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Bangkok has not lost its charm by Summer Nicks.



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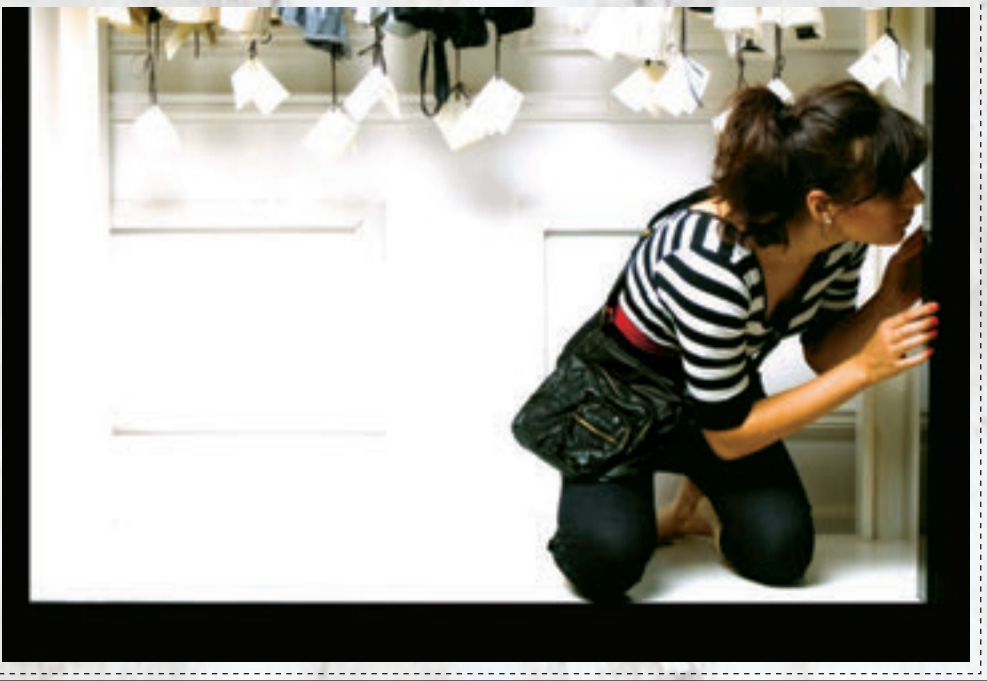
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AHMAD RAFAY ALAM



is a lawyer and environment activist. He lectures at the Department of Law & Policy at LUMS and at the Architecture Department at the University of Punjab. His columns in The News and Express Tribune focus on the environment and urban issues. Two years ago Rafay and others started Critical Mass Lahore, a weekly cycling group that raises awareness of urban issues like the importance of public transport, clean air, public spaces and the right of all, including women, to participate in our cities. He lives in Lahore with his wife and almost five-year old daughter.

AYESHA SIDDIQI



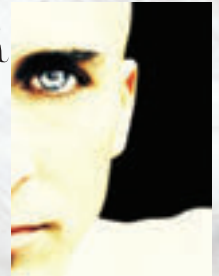
is a fierce fighter, yet a cravenly coward. Vocalizing her opinions yet unquestioningly accepting others', she writes to please. Inherently indecisive, she has worked in London, New Delhi, and Paris, all the while lugging around in her heart her home-town of Karachi. She is currently working on her first novel, as well as a book of non-fiction exploring gender and identity in South Asia.



MEHER TAREEN

has a Bachelors of Arts from the University of Michigan Ann Arbor in Sociology and a Masters degree in International Marketing Management from Regents Business School, London. She has volunteered as a teacher at CARE, worked at SMEDA under the Aik Hunar Aik Nagar project, worked as a Marketing Director for A&A Farm Fresh Milk and collaborated with Sara Shahid of SUBLIME to launch an eco friendly line of patriotic t-shirts. Currently she heads the Humara Pakistan Charity Foundation, dedicated to raising funds for flood relief and rehabilitation. She is also a freelance writer, volleyball player and enjoys being a daughter, sister, wife, friend and most of all a mother.

SUMMER NICKS



An Australian, Summer Nicks is a roving food fanatic and a connoisseur of fine living. Having visited nearly 50 countries and experienced everything from living in the Carlton Ritz in Cannes, France to bamboo rafting up the Amazon River, Brazil, his experiences are thus vast and his motto of living well is set in the proof of his experiences.



MASOOD HASAN

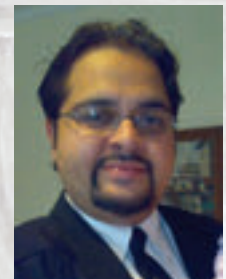
is a loser and a has been who is hanging out in Lahore waiting for a Mothership that will take him away to another galaxy where undoubtedly he will be very disillusioned. He apparently does a number of things but no one knows quite what – he doesn't either some say. There are rumours that he is distantly related to a musician but Dr. Adnan Sarwar has denied this.



SOPHIA KASURI

is the founder of The Early Years, part of the Beaconhouse Education Group, and also the director for the Gymboree play and music centres. You can reach her at sophiakasuri@beaconhouse.edu.pk

USMAN RAZA JAMIL



[Ujay] is our resident legal beagle. A lawyer by day and DJ by night he is a fanatical sports follower, movie buff and a music lover. A hands-on dad of two, he will not be disturbed during a live telecast of his favorite sporting events. And he would still like to be fashionable... someday.

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OMAR JAMIL

is the CEO of Latitude, a recently established corporate marketing and relationship management consultancy. Omar returned to Pakistan in the summer of 2010,

having spent the better part of the past two decades ping-ponging between various continents. He holds a masters in journalism from Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism, loves dogs and is a self-confessed movie buff.



FARAN MAQSUD

is our chief technology writer. A suit with a soul, The Beej, as he is popularly known, is at the intersection of technology, liberal arts, and corporate philosophy. He wants humanity

to bow down to the world of gadgets and innovative marketing. A big supporter of geek culture, his scheming mind keeps coming up with ideas that will eventually allow machines to take over our lives. What's scary is that he might just succeed.



FAZEELAT ASLAM

graduated with a degree in media studies and gender studies in 2007 from Wellesley College and has since worked in the Pakistani news media. She has worked on several independent

documentaries for international organizations such as PBS Frontline, Channel 4 UK, and The New York Times Online. She resides in Lahore where she is a freelance filmmaker, producer and writer, as well as a radio jockey for CityFM89. She is currently working on a piece for HBO.



HAMZA BUKHARI

graduated from Bentley University with a degree in marketing and is currently operating The Groom Room in Y-block, DHA Lahore.

He has been somewhat of a nomad over the past five years having lived in San Diego, Boston, Dubai and now finally Lahore, making his general knowledge of exotic cuisines quite extensive. He is a self-proclaimed culinary connoisseur with a palate that is the human equivalent of the bomb-sniffing dog's nose.

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Editor's Letter



The first issue of Paper was launched at a time when we thought that Pakistan was at its lowest point. We had all the problems: political instability, religious extremism, bombings, inflation, just to name a few of the big ones. Things surely couldn't get any worse.

And then came the floods, wiping away whole villages and altering the landscape along the length of the Indus. The poorest lost everything. We were told it was worse than the tsunami and the two biggest recent earthquakes put together. Before it was men with beards out to blow us up; now Mother Nature seems out to get us too. It can all get a bit depressing, enough to make us wonder if we'll ever get a semblance of normality here. In 'Shame' (page 50), we look at how the government has handled the floods crisis, and how it should have.

It might seem incongruous at a time like this to be presenting page after page on fashion, arts and lifestyle. But the designers, artists and entrepreneurs who work in these industries have also come together at this time to support the survivors of the floods, by arranging fashion shows, concerts and charity drives. Without them there would be less aid to the needy.

As in our previous issue, we'd like to emphasise the importance of not letting violence and bombings affect our lives. I was proud to see how the people of Karachi reacted to a bombing during the fashion week organised by the PFDC. More people turned up for the show on the day after the bombing than before, sending the message that they were unafraid and would not be cowed by terrorists.

We cover the PFDC fashion week extensively in this issue with a look at our ten favourite designers at the show. We also examine the Karachi-Lahore fashion council tension, and how it hurts the fashion world, pages (87-100).

Our cover star is the beautiful Meesha Shafi, a progressive and talented musician/model who breaks social taboos. We share her attitude that pregnancy is not something to be hidden, but something to be celebrated. Read her profile to see how she juggles multiple careers and a fulfilling family life. Pages 104 - 110.

We visit Ghazala Rahman's beautiful home, a mix of Islamic architecture and traditional elements, and find out how she founded the popular label In Design at a time when there were not many women in the workforce. Pages 120-125.

Paper's second issue is packed with other exciting features and we hope that it is as well-received as our first. We'd like to thank all those who read and bought copies of Paper. The reader response was overwhelming. We'd like to renew our pledge from the previous issue: to bring our readers a cutting edge magazine full of style, humour, health, music, technology and social issues. Thank you for reading, and have a prosperous new year.

Samina Khay

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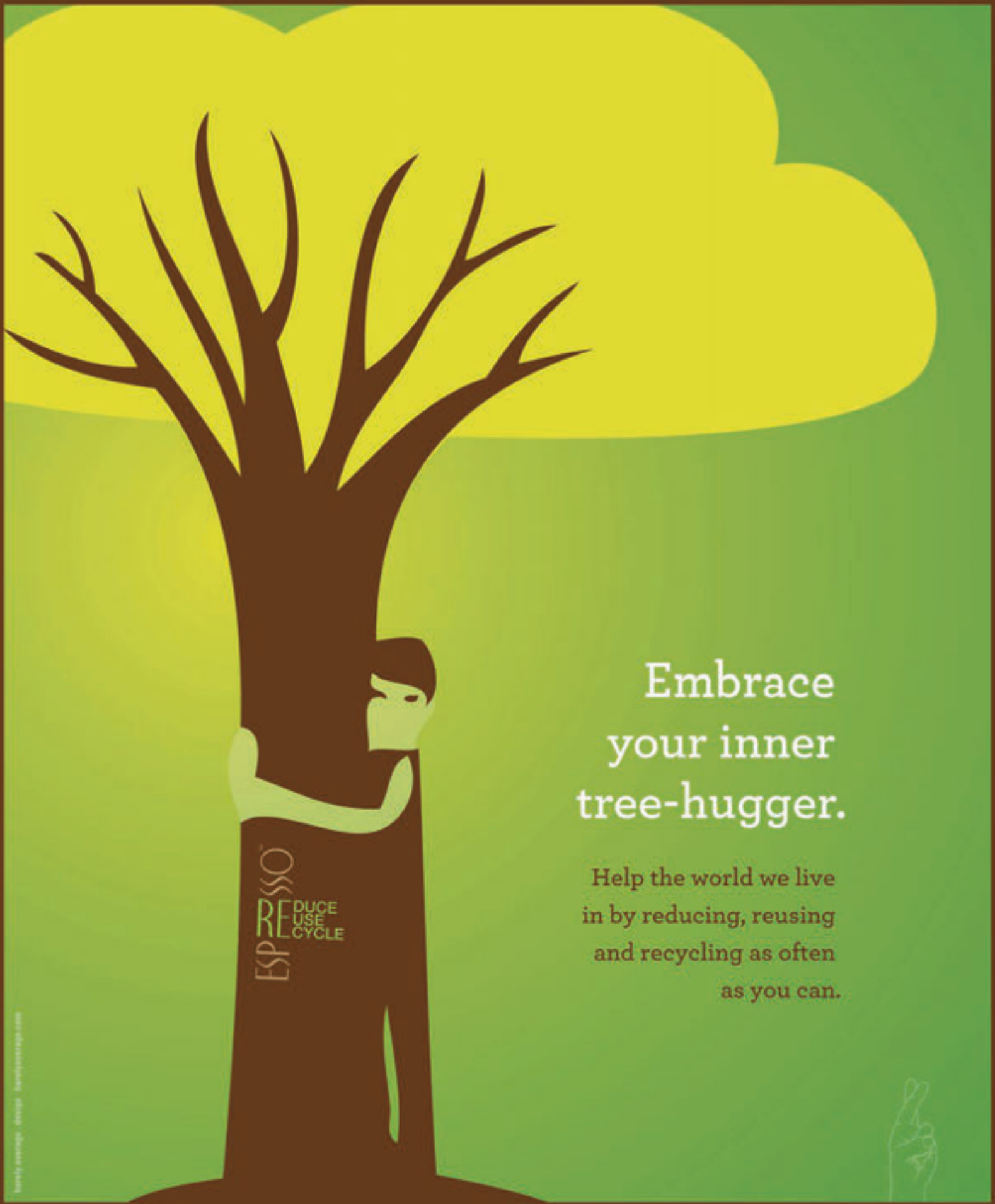
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THE FANTASTIC FOUR

The men with the powerful lens: Izdeyar Setna, Tapu Javeri, Arif Mehmood and Amean J. pose for a classic shot at BHV ZOO Book launch in Karachi.



MARYUM & IRAJ

cozy up at the launch of TapuJavicious; the edgy new retrospective of Tapu Javeri's work.



GULABO

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Maheem Khan, Frieha Altaf & Saima Mohsin

Frieha wears Sadaf Malaferrre's signature long fabric beaded necklace..very beachy..very Karachi



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MAHEEN GHANI
at the charity
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sporting the flare



HAMZA TARRAR
generously piling up for his
sisters and mother.



OMAR FAROOQ
at the
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fashion
week



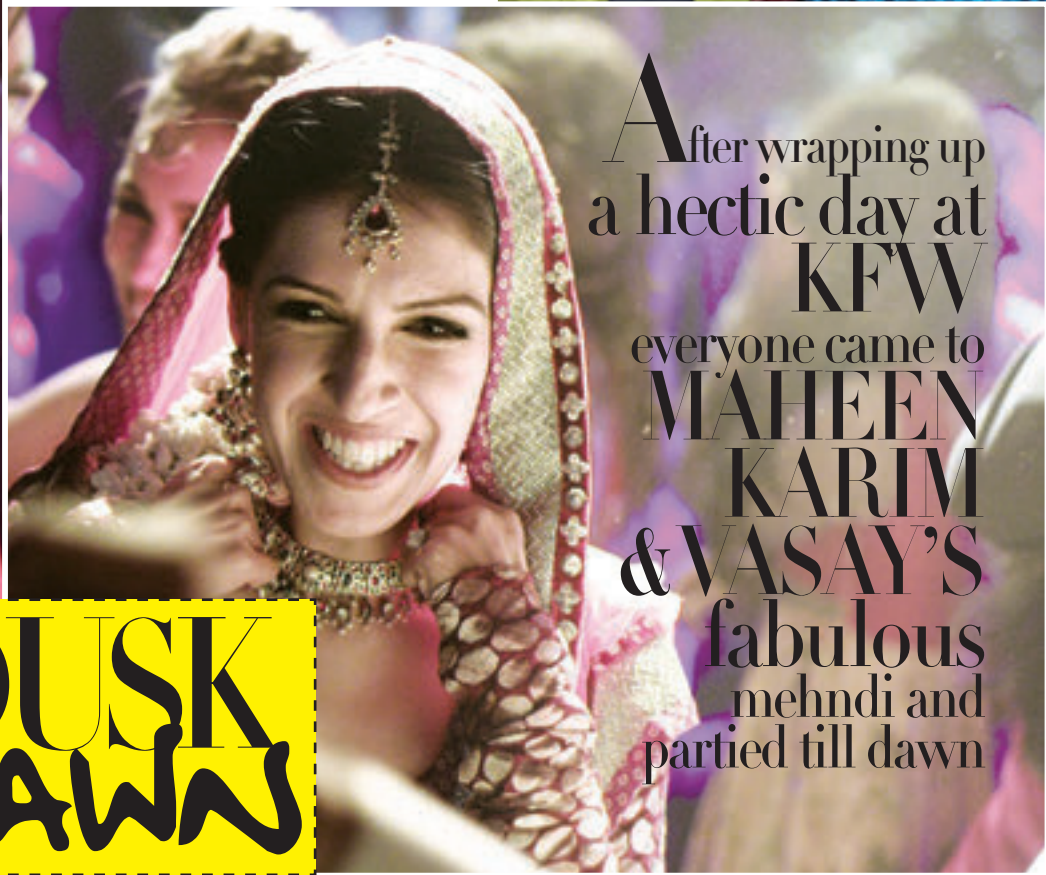
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GOOFY THOUGHTS

A perspective on the youth of today

By Masood Hasan



Goofy thoughts, in case you didn't know – is a name given to thoughts which are goofy. Goofy Thoughts. It is a complicated piece of deduction but if you set your mind to it and don't light up that tempting joint calling out to you in the most seductive tones possible, you might even make the connection. Most people below the age of 35 don't. Either they are stoned or unable to fit pen cap to fountain pen – agreed that this is not an easy thing to do at the best of times.

The thing is that I feel very sorry for the young of Pakistan. Fate has given them a pretty lousy poker hand. There is no way they are going to make it unless they are flamingly gay, out of the closet with the doors broken off the hinges and cruising at 50,000 feet while still carrying more stones than you can carry coals to Newcastle. I mean, if you look around at night – that's when they come out because they can't face the sunlight without going into a stupor – you can see what a pathetic existence this country has handed out to them. If they are walking and don't even have a bike, there is no place they can go to. If they have that car with three letters that no one knows mean what, they still have no place to go to. They can party at a farm in *Bedian* and get hopelessly stoned and drunk and hope that they can get away making a pass at that girl whose jeans are now under her skin – how she squeezed her flesh into it remains one of the last mysteries on planet earth – but chances are that it won't happen. For one thing, she can't speak a word of English except 'Yes,' and 'Now,' which many will argue is all that a girl needs these days, – no, not get laid – arrive. For another, who in his or her right mind would want to go to a smelly farm in *Bedian* where you are close enough to the border to smell the garlic on the Indian's eating curry? There is no road and the young things, having no flesh so to speak of, are jolted and smashed even before they are smashed. Parties at farm houses are just about as fashionable as Gandhi's underwear.

Pakistan's young and Lahore's particularly have been done out. Their elder generation, those washed-out old men and decaying aunties, are tottering about trying bravely to stay 'in,' and not realising that the big 'In' is a bigger 'Out.' All they can do is wheeze about the good old days and refrain from talking about the good old nights when there was real action. For the men, at least the women were a handful, not skin stretched over minuscule square inches of Lahori bones. The old geezers were drinking themselves silly, ballroom dancing till 3 am and going home in tongas playing footsie through the underpinnings of voluminous *saris*, without anyone ever finding out where your big toes was nestling. The new generation can do frenetic dancing where touching the partner might cause a rumble and play desperate but the older set was doing only the slow numbers, and that too with someone else's wife while that someone else was most likely making out with his spouse behind the tonga stand – and the old derelicts say the tongas were not the only ones standing.



These days things are different but not better. Elegant dining has been replaced by '*Phajja*' and his '*payas*.' That may be good news for the God of Cholesterol – elegant dining it is not. But that's where the young might wind up, climbing 4,000 stairs till the Lahore Fort looks like a dinky toy. Where the establishment can microwave your food and your they-don't-know-any-better out of station guests peer over the edge and croak 'awesome.' Not quite the swinging scene by any stretch of the imagination.

Of course those who are still able to 'party', as these activities are euphemistically referred to during heights of delusional behavior, can do so inside a 12ft x 15ft room drinking themselves silly with bad liquor at exaggerated prices. These days you can buy a second hand Honda CD 70- the kind that Mulla Omar endorses in campaigns worldwide – or a bottle of cheap Scotch. Hardly the kind of thing to give you goose bumps with excitement. And the parties are ever more desperate by the day. The same people hang out with the same people talking about the same things that they were talking about last time they were smashed, stoned and free wheeling. The hours of discussion are futile and bear no resemblance to anything that is partially recognisable. There is perpetual shortage of liquor and food or whatever passes for it is largely inedible. All in all it can be mentally very challenging to survive a night in these dire circumstances.

So what are the young to do? Let's write off the fuddy-duddies because their gig is up and the fat lady hasn't even got on stage. The young can break out and sell burgers in a freezing northern part of the USA or worse Canada and wipe frozen wind screens and dispense gas to 250-pound rednecks in large check flannel shirts with tattoos of raunchy broads lying spread-eagled – do all this and tell folks back home they are having a ball. The more affluent ones can do something esoteric like Development Economics and come back to Lahore and find that there is no Economics. As for Development it was last seen in 1954. So they head to a party at a farm house in *Bedian* and find that it is actually a good old '*Mujra*' thinly disguised as a party. So they get drunk and get stoned, or get stoned and get drunk, and fail to score all night. They then rashly drive their father's 1998 Civic into the nearest tree and are hospitalised. If they don't cop it, they are back at the farm in about three months. And there it begins again.

There is a Buddhist retreat in a remote part of Tibet and I happen to have their address. ■

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SHAMIE



FLOODWATER IN THE VILLAGE OF BASEERA, IN PUNJAB PROVINCE
PHOTOGRAPH BY DANIEL BEREHULAK

A look at how the government has handled the flood crisis

Our first family has a remarkable penchant for proving themselves to be classically without class and utterly without good sense. When Prime Minister Gilani had only been in office for some months, his sister took to using writing pads with the header ‘Sister of the Prime Minister’. His daughter wrote a shameless piece praising Bilawal Bhutto Zardari as the great hope of Pakistan.

At Sania Mirza and Shoaib Malik’s wedding reception, the prime minister’s son caused a ruckus by getting into a brawl. More recently, a traffic cop was forced to apologise to another of the PM’s sons for doing his job, ie, ticketing him for having tinted car windows.

Yet all of this pales in comparison to how the prime minister’s family acted recently with Angelina Jolie, a goodwill ambassador for the UN. While the country was going through an unprecedented tragedy, our first family flew to Multan in a plane, paid for no doubt by the Pakistani taxpayer, to give expensive gifts to and have dinner with the famous Hollywood actress. Jolie may have been too polite to point out the contradiction, but faithfully reported the matter to the United Nations. When the Pakistani media rightly raised the issue, the ruling party’s storm troopers attacked the media for “conspiring against democracy”.

The point of this article is not to suggest that the government should be removed, more its PR. Gilani’s bungling notwithstanding, the Pakistan government has by and large performed quite well under difficult circumstances. Unfortunately, international donors don’t see this, because its PR advisers have not been able to show it to them.

The local media hasn’t helped either by making an artificial distinction between the army’s efforts and the efforts of the democratically-elected government, as if the army were an independent entity and power centre unto itself, and not an arm of the government with President Asif Zardari as its commander in chief.

The truth is that Pakistan is in an extremely difficult situation and much of the credit goes to the government for keeping its head through a difficult time. It is forgotten that much of the trust deficit about Pakistan emerges not from the real and perceived corruption of the current government, but the way General Pervez Musharraf and his illegitimate regime handled the funds after the earthquake tragedy of 2005. Yet all the blame has fallen on the current government.

The state must do more to review its disastrous policies. For starters, the flood tax, designed to cripple the middle class, reinforces the view that the civilian rulers are interested only in forwarding their class interests, not the interests of the country. This does not bode well for democracy, yet only a constitutional democratic framework can ensure continuity of the kind that would build a Pakistan more mindful of its responsibilities as a state. Our civilian leaders must realise what many of their well wishers and friends have been saying for a while: you cannot expect other countries to help you when you are not willing or able to tax your landed elite because you continue to depend on them for your coalitions.

When the same landed elite diverts water from its lands and creates a horrendous mess, the rest of the world is right to ask why they should foot the bill. As a great natural catastrophe, the floods gave the government a grand opportunity to show itself as serious about wanting to help ordinary Pakistanis. Take one look at the people affected by the floods and you will see the calamity is merely the tip of the iceberg. It tells a sorry tale of dispossession, displacement and neglect by the state.



A REFUGEE WITH HER CHILD AT THE RISALPUR RELIEF CAMP
PHOTOGRAPH SHAHNAWAZ



AS A GREAT
NATURAL CATASTROPHE,
THE FLOODS PRESENT
A GRAND OPPORTUNITY
FOR THE GOVERNMENT
TO TAKE THOSE HARD
AND UNPOPULAR
DECISIONS THAT
WOULD SAVE PAKISTAN



Our rulers have the ideal opportunity to create a level playing field and undo the wrongs that have been done to the poor and subsistence level farmers and peasants. Most importantly the need of the hour is public-private partnership. It is the private sector alone that has the ingenuity and skill to re-equip the people of Pakistan and make them empowered citizens of a free state.

I need not emphasise how serious is the crisis upon us. The floods destroyed the homes, fields and livestock of the poorest in Pakistan – those already without adequate food, shelter, or jobs – and pushed them deeper into debt. An estimated 60% of people in Sindh are landless. The province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is also completely devastated. The situation is slightly better in South Punjab, but not by much.

Is it then time to revisit the ridiculous logic that was deployed by the Mullah and the Qazi in the 1990 Qazalbash Waqf case, which in essence outlawed land reforms as being unIslamic? Is it Islamic when people are forced to beg and pawn their lands, belongings and even children for exorbitant and exploitative interest rates charged by the local money lender?

Meanwhile, the elite in Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad once again proved themselves callous and self-centred, partying on while up to one fifth of the country lay under water. Some even argued that these floods would have a long term positive impact on the productivity of the agricultural sector. Only a large land owner could make such an insensitive statement.

Pakistan's vulnerability to climate change is an issue no one, no matter what their class background, can afford to ignore any longer. In this country with its enormous class divide, the floods could just as easily break down the social structure atop which our elite are ensconced.

Perhaps it would be a good idea to stop playing the fiddle now and tackle these issues - social inequality, lack of justice and fair play, climate change - before the next tsunami from the sky washes all of us away. It is time we acted, if only in self interest and self defence. ■

PAPER

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into the Wild

Animal prints have always been a hot trend in Pakistan. This year it's back with a big bang in the fashion arena. The trick is to wear it right. Don't dress in animal from head to toe. Opt for just a scarf, bag or a jacket.



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JEGGINGS

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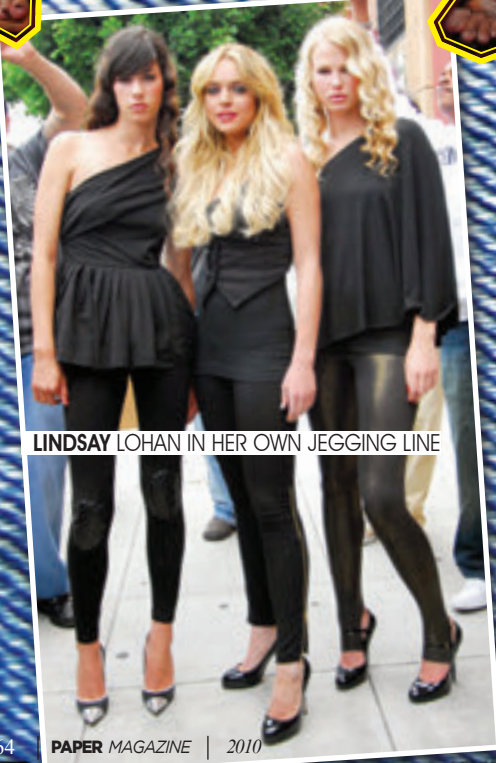


SAHAR ZAFAR



AGNEYS DEYN

STYLE TIP
Do not get intimidated by its snug fit. Jeggings make your legs look slimmer and longer. Opt for a dark indigo or black and avoid WHITE jeggings.



