of little concern. What matters most are capability, professionalism and competence.

The recent Supreme Court ruling is in support of women in armed forces. What has been the reason for it to happen now? Is there any change in operations or is it more about change in opinion?

Women are joining a large number of Arms and Services in the armed forces, such as the Army Services Corps, Judge Advocate General Branch, Engineers, and

Signal Corps etc. Recently the MoD has sanctioned permanent commission to women officers in the Army. The requirement of Armed Forces is changing in keeping abreast with technology and social norms as well. Therefore, the scope for women taking on these responsibilities has become larger and I think that this is a step in the right direction. There is a shortage of officers in the armed forces and hence giving opportunities to capable women benefits both.

Health and defence are the two biggest fields in the spotlight now, and you are in the thick of both! Does the pressure get to you?

Yes, trying to handle both is

tough. I ensure that I spend time in yoga and meditation besides regular physical exercise to be physically capable and mentally poised. A fit mind in a fit body helps to overcome this pressure.

Can you share your success mantra for the perfect work/life balance?

Work hard, but don't forget to enjoy the simple pleasures in life and have fun. The journey is beautiful if you take time to smell the roses. I have realised that team work is important. 'I' has to be replaced by 'WE' to move from 'Illness' to 'Wellness'. We need to spend time in developing a team and giving credit to each member. Individual brilliance has to be supported by collective competence. Also, focus, balance and time management are crucial.

Your advice young women who're looking to select a career path?

Gender should not come in the way of their choice of a career. It should be their passion. It is important to introspect, reflect and talk to friends and family to help choose a path. At the same time, once a path is chosen, pursue the journey with dedication, passion and perseverance. There will be difficulties, but it is these very difficulties that make you strong. Whichever career you choose, don't think yourself any lesser. You do not need to be like a man. You are able and capable as a woman. So, go out with courage, confidence and cheer... every time and anytime. >

**"I HAVE
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[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)

NEED **FOR** SPEED

ALISHA ABDULLAH

INDIA'S FIRST FEMALE SUPERBIKE CHAMPION IS
BREAKING RECORDS AND STEREOTYPES. SHE CHATS
WITH CHARLENE FLANAGAN ON LIFE IN THE FAST LANE



How many of us remember stating 'Princess', 'Model', or 'Nurse', when posed with the question, 'What would you like to be when you grow up?' And how many of us remember the answers our male peers would respond with? Whether we want to admit it or not, society has

always been busy dictating dos and don'ts to both genders. Boys shouldn't cry like girls or throw like them. Girls shouldn't play with GI Joes but with Barbies, instead. Then there are women like India's, Alisha Abdullah; women who don't do what they're supposed to do, and dare to be different.

For Abdullah, she wasn't really defying norms because racing was in her DNA. In fact, Abdullah holds the record for being India's first female national

+

racing champion, super-speeding in bike, kart, and car racing sportswoman, breaking stereotypes and doing everything society says women shouldn't do. "There was never any specific reason for me to decide racing is going to be my career and life. It's just in my genes," says the racer who was inspired to follow in her father's footsteps. "The problem in India is that parents and families ridicule the idea of their daughters racing cars simply because of the huge >



**"THE PROBLEM
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RISK FACTOR."**



risk factor,” she explains. Over to the 31-year-old champion.

You hold the distinction of being India's first female superbike racer. Take us through your journey.

Without a doubt, it is a matter of pride and honour. Of course, this title comes with a great deal of responsibility. I'd say, it all started when I was eight and my dad took me to the go-karting track, made me sit in a go-kart and encouraged me to take the wheel. It started out as a fun outing, but it later became much more. Before I knew it, I was hooked and it became my Sunday routine. Today, I'm 31 and there's not a day that goes by that I don't love being behind the wheel. I owe everything to my father, a multiple-racing champion himself.

You said in an interview that you were fascinated by bikes, unlike other girls your age. Can you tell us how that fascination began?

I've always maintained that my fascination for cars, bikes, and motorsports begins and ends with my parents. It's in my genes. But I think it began when my mum was pregnant with me. She used to watch my dad race. And right since I was a baby, you'd find me playing with cars and bikes, not dolls. I don't think I ever played with dolls.

In a field dominated by men, how did you manage to make a mark?

It was mum and dad who constantly encouraged me and never let me give up. I remember this one incident

from when I was young. It was during my regular Sunday [go-karting](#) sessions that I met with an accident. This boy I was racing with caused it because he didn't like the fact that I had overtaken him. My hair got caught in the go-kart. I was forced to chop it all off. That's probably the only negative I remember. But what stuck with me was instead of taking me to the hospital, my dad helped me up, told me to dust myself off, and get back in the car. Every time I have fared badly, they have encouraged me to pick myself up and come back stronger.



“I HAVE HAD TO DEAL WITH PEOPLE SAYING THINGS LIKE ‘SHE IS A GIRL AFTER ALL’. IT JUST MADE ME WORK HARDER.”

Did you find yourself under scrutiny because of your gender? Did you have to work harder to prove yourself?

Absolutely! But for me, it's been much more than just my gender. I've had to live up to my father's name and skill. I have had to deal with people saying things like 'She can never be like her dad,' or 'She is a girl after all'. This just made me work harder. In fact, there were times I would bunk college lectures just to go workout and train. I don't think I had a regular college life either. For me, it was just racing and training.

Tell us about some of the challenges you overcame on this fast track.

More often than not, people would underestimate or undermine me because of my gender. I constantly faced stereotypical comments like 'She is a girl who will marry and go away'. Of course it didn't help that when I began racing, I'd always come in last. Yes, I did come in last but I worked hard and I'm proud to say that I stayed on this path, and I don't come in last anymore. I can hold my head high and I am proud of how far I've come.

What are your go-to rules when it comes to racing?

I live by four simple rules when it comes to racing—dedication, passion, sacrifice, and more importantly, humility.

Take us through your diet and fitness routine. Is there any special training you undergo before an event?

I am a big foodie. I don't restrict myself when it comes to my diet, but I make sure to work it all off at the gym. Of course, since the lockdown, my gym workouts have been put on hold. So I tend to help my mum around the house, and my workout now consists of at-home bodyweight training. I do whatever I can to get in my daily exercise. Since I cannot gorge like I did before (given the change in my fitness routine), I have supplemented my regular diet with healthier alternatives like quinoa, *dalia*, and a healthy serving of veggies.

What are some of the important aspects to keep in mind when it comes to

**"I LIVE BY FOUR
SIMPLE RULES
WHEN IT COMES
TO RACING—
DEDICATION,
PASSION,
SACRIFICE, AND
HUMILITY."**



motorsports?

