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MYSTIC AURA

MAGAZINE

Ideal Behaviour
TEENAGERS

PHOTOSHOOT
Perfect Dress

HEENA
a classy alternative
to tattoos

Divas

Bold yet graceful, unspoken power and glamorous

Cover Photography: Kaushik Brahma
Makeup : Zeenat Makeovers Studio & Academy
Designer: Ruplin Kropi

2025



GITALI PATHAK DEKA

Proprietor & Editor-in-chief

She is a model, an educator and also a Master Trainer under the BRITISH COUNCIL. A lady with principles, positive vibes who always loves to inspire others to fulfill their dreams. Confidence, determination, will power and faith in God, her strength. Her indomitable talent in fashion world is known by all. She has been successful in winning many titles in State, National and in International level, Brand Ambassador of a few beauty pageants. Recently awarded with the most prestigious Nari Shakti National Award. She is Mrs India International (2nd runners-up) at Sri Lanka, Colombo.

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From Editor's Desk



April, a season of renewal and celebration across India, but for the people of Assam, it holds special significance as they welcome the new year with the vibrant festivities of Bohag Bihu, a time-honored tradition rich in culture and heritage.

In this issue, we've woven together the vibrant spirit of Bohag Bihu with the elegance of fashion. Our Aura pages are dedicated to warm Bihu greetings, showcasing the rich cultural heritage of Assam. As always, you'll find a captivating interview and stunning visuals that make our Aura section a must-view part.

Regards

GITALI PATHAK DEKA

Proprietor & Editor-in-chief

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On the COVER

Dixita Kalita

is a model and actress based in Guwahati, Assam . Dixita has been featured in various projects, including Assamese serials and music videos albums. She has also participated in modeling assignments, collaborating with designers and Presently, pursuing her BA in English

Honours . With her confidence and talent, she aspires to work in larger film industries.

Dixita's journey showcases her dedication and love for acting and modeling. Dixita Kalita aims to make a lasting impact in the Indians entertainment industry through her hard work .

Photography : **Kaushik Brahma**

Makeup: **Zeenat Makeovers Studio & Academy**

Disshaa Deka

22 years old basically from Guwahati is a model by profession. She explained in her words how confidence could have given courage and the platform of modelling has helped her to move forward in life. She believes in divine timing and spiritualism and by God's grace and hardwork at present she is a completely different girl than who she was two years back scared even to face the camera.

Furthermore, she says her belief and patience, hardwork, resilience and the mentality of never giving up can give success to a person and one day, hope to get a successful career in this field.

Photography : **Kaushik Brahma**

Makeup: **Zeenat Makeovers Studio & Academy**

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BEAUTY

On the COVER

Rashmi Pandit

24 years old, a dynamic and passionate individual with a love for arts, and media. Born in Margherita, Assam, recently moved to Guwahati for personal life. With a strong inclination toward the creative field, specializing in runway and print media modeling, and have also showcased skills as an anchor. Beyond the camera and stage, she loves dancing and cooking, both of which fuel her artistic expression. Fitness is another integral part of my lifestyle, reflecting discipline and dedication. With an ever-evolving vision, I aim to continue making an impact in the media and entertainment industry.

Photography : **Kaushik Brahma**

Makeup: **Zeenat Makeovers Studio & Academy**

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Simakshi Baishya

is a 21-year-old with multiple passions that fuel her vibrant personality. As a model, she's confident, creative, and effortlessly captivating. As a banking aspirant, she's diligent, focused, and driven to succeed. Her love for traveling takes her to new destinations, broadening her

horizons and sparking inspiration. Meanwhile, her spiritual side keeps her grounded, centered, and connected to her inner self.

Already making waves in the modeling world, Simakshi's impressive win of Asom Brosa S4 showcases her talent and dedication. With her dynamic personality, determination, and infectious enthusiasm, she's poised to excel in all her pursuits and leave a lasting impact.

ON the COVER



Photography : **Kaushik Brahma**

Makeup: **Zeenat Makeovers Studio & Academy**

Northeast India

Bihu

Festival of Assam



THE CHARMING SPRING

Shaking away the winter's cool wind
The spring comes in softly with different hues and essence.
Togors, Kopous, Modars, Polax all blooms happily to welcome spring.
Tiny green blades of grass,a soft carpet to tread on.
At the break of the morning sweet songs of quails and ketekis wakes us up.
Spring awakens our senses with it's gentle breeze, different hues and flavours.
The insects buzz around kissing the flowers for Sweet nectar.
The nature flirts with the soul of maidens and young men.
Their heart skips and flutters
Their body shakes to the Rhythm of spring's festive music.
Take a moment to inhale and listen to the spring singing her tales.

Monali Bhuyan
Assam



PHOTOSHOOT

CHOOSING THE PERFECT DRESS

By : Utpal Datta
Photographer and Filmmaker

I often receive a common inquiry from women who want to be photographed: What kind of dress should we choose for a casual photoshoot to look more photogenic?

While the question seems straightforward, the answer is quite complex. When models attend a professional photoshoot,

they typically receive guidance on dress selection, styling, and make-up from various experts. However, those participating in casual shoots also need helpful dress selection tips. Picking the right dress is crucial for helping the photographer capture impactful images. It's not just about choosing something that looks good on you; it's about

finding a dress that aligns with the shoot's theme, location, and overall aesthetic.

The key is to avoid choosing a dress that makes you feel uncomfortable. Here's a detailed guide to help you select the ideal dress.

1. Think about the Photoshoot's Theme and Location.



Theme: Is it a relaxed outdoor session, a formal indoor shoot, or something more artistic? Your dress should align with the theme. For example, a light sundress works perfectly for a bohemian outdoor setting, whereas a fitted gown is appropriate for a formal studio shoot.

Location: The background matters. A bright dress can stand out against a plain backdrop, while subtle colours might harmonise better with a lively setting. Also, consider the environment. A long, flowing dress may be challenging to manage on a windy beach or rough terrain.

