

# AMORE

LIFE & LEISURE

Spring Issue 2026

SCARVES. SALADS. SCENTS.  
**LITTLE THINGS  
WE'RE LOVING  
THIS SEASON**

LIVING ROOM REFRESH  
**THE COOLEST  
COLOUR  
COMBINATIONS  
RIGHT NOW**

LEAFY LAMPS  
**TO BRING THE  
OUTDOORS IN**

PRETTY IN PINK  
**A DREAMY  
CAKE YOU'LL  
LOVE TO BAKE**

TRAVEL  
**7 PERFECT  
DAYS IN THE UK**

INSPIRATION  
**BRILLIANT  
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**AMANDA JOY PURAVANKARA**  
Whole-Time Director  
Puravankara Limited

**L**ately, the world has felt a little unsettled.

Every morning brings another headline, another reminder of how fragile things can be. It makes you pause, sometimes with a quiet heaviness you can't quite explain.

And yet, in the middle of all this, spring arrives as it always does.

One morning the trees are bare; a few days later, they are dotted with the softest green. Bougainvillea spills over walls again. Somewhere in the neighbourhood, someone has started watering plants earlier in the day, and the faint smell of wet earth drifts through the air.

Spring carries a kind of quiet optimism. It doesn't argue with the darkness of the world. It simply reminds us that life continues to find its way back.

Perhaps that is why the idea of home feels especially important right now: a small sanctuary—where the noise of the world softens, where the people we love gather around the table, where the simple beauty of everyday things surrounds us.

A favourite chair by the window. A balcony touched with green. The warmth of familiar voices in the evening.

In times like these, those small comforts feel bigger somehow. They remind us that even when the world feels uncertain, there are still spaces where peace lives quietly.

And perhaps that is the real promise of a home: a place where hope can take root and grow, season after season.

*Amanda Joy*

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Spring Issue 2026

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# an ode to Linen

Aeka is a planet- positive brand that consists of linen sarees and separates. The endeavour at Aeka was to empower the wearer to lend her personality and style to the garment.

We work with breathable fabrics and relaxed silhouettes and believe in slow fashion and living.



# aeka

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## editor's note



Dear Readers,

Spring has a lovely way of slipping in quietly. One morning the light feels softer, the air smells faintly of orange blossoms, and suddenly everything seems fresher.

In this issue, we celebrate that feeling of renewal. From Beauty Goes Green—simplifying your skincare—to warm, earthy living room palettes, we explore small ways to refresh both our homes and ourselves.

We also pause to think about the Quiet Crisis of listening, the creative power of metaphors, and the calming joy of art.

And because spring is always best enjoyed around a table, we bring you bright seasonal flavours—from Strawberry, Rocket & Almond salad to creamy baby potatoes and the charming geometry of a Battenberg cake.

As always, I hope these pages bring you a little inspiration—and a lot of simple, everyday joy.

*Shubhra*



*Samuel Shetty*

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# The A List

TRENDING RIGHT NOW



## TUDOR ROYAL CLASSIC ELEGANCE FOR HER & HIM

Integrated stainless-steel bracelet, sunray-finished blue dial, and automatic movement. Perfect for both romantic moments and milestone celebrations.



## OCHRE SPIRITS

Crafted for consumers who appreciate nuance, creativity, and authenticity, Ochre's spirits highlight the elegance of contemporary Indian distilling.



## DESTINIO GADGET ACCESSORY ORGANISER

This gadget bag comes with a charging cable pass-through in the exterior pocket for charging your devices on the go.



## OSHEA HERBALS PAPAYA CLEAN FACE WASH

Crafted with clinically tested ingredients, the Papaya Clean Face Wash effectively lightens blemishes and helps reduce pigmentation.



## PAPER PLANE VINTAGE FLORAL WALLPAPER

Elevate your interiors with this luxurious, seamless wallpaper roll.



## SYSVENT TRAVEL TOWELS

Crafted from pure cotton, these compressed towels are both washable and reusable, offering a long-lasting solution for anyone on the move.



## BARE NECESSITIES SOAK IT UP NATURAL MOISTURIZER

Rich in omega fatty acids, this hydrating light moisturizer has no artificial ingredients, providing 24-hour hydration. Perfect as a day cream for daily use.



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**The Best Things Anyone  
Ever Said About...**

# **BUTTERFLIES**

“  
A butterfly is a  
caterpillar who  
never gave up  
on its dream  
to fly.

- Matshona Dhiwayo,  
Canadian philosopher

“  
Let us learn from  
the butterfly  
to count life in  
each and every  
moment and  
make the most  
of it.

- Anonymous

“  
We delight in  
the beauty of  
the butterfly,  
but rarely  
admit the  
changes it has  
gone through  
to achieve that  
beauty.

- Maya Angelou, American  
essayist and poet



“  
**Butterflies  
are self  
propelled  
flowers.**

- Robert A. Heinlein,  
American author

“  
**If you smile when  
you see a butterfly,  
you have happiness  
in your soul.**

- Diana Cooper,  
International Speaker

“  
**Butterflies  
are more like  
flowers; their  
only advantage  
is that they can  
touch the sky.**

- Anonymous

“  
**Do you know  
God paints  
every colour on  
a butterfly with  
His fingers?**

- Abigail Breslin,  
American actress

“  
**I almost wish  
we were  
butterflies and  
liv'd but three  
summer days -  
three such days  
with you I could  
fill with more  
delight than  
fifty common  
years could  
ever contain.**

- John Keats, poet



# AMORE


## WHICH KNIFE IS BEST FOR EVERYDAY COOKING?

 *Ananya, Pune*

A good vegetable knife is the true workhorse of everyday cooking. It handles everything from vegetables to herbs with ease and offers better control than smaller blades. Stainless steel knives are low-maintenance and resist rust, while high-carbon steel stays sharper for longer but needs a little care. Use a small paring knife for finer tasks.



## WHAT'S THE RIGHT HEIGHT AND PLACEMENT FOR A WORK DESK?

 *Karan, Gurugram*

Your desk height should allow your elbows to rest comfortably at a 90-degree angle when typing — usually around 28 to 30 inches for most adults. If your shoulders creep up or your wrists dip, the desk is too high or too low.

As for placement, position the desk so light falls from the side, not directly in front or behind, to avoid glare and eye strain. Sitting with a wall behind you and a clear view ahead helps with focus and posture. A well-placed desk doesn't just improve comfort — it quietly boosts how long and how well you can work.

## HOW CAN I TELL IF THE HONEY I'M BUYING IS GOOD QUALITY?

 *Sneha, Lucknow*

Good-quality honey is thick, slow-moving and has a distinct aroma rather than a flat sweetness. It may crystallise over time — that's natural and actually a good sign, not a flaw. A spoon of real honey won't dissolve instantly in water and won't drip off like sugar syrup. Quality honey tastes complex, slightly floral, and leaves a gentle warmth rather than a sugary aftertaste.





## WILL DARK WALLPAPER WORK IN A ROOM WITH VERY LITTLE SUNLIGHT?

 *Ishita, Delhi*

Yes, it can — if you balance it thoughtfully. Dark wallpaper with a rich print can actually add depth and drama to a low-light room, making it feel intentional rather than dull. Use it on one feature wall instead of all four, and keep the remaining walls light to prevent the space from closing in. Pair it with warm, layered lighting and lighter furniture to offset the moodiness. If you truly love the print, trust it — good design is often about confidence, not just brightness.



## MY CAKES TURN OUT DENSE INSTEAD OF LIGHT — WHAT AM I DOING WRONG?

 *Meera, Jaipur*

Dense cakes are usually a mixing or measuring issue. Overmixing the batter develops too much gluten, while packed flour or extra liquid can weigh the cake down. Use a light hand once the dry ingredients go in, and always measure flour by spooning it into the cup rather than scooping. Also check that your baking powder or soda is fresh — old leavening won't give enough lift. Get these basics right, and your cakes will bake up soft, airy and evenly risen.

## WHAT EXACTLY IS CHEDDAR CHEESE BEST USED FOR?

 *Rohan, Chandigarh*

Cheddar is valued for its balance of flavour and meltability. Mild cheddar works well in sandwiches, toasties and sauces, while mature cheddar adds depth to dishes like mac and cheese, baked vegetables and savoury pies. It melts smoothly without becoming greasy, making it reliable for everyday cooking. Avoid using it in dishes that need a stretchy pull — cheddar shines more in flavour than drama.



**Got a burning home decor dilemma or a kitchen conundrum you need advice on? Send your queries to [amore@puravankara.com](mailto:amore@puravankara.com) with your name and city, and you might see your question featured in the next issue of Ask Amore!**

# INSPIRATION BOARD

Because you are what you read, watch and think



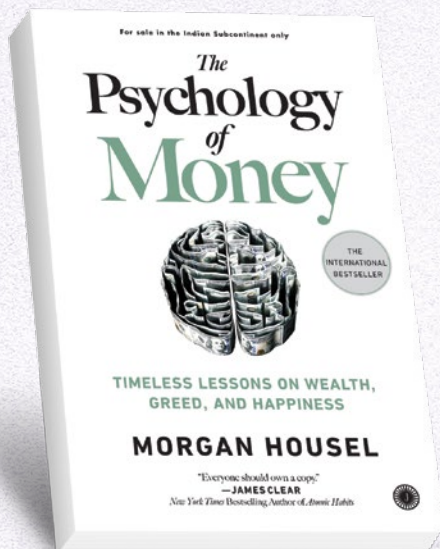
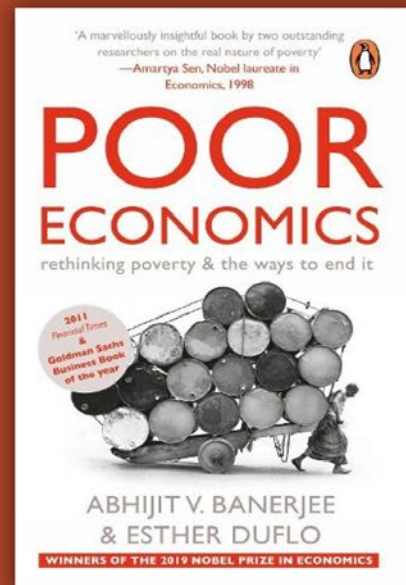
## BOOKS THAT RETHINK MONEY, WORK & AMBITION

### “POOR ECONOMICS”

by *Abhijit Banerjee & Esther Duflo (India/France)*

A quietly radical look at poverty, choice, and how people really make financial decisions. Based on years of field research, this book replaces grand theories with human nuance.

**Why it matters:** It teaches empathy without sentimentality — and makes you question everything you assume about money.

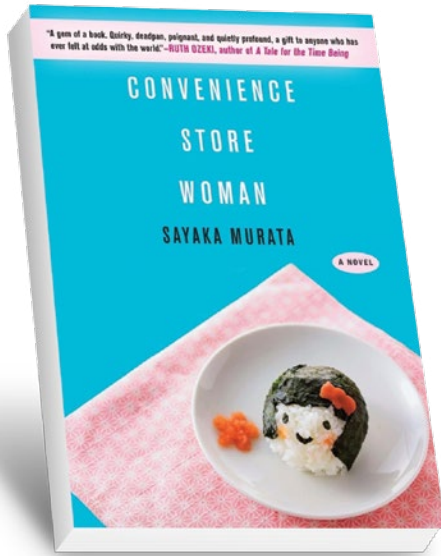


### “THE PSYCHOLOGY OF MONEY”

by *Morgan Housel (USA)*

Less about numbers, more about behaviour. Housel explores why smart people make terrible financial decisions — and why luck, fear, and ego matter more than spreadsheets.

**For readers who enjoy:** Clean writing, sharp anecdotes, and big ideas explained simply.



## “CONVENIENCE STORE WOMAN”

by Sayaka Murata (Japan)

A deadpan, quietly subversive novel about a woman perfectly content working at a convenience store — and society's discomfort with that choice.