As anyone who is a master of their trade will tell you, it's all about knowing your tools. For me, it's understanding the machine I'm using. You need to know your car or bike and make sure all the kinks have been worked out before the race. Of course, the next part is your mindset. You need to

clear your head, be alert, and give it your best shot.

Who do you consider your mentor in the field of motorsport?

I learnt everything I had to from my father, He's been my inspiration and mentor. But of course, my peers and contemporaries always bring their own unique skill to the table, and there's always something new to learn. But above everything, it's their dedication that I admire. Their resilience and unbreakable spirit is always inspiring.

A woman racer you look up to?

Danica Patricia.

Tell us about the [Alisha Abdullah Racing Academy](#). Is it open to all, or do you prefer to encourage more women?

I am proud to admit that I have been a big influence for women in my field, and may have inspired a few to take up racing professionally. However, I don't discriminate and my academy is open to both men and women who want to learn the nuances of racing.

When you're not racing or working, how do you like to unwind and relax?

The thing is, when you love what you do, you're never going to think of it as work. But, when I'm not racing, I do focus my energies on my cosmetic label and skin clinic (both by the name Charissma Aesthetic Studio). I am also working on a new skincare line. >

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)



PHOTOGRAPHS: PRAVEEN TYAGARAJAN



PUSHING BOUNDARIES



SMRITI MANDHANA

SHE'S THE GIRL WHO HOLDS RECORDS AND HAS LED THE COUNTRY TO A WIN MANY TIMES OVER. CRICKETER SMRITI MANDHANA TELLS SHRADDHA KAMDAR WHAT IT TAKES TO WAKE UP LIKE A WINNER EVERY DAY



The opening batswoman of the Indian cricket team; the fastest Indian woman (and second fastest Indian cricketer) to score 2000 ODI runs; a cricketer to have crossed the 1000-run mark in T20 internationals; winner of several awards including Best Women's International Cricketer 2018 (BCCI), Rachael Heyhoe-Flint Award for the best female cricketer of the year 2018 by ICC and the ODI Player of the Year by the ICC in the same year. That's [Smriti Mandhana](#) for you, a player with determination, dedication, focus, hard work and a never-give-up attitude. She let's us in on how she managed to achieve it all!

You were inspired to play cricket after watching your brother, and your father played at the

district level as well. Did you face any issues when you announced that you also wanted to take up the sport?

In fact, it was the opposite! It was my parents' dream for me to become a sportsperson and play for India, and then, cricket was the chosen sport. For me, the decision came easy, I had no convincing to do. It was a normal routine for me from there on.

Despite cricket being the most popular sport in India, the men's team is far more recognised than the women's team even today. Your thoughts?

The situation is improving with each passing day. Especially after the 2017 Women's World Cup, people's knowledge about women's cricket in India has improved drastically. There is a slight difference between the way the teams are recognised, but then men's cricket also got a lot of recognition after winning the 1983 World

"IT WAS MY PARENTS' DREAM FOR ME TO BECOME A SPORTSPERSON AND PLAY FOR INDIA, AND THEN, CRICKET WAS THE CHOSEN SPORT."

Cup. For now, we are simply concentrating on winning the World Cup (to be held in New Zealand in March 2021).

Have you, because of your gender, needed to do anything differently to keep proving yourself in your field?

It was a different story for me, I was a lucky kid! I was the only six or seven-year-old girl on the ground when training. All my seniors and coaches used to shower me with special attention, thinking, "That this small girl is playing cricket." With each step, I was offered something more—perhaps extra practice or let me play some more balls for my knocking.

What was the first feeling that hit you when you scored your double century, becoming the first Indian woman to achieve a double hundred in a one-day game?

Although it quite a long time back, it was a moment of joy. It felt more special because my team was really excited and happy about me scoring all those runs! There was a major contribution from the Maharashtra Team. After every over, they were sending a motivating message, like please don't play a bad shot and the like, saying concentrate and try and get your 200 runs. And I did! I received a standing ovation from all the team members, one after the other, in the line after I was inside. I think those moments made that double century special. >

How do you think you have bettered your game post the awards?

It would be wrong to say that my game has gotten better only after winning an award. When you receive an award, it feels great—you feel like you're doing something right. The awards are always motivating you to work ever harder and win matches for the country.

You have scored the fastest fifty for India in Women's T20Is (in 24 balls against New Zealand in February 2019). What motivates you to keep doing better?

My greatest motivation stems from the fact that I want India to win. I would say whenever my performance makes India win the match, is when I want to do even better. Whenever I work out, or am at the practice, I just keep thinking that I have to win matches for India, and that keeps me going. Even if I am feeling like skipping a workout, these emotions keep me going.

How do you keep at the top of your game?

It's about being disciplined with your practice, routines and workouts. I think these are the things which are at least in my hand, I try to do my best. Whatever happens next, it might be a bad day that I might get out on a good ball or might end up scoring a 100, but that's only partially in my hand. My workouts, routine and my practice are what I concentrate on to every day.

Which other sport

**"MY GREATEST
MOTIVATION
STEMS FROM
THE FACT
THAT I WANT
INDIA TO WIN,
WHENEVER
I PLAY."**

interests you?

I like watching football and tennis, although I can't play either too well. I love playing table tennis, though.

Name three of your favourite sportspersons across the world.

Cristiano Ronaldo, Roger Federer, and Sachin Tendulkar.

Name three cricketers you look up to.

Kumar Sangakkara, Michael Hayden, and Sachin Tendulkar.

How do you unwind?

Besides sleeping, I love watching movies. So yes, whenever I get free time, I end up watching movies. I also love playing games on my iPad or the Play Station.

Your advice to our readers?

Life is very unpredictable so I feel one should try and enjoy each moment, that's something I have realised in this lockdown (although the feeling was always with me). Now, I would say, I need to enjoy everything every day and make it productive.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)



GITA GOPINATH

Gita Gopinath always had her parents' support for whatever she wanted to do. So when her journey of hard work, making the right choices, and determination, led her to become the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Chief Economist in 2018 at the age of 46, no wonder she made them proud. The position as a world-class economist today allows her to do what she received—breed intellectual leadership—as the first woman to hold that position.

Gopinath is the John Zwaanstra Professor of International Studies and of Economics at Harvard University; although currently on leave of public service from the economics department to serve at the IMF. She is the co-editor of several journals, among other honorary positions, she is also economic advisor to the Chief Minister of Kerala.

She has received the highest honour conferred by the Indian government to those overseas, the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman. Gopinath was named among the Bloomberg 50 people who defined 2019 and named one of the Top Global Thinkers in 2019 by Foreign Policy. Time magazine named her among the Women who Broke Major Barriers to Become 'First's' in 2019.