2. Determine the Mood and Style:

What emotion do you wish to evoke? Romantic, playful, dramatic, or elegant? Your dress should embody this sentiment. Flowing fabrics and soft hues typically suggest romance, whereas bold, structured silhouettes can create a more dramatic look.

Style: Reflect on your personal style and what makes you feel comfortable and confident. If elaborate gowns aren't your usual choice, a simpler, elegantly designed dress could be more suitable.

3. Consider the Season and Weather:

Season: Select a dress that suits the current time of year. A light, breezy dress is ideal for summer, while a warmer, denser fabric is more fitting for winter.

Weather: Stay updated on the forecast for outdoor shoots. During cooler temperatures, a long-sleeved dress or a chic jacket

can combine practicality with fashion.

4. Focus on Fit and Silhouette:

Fit: Select a dress that fits you perfectly, highlighting your best features while ensuring comfort. Avoid options that are too tight or loose, as they can appear unflattering in photos.

Silhouette: Different silhouettes complement various body types. A-line dresses are versatile for most figures, whereas empire waist dresses suit petite frames well. Pay attention to the neckline, sleeve style, and dress length.

5. Be Mindful of Colours and Patterns:

Colours: Solid colours typically photograph better than intricate patterns, which can be distracting. Take your skin tone and the shoot's overall colour scheme into account. Jewel tones are vibrant, while pastels offer a soft, romantic vibe.

Patterns: If you choose a patterned dress, select a subtle design that is not overpowering. Small, delicate patterns can add visual interest without diverting attention from the main subject.

6. Pay Attention to the Details:

Fabric: The type of fabric influences the dress's appearance in photos. Flowy materials like chiffon and silk add elegance and movement, while structured options like satin and brocade present a more refined look.

Details: Elements like lace, beading, and ruffles introduce texture and visual appeal. However, steer



clear of overly embellished dresses, as they may appear cluttered in pictures.

7. Remember Movement and Comfort:

Movement: Dresses that flow or drape nicely bring life to your photos. Consider how the dress will look when you move, pose, or engage with your surroundings.

Comfort: Since you'll spend a lot of time in the dress, ensure it is comfortable. You should be able to move effortlessly and feel confident without needing constant adjustments.

By thoughtfully considering these aspects, you can choose a dress that looks gorgeous and enhances the visual appeal of your photo-shoot, leading to stunning and memorable images.





HAIR ACCESSORIES

Complete guide

By: Vanessa Jacqueline D Cruz, Singapore.



Hair accessories have always been a crucial element in the world of fashion. They not only add style and elegance to your look but also serve functional purposes like keeping your hair in place. Whether you are looking for a casual everyday look or a glamorous red carpet-ready style, the right hair accessory can make all the difference. In this complete guide, we explore different types of hair accessories, how to style them, and the latest trends to help you stay ahead in the fashion game.

Hair Accessories

Hair Clips & Barrettes

Hair clips and barrettes are versatile accessories used to hold hair in place while adding a touch of style. Available in different sizes, colors, and embellishments, they are perfect for both casual and formal occasions.

Headbands

Headbands are a classic hair accessory that suits all hair lengths and textures. From simple fabric headbands to intricate beaded designs, they provide an effortless way to keep hair away from the face while making a chic statement.

Hair Ties & Scrunchies

Hair ties and scrunchies are essential for creating ponytails,

buns, or braids. Modern scrunchies come in luxurious fabrics like velvet and silk, making them not only practical but also stylish.

Hair Pins & Bobby Pins

Hair pins and bobby pins help secure hairstyles in place and add decorative flair. From pearl-adorned pins to crystal-studded bobby pins, they offer both function and fashion.

Hairbands & Turbans

Hairbands and turbans are trendy, especially for bohemian and vintage-inspired looks. They are great for adding volume and elegance to your hairstyle.

Claw Clips & Banana Clips

These are perfect for effortlessly securing hair in an updo or half-up style. Their resurgence in popularity makes them a must-have accessory for those who love quick and stylish hair solutions.

How to Style Hair Accessories

Casual Looks: For everyday wear, opt for minimalist hair clips, simple headbands, or scrunchies. These add charm without overwhelming your outfit.

Work & Professional Styles: Sleek metallic barrettes or classic bobby pins keep your hair polished and professional while maintaining a sophisticated look.

Party & Glamorous Styles: Rhine-

stone clips, embellished headbands, or ornate pins elevate your look, making them perfect for special occasions.

Bohemian & Chic Looks: Floral crowns, woven headbands, and scarf ties work well for a free-spirited and artistic style.

Latest Hair Accessories Trends

Pearl and Crystal Accents: Elegant and timeless, these add a touch of sophistication.

Oversized Clips and Barrettes: Statement hairpieces are making waves in the fashion world.

Velvet and Satin Scrunchies: Luxurious materials add a refined look to casual hairstyles.

Retro-Inspired Hairbands: Thick padded headbands and vintage scarves are back in trend.

Eco-Friendly Accessories: Sustainable and biodegradable hair accessories are gaining popularity.

Hair accessories are an easy way to enhance your style and keep up with the latest trends. Whether you prefer understated elegance or bold statement pieces, there's a perfect hair accessory for every occasion. Experiment with different styles and find what best complements your look.