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PAPER Bags

The *clutch* FACTOR

Wear the right CLUTCH this winter as the WEDDING and PARTY scene is in full bloom. we take a look at a few exciting clutches that will make the perfect **STYLE STATEMENT.**



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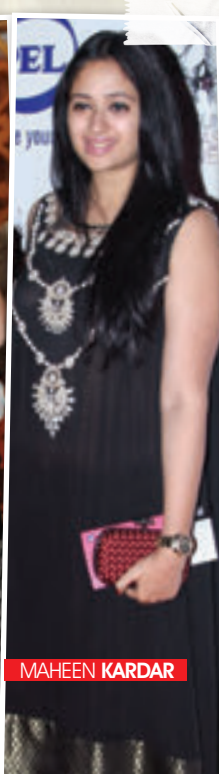
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I'M your MAN

HOW TO HIDE YOUR FLAWS AND GET IT RIGHT WITH A WELL-FITTED SHIRT.



By Faraz Salehjee 



Our colour selection transcends the dogma that those that don't wear black, brown, blue, grey or white are social outcasts. Our fits guarantee *poondhi*.

It is time that Pakistani men transcend the fashion constraints of our fore-fathers, people who used to wear shalwar kameez with collars and cuffs, a jacket (usually blue with shiny buttons) and black western shoes. As I write this, it's winter time in our fair city and the streets are already inundated with this unfortunate fusion of east and west.

Others that still have this concept of fashion are probably sitting hurling obscenities at each other in the 38 talk shows that, for some reason, believe we want to waste our time listening to people who don't have the intelligence to effectively govern their wardrobe much less our country. But not all men fall into this fashion infamy. There are those who make do with the more conventional casual uniform of jeans and collared t-shirts (normally with a large animal embroidered on it). Some of us get away with traditional shalwar kameez as well, but usually look as if they have been rejected from some *mehndi* for being unimaginative.

We also have the very few who have realised that one can never go wrong with a well-fitted shirt. At work, at social gatherings, when you need to have your picture taken, when you want to impress – just wear a shirt. If you are going to do something then do it right: buy from a place that has specialised in shirts for the past decade.

We at Chester Bernard deal with both ready-to-wear tailored shirts as well as custom-ordered bespoke wear. Our specialty includes a selection of over 500 different colours, shades and combinations and we cater to every conceivable occasion – from casual GTs to outfitting grooms on their special day. For those who wish to stand out from their contemporaries at work and those who need 14 different shades of white shirts, we excel in keeping our clients happy.

We have added a selection of hand-crafted ties with vibrant colours and hues which will lift the atmosphere of even the dreariest work place, and will stand out in even the most flamboyant wedding reception. Our sales staff offer excellent advice on shirt and tie combinations which will help you cultivate your own unique sense of style.

Our Italian cufflinks are pieces of art – just the accessory to transcend your look into a higher dimension of taste and sophistication. The motto that Chester Bernard believes in is that the Pakistani man should look great, and is there to make sure he does. ■

The men in Lahore have longer arms than those who live in Karachi. Though this advantage comes into great use if you need to get at that maddening itch in the middle of your back or need to get things off the top shelf, it does pose a problem for those who just wish to go out and buy a well-fitted shirt.

Pakistani men in general have short stocky necks, an affinity to grow facial hair and are depressed about cricket. The point is that here at Chester Bernard we understand our fellow Pakistani man. From the pot bellies they want to hide, to the right to discounts that they believe are part of the latest constitutional amendment, we understand what the Pakistani man wants. And it isn't just bread, clothing and shelter; it's the ability to look good, feel good and be part of that magical group of men that our mothers normally refer to as '*smaart hai*'.

Our quality control takes into account the evil, heavy-handed *dhobhi*.

“From the pot bellies they want to hide, to the right to discounts that they feel are part of the latest constitutional amendment, we understand what the Pakistani man wants.”





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Fortress Stadium.
Y-Block, DHA.
Gulshan Ravi.
Model Town, Link Road.
Center Point, Gulberg.
Main Boulevard, Iqbal Town.
Shadman.
Ahad Arcade.
Johar Town.
City Tower.
Fountain Avenue.
Shalimar Link Road.
Wapda Town Round About.

Multan

Chen One Tower.
Shop Cantt.
Sharif Plaza.

Rahim Yar Khan

Club Road

Rawalpindi

Al-Abbas Market, Adamjee Road, Saddar.

Sargodha

Katchery Bazar.

Sahiwal

College Road.

Siakot

V Mall, Ghalib Road, Cantt.

Shop in Shop

Lahore: HKB Liberty,
Shoppe 2 Mall Road,
EnEM Liberty.

Rawalpindi: S. Alta Ullah Bank Road,
Rawalakot: Gulf Shopping Complex.

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G OSSIP IBLISATION

PAKISTAN

A LOOK INTO A WORLD
PLAGUED WITH
SNOBBERY, PRETENTIOUS-
NESS, DRINKING, DRUGS,
PHILANDERING AND
BACKSTABBING.

By Meher Tareen 

Gossip girl is an American teen drama based on a series of novels of the same name. Gossip Girl takes viewers inside the exclusive world of privileged teenagers at an elite New York City private school. Each episode is told through the eyes of an anonymous blogger, a.k.a gossip girl, who reveals the deepest secrets of the group. According to the Hub pages, “in this fictional series, typical teenage nastiness is fuelled by Upper East Side wealth and disseminated via new technologies.” In my opinion the show is plagued with envy, jealousy, and malicious gossip, something we are all too familiar with in Pakistan. The show encourages the use of humiliation, manipulation and sabotage to get ahead, trying to pass off these qualities as drive and ambition. It is also plagued with snobbery, pretentiousness, drinking, drugs, philandering and backstabbing.

According to Naomi Wolf, “The problem is a value system in which meanness rules, parents check out, conformity is everything and stressed-out adult values are presumed to be meaningful to teenagers. The books have a kitsch quality – they package corruption with a cute overlay; the rich are right and good simply by virtue of their wealth. Seventh graders have Palm Pilots, red Coach clutches, Visas and cellphones in Prada messenger bags. Success and failure are entirely signaled by material possessions – specifically, by brands.” Sound familiar?

Unfortunately, just as adolescent American teens are impressionable and take these semi satirical shows seriously and start to mimic the values disseminated by them, viewers from developing nations, such as Pakistan, are even more impressionable and likely to consciously or subconsciously mimic values perpetuated by these shows. Too often I see teenage girls in Pakistan not only trying to act like Blair or Serena from *Gossip Girl* but also look like them, with their perfect hair, manicured hands and designer handbags. Why a thirteen-year-old, living in Pakistan needs to carry a Chanel bag is beyond me.

Dr. Mahmoud M. Galander, an Associate Professor of Mass Communication and Information Science Department at Qatar University, states: "Entertainment, including game shows, sitcoms and soap operas, carries within its genres elements of the culture to which it belongs. American entertainment diffuses values, morals and lifestyles.

Entertainment in international TV is culturally Western-oriented and, as the media reach of international TV is fast expanding to all corners of the globe, it is possible then to hypothesise that the 'reality' cultivated by the audience of international television is shaped by Western images portrayed in these programmes." Galander states that, "continued exposure of a non-American audience to such values and morals may impact the tastes, preferences and behaviour of that audience. It may numb the audience to the extent that they become desensitised against their own basic values." And therein lies the problem, as we seem to have traded in our own Pakistani values for what we perceive as must-have western ones.

Our culture encourages respect for elders and it's not lame to be close to your parents. In our culture kindness towards others is encouraged, as opposed to witty nasty put downs. We were taught by our parents to stand up for the weak, instead of ganging up against them. In our culture frivolous, superficial people are supposed to be shunned, not admired. We grew up in a world without pressure to be sexy too soon, without pressure to have perfectly manicured nails and blow-dried hair, and without pressure to own designer bags when you're barely out of diapers.

Today it seems that every adolescent aspires to have the latest BlackBerry or iPhone, designer clothes/bags/shoes, drive luxurious cars, wear cleavage-bearing tiny clothes and live lives similar to the rich kids on *Gossip Girl*. In one of the episodes Blair proudly says, "Whoever said money can't buy happiness didn't know where to shop." Most teenagers in Pakistan cannot afford the luxurious goods they aspire to possess as a result of constant exposure to these shows, but they nevertheless want them. Unfortunately this does not only apply to

teenagers. According to the CW (the television network that airs the show), the series is aimed at women aged 18 to 34 and the median age for viewers is 27. So whether we admit it or not, we are all picking up these new value systems and applying them to our own lives, consciously or subconsciously.

Teenage girls in PAKISTAN are not only trying to act like Blair or Serena from *Gossip Girl* but also look like them, with their perfect hair, manicured hands and designer handbags.

Besides glorifying materialism in our minds, *Gossip Girl* is having an adverse effect on female relationships. Blair and Serena, the supposed best friends, have gone to great lengths to make each other miserable, from sleeping with each other's boyfriends, to sabotaging college acceptances, spreading malicious rumours, putting each other on the spot, demolishing each other in wars of words and having physical cat fights. While they always make up no matter how vicious they are with each other, their temperamental relationship is not exactly worth looking up to for those of us with real female friends.

Alessandra Stanley of the New York Times says that *Gossip Girl* "focuses on worldly little girls who join forces against one another." This refers to what has come to be known as the frenemy (friend and enemy). This tragic new definition, which is made to look like the norm in the show, depresses me. Why should a person be friends with someone and spend time and effort to build a bond with them if they feel the relationship is fraught with competition, jealousy, envy, risk and mistrust? Too often I see girls befriend each other in a second, declare their love and friendship (with hundreds of pictures to prove it) for all to see on Facebook and before you know it they start competing with each other on the most superficial things, start bitching each other out and stabbing each other in the back. What a waste of time!

The show also glamourises this new culture of the "Queen Bee" and her "minions" (translated to *chamchi's* in Urdu) who rule the school. The Queen Bee treats the minions dismissively (for example, asking them to fetch her yoghurt or ice her knee) and uses them to carry out her commands, which usually involve humiliating a "victim" by throwing yoghurt or eggs on them. While most girls I know graduated from high school years ago, sadly this phenomenon still exists. What social hierarchy are we competing for by being petty, mean and cruel? Why must we indulge in humiliating others to feel better about ourselves? Why do we need "minions" to hang on to every word we utter? Have we become so insecure and superficial?

The show also propagates eliminating (read: destroying) the competition, to stay on top. For instance, Blair ensures that her academic rival, Nelly Yuki, does poorly on the SAT exams by hiring her ex-boyfriend to get back together with her only to break her heart and distract her from doing well on the SAT exam. As if that wasn't bad enough, as "insurance" Blair takes the batteries from Nelly's calculator right before the exam. So lying, manipulating, sabotage and bribery are portrayed as cute and clever qualities necessary to get ahead, often with no consequences.



In June 2001, the renowned Harvard Medical School's Nurses' Health Study concluded that women's social networks play a vital role in enhancing our health and quality of life. The study went so far as to conclude that not having at least one good confidante is as detrimental to a woman's health as being overweight or a heavy smoker. Can you believe it? And here we are wasting our time competing with so called 'frenemies' who are and should be inconsequential to our lives as they will never be there for us when we need them. Real female friendships are an asset; they provide the kind of support system women can only expect from family and siblings. They keep you grounded, sustain you and provide real laughter, happiness and joy. So rid your life of frenemies and minions and hold on to the few real friendships you have.

Besides disseminating values of materialism and superficial friendship Gossip Girl also glamorizes teenage sexiness and inappropriate seductiveness. According to Reuters, "Carol Platt Liebau, a cultural commentator who has written about a sex-obsessed culture damaging young girls, said while the show was entertaining, depicting "high school girls as little more than gossipy sex objects is simply a tired cliché that does all females a disservice." The

show, she said, teaches teenage girls that "sexiness" is more important than character or intelligence. It glamorizes and normalizes the kinds of behaviour that may seem charmingly risqué and sophisticated when little girls see them on TV, but which, if emulated in real life, can result in emotional and psychological distress for them." Furthermore,

Belinda Luscombe wrote in Time magazine that, "The real problems arise when the media unanimously suggest that hotness is the only identity worth trying on. This results in girls trying to dress and act sexier. One of the clear findings last year of the APA task force was that an early emphasis on sexuality stunts girls' development in other areas like interest in school, sports, personal growth and development and focusing on things that are actually important like relationships with family and friends. Moreover, pressure to be sexy and desirable has an adverse effect on issues pertaining to body image, self esteem and confidence as girls strive to be a size zero like Blair and Serena. Furthermore, desirability is measured by how many boys think you are "hot", resulting in looser moral conduct, which often does not end well.

Don't get me wrong. I am not above the lust for labels; we are all part and parcel of a world of consumerism, fueled by marketing and

Whoever said 'money can't buy happiness didn't know where to shop'



advertising that feeds off our desire for wanting more (or for wanting the best).

There is nothing wrong with buying what you can afford and enjoying it. The point I'm trying to make is that material acquisitions, fake friendships and dressing and acting sexy to win the admiration of random boys is not the key to success and lasting happiness. Happiness is the result of building and maintaining successful relationships with those people in your life who should matter, people who want to see you succeed and cheer you on along the way.

Instead of following the hedonistic fantasies of fictitious characters like Blair and Serena, it would be beneficial to focus on relationships with parents, siblings, spouses, children and friends. These are the people who matter most and will give you good advice even when you don't like it. They will be there to support you and share in your happiness and sorrow; unless of course if you are too busy for them. Bags and shoes come and go, so do fake friendships. Hold on to the few good people in your life and learn to respect each other and stand by each other.

The most important thing to remember is that we live in Pakistan and our country is going through a rough deal with challenges to our security, a civil and ideological war with extremists, where millions are displaced and a fifth of our nation is under water.

There is recession, inflation, shedding and political instability.

unemployment, load

So let's not be ostriches, put our heads in the sand and pretend we live "the scandalous lives of a Manhattan's elite". Yes life has to go on, and who better to know than us resilient Pakistani's, but it doesn't need to be in a fake bubble we have built for our convenience. As a nation, our strength lies in our endurance and in our ability to pick ourselves back up, every time we fall. So let's stick to our own values, educate ourselves about the issues impacting our real lives and try to improve ourselves and our country.

Instead of looking up to frivolous fictitious characters on Gossip Girl, I think we should look for real people around us who can inspire us to improve ourselves; people who have used their talents and worked hard to achieve success, while keeping their core relationships intact. ■

YOUNG WOMEN WORTH LOOKING UP TO:

SHARMEEN OBAID-CHINYOY: The Emmy Winning Journalist



Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy graduated from Smith College with a bachelor of arts in economics and government. She then went to complete two master's degrees from Stanford University in international policy studies and communication. Sharmeen is a film-producer and journalist who has worked on 14 films for major networks in the United States and Britain. Sharmeen's work has taken her to over ten countries around the world where amongst other things, she has worked with refugees, women's advocate groups and human rights defenders. By bringing their voices to the outside world, she has helped them bring a critical change in their community. Sharmeen currently sits on the alumni association board of Smith College, is a TED fellow and Asia 21 fellow. Amongst other honours, her work has earned her the Alfred I. Dupont Award, The Livingston Award, The Overseas Press Club Award, The American Women in Radio and Television Award, The One World Media Award, the Banff TV Rockie Award. In 2010 she won the International Emmy Award in the current affairs category and dedicated it to her father who passed away a month ago. Sharmeen is married to her high school sweetheart with whom she has a daughter. Sharmeen we are so proud of you.

NASEEM HAMEED: The Fastest Sprint Runner in South Asia



Naseem Hameed won the Gold medal in SAARC games in 100 meters sprint in 2010 and became the first Pakistani female athlete to win the short sprint gold in the 26-years history of the South Asian Games. Mobilink added Naseem to its panel of brand ambassadors to celebrate her success and recognize her role as an inspirational icon. What's noteworthy about this 23 year old from a modest background in Korangi is that because she belongs to a conservative country and family she participated in the games, wearing a t-shirt and tights which is atypical for runners as it is not the most aerodynamic attire. Despite the odds she won, proving to us that you don't need to forget who you are, to become who you want to be. When she was welcomed home she gave her parents all the credit for their support, for believing in her and making sacrifices in their lives so that she could one day fulfill her dream. Naseem has shown us that if you have a dream and you follow it with passion, dedication and hard work you can accomplish the impossible. Thank you for making Pakistan proud and for giving us something to cheer about

KHADIJAH SHAH: The Designer Extraordinaire



Khadijah Shah is the force behind the successful international design house, Élan. After graduating with a bachelor's degree in international relations from the London School of Economics, she returned to Pakistan and channeled her flair for fashion in to a business. What is remarkable about this young designer is that while she initially started with four *karigars* and a tailor in her house, she has managed to create Élan into a fashion empire in a matter of years. Today Élan is one of the most sought after designer labels with various fashion outlets and a loyal clientele. Not only has Khadijah Shah created a fashion empire at such a young age but while doing so she married her high school sweet heart and together they have been raising two children. Khadijah is a designer, entrepreneur, wife and mother. She has found the perfect quotient of a prosperous business, a supporting husband and loving children and that is why she is a role model and a true inspiration.

SELINA RASHID: The Public Relations Pioneer



Selina Rashid graduated from the University of Warwick with a bachelor's of arts in politics. In August 2007, she established Lotus Client Management and Public Relations, Pakistan's first PR Company focusing on art and entertainment. Selina was brave enough to create a PR company in a country where there was no concept of working solely toward media recognition and image building. Regardless of the risk of failure, Selina pursued her passion and is accredited for introducing professionalism in to the industry. Selina started her company with four clients who believed in her talent; three years later Lotus PR represents over forty clients, which include fashion designers, motion picture houses, luxury brands, schools and cafés. Selina has an easy-going attitude exudes confidence and is also married to her high school sweetheart.

MUNEEZE KHALID: The Culinary Prodigy



Muneeze Khalid is an 18-year-old culinary prodigy who made a name for herself in Lahore while still in high school. This self-taught teenager specialises in making gravity defying cakes that are not only incredible to taste but also incredible to look at. Muneeze created a successful catering business at the age of 17, while balancing life at home and at school, and also hosts her own cooking show called 'Muneeze's Kitchen'. She has recently graduated from high school and has been accepted at the prestigious Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts in Boston. Her passion, dedication and hard work are a real source of inspiration, but what truly sets her apart is her humility, her solid relationships with family and friends, her forthcoming disposition and smiling face.



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PFDC
SUNSILK
FASHION
WEEK
KARACHI

Find out what went on behind the scenes
and PAPER'S
TOP TEN DESIGNERS

DIVIDE & RULE

A brief introspective about fashion & politics in Pakistan.

By **Samina Khan & Zahra Hameed**

Recently PFDC Lahore went to Karachi. Lahore in Karachi? Many frowned; why is Lahore going to Karachi? Shouldn't it take place in Lahore where most of the designers are based? And then there is the very obvious divide between the two councils which no one wants to admit to and yet it exists.

To the layman who has no idea what we are referring to, let us clarify: who or what the Lahore fashion council is. The PFDC which stands for the Pakistan Fashion Design Council is headed by Sehyr Saigol and consists of leading designers such as HSY, Kamiar Rokni, Khadijah Shah, Ammar Belal amongst many others. It is an eclectic group that comes together to further designers' careers by organising shows such as fashion weeks. It is geared towards showing their latest collections, introducing new talent and creating a marketing and selling platform with regional and foreign buyers as well as journalists.

The Karachi council, also known as Fashion Pakistan, is headed by Aamir Adnan and Shumail and includes designers Maheen Khan, Deepak Perwani, Nilofer Shahid, Bunto Kazmi and Rizwan Beyg among other Karachi designers. Their focus is also on promoting designers, showing their collections in a fashion week and attracting international buyers.

With both councils having the same agenda, fashion heavyweights and media support, it is hard to fathom why they can't give up their personal differences and come together. Is it really about Karachi versus Lahore? With prominent designers from Lahore being part of the Karachi council and some neutral designers from Karachi showing at the PFDC Karachi Fashion Week, we can deduce that it is more about a power struggle between a certain set of people and not the entire fashion fraternity.

The struggle has its roots in the decision over who gets to head a unified council for both cities. Who is its natural leader? The most senior designer, an industrialist, someone from the government perhaps, or the army? Unfortunately it's a catch 22 situation, where money is power; marketing is fundamental and no one wants to step down. It's a true reflection of us

Sunsilk PFDC Karachi Fashion Week



Deepak Perwani, HSY, Nomi Ansari & Maheen Khan

as a nation. We all want the accolades and the title. After all, what's the point of all the hard work and talent without adulation and recognition?

After talking to most of the designers from both sides, it is obvious that a collective council with both Lahore and Karachi with two fashion weeks a year would make more sense. And what about other cities? Is Islamabad, Peshawar or any other city and talent from across Pakistan less important? Fashion politics and snobbery aside, the reality is that in order for any industry to boom – whether it is fashion, furniture, media or the arts we have to learn to relinquish power and titles, pool our resources and work cohesively. With natural calamities, security concerns and financial crises in the country, Pakistan needs to be united on all fronts to face whatever next may come our way. It's not Palestine and Israel, it's Lahore and Karachi! So let's lighten up and move ahead together.

The Week Itself

On the 10th of November, the Sunsilk PFDC Karachi Fashion Week hit the catwalks at the golf club in Defence Karachi for four days of pure fashion. The first two days were extremely disappointing in terms of the turnout. After seeing heavily packed fashion weeks previously, it left us wondering what the reasons were behind this. Was there a lack of marketing which led people to believe that there were only two days of the fashion week? Were the rumours true that the event had been sabotaged by the Karachi fashion council? The terrible bomb blasts in the middle of the city did not help either. At a time like this, should fashion be at the forefront? These were the dilemmas that almost all involved in the event were consumed with. However, with the attitude that the show must go on, it did. We spoke to some of the designers to get their views and feedback and share who captured their attention on the ramp.

“We were a bit sensitive to advertising given the current situation and we relied heavily on word of mouth. We wanted buyers and journalists to come and they came every day regardless of the situation. Also, it is really important to understand that given the fact that Pakistan is going through a crisis, we were fortunate to have such a turnout, which was packed by the last day.

It was encouraging to see that the turnout was even bigger on the last two days, given that there was a huge bomb blast in Karachi on Day 2 of the fashion week. Coming back to the Sheraton hotel, where most of us were staying, I found my bed had moved into the bathroom and the windows were broken. Yes there are rumours about a letter banning all the Karachi designers from participating in the show. However, those are rumours and we certainly hope they are not true. If we are to grow together and want the best for the fashion industry, we should come together collectively as it is the role of the councils to support the designers. We did invite the Karachi council and it is completely up to them whether they want to participate or not. The PFDC is not interested in politics and we would like to stay away from it all. Our goal is to simply design and put on great shows.

Republic did a fantastic job, I liked his direction. It was great to see that Ali Xeeshan had blossomed into a more serious designer. Sarah Shahid had stunning, sophisticated designs. Maria B’s attention to detail was unmatched. Kamiar’s work was fun, quirky and fashion forward. Akif and Mohsin have huge potential, however they need to know how to sell and not just create. Khadija Shah’s clothes were stunning.”

Ammar Belal

“The Karachi council was invited on an equal footing to join in. There are rumours that they did not allow its designers to come forward. It would be extremely disappointing if these are true. Yes we wanted to go to Karachi; we said we would, our sponsors wanted us to, and so we kept our word. We have set the precedent and it is up to Karachi to join us in the next fashion week in Lahore.

Each designer has his own objective; some want to make a statement, and others want people to go out and buy the next

day. When foreign buyers come they like to see ethnicity and culture rolled into our clothes and that’s why I feel that Kamiar’s collection was liked across the board. He managed to infuse the East with the West in terms of colours and his cuts that were both eastern and western. Feeha’s clothes were awami and can be referred to as the eastern GAP. The price bracket is below Rs.5,000, which is very affordable and very wearable.

Khadijah Shah, ELAN

“For me personally it was a great experience to show in Karachi because Elan has a big market there and shows in Karachi always translate into sales. Having said that, a fashion week requires a certain energy and buzz that is provided by who and how many show up. Unfortunately on both accounts the Karachi fashion week suffered. The Karachites did not show up in the numbers expected. This could either be because of the Karachi council/PFDC political divide or just because they are not familiar or interested in the work of Lahore-based designers. I feel PFDC should continue to show in Karachi as that would eventually lead to the two councils collaborating and for people in Karachi getting interested in the work of some of Lahore’s very talented designers.

I only attended fashion week on the second day, and enjoyed the Muse collection thoroughly. It was fun, flirty and beautifully tailored. I loved the shift dress with a sequined bag embellishment and a black jumpsuit with a lace bodice. The collection was cosmopolitan and in touch with international trends. It was also cohesive without being repetitive.”

Sara Shahid, SUBLIME

“I think holding the fashion week in Karachi was a fantastic idea. It was a great opportunity for all of



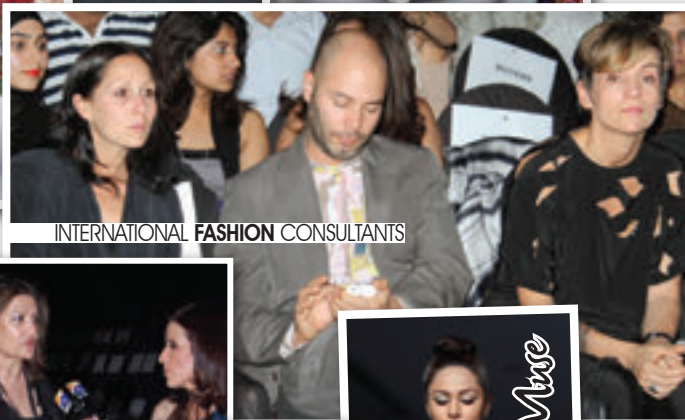
HSY



Maria B



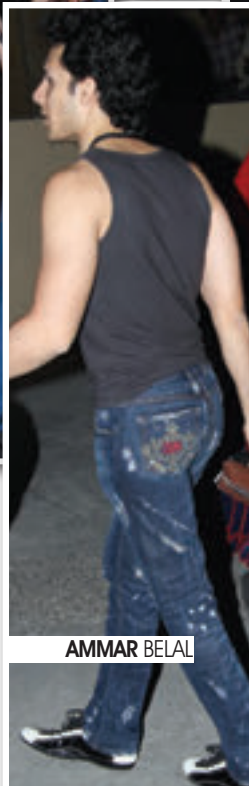
KHADIJAH SHAH



INTERNATIONAL FASHION CONSULTANTS



SEHYR SAIGOL



AMMAR BELAL



Muse

us from Lahore to show in Karachi which is very important. There is a huge market there and many of us are stocking in stores in the city. It was great to have time to work and meet with people from the industry in Karachi. This was the first time the PFDC showed there and I am certain that the next time we will have more people attending. I strongly believe that fashion must be made accessible. It is not easy to individually get up and go to another city to do solo shows. Through this fashion week we all had an opportunity to easily take our work to another city as the council was providing the platform. Most importantly we are all Pakistani designers and the only way we will all progress and gain out of this is if we all get together and put the best fashion forward to show the world.