ZOYA AKHTAR

She brought forward the manipulations and quirks of the world of glamour in her directorial debut, *Luck By Chance* (2009), and over the next few years, went on to tell tales about friendships, dysfunctional families, social dynamics behind weddings, and the journey of the underdog among others. But what remained constant between these films was the 'Zoya' factor. The filmmaker's unique ability to convincingly portray complex characters onscreen makes her a force to reckon with in the world of films. Last year, the [Oscars Academy](#) invited Akhtar (along with Anupam Kher and Anurag Kashyap) as one of the members in the director's category.

BHAWANA KANTH CREATED HISTORY BY BECOMING THE FIRST WOMAN TO QUALIFY FOR COMBAT MISSIONS.

BHAWANA KANTH

When one talks of women in the Indian Air Force, [Bhawana Kanth](#) is sure to find a mention. The Flight Lieutenant created history by becoming the first woman to qualify for combat missions on a fighter jet in 2019. Before that, in 2016, she became one of the first women fighter pilots to be commissioned into the force. For Kanth, becoming a fighter pilot was a childhood dream. "It was something only boys were expected to aspire for. At least that was the stereotype. But my parents never made me feel I needed to think any different just because I am a girl," she said in an interview. >





INDRA
NOOYI

Born into a conservative Brahmin family in Chennai, [Indra Nooyi](#) went on to inspire a generation of women who desire to have a flourishing career in the corporate world. She started out as a product manager in Johnson and Johnson, and her most notable career stint was with PepsiCo as CEO (2006-18) and chairman of the board (2007-19). She is considered to be instrumental in the lucrative diversification of soft-drink brand.

As per reports, under her leadership, PepsiCo's revenues increased from \$35 billion in 2006 to \$63.5 billion in 2017. In 2017, Nooyi was placed second on the Forbes' list of most powerful women in business. She was second only to Mary T Barra, CEO of GM. In 2016, she was ranked number 3. As for the Forbes' list of the 20 most powerful women in the world, Nooyi clinched the 11th position in 2017, three places up from 2016.

NAINA LAL KIDWAI

Apart from being the first Indian woman to graduate from Harvard Business School in 1982, [Naina Lal Kidwai](#) has broken ground in many bastions. She was the first woman to serve as president of Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) from 2012 to 2013. After a career spanning across enviable names, Kidwai joined HSBC Bank as vice chairman and managing director at HSBC Securities and Capital Markets in 2002, and was appointed group general manager in 2006. She then became the chief executive of HSBC India in 2007 and chairman of HSBC India in 2009. Kidwai has repeatedly secured a position in global lists of top women in business. She was honoured with the Padma Shri in 2015 for her contribution to trade and industry. Currently serving as chairman of Max Financial Services Ltd and HSBC



Asset Management (India) Pvt Ltd and HSBC InvestDirect (India) Ltd, among other honorary positions, this author of three books is busy creating awareness for an open defecation free India, as chair of the India Sanitation Coalition.

BORN INTO A CONSERVATIVE BRAHMIN FAMILY, INDRA NOOYI WENT ON TO INSPIRE A GENERATION OF WOMEN.



ROSHNI NADAR MALHOTRA

As HCL founder Shiv Nadar's only child, [Roshni Nadar Malhotra](#) was the natural choice to lead the \$8.9 billion organisation. The young scion was appointed executive director and CEO of HCL Corporation in 2009 and is also vice-chairperson, HCL Technologies. Nadar Malhotra, who came back to India in 2008 after her MBA in social enterprise management and strategy from the Kellogg School of Management and a short stint in the US media, provides strategic direction to the company and is responsible for developing a vision for the group. She is passionate about CSR activities and human resource development and is deeply involved in the Shiv Nadar Foundation educational trust.

Nadar Malhotra is also the chairperson of VidyaGyan, a leadership academy for bright, but economically weak students. She is the founder and trustee of The Habitats Trust that works towards protecting natural habitats and indigenous species.

KIRAN MAZUMDAR SHAW

[Kiran Mazumdar Shaw](#) founded Biocon, an Indian pharmaceutical company, in 1978 and credits it as being the “first tech startup in the country.” The company kick-started in a garage, and today, manufactures generic active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) that are sold in over 120 countries across the globe, including the developed markets of the United States and Europe. Mazumdar-Shaw took

Biocon to unparalleled heights at a time when women in business in the country were rare; the organisation also can be credited for bio-revolution in India. The entrepreneur advises every woman to believe in herself, no matter the skepticism. “Take on leadership opportunities and learn on the job. Most women are passive and willing to be led by male bosses. You need to get out of that mindset,” she says.

KIRAN MAZUMDAR SHAW TOOK BIOCON TO UNPARALLELED HEIGHTS AT A TIME WHEN WOMEN IN BUSINESS IN INDIA WERE RARE.




PHOTOGRAPH: ANKIT SHARMA



[Kiran Bedi](#) was the first woman to join the Indian Police Service (IPS) after undergoing training at the National Police Academy, Mount Abu. First posted as the Sub-Divisional Police Officer at Chanakypuri Police Station in Delhi, covering the areas of Rashtrapati Bhawan, PM House, Lutyens Delhi, and offices of many key government officers and ministers, Bedi was known for her no-nonsense attitude.

She was given the nickname ‘Crane Bedi’ after towing away, the then Indian PM, Indira Gandhi’s car for a parking violation.

She was the first woman officer to lead the male contingent of Delhi Police at the 1975 Republic Day Parade. She is known to have introduced several reforms at the Tihar Jail in New Delhi while serving as Inspector General of Prisons. Bedi also served as police advisor in the United Nations peacekeeping department, and has been honoured with the UN medal for her exceptional service. 

Challenges Indian agricultural technology firms face

39%
Funding

29%
Policies

20%
Lack of Digital

12%
Farmer's Mindset



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AGRONOMICS 2.0

Introduction of new technology in agriculture is gaining momentum, while giving many the impetus to explore career options in the field, finds **Aishwarya Acharya**

Agriculture is the primary source of income for 58 per cent of India's population. And, as agriculture contributed to 17 to 18 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product of the country in 2018, it inevitably increases the need to technologically propel the industry even further. There has been a consistent and significant rise in the emergence of agricultural technology start-ups that are making farming and agriculture easier, and viable with time. This advent of the agritech industry has youngsters, IIT, management and

"AGRICULTURE
IS NO LONGER
PAINTING
A FEEBLE
PICTURE."

engineering graduates exploring their career interests in agricultural technology, therefore not restricting it just for the uneducated. Agriculture is no longer painting a feeble picture. Read on to know some of the latest developments in the agritech space that are paving the way for a new career module.