AURA PHOTOGRAPHY

Model
RADHIKA KALITA

Makeup
MANAMI TAMULI

Photography
UNIQUE BORAH



HEENA

A Classy Alternative to Tattoos

By: Manikangkana Devi

Writer, Poet, Artist & Translator

The world of body art has always been rich and diverse, but with the growing popularity of tattoos, many have overlooked alternative forms of skin adornment. One such option

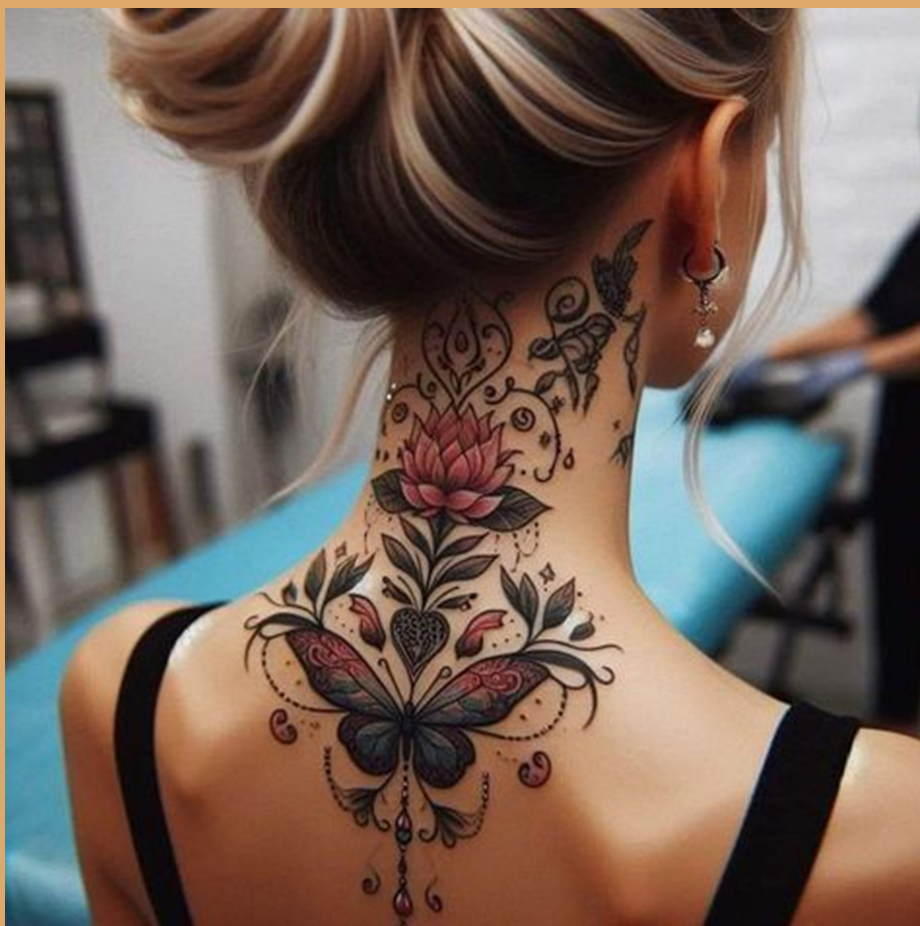
that is gaining traction is the traditional art of henna, or mehndi. This temporary form of body art not only captivates with its intricate designs but also serves as a beautiful alternative to permanent

tattoos.

Henna is a natural dye derived from the *Lawsonia inermis* plant, commonly found in regions like North Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia. The process of applying henna has been a cherished tradition for centuries in many cultures, often reserved for special occasions like weddings, festivals, and celebrations. The application method typically involves using a cone to carefully draw designs on the skin, which leave behind a stunning reddish-brown stain. These designs can range from small, delicate patterns to large, elaborate motifs that cover significant portions of the skin.

One of the most alluring aspects of henna is its temporary nature. While tattoos are a lifelong commitment, henna usually lasts one to three weeks, making it ideal for those who may want to experiment with body art without the permanence. This transient quality appeals to a diverse audience; from festival-goers looking for something eye-catching for a short period, to individuals who may want to try out a design before committing to a tattoo.

Additionally, henna is a great option for those who may be hesitant about getting a tattoo due to concerns about pain, healing, or skin reactions. The process of henna application is generally painless and less invasive compared to tattooing. Also, since henna is made from natural ingredients, it is often considered safer, although it's still advisable to conduct a patch test to ensure there's no allergic reaction.



Culturally, henna carries profound meaning, often symbolizing joy, beauty, and auspiciousness. For instance, in Indian weddings, the bride typically adorns her hands and feet with henna designs, believed to bring good luck and blessings in her new life. By choosing henna, individuals not only embrace a unique form of body art but also connect with these rich cultural traditions.

Furthermore, henna's versatility allows for endless creative possibilities. Modern artists often blend traditional patterns with contemporary designs, including geometric forms, floral arrangements, and even freehand art that incorporates personal symbols or meanings. This fusion not only keeps the art fresh but also caters to individual preferences and

styles, making henna a favorite among creative spirits.

A wonderful example of henna's rising popularity can be seen through artists like Rishab Sharma, a talented Sitarist who incorporates henna art into his personal style as well as his cultural expression. Rishab often adorns his hands with stunning henna designs during performances, creating an impactful statement that truly connects with his audience. The beautiful patterns highlight his movements and elevate the visual charm of his sitar playing, offering a delightful sensory experience for everyone watching and listening.

In conclusion, henna offers a beautiful alternative to tattoos that combines artistry, tradition,

and individuality. Its temporary nature, coupled with the cultural significance and the ability to customize designs, makes it an appealing option for many people. Whether you're looking for a way to express yourself, celebrate a special occasion, or simply enjoy the beauty of body art, henna is a stunning choice that deserves consideration. So the next time you're contemplating a design, think of henna — a beautiful way to adorn the skin while embracing a rich cultural heritage.

SPRING

Earth's bride she is splendorous Spring
Her colour paints all grass and leaves
Flowers blossoming a sight of bliss
Hearts pregnant with tender dreams.

The flirtous breeze opening wandering wings
Caressing the sleepy buds in a casual fling
Nature's quill penning poetry
with moonlit words wrapped in mystery.

Dewy Dawns breaking into placid mornings
Song birds chorusing soothing melodies
Of love and joy and pain of heartbreaking
Renewing hopes making the days splendid.