**Why include it now:** It dismantles success narratives without raising its voice.

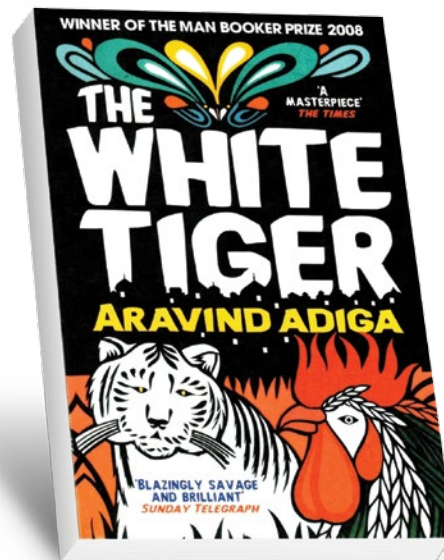


## “THE WHITE TIGER”

by Aravind Adiga (India)

A savage, funny, unsettling portrait of ambition in modern India, told through the voice of a man determined to escape poverty at any cost.

**What lingers:** The moral messiness of wanting more — and getting it.



## “SMALL THINGS LIKE THESE”

by Claire Keegan (Ireland)

A slim, devastating novella about quiet decency, moral courage, and the price of looking away.

**Why it earns its place:** Proof that restraint can be more powerful than spectacle.

 **FILMS THAT SIT WITH YOU LONG AFTER**



**PERFECT DAYS**

*Available on MUBI*

A meditative Japanese film following a Tokyo toilet cleaner whose life is built around ritual, solitude, music, and mindfulness. A reminder that a small life can still be a complete one.



**THE LUNCHBOX**

*Available on Netflix*

An accidental correspondence between a widower and a neglected housewife in Mumbai. Still one of the most tender portrayals of loneliness and connection in Indian cinema.



**COURT**

*Available on Netflix*

A minimalist Indian courtroom drama that exposes the absurdities and quiet violence of bureaucracy.

**PAST LIVES**

*Available on Amazon Prime*

A restrained, aching story about childhood sweethearts separated by countries, choices, and time.

**What it explores beautifully:** The lives we live — and the ones that quietly haunt us.



**AFTERSUN**

*Available on Apple TV*

A father-daughter holiday, remembered imperfectly. This film understands memory the way life does — fragmented, emotional, unresolved.





## TALKS THAT SHIFT PERSPECTIVE

Watch these TED & TEDX gems on YouTube



### **BRENÉ BROWN**

*"The power of vulnerability"*

A talk that made emotional honesty feel brave instead of weak.



### **DR. ARIF KHAN**

*"The #1 Journaling Method for Brain Health You Need to Know"*

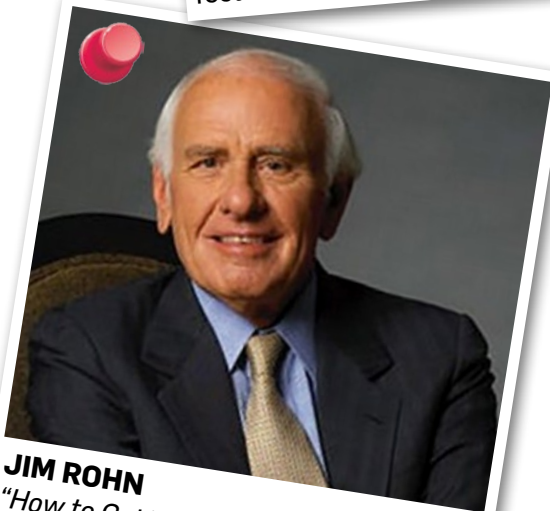
How writing isn't just emotional release, but actual neurological repair.



### **MALCOLM GLADWELL**

*"Choice, happiness and spaghetti sauce"*

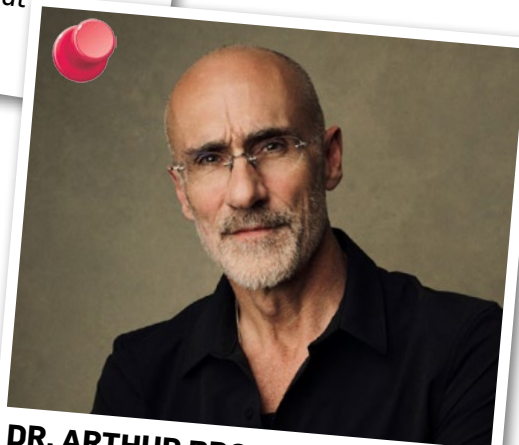
A playful reminder that there is no single way to like anything — including success.



### **JIM ROHN**

*"How to Get Whatever You Want"*

In this video, he talks about the importance of asking, 'The Art of Asking.'



### **DR. ARTHUR BROOKS**

*"You Need to Be Bored"*

Why boredom isn't a flaw to fix — it's the mental space where creativity, clarity, and original thinking are actually born.



### **RUTGER BREGMAN**

*"Poverty isn't a lack of character"*

A bold reframing of inequality and human nature, delivered with clarity and optimism.

**SCROLL TO SANCTUARY**  
Healthy Food Inspo on Instagram

**@foodiesfood\_court**

Easy homemade recipes by Neha and Anshu Kumari.



**@mumbaifoodiz**

Recipes for busy people, curated by Ravika Thorat.



**@mediterranean.diet.plan**

This account has 5 million followers. Enough said.



**@purna\_recipes**

Curated by Purna Mehra, these simple and delicious recipes have a big fan following.



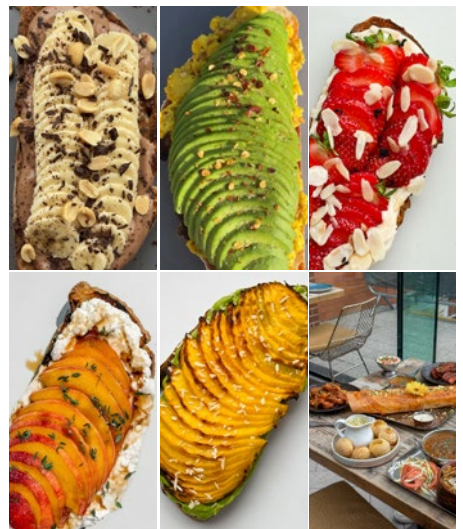
**@fat.burning.recipes**

Healthy recipes posted daily.



**@vegangirlboss**

Adina Akhmetova's delicious healthy vegan recipes.



# ENRICH

TAKE TIME TO NURTURE THE MOST IMPORTANT  
PERSON IN YOUR LIFE—YOU!





BOOK EXTRACT

# The Four Life Skills

BY AMIT AGARWAL

Published by Penguin Random House India

# W

riters rely on metaphors. J.K. Rowling, in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, describes the Dementors as a metaphor for evil, sadness and depression: 'Get too near a Dementor and every good feeling, every happy memory will be sucked out of you. If it can, the Dementor will feed on you long enough to reduce you to something like itself—soulless and evil. You'll be left with nothing but the worst experiences of your life.'

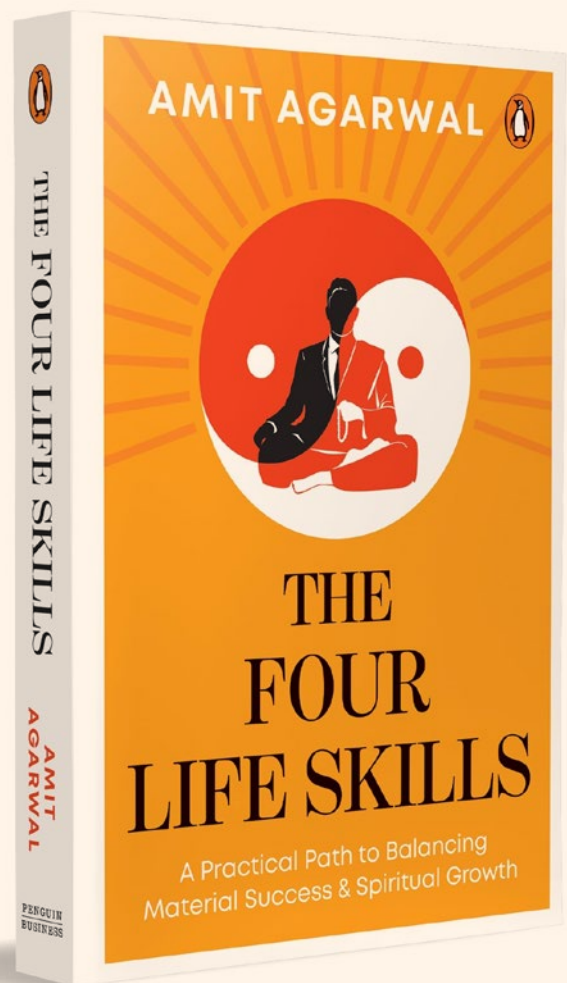
So, if you are wondering if you can use metaphors in business communication, the answer is a big YES! A creative metaphor can be a very effective tool for influence and persuasion in business.

Let's study this incident that took place at one of the organizations I worked with in the past. We were working on the customer experience of the website of one of India's leading banks. Their analytics department was reaching out to my team for various requirements on data enrichment. While this was not our primary offering, we were committed to helping our client to the best of our capacity. Although we had informed the bank that their requests couldn't be met, our team continued to receive repeated requests from the client. During a quarterly review, I met their head of analytics.

I asked him, 'Do you enjoy films or cricket?'

'Both,' he answered with a smile.

'Great,' I continued. 'Since you like films, you agree that Amitabh Bachchan is the superstar of Indian



cinema. And I am sure that a leading bank like yours would want to work with software providers whose profile and experience are similar to that of Amitabh Bachchan in their field. So, Abhay, we are the

Amitabh Bachchan of website personalization. However, when it comes to data enrichment, we are like the new actors in Bollywood.'

Interestingly, after this meeting, the client understood that our forte lay in website personalization. They didn't pursue the question of data enrichment as they had done before.

### CREATING THE METAPHOR

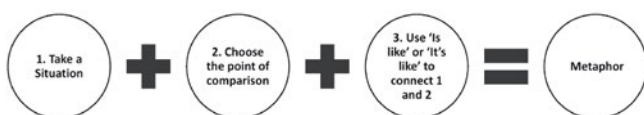
As seen in these examples, metaphors are an amazing communication tool for effective influence and persuasion. They simplify scenarios by providing a relatable reference point. And the best part?

It is very easy to create a metaphor—a simple three-step process.

**Step 1: Take a situation.**

**Step 2: Think of what you would like to compare your situation/product/idea with.**

**Step 3: Use a connector (e.g. is like, it's like, etc.) to link 1 and 2.**



Creating a Metaphor

Let's put it into practice.

**Step 1: Take a situation.**

It is difficult and rewarding to win clients as a start-up as compared to large, established companies.

**Step 2: Think of what you would like to compare your situation/product/idea with.**

Scoring centuries on bouncy and swinging pitches in England.

**Step 3: Use the phrase 'It's like' to connect 1 and 2.**  
*Winning clients in a start-up is challenging. It tests your skills but is very rewarding. It's like scoring centuries on bouncy and swinging pitches in England. Both require deep focus, teamwork, a strong desire to succeed and, most importantly, Shubman Gill.*

Now, you may wonder why Shubman Gill made an appearance in the metaphor. When thinking of a metaphor, always consider the cultural background of the person or organization you are communicating with. Taking into account the context of the situation and the cultural and professional environment, comparisons are the keys to a successful metaphor.

### CONVERSATIONAL METAPHORS

In the examples above, we saw direct comparisons between two objects. However, metaphors can also be used more subtly in everyday conversations. Let's explore a few examples of how conversational metaphors can be woven into our speech to enhance its effectiveness and impact.