My show was on the first night in which I found that the new talent really stood out. There were many individual pieces that I loved from many different designers. I loved the jumpsuits, long jackets and the whites in the Libas collection. Khadijah's collection had some beautiful pieces and I also enjoyed Muse for their distinct style statement. Zara's short shirts and *shalwars* was also something new and fun. I did not get a chance to see any other days but from the pictures I have seen, Kami's collection was fabulous and Sheru's was a fantastic closing. I have always loved Feeha's, Ammar's and Sadaf's designs."

Feeha Jamshed, TEEJAYS

"Yes, I believe the Karachi council members were not allowed to show at PFDC but I am not a part of either council and just want to put on a good fashion show. As for the venue, why is Islamabad being neglected? It is a huge market for our clothes. In terms of the turnout, Maheen Shumail and Deepak were there every day. Why didn't they show? I am not sure, but a lot of the Lahore designers didn't show in Karachi fashion week either. I will say though that there was a slight problem with the PR. I feel that it lacked and they should have gotten a Karachi based event organiser such as Wow Factor, Frieha Altaf, or J&S who work in Lahore and Karachi. You need to involve everyone to make it a complete success.



SARA SHAHID



Zara Shahjahan



Evan



FEEHA JAMSHED



Teeljays



Libas



Kamiar Rokni

The new kids Akif and Mohsin Ali were brilliant! It's great to see new talent on the runway. They were perfect – seemed like they had been working for years. I enjoyed Zara Shahjahan's collection. The *chooriedars* and the *kurtis* brought something different and traditional. Of course Kami and Maria B were great."

Deepak Perwani

"There isn't a political divide between the Lahore and Karachi councils. We were there all four days supporting Lahore. I couldn't have shown, as there wasn't enough time and I couldn't have done it in such short notice. It's not possible for designers to design four collections in a year. I have to prepare for the Fashion Pakistan week in Karachi and can't show so many collections in a year. I think that goes for all the designers. I also feel that it would be easier if we came together as a council, and showed prêt in Karachi as it is more prêt inclined. In Lahore we could show the formal/bridal line in fall/winter. This would avoid fashion fatigue. We as designers don't have huge design houses where we are equipped to deal with so many fashion weeks. The councils should come together and further the careers of the designers. We need to sell collections not just show them.

In terms of collections – I really enjoyed Feeha's, Ammar's – Sara Sublime and Asifa Nabeel's"

Kamiar Rokni

"We want a progressive attitude from both councils, and we will work together. Our focus should be to further the designer's career. We have a country filled with amazing talent and we must go on with the show. I really enjoyed Feeha Jamshed's collection. It was structured and cool, original and Pakistani without embellishment. Overall, it was a great effort by PFDC. It's not easy to pack up and go to another city and host a fashion week. As for Karachi, I love this city – great people and lots of fun."

ALI XEESHAN

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WANTING MORE. WITH THE **PERFECT**
PALETTE OF FUSCIA, GREEN, AND BLUE
WE CAN'T HELP BUT **RECOGNISE ALI** AS A
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AMMAR BELAL

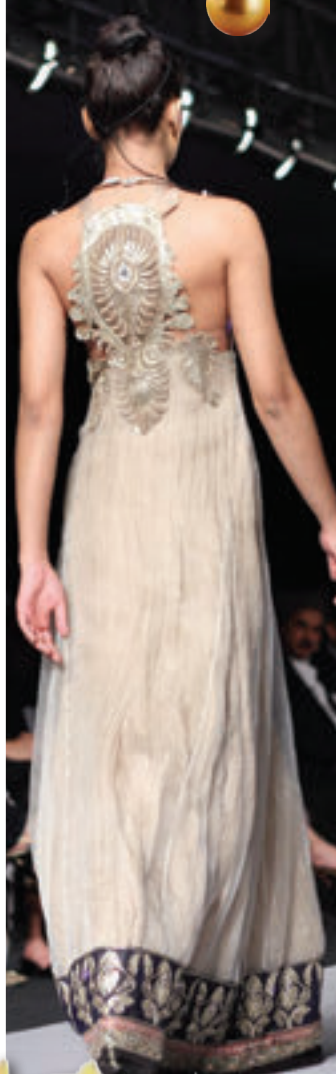
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AMMAR IS ONE OF OUR FAVOURITES. WHY? HE BRINGS **SOMETHING EXTRA** TO THE SHOW-FROM A **TRIBUTE** TO THE LEGENDARY **MICHAEL JACKSON** IN HIS LAST SHOW TO A **TRIBUTE TO NEW YORK** IN THIS ONE, WITH **ALICIA KEY'S** SONG 'NEW YORK' AS HIS **OPENING NUMBER**, HE **QUICKLY DREW ATTENTION**. AMMAR IS **EXPERIMENTAL**, WHICH IS A BREATH OF FRESH AIR TO THE DESIGNS WE SEE EVERY DAY, WITH A **FORWARD LOOKING, FUTURISTIC** THEME. HOWEVER, AS **ORIGINAL** AS HIS CLOTHES MAY BE, HE DOES NOT HAVE VERY **WEARABLE** CLOTHES FOR PAKISTAN. INSTEAD, HIS OUTFITS **BELONG** IN THE **HIPPEST BARS ABROAD**.



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KHADIJAH'S SHOW WAS **SPELLBINDING**. THE DESIGNS WERE **FLAWLESS** AND INSPIRED BY HER RECENT **TRAVELS TO PARIS**. EVERY SINGLE OUTFIT SPOKE OF **SOPHISTICATION** AND **CHARM**. KHADIJAH UNDERSTANDS THE PHILOSOPHY THAT **WOMEN'S CLOTHES** SHOULD BE **BEAUTIFUL** WITH THE ABILITY TO **TURN HEADS** YET REMAIN **WEARABLE**. SHE ALSO KNOWS **STYLE** AND HER **MARKET**. THE **AUDIENCE** WAS **AWE STRUCK** AS MODELS WALKED DOWN THE **RUNWAY** ASKING EACH OTHER, 'WHERE CAN WE BUY ÉLAN? DOES IT **STOCK** IN KARACHI?' NEEDLESS TO SAY, THIS COLLECTION IS **SURE TO SELL OUT**.

FEEHA JAMSHED

Making awami cool!



FEEHA IS AS **ROCK 'N ROLL** AS THEY GET AND IS ALWAYS IN EVERY **DESIGNER'S TOP 5 PICKS**. HER LOOK IS **STRUCTURED** AND SHE MAKES **SHALWAR KAMEEZ COOL**, A FEAT NOT MANY CAN PULL OFF. **TEEJAY'S CLOTHES** HAVE POCKETS ON SHIRTS, **ROUND CUTS**, ARMY COLOURS AND ARE **FUN, SEXY**, WEARABLE AND VERY **AFFORDABLE**. FEEHA IS AN INNOVATOR AND WE SIMPLY **LOVE HER**. WE'RE ALREADY LOOKING FORWARD TO WHAT SHE **COMES UP** WITH NEXT.

KAMIAR ROKNI

KAMIAR ROKNI NEVER CEASES TO AMAZE. HE IS ONE OF THE FEW **DESIGNERS** WHOSE **PERSONALITY** TRANSLATES SEAMLESSLY INTO HIS **DESIGNS**. BRIGHT, BEAUTIFUL AND VERY **SENSATIONALLY SPRING**, KAMI'S COLLECTION WAS A **CLEVER MIX** OF **TRUCK ART** MOTIFS, LOCAL **TEXTILES**, EMBELLISHMENTS AND **EMBROIDERY**. WITH **FUNKY CUTS** IN PANTS, **JACKETS** AND DETAILING, THIS LINE IS PERFECT TO WEAR ON ANY GIVEN DAY. THIS IS **PRÊT AT ITS BEST**.



Bright, beautiful & very sensationally Kami.

MOHSIN ALI

WE **APPLAUD** YOUNG NEW TALENT AND MOHSIN ALI IS A **CLEAR EXAMPLE** OF THIS. **HIS THEME WAS MINIMALISTIC**, WITH SIMPLE CUTS AND HIS NOW **FAMOUS BALLOON-LIKE JACKETS**. **FUN, TRENDY** AND NEW - MOHSIN ALI IS **HERE TO STAY**.

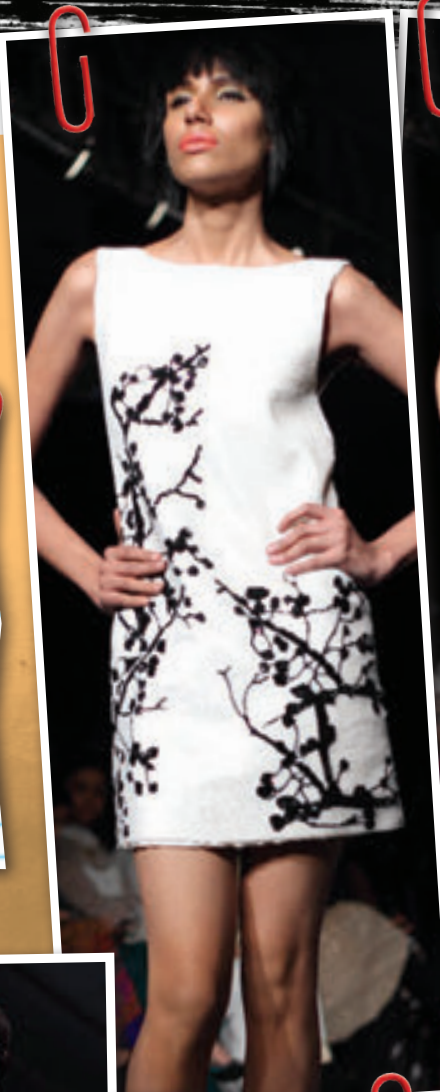
A new talent that is here to stay.



MUSE

*Bringing the fun
back into fashion!*

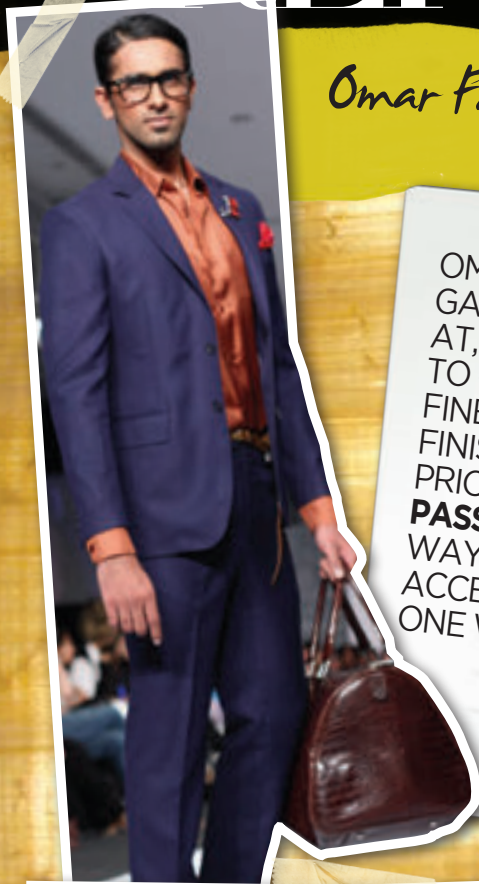
MUSE SHOWED AN **ARRAY OF SPRING COLOURS** MAKING THE WHOLE VENUE CRAVE FOR **SPRING TO COME SOONER**. THE COLOUR PALETTE WAS FULL OF **BLUES ORANGES AND PINKS**. WE ALSO SAW A GLIMPSE OF **SEQUINED DRESSES AND PANTS** FOR AN IDEAL EVENING OUT. EASY, **SEXY** AND **FASHIONABLE**. A YOUNG DESIGN TEAM THAT **KNOWS WHAT IT IS DOING**.



REPUBLIC

Omar Farooq knows how to dress a man.

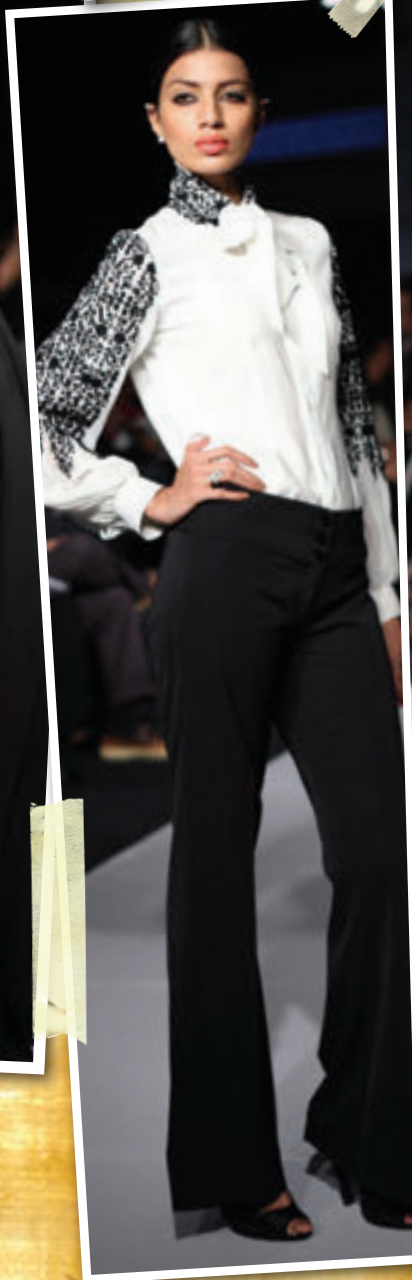
OMAR FAROOQ'S COLLECTION WAS SUAVE AND GAVE THE PAKISTANI MAN SOMETHING TO LOOK AT, SOMETHING TO LOOK LIKE AND SOMETHING TO GO AND BUY LOCALLY. OMAR USES THE FINEST ITALIAN CLOTH WITH IMMACULATE FINISHING AND PERFECT FITS WITH AFFORDABLE PRICES TO BOAST. IT IS CLEAR THAT OMAR IS PASSIONATE ABOUT BRINGING A CHANGE IN THE WAY PAKISTANI MEN DRESS. FINALLY IT WILL BE ACCEPTABLE TO WEAR A SLIM FIT SUIT AND NOT ONE WHICH IS A COUPLE OF SIZES TOO BIG.



SUBLIME

Classic, timeless and elegant.

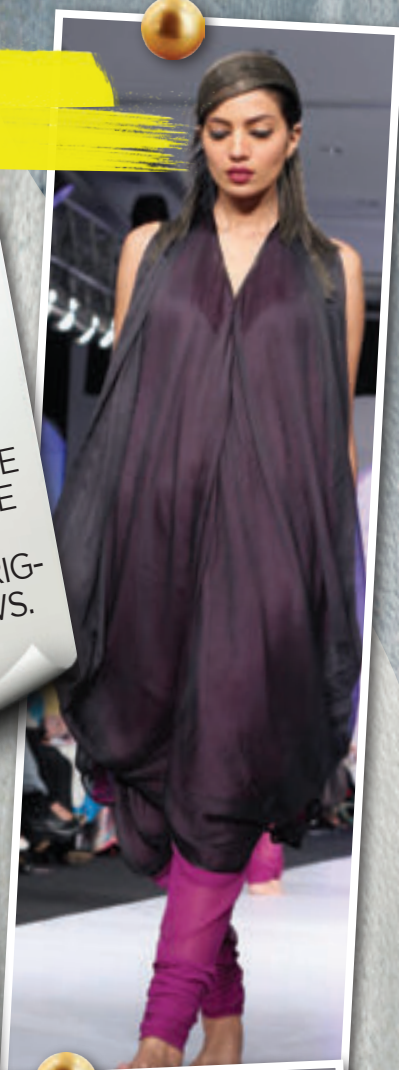
SARA SHAHID'S DESIGNS ARE CLASSIC, TIMELESS AND SIMPLY SUBLIME. THE MOST NOTICEABLE THING THAT SARA DID WITH THIS COLLECTION WAS NOT TO **FALTER FROM NEUTRAL TONES**. THIS COLLECTION IS FOR THOSE **WHO DON'T NEED TO TRY HARD TO BE FASHIONABLE**. WITH A LOT OF **SILKS AND LACE TO ACCENTUATE THE BEAUTY OF EVERY WOMAN - EACH DESIGN WAS ELEGANT.**



YBQ

Simplicity makes a statement.

YBQ'S COLLECTION WAS **COHESIVE**. HIS **EMPHASIS** WAS ON CUTS, RATHER THAN **EMBELLISHMENT**. IT SHOWED THAT A **SIMPLE ORIGINAL CUT** CAN TAKE US A LONG WAY. SIMPLICITY MAKES A **GOOD STATEMENT** AND PERHAPS **APT FOR THE TIMES** THAT WE ARE LIVING IN. YBQ'S **BRAVE AND BOLD** USE OF JUST TWO COLOURS - GREY AND PLUM WAS **REFRESHING**. ALWAYS ORIGINAL. IT IS **EXCITING** TO SEE HIS SHOWS.





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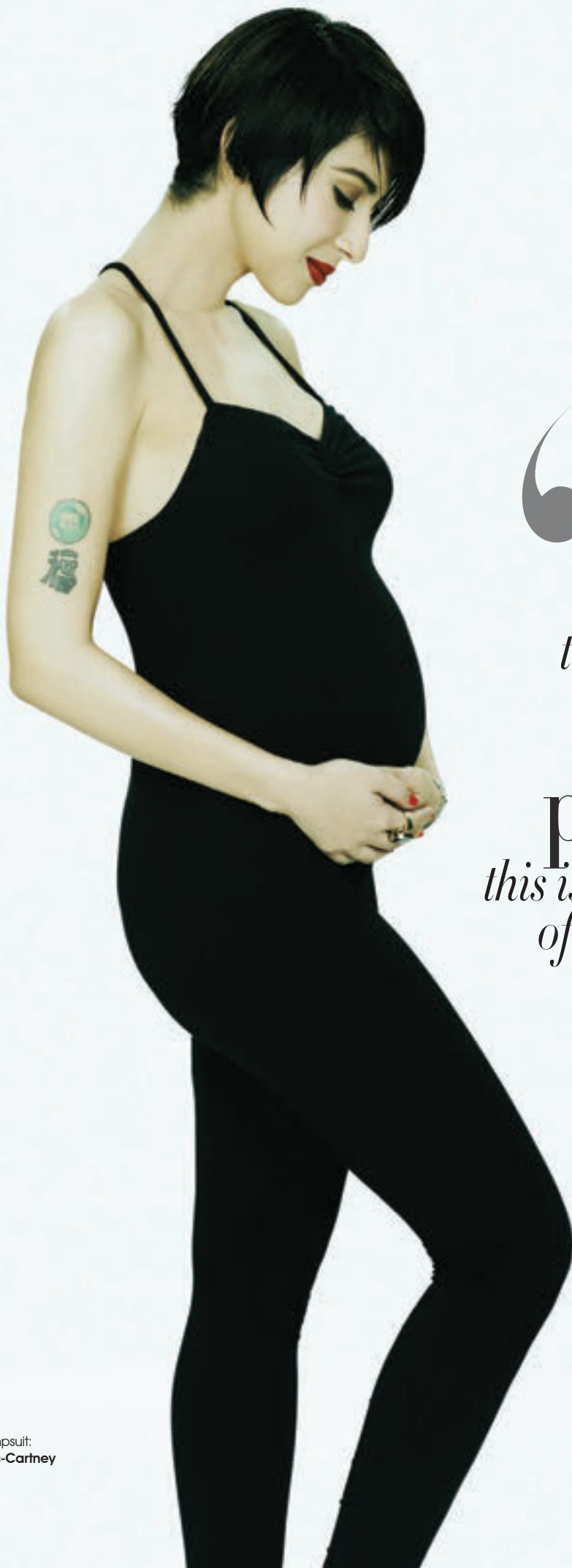
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BEAT EXPECTATIONS

*Punk Rocker
Meesha
Shafi
talks about
modeling, music
& motherhood.*

BY FAZEELAT ASLAM 

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **ATHER & SHEHZAD**, CONCEPT BY **SAMINA KHAN**



*It would be
hypocritical
to have a story done on
myself and to
exclude my
pregnancy,
this is an undeniable part
of my life right now.*

Black jumpsuit:
Stella Mc-Cartney

“I WANT TO THINK
ABOUT ALL
THE JOY &
HAPPINESS
AND POSITIVE
CHANGES
TO COME.”

I walk into Meesha Shafi’s home on a balmy afternoon to find her in a relaxed t-shirt and jeans. She looks better than most models do sauntering down the runway. Her husband, musician Mah-mood Rahman, sits casually close by. As we talk, the complete lack of pretense makes me wonder if this laid-back, affable songstress is the same person as the Coke Studio sensation we’ve been hearing about for months.

Intrigued by her subtle but unique style, as well as by the lack of sequins and embroidery most choose to don for interview attire, I ask if she has any desire to jump on the design bandwagon. “I don’t want people to wear stuff that I wear,” Shafi responds. “The reason I enjoy fashion is because I can make it mine. I don’t even want my wardrobe photographed.”

It seems, by this distinction, she doesn’t want her hair photographed either; her long locks have been snipped into a coquettish pixie cut. I ask her what prompted the drastic change.

“I just got bored, so I chopped it off,” she says straightforwardly. “I heard from one or two people that it wasn’t ‘commercially viable’ in this market to have short hair,” she laughs, using air quotes, “but I’ve had long hair my entire life, I’ve worked in this industry for ten years and I don’t think it helped me too much because my face is not ‘commercially viable’. I don’t fit the cookie cutter mold. I can’t sell tea, nobody’s going to buy it!”

She takes a sip from her mug and clarifies, “I only started getting endorsements when I became Meesha.”

She is of course referring to the phenomenon that is her hit single with Arif Lohar, *Jugni ji*, from the 2010 Coke Studio sessions. Shafi can now be seen on billboards, magazine covers and popular advertisements all over the nation. You won’t see her with her new hair though; corporations have gone to great lengths to make sure she appears exactly as she did, down to the colour of her outfit, in the *Jugni ji* music video.

“And it’s not just the corporate mindset,” she exclaims. “At a wedding recently, countless people confronted me and asked why I wasn’t wearing red lipstick.”



Rolled-up
boyfriend jeans:
J-Brand
Neon orange
sneakers:
CONVERSE



Unfazed by the call of the crowd, Shafi plays by her own rules and has reached the top by straying from the trends rather than following them. As I take in the surroundings, I note that her creativity is present in the artwork that adorns the walls. A quirky self-portrait in oil hangs in the corner.

“I was always interested in the arts, as far back as I can remember,” Shafi starts. “Everything I have done academically and professionally has been related to the arts.” She pauses. “I don’t paint these days. Actually right now more than anything I’d love to paint because everything else has taken a backseat. But you’re not supposed to paint when you’re pregnant.”

To reveal pregnancy, let alone exhibit it, is a taboo in society. However this hasn’t stopped Shafi from her musical or modeling career. She is an artist by nature, a model and singer by profession, and a force to be reckoned with.

“It would be hypocritical to have a story done on myself and to exclude my pregnancy. This is an undeniable part of my life right now.”

Following in the footsteps of Demi Moore, Cindy Crawford, Halle Berry and Claudia Schiffer, Shafi is featured posing pregnant on a cover – the first woman in Pakistan to do so. When I ask her why she chose to make such a bold statement, she responds, “I don’t want to be all talk and not back it up. I talk about being progressive and helping reduce taboos. A large part of hiding pregnancy is superstition. You’d be surprised how many people buy into it. It’s not something to

hide – it’s something to celebrate.”

Shafi’s attitude and confidence is atypical, which leads me to ask her why she’s chosen the conventional option of becoming a young mother.

“I’ve always wanted to be a young mother,” she asserts. “I think young parents are fantastic. I want to be able to have energy to match my child’s and to be able to relate to my child. I think it’s probably a lot easier as a parent when you’re younger and before you know it, you’re friends.”

But unlike most young mothers, Shafi is at what some would call the pinnacle of her career. I ask her how she responds to those who criticize her timing and claim that she’s hurt her popular appeal.

“As far as timing is concerned, I try and make my decisions based on whatever I feel is instinctively right to do at any given time. I’m not doing any of what I’m doing to become famous. I never have. It happened by itself. In fact, fame makes me quite uncomfortable.”

Shafi is clearly not going to bend to popular opinion, but she’s still determined to surpass her previous achievements.

“This has been a fantastic year for me,” she says “but that doesn’t mean this is as high as I will go.”

Shafi seems to be confident in the choices she has made. I ask her ▶



“IT’S NOT
something to
HIDE;
it’s something
to CELEBRATE”

Quick Q's with M

P. If I was to turn on your ipod right now, what five artists/songs would I see on your recently played list?

M. Beirut
Florence and the Machine
John Mayer
Moloko
Fiona Apple

P. If you could go open up for any artist on tour who would it be?


M. Red Hot Chilli Peppers

P. What is your most favourite recent fashion acquisition?

M. Neon sneakers.

P. What do you hate about fashion trends these days?

M. *Chapals* with heels and rhinestones, and jeans that don't fit right.



where she gets her strength from, and how she is able to disregard convention in favour of personal choice. She responds that she's "carefree but not careless."

"As a child I was told the difference between right and wrong but I was also given the freedom to try out what was wrong, which you have to be very brave as a parent to do. I'm hoping to raise my child the way I was raised. I'm just a lot more fortunate because I have a lot of support from my husband whereas my mother was a single parent."

Having been raised in a family of strong, working women and married into one with similar principles, Shafi attributes her strength in the industry to her family. "The biggest privilege of coming from a supportive family is the advice and support that you get from people you can trust unconditionally. There are girls in show business who don't come from a supportive family, or don't marry into one. They have to sometimes trust people who are not the best choice. When you can talk to people at home there's a huge difference, because they don't have agendas. Nobody can point a finger at you when you know that the people around you know and approve of what you do. What makes a difference, is if the people around you are supportive. That would be him." She points to her husband.

The two met at the National College of Arts in Lahore where they completed their undergraduate degrees. Rahman was Shafi's predecessor as director for the music society, and the two continue to work in the music industry together in the band Overload.

White cotton
dress shirt:
ARMANI
Mauve plaid
socks:
Stradivarius

While the sheer might of *Jugni ji* has currently engulfed Shafi's career, Overload has had its fair share of success too. Unbeknownst to many, she penned the Urdu hit *Dhol baje ga* herself.