Vijaylaxmi Sarmah
Assam

SUMMER COCKTAIL

Refreshing Recipes to Keep You Cool

By : Brian La Cour,
Writer/Author, US



As the temperatures rise and the days stretch longer, there's no better way to enjoy summer than with a refreshing cocktail in hand. Whether you're lounging by the pool, hosting a backyard barbecue, or just unwinding after a long day, the perfect summer drink can elevate the moment. From tropical flavors

to citrusy delights, here are some of the best cocktail recipes to keep you cool all season long.

1. Classic Mojito

A Mojito is the ultimate summer refresher, combining mint, lime, and rum for a light and invigorating cocktail.

Ingredients:

- 2 oz white rum
- 1 oz fresh lime juice
- 2 tsp sugar
- 6-8 fresh mint leaves
- Soda water
- Ice

Instructions:

1. Muddle the mint leaves, sugar,



and lime juice in a glass until the flavors release.

2. Fill the glass with ice and pour in the rum.

3. Top with soda water, stir, and garnish with a lime wedge and mint sprig.

Why It's Perfect for Summer: The crisp combination of mint and lime makes this drink endlessly refreshing, perfect for beating the heat.

2. Spicy Mango Margarita

Put a tropical twist on a classic margarita with sweet mango and a

spicy kick of jalapeño.

Ingredients:

- 2 oz tequila
- 1 oz triple sec
- 1 oz fresh lime juice
- ½ cup fresh mango puree
- 1-2 jalapeño slices
- Tajín or salt for rimming the glass
- Ice

Instructions:

1. Rim the glass with lime juice and dip it in Tajín or salt.

2. Muddle the jalapeño slices in a shaker, then add tequila, triple sec, lime juice, and mango puree.

3. Fill with ice, shake well, and strain into the prepared glass over fresh ice.

4. Garnish with a mango slice or lime wheel.

Why It's Perfect for Summer: The sweet mango cools down the fiery jalapeño, creating a balanced yet bold summer sip.

3. Watermelon Basil Spritz

This light and refreshing cocktail highlights the natural sweetness of watermelon with the aromatic touch of basil.

Ingredients:

- 2 oz vodka
- 3 oz fresh watermelon juice (blended and strained)
- ½ oz fresh lime juice
- ½ oz simple syrup
- 2-3 fresh basil leaves
- Soda water
- Ice

Instructions:

1. Muddle the basil leaves in a shaker with simple syrup.

2. Add vodka, watermelon juice, lime juice, and ice, then shake well.

3. Strain into a glass filled with ice and top with soda water.

4. Garnish with a basil leaf and a small watermelon slice.

Why It's Perfect for Summer:

Watermelon is the quintessential summer fruit, making this cocktail a seasonal must-try.

4. Coconut Pineapple Rum Punch

Escape to the tropics with this creamy, coconut-infused rum punch.

Ingredients:

- 2 oz coconut rum
- 3 oz pineapple juice
- 1 oz coconut cream
- ½ oz lime juice
- Ice

Instructions:

1. Add all ingredients to a shaker filled with ice and shake well.
2. Strain into a glass over ice and garnish with a pineapple wedge and a cherry.

Why It's Perfect for Summer: This drink tastes like a mini tropical vacation, no plane ticket required.

5. Blueberry Lemon Gin Fizz

For a berry-infused take on a classic gin fizz, this cocktail is bright, bubbly, and full of summer flavor.

Ingredients:

- 2 oz gin
- 1 oz fresh lemon juice
- ½ oz simple syrup
- ¼ cup fresh blueberries
- Club soda
- Ice

Instructions:

1. Muddle blueberries with simple syrup in a shaker.
2. Add gin, lemon juice, and ice, then shake well.
3. Strain into a glass with fresh ice

and top with club soda.

4. Garnish with a lemon wheel and extra blueberries.

Why It's Perfect for Summer: The tartness of the lemon balances the sweetness of the blueberries, making this a crisp and refreshing cocktail.

Final Sip

No matter your preference—citrusy, tropical, spicy, or bubbly—there's a perfect summer cocktail waiting for you. These recipes are easy to make, bursting with flavor, and guaranteed to cool you down on even the hottest days. So, grab your shaker, mix up a drink, and toast to a summer filled with good times and great cocktails. Cheers.



Aura Beauty Touch

A Portrait of Passion & Precision: The Inspiring Journey of Makeup Coach Sangsmitha Nath Mazarbhuiya.

In a world that constantly demands reinvention, Sangsmitha Nath Mazarbhuiya, fondly known as **Makeup Coach Sangsmitha**, stands as a shining example of what it means to follow one's heart while embracing one's roots. A biologist by degree and an artist by soul, her journey from the serene town of Silchar, Assam to the national stage of beauty and education is nothing short of remarkable.

Born and raised in Silchar, Sangsmitha was always an academically brilliant student—disciplined, driven, and deeply curious. Her early life was a harmonious blend of intellect and artistry. While she excelled in her studies, she was also being rigorously trained in the classical dance form **Gaudiya Nritya**, earning prestigious recognitions such as the **Junior and Senior National Scholarship from CCRT, Government of India**. It was this multidimensional upbringing that sowed the seeds of



versatility in her—something that would define her future path.

After completing her **MSc in Life Sciences and Bioinformatics**, Sangsmitha could have easily pursued a career in science. But passion has its own gravity, and the call of art was louder. She transitioned into the world of beauty and makeup with an analytical mind and a creative soul—two traits that have helped her redefine the way makeup is perceived and taught today.

With over **10+ international and nationally recognized certifications** in makeup and hair-styling, Sangsmitha's expertise is backed not just by flair but by deep technical knowledge. Her career took a cinematic leap when she worked as a **prosthetic makeup artist in Vikram Bhatt's production "1920: Horrors of the Heart"**, a testament to her prowess in special effects makeup. She further enriched the academic side of beauty education by working as a trainer in renowned institutes like **International Institute of Cosmetology & Aesthetics (IICA)** and **Lakmé Academy powered by Aptech**.