Once, I was meeting with a bank to renew a software product offered by my company. Since this was our first banking client, we proposed a modest fee. We created great value over twelve months and the bank championed our services. During a subsequent meeting, the agenda was to discuss the subscription renewal. I asked the client to increase our fee to double what we had quoted earlier and were currently being paid. While Jatin, the manager, acknowledged our contribution, he said their finance department would not approve a 100 per cent hike in fees.

So, I asked him, 'Jatin, as a manager, will you hire somebody for their potential even though the person may not have proven past credentials?'

'Yes, of course, I would,' he said.

'Then, in such a case, you may pay them a salary that is lower than the market standard,' I pointed out.

Jatin agreed.

'And after a year or so, when your hired employee performs amazingly well, exceeds the organization's expectations and their appraisal is nearing, will you consider bringing their salary to market parity? Or do you feel it should remain the same?'

'I will definitely correct their current salary and bring it to market parity,' Jatin said.

'Wonderful. Jatin, think of us as that employee. We need your help in getting the increased subscription fee to gain market parity and the respect we deserve as reliable service providers.'

Our subscription fee was hiked by 115 per cent in a month or so. Yes, that's more than double.

As seen here, a conversational metaphor can be a powerful way to influence others—no technical jargon required. Conversational metaphors are also an excellent way to convey emotions. In January 2025, Sofia, one of the sales owners looking after Latin America, won a banking deal after two years of extreme diligence. So, I asked her, 'Sofia, how do you feel after you've finally won the client?' She said, 'Amit, it feels like we've won the Soccer World Cup.'

# How the World Says “Thank You”

## Global Practices of Gratitude

Long before guided meditations and gratitude apps made their way into our lives, cultures around the world were already building rituals that encouraged people to pause, reflect, and give thanks. These practices—colourful, quiet, spiritual, or deeply communal—tell us something simple and enduring: gratitude is a human reflex, shared across geography, language and time.



### JAPAN: TURNING EVERYDAY MOMENTS INTO APPRECIATION

In Japan, gratitude isn't saved for grand gestures. It slips into daily rhythms—before eating with *Itadakimasu* (I receive with thanks) and after with *Gochisousama* (thank you for the meal).

Even the practice of *ojigi*—a bow—turns into a physical expression of respect. A tiny tilt for casual encounters, a deeper bend for profound appreciation. The Japanese approach makes gratitude elegant, quiet, and intentional, transforming routine into ritual.



### GHANA: DANCING IN DEFIANCE OF HUNGER

The Ga people of Ghana celebrate *Homowo*, which literally means “scoffing at hunger.” Rather than ignoring the pain of a historic famine, they meet it with drums, food, and laughter.

Communities cook together, share freely, and dance in the streets—especially with those who have less. Gratitude here is loud and joyful, but also fierce: a celebration of survival, generosity, and collective strength.



### BALI: DAILY OFFERINGS, DAILY DEVOTION

Walk through Bali on an ordinary morning and you'll see hundreds of *canang sari*: tiny palm-leaf baskets filled with flowers, rice, and incense, placed at temples, doorsteps, counters, and pavements.

These offerings are everyday thank-yous—for protection, prosperity, and even the challenges that teach resilience. Gratitude, in this context, becomes muscle memory: small, repetitive, and heart-centred.



**SOUTHERN AFRICA:  
GRATITUDE FOR COMMUNITY**

The spirit of Ubuntu, found across Southern Africa, is best summed up as: "I am because we are."

It's the belief that humanity is shared—that kindness strengthens the group, and that we are all indebted to one another. Ubuntu turns gratitude into an ethic: not just thanks for what we have, but for who we have.



**INDIGENOUS NORTH AMERICA:  
GRATITUDE TO ALL BEINGS**

Many Indigenous communities practise the Thanksgiving Address, also known as "Words That Come Before All Else."

Unlike prayers that ask for things, this address appreciates the Earth, waters, plants, animals, and ancestors. It acknowledges interdependence, reminding speakers and listeners that gratitude isn't just emotional—it's ecological. A way of honouring the world that keeps us alive.



**BRAZIL: SAYING THANKS  
THROUGH MOVEMENT**

In Brazil, gratitude often shows up in the physical poetry of capoeira—a blend of martial arts, music, and dance.

Once a match ends, players bow, shake hands, or embrace—thanking each other, their teachers, and the tradition itself. It's an embodied appreciation: the body giving thanks for being challenged, stretched, and uplifted.

**YOUR GRATITUDE JOURNAL (FILL IT IN!)**

Take two minutes. Be spontaneous!

Today, I'm grateful for:

- 1. ....
- 2. ....
- 3. ....

A person who makes my life lighter:

.....

A person I have been meaning to thank but haven't:

.....

Something simple I take for granted, but shouldn't:

.....

One thing I'll appreciate more tomorrow:

.....

.....

A close-up photograph of a person's hands weaving a vibrant, multi-colored textile on a traditional wooden loom. The fabric features bold stripes of red, blue, and orange, with intricate geometric patterns in white and brown. A wooden shuttle is positioned on the red section of the fabric. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting an outdoor setting. The overall mood is warm and traditional.

# WEAVING MAGIC

HOW INDIA'S TIMELESS  
TEXTILES ARE THE SECRET TO  
YOUR WARMEST HOME



In a world obsessed with fast trends and cold, minimal spaces, how do you inject genuine personality and warmth into your home? The answer isn't in imported furniture or high-street decor—it's in the breathtaking beauty and rich history of India's own handloom and handcrafted textiles.





These fabrics—from the crisp geometry of *Ikat* to the tactile richness of a *Kantha* stitch—are having a magnificent renaissance in contemporary interiors. They are the soul of the room, effortlessly adding depth, comfort, and a vibrant layer of cultural heritage without compromising on modern style. It's time to move them out of the wardrobe and onto the display.

### **THE NEW HIERARCHY OF TEXTURE AND TONE**

The secret to integrating traditional textiles into a sleek, modern space is to prioritize **texture** and **tone** over overwhelming patterns. Begin with a calm, neutral base—think off-white walls, natural wood, or a solid, muted sofa (grey, beige, or olive). This creates a quiet canvas that allows your textiles to truly sing without shouting. For primary elements like curtains or upholstery, invest in handwoven fabrics like *Khadi* (hand-spun cotton) or *Tussar Silk*. Their slight imperfections, natural slubs, and soft drape introduce a refined, organic texture that machine-made fabrics simply cannot replicate.



## LAYERING FOR INSTANT DEPTH

True comfort comes from depth, and textiles are your best tool for layering. On a modern sofa, swap out matching cushion sets for an eclectic mix of textures and patterns. Layer cushions using contrasting feels: perhaps a raw **Kantha** throw with its visible running stitches, alongside a few cushions in shimmering **Mashru** silk, and one piece of graphic **Ajrakh** block print. The three-dimensional approach is what makes a room feel instantly curated and inviting. A great trick when mixing bold patterns is to keep the colours within the same family (e.g., all indigo blues and whites) or use a neutral texture (like a plain handwoven linen) to separate and ground the patterned pieces.



## REGIONAL ACCENTS, GLOBAL STYLE

India's regional crafts offer an encyclopaedia of design. Using these accents strategically allows you to infuse unique, meaningful character into every corner. A throw in the signature blurred edges of **Ikat** (from Odisha or Telangana) can drape over a sleek, mid-century chair, perfectly bridging ancient craft and modern graphic design. A vibrant **Block Print** table runner from Rajasthan or a set of geometric placemats are perfect for adding an artisanal pop to a modern dining table. For the bedroom, a lightweight **Kantha** quilt

from West Bengal, with its visible hand-stitched detailing, serves as a beautiful, cosy, year-round throw blanket that softens hard lines.

## BEYOND THE CUSHION: TEXTILE AS ART

The most exciting aspect of this textile renaissance involves creative, non-traditional applications that showcase their artistic value, moving them off the sofa and onto the walls. A heavily embroidered **Phulkari** panel from Punjab or a vintage **Bandhani** shawl can be artfully draped or tacked onto a wall to create a soft, textured focal point, offering a warm alternative to heavy canvas paintings. Consider giving a beautiful but worn Banarasi silk saree new life by having it backed and used as a luxurious, one-of-a-kind headboard panel. Even your floors can tell a story: swap the typical imported rug for a handwoven Indian **Dhurrie** or a pile carpet. These traditional floor coverings are durable, often reversible, and their subtle, geometric motifs add immediate grounding to the room. By choosing textiles that are handmade, naturally dyed, and rooted in regional craft, you are not just decorating; you are supporting artisan livelihoods and weaving the deep, beautiful history of India right into the fabric of your modern life.



# THE LANGUAGE OF THE LOOM

Reviving Karnataka's forgotten handlooms

BY NIKUNJ JOSHI & AVINASH BHAT





In a small weaving town in North Karnataka, the sound of the loom once echoed through narrow lanes from morning until dusk. Cotton threads stretched across wooden frames, moving in a quiet rhythm as artisans wove sarees meant for everyday life — for festivals, fieldwork, rituals and family gatherings. Each region carried its own motifs, colours and techniques, passed from one generation to the next like a language spoken through cloth.

But as power looms spread and synthetic fabrics replaced handwoven cotton, many of these traditions slowly faded from everyday use, though not from memory.

For textile researcher Dr Hemalatha Jain, that absence became the beginning of a journey, one that would take her across Karnataka's weaving clusters in search of traditions that were quietly disappearing.

After returning to India in 2014 following academic work abroad, Jain began travelling through villages and weaving communities across the state. What she discovered was both fascinating and unsettling. Artisans could vividly recall the sarees that had once defined their communities — the colours, the textures, the ways they were worn — yet the fabrics themselves had nearly vanished.

It felt, she says, like watching history fade in real time.

"When a loom goes silent, it is not just fabric that disappears; it is memory losing its language," Jain reflects. "I have seen pit looms closed, their wooden parts burned, and mourned almost like the loss of a loved one."

The spread of power looms, synthetic yarns and changing market demands had gradually pushed many traditional techniques out of everyday use. What remained were fragments of knowledge and fading recollections.

For Jain, that realisation became the starting point of Punarjeevana: an initiative dedicated to documenting, reviving and sustaining Karnataka's disappearing handloom traditions.

## FOLLOWING THE THREAD OF A FORGOTTEN SAREE

One of the earliest turning points in Jain's journey came during a visit to northern Karnataka.

There, she encountered an elderly woman who owned a 200-year-old Patteda Anchu saree — a tradition dating back to the 10th century. Characterised by distinctive checks across the body and a thick contrasting border, the saree was once widely worn by women working long hours in the fields. Its sturdy structure allowed both durability and ease of movement.

By the time Jain discovered it, however, the weave had nearly vanished.

"Listening to older women speak about fabrics they once wore every day but could no longer find felt like a quiet cultural emergency," she recalls.



Dr Hemalatha Jain

Determined to revive the weave, Jain began working with a single weaver to recreate the saree. The process was painstaking: studying old samples, reconstructing weaving techniques, and carefully adapting them for contemporary use.

Months of experimentation followed before the first prototypes emerged. Orders slowly began to arrive. Gradually, more weavers returned to the loom.

What began with one artisan quietly evolved into a small but determined revival movement.

### **BRINGING BACK LOST WEAVES**

Over the years, Punarjeevana has expanded its work to revive several traditional Karnataka sarees that had nearly disappeared from everyday wardrobes.

Among them are Patteda Anchu, known for its checks and distinctive double pallu; Gomi Teni, whose motifs draw inspiration from jowar seeds and which was traditionally worn during harvest festivals; the Hubli saree, once widely worn by married women in rural communities; and Aane Hejje, a historic cotton weave from the Bengaluru region.



Many of these textiles had been absent from wardrobes for decades.

“When a weave disappears, we lose not just cloth, but a way of seeing the world,” Jain reflects.

Reviving them required more than reconstructing old techniques. Jain worked closely with artisans to introduce subtle innovations, such as yarn twists that reduce creasing, stronger borders that eliminate the need for additional finishing, and colour palettes that resonate with contemporary wearers.

These adaptations allow ancient weaving traditions to find a place in modern wardrobes without losing their character.