I ask Shafi what she feels the problem is with music these days. "Every song has the same words. Everyone is singing 'Where did you go? Why did you go? Why did you do this? How could you do this?' I wrote *Dhol baje ga*, and it's tongue-in-cheek, because why does everyone have to be deep to be taken seriously? You have 19-year-olds singing about experiences I doubt they've gone through. I can't relate to it and I don't buy it."

With a thriving musical and modeling career, Shafi is frequently on the go. I turn to her husband and ask him what he does when his wife is gone for long stretches of time. He turns to me and says, "I sob hysterically into my pillow and ask, 'why did she leave me? What did I do? Where did she go?'"

Rahman's response is indicative of the relationship they have. They don't take themselves too seriously - a rare quality amongst most people, let alone rockstars and models.

Shafi takes life "one day at a time," which is why this pregnancy is not something she's allowed herself to become frantic over. Her only concern is her lack of weight gain; in her second trimester (yes, she looks like that at 6 months) she's gained less than ten pounds.

"I take the dog for a walk every other day, but I'm thinking of doing some prenatal yoga, which is good for the mother and the baby."

Shafi's only real indulgence has been the setting up the nursery for the baby. And despite the calm she presents, she can't hide her excitement.

"I want to think about all the joy and the happiness and positive changes to come," says Shafi. "As a working person, soon to be working mother, I've already cut down work so I'll have enough time to balance my schedule."

Aside from bringing some serious natural talent to the scene, Shafi truly puts her money where her mouth is. She takes everything from her pregnancy to her success in stride without the histrionics that supplement most stars. In a time where it seems rationale has gone out of fashion in favour of the ridiculous, Shafi is both grounded and groundbreaking. ■





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BIG LOVE

Becoming a mother is one of the most emotional times in a woman's life. Four real life mothers share their thoughts and experiences.

Compiled by Zahra Hameed



Photographs courtesy of Sana & Mikael Habib

Rabia Mughal WORKING MOM ABROAD

Every day when I walk out the door my son turns his little wobbly head and follows my movement as long as his line of vision allows. I walk out the door, take a deep breath, and start the ten minute walk to work with my mind roiling with doubts and anxiety. I am a working mom of a four-month-old. When I moved to the US many years ago I put all my efforts and energy into building a journalism career and then at the height of its realisation a tiny angel came along and changed everything.

When Mikail was born I knew I would go back to work and I actually walked into my office with a smile on my face exactly twelve weeks after his birth.

"Oh, this is not too bad," I told myself at 9:15 a.m. At 9:30 a.m. I was sobbing in the ladies room as his video played on a loop on my phone.

Such is the dilemma of the working mother whose career is not an option but a passion, a need. For those of us who go to work for more than just a paycheck the choice is harder than the labour pains that brought our precious bundles into this world. Initially when I walked back into the door seven hours later there was no magical reunion full of gummy smiles and coos. No, it was a much more unpredictable affair than that. My baby

boy – not yet emotionally intelligent enough to realise that mommy need an affirmation of love – would sometimes ignore me for five or so minutes before it dawned on him that the sounds of "hi baba" need to be acknowledged.

I had to constantly remind myself that he is in loving hands during the day and my evenings and weekend belong exclusively to him. Even a manicure is an intrusion on our time together. Even the sound of television is not acceptable when my baby and I are having a conversation. Dinner and social occasions are acceptable only if they include him.

Yes, life is at a standstill. I have given up my own time and life for these months and that is the best compromise I can think of. Seeing him rock on his hind legs fully poised to crawl as I cheer him on is better than a Broadway show any day.

And lately his little face lights up as soon as I walk through that door. He looks right into my eyes and even though he can't speak to me yet I know he is thinking.

"Yo wasssupp mommy, wanna see me roll over," and that toxic feeling that I carry around in the pit of my stomach recedes just a tiny bit.

Mina Malik Hussain

MOM AT HOME

Before my daughter was born, when people asked me what I did I used to laugh and wonder where to begin. I was at one time juggling three jobs, and loving each one. I was teaching creative writing, working with a feminist-activist NGO and directing amateur theatre productions. I marked final exams with the *lappa* on my *maiyun dupatta* getting into my eyes; I did the curtain call for my last production eight months pregnant. Two days before giving birth I was at Alhamra watching Ajoka's magnificent '*Bhulha*'. Post-birth, I became a stay at home *Amma* believing that I could carry on with my interests and raise an infant. A baby had always been part of the plan just as writing and theatre was, so there needn't be a dichotomy. What I didn't count on was what other people would think of me, and how much I would mind.

The response to 'what do you do?' now, instead of eliciting interest or surprise, became a rapid shutters-down 'oh'. Someone even said 'so you don't do anything' when I said I was a full-time mother. At the time I wanted to frog-march her through my fifteen-hour day and ask how many babies her uterus had spent thirteen hours getting out. It bothered me that my identity was so firmly bracketed by being a mother that everything else- the thespian, writer, teacher, feminist- was blotted out by that condescending 'oh'. I was an aunty. I had to abandon social plans because the baby wouldn't go to sleep. I wore sensible shoes. Conversations- when my brain could sustain one- were abruptly ended by a hungry child. It was and still can be terrifying. Where did I go? Was I doomed to be a baby-slave, picking macaroni out of my hair and changing diapers for eternity? Would the bohemian free spirit I imagined myself ever come back? I loved my baby but somehow that took up a lot of the capacity I had for loving myself.

Truth be told, I didn't go anywhere, but that took time to realise. I came out when I found myself singing 'under the sea' during bath-time. I came out when I read E.E Cummings to an audience who wanted to chew the pages. It is still there when I drape the toddler in a towel-toga and do 'Friends, Romans, countrymen'. As she gets older it becomes easier to find time for a quiet read, a long bath, and some pages written. Sometimes I feel a pang of desperation when I think of the degrees I've postponed or my unwritten book. Those are days when the baby is howling, her lunch is on my sweater, I'm tired and the errands loom. But at the end of it there is my sunny, intelligent toddler of whom I am unerringly proud, and just as much of myself for trying as hard as I can, every day, to be a good mother. My self-worth needn't hinge on my cool jobs. I have a pretty fabulous one forever.



Rabia & Mikael



Sahar & Ismail



Mina & Khairunisa



Sara, Nayum & Shayaan

“Someone even said, ‘so you don’t do anything after i told them I was a full-time mother. At the time I wanted to frog-march her through my fifteen-hour day and ask how many babies her uterus had spent thirteen hours getting out”.

Sahar Amin

NEW MOM

Most of my friends who have children would say that their first pregnancy was their easiest. Never mind the fact that they vomited every day for the first trimester and all the other yucky stuff that happens. The first pregnancy

sets the standard for what is normal in a woman's mind about how it should go the next time around. There is something blissful about that ignorance.

Bringing the baby to this world leaves you exhausted - you are wheeled out to your car with your new bundle of joy, dreamily admiring your husband. Everything is rose-coloured and you think the hard part is over. Then you get home - a very strange, surreal place with a newborn human plopped down in your living room floor for the first time. Your home literally changes around you and you have to adjust. Oh yeah, and all the space that baby gear occupies. Could “they” make strollers, swings, car seats, any bigger or obnoxiously coloured?

The first night home with a newborn is like being taught how to swim

by being pushed into the deep end by a mean swimming instructor. Remember when you were still pregnant and your mom told you to “sleep while you can” and you just rolled your eyes at her? You may have planned to go to bed after an episode of Grey’s Anatomy as always, but your sweet baby turns into a maniacal dictator and you have no choice but to fall in line with his schedule.

The hard part of being a first-time mom is the utter lack of sleep. It can make anything seem ten times worse than it actually is. Breastfeeding may be going terribly, your kid could be soiling ten outfits a day, your husband may be going on with his life as normal but all you want to do is curl up and nap. It’s hard to feel enthusiastic about hanging out with friends when you haven’t showered in days and your smelly shirt is full of spit up!

Eventually you emerge from your cocoon. One day you boldly feel like you can brave a trip to the bazaar or to a friend’s place. Yes, it takes you an hour to groggily pack the essentials you need to bring with you and once you get to your destination you hope and pray that no one clutches your baby’s hands, infecting them with the swine flu or the plague! You even feel confident enough to let grandma watch him while you go out to dinner with your husband to chat about, of all things, the baby.

Sara Shahid WORKING MOM

Truth is that all moms work and being a mother is a job in itself, though one that is unfortunately not appreciated as much. I am a “working mother” as I also run the designer label Sublime by Sara. I have two children - a daughter Nayum, 9, and a son Shayaan, 4, and of course my third child Sublime, 8. It’s been a journey of love, balance, goals, achievement, fear and immense joy. I have enjoyed every little milestone that I have reached and tried to enjoy the journey it took to get there. My business grew from my home to a small studio to my flagship store which I opened a week before my son’s first birthday. I am blessed to have been able to reach my goals without compromising on anything that was important in my life. It has been an incredible amount of multitasking, occasional guilt trips, times I have wanted to give up and then times of immense joy in the smallest of achievements. My children have grown up with Sublime and view it as an integral part of who mama is today.

As a mother we are not allowed to disappear for hours on end. We will always have calls from home with little demands – silly issues – arguments from the kids. I miss you mama. When will you be back calls. We will be planning who needs to be dropped, what groceries to buy and just simply be a home maker. But when that call comes we will put everything on hold and address what is the most important – the kids, home – and then resume our work. It is a constant struggle of finding the right balance, prioritising and occasionally letting go of opportunities that may come our way as a mother of growing kids. This is a choice we make as working mothers and reap the benefits of having a career as well as a family. Both are important for a woman’s identity and make you who you are. ■



“We will always have calls from home with little demands – silly issues – arguments from the kids. I miss you mama. When will you be back.”



GLAM MOMS

Top style trends for MATERNITY

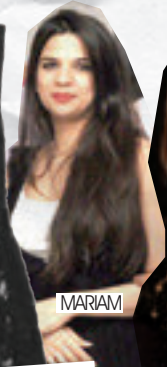
MATERNITY LACE: is the hottest trend right now. It's a great way to show some skin in the right places; feel feminine and sexy.



Top Shop maternity lace angora shrug **\$70**



D & G sleeveless lace top **\$380**



MARIAM



ZAHRAA SAIFULLAH



ALICIA KEYS



JESSICA SIMPSON



Brown faux fur stole **\$30**

ROCKER CHIC: another big maternity trend is combining skinny jeans, with a graphic sweater boots and a leather jacket.



Top Shop grey chain detail jersey scarf **\$50**



PENELOPE CRUZ



EVA LONGORIA

Isabella Oliver ruched midi dress **\$195**

MONOCHROME: Wearing all one colour from head-to-toe is slimming and stylish. Plus, not having to match pieces makes it a no-fuss option for busy moms-to-be.



KOURTNEY KARDASHIAN

THE MIRACLE OF BRONZER:

Wondering how you can hide your double chin? Brush bronzer along your jawline to provide shading to give the illusion of a thinner neckline. Warning: Avoid over shading or you may look like you have a beard.

YVES SAINT LAURENT lingot gold plated heart ring **\$250**



Jimmy Choo Witty leopard-print suede flats **\$300**

SKINNY JEANS: Don't panic! Skinny maternity jeans show off your legs and contain a bit of stretch for maximum comfort. Pair with bump-hugging sweaters, print tunic tops and funky belts.



Seven jeans **\$185**



Alia cross-over studded suede belt **\$120**

BELT YOUR BUMP: Pair your sweater dress with a belt — below or above — your growing bump for much needed waist definition.

SLIMMING MAKE-UP: Make your eyes pop by lining with black eyeliner, kajal and finishing off with mascara. A soft lipstick hue will top off your look perfectly. Who will notice anything but your notice-me eyes?



SAHAR

Jimmy Choo Mandah studded suede boots **\$1072**

THE

EVOLUTION OF CHILDCARE

By Sophia Kasuri 

RAISING A CHILD IS ABOUT BALANCING YOUR PROFESSIONAL & PERSONAL LIVES

Forgive me for being trite, but times really are changing. When I was growing up, there were no fancy terms for ‘childcare’ – it was simply taking care of your children or ‘baby-sitting’ at best. Working or busy parents would leave their children in the care of their grandparents or the household *aaya*. I, for one, grew up in a household where my mother personally took care of my siblings and me. However life has really changed since then. The rise of urbanisation has led to an increase in dual income families. Today there are more young working mothers in Pakistan than ever before – even if some of them are working from home. With both parents involved in the workforce, there’s been a knock-on effect on family structure and how children are raised within the home environment. This is especially relevant when it comes to young or new parents with newborns or toddlers.

For many working parents today, a live-in nanny can be an enormous source of financial stress and emotional anxiety. Unlike the days of yore, even people who can afford live-in nannies remain nervous about the ‘bad apple’ who abuses children or disappears without warning. Nowadays, the turnover period for a household nanny is three months on average – and unless you’re amongst the privileged few who can afford to employ foreign help (the current favourites being the Philippino nannies), you’ll be hard-pressed to find someone you’re comfortable leaving your child with for extended periods of time. Add to this the fact that a large number of grandparents today hail from the ‘baby boomer’ generation, hence are relatively young and busy in their own right, leaving one with relatively few options.

Within this scenario, child raising becomes a question of balancing ones’ professional and personal lives for many young parents. And this, in turn, has led to the rise of day care centres in Pakistan.

The concept of a day care originated with the 19th century US welfare and reform movements to care for immigrant and working class children while their impoverished mothers worked. The modern-day day care centre evolved from these ‘day nurseries’ that began in Boston in the 1840s.

However the growing number of working mothers and dual income families in Pakistan in modern times has led a need for alternative child care services. Today’s day care centres fulfil this need – they provide dependable child care services so that parents can rest assured that their children are in a safe environment with steady trained care-givers. For parents, this means a stress free option; for the kids, it’s an environment where they can play and interact with other kids - nap time, lunch and snacks are all part of what children can expect at a good day care facility.

Nonetheless, recent findings in early childhood development have revealed that effective child care is more than just ‘baby-sitting’. It’s about giving children



a positive start in life and providing them (and their parents) with the tools they need to become better, more confident learners. We now know that 80 percent of the human brain develops between the ages of 0 and 3 years. Therefore we need to ensure that we are focusing on the development of our children’s core cognitive and motor skills – the basic tools they will need when they later enter the early schooling environment.

We also know that children need to play – and that they learn from positive interaction with adults they trust. Children emulate what they see around them, from expressions to tones of voice and so on – and, therefore, parents are their children’s most influential teachers. Recent research (conducted at Northwestern University earlier this year) also revealed that early Homo Sapien fathers played an instrumental role in the rearing of their children – especially with newborns and toddlers.

In an interview with Discovery News in March this year, Northwestern researcher Lee Gettler said that “dads in early human species would have aided in carrying children, as well as in their bathing, feeding, playing and teaching them the lessons of prehistoric life.” The research further revealed that this parental role played a key part in the proliferation of the human species.

The question then arises, how do parents today – who are swamped with work and busy schedules – find the time to spend with their children? More to the point, where do they learn the skills they as parents require to ensure they are doing the best to help develop their children’s early cognitive and other learning skills.

That’s where the latest day care centre comes in –they focus on programmes involving parent-child interaction (unlike the ‘traditional drop-off day care’) for children aged 0-5 years. And by doing so, they provide parents with the skills they need to help make their children confident learners.

Admittedly, early childhood development centres cannot replace traditional drop-off centres, they provide an important – indeed essential – ingredient. And many such centres will also have ‘drop off’ programmes for slightly older children (those within the 4-5 year range).

The children and toddlers of today are the leaders of tomorrow. It’s therefore imperative that we, as parents, ensure that we do everything in our power to facilitate their education and mental and emotional growth. ■

What to Expect When You're Expecting

By Arlene Eisenberg, Heidi Murkoff & Sandee Hathaway. The quintessential pregnancy bible from the What to Expect series that all moms swear by. This book is arranged by month, from the pregnancy test through labour and delivery. Each section offers answers to frequently asked questions, along with features such as "What You May Be Feeling" and "What You May Be Concerned About."

Available at **READINGS AND LIBERTY BOOKS**



1

HOT Water Bottle

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WWW.BOOTSCOM.COM

2

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Feel pretty and super comfortable in a 100% cotton nightshirt, pj's with a robe. Available at **MOTHERCARE**



3



CHOCOLATE MOOSE Rocking Chair

Get comfy with your favorite book and rock yourself to sleep in this fantastic rocking chair, designed by Mehar of White.

4

DREAM GENII Pregnancy Support Pillow

A dual purpose feeding and support pillow that will get you through your pregnancy and help with breast feeding. It supports your back, bump and knees at the same time and aids a much needed restful night's sleep.

Order online
WWW.MOTHERCARE.COM



5

7 PREGNANCY ESSENTIALS

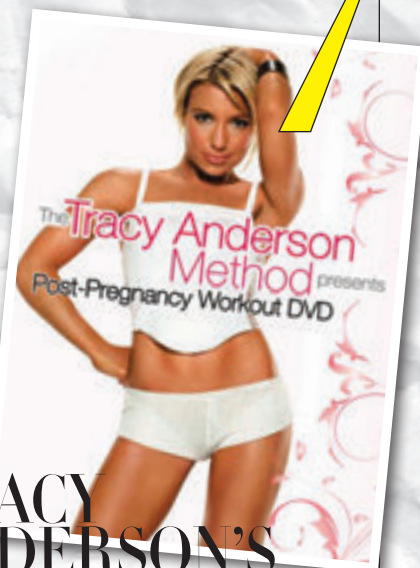
WHAT YOU **NEED**, WHAT YOU **WANT** AND WHAT REALLY **WORKS**

BELLY BANDIT

An abdominal compression binder designed to help you get your body back to its former fabulousness post childbirth. It helps reduce uterine swelling, water retention and gives support for weary legs and back. Courtney Kardashian, Minnie Driver & new mom Sana Raza swear by it.

Order online
WWW.BELLYBANDIT.COM

6



TRACY ANDERSON'S Post Pregnancy Workout 2010

Celebrity Trainer Tracy Anderson is the woman responsible for helping Madonna and Gwyneth Paltrow snap back into shape after two babies in quick succession.

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WWW.AMAZON.COM

7



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INTERIORS

An intimate
portrait of
interior
designer
**GHAZALA
RAHMAN**

By Fazeelat Aslam



Walking into the home of Ghazala Rahman, founder of In Design interiors, is similar to gazing into a mirrored kaleidoscope; there's a delight in every corner with a restrained balance that doesn't overwhelm the eye. Looking through a kaleidoscope, the colours and patterns steer the gaze from one corner to another. The geometry of it, the harmony of its symmetry is what truly captivates you to explore its intricacies. The house charms you from the minute you enter the main gate. In the front entrance hang two small replicas of Frida Kahlo's consummate pieces. As I walk in the first thing I see is a gold-mustard armoire next to a painting of three women by Anwar Saeed.

"This work can't be done by anyone," says Rahman as she traces her fingers delicately over the hand painted armoire. "Look at the hand painting and patina, I finished it myself. In the early stages of my career I would sometimes do the colouring and layout and even draw with the craftsmen. This is one of my favourite pieces."

Rahman proceeds to give a tour of her home which her and her family have lived in since the 1980s. In a time when stylists reign





supreme, everything from the clothes one wears to the paintings in one's home are, for many, dictated by the status quo.

"It's totally commercial," Rahman comments on the current interior design practices. "When I started working with interiors, people had collections to work with. You have a collection and then you build your interior around that. You don't start with a blank slate. Now it's like the house has been made, the decorator has come, you don't choose items down to the ashtray. It's impersonal, it's brash, it's over the top. There's not participation by the client at all."

Rahman's home reflects her craft, her fashion and most significantly, her culture. The house was designed by visionary architect Kamil Khan Mumtaz.

"We both worked on it together. He was my teacher at college and I had a lot of respect for his work. I really appreciate Muslim architecture across the world and that was Kamil's forte. Naturally, being a designer, I wanted to be involved with it at every stage of planning. I wanted the best he had to offer for my home."

THE TRADITIONAL ISLAMIC STRUCTURE OF THE HOUSE IS DEFINED BY ITS STRUCTURAL SYMMETRY DISTINCTLY MEASURED BY MULTIPLES OF THREE

As we continue through the house, Rahman explains the traditionally Islamic structure of the house, which is defined by its structural symmetry distinctly measured by multiples of three. We walk onto the patio, which once again in traditional Islamic style, is invariably connected with the rooms of the house that surround it. As we reach the master bedroom we meet Rahman's husband, Rashid Rahman, who, whilst sipping his afternoon tea, proclaims rather ceremoniously, "This is Ghazala's house, I only live in it."

Only a house this colourful could house such colourful inhabitants. Eventually we decide to sit in the family room, which boasts many of Rahman's signature designs, including wooden *jaalis* (screens), which beautifully serve the function of venetian blinds. It also holds two striking paintings by Rooha Ghaznavi. Aside from their collection of Chughtais, the rest of the house is speckled with an assortment of artists.

"I haven't bought expensive art ever. I've bought young artists who over the years; it's just my luck - have become extremely well known and established. When I collected art there weren't many art galleries. There was more intimacy in knowing artists; that's how I got this collection of miniatures in the studies."

We settle into the family room where tea is served. The room's features epitomise the innate beauty of the house.

"I love natural materials, so a lot of the materials used in this house are wood, marble, and brick - but I don't like too many patterns. The best way to design is when you know when to stop and if you don't know when to stop that's when you get into trouble with designing anything."

When I ask Rahman, what she considers to be the ideal home she explains the utility of the home, which works in harmony with its aesthetic.

"What I wanted was a home that belonged to Lahore and not anywhere else. I love the climate of Lahore throughout the year." She stops and looks around the room filled with daylight. "The light is very important so that the house breathes, and it's got shifting light throughout the day." ➤



ELEMENTS OF ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE



MIRRORED CLOSET



ROOHA GHAZNAVI



“The best way to design is when you know when to stop”



THE LOUNGE



CHUGTAI

ANWAR SAEED



Rahman is dedicated to promoting a craft that she can call her own. Her commitment to building a home that is congruous with its natural environment is characteristic of her attitude towards her own craft.

“My own work was initially very steeped in looking at our own traditions. If you don’t look at your own traditions you really can’t be authentic. You can be as modern as you want, but your roots are there.” Rahman studied fine arts at the National College of Arts in Lahore, after which she worked designing sets for PTV in Lahore, Karachi and Islamabad.

“After I graduated and got married, I was a designer for television. A bunch of us young people joined PTV and it was fantastic; a very creative environment. I did a lot of work in five years.”

Rahman’s career in furniture was an evolution: she began her foray into design with hand woven and screen printed fabrics which eventually turned to working with crafts, and skilled labour.

“Salima Hashmi had a lovely gallery in Pindi called Rohtas. She had my first show and no one could believe it was done in Pakistan. I’d sourced from textiles, from wall paintings, from frescos, I did hundreds of patterns.”

Rahman eventually started a company, now known as In Design, in 1979. For the first 6 years it functioned as a workshop. In 1985 the showroom was established, with another visionary architect, Nayyar Ali Dada.

At this point, Rahman’s two sons, Taimur and Jamal walk into the room. “Am I going to sit with the entire family and do this interview?” Rahman quips. “This is extremely difficult for me!”

“This is what you do to my interviews!” Taimur, her elder son, retorts. Rahman’s younger son, Jamal, is the successor of In Design as he has grown up with the business and recently joined on full-time. Rahman herself did not have similar support when she began her career.

“I found the business side very tough; to pioneer on your own, not to be dependant, to work with labour, do your accounts, to build a shop, to have a separate working place from the home, to run a home, to bring up three small children...” Rahman is cut off.

“Two, ma.” Jamal reminds his mother.

“Third was the husband.” Rahman ripostes without skipping a beat. Her humour, much like her resilience, is indubitable. “Looking after the family was very tough. Rashid is very liberal but I had to do my own work, I discussed things with him at home but he doesn’t interfere and tell me what to do. The responsibility was and is entirely mine, and this was thirty years ago. Women from my period are pioneers in their own field and are opening the doors for other women to come.”

I ask Rahman what her biggest struggles were as a working woman in her field at the time.

“People ran away with my work all the time and I didn’t have a clue - how can you when you’ve been living in a protective environment?”

Customers, clients, workers, staff, labour - my work was auctioned! There are smart people out there who see your weakness and exploit it. Designers copied my work, big shot designers were picking up chairs from each other’s homes. I thought it was so pointless, because I had the recognition, but how could I run my business day to day?” She takes a sip from her tea. “When I felt like giving up, I talked to my children, my husband and they helped me. They pulled me out of it.”

Rahman was business savvy, but she made a name for herself purely because of her innovative design.

“I looked very hard and closely at what was there before me. I don’t feel designers feel the need to do that today, whether it’s in fashion, furniture, or textiles.”

Rahman’s devotion to local craft is clear through her incorporation of it in her life and work.

“We look at culture in a very superficial way, we don’t understand what it means. Culture is your language, your literature, and your skills. We can build beautiful homes, and give recognition to our craftsman. I am the catalyst, as a designer, for that skill. I can’t do it without him. That respect, that relationship, you need to develop that. In India, they cultivated their local crafts and textiles and it gave them an identity. When they built that base it was a state enterprise.

They’ve made a lifetime commitment to build that sense of identity and pride in themselves. We have always imported, we have not recognized what is our own.”

I ask Rahman about the pieces she considers successes and which ones are close to her heart. ▶

*If you don't look
at your own
traditions
you really can't be
authentic*



THE STUDY

“My furniture has never had that snobbery, everyone has bought it. When it started getting copied it was selling to everybody. I have a chair, which sits in my bedroom. It was one of my first chairs, and thirty years later it’s still selling. It gives me enormous pleasure that my design is still going into so many homes. All of my designs are original, but they don’t all come out of my head; I research a lot.”

Rahman’s initial work explored the Raj period, looking at British influence in India and how local craftsmen interpreted it. Her design has manifested into many different aesthetics since, ranging from Chinese household furniture featuring clean lines, to modern art deco from the 1920s and 1930s that has a more classic and elegant feel.

“It makes sense to look at what is modern today because you always have to be with the times - not in the sense that you’re following a trend, but to evolve naturally towards it.”

Rahman’s home is a testament to her talent as well as her perseverance over the years. Each nook reveals details that have been arranged with great thought and care, which only makes them more wonderful to discover. It is rare in this age of immediate gratification to find a space that has developed over time with such reverence to its innate structure. The house has evolved organically, each addition and modification reflecting the families’ changing needs and priorities. Most significantly, it is a home that could never be bought; only cultivated by a true eye for natural beauty and through a holistic understanding of its environment. ■



SOURCES OF LIGHT



THE FAMILY ROOM

PAPER HOME

A collection of furniture and home accessories to add personality, and comfort to your interiors.

MIAN AHAD

Defining refined elegance for more than two decades, Main Ahad's hand-crafted furniture in luxurious fabrics represents a confluence of modern and classical styles.