Modernised farming

While [traditional farming](#) is still very much prevalent, there are prominent advances in the sector to optimise farming and output, while being sustainable for the environment. >



Agriculture is the main sources of livelihood for more than 80 per cent population of rural India

Somveer Singh Anand, cofounder and CEO of Pindfresh—an agritech start-up revolutionising [urban farming](#) by using lesser pesticides and space aka hydroponics—says, “Hydroponics is the science of growing plants in a sterile medium where nutrients are delivered to the plant via a flow. Usually, you will see two major versions of this—one that grows in pipes and the other that grows in buckets.” It is easier to grow plants vertically which rules out the need for acres of lands solving the space constraints issue. “Hydroponic systems are light weight and extremely modular which makes them a viable option to grow indoors and on rooftops without stressing the existing infrastructure,” adds Singh Anand.

Increase in employment opportunities

Whether it is the distribution channel for the farming outputs or an efficient supply chain, employment sectors are only just growing. Coimbatore-based VilFresh supplies farm-fresh produce including dairy to urban areas and is empowering rural village youth into becoming ‘villagepreneurs’. Founder Selvakumar Varadharajan says the farmers’ income has doubled in the last three years and has provided employment opportunities to over 2,000 people. “We could successfully transform the lives of our networked

“THE SECTOR HAS TRANSFORMED INTO AN ENTREPRENEURIAL DOMAIN.”



farmers by selling all their farm inputs at a wholesale price and procure their products at a higher price. Unfortunately, Indian farmers buy the inputs at a retail price and sell their outputs at a wholesale price which is counterproductive,” says Varadharajan. He is also working towards encouraging village youths into taking up farming giving them an entrepreneurial opportunity in the field.

Role of technology

It is now possible to monitor and control crop rotations and irrigation systems using a smartphone, using ultrasound in livestock to test DNA of animals to check their pedigree, crop sensors that help in application of fertilisers that maximise the uptake, and this is just a few off the list. “Advanced technologies have come with a new economy, sociability and awareness enabling greater growth in the field. Also, the sector has transformed into an entrepreneurial domain. However, besides on-ground evolutions in Indian farming, farmers have also been benefitted by many other online services such as online agri-trading, online stock procurement, better warehousing facilities, online crop health analysis, and many more which can be targeted in new start-up ventures,” says Kunal Bansal, senior product manager, AgriBazaar, India’s largest online agri-trading marketplace.>



Agricultural sciences and engineering have a wide scope in future

New and upcoming entrepreneurial areas

Besides just being a traditional farmer, identifying and tapping areas that haven't been explored to their best is the first step budding entrepreneurs should take. "Everyone who wishes to start growing their own food, soon starts growing for the community. With every new entrepreneur we create a new business owner, who uses dead assets like spare rooms or rooftops to create value. Aspirants can keep this in mind if they wish to tread differently in the agritech space," says Singh Anand.

Varadhajan points out dairy

"EVERYONE WHO WISHES TO START GROWING THEIR OWN FOOD, SOON STARTS GROWING FOR THE COMMUNITY."



JOB PROFILES ONE COULD EXPLORE:

AGRICULTURAL ENGINEER: Experts in design, construction and improving farming techniques and machinery.

AGRONOMISTS: Often called as 'crop doctors', they study crop production, seed and soil management.

PLANT GENETICISTS: Provide solutions to farmers regarding new scientific developments in crop growing operations.

VILLAGE LEVEL ENTREPRENEURS (VLES): Reach out to farmers and encourage them to get tech-enabled.

LAND ARCHITECTS: Play a vital role in planning, developing and designing lands to support dynamic cropping patterns.

SEED SPECIALISTS: Play an important role in pre-harvest management.

WAREHOUSE MANAGERS: Handle supply chain needs like distribution, coordination, and logistics.

TECH SPECIALISTS: Understand and work in artificial intelligence, block chain, drones, remote monitoring to be applied in agritech industry.

is a key area India can capture and improve upon. "India is the largest milk producer in the world. However, our share in the export market is still negligible, considering per cow yield is one of the lowest. Also, percentage of value processing to the overall production is minimal," he says. This shall open up doors for more start-ups and organised players looking to change the [dairy dynamics](#) of the country. 

PHOTOGRAPHS:123RF



UPPING THE ANTE

Making way for innovative marketing, branding and media communications in India, Radhika Nihalani, founder and CEO of Think Ink Communications is redefining the public relations industry. In its five years of existence, the company has serviced over 150 brands with entertainment giants including Times Network. Their film division have

handled celebrities like Dia Mirza and tennis legend Sania Mirza in the past. The expertise of the company remains entertainment and focusses on proffering content that engages the consumer thoroughly. With the best talents at hand and plethora of innovative ideas, Nihalani envisions her company to stand out in quality while delivering more than what's expected.



WHAT ARE YOUR SUGGESTIONS WHILE PLANNING A VACATION WITH YOUR FRIENDS?

1. Lonavala! Fits well for fun and funds.
2. Guys, start saving up. We're headed to Bali.
3. Bali sounds great, but can we try the Konkan too?
4. Why don't we just have a house party?



WHAT COMES TO YOUR MIND WHEN SOMEONE SAYS LET'S HAVE CHAI?

1. Oh, the piping hot cuppa at the *tapri*.
2. Destination, Starbucks.
3. I hope these guys decide on Starbucks, please!
4. Why do we have to go out for chai? I can make some at home.



WHICH CHARACTER FROM SARABHAI VS SARABHAI DO YOU CONNECT WITH THE MOST?

1. Manisha (not Monisha) is my inspiration.
2. Maya, because anything beyond Peddar Road is just so middle class!
3. Indravadan. I can't decide if I'm comfortable in shoes or my flip flops.
4. Dushyant. Why should I call a mechanic when I'm equipped to do it myself!

LAVIDA LOCAL

Do you know whether you are a sucker for culture, heritage, and everything homegrown? Take this quiz to find out, says **Aishwarya Acharya**

What excites you more—bustling markets or air-conditioned malls? The quiet of a spa or the humdrum of a city? Do you prefer a quick-fix meal from a street food vendor or would you rather savour a four course meal at your city's finest restaurants? If you're wondering what your personality says about you, take this quiz to find out.



WHAT DO YOU ASK FOR WHEN YOUR FRIEND ASKS FOR A SNACK AT A HOUSE PARTY?

1. Roasted peanuts, anytime.
2. If it's not nachos with dip, is it even a house party?
3. I can make do with peanuts (I should have carried my nachos).
4. Don't worry, I brought along my chips.



WHAT WOULD YOU PLAY ON A NETFLIX NIGHT IN WITH YOUR FRIENDS?