### **THE DIFFICULT WORK OF REVIVAL**

From the outside, craft revival can appear romantic. In reality, it demands patience, persistence and trust.

Convincing weavers to begin again after previous buyers have left unpaid dues is often the first challenge. Breaking dependence on exploitative advance systems requires ensuring timely payments and fair working relationships. Working capital constraints, fluctuating raw material supply and uncertain markets add further complexity.

“Revival is not only about reviving technique,” Jain explains. “It is also about releasing artisans from financial cycles that quietly erode dignity.”



Behind every revived weave lies the slower work of rebuilding trust and creating systems that allow artisans to sustain their livelihoods.

### **REBUILDING A CRAFT ECOSYSTEM**

Reviving a weave also means restoring the ecosystem around it.

When Jain first visited the weaving town of Gajendragarh, only a handful of looms were still active. Many artisans had abandoned weaving altogether and taken up construction or other forms of labour.

Today, the Punarjeevana cluster works with dozens of weavers, alongside dyers and spinners who support the production process.

Sustainability remains central to the initiative — not only environmentally but also socially.

Punarjeevana encourages eco-friendly dyeing processes, refurbishes old looms instead of replacing them, and prioritises handcrafted production methods that preserve traditional skills.

For Jain, growth is measured less by scale and more by continuity.

“If the looms are running continuously, that itself is growth,” she says.

### **CRAFT TIME AND THE MEANING OF LUXURY**

In an age defined by speed and mass production, handlooms remind us of a different rhythm.

A saree woven by hand carries hours of labour, quiet concentration and inherited knowledge. Every inch reflects the rhythm of the loom and the skill of the artisan who worked on it. Every revived weave becomes a bridge between past and present, allowing traditions once confined to memory to re-enter everyday life.

Luxury, Jain believes, lies precisely in this investment of time.

“Luxury is not excess,” she says. “It is time made visible.”

### **GIVING THE PAST A FUTURE**

Interest in handloom is growing among younger consumers, many of whom discover craft through design, styling and storytelling rather than inherited



traditions. They seek garments that move easily between work, travel and celebration.

Punarjeevana responds by translating traditional fabrics into forms suited to contemporary lifestyles: lighter drapes, softer finishes and adaptable silhouettes. The aim is not to modernise handloom beyond recognition, but to allow its original practicality to re-emerge.

After all, these sarees were once designed for everyday life.

Today, Punarjeevana continues to work with weaving clusters across Karnataka while exploring new possibilities, from contemporary garments to experiments with recycled yarns and indigenous dyeing systems.


Yet the larger ambition remains unchanged.

“Punarjeevana is not about bringing the past back,” Jain says. “It is about giving it a future.”

And somewhere in villages where the looms had once fallen silent, the threads are moving again.



# The Quiet Crisis



## Have We Stopped Listening?

BY R. VIMALA

It is said that God gave us one mouth and two ears so we might listen twice as much as we speak. It's a simple piece of wisdom yet somewhere along the way, we seem to have collectively forgotten it.

Listening is rapidly becoming a lost art along with genuine human connections. Go through your last few conversations in your mind. Chances are, they ended before they even truly began. You start to share something personal, something close to your heart and before you can finish the first sentence, the other person jumps in with, "Oh, I know exactly what you mean!", "That happened to me too, only worse!", "You should just do X, Y, and Z."

And soon enough, your words are no longer yours. You stop mid-sentence, a half-smile on your face, the initial warmth draining away. You realize they weren't actually listening to you, they were simply waiting to speak. They weren't processing your words; they were composing their reply. This isn't just being rude; it's a crisis of connection.

This epidemic of inattentiveness seems to be catching on quickly everywhere. At times in offices, a colleague may approach a manager to discuss an issue, but before he or she can speak or explain the situation, they are interrupted by the manager with a pre-packaged solution that may just not address the core problem. The colleague walks away feeling unheard and frustrated or hurt.

At home, partners have monologues or talk at each other instead of talking with each other, escalating small disagreements into full-blown arguments. So many misunderstandings and so many frictions in relationships begin not from words said but from words never truly listened to.

And then there is the rush to be right. We even see it on game shows with contestants eager to prove themselves, buzzing in on the answer button too soon, missing the answer and losing only because they never truly listened to the question's end.

We seem to be doing this constantly in life. We are simply rushing, rushing to respond, to conclude, to be right, to get our point across and in that rush, we miss the crucial the wisdom that often lies in holding back our words just to listen.

Listening, I have come to realize, is not just a polite pause between your own sentences. It's a profound, active gesture.

It's an act of respect that says, "You matter enough for me to step outside myself and my world to be with you in your world for a moment."

In our fast-paced, opinion-driven world, this kind of true listening has become rare. And as it fades, so does genuine connection.

Imagine if we all agreed to slow down, hold back our response for a moment longer and truly listen , not to reply, not to debate, but simply to understand. Perhaps fewer hearts would ache from the burden of being unheard because sometimes, what a person needs most is not advice, not a solution, and certainly not an interruption. All they need is a willing, quiet ear.

So just sit back and think , do you catch yourself always rushing to speak, say something, instead of consciously listening ?





In reality listening is so basic, that we forget that it is also a skill and yet, most of us imagine ourselves far better listeners than we are.

How many of us have sat across with someone to pour out our feelings only to notice their eyes flicking to their phone, their posture drifting away, their attention somewhere else?

Nothing feels worse than being unheard by those we count on for understanding.

To truly listen is more than just hearing words. In fact, listening is so central, so woven into human existence, that when it's missing, we notice its absence more than its presence. At times, instead of learning to manage our own emotionality to handle difficult conversations, we avoid them altogether. Paradoxically, these days we may have more ways to communicate but have lesser time for conversation which is like a dance of roles. To share a feeling, there must be one willing to talk and another open to hear.

Today, our digital lives are also expressions of this yearning. A photo or status, posted to social media, is a thread cast into the digital sea, hoping for others to bear witness. So when we see our stories met with silence, we feel the ache of being invisible, just as we would be if we were ignored in person.

Whether we speak face-to-face or through electronic communication, we are still giving voice to our need to be heard. Even what we call "reassurance" is not listening because to be listened to is the way we discover ourselves as understandable, even acceptable.

We therefore deeply value those who listen, sometimes even love them because when they give us their attention, we feel momentarily whole.

Sometimes our conversations don't even rise to the level of dialogue they are monologues punctuated by silence. When we understand the healing force of true listening, we can become brave enough to hear what makes us uncomfortable.

But when we take the time to feel the emotion beneath another's words to hear the pain beneath anger, the resentment behind avoidance, the vulnerability inside impatience we give ourselves



the power to soothe the bitterness that probably divides us.

Being heard is a deep need which makes us feel taken seriously, expressed, validated, acknowledged, appreciated, cared for and connected to others. The receptive listener helps us clarify what we think and feel, nourishing our experience of self. By confirming what is understandable in us, the listener affirms our shared humanity.

When we are not listened to, we feel cut off, unappreciated, alone. No number of “likes,” hearts, or emojis will ever nourish you as fully as one moment of undivided listening. Being listened to is like food and drink to the heart.

The seeds of such attentive listening are sown in our childhood. Parents who listen make their children feel worthwhile and appreciated and help them build a secure self. Such children develop their own unique talents and ideals to approach relationships with confidence. Most of us can imagine a mother

with smiling eyes listening enthusiastically to a child eagerly describing some triumph or a father comforting a sad-faced toddler crying over some minor tragedy. And we also know how bad it feels to watch a parent reduce a child to tears of humiliation for making a mistake. How early or how profoundly the quality of listening begins to shape their character may not be obvious but they do have an impact a child’s psyche.

Even infants thrive on attentive listening. A baby’s cries and smiles are calls to be heard and parental attunement is social nourishment. Parents constantly adjust, intuitively listening, as the child’s needs and skills grow. A child who has been truly listened to finds it natural to seek help; one who has not may become quiet and seek solace in silence instead of support.

We do grow out of childhood, but not out of this need to be taken seriously, to have our feelings honoured and be heard. The ability to understand not only what is said, but what is felt is empathy and listening with attention can instil a sense of belonging by removing thoughts of being isolated. So whenever someone approaches us to share their thoughts we can offer our complete attention by keeping away distractions and holding back judgments.

The power to heal, inspire, and uplift lives is there in every ear that chooses to listen. Let’s begin to listen not just with our ears, but with our hearts.



R. Vimala, IAS, Resident Commissioner Maharashtra  
Compassionate Civil Servant and PhD Scholar at IIT Bombay

# DECORATE

IDEAS & INSPIRATION ON HOW TO MAKE  
YOUR HOME A BEAUTIFUL SANCTUARY



# THE LIVING ROOM PALETTE

THE RIGHT COLOUR SCHEME CONTROLS LIGHT, FLATTERS FURNITURE AND INFLUENCES MOOD.

Interior design enthusiast  
**Chetna Srinivasan** picks seven  
that feel timeless, international  
and deeply liveable.

# 01 WARM BEIGE & WALNUT

## MOOD

Sophisticated calm

## BEST FOR

Apartments with moderate natural light

This combination is urban gold. Pair it with walnut wood, linen upholstery and brass accents.

## DESIGN TIP

Add one textured rug in a slightly deeper taupe to prevent the room from feeling flat.

### RULE OF THREE

No matter which palette you choose:

1. Pick one dominant colour (60%).
2. One supporting colour (30%).
3. One accent (10%).

And never rely on overhead lighting alone. Colour comes alive under layered lamps — the true secret of a beautiful living room.



# 02 DEEP TEAL & BURNISHED BRASS

## MOOD

Dramatic elegance

## BEST FOR

Homes that entertain often

Teal has depth without heaviness. It flatters Indian skin tones beautifully under warm lighting. Pair it with muted gold, velvet cushions, and dark wood.

## DESIGN TIP

Paint just one accent wall if the room is compact. Let lighting do the rest.



# 03

## TERRACOTTA & CREAM

### MOOD

Earthy warmth

### BEST FOR

Sunlit living rooms

Terracotta echoes Indian soil and Mediterranean aesthetic alike. Balance it with cream sofas and cane furniture.

### DESIGN TIP

Add indoor plants — green against terracotta is a timeless pairing.



# 04 OLIVE GREEN & NATURAL TEXTURES



## MOOD

Restful, organic

## BEST FOR

Homes overlooking greenery

Olive is subtler than emerald, warmer than sage. It reduces visual fatigue — especially important in city homes surrounded by concrete.

## DESIGN TIP

Layer with jute rugs, woven baskets, off-white curtains and soft lighting.



# 05 CHARCOAL & SOFT BLUSH

## MOOD

Urban chic

## BEST FOR

High-ceiling or well-lit rooms

Charcoal creates instant drama. But soften it with muted blush cushions, art or throws.

## DESIGN TIP

Use warm lamps — cool white light will make charcoal look harsh.



# 06 IVORY & BLACK

## MOOD

Gallery-like clarity

## BEST FOR

Art lovers

Ivory walls, black frames, neutral furniture. — and one deliberate colour (mustard, cobalt, rust) introduced through art or upholstery.

## DESIGN TIP

Avoid over-accessorising. Let negative space breathe.



# 07 DUSTY BLUE & SAND

## MOOD

Coastal serenity

## BEST FOR

Smaller living rooms

Dusty blue cools without freezing the space. Sand and beige warm it back up. It reflects light gently — excellent for compact urban flats.

## DESIGN TIP

Add sheer curtains to amplify daylight.

# SMALL SPACE, BIG STYLE

How to Make the Most  
of a Compact Kitchen

A compact kitchen doesn't have to feel cramped or compromised. With a few smart tweaks and bold choices, you can transform it into an efficient, cheerful and genuinely enjoyable space to cook in. Here are simple ideas that make a big difference.





# 01

### **ADD A MINI ISLAND (YES, REALLY)**

Even in a tiny kitchen, a slim, movable island can bring extra prep space and storage. Think of a narrow butcher's block, a wheeled trolley, or a foldable peninsula. It can double up as a breakfast perch or a serving counter when guests drop in.