As the **Founder of Sangsmitha-makeovers**, she has not only beautified many brides (**SNM Brides**)

and models but also won their hearts by building lasting relationships. Her range of makeup expertise spans across **bridal, editorial, airbrush, prosthetic, theatre, fashion, and pageantry**, reflecting her dedication to mastering every aspect of her craft.

Adding to her multifaceted career, Sangsmita is also a **certified nail technician** and the visionary founder of **Extensions by SNM**, a premium nail studio that blends creativity with elegance. Her expertise also extends to eyelash artistry, where she works as both a skilled artist and educator, training students to create flawless lash extensions with precision and care. These ventures reflect her holistic approach to beauty—where every detail, from makeup to nails, is crafted with purpose and perfection.

But her most powerful role is that of an educator. Sangsmita believes that **“makeup is science”**, and her teaching style mirrors this belief. She breaks down complex concepts into simple, scientific explanations, making her classes engaging and enlightening. She mentors her students beyond the brush—teaching them personality development, industry ethics, and the confidence to chase their dreams.

Her contribution to the community is also profound. Through the Hope for Gems Society, she has conducted several **Look and Learn Seminars for underprivileged women**, earning her the **Women for Women Recognition**. Her excellence has also been acknowledged through accolades like the **BARAK Iconic Award for Best Educator (2023)** and the **ICONIC Award for Contribution & Commitment by PAC Cosmetics (2025)**. A respected judge in various pageants, she brings grace, fairness, and depth to every panel she sits on. The student within her is very much alive, always seeking to grow, refine, and perfect her craft.

In a world where passions often take a backseat to practicality, she believes that blending your purpose with passion, and science with art—you create a legacy.



Cinema has always been a powerful medium for storytelling, capturing emotions, experiences, and societal reflections. The Aravindam National Short Film Festival 2025, held from March 14 to 16 at CMS College, Kottayam, was a grand celebration of short films that conveyed deep, thought-provoking messages. Organized by Thamp Film Society, the festival was a tribute to the legendary filmmaker G. Aravindan, commemorating his 90th birth anniversary.

Known for his timeless and internationally acclaimed works, Aravindan's films transcended geographical and cultural boundaries, making his contribution to cinema truly invaluable.

The festival featured a Panorama Competition with 21 selected films, shortlisted from 150 submissions, showcasing diverse narratives and filmmaking styles. It stood out not only for its tribute but also for offering one of Kerala's highest cash prizes for short films—a sum of ₹ 1,00,000—to winners in various categories in the General section, including Best Short Film, Best Actor, Best Actress, Best Director, Best Cinematography, Best Editor, and Best Script. With two categories—General and Campus—the festival provided a platform for both emerging and established filmmakers to showcase their creative brilliance.



ARAVINDAM NATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL 2025

A Tribute to Timeless Cinema

-Jishnu Vijayan Nair

Actor/Writer/Motivational Speaker, Kerala



An Unforgettable Experience

I had the opportunity to attend the festival on its final day and watch four remarkable short films including "My Father is Afraid of Water" (Hindi), "Mannaasai" (Tamil), "The Split" (Malayalam) & "Thunai" (Tamil). Among them, the Hindi film "My Father is Afraid of Water,"

directed by Prateek Srivastava and starring Mohan Agashe and Rahul Bagga, left a lasting impression on me.

This poignant film narrates the struggles of a bachelor son who becomes the sole caregiver for his father suffering from Alzheimer's disease. It beautifully captures

the emotional and psychological challenges of caregiving—patience, frustration, love, and duty. The film's storytelling was deeply personal, as Prateek Srivastava drew inspiration from his own life experiences with his father.

Watching the film was not just an artistic experience but also a deeply moving one. In today's world, where old-age homes are becoming more common, the film emphasizes the importance of familial bonds and responsibilities. It sends a strong message that caring for one's parents should not be seen as a burden but as an act of love and gratitude. This powerful theme resonated with the audience, making it a deserving winner of the festival's top honors:

Best Short Film prize shared between "My Father is Afraid of Water," and "Molanji" (Directed by Mahesh Madhu)

**Best Director (Prateek Srivastava)
Best Actor (Mohan Agashe)**

A Powerful Message for Society

One of the most striking aspects of the film is its universal theme. It challenges the modern mindset where caregiving is often considered a struggle rather than a natural duty. The film highlights how love, patience, and empathy can transform this experience into something meaningful.

The protagonist's journey serves as a reminder that parents dedicate their lives to nurturing



their children, and in their old age, it becomes the child's responsibility to provide the same care and love. This idea is deeply rooted in Indian values, making the film even more impactful.

A Festival to Remember

The Aravindam National Short Film Festival 2025 was a gathering of creative minds, film enthusiasts, and passionate storytellers. The festival was inaugurated by acclaimed filmmaker Blessy and

featured a keynote address by J. Nandakumar, Deseeya Samyojak - Prajna Pravah, setting the tone for a celebration of meaningful and thought-provoking storytelling. The closing ceremony and award distribution were led by renowned director Shyamaprasad.

The festival's director, Vijayakrishnan, a well-known writer, critic, and filmmaker, played a crucial role in curating a selection of films that sparked discussions on contemporary

societal issues. Yadu Vijayakrishnan, Abhilash S, Anoop KR Dr. Vishnu Raj were the jury members done the screening of 35 films and sent to the award jury members were Vijayakrishnan, A Chandrasekhar, Pradeep Nair, and Dr. J Prameela Devi, ensuring that the best cinematic works were recognized and celebrated.

Another noteworthy film at the festival was "Mannaasai", a Tamil film written and directed by Arivarasan. The film critically





examined society's obsession with wealth and power, shedding light on how greed has corrupted even religious institutions. Like "My Father is Afraid of Water," this film too delivered a strong message about morality and human values.