1. A rerun of *Sacred Games*.
2. *The Big Bang Theory*. Period.
3. Finally, I have some time to watch *The Office*.
4. Netflix? I think you meant The News.

Mostly As: VOCAL FOR LOCAL

Your loyalties lie with everything Indian—from vacation destinations to the shows you watch on a Saturday night. You are constantly on the lookout for local alternatives, are proud of your roots and don't hesitate to celebrate it.

Mostly Bs: THE IMPORT

While you may live in India, your preferences are mostly western. You prefer pasta over pulses, Robert Downey Jr over Ranveer Singh and metros over local trains. You don't mind spending an extra buck for your comfort, and are unabashed about it.

Mostly Cs: GLOCAL

You are a stuck between local and global cultural preferences. You do not like to disappoint your company, and hence tend to be accommodating. You are perfectly okay to forgo that cup of chamomile for some tapri chai.

Mostly Ds: LADY SCROOGE

*You are unabashedly local but are not so proud about it. You look for homegrown and cheaper alternatives to save your hard-earned money. You like the traditional approach to everything, even if it means you come across as Scrooge McDuck. A little penny-saving harmed nobody. **F***



IKAI



VAISHALI'S



EKA



RIMZIM DADU



Elephant dangles, ₹9,500, The Olio Stories

DOWN MEMORY LANE

Spring/Summer 2020 runways saw several looks from sustainable brands. We bring you a round-up of our favourites



ASHDEEN



PAYAL JAIN



DHIL



ANAMI



Capri Wedges, ₹2,299, The CAI Store

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)



GREEN JEANS

From [emerging designers](#) to high-street brands, recycled fabrics are ruling the roost. If you are looking to add some drama to your look, an embellished jacket is a good choice



Super skinny high jeans, ₹1,499, H&M (conscious)



Charmed pala bangle, ₹4,250, Misho



Embellished denim jacket, price on request, Dhruv Kapoor



PANKAJ AND NIDHI

Ring, price on request, Fendi



Tie & Dye saddle, price on request, Dior



Metallic cuff leather heels, ₹8,490, Charles and Keith





Elise tote,
₹5,925, Sole
Society



Straw handbag,
price on request,
Pamela Munson



Vices Straw
Clutch, ₹3300,
O'Neill



Shell and bead bag,
price on request,
Nordstrom

TOTE-ALLY ECO

Nothing speaks **summer** like sustainable tote bag. Get on the conscious fashion bandwagon with these stylish pieces



Straw bag, ₹5,925,
Sole Society



Round straw
shoulder bag,
₹1,999, H&M



Straw shopper,
₹1,299, H&M

POP ROCK

Versace launches the Medusa Biggie Eyewear SS 2020 Eyewear Collection as an ode to the luxury brand's ocean-deep heritage of celebrating pop culture. Bringing back that vintage spirit, this collection modernises the original silhouette with wide temples and low lenses on an eye-popping fluorescent colour palette, making it a must-have this season.

Price: 22,000 onwards **Available at:** Sunglass Hut



ROMANTIC RUFFLES

Get ready to drown yourself in glamour. Inspired by the golden age of the '90s, Shehlaa Khan's new collection Nostalgia has everything you need. Modern silhouettes are interpreted with the old-world charm of Swarovski-laden flared bottoms, adorned with lace. It boasts of a rich colour palette, from romantic nudes to fuchsia and hot red.

Available at: Shehlaa Khan stores and shehlaa.com



Trending

FEMINA'S ROUND-UP OF LATEST NEWS, VIEWS, AND **BUZZ IN FASHION**



PINK PARTY

Bindani's SS'2020 collection, Alizeh, is tailor-made for the modern Indian bride. Showcasing a variety of Victorian hues, the collection introduces a cocktail twist by way of ruffles, tasseled, and draped sleeves over yards of organza and pure silk. An epitome of femininity, this adds an unquestionable touch of royalty to each piece.

Price: On request **Available at:** Bindani store and bindani.in

PUMPED-UP KICKS

Witness the marriage of aesthetic and athleisure with adidas' novel ZX 2K BOOST, an extension of the adidas Originals ZX series. The sneakers are engineered with boost technology to ensure maximum comfort. The silhouette is constructed with a modern design in bold hues and a mesh overlay, keeping sneakerheads in mind.

Price: 13,999 **Available at:** adidas stores and adidas.co.in



PRECIOUS TRINKETS

Hand-crafted classic jewellery from the remotest corners of India takes on a contemporary twist with And Noor. Deconstructed jewels with floral, geometrical and abstract patterns in their new collection, is precisely designed for new-age men and women who appreciate concept jewellery.

Price: 750 Onwards
Available at: andnoor.com

MINIMAL CHIC

This season, slip into the easy-breezy, tropical paradise-themed Fall'20 collection by Curador. From the muted tones of pastels to shimmering bronze, this line has all the elements of being understated with a touch of chic. The silhouettes range from deconstructed shirts, separates, textured blouses and jackets.

Price: 4,041 Onwards

Available at: curadorbyskb.com

ETHNIC ELEGANCE

Anjul Bhandari's new collection, *Zaina*, is entirely crafted by women at home. The light and airy Chikankari work on Chanderi fabric, effortlessly complemented the classic ancestral silhouettes of angrakhas, chogas, and A-line kurta sets. Pastel hues such as powder pink, periwinkle blue, and nude commanded the colour palette.

Price: 19,900 onwards

Available at: Ogaan.com

FLORAL BLISS

Inspired by the soothing freshness of our surroundings, ShilpSutra launched the Nature's Edit collection this season. Each jutti has a jute base, with resham embroidery elevating the silhouette. Complete with sequined flowers along and luscious green vines, this collection will feel like spring gleaming on your feet.

Price: 2,999 Onwards

Available at: Shilpasutra store and shilpsutra.com



GRAPHIC DIALOGUES

A cultural collaboration between Dior's creative director, Kim Jones and artiste Amoako Boafo, led to the creation of Dior Men's Summer 2021 collection. Surreal summery hues like lemon yellow and brown, dominated over the graphic-patterned pieces. The garments comprised mid-length leather shorts, capes, printed shirts, and jackets.

Price: On request **Available at:** dior.com

A Conscious WAVE

It is time to adopt a mindful approach and make sustainable fashion choices by opting for [ethical brands](#). Take cue from Rakul Preet Singh and build a new [minimalist wardrobe](#).

Senior Fashion Stylist **Yukti Sodha**.

Photographs **ESHAAN GIRI**.

BLUE REVOLUTION

Upgrade your denim-on-denim game with classy recycled co-ord sets.