# 02

### **LET IN SOME REAL LIGHT**

Natural light instantly opens up small spaces. If possible, position a window above the sink or add a skylight to brighten the work zone. If structural changes aren't feasible, use light-reflective tiles or glossy backsplashes to bounce whatever light you have.



# 03

## DON'T BE AFRAID OF DRAMA

Bold colours can energise a small kitchen. Teal cabinets, a striking feature wall, patterned tiles—anything that adds personality without feeling cluttered. If you're nervous, keep the base neutral and play with accents.

# 04

## MAXIMISE STORAGE— EVERY INCH COUNTS

Run cabinets all the way to the ceiling. Use pull-outs, corner units, and slim drawers for spices and baking trays. Open shelves above prep counters are great for everyday crockery, freeing up closed cabinets for bulky items.

# 05

## THINK VERTICAL, NOT JUST HORIZONTAL

Tiny kitchens benefit immensely from tall solutions: high hooks for mugs, magnetic knife strips, wall-mounted rails, or hanging baskets for fruit. Buy tall containers instead of wide ones.





# 07



# 06

## **SMART APPLIANCES, SMART CHOICES**

Compact dishwashers, built-in microwave/oven combos, and under-counter fridges reduce clutter and free up valuable surfaces. If an appliance doesn't serve you weekly, skip it.

## **CHOOSE MULTI-TASKING FURNITURE**

Fold-down tables, stackable stools, and nested storage containers make everyday movement easier. A collapsible worktop or ironing board can be a game-changer in a studio flat.

# 08

## KEEP IT AIRY AND BRIGHT

Glass cabinet fronts, open shelving, and under-cabinet lighting create a sense of visual space. Limit visible objects: a small kitchen looks instantly larger when surfaces are clear. A white colour scheme gives a sense of space.



# 09

## STYLE IT WITH INTENTION

Add a runner, a plant, or framed art. Even tiny spaces deserve character. Just avoid anything that obstructs movement or collects dust.







Spring Colour of the Year

# SOFT MARIGOLD

Spring isn't shy. It arrives with temple flowers, morning markets, turmeric-stained fingers, and that gentle golden light just before summer toughens everything up.

This year's spring colour feels like a softened marigold. A sun-warmed yellow with calm in it.

#### IT SHOWS UP QUIETLY

- In handloom saris that catch afternoon light
- In lime-washed walls of old homes
- In pottery, table linen, and cotton kurtas left to dry in courtyards

Unlike winter neutrals, this shade cheerful without being decorative, grounding without being heavy.

In Indian homes, soft marigold works beautifully because it plays well with what we already have—dark wood, brass accents, terracotta, and plants that refuse to behave. It lifts a space, flatters skin tones, and still feels lived-in.

Think of it as sunlight you can keep indoors.

#### HOW TO USE IT

- One statement cushion or throw
- A ceramic bowl or tray that catches the eye
- Dupattas, stoles, or summer cottons

# MOOD MAKERS

## SEVEN LAMPS THAT BREAK THE RULES

Urban homes today are less about matching sets and more about mood. Lighting is no longer background utility; it is sculpture, story, theatre.

Here are seven lamps that feel unexpected, design-forward, and quietly powerful.



# 01

## THE MUSHROOM LAMP (RETRO REVIVAL)

### BEST SUITED FOR

Bedroom corners, stylish work desks, teen rooms, boutique Airbnbs.

Soft, rounded, slightly playful — the mushroom lamp diffuses light in the gentlest way. Its dome creates a glow without glare.

It feels nostalgic without being kitsch.

### PLACEMENT IDEA

Pair with low seating and textured rugs for a relaxed, lounge-like feel.

### FUN FACT

Originally popular in the 1960s–70s, mushroom lamps are back because they produce indirect light — easier on the eyes in screen-heavy homes.



## 02 THE LIBRARY LAMP (BANKER'S LAMP)

### BEST SUITED FOR

Home offices, study desks, reading rooms.

That iconic green glass shade and brass base instantly evoke old libraries and quiet scholarship.

In contemporary homes, it introduces gravitas.

### PLACEMENT IDEA

Style on a dark wood desk with stacked hardcovers and a fountain pen. It transforms a laptop desk into a thinking space.

### FUN FACT

These lamps became popular in early 20th-century American banks — hence the name.

## 03 THE HIMALAYAN SALT LAMP

### BEST SUITED FOR

Bedrooms, meditation spaces, reading corners.

Its blush-pink glow feels intimate and grounding.

While the wellness claims are debated, what is undeniable is its atmosphere — it softens even the most clinical modern interiors.

### PLACEMENT IDEA

Use it in rooms with white walls and sharp lines. The contrast is beautiful.





# 04

## THE PAPER LANTERN (MODERN JAPANDI)

### BEST SUITED FOR

Living rooms, yoga spaces, minimal homes.

Lightweight, cloud-like and poetic, paper lantern lamps diffuse light beautifully.

They work especially well in smaller urban flats because they add presence without visual heaviness.

### PLACEMENT IDEA

Hang one low in a quiet corner. Let it float like a moon.

# 05

## THE INDUSTRIAL CLAMP LAMP

### BEST SUITED FOR

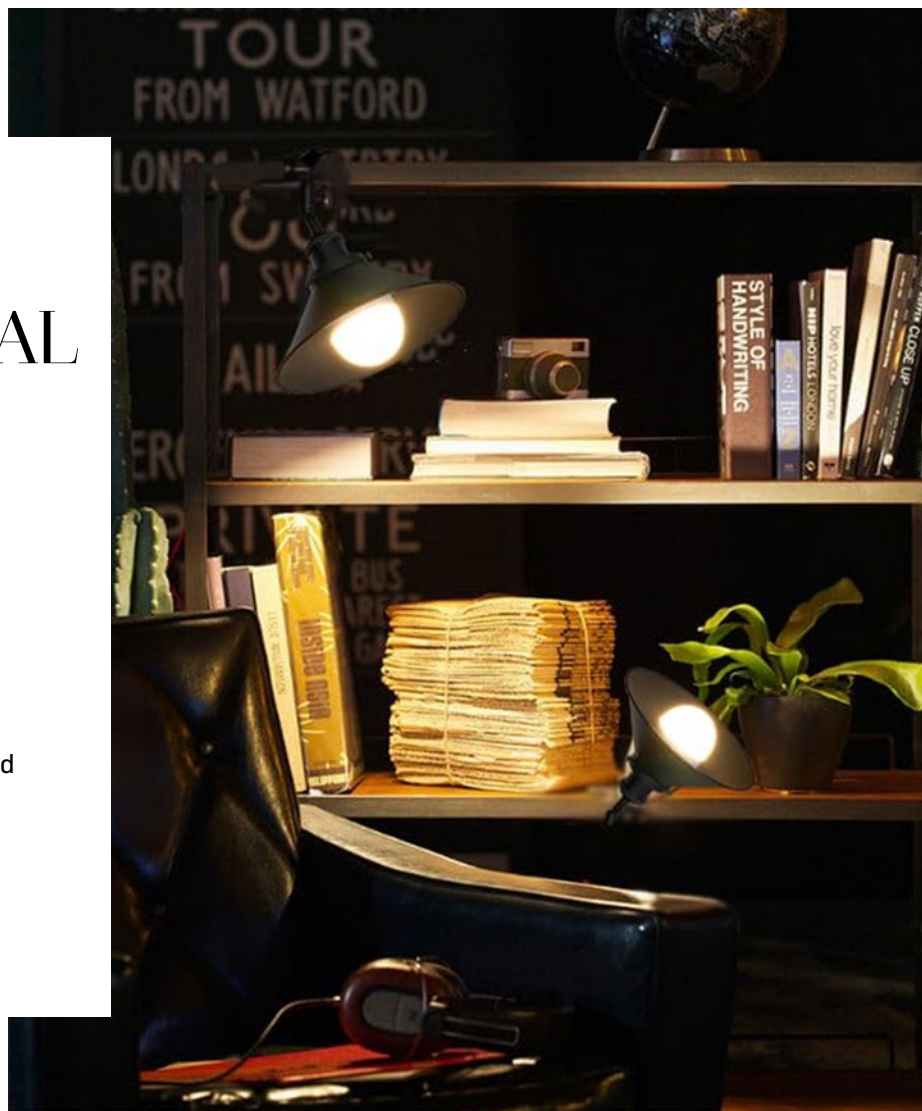
Bookshelves, kitchen counters, art studios, rental homes.

Practical, movable, slightly raw.

Clamp lamps are wonderful for renters because they require no drilling. Clip and glow.

### PLACEMENT IDEA

Attach one to a bookshelf and angle it toward a favourite art piece. Instant gallery lighting.



# 06

## THE SCULPTURAL LED LIGHT BAR

### BEST SUITED FOR

Media rooms, modern living spaces, hallway accents.

These are slim, often vertical light tubes that look like contemporary art installations.

They emit ambient, indirect light — perfect for evening entertaining.

### PLACEMENT IDEA

Lean one casually against a wall behind a sofa. It feels editorial, almost gallery-like.



# 07

## THE PORTABLE RECHARGEABLE LAMP

### BEST SUITED FOR

Dining tables, balconies, terraces, power-cut moments.

Cordless lamps are the new luxury.

They allow you to carry ambience from the living room to the balcony without hunting for sockets — a blessing in Indian homes where plug points dictate layout.

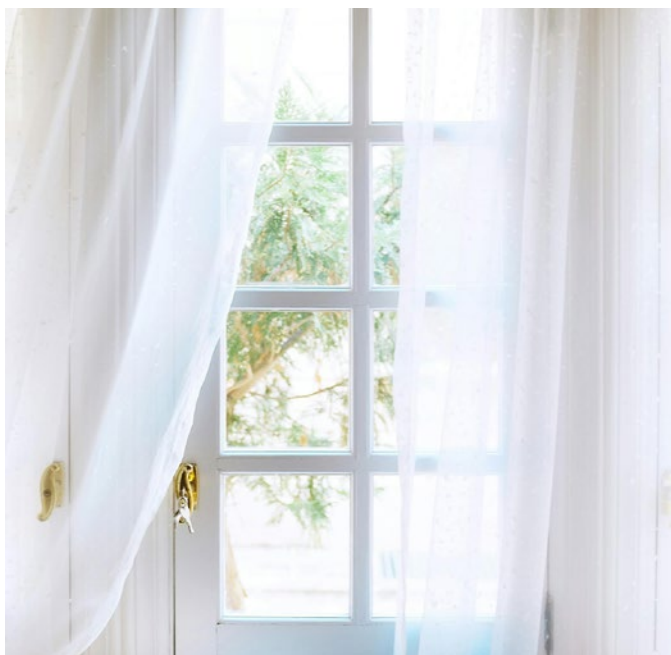
### PLACEMENT IDEA

Use one as a centrepiece during dinner parties. Low light = longer conversations.

HOME IN BLOOM



# OPEN HOUSE



You walk in and it just feels... lighter.

Nothing dramatic has changed. No big makeover, no obvious “spring refresh.” But the room breathes a little more. Light travels further. Things aren’t fighting for attention. Somewhere along the way, the house has relaxed.

That’s the shift this Spring. Homes are borrowing from gardens, not copying them. You’ll see leaves, yes—but softened. Florals too—but handled with restraint. And plenty of green, not as a statement colour, but as something that quietly belongs.

Think of this as stepping into a home that’s been left open to the season. Windows ajar. Curtains moving. Plants doing their thing. Everything else simply falling into place.



# CUSHIONS THAT FEEL GROWN, NOT BOUGHT



Floral cushions this season don't announce themselves. They settle in.

**THINK:**

- oversized blooms blurred into painterly strokes
- leafy outlines stitched, not printed
- muted botanicals on linen, cotton, khadi

The trend has shifted away from matchy sets. Instead, cushions are mixed the way plants grow—unevenly, instinctively. A single bold floral sits beside a striped neutral. A leafy motif is balanced with solid colour.