A Personal Encounter with the Director

Being part of the festival allowed me to engage in meaningful conversations, including a discussion with Prateek Srivastava himself. As someone deeply connected to cinema, I found it inspiring to hear about his creative process, the personal experiences that shaped his storytelling, and his vision for impactful cinema. Prateek Srivastava, an alumnus of the prestigious Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), Pune, has

a remarkable career in the Indian film industry.

His latest short film, "My Father is Afraid of Water," has already gained international recognition, premiering at the 46th Moscow International Film Festival and earning nominations at prestigious festivals such as the 29th Kolkata International Film Festival, 16th Seoul International Senior Film

Festival, 10th Smita Patil International Film Festival, and 18th Mumbai International Film Festival. It is also competing for top honors at the 21st Indian Film Festival Stuttgart, Germany, and the 8th Busan Inter-City Film Festival, Korea.

Final Thoughts

Attending the Aravindam National

Short Film Festival 2025 was an eye-opening experience. It was a celebration of storytelling, artistic expression, and social awareness through cinema. "My Father is Afraid of Water" was not just a film but an emotional journey—one that reminded us of the importance of human connections, family bonds, and responsibilities.

As G. Aravindan's legacy continues to inspire filmmakers, festivals like this ensure that cinema

remains a medium for change, reflection, and emotional resonance. I look forward to witnessing more such impactful films that challenge perceptions and spark important conversations.



Mrs.

- Dr. Dipsikha Bhagawati
Film Critic, Author, Translator

In a subtle challenge to the intermittent patriarchy, *Mrs.*, the Hindi adaptation of the acclaimed Malayalam film *The Great Indian Kitchen* by Jeo Baby, effectively highlights the evolving tactics used to perpetuate harmful patriarchal norms within certain Indian families. Unlike tradition-

al portrayals that often feature drunken men or physical abusers, *Mrs.* presents a more nuanced depiction. The family of the charming Richa (Sanya Malhotra) is portrayed as seemingly respectable, where their intelligence is derived not from education but from their social standing and positions, al-

lowing them to cleverly rationalize their malpractice.

A neutral standpoint hits that the representation of a particular family does not encompass the overall familial dynamics of the country as a whole. The narrative, while engaging, offers a snapshot that may overlook the vast array of experiences and structures that characterize family life in contemporary India. The norms of middle-class families have undergone significant changes, with male members now actively participating in household chores such as cooking and dishwashing, showcasing a shift toward shared responsibilities that challenge traditional gender roles. This evolution reflects a broader societal transformation where collaborative parenting and domestic duties are increasingly recognized as integral to family life, reflecting a move towards more equitable partnerships within the household.

Moreover, the phrase 'Naukri ke liye mana kiya tha' is an outdated maxim, yet the family depicted in 'Mrs' does not necessarily adhere to such a restrictive mind-set, which should be reflected in their overall lifestyle, culture, financial behaviours, gadgets, attire, and even furnishings if it were truly antiquated. In contemporary society, women are actively engaged in various forms of work or entrepreneurship, pursuing their hobbies, and are not solely confined to kitchen duties late into the night. This shift is indicative of a broader cultural change,



where the notion that culinary expertise is the sole measure of a good daughter-in-law is no longer prevalent in middle-class families. These families have become more open and supportive, distancing themselves from feudalistic ideals that once dictated familial expectations and embracing a more modern view of partnership and shared responsibility.

While patriarchy is predominant in a significant portion of the North Eastern states, matriarchy is followed in many other states, indicating a diverse societal landscape that complicates the understanding of family dynamics. This variety illustrates that there is no singular experience of family in India; instead, each region brings

its own customs and practices that influence how families operate and evolve. The interplay of different cultural norms creates a rich tapestry of familial experiences, each distinct yet interconnected, revealing the complexity of what it means to belong to a family in this vibrant nation. Furthermore, a successful doctor's family is not typically classified as purely middle class within the societal hierarchy, emphasizing that class delineations can be fluid and contingent upon numerous factors, including profession, education, and economic stability.

Exceptions exist everywhere, but they are not necessarily exemplary, and it is crucial to recognize that the challenges and triumphs

of families portrayed in media often do not encapsulate the realities faced by many. The prevalence of preachiness in certain narratives can

be counterproductive, causing disruptions in the collective societal progression by perpetuating stereotypes rather than fostering understanding and empathy. Instead of presenting a narrow portrayal of family life, stories should aim to highlight the multifaceted nature of familial relationships, thereby inviting audiences to engage with the diverse realities that exist beyond the screen.

Sanya Malhotra delivers a top-notch performance in the film, bringing depth and nuance to her role, which resonates with



in stark contrast to the idealized, nostalgic image often associated with it.

In a world where media representations can either uplift or hinder societal progress, it becomes imperative for storytellers to craft narratives that celebrate the complexities of womanhood and familial relationships. By showcasing the triumphs, joys, and everyday victories of women like Richa, filmmakers can foster a more inclusive dialogue about gender roles, family responsibilities, and personal aspirations. Ultimately, narratives that balance the struggle with the celebration of achievements can inspire audiences, encouraging them to recognize and appreciate the diverse experiences that shape family life in India today. Through thoughtful storytelling, there lies the potential not only to entertain but also to educate, empower, and engage viewers in meaningful conversations about the evolving nature of family dynamics in a rapidly changing society.

audiences seeking relatable characters. Her ability to embody the struggles and triumphs of her character allows viewers to connect on a personal level, seeing reflections of their own lives and experiences in her journey. The direction of the film is commendable, effectively weaving together various thematic elements that speak to both individual and collective experiences. The film primarily focuses on the rebellion and development of Richa, culminating in her emergence as an independent dance teacher, which symbolizes the breaking of traditional molds and the pursuit of personal passion. However, many reviews tend to emphasize the hardships she faces rather than her breaking down barriers for self-esteem, which is equally significant. This shift in focus invites a broader discussion on how narratives surrounding women in film can evolve to highlight their resilience and achievements,