Brooklyn denim shirt, ₹3,800, Ottawa denim pants, ₹4,500, both **The Summer House**. Mini sun studs, ₹8,800, density ring, ₹7,400, pebble ring, ₹8,200, (worn throughout) both Misho. >



FLORAL BURST

Flip a simple white cotton dress around with a floral embellished statement sustainable jacket to achieve a playful ensemble.

Embellished denim jacket, price on request. **Péro.** Cotton dress, her own. >



YIN-YANG EFFECT

Say goodbye to the blues with perfectly coordinated monochrome fits. Minimal yet edgy.

Kimono shirt, ₹12,500, pants, ₹12,900, both [Lovebirds](#). >



REFINED PLAY

A pure white attire radiates true elegance, and is seamlessly chic.


Vincent wrap top, ₹3,400, Freida wide leg pants, ₹3,700, both **The Summer House.** >





PRINT AFFAIR

An interaction of light prints over dark colours brings out a debonair aesthetic in the simplest form.

Reyon top with floral stripe print, ₹11,900, Reyon pants with floral stripe print, ₹12,800, both **Lovebirds.** 



FEMINA

BE UNSTOPPABLE



Isn't it time we started measuring
success differently? Let's talk.
[@femina.in/lifestyle](https://www.femina.in/lifestyle)



FEMINA

BEAUTY

THE BIG SWITCH

Clean beauty and consumer awareness are the current buzzwords in the beauty industry. While big names continue to cater to changing needs, it's time to laud the role of comparatively smaller, but impactful homegrown brands leading the way towards sustainability.



Founder Prasanthy Gurugubelli

A commitment to helping mother nature thrive by making eco-conscious choices and giving back to society, while formulating only the most effective plant-based products, is what clean beauty brand Daughter Earth is all about. Founded by mechanical engineer turned entrepreneur, Prasanthy Gurugubelli, this sustainable skincare venture is what the world needs, and it all began right here, in India. Gurugubelli takes us through the brand's journey and goals.

What inspired you to create a sustainable skincare brand for the Indian market?

My first job was to integrate mission-critical systems onboard India's first nuclear submarine and to make it ready for the launch. The entire country took pride in the engineering of one of the world's most complex machines, and after witnessing that response, I wanted to do more with science in a way

that would allow people to experience its fruition on a personal level. This is where the idea of Daughter Earth stemmed from. My vision was then to create the most rigorously researched and scientifically formulated skincare brand with plant-based bioactives, right here in India.

What is the brand philosophy and ethos?

Science meets sustainability. Our mission is to create the best plant-based formulas through scientific research while being conscious, ethical and creating impact at the grassroots. We do so at the confluence of advanced science and [ancient Ayurveda](#).

How do you source ingredients?

We go straight to the source in search of potent botanicals and 99 per cent of them are from India. For example, we source the world's most potent wild sea berries from the cold deserts of Lahaul and Spiti. Nutrient-dense coffee Arabica is picked from Araku microclimates in Visakhapatnam, which also happens to be the world's largest certified organic and biodynamic coffee forestry. This coffee is produced in the agroforestry format where value is derived while preserving the wilderness.

We partner with a network of government-approved wild harvesters, so we also drive economic impact in remote regions.

How do you experiment and zero down on the final product formulation?

We make prototypes after trying out ingredients that we shortlist. We are 100 per cent cruelty-free and vegan. As a policy, we use only reef safe ingredients and avoid harmful microbeads, silicones, and siloxanes. We are even supercritical about the extraction process as we use green processes that do not leave any solvent behind.

What is the brand's approach to packaging?

We package everything with integrity. >

Planet FIRST

Here's how clean beauty brand DAUGHTER EARTH follows the path of sustainability for a brighter future, reports Eden Noronha



Pure and effective formulas





Handpicked ingredients

We use white, opaque, and dark amber glass bottles that are infinitely recyclable and which protect formulas from photo-oxidation and 100 per cent post-consumer-recycled paper board secondary packaging. We convert corrugated board waste into our fillers to ensure that the packages are sturdy. Our cartons are designed keeping form and function in mind while minimising waste. Some of our packaging material that we source from local NGOs, is made by disadvantaged women and victims of human trafficking.

How do you plan on expanding the product portfolio?

As a brand, we believe in less products, but with more plants, more phytonutrients. You wouldn't see us creating a line with hundreds of products and variants, but you would most certainly see us creating the most potent and intense formulas out there. We take years to develop one formula, and only when we are absolutely convinced about it do we launch it. While there are many ways to look at how one should expand a product line, I'm rooted here, and my guiding compass is the needs of our customers.

How do you plan on expanding the brand's presence?

Word of mouth has been our single largest growth factor and this was because of the formulas that we make and the values that we stand for. We'd be carrying that forward. From a business model point of view, we are a digitally native brand, and pretty much everything related to the brand was designed for a direct to customer (DTC), digital experience. So, we'd be investing more into all things digital that are relevant to us.

What lies ahead for the brand?

We are in it for the long haul. Every penny that we




Sustainable packaging

"Our cartons are designed keeping form and function in mind while minimising waste."

make after our conscious giving is reinvested in the R&D of future formulas. This way we will be able to create superior and industry-leading formulas. In future, you'd also be seeing us developing advanced formulas for holistic health. We are also planning to test one-two new markets abroad next year.

How does the Daughter Earth give back to society? What are the initiatives being taken?

Even before we sold our first bottle, we funded the education of our first girl child in Hyderabad. We believe that the world is a better place when girls are educated, and the planet is better when the wildlife is conserved and more trees are planted. Ten per cent of what we earn goes into the above causes. We work with Plan India, Project Greenhands, One Tree Planted, World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and Vipassana International Centers. 

1 SHINE ON

Struggling to get back that glow back? Tackle the dull skin woes with MyGlamm's GLOW range which includes brightening skincare products enriched with the hydrating properties of Rosehip oil vitamin elixir. From cleansers and toners to creams, lotions, and masks, this range has it all.

Price: Starting from ₹995
Available at: myglamm.com



2 MATTE-ME-UP

Ruby's Organics inclusive matte mouse concealers are a perfect match for all skin types. The goodness of rosehip and argan oils, intensely moisturises the skin. With a creamy texture that glides smoothly, it also keeps environmental stressors at bay.

Price: ₹1,100
Available at: Nykaa.com and rubysorganics.in



HOT RIGHT NOW

All that's fresh and fun on the beauty shelf

3 DEWY FRESHNESS

With antioxidant properties, WOW Skin Sciences' new Vitamin C skincare range helps battle impurities to maintain the suppleness of the skin.

Comprising face washes, toners, masks, and serums, the products help in achieving smoother, softer and younger-looking skin.