Art Deco veneered armchair with cream white velvet chienne



Classic French settee with Italian check fabric

Prices available on request



Breakfast table with leatherette detailing

LA MAISON

Specializing in leatherette and clean-cut lines, Erum Raojee and Mehreen Ghaus Akbar's sophisticated and functional collection of accessories adds flair to everyday living.



Cigar Tray with stainless steel legs
Prices available on request



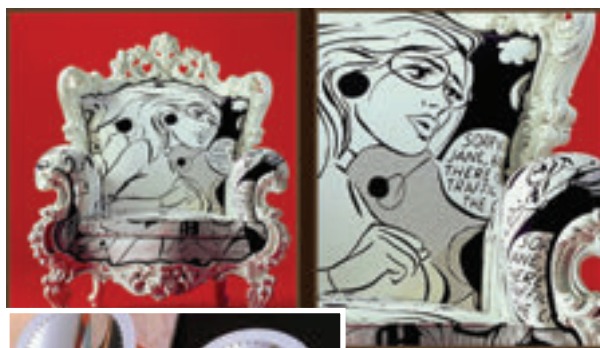
Ayuthaya Buddha Rs 12-16,000.



Tree Side Table Rs 25,000

ZAMANA

With her interior design experience from New York, Fatima Salahuddin brings a funky new edge to furniture and accessories with a bold collection of pieces in gold.



Comic chair in wood with quirky comic print graphics. Rs 155,000.



Steelica wood and stainless steel accent chair Rs 125,000

CASA HAMZA

Hamza Tarrar believes that every room should be like an art installation. Make a statement with these fabulously quirky and cool pieces.

WHITE BY MEHAR



New Autumn armchair over-sized leather armchair. Rs 32,000



Marble chess pieces Rs 18,000- 21,000 a pair
NY king size bed Rs 68,000

Unique, comfortable and contemporary pieces by Mehar Chohan



➤ Diva Diva upholstered in a mix of Central Asian textiles, old *sari* borders and velvet.



➤ Carved horse and patch work leather trunks.

THE OLD SILK ROUTE

An eclectic mix of tapestries and treasures from around the world – The Old Silk Route uses only real leather and exotic textiles in its furniture. The next collection will feature antique Benares sarees and Tajik pieces.

Prices available on request

On a Rococo tour de force, these 18th century reproductions by Gallery 98 add grandeur and grace to your interiors.

A Louis XIV Le Roi Soleil table with walnut and rosewood veneer top, mounted on cabriole feet with pure brass accents. Reproduction of the original circa 1715. PKR 250,000 ➤



GALLERY 98

➤ Walnut and rosewood veneer bombe commode with marquetry and cabriole legs with brass accents. PKR 85,000

AEDL FURNITURE



➤ Espasso chair in cowhide – bent *shisham* with solid brass feet and upholstery Rs 28,000

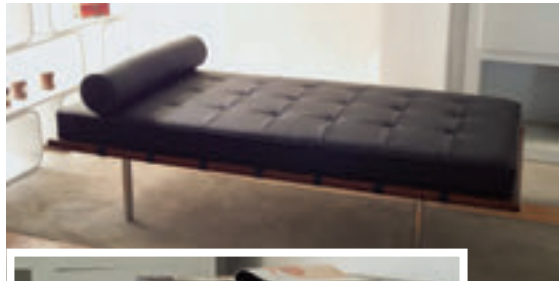


➤ Wood Stalactite – side table in varied lengths of solid beech wood, Rs 48,000

We love these cool modern pieces with an architectural twist by AEDL – an architectural and interior design firm established in 2004. Alternative finishes and bespoke elements can be added on request.

SOUL RUMMS

Modern and sleek furniture pieces, furnishing, lights and accessories for stylish interiors.



➤ Barcelona Day Bed Price: Rs 44,500



➤ Nest Side Tables Price: Rs 15,400



➤ Bedroom chairs Rs 18,000
Round table with glass top Rs 16,000

NYLA CONCEPTS

Contemporary made-to-order furniture and accessories at fantastic prices.

➤ Lounge Ottoman Rs 9,500

ART FOR A CAUSE

By Asif Khan



The spirits were high at the black tie Indus Inspirations 2 Charity Art Auction as guests out bid one another for an exquisite collection of artworks in support of the Sanjan Nagar School & Trust.

It was an electrifying night, when a fresh faced student took centre stage to share her experience of how a quality education at the Sanjan Nagar School has transformed her life. It was a moving story about the potential and power of the human spirit. A testament to its founder Raza Kazim's vision of 'enabling the weak' that has culminated into a highly accomplished student body and administration, in the 16 years since the first SNPET School was first set up.

The guests were moved by a sense of empowerment to genuinely make a difference in furthering SNPET's aim to upscale its program to a hundred schools. As the auction began, Edward Rising, senior consultant auctioneer from Sotheby's started the bidding. Everyone took to their seats, excited at the prospect of outbidding one another for the collection of artworks – donated by twenty seven leading Pakistani artists and the legendary M.F Hussian.

The venue, managing trustee Baela Jamil's residence looked resplendent with a gallery displaying the artworks, an outdoor reception and a tasteful auction space. The scrumptious canopies and cocktails by Cosa Nostra and the live classical music were an ideal combination.

It was refreshing to see Lahore's most influential families, educationists, industrialists, artists and celebrities mingling together and supporting the cause of education and the arts. Red carpet hosts Kamiar Rokni & Maleeha Najpaul added glamour to the evening. Nadia Jamil & Faisal Qureshi co-hosted the auction sharing their experience of the school.

The stars of the evening were the artists – the presence of old masters, upcoming and young talent like Shahid Sajjad, Meher Afroze, Mian Ahad, Sheherezade Alam, Fauzia Minallah, Ghulam Hyder Daudpota, Muhammad Illyas, R.M Naeem, Sadaf Naeem, Irfan Gul, Faisal Asgher, Rasheda Raza and Emaan Mahmud was appreciated by the guests.

The spirit of giving was inspirational and helped raise funds for the Sanjan Nagar School.



NASREEN KASURI, FATIMA, ALI & SOPHIA



SABENE SAIGOL & ALI ZAFAR



MALEEHA & AYESHA



SIDRA SHOAB SANJAN NAGAR SCHOOL

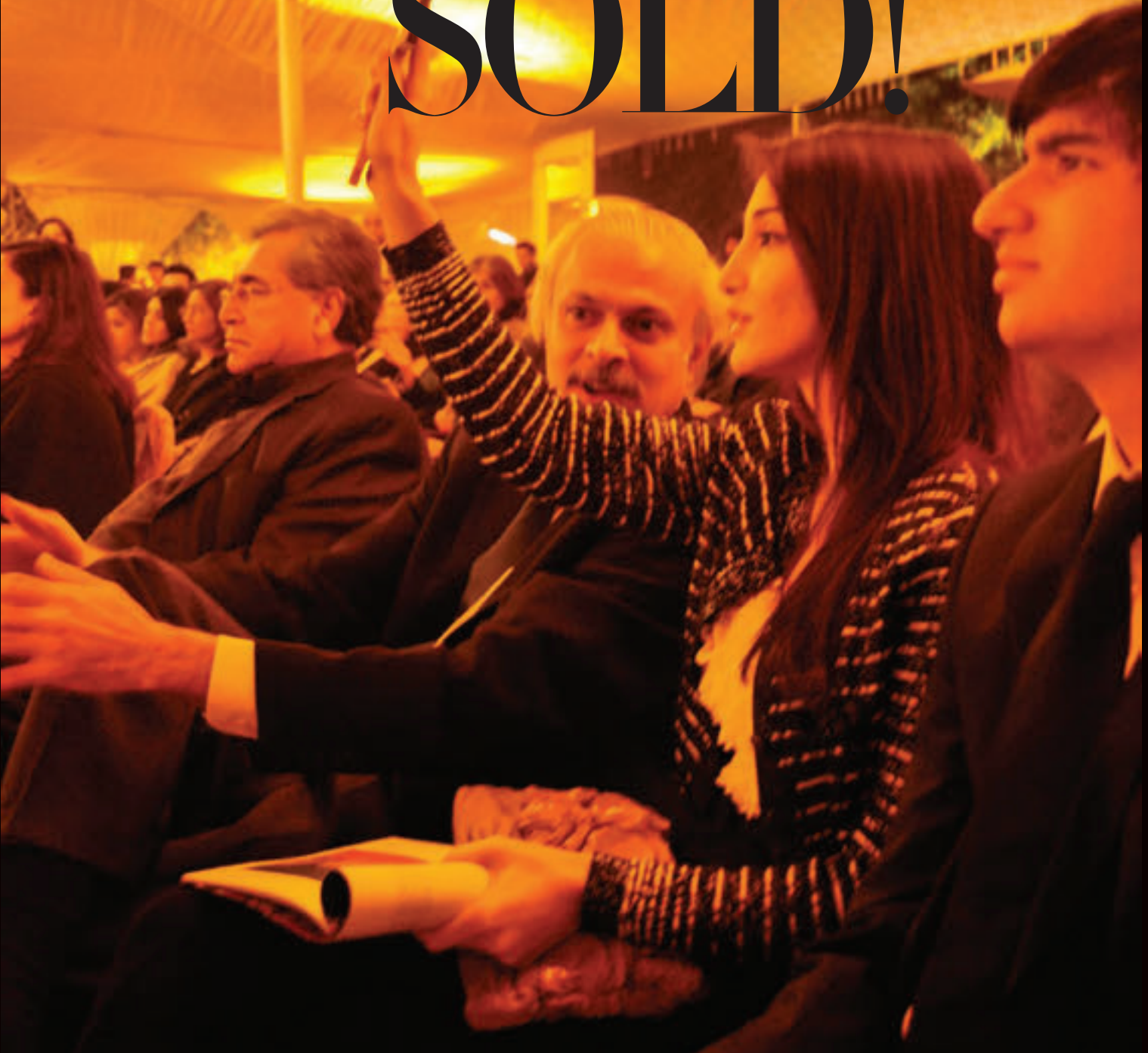


IMAN ALI



RUTH, HELGA TWANA & VALERIE KAUL

GOING *once...* GOING *twice...* SOLD!



ALAMGIR TAREEN & SEHER

us Inspirations II

Education

MR EDWARD RISING.

Senior Consultant Auctioneer,
Sotheby's

*"One of the best auctioneers
I have seen"*

**LORD HARRY
DALMENY,**

Deputy chairman, Sotheby's.

Edward Rising is an extremely experienced and well known auctioneer who has raised over £3,000,000 for various charities in the last few years. He was a senior auctioneer and furniture expert at Sotheby's where he conducted many of their high profile auctions - including the property of the late Gianni Versace which sold for a staggering £6,000,000.

With his energetic and humourous style Edward created an entertaining and hugely profitable auction for the Sanjan Nagar School & Trust.





Omar Salamat gets the TUX right. ➡

Meher Tareen in ELAN's chic new jeweled gown. ➡



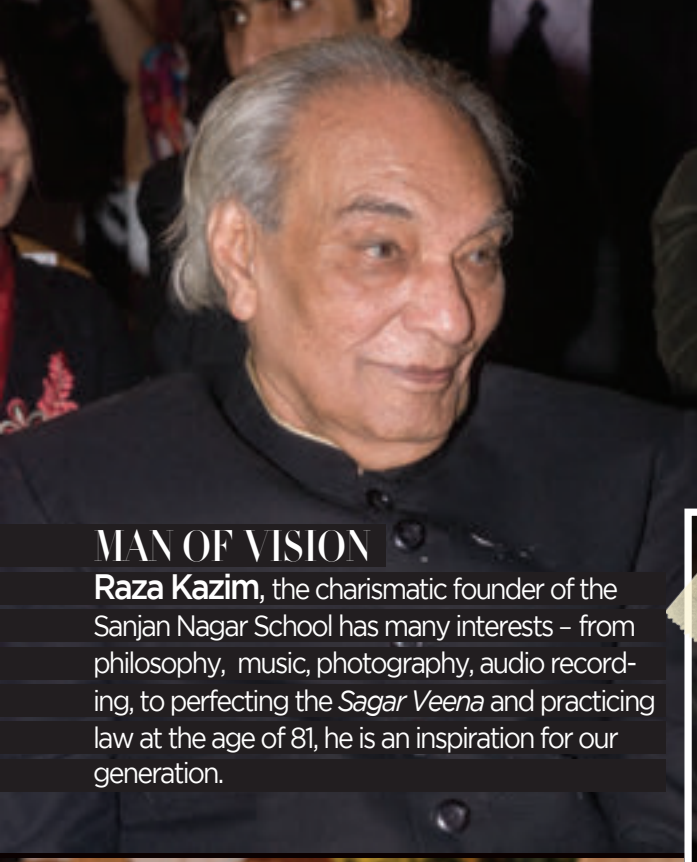
SANAM TASEER IN A GOLD COCKTAIL DRESS



KHADIJAH SHAH CARRIES THE SEASON'S HOTTEST GOLD ALEXANDER MCQUEEN CLUTCH



NASREEN KASURI IN A CLASSIC JAMAVAR SHAWL.



MAN OF VISION

Raza Kazim, the charismatic founder of the Sanjan Nagar School has many interests - from philosophy, music, photography, audio recording, to perfecting the *Sagar Veena* and practicing law at the age of 81, he is an inspiration for our generation.



JEHANZAIB AMIN & SOPHIA KASURI



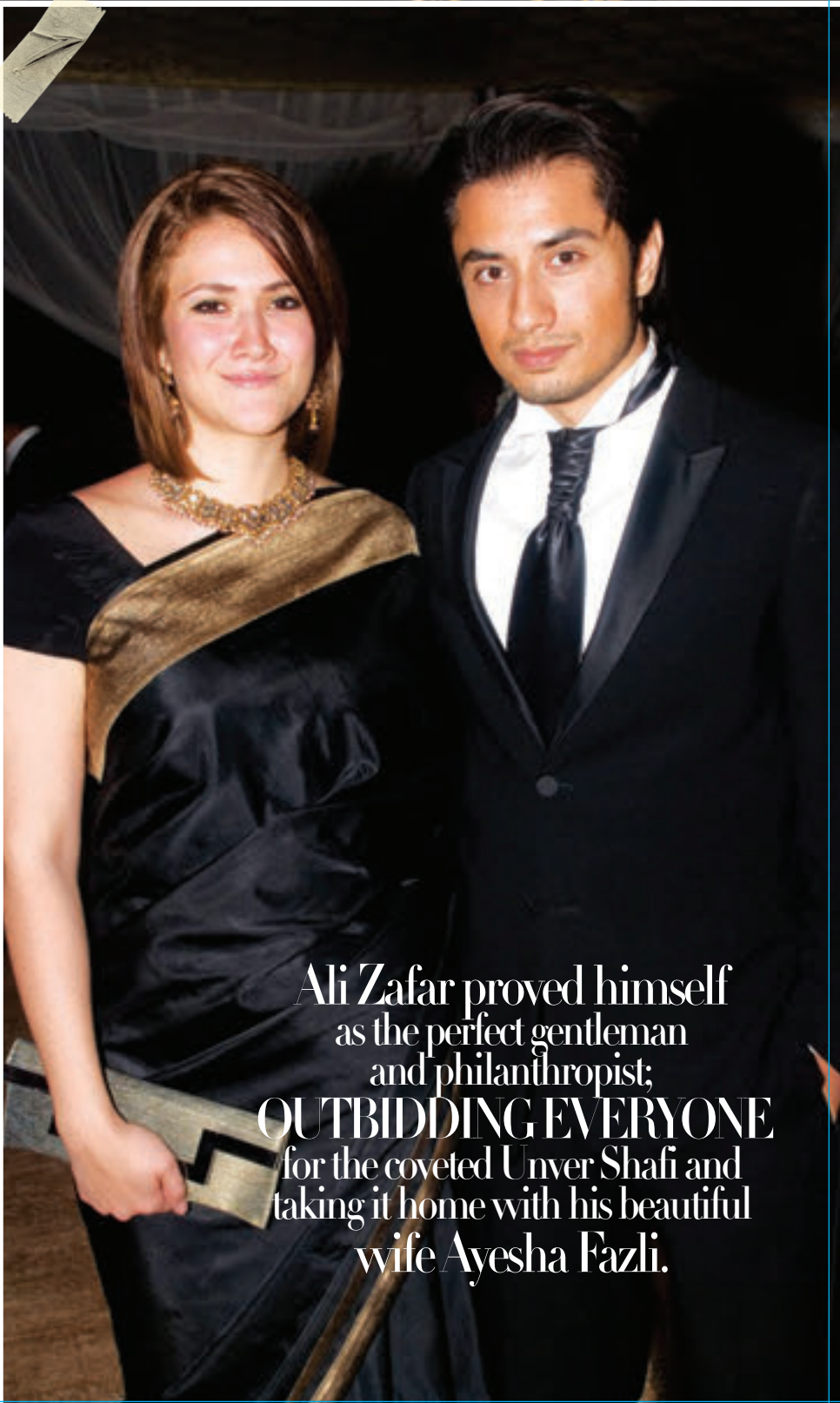
MIAN AHAD & MANSOOR ARIFEN



SHAHIDA SAIGOL & NAZ MANSHA



MUEEN AFZAL



Ali Zafar proved himself as the perfect gentleman and philanthropist; **OUTBIDDING EVERYONE** for the coveted Unver Shafi and taking it home with his beautiful wife Ayesha Fazli.

BEAUTY

TRENDS FOR WINTER

**REDAH MISBAH RECOMMENDS
HER TRIED AND TESTED BEAUTY REGIME**

KERATIN TREATMENT

is the best way to transition from the summer into the fall and from fall to winter. I don't know why people call it a permanent blow dry. Its not! Keratin is the substance that your hair is made up of and by using it as a treatment it reconditions the hair for a more healthier look and shine.

HAIR EXTENSIONS

by Wigomania are super cool. They don't look like a horses tail: dry and frumpy, like other brands of hair extensions. Redah's recommendation: Blue skin wefts

PINK BLUSH-ONS

must quietly recede to the back of your make up kit. Peach is the colour for the season. Don't cover your entire cheekbones. Just do the apple of the cheek for a natural look. Redah's recommendation: MAC Instant Chic Sheer Tone

STOP THE BASE

and ditch your cream and pancake foundations. Mineral foundation is the best natural coverage. Redah's recommendation: Revlon Colour Stay Mineral Foundation 060 (* Sometimes its short in the market but is easily procurable from local cosmetic shops like Roop Mehal)

NO HIGHLIGHTS

and please no bleaching! Bleach seriously damages your hair. And none of that cheetah print look that you get with stark blonde highlights when your hair is tied back tight. If you don't like solid block colours go for low highlights. The look this season is coffee or chocolate brown

Label M deep
cleansing
shampoo

QUIRKIEST SKINCARE

Tip

• Sometimes the cheapest products are the best. You don't always need a Chanel no. 5 cream. Get Olay. Or better yet-Tibet Snow Cream. I can imagine the horror and shudders with this advice. But trust me I got it tested by a pharmaceutical lab and Tibet has no cortisones or chemicals. It's a natural product with 70% rose water and herbs. Upon my return to Lahore from London my skin broke up like mad and a model advised me to try Tibet. As it turned out even my nani used it! A word of caution though use it at night-it does stink quite a bit.

BASIC BEAUTY CARE FAVOURITES:

Dermalogica facewash. It's easily available and gives great results. I was trained on Dermalogica products hence I recommend them most. You cant believe in a product till you have used them yourself.

L'Oreal Pure Zone 3 steps package with the face wash, moisturiser and toner is also very good. Most people disregard this essential 3 step process before going to bed. Your face gets maximum blood flow at night since the body is at rest so it is critical to make sure your face is absolutely clean for it to derive most benefit from this blood flow. For those who have a preference for the 'white' ranges, I would suggest Olay Natural White.

• Please dispel this myth that conditioners make your hair oily, limp and lifeless. That's not true. You must condition your hair to protect it from daily wear and tear. The local SunSilk

range of conditioners give great results. As far as shampooing goes, I would recommend the salon range for L'Oreal and Label M. that are excellent but you can not procure them from the market since they're solely distributed in salons.

• For general body care, which will be of most importance in Fall and the upcoming winter months, Vaseline Moisturisers are the most non fuss and easy to use all over the body. For a bit of an indulgence, I'd say go for the Body Shop body butter range-they are so yummy you want to eat them up!



Dermalogica
clearing skin
wash



Clinique liquid liner

L'Oreal vitamin
colour shampoo



6 MAKEUP ESSENTIALS

By Atika Khawaja



4. EYE BASE

Eye shadow will dissolve on an oily lid or the true colour of the shade will not show through a discoloured lid. I started off by using a little bit of concealer on my lid which made eye-shadow last past half an hour. Nowadays my lid is not only oily but also a completely different colour to the rest of my face. A base or primer made just for lid not only evens out my skin tone around the eye area but also makes eye shadow pop and last for hours. Laura Mercier came to my rescue again, I use her eye basic which is formulated just for the lid and is matched to your skin tone (it's not a concealer that you can use under the eye) and is a hefty product that I need to use eye make-up remover to take off.



MAC Brush



MAC trip total face kit



Estee Lauder eye liner

1. PRIMER

A product used to prep the face before applying any make-up which has gained popularity in recent years. I can attest through personal experience that applying primer before make-up increases the longevity of make up on your face and makes the skin into a smooth canvas. Don't want to add another step to your make-up routine? Just use it for special occasions like weddings and parties. It'll smooth out lines and fill in pores. Primer is now ubiquitous for all make up brands. I've even seen make up primer that is made for people who will be filming in HD! The gold standard is Laura Mercier: A lightweight primer found in a tube or in powder form.

2. BLACK LIQUID EYE LINER

for the strong siren look. What South Asian woman doesn't look striking in the strong precise line that only liquid liner can give you. I like Clinique eye defining liquid liner.

3. BRUSHES

Although I believe that (washed and dried) fingers are the best tool for applying make-up, one needs to have 2-3 brushes to use on a daily basis. These brushes can multi-task, and if you keep them clean they can last a lifetime. How to keep them clean is another story and again, the internet has great ideas and methods (for a demo see You Tube) for keeping brushes germ free, soft and resilient. My advice is to invest in good quality (which also means expensive) brushes, just a few and taking it from there. My faves are:

- a pony tail brush (by Nars) which is great for blending eyeshadow as well controlling the amount of product you use.
- a skunk brush (by MAC) which is also known as a stippling brush or a finishing brush. This brush is so versatile and I use it for blush, bronzer and shimmer powders.
- A go-to eyeshadow brush. Mine has a long handle with a wide fan. I have played around with different sizes and lengths and feel that this is something very personal. One can buy a couple of cheap brushes and see what style and size suit them and consequently invest in something of better quality, using again and again.

5. MAKEUP PALETTE

Instead of loading up on dozens of pots of eyeshadows and blushes, which can shatter and crumble after a while, I like buying make up palettes from my favourite brands. Urban Decay and MAC have great choices especially in the winter as people in the West buy these as Christmas gifts and stocking stuffers. These palettes will have the brand's best selling colours; limited edition colours that they don't sell individually; or even colours grouped according to shades, cool colours in one palette, and warm colours in another.

6. RED LIPSTICK

You only need one tube, and don't be afraid of the colour. You can get a lipstick which will deposit a sheer stain or colour, or a highly pigmented version that packs a punch. Please ask a professional make-up artist to suggest one according to your complexion. I went to the Guerlain counter to get mine. The lipstick is extremely moisturising and makes my teeth whiter and complexion brighter. With this item dress down the rest of your face (smoky eye

make-up is a big no-no) and let your mouth do the talking. I really feel that variants in the south asian complexion are made for such a strong and vibrant colour.



Guerlain & Nars red lipstick



Laura Mercier eye basic primer



Estee Lauder Coach Platinum



Urban Decay naked palette

BABY BOOM

IVF TREATMENT

Hameed Latif Hospital's fertility treatment centre is a pioneer in its field in Pakistan – the first to open an **in vitro fertilisation** clinic in and to deliver an **IVF baby** – In its new guise as the **Lahore Institute of Fertility** and Endocrinology, or LIFE, the clinic offers couples sex selection through pre-implantation genetic diagnosis. Paper speaks to **embryologist Dr Haroon Latif**, the son of the founder, about his clinic and where it will go next.

By Hani Taha Salim



Paper: How did the IVF clinic start?

Dr. Haroon Latif: My father, Dr Rashid Latif, was deeply interested in IVF and he opened this clinic in 1984, the first in South Asia. He delivered the first IVF baby in 1989 and was awarded the Sitara-e-Imtiaz for this in 1990. I started working here in 2006, after I did a post-grad degree in embryology at Monash University in Melbourne.

Paper: What challenges did you face in opening the clinic?

Dr. Haroon: It was very difficult at the time to procure technical equipment and medicines since it was a very new technology. We had to rely on friends to carry medicines with them in their suitcases for us from the UK, which needless to say was a very expensive way of attaining these drugs. We did not even have funding from an external source, neither any NGO nor any government agency, and due to medical ethics, we could not even advertise. We had to rely on word of mouth for people to learn about our facility. After continuous efforts and trials, we were able to achieve our first pregnancy in 1987. Unfortunately for us though, it was an ectopic pregnancy [where the embryo obstructs the fallopian tube]. A year later however we were able to secure a pregnancy and we delivered our first baby in 1989. It was born to a family from Northern Pakistan that was settled in the Middle East. We have strict codes of confidentiality, so we cannot talk about the details of that case.

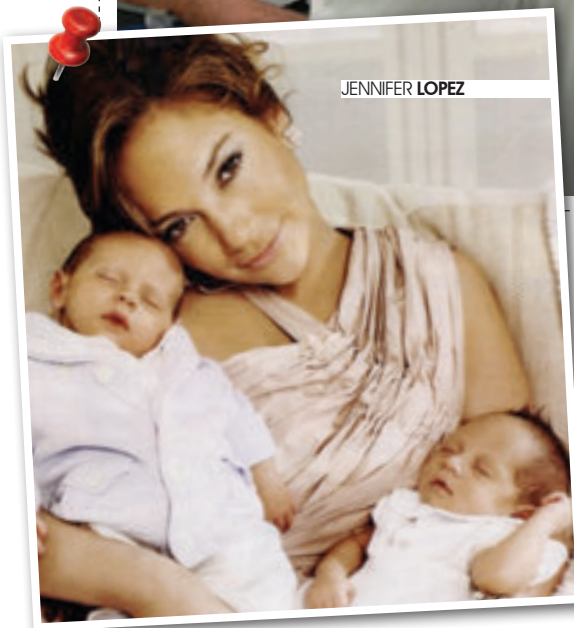
Paper: IVF can be quite a sensitive issue in religious countries. How do you respond to aggressive assertions about the permissibility of this procedure in Islam?

Dr. Haroon: There are fatwas that have been issued by the Al Azhar University in Cairo declaring IVF permissible, provided both husband and wife undergo treatment and only their fluids are used. There should be no third-party involvement, vis a vis a donor egg or sperm. In Iran they have allowed IVF with donor sperm, citing the injunction that on the Day of Judgement, we will be raised by our mother's name.