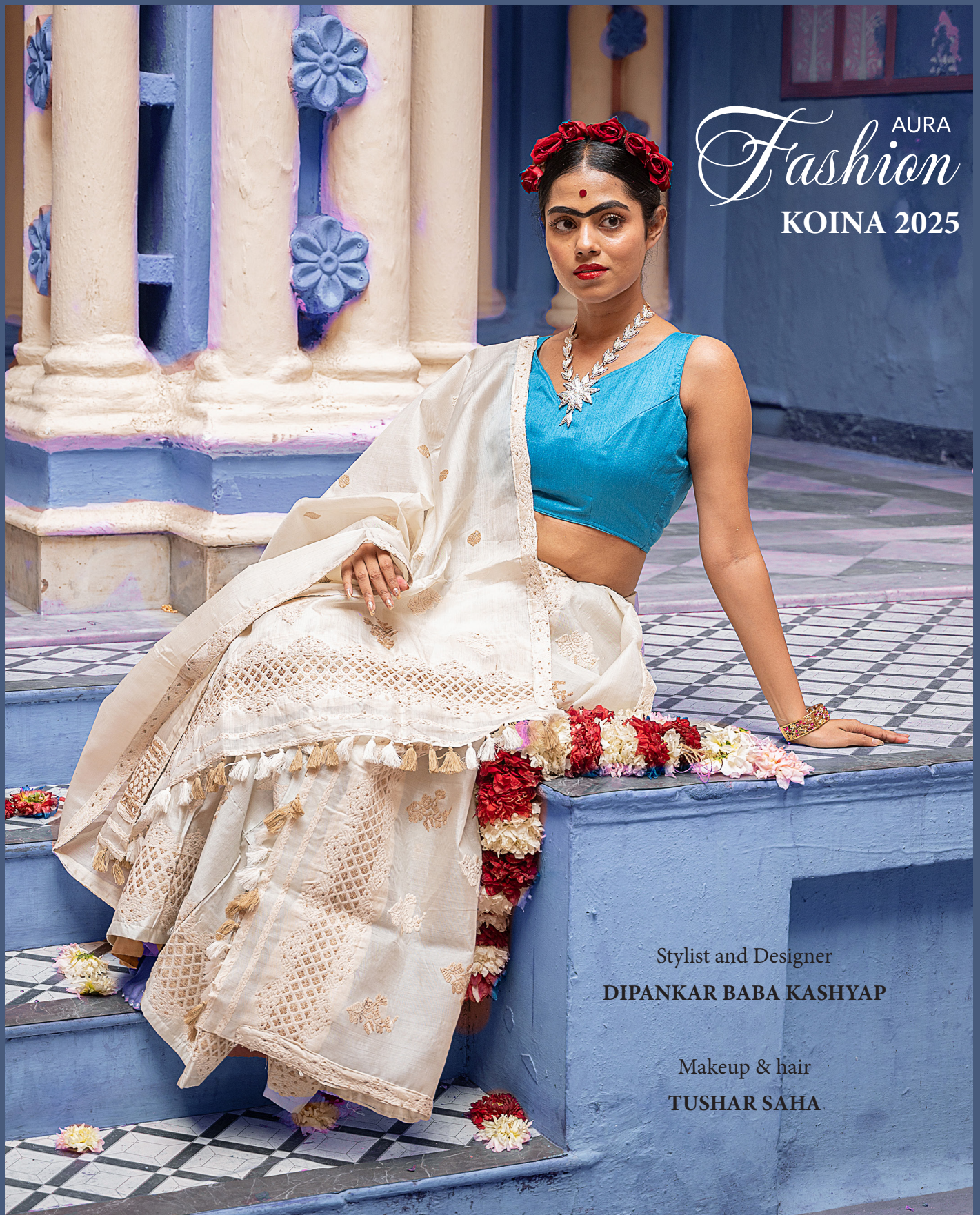
rather than solely their struggles, thus contributing to a richer, more nuanced portrayal of women's lives in contemporary society.

Considering the collective cinematic affinities, it has to be acknowledged that the director Arati Kadav has sensitively portrayed the suffocated state of the protagonist through the metaphor of the clogged sink. Richa repeatedly urges Diwakar to call a plumber and fix the clogged, leaking sink, but he continually 'forgets.' When his aunt visits, she subtly suggests that the persistent issue reflects Richa's shortcomings. The clogged sink and dripping pipe symbolize Richa's powerlessness, mirroring the experience of the unnamed wife in *The Great Indian Kitchen*. Ironically, this situation becomes the catalyst that drives Richa to a breaking point, both literally and figuratively. The narrative invites readers to recognize how the kitchen can transform into a confining, unpleasant environment,