Price: starting from ₹349
Available at: buywow.in



4 REGAL RADIANCE

Adding to the Abeille Royale creams, Guerlain introduces a mattifying day cream for oily and combination skin. With the age-defying agents and BlackBee repair technology, it provides a youthful radiance with the goodness of honey.

Price: ₹11,180
Available at: Nykaa.com

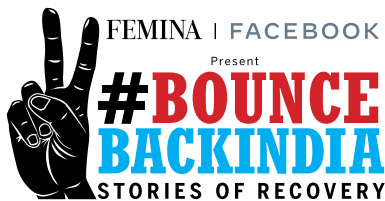


5 CROWNING GLORY

Gone are the days when one dreaded post-colour frizzy hair. Wella Professional's, ColorMotion+ range helps lock the colour in with a regime of nourishing shampoo, conditioner, and a mask. In addition, the range also provides shine and strength to the tresses.

Price: Starting from ₹1,050
Available at: Nykaa.com





DOCTOR DETERMINED

Even COVID-19 couldn't stop **DR VIDYA THAKUR** from working while being admitted. Radhika Sathe-Patwardhan finds out what gave this Mumbai doctor the determination to stand strong



The pandemic challenged the world like no other, but the turbulent time also brought the best of mankind forward. Take Dr Vidya Thakur, the medical superintendent of Ghatkopar-based Rajawadi Hospital, Mumbai, for example. She tested positive for COVID-19 on July 26 and was consequently admitted, but that did not stop her from continuing to perform her duties to ensure the hospital runs smoothly, and patients have all necessary facilities.

While being treated, she set up a work unit in her ward where she constantly fielded calls from

"THE HOSPITAL STAFF NEEDS TO ENSURE THAT PATIENTS ARE GETTING AMPLE EMOTIONAL SUPPORT DURING HOSPITALISATION."



employees of the Ghatkopar hospital and assisted them via video and phone calls. She was also available to patients' families, and answered their questions. On an average, she dedicated eight hours of her day to calls while being at the hospital and in-between treatments.

"My work is my passion, and keeps me fit. In fact, hospitalisation helped me consider other aspects of patient needs which I might not have understood otherwise. For instance, the patients are alone during hospitalisation with no loved one around to keep their spirits up. Under these circumstances, the hospital staff needs to step up and ensure that they have ample emotional support. It's also a great idea to have books or televisions in rooms to alleviate anxiety and sleepless nights. I am eager to look into these when I resume work."

Dr Thakur is currently on leave after being discharged, and will return to work by end August.

The 55-year-old recalls the time when she displayed COVID-19 symptoms and got tested. "My husband, Dr Vijay Thakur, an ENT surgeon, and one of my daughters tested positive too. We were admitted the moment we got our results," she says.

When not attending to patients, she would spend her time drawing. "My daughter sent along a drawing book and some colours to keep me occupied during the time in the hospital. Art has been a great stress buster!" Now at home, Dr Thakur concentrates on consuming a healthy diet while paying special attention to strengthening immunity.

Even though the nation is bouncing back, and lockdowns have been relaxed, the senior doctor advises citizens to be careful and follow safety rules. "This disease is a new one. Always wear masks and avoid unnecessary wandering out. If you feel unwell, immediately take medical advice. If treated timely, even serious infections are treatable." **F**

This story is part of a series in association with Facebook. Facebook has no editorial role in this story.



Reshma on duty at the hospital

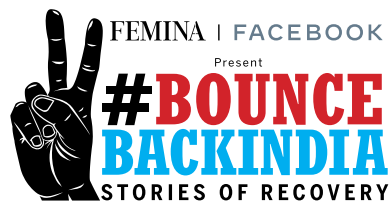
“AFTER MY QUARANTINE ENDED, AND POST FOUR DAYS OF CASUAL LEAVE, I REPORTED ON DUTY.”

four-hour duty wearing the PPE kit, and after shift hours, we were allowed to exit the hospital only after we followed the doffing process.”

Reshma contracted the virus in March while treating India's oldest COVID-19 positive couple, who eventually recovered. “Thomas, 93, and his wife Mariyamma, 88, caught the infection from their grandson who returned from Italy. Thomas had cardiac problems. Mariyamma also has age-related hearing loss that made me go close to her often. Also, due to their age, they needed someone to help them with their daily needs such as feeding, bathing and toilet needs. Hence, social distancing was not possible,” shares Reshma, who started showing symptoms at the time of the couple's recovery.

“I never had a fever, only a dry cough and running nose. As per protocol, if we show any of the prescribed symptoms, we need to report ourselves to the head nurse.” Her result was positive, and she went into isolation on March 23. She was treated at the same Kottayam hospital for 11 days. “After three swab tests were negative, I was discharged and sent into home quarantine for 14 days. After my quarantine ended, and post four days of casual leave, I reported to duty,” she shares with pride. The constant support and confidence of her husband was a driving factor for Reshma.

She resumed treating COVID-19 positive patients in the same isolation ward. Kerala Health Minister, KK Shailaja, in her Facebook post, had mentioned: “Our hospitals are equipped to take on COVID-19. Scores of health workers are doing their job with dedication... Reshma has shown that Kerala will survive COVID-19.” **F**



CALL OF DUTY

RESHMA MOHANDAS was helping Covid-19 patients when she too got infected. However, that didn't stop her from returning to duty in the same ward post recovery, reports **Kayalvizhi Arivalan**

While Kerala reported the very first case of COVID-19 in India, the state deployed stringent measures to gear up to fight the virus. Reshma Mohandas, a 32-year-old nurse at Kottayam Medical College in Kerala led by example in this battle against the virus. While attending to patients at the COVID-19 intensive care unit, she too got infected. “I've been working at the Kottayam Medical College for the last three years. During the coronavirus pandemic, I was on the ICU duty. But, as patients increased, I was shifted to treat COVID-19 patients,” says Reshma who carried out a four-hour shift wearing the PPE kit. “We were a team of sixteen people. I had a

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INDIAN CORN MADE MEXICAN

Bhutta is a quintessential part of the rainy season in India. This year, even if we can't stand about on the street to eat it, slathered with lime, salt, and chilli powder, all is not lost. Give your Indian corn on the cob a Mexican twist with this recipe.