Paper: In some circles, failure to conceive is automatically believed to be a failing of the woman. How true is this belief?



DR. HAROON LATIF



JENNIFER LOPEZ

Dr. Haroon: Over 20% of all couples worldwide deal with issues of infertility and this rate is even higher for Pakistani couples, in both males and females. Also, contrary to what we believe, infertility is higher amongst Pakistani males than females. For men there's a simple five-minute test where we do an analysis of the semen. But to actually get the men to agree to do the test is a Herculean task. Men are extremely reluctant, even those who are educated. For instance, a 60-year-old man from interior Sindh came to me with his three wives whose ages ranged from 18 to 40 years. After three marriages without children, he decided it was finally time to get himself checked. People need to get over their biases. We need mutual consent for us to treat the problem since both partners have to be treated simultaneously, irrespective of which one has the ailment. The chances of a successful IVF are about 40% for women under the age of 35 and it falls even lower after that. So people should not wait, but act quickly if they are unable to conceive.

Paper: The general belief is that only a certain class of people would seek this treatment. Is that true?

Dr. Haroon: People come to us from all corners of Pakistan. I have had patients who have sold their cattle to come and get treatment done.

Paper: Have you ever advised patients to adopt?

Dr. Haroon: There's a lot of insecurity with adoption. It's a very complex issue. In our society it does seem to be frowned upon in general and people typically adopt from within the family, which is complicated since in most cases a relative may turn around and ask for the child

back. Also since almost 70% of families in Pakistan are land-owning, there is no legal recourse for an adopted child to get his/her inheritance in property. So people are desperate for a male child to be able to retain their property and wealth.

Paper: How are you addressing the issues of multiple pregnancies in relation to sex selection?

Dr. Haroon: Most couples that come to us are rather desperate. We do explain to them that there are chances of multiple pregnancies, hence the probability of different sexes are also higher. Pre-implantation genetic diagnosis or PGD was introduced in 2001-2002 for doctors to be able to look for Downs Syndrome and Turners Syndrome. With this technique, we use IVF and then do a DNA analysis of the embryos to screen out the good, healthy eggs from the bad ones. Hence we can give the couple the chance to select the sex.

Paper: How do you deal with the ethical and social concerns that arise from sex selection, which in this part of the world translates into a certain gender preference?

Dr Haroon: Unfortunately, all the cases that we have received so far are for boys, although the patients that we have received are from different backgrounds. We have an ethics committee consisting of doctors, lawyers and social workers who assess the authenticity of each case for us. We only perform these procedures for ‘family balancing’. It is not for couples who are starting a family or just have one child. As religious legal recourse, we have also got a fatwa from Al Azhar University on this which sanctioned the use of this technique but only for family balancing. It is only in the USA and the Muslim world that family balancing is allowed. Everywhere else it is banned. In fact in India, it is now illegal to inform parents of the sex of the baby.

Paper: Magazines and now even billboards are full of advertisements about sex selection. What are these clinics selling?

Dr. Haroon: Gender selection has been happening for over 2000 years probably. There are multiple methods that people use but none of them are as scientific and accurate as PGD. The commonly used techniques are what’s called the Chinese method, sperm sorting, there are various diet plans and certain sexual positions and days for conception all of which are based on probabilities. But what most clinics are advertising about and giving their clients are ‘*totkaas*’ [home remedies].

Paper: What is the next step for the clinic? What other innovations are you looking to in the future?

Dr. Haroon: We are about to start this new technique called cord blood banking, where we will store the blood that is deposited in the umbilical cord of the baby. This blood contains the baby’s stem cells and can be used to cure various diseases such as diabetes, Parkinson’s disease and leukaemia. Its use is not restricted to the donor, but can be used on strangers as well, though it will be most effective for members of the same family. Since stem cells are cells in their purest form, they can be multiplied to create more cells of various different types. Currently we have about 300 deliveries a month, so if we can just start banking this blood in small tubes we would have a significant repository for future treatments. We also hope to establish a stem cell treatment centre in the future. First though we need to raise awareness about this treatment and try to lift taboos. Gynaecologists will have to speak and educate their patients about this technique and its limitless benefit. Although its about \$1,000-\$1,200, it is a lifetime investment that one can rely on in times of serious illness. ■

“There are fatwas that have been issued by the AL AZHAR UNIVERSITY in CAIRO on IVF that both husband and wife must undergo treatment and only their fluids can be used.”



ANGELINA JOLIE & BRAD PITT



COURTNEY COX



JULIA ROBERTS

5 CELEBS WHO WENT FOR IT

1. BROOKE SHIELDS & CHRIS HENCHY
Lipstick Jungle actress Brooke Shields had fertility problems but after several IVF treatments, Shields got pregnant and gave birth to her first child in April 2006, at 41.

2. JENNIFER LOPEZ & ANTHONY
Jennifer Lopez successfully conceived, at 39, fraternal twins Max and Emme after undergoing several IVF treatments.

3. ANGELINA JOLIE AND BRAD PITT
According to sources, Brad and Angelina used IVF treatments to conceive a set of twins.

4. DAVID AND COURTNEY COX-ARQUETTE
After several miscarriages and IVF fertility treatments, David and Courtney were successful in becoming parents to a healthy baby girl.

5. JULIA ROBERTS
Gave birth to a pair of twins in 2004, reported to be a result of in vitro fertilization (IVF) treatment.

FOODS TO BOOST YOUR LOVE LIFE / LIBIDO BOOSTERS

1. OYSTERS

A source of food and pearls, oysters contain zinc and dopamine that kick starts the libido. Some people find the act of eating an oyster, thoroughly erotic. Add oysters into your meal to boost your sex drive.

2. FIGS

Figs are an aphrodisiac known to heighten up the female libido. They are high in amino acids which basically increases your sexual appetite and stamina.

3. BASIL

This wonderful herb increases circulation, jump starts the sex drive and helps fertility. Basil also gives a general sense of wellbeing to the mind and body.

4. AVOCADO

This fruit helps improve both male and female libido; the high levels of folic acid metabolises proteins and provides energy. It also contains vitamin B6 nutrient that increases the male hormone production.

5. BANANAS

Bananas contain the enzyme 'bromelain' a known male libido booster. They are rich in vitamin B nutrients, riboflavin and potassium and improves the production of sex hormones.



FIT TO EAT

By Javeria Rana



Quick tips for a healthy lifestyle by **AHLAAM ALI**, founder of Powwer Living

Paper: At what point did you take an interest in health and fitness?

Ahlaam: I've always been interested in health and fitness. In 2009 I started formally with my Powwer Bhangra class. We've had a great response and since then there's been no looking back.

P: Say I walk into your clinic, what happens first?

A: You would have a proper consultation with me where we would discuss your health problems and figure out whether you are facing any problems due to a lifestyle, health issues or both. I would then work with a team of doctors to help you lose weight. The information we usually ask for is your age, weight, height and activity level. Then we come up with a plan to suit your lifestyle. It's a three-pronged approach which includes treatments for inch loss, exercise and meal plans.

P: How are your meal plans different from crash diets like the soup diet or Atkins?

A: We don't plan on leaving out food groups. We include all food groups in our plans. The idea is to get your body used to eating and losing weight. If you starve yourself on one of these crash diets, your body doesn't know what to do with the food when you start eating again, and so it stores it as fat. Our meal plans are for 'foodies' – people who love to eat, and we give 5 meals a day.

P: What would you say to people looking for 'get skinny quick' schemes?

A: I would tell them that they should instead focus on changing their lifestyle and we can help you. If you lose weight quickly, you'll gain it back quickly.

P: What are a few simple tips that you suggest for a healthy lifestyle?

A: Try and be a bit more active. Don't just hang out on the couch. When you are going out, don't go to dinner and a movie. Do

some activity-based things like bowling. Go for a walk – that's the best exercise. You don't need any hi-tech equipment or a gym.

P: 5 foods that are great for nutrition and weight loss:

A: Go for less-processed, super foods like:

- *Unsalted, unroasted nuts.
- * Seeds – pumpkin, sunflower and flax. These are high in omegas, which are good for the brain and skin.
- *All fruits and vegetables are good – the more varied and colourful they are, the better.
- *Water is very important.
- *Brown bread and foods high in fiber.

P: 5 foods that people should avoid:

- A:** *White flour and sugary things.
- *Cooking oil and butter.
- *Cream and cheese.
- *Fatty foods, like *nehari*.
- *Fizzy drinks.

P: 5 ways to get a better body in a week?

A: Detox (avoid coffee/caffeine), eliminate all processed food and have natural stuff like fresh juices. Take supplements, exercise for an hour a day and drink lots of water.

P: How would you describe your program?

A: It is a very holistic program that doesn't look for fast results – rather for significant results. Once you get the weight off, it's not going to come back quickly. It's all about developing a new lifestyle that is healthy and better for your body.

P: What are your plans beyond Karachi?

A: To expand to Lahore, Islamabad, Faisalabad, and the international market.

“The idea is to **get your body** used to **eating** and losing weight. If you starve yourself on one of these **crash diets**, your **body doesn't** know what to do with the food when **you start** eating again, **and so it stores** it as fat”.



The secret of my mama...



Bread & Beyond

Bread & Beyond
JUST BAKED



FIRST DATE

By Taimoor Choudry & Sana Khan

SO YOU ARE MEETING 'THE GUY OR GIRL' FOR THE FIRST OFFICIAL DATE. ANTICIPATION IS HIGH AND YOU HAVE ALL THESE QUESTIONS IN YOUR HEAD: ARE YOU GOING TO CLICK? IS THE CHEMISTRY GOING TO BE HOT? WELL, LET'S HOPE IT'S ALL THAT AND MORE. TAIMOOR & SANA GIVE YOU QUICK TIPS ON HOW TO ACHIEVE THE PERFECT FIRST DATE.



On a first date a man should dress to impress. Women judge a man on his appearance and what you wear could make or break your first date.

WARDROBE WOES FOR HER



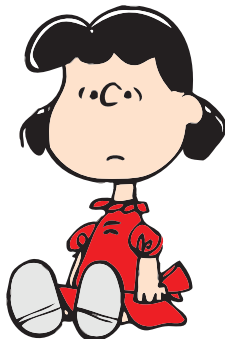
First ask yourself, 'Am I more comfortable in *shalwar kameez* or western clothes?'. This is not the day to experiment, so be safe in your choice. Don't wear a *shalwar kameez* if you cannot handle a *dupatta*, and don't wear tights if your legs are a little overweight. If you are still practising walking in high heels, then don't try them out now. Nothing is worse than a fumbling girl! Guys generally don't really care about brands. Men are not big fans of baggy clothes,

so avoid the tent and harem pants. Instead opt for something form-

"Men are not big fans of baggy clothes, so avoid the tent and harem pants unless you are skinny and tall".

fitting, subtly sexy and stylish. Nothing beats a well fitted pair of jeans with a top in a colour you have received the most

compliments in. White or black are safe bets. Don't have a plunging cleavage, but show some skin on arms or shoulders. It's also good to get a boy's opinion on your wardrobe. Ask your boy pal or a friend who can be totally honest with you. Wear subtle make up and avoid dark lipsticks; boys like natural looking girls with little or practically no make up. For hair, go for a natural and groomed look. Over-ironed poker straight, or frizzy and untamed hair is definitely out. Avoid back-combed, teased and stiff hair which not only looks artificial but may end up giving the poor guy a bad case of paper cut if he was to touch your hair. Smell nice, but please remember that too much perfume is nauseating. Don't pile on the accessories. Stick to a nice watch and small elegant earrings. Remember, 'less is more' at all times.

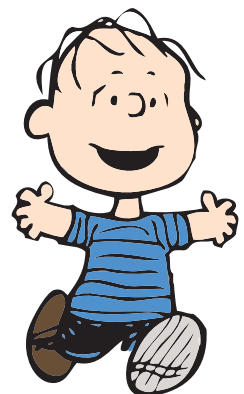


FOR HIM

These days, men can no longer afford to look messy. On a first date a man should dress to impress. Women judge a man on his appearance and what you wear could make or break your first date. Remember that your date is likely spending hours selecting an outfit, so it wouldn't hurt to spend more than two seconds looking for a shirt from the "clean" pile on your floor. Dress according to where you're going. Avoid very flashy colours and loud prints. Labelled shirts and chunky branded emblems are also very tacky. Keep it simple and wear a freshly laundered shirt with a well

fitted pair of jeans. We believe in one golden rule: no matter how casual your destination might be, looking clean, crisp and put together can never hurt. A nice watch and classic shoes will also go a long way and are one of the first things, a woman notices.

Basic grooming is a must for the first date. Don't show up looking scruffy, with a big beard. Get a cut or a trim and please shave. Pay attention to your hands and nails. A manicure or a facial is not a girly thing anymore and says a lot about your personal hygiene. A great smell can make a lasting impression, so always wear deodorant and perfume. Smell like a man and use a cologne like Cartier eau de toilette.



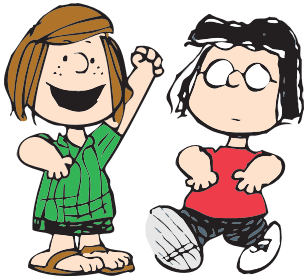
COFFEE, LUNCH OR DINNER?

Coffee, lunch or dinner on a first date involve exactly the same thing. It's simply a chance for two people to speak face to face for the first time and get to know one another. Coffee is shorter and more casual than lunch, and dinner can be more intense and longer. So for the first date always push for coffee rather than lunch or dinner. In case the person turns out to be boring, you will not have to sit through it for a long time. Coffee dates can be ended at your own leisure. (And of course you can pull the friend emergency card) If, however, you both feel comfortable and click, then you can always continue the date by going for lunch or dinner later on.



TALKING POINTS

So now that you look and feel great, what kind of conversation are you going to have? Do you have similar interests? We are assuming that this is what has led to the date. If you are both interested in each other it will be apparent in the first fifteen minutes.



You will notice however that conversations at times will be slow on a first date. You both don't know much about each other and have no previous

history so it can be difficult to find things to talk about. But if you can overcome the first awkward silences, rest assured you are on your way to a comfortable conversation.

Keep it simple and neutral. Talk about hobbies, education, passions (what motivates the person) and career. Avoid discussions about previous relationships and stay away from the M word. Make eye contact to see if you want to keep on looking. Talking in the other direction or looking away shows lack of interest. Keep the mood light and try to make the other person laugh, but don't act like a clown as it can be embarrassing. Avoid long winded one-sided conversation and boasting or showing off. First impressions do last. It's a fact that your first date can determine whether you will ever see that person again or not. Be yourself and be confident at all times.

PAY UP!

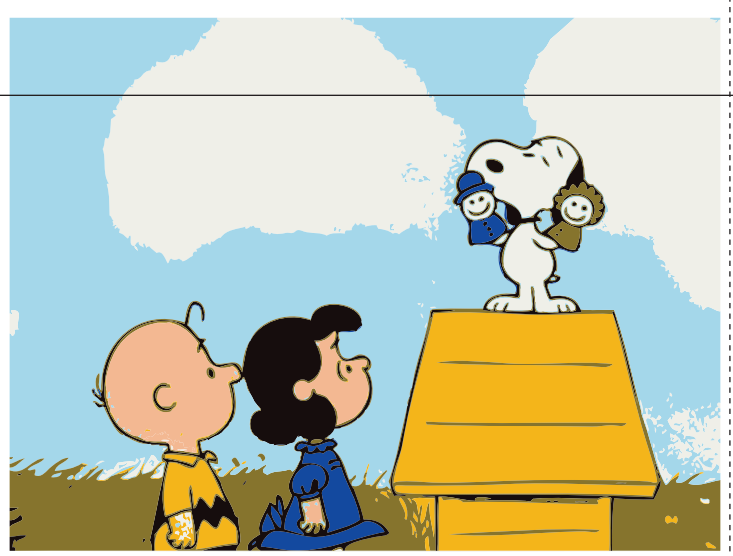
The man should ALWAYS pay. It's about showing respect towards the girl and keeping your values intact. After the first date take a back seat and wait for things to unfold. We would not advise you to call right the next morning but leave it until the following night or even the next day. Adding the other person on Facebook or sending them an SMS the next day saying if you've had a good time is a sign of encouragement that you want to proceed further.



DO NOT...

- You should NEVER try to kiss someone on the first date. Always plan out your date in advance and make sure you give the other person the right type of an environment which will help you build an understanding and attraction towards each other.

- Sexual innuendo, staring at the other person in a way that makes them uncomfortable should be avoided.



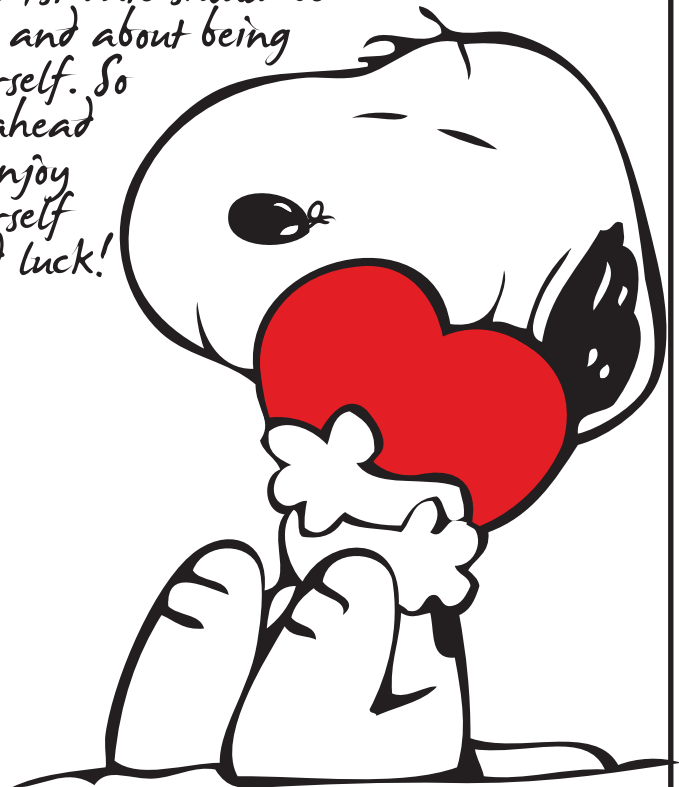
- Don't steer towards personal questions as it might get too heavy for a first date. Keep your conversation light and easy and definitely don't talk more than the girl. Give her a chance to talk as well. After all how else would you get to know each other better?
- A few drinks might help you relax during the date, but remember to take small sips and not gulp the whole drink down. Being a drunken loser is never a turn on.

WHAT TO EXPECT

This is not an Indian movie, where there is a moment with background music. The only moment you can expect to have on a first date is to realise whether you want the next date or not. If you like one another and seem to click, tell the other person you had fun and would like to do this again soon. If you want to keep in touch compliment her and ask for her number but don't be too keen. Personal space should be kept in mind. If all goes well, maybe a kiss on the cheek, or a hug to say goodbye is suitable. ■



The 1st date should be fun and about being yourself. So go ahead & enjoy yourself good luck!



Environmentally FASHIONABLE

By Ahmad Rafay Alam



Environment is the new fashion. We recommend going green for sustainable consumption that embraces both.

When I was asked to contribute a piece on fashion and the environment, I was at a loss. Both are inimical to one another, like chalk and cheese. Environmental concerns and sustainable development preach a philosophy at odds with the consumerist lifestyle that fashion represents. But, in the end, you simply can't ignore the fact that the environment is the new fashion. Despite being flummoxed at first sight, I discovered that the relationship between fashion and the environment reveals a complex and complicated world that needs better appreciation.

I have to admit that my first thought about a world without fashion was to worry about what we'd all wear. But then I realised that what we wear is less a function of fashion than it is about our own habits and the morality we set for ourselves. A few years ago this point came home to me, one sizzling day in June, when I found myself following up a couple of cases in Lahore's civil courts on my birthday. I had the chance to reflect on how, now a fully grown man, I was basically wearing a black suit in the summer sun. Of course, this doesn't reflect well on the entire legal profession, who insist on torturing themselves when sartorial alternatives exist. But it does prove the point that what we wear is sometimes less function, more form. Why else would someone shroud themselves in a black cloth?

The fashion industry is another one of those chimeras. The more you try to identify its characteristics, the more it eludes understanding. There are clothes, of course, and designers and their teams of *karigars*, *mistris* and *masterjis*. They represent, perhaps, the most conspicuous part of this fashion industry. There's furniture and interior design, of course. While one man's gold sofa is another man's blasphemy, entrepreneurial Hamza



Tarars have made throw pillows and energy-guzzling halogens seasonal accessories. But whatever appearance the fashion industry takes, it does have one unifying characteristic: promotion of a lifestyle of conspicuous over sustainable consumption. Sustainable development is defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Think about that the next time you glance upon a diamond watch or a diesel-burning SUV.

There are notable exceptions. For example, Noorjehan Bilgrami specialises in producing fabrics that don't consume environmentally unfriendly dyes. My friend, the environment activist Nimra Amjad-Archer, actually proved it was possible to have a "sustainable" wedding by ensuring that all of her and her husband's outfits were made with traditional methods and a tiny carbon footprint. The architect Kamil Khan Mumtaz builds houses using traditional masonry techniques, and these are vastly more energy efficient than the ubiquitous brick-and-cement monstrosities that litter our residential areas.

The interesting thing is that, while fashion itself is consumptive and unsustainable, it's the textile industry that actually does the polluting. Chemicals used and effluents produced by the industry are not disposed of properly, fouling water-courses, the water table and even parts of the lower Indus Basin. The leather industry is also an accomplice in this environmental crime. The chemical effluents produced by the tanneries in Kasur, for example, have polluted water sources and increased levels of flourad to beyond toxic. There is a generation of children in and about Kasur whose bones, weakened by the fluoride, are unable to support the weight of their bodies. Think about that next time you put on a pair of shoes or buy a handbag. The more fashion, the more textiles and leather goods produced. You can see the viscous cycle, can't you?

How can fashion and the “fashionable” consumer produce less pollution? There are solutions beyond the hard work of our Noorjehan Bilgramis and innovation of our Nimra Amjad-Archers. The processes that are employed in producing the fabrics we wear or the materials that we use to build and decorate our houses are all environmentally unfriendly and unsustainable. Yet there exist technologies and solutions that can produce equal amounts of fabrics and materials without using the chemicals and producing the effluent and pollution we do today. These technologies and solutions have been given shape and form, through international law and the Ministry of Environment, and can be financed through the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Under the CDM system, Pakistani companies and industries can stand to benefit from the global trade in carbon credits by investing in green technologies that lower their carbon footprints. Already, there are fertiliser companies and cement plants making millions by investing in cleaner processes, benefitting from CDM. There’s even a carpet company in Faisalabad that, because it trades with Ikea, was forced to set up an effluent treatment plant on its premises (too bad it’s only one of over one hundred units throwing effluent into the same water channel). Textile companies can also benefit from these schemes by investing in

and employing green technologies.

Interior decorators can drastically reduce the energy consumption in the structures they work in by employing energy-efficient lights and insulated windows, reusing water and exploring the world of green architecture (and especially forest friendly architecture and furniture design).

However, the industries that produce this pollution are affluent and provide the fashion industry with its raw materials in response to the demand. As long as the fashion industry continues to require chemically-treated fabrics and decorating a house means destroying a forest and being energy inefficient, fashion will continue to be consumptive and non-sustainable. And herein lies the irony: fashion responds to tastes and opinion

and to the morality we set for ourselves. Unless we change these, fashion will continue to do what it does to the environment.

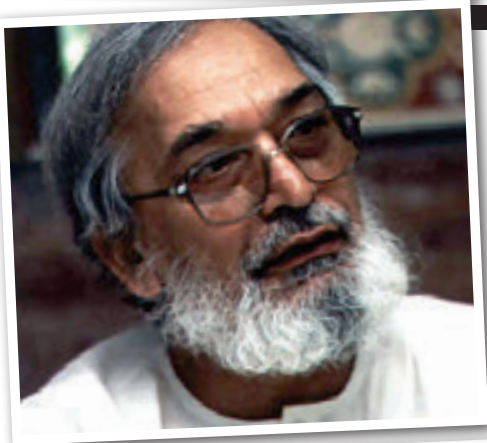
The state of Pakistan’s environment is appalling. The country wastes as much as Rs. 1 billion a day because of environmental degradation. Pollution costs hundreds of thousands of precious lives a year. Unclean drinking water accounts for over a third of the patients in all our hospitals. Unclean air resulted in as many as 45 million cases of respiratory disease in 2005. These numbers are only going up. The money most middle-income families earn is often diverted to medical expenses. If we could just improve the quality of our drinking water, for example, we could actually raise the income of many families. But that can only happen if going green becomes fashionable. In fact, the only things fashionable should be going green. ■

“The state of Pakistan’s environment is appalling. The country wastes as much as Rs. 1 billion a day because of environmental degradation.”

Nooriehan Bilgrami is an **artist, textile designer and researcher** whose interest in traditional crafts, handloom weaving and natural dyes has led to the establishment of **KOEL**, a workshop that pioneered the **revival of hand block-printed fabrics** in Pakistan.



Architect Kamil Khan Mumtaz builds houses using **traditional masonry techniques**, that are vastly more **energy efficient**



“Fashion responds to tastes, opinion and to the morality we set for ourselves. Unless we change these, fashion will continue to do what it does to the environment.”



CHALE SHARIF TOMB & MOSQUE PROJECT - GUJRAT

OUT CAST OUTSPOKEN

Where class structures are virtually impenetrable and homosexuality strictly prohibited, there exist unlikely communities of adopted sisters and mothers, gurus and disciples, all of whom consider themselves neither male nor female but of a third gender.

PHOTOS BY SANUREE GOMES

By Ayesha Siddiqi



We come across Gia in the bustling area of Gizri in Karachi. She has on luminous purple eye shadow and is tall and dark with black shoulder length hair. Her masculine chin is offset by her prominent cheekbones and expressive eyes. She stands out in her silken *shalwar kameez* of sky blue amongst the shopkeepers and traders with whom she is chatting. Their gray and white *kameezes* are a sharp contrast, dirty and sweat-stained from a long day of working in the blazing sun.

When I get her attention, she saunters up as if she had been expecting me. 'Can I interview you?' She tosses her hair flirtatiously, '*Bilkul* (ofcourse)' she says, and proceeds to order one of the numerous mischievous and curious street boys that have surrounded us to get some chairs. Five of them, keen to be part of the spectacle, run to do her bidding.

At first, she is chatty but guarded, mostly speaking of her famed beauty and charm. 'Can you tell that I am wearing make up?' she asks eagerly, followed by a question about what famous Pakistani film actress she most resembles. By the end of the interview, she has adopted me as her sister and gives me her number with the instructions, 'I'll be out all night now, so call me at 2 in the afternoon'.