Eco-friendly fabrics are no longer niche here. Handloom cottons, recycled blends, and natural dyes bring depth that synthetic prints simply can't fake. These cushions age well. They crease, soften, and improve with use.

They don't decorate the sofa.

They make it feel inhabited.



# BOTANICAL TABLEWARE FOR EVERYDAY USE

Spring tables are less about occasions and more about frequency. Plates you reach for on a Tuesday. Bowls that feel good in the hand.

Botanical tableware this year draws from nature without copying it:

- fern impressions pressed into clay
- hand-painted leaves that don't match perfectly
- glazes that pool like rainwater

There's a move towards stoneware and ceramics made in small batches—pieces that accept irregularity as character. Nothing too glossy. Nothing too precious.

Layering is key. A leafy side plate over a neutral charger. A simple white bowl next to a patterned mug. The result feels relaxed, almost accidental, but deeply considered.

This is tableware that invites lingering—second helpings, slower meals, conversations that don't rush.



# PLANTERS AS LIVING OBJECTS



Plants are much more than accessories, especially in this season of freshness. Housed in beautiful planters, they are participants in your vibe.

Spring's favourites lean tactile and earthy:

- terracotta left unsealed
- rough ceramic with visible hand marks
- planters woven from natural fibres or recycled materials

Shapes are generous. Rounded. Grounded. Nothing top-heavy or ornate. The focus is on stability and longevity—planters that support growth rather than compete with it.

Grouped together, they create quiet pauses within a room. Singularly placed, they become punctuation. A reminder to look up, look down, notice something alive.

Sustainability shows up here in restraint—buying fewer planters, choosing better ones, letting plants grow into their space instead of constantly being upgraded.



# LAMPS THAT BORROW FROM LEAVES AND LIGHT



Lighting this spring feels almost botanical in spirit.

Lamps take cues from nature without mimicry:

- shades that curve like petals
- bases inspired by stems and branches
- perforated surfaces that scatter light like foliage

Materials are softer too—paper, fabric, wood, ceramic. The aim isn't drama, but glow. Light that sits low, warms corners, and makes evenings feel unhurried.

Placed beside plants or near windows, these lamps blur the line between indoors and out. By day, they read as sculptural objects. By night, they change the mood of the entire room.

They don't dominate.

They respond.



# BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER



What ties these elements together is the thought that change is in the air. Fresh possibilities, ideas are welcome in this space.

Homes in bloom this spring make space for things to breathe, for materials to show their origins, for objects to feel chosen rather than collected.

The result is a house that feels gently awake.

Ready for life.

A home that feels like spring!



# INDULGE

A CORNUCOPIA OF LIGHT & LOVELY FLAVOURS,  
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# SPRING ON A PLATE

These six salads are built around easily available ingredients and simple techniques, allowing the produce to shine. Each recipe is designed to be light on the stomach, visually pleasing on the plate, and flexible enough for everyday meals or relaxed entertaining.

## SIMPLE TIPS FOR SUPERB SALADS

- Use two colours max, three at most
- Leave negative space on the plate
- Toss gently—not everything needs to touch
- Finish with fresh herbs, never dried
- Dress lightly; glossy, not soggy

### PEA, MINT & FETA SPRING SALAD

**Ingredients:** 1 cup green peas (fresh or frozen), blanched and cooled; ½ cup feta, lightly crumbled; a small handful of fresh mint leaves, torn; zest and juice of ½ lemon; 1–2 teaspoons olive oil; salt and cracked black pepper to taste.

**Method:** Place the peas in a bowl and toss with lemon juice, zest and olive oil. Add feta and mint, folding gently so the peas remain intact. Season lightly with salt and finish with black pepper. Serve immediately or chilled.



### STRAWBERRY, ROCKET & ALMOND SALAD

**Ingredients:** 2 cups rocket leaves; 1 cup fresh strawberries, hulled and sliced; 2 tablespoons almonds, lightly toasted and roughly chopped; 1 tablespoon olive oil; 1 teaspoon balsamic vinegar or lemon juice; salt to taste.

**Method:** In a large bowl, combine rocket and strawberries. Drizzle with olive oil and vinegar or lemon juice. Toss gently, add almonds and a light sprinkle of salt. Serve at once to keep the leaves crisp and the fruit fresh.

### CUCUMBER, RADISH & YOGURT SALAD

**Ingredients:** 1 cup thick yogurt; 1 large cucumber, thinly sliced; 6–8 radishes, shaved; 1 teaspoon olive oil; salt to taste; fresh dill or coriander for garnish.

**Method:** Whisk the yogurt with olive oil and salt until smooth. Spread onto a serving plate or shallow bowl. Arrange cucumber and radish over the yogurt. Finish with herbs and chill for 10–15 minutes before serving.





### **CORN, AVOCADO & LIME SALAD**

**Ingredients:** 1½ cups sweet corn kernels, steamed or lightly grilled; 1 ripe avocado, cubed; juice and zest of 1 lime; 1 tablespoon olive oil; salt to taste; a pinch of chilli flakes (optional).

**Method:** In a bowl, combine corn with lime juice, zest, olive oil and salt. Gently fold in the avocado just before serving. Sprinkle with chilli flakes if using and serve fresh.

### **ORANGE, CARROT & OLIVE OIL SALAD**

**Ingredients:** 2 oranges, peeled and sliced; 1 large carrot, shaved into ribbons; 1 tablespoon olive oil; sea salt to taste; fennel fronds or parsley (optional).

**Method:** Layer orange slices and carrot ribbons on a flat serving plate. Drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle lightly with sea salt. Garnish with herbs if desired and serve immediately.



### **SPINACH, MUSHROOM & LEMON SALAD**

**Ingredients:** 2 cups baby spinach; 1 cup button mushrooms, thinly sliced; juice of ½ lemon; 1 tablespoon olive oil; salt and cracked black pepper to taste; parmesan shavings (optional).

**Method:** Toss mushrooms with lemon juice, olive oil, salt and pepper. Combine with spinach just before serving. Finish with parmesan if using and serve fresh.



*M M Javed*  
Men's Designer

YOUR LUXURY WEAR SPECIALIST

# CREAMY COMFORT

Small potatoes, slow-simmered in cream until glossy, indulgent and impossible to resist.

## WHAT YOU NEED

- 2 cups baby potatoes, scrubbed
- 1 cup fresh cream
- 2 garlic cloves, lightly crushed
- 1 tbsp butter
- ½ tsp salt (or to taste)
- ¼ tsp freshly ground black pepper
- A tiny pinch of nutmeg
- 1 tbsp finely chopped parsley or chives

## WHAT YOU DO

### 1. Parboil the potatoes.

Place potatoes in salted water and boil until just tender — about 12–15 minutes. They should hold their shape. Drain and set aside.

### 2. Start the base.

In a wide pan, melt butter over low heat. Add crushed garlic and let it perfume the butter for 30 seconds — do not brown.

### 3. Add the cream.

Pour in the cream. Add salt, pepper and nutmeg. Let it come to a gentle simmer.

### 4. Coat and cook.

Add the drained potatoes. Simmer uncovered on low heat for 8–10 minutes, turning occasionally, until the cream thickens and glossily coats the potatoes.

### 5. Finish.

Remove garlic if you like. Scatter with fresh herbs. Serve warm.

The sauce will thicken further as it cools — rich but not heavy.

Baby potatoes hold their structure beautifully and have thinner skins, which means no peeling and no breaking apart in the cream. Their natural starch helps thicken the sauce gently, creating that velvety coating without any added flour.

## MAKE THEM YUMMIER

- Add a spoon of grated Parmesan at the end for a deeper savoury note.
- Swap parsley for fresh dill.
- Stir in a teaspoon of Dijon mustard for subtle sharpness.
- Finish with a drizzle of good olive oil just before serving.

## MAKE THEM LIGHTER (OR RICHER)

Lighter: Replace ¼ cup cream with milk and simmer a little longer.

Richer: Add 1 tbsp cream cheese while simmering for extra body.





# Grazing Glory

How to create a table that spills over with colour, crunch and conversation.

A long table. Linen slightly ruffled. Candles flickering. And food—layered, lounging, unapologetically generous.

## 01

### START WITH THE STARS

- Creamy brie, just soft enough to surrender
- A sharp aged cheddar, cut into rustic shards
- Smoked gouda, nutty and confident
- Spiced paneer cubes rolled in cracked pepper
- Whipped feta with olive oil and chilli flakes

Soft beside firm. Mild beside bold.

## 02

### THE INDIAN TOUCH

- Mini khari biscuits tucked between crackers
- Roasted makhana with sea salt
- Aloo tikki sliders in brioche
- Papdi with yoghurt and tamarind (assemble last minute)
- Saffron rabri shots in tiny glasses
- Stuffed dates with pistachio slivers

Unexpected. Playful.

# 03

## THE COLOUR DRAMA

- Burgundy grapes tumbling freely
- Ruby pomegranate pearls scattered like confetti
- Emerald olives gleaming in olive oil
- Blush guava slices
- Golden honeycomb dripping lazily
- Fresh figs, split open like secrets

If it looks abundant, you're doing it right.

# 04

## CRUNCH & CONTRAST

- Rosemary crackers
- Toasted sourdough fingers
- Seeded lavash shards
- Candied walnuts
- Roasted almonds
- Dark chocolate squares broken unevenly

Glossy beside crumbly. Creamy against crisp.







# 05

## THE DIPS THAT DISAPPEAR QUICK

- Hummus swirled with chilli oil
- Tangy pudina chutney
- Roasted red pepper dip
- Guacamole with lime and green chilli
- Honey with a pinch of flaky salt

Expect double-dipping.

# 06

## SWEET LITTLE SURPRISES

- Chocolate covered strawberries
- Bite-sized brownies
- Turkish delight cubes
- Anjeer and apricots
- Mini laddoos rolled in coconut

Sweetness hiding between savoury bites.

# 07

## THE RULES

- Scatter, don't line up.
- Fill the gaps. Grapes are your best friend.
- Layer heights—stack boards, lift bowls.
- Let it spill slightly. Perfection is boring.

And when the evening ends, what remains is not just crumbs—but the warm memory of having shared something beautiful.

# PRETTY IN PINK

The Royal Cake That Checks All The Boxes



# T

he Battenberg — with its neat pink and yellow squares — looks like it took hours of architectural precision. In truth, it is simply clever layering and a bit of patience.

This simple version is finished with a light vanilla buttercream coating — easy to source, easy to spread, and perfect for home bakers who want elegance without the extra hunt for specialty ingredients.

## WHAT YOU NEED

(Serves 4.)

### FOR THE SPONGE

- ½ cup unsalted butter, softened
- ½ cup caster sugar
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 eggs
- ½ tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp almond essence
- 2 tbsp milk
- A few drops pink food colour

### FOR ASSEMBLING

- 2 tbsp apricot jam  
(or orange marmalade)

### FOR THE VANILLA BUTTERCREAM FINISH

- ½ cup unsalted butter, softened
- 1 cup icing sugar
- ½ tsp vanilla essence
- 1–2 tsp milk

## WHAT YOU DO

### 1. Prepare the tin

Line a small loaf tin (about 6 x 3 inches). Create a divider down the centre using folded foil so you have two long sections.



### 2. Make the batter

Cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Gently fold in flour and baking powder. Stir in almond essence and milk.



### 3. Colour and fill

Divide the batter into two bowls. Tint one portion pink. Spoon each batter into its own section of the tin and level gently.

### 4. Bake

Bake at 170°C for 25–30 minutes or until a skewer comes out clean. Cool completely before handling.



### 5. Trim and slice

Cut each sponge lengthwise into two equal strips. You should have four long bars — two pink, two yellow. Trim edges neatly for clean lines.