Elote (Mexican Grilled Corn)

Ingredients

4 ears corn on the cob
¼ cup mayonnaise
¼ cup sour cream
½ cup finely-crumbled feta cheese + extra for serving
½ tsp chilli powder + extra for serving
1 tsp finely-minced garlic
¼ cup finely-chopped coriander leaves and stems
1 lime, cut into wedges

Method

1. Grill the ears of corn on a grill pan until slightly charred, for about 10 minutes.
2. Mix the mayonnaise, sour cream, feta cheese, chilli powder, garlic, and coriander in a large bowl. Stir until well blended.
3. Use a large spoon to evenly coat corn on all sides with the mayo-cheese-cream mixture.
4. Sprinkle with extra cheese and chili powder and serve immediately with lime wedges.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)



SPICE BITES

This season, enjoy these spicy and tangy Indian snacks from
from **Chef Rajan Mehra** of The Butler and the Bayleaf

SPROUTS CHAAT



1.5 cups sprouts
2 tbsp turmeric
Salt, to taste
1 tsp chaat masala
1 tsp red chilli powder
2 tbsp onion,
chopped
2 tbsp tomato,
chopped

1 tbsp raw mango,
chopped
1 tbsp coriander
leaves, chopped
+ extra to garnish
1 tsp mint leaves,
chopped
2½ tbsp green
chutney
2½ tbsp tamarind
chutney

SERVES: 2 > PREP TIME: 25 minutes > COOKING TIME: 5 minutes

1. Boil the sprouts over a medium-high flame with the turmeric powder and salt. Remove them when tender and allow to cool.
2. Place the sprouts in a large mixing bowl, and season with salt, chaat masala, and red chilli powder.
3. Add the onion, tomato, raw mango, and the coriander and mint leaves. Mix well.
4. Add the tamarind and green chutneys as per taste, and mix well.
5. Serve garnished with coriander leaves. >

TIP: SERVE THIS SALAD WITH POMEGRANATE ARILS AND SWEET POTATO CHIPS.

MUSHROOM GALOUTI



500 g mushrooms, kept whole and cleaned
1 tsp oil
3 tbsp ghee (divided usage)

2 tsp cumin seeds
Salt, to taste
1 tsp garam masala
A few drops kewra water

Calorie count:
250 calories
(per serving)

SERVES: 2 > PREP TIME: 30 minutes > COOKING TIME: 5 minutes

1. Bring a pan of water to the boil, add the mushrooms, and cook until done. Remove from the flame and drain completely. Dry on kitchen towels to remove as much excess water as possible. Blend to a paste, using one teaspoon of the oil and no water.
2. Heat half the ghee in a pan over a medium-high flame. Add the cumin seeds, and splutter.
3. Add the mushroom paste, and mix well.
4. Add the salt, and sauté until the water released from the mushrooms dries up, and the mixture is completely dry.
5. Add the garam masala and the kewra water and stir well.
6. Remove to a plate and set aside to cool.
7. Grease your palms with oil and form the mushroom paste into kebabs.
8. Heat the remaining ghee in a non-stick pan. Shallow fry the kebabs until brown on both sides. Drain on kitchen towel.
9. Serve hot. >

TIP: SERVE THE MUSHROOM GALOUTI WITH A GREEN CHUTNEY.

LOTUS STEM FRITTERS



2 lotus stems,
peeled and
thinly sliced

2 tbsp oil
+ extra for
deep frying

2 cloves garlic,
finely chopped

1½ tsp red
chilli powder
(divided usage)

1 tbsp red
bell pepper,
chopped

1 tsp yellow
bell pepper,
chopped

1 tbsp green bell
pepper, chopped

For the batter:
3 tbsp cornflour

2 tbsp tempura
powder

1 tsp red chilli
powder

Salt, to taste

Cold water,
as needed

**Calorie
count:**
400 calories
(per serving)

SERVES: 2 > PREP TIME: 20 minutes > COOKING TIME: 10 minutes

1. To prepare the batter, mix the cornflour, tempura powder, red chilli powder and salt in a large mixing bowl. Add cold water. Mix well.
2. Heat oil in a frying pan. Dip the lotus stem slices in the batter and deep-fry until crisp and a little brown. Remove from the flame and drain on kitchen towel. Set aside.
3. Heat two tablespoons of the oil in a pan over a medium-high flame. Add the garlic, and sauté until brown. Raise the flame to high, and add one teaspoon of the red chilli powder, the bell peppers, and sauté for one minute.
4. Add the lotus stem fritters and stir well. Season with salt and the remaining red chilli powder.
5. Remove from the flame and serve hot. **F**

TIP: SERVE THE LOTUS STEM FRITTERS GARNISHED WITH CHOPPED CORIANDER LEAVES.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)



A BOWL OF COMFORT

Allow these soups to keep you cosy while it rains



Mint And Zucchini Soup

INGREDIENTS

3 tbsp olive oil
1 onion, finely chopped
Salt, to taste
3 cloves garlic, sliced
6 zucchinis, thinly sliced
740 ml vegetable stock
150 ml crème fraîche + extra to serve
1 small bunch mint leaves, chopped
(divided usage)

METHOD

1. Heat the olive oil in a pan over a medium flame and cook the onions with a pinch of salt for 10 minutes until softened; do not allow them to colour. Add the garlic and cook for a few minutes. Add the zucchini and cook on a low flame for 20 minutes.
2. Add the vegetable stock, bring to a boil, and cook for a few minutes.
3. Blend the soup until completely smooth. Stir in the crème fraîche and three-fourths of the mint. Blend again, and season to taste.
4. Divide into serving bowls, and serve, drizzled with crème fraîche and garnished with mint leaves.



Vegan Sweet Potato Soup

INGREDIENTS

2 tsp groundnut oil
1 onion, finely diced
2 sticks celery, finely diced
500 g sweet potato, peeled and cut into small dices
1 tbsp grated ginger
1 hot chilli, seeded and chopped (or to taste)
2 cloves garlic, sliced
2 tomatoes, diced
1 litre vegetable stock
2 tbsp smooth peanut butter
Chopped coriander leaves, to serve
Slivered almonds, to serve

METHOD

1. Heat the oil in a large pan over a medium-high flame, add the onion, celery, and sweet potato, and cook for 10 minutes until the onion and celery have softened.
2. Add the ginger, chilli, and garlic, and cook for two minutes.
3. Add the tomatoes and stock. Bring to a boil, and simmer for 20 minutes. Season.
4. Stir in the peanut butter, then blend until smooth.
5. Serve garnished with coriander leaves and almonds slivers. 📌

Potato Soup

INGREDIENTS

2 tbsp butter
2 bunches spring onions, trimmed and sliced (divided usage)
750 g potatoes, peeled, and chopped
Salt, to taste
1.5 litres vegetable stock
100 ml double cream

METHOD

1. Melt butter in a large pan, and add the spring onions, reserving some green slices for garnishing. Cook until very soft.
2. Add the potatoes, season well. Add the stock, bring to a simmer. Cook until the potato is very soft.
3. Blend until smooth. Add the cream and adjust seasoning.
4. Divide into bowls, and serve garnished with spring onion greens.



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