Hijras make their livelihood primarily from begging, dancing, or sex work. Gia, however, vehemently denies taking part in any form of prostitution, 'I make my money through dancing,' she says, 'or looking beautiful.' She pauses at this point and strokes the side of her face, showing me her profile, to illustrate. Her mannerisms are intensely dramatic. 'The truth is I yearn for love. And it is for love that I dress up and beautify myself everyday. I want to please people. Sometimes, when I'm walking down the street, men will shout out vulgar things, or refuse to give me money. I just tell them, 'Who do you think you are? Do you think you're something special? If you don't give me something I don't give a damn, someone else will.'

Rejected by mainstream society, *hijras* come together to form their own communities in the form of blocks of make-shift housing scattered around the different cities of Pakistan. Each group is headed by a guru: an experienced and formerly successful *hijra*, who is, in effect, retired, and speaks of her disciples in decidedly maternal terms. She welcomes them into the community and addresses their needs and concerns, providing them with housing and, if they are engaged in sex work, clients. In return they give her a cut of their earnings and an apparently unflinching loyalty. The guru also takes charge of arranging the castration operation for some of her disciples.

GIA SHARES HER STORY

‘I was born like this – neither man nor woman. My family could not understand me, and although my sisters were kind to me, I decided at thirteen to leave and join the other *khusras*. I felt more at home with them; more accepted. I send money to my sisters regularly. My parents are not with us anymore, and one of my sisters is a widow and has no way of supporting herself. I have brothers too, but I don’t care about them. I only love my sisters, and I would do anything for them.’

Hijras are normally born with either male or ambiguous sexual organs but with a distinctively feminine spirit or rooh. In English they are often referred to as eunuchs or hermaphrodites. Activists are fighting to re-label them transgender but even this translation is misleading, as a large majority of hijras are born physically male.

The *hijra* community is often deemed fiercely secretive by researchers, and although seemingly talkative and open, it’s not difficult to understand from speaking to Gia why the elusive community can be difficult for the outsider to penetrate. Their contradictory statements, wild exaggerations and theatrical displays can have much of the same bewildering effect as their heavy make-up, glittering bodies and shiny clothes. This becomes apparent when Gia emotionally described her betrayal from her first *khusra* community and mentions an operation,

‘I loved my first guru, and lived with her and her disciples for many years. Then, the rest of the *khusras* got together and deceived me. They sold me, without my knowledge, to another community. Actually, they didn’t even sell me, they just took me. Then there was the operation, and I had to leave my beloved guru for another.’


I interrupt her to ask more about the operation, ‘You know’, she replies, ‘where they cut it off.’

‘So you weren’t born like this then?’

She falters, ‘No, I mean they had operations. I was born like this.’

Most *hijras* that are born physically male are castrated, in a ceremony involving no anesthetic and loud music to drown out the screams of pain. It is almost a religious ceremony, and is considered a transition towards a true self. Those that remain men, undergoing no surgery and living as transvestites, are often deemed fake by others in the community.

The reason why the widespread presence of eunuchs, transvestites and transgenders is tolerated in Pakistan and does not stir the backlash that one would imagine from the fundamentalist Islamic clerics is complex and manifold. In the case of Ali Saleem, for example, this behavior is not only tolerated but lauded.



“Most hijras that are born physically male are castrated, in a ceremony involving no anesthetic and loud music to drown out the screams of pain. It is almost a religious ceremony, and is considered a transition towards a true self.”



Famous Tv Personality, BEGUM NAWAZISH ALI

Ali Saleem is a 28-year old bisexual man who appears on television as a middle-aged Pakistani widow. Begum Nawazish Ali – Saleem’s alter-ego – is resplendent in her *saris* and flirts brazenly with her male guests, whilst trading beauty tips with the women. Saleem often cites his immense popularity as an example of how the country is actually more open than it may seem, but the truth behind why people like Ali Saleem, as well as those gay men who choose to join the *hijra* community, enjoy their unique position in society may be more complex.

First of all, there is the historical background. William Dalrymple in his *City of Djinn*s attributed the curious position of eunuchs in India to the collision between Muslim and Hindu traditions. In Hindu tradition castration was a punishment often meted out to lower-caste Untouchables who angered Brahmins. In Islamic traditions the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) forbade castration. Still, the presence of eunuchs remained widespread and they were considered trustworthy due to their sexual impotence. The shirt of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in Cairo was guarded by eunuchs, as was the holy Ka’aba in Mecca. He is said to have instructed followers to treat them with love and sympathy, in the understanding that God had given them a particularly difficult test. Then, during Mughal times, they often acted as trusted caretakers of the royal harems, and respected members of the courts.

It was only during British rule in India that attempts were made to eradicate the *hijra* community, and they were left with little means to earn their living besides begging and prostitution. They were labeled a ‘criminal tribe’, and although this was repealed in 1952, eunuchs today continue to be stigmatised.

The treatment given to transgenders in India and Pakistan can also take on a somewhat superstitious turn; their prayers are believed to be powerful, bestowing them with the ability to bless or to curse. They are invited to dance at weddings, and give blessings at the birth of a son. Some find them to be a nuisance, as they turn up uninvited at wedding and birth ceremonies, dancing and singing,

and not leaving until they are paid. Also, upon their own deaths, they are buried late at night, as sight of one of their bodies is said to bring about impotence. Mostly however, they are looked upon with a mixture of ridicule and pity, and these sentiments reveal more about the on lookers – the rest of society – than the *hijras* themselves.

Their lifestyles challenge gender roles in more ways than one. They can, for example, be vulgar and crude if need be. Hijras are known for causing scenes and using vulgar language and gestures at the slightest provocation, and threatening to expose themselves to men who refuse to give them money. For an ordinary Pakistani woman, this would clearly be unacceptable. At the same time, their theatrical dialogue and exaggeratedly feminine mannerisms would, of course, be unthinkable for the male gender. It turns out to be, paradoxical, only Pakistan’s third gender that manages to inhabit this curious role without drawing askance looks. Well, no more than usual.

Gia asks me to show her the picture that I have taken of her. It is unaffected and raw and possesses a kind of masculine vulnerability. She is thoroughly displeased with it, and piling her hair atop her head and pointing her chin downwards, asks me to take another. Happy with the results, she tries one more, looking bashfully to the side this time.

We also speak to Sharmeeli, who shows me an old photograph where she is clad in a red *sari*. She asks me whether I can tell from the photograph that she is a *hijra*, and not a real woman. I say I can’t, so as not to break her heart. She seems thrilled. I tell Gia a similar lie when she asks me if I can tell she is wearing foundation, and find myself surprised at worrying about hurting the feelings of these people who have doubtlessly had to harden themselves after lifetimes of constant ridicule and abuse. That there is something admirable about the fact that her outlook is more defiant than desperate, more humorous than hopeless.

“Ask the richest man, or the poorest even, to put on lipstick and roam these streets. Offer him all the money in the world, and he would still refuse. Yet this is what I do everyday.”

‘We are women’s children just like everyone else. We can be born into any household. Rich people also have them, but they support them, give them cars and money and houses. Sometimes they tell them not to grow their hair or behave like women, but those boys are just like us, in their hearts. *Izzat* – respect – is all about money in this country.’

Gia explains how no one would opt voluntarily for her predestined fate; ‘Ask the richest man, or the poorest even, to put on lipstick and roam these streets. Offer him all the money in the world, and he would still refuse. Yet this is what I do everyday.’ I must admit I am enchanted by her, and instead of turning bright red when a passer-by shouts out vulgarities, I simply imitate her icy stare and cold smile as she tells him in no uncertain terms to get lost. ■

LEGAL BEAGLE REPORTS

FOR THE NAUGHTY BRIDE

By Usman Raza Jamil, advocate. 



GET A PRENUP

Yes, indeed there is a provision in your *nikahnama* for a prenuptial agreement

Ahhh, marriage – a wonderful concept, where man and woman in Islam, by entering into a civil contract, become husband and wife. After the numerous *shadi* functions, the honeymoon and the countless family gatherings committed to fatten your tummy, comes reality – making babies and making the marriage work. And it is hard work. For

those who cannot steer the course, the ‘D’ word becomes significant, and then we all frantically revert to that contract to see what we can do and what we can’t. Suddenly, that contract becomes much more than just a piece of paper a groom or a bride signed, amidst all the pomp and ceremony that goes with a marriage in Pakistan.

SO HERE ARE SOME KEY POINTS:



1. Once you sign that *Nikahnama* and shout out “*Qabool hai*” in excitement, make sure it gets registered in the relevant Union Council, where your marriage is being solemnised, otherwise you won't be able to enforce any of your legal rights thereafter.
2. The husband has the unilateral right to divorce his wife (however, if you are a naughty bride, you can always curtail this right by [READING AND FILLING IN COLUMN NO. 19](#) in your *Nikahnama*. However, the husband has to send a written notice to the relevant Union Council pronouncing *talaq* upon his wife (verbal *talaqs* are not recognised under law), a copy of which goes to his wife. Upon the expiry a 90-day *iddat* period, the divorce becomes final.
3. If the wife has the right of divorce, as delegated to her under COLUMN NO. 18 of the *Nikahnama*, she has to go through the same procedure as the husband when he pronounces divorce. All you empowered ladies out there, column No. 18 is very, very important and saves you the trouble of going to court to get out of a messy marriage. And by the way, your right to the specified *haq-meher* in your *Nikahnama* isn't affected by this procedure.

4. Should the wife not have the delegated right of divorce, she has to approach the competent Family Court for *Khula* by filing a suit for dissolution of marriage. In this case, the wife does not need to prove her grounds for divorce but only has to substantiate those grounds, i.e., “I cannot live with my husband any longer as an irretrievable breakdown of the marriage has occurred.” In this case, the wife forgoes her financial rights and the court decides how much and what is to be returned on the facts of the case. A decree is issued by the court and the relevant Union Council is notified of the decree, which then proceeds accordingly, as in the case of a *talaq* or wife having the right of divorce.

5. Where a wife is unfortunately locked into a nasty and horror-filled marriage, she can file a suit for judicial divorce before the Family Court under the Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act, 1939, where she regards the husband at fault. Normally in this case, the grounds for divorce are that the husband has caused, mental abuse, to his wife, has been cruel to her, has forced her to lead an immoral life, has disposed of or stops her from controlling her

property and that he is a man of bad character, etc. In this case, the wife would retain her rights to *mehr* and other benefits received from the husband

6. THE PRENUP Yes, indeed there is a provision in your *Nikahnama* for a prenuptial agreement – in COLUMN NO. 20. Although it might have the effect of scaring off traditional and potentially lucrative *rishtaas*, it will ensure that all parties to the marriage are on the same page for making sure that the union is a happy and content one. So know that the provision for such an agreement does exist. ■

DIVORCE KNOW YOUR ROLE AND RIGHTS

These are only a few basic points, which should give you the minimum, but essential information about getting married and what happens when it goes

wrong. When children are involved, issues of custody, maintenance, visitation rights, etc all come into play and those tend to be more complex. However, for the time being, Ladies, know your rights and holler out: "All the single ladies...If you like it, then you shoulda put a ring on it!!"

STREET TECH

By Faran Maqsood   twitter.com/faranmaqsood

There are three screens that dominate our world: the Phone, Computer, and TV. Historically, communications and entertainment were accessed by different devices, but today the lines have started to blur. It is now possible to integrate these experiences. Eventually, there will be a time when all these devices will converge into the phone. Your phone will have projection capabilities that will enable you to have a full-blown TV experience or even give you access to a full size virtual keyboard and screen. However, we're still years away from that. I asked a few of my friends to tell me about which tech and entertainment they regularly use. Most seem to have the right idea on which gadgets to use. I'm glad to see that the fascination with pushing little plastic buttons is slowly fading away. Of course I'm talking about the phone from the dinosaur era - the BlackBerry. I make it no secret that I don't

think much of BlackBerry's limited capabilities of doing email and everyone's favorite, BBM. Other phones can do better push mail, and cross platform messaging is the future (ie WhatsApp). I'd say get the Samsung Wave that runs Android, but please get over your fetish for tiny screens and plastic buttons. This is the beginning of a new decade - it's time to let go and embrace the future. I got my telco friends to dig out some data, and shockingly enough there are more iPhones on the Pakistani networks than BlackBerries. So much for spending millions of rupees advertising the damn thing. The iPhone in Pakistan doesn't even have a warranty, its more expensive, a pain to get jailbroken/unlocked, and most people have no clue on how to deal with the software updates. But it seems that people are willing to go through the hassle for that amazing iPhone user experience.

QUESTIONS

- WHICH PHONE DO YOU USE?
- WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT YOUR PHONE?
- 3 FAVOURITE FEATURES ON YOUR PHONE?
- THE TYPE OF LAPTOP YOU OWN?
- WHAT YOU USE YOUR LAPTOP FOR?
- LIST YOUR 3 FAVOURITE GADGETS

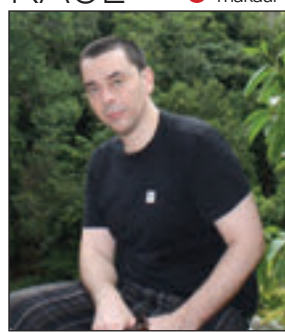
- 3 TV SHOWS THAT YOU WATCH REGULARLY
- THE ONE GADGET YOU CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT AND WHY?
- LIST YOUR 3 FAVOURITE WEBSITES
- HOW DO YOU USE TECHNOLOGY IN YOUR DAILY LIFE?
- WHAT GADGET WILL YOU BUY NEXT?

ALI AZMAT   [realaliazmat](https://twitter.com/realaliazmat)



Phone: I use the iPhone
I love: That it has a stable operating system, lots of applications and music friendly apps
Fav features: Music apps, iPod, mail messaging
Laptop: I use the Mac for research and communication
TV Shows: The Simpsons, Brasstacks, Friends.
Gadgets: iPhone, MacBook Pro, iPad
Can't live without: My iPhone
Websites: aliazmat.com, prisonplanet.com, facebook.com
Technology: Everything possible, weather forecast, newsupdates
Next Gadget: The next generation iPhone

MATEEN KAUL   [makaul](https://twitter.com/makaul)



Phone: I use the Nokia basic phone
I love: The flashlight
Fav features: Flashlight, alarm clock, phone
Laptop: I use a MacBook Pro
TV Shows: The Walking Dead, House MD, The Daily Show with Jon Stewart
Gadgets: Computer, iPod, Camera
Can't live without: My computer, I use it for work, play and communications
Websites: nytimes.com, guardian.co.uk, gmail
Technology: I use technology for work, for play and communications
Next Gadget: Possibly the iPhone, as I would like a phone on which I can use Google maps

KIRAN CHAUDHRY 



Phone: I use the iPhone
I love: The fact that it is a great way to access so many useful apps, big screen, slim and handy
Laptop: I use a Mac for everything
TV Shows: Friends, Desperate Housewives, Dexter
Gadgets: iPhone, MacBook Pro, iMac
Can't live without: My iPhone, it's my life
Websites: facebook/gmail google, bloomberg
Technology: I use technology for news, email, research
Next Gadget: Not sure!

USMAN JAMIL   [ujaydaman](https://twitter.com/ujaydaman)



Phone: I use the iPhone, I can do so much more with it compared to other so called smart phones I use it for apps, media capabilities, camera.
Laptop: I own a Windows Based PC and use it for work and entertainment
TV Shows: Smallville, Grey's Anatomy, Glee
Gadgets: iPhone, Laptops, HDTV
Can't live without: My iPhone because it does everything for me
Websites: bbc.co.uk/sport,cnssi.cm, thenews.com.pk
Technology: I use technology in my life for work, for listening to music, and for watching movies
Next Gadget: New laptop because my old one is not working



OMRAN SHAFIQUE



Phone: I use the Blackberry Bold
I love: The fact that it is a cheap Smart Phone
Fav features: Email, BBM, Keyboard
Laptop: I use a Windows based PC, I use it for surfing the internet
TV Shows: Dexter, The Walking Dead, The Daily Show
Gadgets: Desktop, PC, Black-Berry
Can't live without: My BlackBerry, it connects me to everything
Websites: anticool.com, digg.com, facebook.com
Technology: I use technology in my daily life for watching TV, make music, listen to music, read books
Next Gadget: I will buy Kinect for Xbox next



ADNAN SARWAR



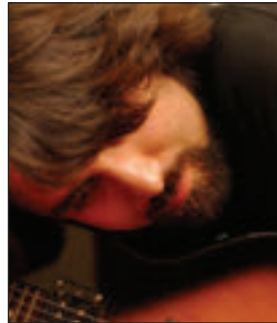
Phone: I use the iPhone
I love: The interface and usability
Fav features: Touch screen mail access, skype
Laptop: I use a windows based PC
 I use it for email, designing and Excel
TV Shows: Top Gear, House MD, CSI
Gadgets: iPod, iPhone
Can't live without: My iPhone, it's my window to everything
Websites: bbc.com, formula1.com, facebook.com
Technology: I use technology mostly through my iPhone
Next Gadget: The iPad, because of it's size and usability



BILAL SAMI



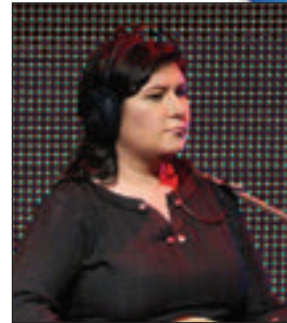
Phone: I use the iPhone
I love: That it squeezes my planner, my radio, my MP3 player ,my GPS, my newspaper, and my life in one small device
Fav features: Email, News, Utility Apps
Laptop: I use the Mac and use it for Web-surfing, Writing, Music and Movies
TV Shows: House MD, The Office, Family Guy
Gadgets: iPhone, MacBook Pro, iMac
Can't live without: My iPhone it runs my life
Websites: bbcnews, the onion, Netflix
Technology: As a filmmaker, I use technology for everything I do, writing, shooting, editing and watching films and television, involves varying levels of technology
Next Gadget: iPad because it will replace my writing pad



ALI NOOR



Phone: I use the iPhone
I love: The fact that it does everything for me even my live stage mixes are done with it and that I can read books on it
Fav features: touch OS, iBooks, with Dictionary, Facebook
Laptop: I own a Mac and use it for all my audio and video work, movies, music, writing- practically everything I have a special table for the toilet!! The iPad is taking over though.
Gadgets: iPhone, iPad, Canon 550d
Can't live without: My iPhone
Websites: froogle, vimeo, cnet
Technology: I use technology in my daily life for everything from my music to video to my movies it's all digital now... we got like 15 TB of hard drives... even my new dog is being trained through YouTube!!!
Next Gadget: WD TV live I need a non OS based watching system



HANIYA ASLAM



Phone: I use the iPhone
I love: It because of it's high quality hardware
Fav features: Communication, camera, games
Laptop: I own a Mac and use it for internet, entertainment, music and videos, music recording and editing
Gadgets: iPhone, Zoom H4N field recorder, Sony eReader
Can't live without: My laptop, it's my primary link to friends, my entertainment center, my workstation
Websites: Google, Facebook
Technology: Technology is inseparable from my day to day activity
Next Gadget: Western Digital MyBook external hard drive for use in my studio





PLAYING FOR CHANGE LAAL - An explosive mix of music & social activism

By Fazeelat Aslam



In a country where tragedy, violence and dirty politics permeate our everyday existence, music is a welcome relief from our resounding woes. We can escape into a world completely disparate from ours. Laal's music, however, will not take you to a college hallway running after a dark-eyed beauty, or a rock concert mosh-pit filled with hot babes. While what sells these days is escape, Laal offers something very different for the problems of Pakistan: an answer.

Taimur Rahman formed Laal a few years ago while he was a professor at Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS). Whilst LUMS has a thriving music scene, it is not necessarily political, and Rahman himself wasn't always as politically inclined with his music.

"At first my music and politics were very separate. In fact, there was a time where I stopped

playing music because I thought it was too bourgeois."

Rahman's sense of humour, and his students' encouragement to play and sing, made him a welcome addition to the LUMS musical community. Eventually this led to the discovery of Shahram Azhar, a student at the time, who became Laal's lead vocalist. Rahman and Azhar were united not just by their love of music, but also by their shared political ideologies.

Whilst in London pursuing his PhD, Rahman's political activism and music manifested in what is now the musical group Laal. As a non-partisan group, political parties welcomed them to lead their rallies and sing their songs. During this time, Taimur Khan, a British-Pakistani, followed the group as a part of the documentary "Democracy in Flames" which was released in 2009. Khan encouraged Rahman to record a single, for which Rahman had modest expectations.

"We put it up on You tube and thought it might get four or five hundred hits. Before we knew it we had thousands and thousands of hits, remarks and comments. It was phenomenal, and, to tell you the truth, we didn't anticipate that much success."

“THIS IS NOT A BAND TRYING TO SELL YOU COOL SHOES, SOFT DRINKS, OR T-SHIRTS. THEY DON'T WANT TO SELL YOU ANYTHING. THEY WANT YOU TO STOP SELLING OUT.”



Laal's first album was picked up by Geo, and they were offered publicity and the basic costs of recording and releasing the album. Laal is currently in the midst of producing their second album.

“One of the biggest issues that Laal will be focusing on is terrorism and religious extremism,” says Rahman. This message is carried out through their latest release, “*Utho meri duniya*” (Rise up my world). The music video is compiled of actual footage of the band's social activism.

“Laal is not just a band. We're a movement,” says Rahman. “A group of factory workers were so inspired by Laal, they formed a group called ‘Laal Street Theatre.’ They have outperformed us in the last month. They do guerilla shows in which five hundred to six hundred people are in attendance.”

Aside from their political activism, Laal has contributed a great deal to flood relief through free performances and personal contributions, as well as their single “*Doob Gaya Hai*” (Everything has drowned). The message in Laal's music is clear; this is not a band trying to sell you cool shoes, soft drinks, or t-shirts. They don't want to sell you anything. They want you to stop selling out.

“People need to realise one fundamental thing,” Rahman says. “This is our home, and if you have a serious problem in your home you can't live in peace. If your house is on fire, you can't reside in it. And our house is in flames?”

Rahman's passion for the cause is shared by his fellow band members. The core members are Shahram Azhar on vocals, brother Jamal Rahman on guitars, their cousin Haider Rahman on the flute, and Taimur Rahman's wife, Mahvash Waqar on backing vocals. Anyone who has been to a Laal performance knows that the positive energy swells in the room until it's fit to bust. This kind of energy rare in musicians, but even rarer still in people who have day jobs apart from their music. Taimur Rahman at one point was balancing completing his PhD, his teaching, his political activism, and his music. Additionally, since lead vocalist Azhar left to pursue his PhD, Rahman has taken over lead vocals. His wife, Waqar, manages both her musical calling and an impressive career as a news anchor.

His brother Jamal Rahman is a music producer and sound engineer, and aside from running his own recording studio, True Brew Records, he's also involved in his family business of interior and furniture design. With such hectic schedules, and conflicting choices, Taimur Rahman believes there is a reason why Laal perseveres.

“There is never any contention over limelight or money. We're truly dedicated to our music and our cause. We share all the money from the performances equally, whether you're the lead singer, or playing a tambourine. Most of our money is reinvested in Laal.”

It is only with a great deal of passion that one can be this committed. Rahman's rhetoric resonates with a rationale and understanding that one could only dream our politicians could muster up.

“As a Pakistani our responsibility should be to build a society where there is tolerance and harmony between people of various religions and equality between peoples of various nations, equality between genders, democracy, rule of law, sovereignty, education for all, healthcare for all, land reforms, end of feudalism, welfare reforms, minimum wage laws, rights for poor people, freedom of expression. – all the things that a modern, democratic, welfare-oriented society should have.”

Laal's message is not about perpetuating a social hierarchy or exclusivity. As musicians in the public eye, Laal's members have taken on a collective responsibility to refrain from moralising to disaffected youths, and to advocate for a better Pakistan by creating autonomy for the ordinary Pakistani.

“If you manage to identify a problem correctly,” Rahman says “You're more than half way to solving it. Let's make careful statements, not based on hearsay, because our statements matter.” Aside from offering powerful music that stirs listeners' senses, Laal gives a healthy dose of good sense. You can find Laal on Facebook. Keep a look out for their latest single “*Fareeda*.” ■



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MOVIE REVIEW

TOP 5 MUST SEE MOVIES

By Omar Jamil



THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO

While many are eagerly anticipating David Fincher's 'remake' of the movie based on book one of the Millennium Trilogy by Swedish author Stieg Larsson, the Swedish version (*Män Som Hatar Kvinnor*) is a movie I whole-heartedly recommend.

For those who (like me) have not read the book, the movie follows journalist Mikael Blomkvist (played by Swedish actor Michael Nyqvist) and a young female hacker Lisbeth Salander (Noomi Rapace) in their search for a woman who has been missing — or dead — for forty years. The movie is mostly faithful to the original text; however, some particularly dark moments have been toned down — possibly because they might have been far too disturbing when translated onto the big screen.

What makes *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* a truly memorable film is the continuing theme of violence towards women that underpins the main 'whodunnit' story line. Even with sub-titles, the script is gripping and the pace unflagging. The main characters of Salander and Blomkvist are portrayed brilliantly by Rapace and Nyqvist respectively; especially Rapace, who manages to capture all the nuances of Salander's complex character. For those too impatient to wait for the Fincher version (or others who'd prefer to see the book acted out in its original language), *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* is an essential addition to the DVD shelf.



KICK-ASS

Kick-Ass is arguably one of the best movies of 2010. The movie is narrated by Dave Lizewski (played by relative newcomer Aaron Johnson), an unnoticed high school student and comic book fan with a few friends who lives alone with his father after his mother dies of a sudden stroke (facedown in the cereal). Despite being 'invisible to women', Dave's life is otherwise uneventful. That is until he randomly decides to become a super-hero, calling himself 'Kick Ass' (this, sans any powers or training).

Without giving too much away, *Kick Ass's* adventures 'kick' into overdrive when he makes an enemy of local mob boss Frank D'Amico (Mark Strong at his absolute sleaziest). Our young hero is soon joined on his quest to fight evil by Red Mist (better known as McLovin' — or otherwise Christopher Mintz-Plasse), Big Daddy (a former homicide detective turned vigilante — played by Nicholas Cage), and Hit Girl (newcomer Chloë Grace Moretz) and all hell literally breaks loose.

What makes *Kick-Ass* truly brilliant is the way it creeps up on you. The film starts off as the usual teen-angst superbad-esque fare. However, somewhere midway, it takes a decided turn for the dark (starting off with a mobster being crushed in a metal compactor and moving on to far more sinister fare). Perhaps the best thing about the film is Moretz's turn as the overly mature 11-year-old Hit Girl — a maestro with switchblade knives and semi-automatics. Moretz's Hit Girl is too smart and grown up for her own good; and while we find ourselves amused at her colourfully grown-up vocabulary, we can't help but pity this child without a childhood. The dynamic script, tight direction and excellent performances all around, coupled with some truly memorable action sequences, make *Kick-Ass* a solid 10. ■

SCOTT PILGRIM VS. THE WORLD

By Hamza Bukhari

Edgar Wright's *Scott Pilgrim Vs. The World* is a movie adaptation of a graphic novel unlike any other. For the first twenty minutes, I was completely mesmerized by the real life Japanese anime that was this movie. It is a tale of love for all comic book loving, action techies who are sick and tired of sad excuses for adaptations such as *The Hulk* or even *The Watchmen*.