### 6. Build the pattern

Warm the jam slightly. Brush it along the sides and arrange the strips in a checkerboard pattern: pink beside yellow on the bottom, alternating on top. Press gently to secure.



### 7. Make the buttercream

Beat butter until smooth. Gradually add icing sugar. Mix in vanilla and enough milk to create a soft, spreadable consistency.



### 8. Finish the cake

Spread a thin, even layer of buttercream all over the assembled cake, smoothing the sides and top. Chill for 20 minutes to firm up before slicing.



### 9. Slice and serve

Use a sharp knife, wiping it clean between cuts, to reveal those satisfying squares.



## SIDEBAR: A ROYAL BEGINNING

The Battenberg cake dates back to 1884, created to mark the wedding of Princess Victoria (granddaughter of Queen Victoria) to Prince Louis of Battenberg. The four squares are said to symbolise the four Battenberg princes — a confectionery tribute to a royal alliance.

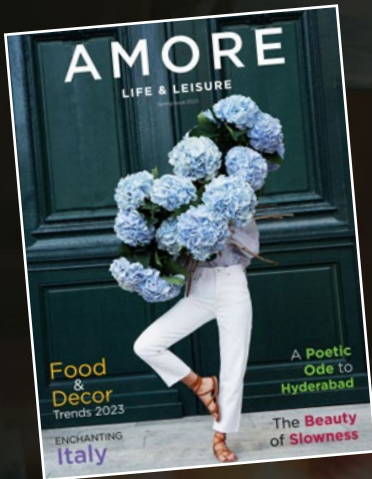
It quickly became a British tea-table favourite, admired for its geometric charm.

## THE CLASSIC VERSION

Traditionally, this cake is wrapped in a layer of marzipan (almond paste), which adds a subtle nutty sweetness and a smooth outer finish. Our buttercream coating offers a simpler, equally elegant alternative — softer, lighter, and far easier to assemble at home.

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# DELIGHT

SAY YES TO LIFE'S SIMPLE PLEASURES







A Scent Note Having a Moment

# NEROLI

# N



eroli, distilled from orange blossoms, is having a quiet moment—especially in warm climates like ours. It smells clean without being sharp, floral without turning sweet. There's sunlight in it, but also shade.

Neroli carries echoes of white flowers strung for morning puja, of citrus peels drying on windowsills, of gardens that wake up before the day gets loud. It's fresh, yes—but with softness at its core.

What's drawing people back to neroli is its versatility. It works in heat. It sits close to the skin. It feels equally right in a linen kurta or a cotton sari, on bare wrists or freshly washed hair. More importantly, it doesn't compete—it calms.

## **THIS SPRING, NEROLI IS TURNING UP EVERYWHERE**

In skin scents, room sprays, bath oils, even gentle laundry mists. It's a lovely background presence—the kind you notice only when it's gone.

## **ORIGIN**


In 17th Century Italy, the Princess of Nerola first obtained Neroli oil from the flowers of the bitter orange tree, which also produces the orange blossom scent. It is now extracted via a different process which results in a slightly more citrus and bitter scent compared to the sweeter scent of orange blossom.



# BEAUTY GOES GREEN

Small switches. Big glow.





**This spring, let your beauty routine breathe a little. Fewer products. Better choices. And skin—and hair—that quietly thank you for it.**

#### **PICK YOUR OILS**

Pick one plant-based product you'll use every single day—your cleanser or moisturiser.

Look for moisturisers using olive, rosehip, or calendula oil as base. They're light and perfect for spring skin. If your skin feels calmer by week two, you're on the right track.

#### **TONER OR MIST?**

Whatever you use, make sure it isn't alcohol-heavy.

A fine rose water mist does more with less—hydrates, calms, refreshes, and doubles as a midday skin reset. Use it:

- after cleansing
- before serum
- over makeup
- when the AC gets aggressive

One product, four jobs. That's green beauty math.

#### **THE MANE THING**

Make hair oiling a pre-wash ritual.

Choose lightweight oils (argan, jojoba, almond) and use them once a week, not daily. Massage gently, leave it on for an hour, wash, done. Your hair will look shinier, behave better, and ask for fewer styling products.

Bonus: Fewer products = greener routine.

#### **TRY THE MULTITASKERS**

- Rose water = toner + mist + makeup refresher
- Face oil = serum + night treatment
- Hair oil = scalp care + frizz control

#### **SPRING CLEAN YOUR BEAUTY SHELF**

Check expiry dates. Half-used bottles. Products you don't enjoy using.

A tighter edit means less waste and more intention. And yes, it also makes your bathroom look like a luxury hotel—which is never a bad thing.



# WRAP IT UP

## Why Spring Belongs to the Floral Scarf

Spring asks for one small, thoughtful addition to your wardrobe—and nothing does the job better than a floral scarf.

This season's florals are watercolour-soft, slightly nostalgic, the kind that feel like they've been found in a sunlit boutique or borrowed from someone who dresses well without thinking too much about it. Think cotton-silk blends, hand-block prints, and botanicals that feel gentle.

The beauty of a floral scarf is its flexibility. On busy mornings, knot it loosely around your neck over a plain linen top—instant polish, zero effort. Feeling minimal? Loop it through your bag handle and let it do the talking. On days when your hair has a mind of its own, tie it softly at the crown or low at the nape. Problem solved, mood lifted.

What makes scarves especially perfect for spring is how practical they are for Indian weather. Light enough for warmth without weight, colourful without being overwhelming. And they work just as well with kurtas and cotton dresses as they do with shirts, jeans, and international silhouettes.

Most importantly, a scarf is the easiest way to refresh what you already own. One piece, worn five ways, can change the feel of an entire outfit. So this spring, let florals bloom quietly. Around your neck.



# LITTLE JOYS

SPRING, IN ITS SOFTEST FORM



Spring shows up in small ways.

- Journal jottings filled with fresh hope.
- Green shoots breaking soil.
- A bowl of warm matcha, whisked without hurry.

This season, luxury lies in these little joys.

## JOURNALS

There's something deeply spring-like about a fresh notebook. Lists. Half-formed thoughts. Doodles.

Keep a journal by your bed or near a window. Write in the mornings, or just before sleep. Five lines are enough.

## CANDLES

Spring candles are lighter, airier—soft florals, herbs, clean woods. Light one at dusk. Let the day taper gently.

## SEEDS

Basil on a windowsill. Coriander in a balcony pot. Flowers you're not entirely sure will bloom—but might.

Seed kits make the process approachable, even for beginners. And there's something grounding about checking on new growth every morning, coffee in hand.

## MATCHA SETS

Matcha asks for your attention. Measure. Whisk. Pause.

Unlike coffee, it doesn't want to be rushed. A matcha set—ceramic bowl, bamboo whisk, simple spoon—turns a drink into a ritual. One that fits beautifully into spring's slower rhythm.



# THINGS *that* FEEL *like* SPRING





### **THE SCENT OF FRESHLY CUT GRASS**

That sharp-green smell that drifts in through open windows. Clean, alive, and oddly reassuring—like the day has just begun, even if it hasn't.

### **BLOSSOMING FLOWERS**

The small ones you notice while walking—half-open buds, petals already falling, colour without effort.

### **WARMER SUNSHINE**

Gentle enough to sit in. The kind that invites you to linger on balconies and benches a little longer.

### **CHIRPING BIRDS**

Suddenly louder, suddenly everywhere. Morning alarms we don't mind, reminding us the world is waking up too.

### **LONGER DAYS**

Light stretching into the evening, blurring the line between afternoon and night. More time, somehow—without doing anything differently.

### **LIGHT RAIN SHOWERS**

Brief, unannounced, and welcome. Just enough to cool the air and darken the soil before disappearing.

### **NEW GREEN LEAVES ON TREES**

That unmistakable bright green—fresh, tender, and hopeful. Nature's version of a reset button.

### **FARMERS' MARKETS**

Crates of vegetables still dusted with earth, flowers wrapped in newspaper, and the quiet pleasure of choosing slowly.

### **SPRING CLEANING**

Just opening cupboards, letting go of what feels heavy, and making space for what comes next.

# Those Seven Days

Three Cities,  
Honey-coloured  
Streets, Westend  
Lights: A Gentle  
UK Sojourn

BY SHUBHRA KRISHAN

I landed at Gatwick on a soft grey morning. Note to self: a direct Delhi-London flight is less tiring than one with a stopover, though Emirates is a wonderful airline.

The great thing about landing at Gatwick is that the immigration queues are much smaller. I was done in 15 minutes flat.

From the airport itself, I boarded a direct train to Portsmouth Harbour – a pleasant journey of about one hour and forty-five minutes, with no changes. When you're travelling with a proper suitcase, that detail matters.

Portsmouth turned out to be the perfect first pause. Compact, walkable, and gently animated by its





Portsmouth



Bath, UK

university population, it has the kind of ease that helps you recover from jet lag without overwhelming you. The harbourfront is ideal for a slow wander – little shops lining the waterfront, cafés where you can linger without being hurried, the sea breeze making everything feel cinematic.

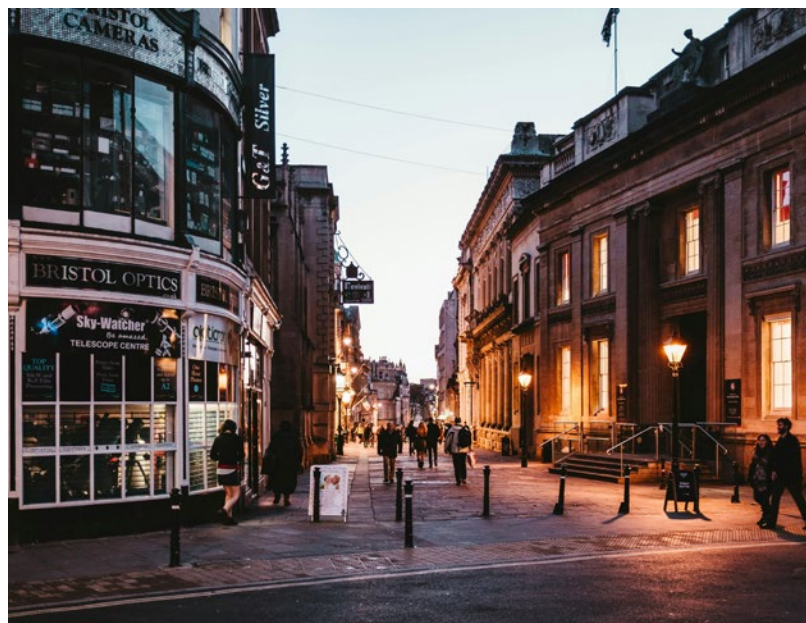
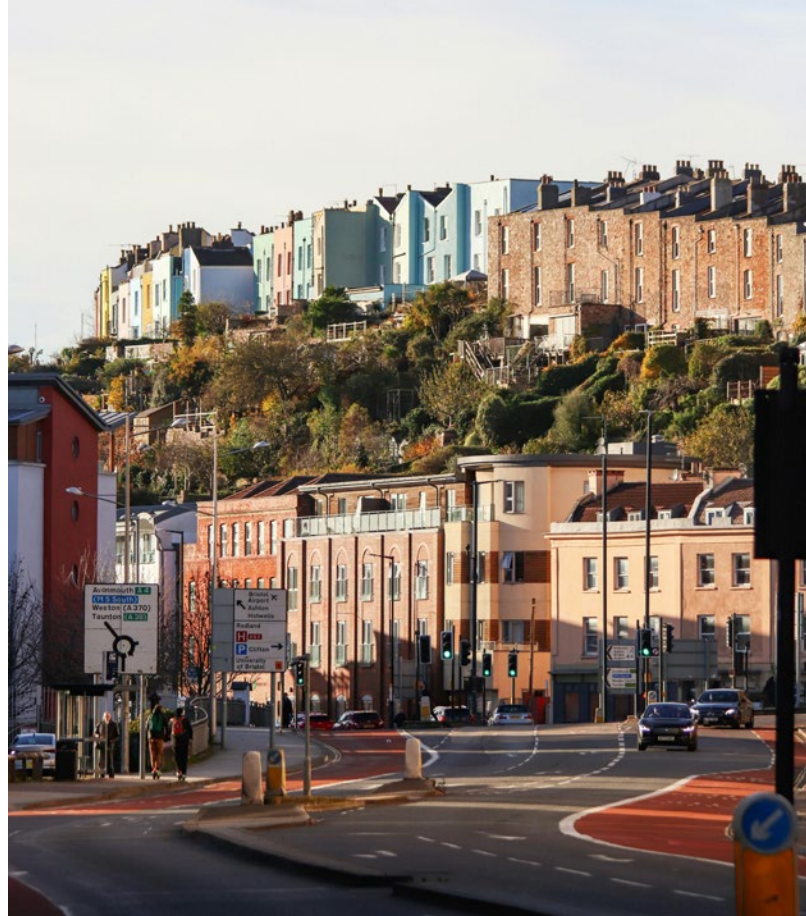
Being a student of English literature, a highlight for me was the Charles Dickens Birthplace Museum. Standing inside the modest home where Dickens was born in 1812 felt intimate and oddly moving. There is something about seeing the humble beginnings of a literary giant that reminds you how quietly history begins. The town centre marketplace is equally pleasant – great for an unstructured stroll, browsing produce, small wares and soaking in everyday English life. One full day in Portsmouth feels sufficient. It is a place best savoured briefly, like a well-brewed cup of tea.