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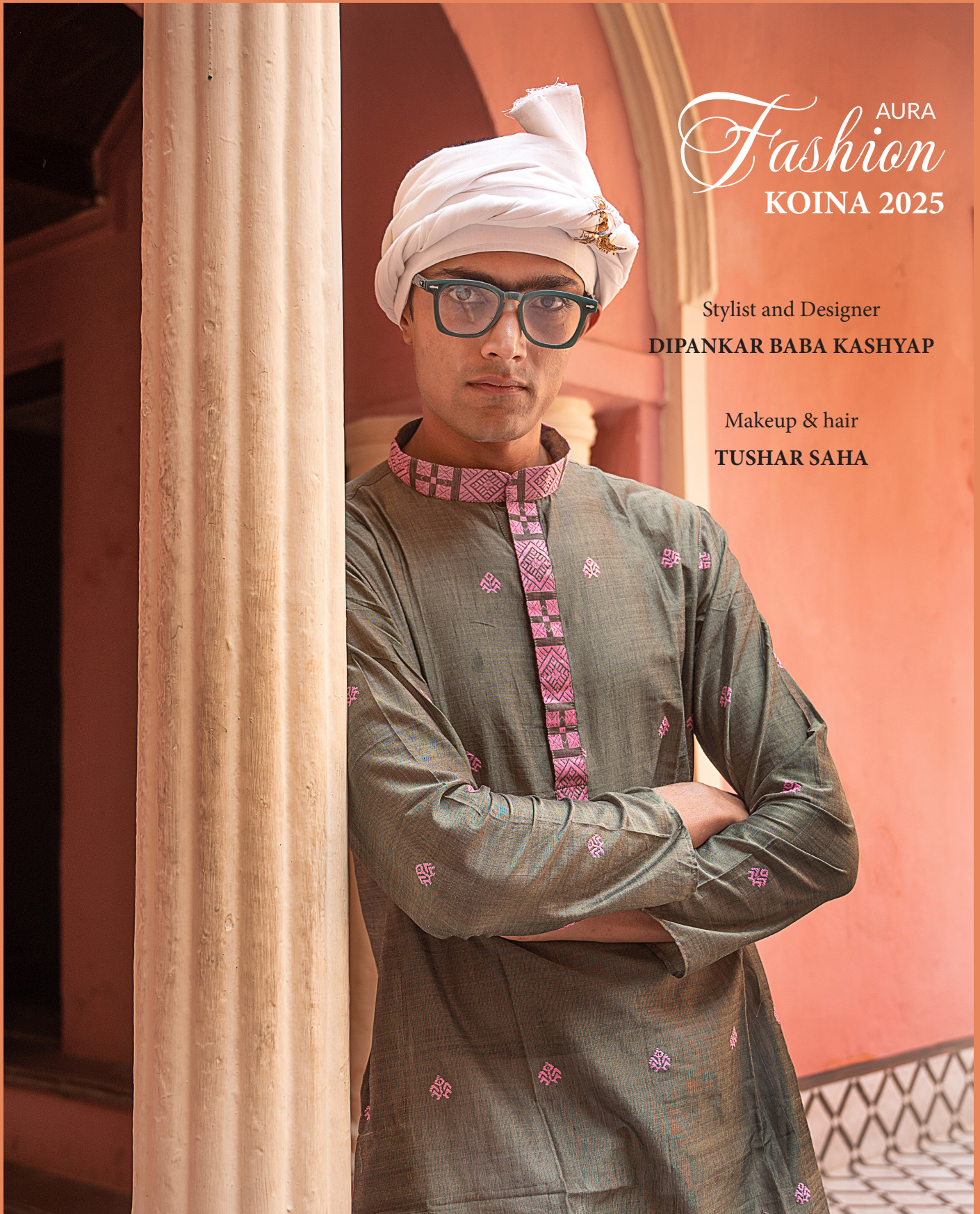
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Ideal Behavior for Teenagers on Social Media and in Life

By: Lalit Rao

In today's digital age, social media plays a significant role in the lives of teenagers. It connects people across the world, provides entertainment, and offers a platform for self-expression. However, it also comes with risks, especially for those who are kind, innocent, and unaware of life's harsh real-

ities. To ensure their safety and well-being, teenagers must follow certain guidelines while navigating both social media and real life.

1. Protect Your Personal Information

One of the most crucial rules for teenagers is to never share sen-

sitive information online. This includes passwords, home addresses, and parents' phone numbers. Sharing such details, even with close friends, can lead to misuse or serious consequences if it falls into the wrong hands. Personal information should remain private to protect oneself from identity



theft, stalking, and other online dangers.

2. Be Cautious About Strangers

The internet is full of people with hidden motives. Teenagers should avoid adding strangers to their social media accounts and refrain from engaging in conversations with unknown individuals. It is easy for someone to create a fake identity online, which can lead to deception or harm. Under no circumstances should teenagers meet any stranger from social media, even in a public place, without informing and taking permission from their parents.

3. Avoid Sharing Family Information

Teenagers must never disclose their family's financial position or

personal life to anyone—whether online or offline. Such information can be exploited, leading to financial scams or emotional manipulation. It is also important to avoid discussing private family matters with people who are not trustworthy, as this can expose the family to unnecessary risks.

4. Always Inform Parents

Open communication with parents is vital. Teenagers should share both positive and negative experiences with their parents. Whether it's an unusual message from a stranger or an invitation to a party, informing parents ensures that they are aware and can provide guidance and protection. No matter how harmless a situation may seem, involving parents is the best way to stay safe.

5. Be Cautious About Social Invitations

Not all social gatherings are safe. Teenagers should avoid parties or events where the crowd is known to engage in irresponsible behavior. Such places can expose them to peer pressure, substance abuse, and unsafe situations. It is always wise to

attend only those events that are supervised by responsible adults and where the environment is safe and respectful.

6. Don't Visit Others' Homes Without Permission

Teenagers should never visit the house of a boy or a girl without informing their parents. This simple rule helps parents keep track of



their child's whereabouts and ensures their safety. No matter how trustworthy someone may seem, it is always better to be cautious and seek parental approval before visiting anyone's home.

7. Trust People Wisely

Trust is an essential part of any relationship, but it should be earned gradually. Teenagers must avoid trusting people too quickly,

regardless of gender. Being friendly is important, but being naïve can lead to being manipulated or taken advantage of. It is always safer to maintain healthy boundaries and observe people's behavior over time before trusting them.

As a conclusion, it can be said that teenagers today face unique challenges as they balance their digital and real-world lives. Following these guidelines can help them

stay safe while still enjoying the benefits of social media and social interactions. By protecting personal information, being cautious with strangers, maintaining open communication with parents, and making wise choices, teenagers can navigate life confidently and securely. In a world full of uncertainties, being smart, vigilant, and responsible is the key to a happy and safe teenage life.

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