The next morning, I took a train to Bristol – a journey of roughly one hour and thirty minutes. If Portsmouth felt gentle, Bristol felt textured. It has grit, colour and confidence. The city invites walking – along the Harbourside where old warehouses now house cafés and galleries, across lively streets dotted with independent shops.

I spent time at the Bristol Museum & Art Gallery, which is wonderfully curated without being exhausting. Cabot Circus offers a more contemporary shopping experience, but the true pulse of the city beats at St. Nicholas Market. Quirky food stalls, vintage finds, independent traders – it feels alive in a way that chain stores never can.

From Bristol Temple Meads, Bath is barely fifteen minutes by train – yet the moment you step out, it feels as though you've travelled back a century.

Bath was love at first sight. Honey-coloured Georgian buildings, cobbled streets, gift shops that tempt you with handmade soaps and delicate ceramics – everything feels impossibly pretty. The Roman Baths are mesmerising, steam rising from ancient waters in the heart of town. Afterwards, I did what one must: queued for a warm Sally Lunn bun. Light, buttery, and unapologetically indulgent.



Bristol, UK

If I were to repeat this trip, I would base myself in Bath and explore the surrounding region through day trips. Lacock, with its storybook charm; Cheddar Gorge for dramatic natural beauty; Bradford-on-Avon for riverside walks; Wells for its quiet grandeur – all easily accessible. Bath has that rare quality of beauty without frenzy, making it an ideal anchor for slower exploration.

From Bristol to London Paddington, the train takes about one hour and forty minutes – swift and comfortable. Arriving in London always feels like stepping onto a larger stage. The energy rises, the



pace quickens, and you instinctively straighten your shoulders.

I devoted two days to London – unapologetically to shopping, walking and theatre. Notting Hill's boutiques are a delight for thoughtful browsing, Marylebone remains a favourite neighbourhood,

and Daunt Books is a sanctuary for travellers and readers alike. There is something about its wooden galleries and skylit interiors that makes you want to buy books simply because they exist.

London also rewards those who wander without a fixed plan. Tiny bakeries tucked into side streets, where the almond croissants are quietly perfect. Independent boutiques in Seven Dials that feel discovered rather than advertised. And then, of course, the West End. Watching a musical in London is not just entertainment; it is ritual. The hush before the curtain rises, the shared gasp at a dramatic note, the applause that feels almost communal – it stays with you.

On the final morning, I made my way back to Gatwick – about thirty to forty-five minutes by train depending on the service. My suitcase was heavier with books and Bath soaps, but my mind felt light.

What I loved most about this seven-day itinerary was its gentleness. No train journey exceeded two hours. Every city was walkable. There was time to linger in markets, to sip coffee without checking the clock, to wander into bookshops simply because they beckoned.

England, done this way, is not about ticking off landmarks. It is about rhythm – harbour to market, museum to bun, theatre to moonlit street.



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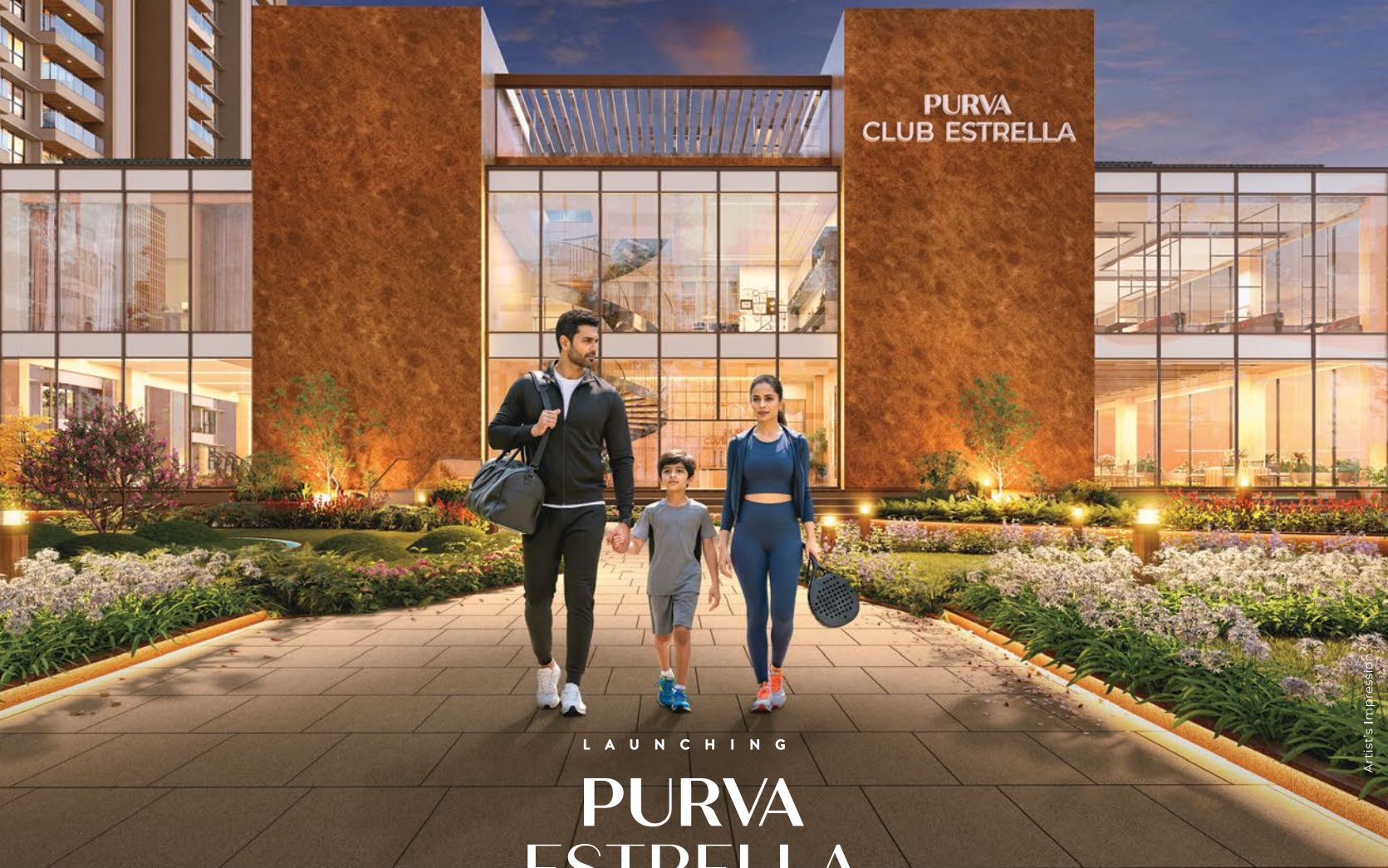
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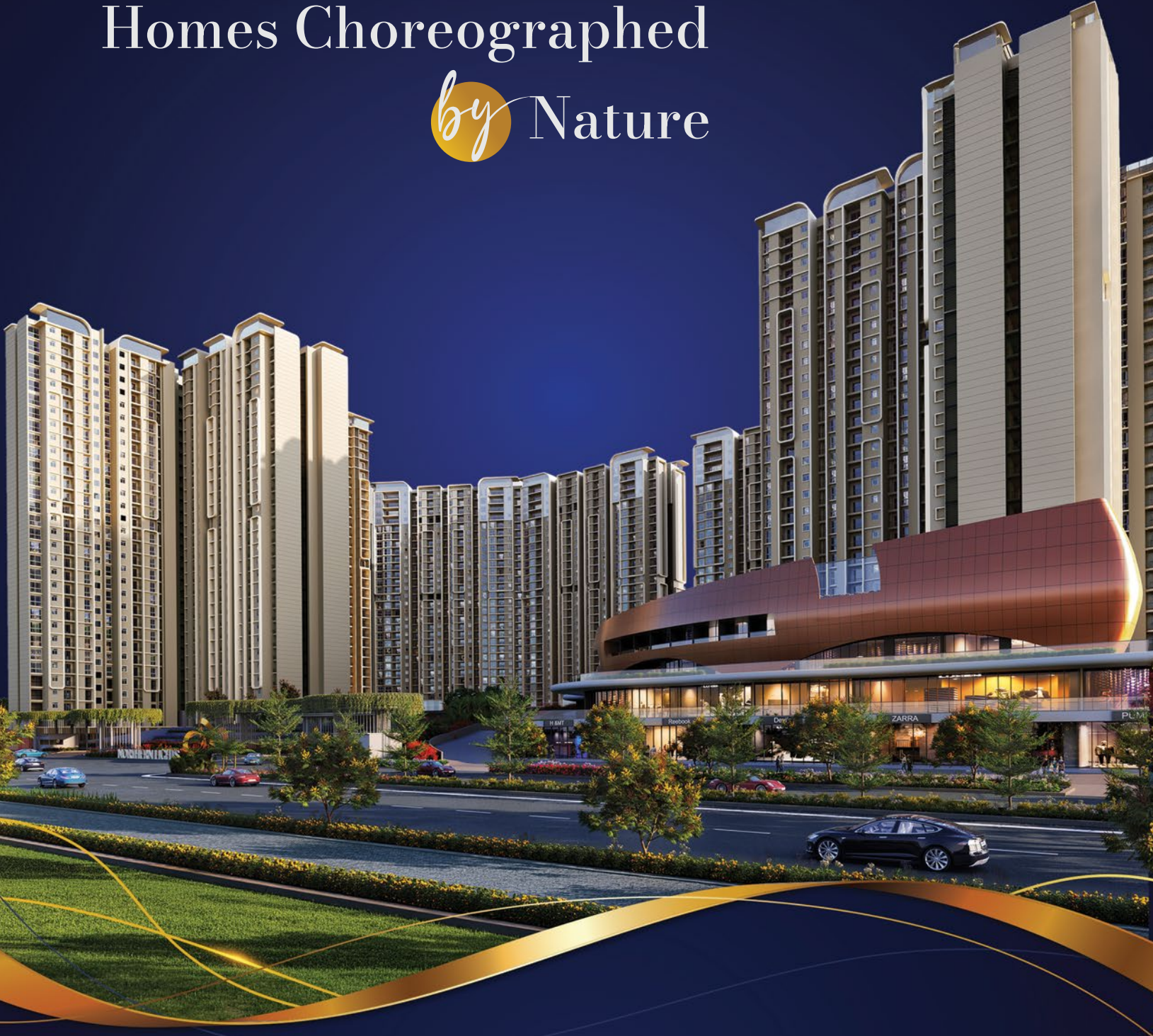
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