The story is about Scott Pilgrim (Michael Cera) and the path he has to take to win over the lovely Ramona (Mary Elizabeth Winstead). He is a semi-musician/slacker in his early twenties, living with his gay roommate in Toronto. Having gone through a bad breakup, he starts dating seventeen-year-old Knives Chau on the rebound. Everything is going smoothly until he meets Ramona Flowers, a girl who had recently moved to Toronto from New York, because she had just gotten out of a bad relationship as well. He befriends her only to find out that the only way he can be with her is if he physically defeats the seven men that make up the league of deadly ex-boyfriends.

This film is a perfect combination of an awesome soundtrack, entertaining plot and characters, nostalgic throwbacks to 8-bit video games and mind blowing special effects. The script is very well written since the subplots had to be threaded together in under two hours, all while being highly stylised. They say the devil is in the details and if that is the case then Satan went ape shit on this flick. I highly recommend that everyone indulge in this acid trip of a movie.



FOUR LIONS THE HANGOVER 2

Touching on the very sensitive subject of suicide bombers, Chris Morris has managed to produce an unbelievably funny satire on this debatable issue. *Four Lions* is about a group of British Pakistanis trying to be accepted by their local Muslim community, not by becoming more steadfast in religious practices but by seeking divine glory through Jihad.

To say that this movie is a dark comedy would be an understatement and it actually possesses a certain shock value. The director has done a great job in keeping the naivety of both terrorists and law enforcement balanced. It does not portray the Jihadists as just fools without a cause, nor does it paint a picture of perfection on the opposing side. It highlights the shortcomings on both sides of the fence and actually pulls it off in a very witty manner.

All of the characters bring a certain flavour without which this film would not have been successful. There is the smart one in Omar, the confused white guy in Barry, the stupid one in Waj and the mentally-handicapped one in Faisal. The constant banter between characters is hilarious and as Pakistanis, is something we can identify with. At certain points during the course of the feature, you will find yourselves laughing at things that you would normally find appalling, and at the same time you won't be able to help thinking more level-headedly about the whole "terrorist" dilemma. This attempt at making a serious issue into a laughing matter was a risky one, but in the end, it has been pulled off beautifully.

My personal opinion is that the character Waj made the movie. All of the characters are funny but this guy is just as loveable as he is funny. His performance probably won't get him nominated for an Oscar but he sure will make you laugh your ass off.



The first one was an instant comedy classic and I'm sure that this one won't disappoint either. Director Todd Phillips has brought us *Starsky & Hutch*, *Road Trip* and *Old School* just to mention a few heavy hitters. The entire cast from the first film has signed on for part deux and there are many glitzy additions to the credits. Liam Neeson, Mike Tyson, Ex-President Bill Clinton and even Zac Efron are apparently going to have cameo roles. Phillips resume in cinema is definitely up to standard. Let's just hope he can deliver on a sequel, which is usually less successful than the originals. ■

TOP 10 FOR YOUR PLAYLIST

FOR ALL YOU FUN
LOVING PEOPLE OUT
THERE HERE IS MY LIST
OF TOP TEN PARTY NUM-
BERS, TV SOUNDTRACKS
AND ALBUMS TO
TANTALIZE YOUR
MUSICAL TASTES.

By Usman Raza Jamil

TOP TEN TV SHOW SOUNDTRACKS

For all you sitcom junkies out there, who hear a great song during a show that you just want to have.

1. Live and learn.... The Cardigans (Greys Anatomy)
2. Collide... Dishwalla (Smallville)
3. Make believe...The Burned (Gossip Girl)
4. Paint the silence.... South (The OC)
5. Marry me....(Glee)
6. Cant take my eyes off you....The Cary Brothers (Smallville)
7. Hide and seek....Imogen Heap (The OC)
8. Dancing with myself....(Glee)
9. Off I goGreg Laswell (Greys Anatomy)
10. The ghost in the machine....B.O.B (Gossip Girl)

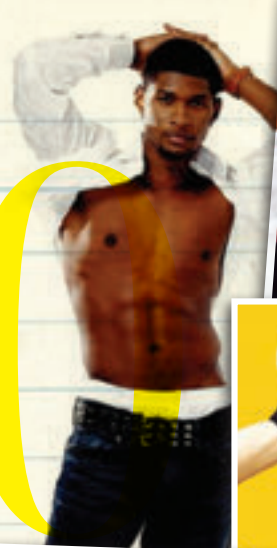
PERSONAL FAVOURITE:
Inside out....VonRay (Smallville)

TOP TEN FOR YOUR PARTY PLAYLIST

Starting 2011 with some foot-tapping numbers.

1. Like a G6.... Far East Movement ft. The Cataracts
2. Hot hottie.... Usher ft. Jay-z
3. Only girl in the world.... Rihanna
4. The time (Dirty Bit).... The Black Eyed Peas
5. Miami 2 Ibiza Swedish House Mafia ft. Tinie Tempah
6. Club can't handle me.... Flo Rida ft. David Guetta
7. DJ got us fallin in love again.... Usher ft. Pitbull
8. Patron tequila.... the Paradiso Girls ft. Lil Jon
9. Dancing on my own.... Robyn
10. Gettin over you... David Guetta and Chris Willis ft. Fergie and Lmfao

PERSONAL FAVOURITE:
One.... Swedish House Mafia ft. Pharrell





TEENAGE DREAM

Katy Perry

Popular in the news these days thanks to her recent marriage in India to crazy-man "Rusty Rockets" Russell Brand and for stirring up controversy by appearing on a Sesame Street episode in somewhat unsuitable attire for the young audience of Big Bird, Katy Perry's sophomore effort 'Teenage dream' is a massive improvement on her debut 'One of the boys', with better lyrics, better singing and all around feel good tracks.

'California gurls' featuring Snoop Dog was the first single off the album that got all of us dancing and grooving. 'Teenage Dream' is a great number, with some memorable lyrics that make us nostalgic about the time when life was much simpler and fun. 'Firework' is another hit single from the album, which is another awesome track. 'Hummingbird heartbeat' has to be, for me at least, the best track on the album and features Perry's great vocal prowess. 'ET (Futuristic lover)' and 'Last friday night' are worth a listen as well for all of you dance lovers out there. 'Not Like the movies' and 'Pearl' are nice ballads.

All in All, 'Teenage dream' is a must-have for all you music lovers out there. It definitely is a step up from the 'I kissed a girl' days of Katy Perry, but still maintains that 'fun' and feel good element of her music.

“A STEP UP FROM THE ‘I KISSED A GIRL’ DAYS OF KATY PERRY, BUT IT STILL MAINTAINS THAT ‘FUN’ AND FEEL GOOD ELEMENT OF HER MUSIC”

MUSIC REVIEW

DOO-WOPS & HOOLIGANS

Bruno Mars

Peter Gene Hernandez, better known as Bruno Mars, burst on to the scene with his soulful voice on the hit single 'Nothin on you' by B.O.B. He then followed it up by adding his vocals to Travie McCoy's hit number 'Billionaire'. His songs have been expertly covered by the Glee cast in the current season and his debut effort 'Doo-wops and hooligans' showcases his talents as singer-songwriter and producer.

'Just the way you are' was a Billboard Top 100 chart topper and is a great track for all us romantics out there. 'Marry you' is another feel good and fun song as well as 'Count and me'. 'Grenade' is one of the best tracks on the album and especially showcases the vocal and songwriting talents. Notable collaborative efforts which are worth listening to on the album are 'The other side' and 'Liquor store blues'. Elements of reggae, r & b and pop are prevalent in the album and Mars' easy and smooth vocals make the songs enjoyable to listen to.

Disappointingly, a great song of his, 'Dancing in the mirror' (available on YouTube) is not on the album, but if you want music that you can headbang to whilst you drive or relax, then this album is definitely worth having. ▀



“REGGAE, R & B AND POP ARE PREVALENT IN THE ALBUM AND MARS' EASY AND SMOOTH VOCALS MAKE THE SONGS ENJOYABLE TO LISTEN TO”

Book review

THE LIFE'S TOO SHORT LITERARY REVIEW 01

By Mina Malik Hussain

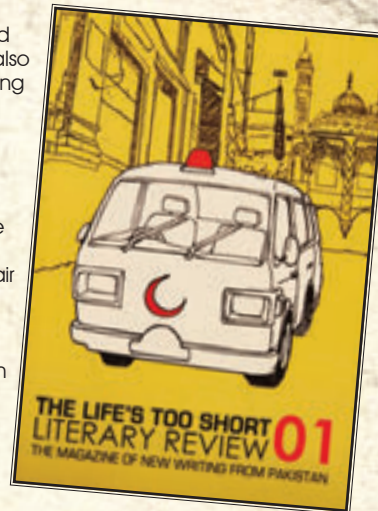
The Life's Too Short Literary Review is the product of the short story competition that bears (more or less) the same name, with extra fries. The jaunty mustard cover sports an ambulance, presumably reiterating the too-shortness of life and long stories. The Review itself is rather delightful. With a mix of short fiction, a photo essay and graphic novel extract, it includes a broad range of new creative work from Pakistan.

The selections are varied and thoroughly readable. With a few exceptions, most of the stories are set in an urban Pakistani landscape – Clifton beach in Bilal Tanweer's haunting 'To live', the upper-portion tenants in Sadaf Halai's 'Lucky people', the anonymous middle-class houses of Sarwat Yasmeen Azeem's 'The wedding'. Most of these cityscapes are of Karachi (or unspecified); as a Lahori reader I kept hoping for a glimpse of the canal or Mall Road. Luckily the strength of the storytelling takes one beyond the geography, and this is where the Review shines. Fast paced, candid (almost to the point of icky, as in 'Baby') and absorbing, even the less invigorating stories get by on the momentum of the others.

The Review's stars though, are the extras; and the champ of them all, ironically, is the piece of translation. Mohammed Hanif's pitch-perfect rendition of (presumably a chapter of) 'Challawa' into English is an unexpected delight. In our tentative fumbblings and experiments with the English language we often forget the treasure troves already present in Urdu literature, and by including a work in translation the Review takes on a raffish, authentic charm. This is compounded by the delicious photograph by Nurjahan Akhlaq on the back cover, and Atiq Uddin Ahmed's photo essay, 'Sign your name across my heart'. It's a nod to the desis we are under all the pronouns and past participles, and these 'extras' are what sets the Review apart from other literary journals like it. Mohsin Hamid's one-page 'archival' note seems irrelevant – probably because it is so brief and doesn't particularly echo material included in 'The reluctant fundamentalist' – but 'Rabbit rap' is downright electrifying. Not because of the plot – it is still too general to be hardcore desi, and besides, the rabbits wear checked shirts and overalls. But a graphic novel from Pakistan has been a long time

coming; hats off to Michelle and Musharraf Ali Farooqi (who has also translated Hoshruha) for launching the first salvo.

One particular quibble I do have with the Review is that the prize-winning stories are not given due importance. They are interspersed casually with other works, which to me is rather unfair given that 'Settling affairs', 'The Six-fingered man' and 'Lucky people' won a national contest and the other entries have been personally picked by the editors. Surely the LTS prize should be better highlighted by the journal?



In her note, editor Faiza S. Khan writes about the burden of writing the 'Real Pakistan' faced by aspiring writers from this part of the world. The Review has deliberately sought to choose stories that are not dependent on the monsoon and mangoes for atmosphere (thankfully there isn't a single urchin dancing in the rain) or death and destruction by the Taliban for plot. The closest any of the Review's stories come to political are bombs that explode in a few stories (I don't want to give anything away), or 'The Six-fingered man' being set in Kashmir. It is a great relief and pleasure to have a collection of interesting, relevant work that is, let's say, of Pakistani origin. It is contemporary, but also grounded in the mysterious something that makes us green-and-white. I like to think it reflects the urban, educated English-speaking type of Pakistani many of us are – we read, write and speak in English, but we dream, curse and break our hearts in Urdu.

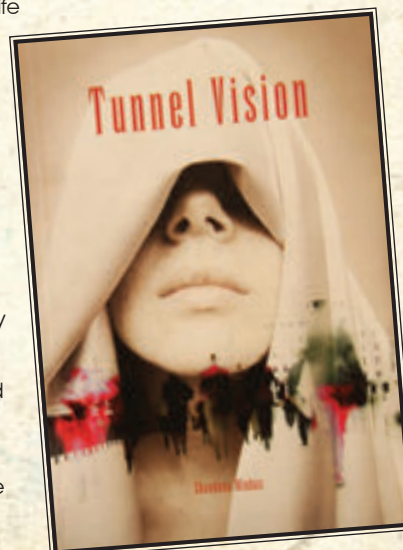
TUNNELVISION BY SHANDANA MINHAS

Tunnel Vision is a rip-roaring, borderline polemic about Ayesha Siddiqui and the near-death experience that leaves in her a state of limbo. In her coma, she floats above herself and in that space finds the clarity – and distance – to analyse her life. Written in the first-person, Siddiqui's narrative voice is sarcastic, caustic and very, very angry. I'm surprised she's thirty-one; the tone of her angst is distinctly sixteen. She rants against her sleazy boss, her parents, rich people living in air-conditioned cocoons while the average Joe sweats it out on a bus, and so forth. It's annoying – yes, life isn't fair. Get over it. But it's also positively delicious being privy to all the catty thoughts a person thinks but never says – and Ayesha never says any of it, much like anyone else. That's what makes her likeable – she may hate her mother, for example, but wants her to love her all the same.

Each chapter begins with a quintessentially desi epigram – from lines from advertisements ("nice girls don't shave", I loved it!), backs of rickshaws ("pyaasi ankhein") to cheapster prank-call pick-up lines ("aap ko kiss se baat karni hai? "mainay sirf aap se baat karni hai"), each epigram has some bearing on the tone of the chapter. They also display a rare wry humor that is one of the qualities that Minhas infuses Siddiqui's character with, and one that helps to balance the vitriol with something more vulnerable.

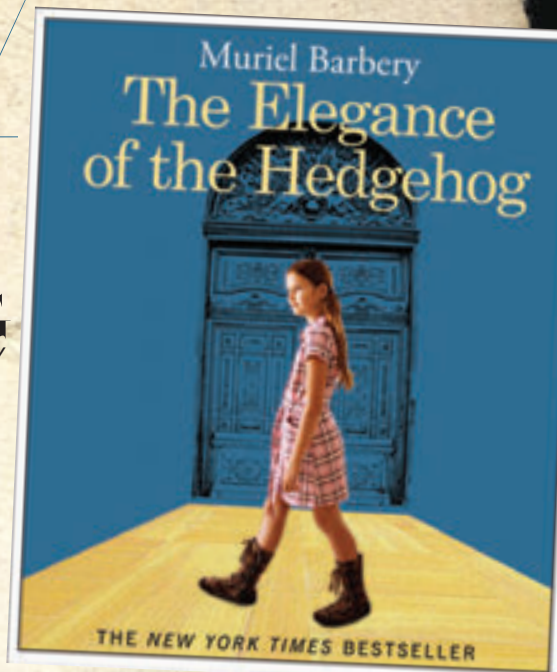
Tunnel Vision is a thoroughly enjoyable read. It may not be high literature, but it is honest and barrels on with a great deal of energy,

wry wit and sheer force of character. It is also refreshing to read about a book that doesn't dwell on the typical – it is a self-absorbed story, and Ayesha Siddiqui's life yields enough of (a surprising amount of) drama to keep one hooked onto her life. The story doesn't look around to why, for example, a class divide exists or why some men are useless in a crisis. It's all a part of life, for Siddiqui, an unchangeable, annoying world order. She isn't out to save the world or bring a revolution, but she is certainly going to voice a loud opinion about it. That's why one ends up rather liking her, and therein Shandana Minhas has successfully created an engaging, opinionated character I for one would like to see more of. ■



LITERARY CRITIQUE

BY AYESHA SIDDIQI



THE ELEGANCE OF THE HEDGEHOG MURIEL BARBERY

A novel by French novelist and professor of philosophy Muriel Barbery, the book follows the life of a concierge, Renée Michel, whose deliberately concealed intelligence is uncovered by an unstable but intellectually precocious girl named Paloma Josse. Full of allusions to literary works, music, films, and paintings, the book incorporates themes relating to philosophy, class consciousness, and personal conflict.

The two protagonists of Muriel Barbery's *The Elegance of the Hedgehog* are both closet intellectuals, hiding their true selves from an outside world that they deem unworthy, and, in order to deal with their day-to-day lives, searching for beauty in the seemingly mundane. Through them, the book explores the universal themes of life and death, and mankind's quest for meaning. Its primary accomplishment is to achieve a meaningful and intelligent discussion on these themes whilst remaining light, and astonishingly readable.

In style, the novel echoes that of the French nouveau with its focus on objects and its emphasis on the world viewed through the eyes of the protagonists. Plot and character are, to some degree, subordinated to this world-view. For instance, neither the name nor physical description of the 12-year-old protagonist is offered until page 240. The way in which the story is told takes precedence over the story itself and the narration takes the form of several essay-like chapters, more for the sake of themselves than as a means of driving the plot forward. This appears deliberate, but not self-conscious. The younger protagonist says at one point in the story, '... a text is written above all to be read and to arouse emotions in the reader ... when you are applying the rules of grammar skillfully, you ascend to another level of the beauty of language.'

The 12-year-old speaker of these words, Paloma, lives in a large flat in an affluent part of Paris with her parents and her sister Colombe. She has decided that at the end of the school year, she will kill herself. The other protagonist, 54-year-old Renée, has been the concierge in Paloma's building for twenty – seven years. The French bourgeoisie disgust her, and she spends her life maintaining the charade of being a typical concierge.

The majority of the book is from Renée's point of view, and it is interspersed with journal entries from Paloma. This structure is effective – it moves smoothly between the two, ebbing and flowing gently so that the reader feels privy to a sort of conversation, and is eager for the two characters to meet and interact. The writer skillfully withholds this meeting until the last third of the book, and so it seems that a friendship develops between the characters just as our own relationship with them matures. This almost offers the sensation that the reader, having gotten to know each of the characters separately, is now introducing them to each other.

Renée's use of the present tense keeps the reader in the moment, refusing to offer a vantage point from some point beyond the end of the story. She saves the past tense for whimsical (and at one point, traumatic) recollection. This type of writing adds to the intensely cinematic nature of the book, a quality further enhanced through short chapters, ranging from half a page to five pages, and through a sophisticated use of imagery; at times of high emotion, the reader

is confronted with the particles of a shaken-up snow globe falling gently within the glass, or the camellia flower – an innocuous enough plant whose beauty can, it seems, save lives and initiate rebirths.

The imagery, however, maintains a self-awareness and an irony that allows the book to retain its satirical element. A scene where Paloma launches a tirade against the petit bourgeoisie lunacy of anthropomorphising house pets is followed by one of Renée conversing with Leo, and Paloma mocks her mother, a rich socialist hooked on anti-depressants and sleeping tablets, more than once for treating her plants like children.

A clever mirroring of the two protagonists is, however, somewhat weakened by the writer's failure to create two distinct voices. Not only do Renée's outlook on life, philosophising, and impression of others in the building echo those of Paloma, their sentence structures and choice of words are also alike. At times Paloma has the voice of a young albeit extremely intelligent girl but at others it feels as if the author is unable to resist carrying a thought to a conclusion that one would expect of Renée but not of the young girl. The use of different fonts for the two characters succeeds to some degree in tackling this problem. Renée's discrete serifed writings convey a maturity and formality that is less present in the precocious Paloma's sans-serif cursive journal entries.

Still, there is a one-dimensionality to the book that lets it down. The plot itself is simplistic, and like a kind of fable or fairy tale. The cultured and popular new Japanese tenant snubs the rest of the inhabitants of the building and gravitates towards Renée, whom he detects is a 'clandestine erudite princess'. He brings the two protagonists together and helps them question the stereotypes that they themselves hold. Traces of clichéd exoticisms run throughout the book (Kakuro's half-Vietnamese assistant is, Renée tells us, 'both manly and delicate, a perfect synthesis of masculine good looks and Asian gentleness'; the Japanese child, Yoko, is the first person that Paloma inexplicably sees as 'fresh and full of possibility'; and there is a 'contemplation of eternity ...' Renée muses, that '... is unattainable to Western sensibilities, and that only Japanese culture can elucidate'), and the scathing social critique also chooses, in the end, to lie down in placid acceptance rather than rise up in revolution.

In spite of this, the novel shines discretely. Although cinematic, it is not a fast-paced Hollywood blockbuster. It is more comparable to the works of Renée's favourite film-maker, the Japanese Yasujiro Ozu. It floats from scene to scene, and talks about the human condition in ways that are at times hilarious and at others tragic. It speaks of finding beauty and meaning in life but avoids any sort of sanctimoniousness. It is introspective, philosophical and, ultimately, quite moving. ■

Restaurant REVIEW

LUCIANO'S at AMMAR BELAL

By Hamza Bukhari

ADDRESS: 39/A2, MAIN
MAHMOOD KASURI ROAD
GULBERG III, LAHORE
PHONE: 92-42-3-7069461



When I first heard that another Italian restaurant was making an entrance into the Lahore culinary scene, I was pretty skeptical. The reason being that in the past couple of months, I have been to countless restaurants with great decors, but when it came to their food, they didn't leave much of a mark. Walking into Luciano's, I got the feeling that the glitzy all white decor would be the only thing that would make a positive impression on me. It did not take long for me to lose my prejudgments about the place. The atmosphere made me feel like I had walked into a posh Miami hotspot. The private lounge idea is solid since most of us find it awkward when on a date and a loud-mouth relative decides to come and say hello. As I perused through the menu, I appreciated that it was not too elaborate and the chef was sticking to produce that is in season. The attendants were well groomed and well spoken. After placing our order, they brought out arguably the most soft and fresh bread that I have tasted locally. Next, the calamari appetizer was unique in that it wasn't your typical battered and deep fried variety, but seasoned with a mildly tangy and spicy marinade. We tried the greek salad, the red snapper and sole and all of them had flavours that we don't see very often here. Luciano's has taken a huge leap of faith by experimenting with flavours that are not a "safe bet". They have gained the respect and approval of this critic.

The trend for quaint Parisian cafes replete with old fashioned chairs and table cloths, has won over Karachi and made Café 76 quite the spot for young and old alike. Its naturally divided spaces within the restaurant and the elongated atrium at the end, where sunshine peaks through the foliage, lending the establishment a more intimate and relaxed feel. The menu has influences from well established fine dining restaurants such as the rich and succulent grilled mushrooms and grilled chilly garlic prawns – but at a much more affordable price. The chilli garlic sauce served with french fries gives a new twist to traditional fried potatoes. However the most unique entrée in the menu is the chef's special steak, an exotic blend of flavours with a sweet and tangy teriyaki sauce with the sharpness of Rocket and garlic. The jalapeño chicken, unlike the one that is served at other establishments, has a very potent, piquant taste and crunch of jalapeños that give this ubiquitous entrée a flavour a distinct taste. Enjoy Karachi's famed balmy evenings at Café 72's front lawn cradling a cool mint lemonade or a coffee for late evenings.

CAFÉ 76



ADDRESS: 76, OLD
CLIFFTON, KARACHI
PHONE: 021- 3-5833162-4

CIRO'S POMODORO



Anyone who has previously heard of or been to Pizza Pomodoro in London would automatically think that the branch in Lahore would be small and cozy as well. I was pleasantly surprised to find the one in Lahore was as quaint but much larger. One of the most recognisable attributes of Ciro's is the live music at the venue, which they have replicated perfectly. I am pleased to announce that Lahore has embraced this tradition. On my visit there were numerous tables consuming signature pizzas and drinks all while being entertained by musicians on stage. This really lightens up the mood and makes everything on the menu taste even better. I would highly recommend the garlic mushrooms, seafood pasta and plain cheese pizza with your own choice of toppings, the menu also lets you know what Axl Rose and Alpacino prefer adding oomph to ordering. Pizza Pomodoro in Lahore is definitely going to hold its own when compared to the one in Knightsbridge, a welcome addition to restaurants in Lahore.

ADDRESS: 31-D/E,
Gulberg III, Lahore.
PHONE: 92-42-3-5755160



THE VERANDA BISTRO



The Veranda Bistro is the perfect languid retreat after a long tiring day. With a lavish Mediterranean menu at a very modest price, this is one restaurant that really offers a complete dining experience with classic jazz tunes, an open backyard and a majestic indoor seating area that is artfully divided into chambers so the whole look of the property is that of a grand ship liner. Sip on the blue margarita and mezza platter for starters and indulge in the grilled veal chops with burgundy sauce as a main course, and let the conversation flow as you soak in the music and get lost to the mellow mood of the Mediterranean in this chic bistro.

ADDRESS: 6L, GULBERG III,
LAHORE
PHONE: 92-42-3-5714764



2011

Happy New Year

Har Naya Din Laey Aik Nai Umang
Aik Pur-Azm Saal Aur Khushiyon Ki Navid
Rehmat Kay Talib Hain Us Say
Jis Say...

Yeh Rishta hay Zindagi ka



Heaven in a bottle



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DELECTABLE

WINTER TREATS

From the queen of fusion cooking, **Poppy Agha** creates two dishes for your friends and family.



COCONUT CHICKEN SKEWERS



1 packet boneless chicken pieces
 1.5 tsp salt
 2 tsp crushed red chilli flakes
 2 tbsps grated coconut
 2 tbsps white vinegar
 1.5 tbsps freshly squeezed orange juice / 1.5 tsp lemon juice
 1 tbsp sesame oil / extra virgin olive oil

Mix all ingredients together in a bowl and then set onto skewers or bamboo sticks. Cook in a pre-heated oven for 18 mins, turning the skewer half way through. Serve with slices of orange and a sprinkling of fresh coriander.

STRAWBERRY CROSTINI



1 baguette – 1.5 inch thick pieces
 3 tbsps olive oil
 4-5 tbsps balsamic vinegar
 2 pods garlic – finely sliced
 1 onion – finely sliced
 1/2 tsp crushed red chilli
 1.5 tps salt
 1/2 tsp sugar
 1/2 lemon juice
 1 tin strawberries in light syrup / fresh strawberries if available.
 1 packet mozzarella – preferably imported
 4 sprigs mint / handful chives if available

In a pan heat the olive oil, add the garlic and onions and saute for 3 mins. Add in 2 tbsps balsamic vinegar and 1 tsp salt and cook till the onions caramelize. (6 - 8 mins.)

In a small pot, add strawberries (if using canned, drain most of the liquid) and bring to a sear. Add in 1/2 tsp crushed red chilli, 1/2 tsp sugar, 2 tbsps balsamic vinegar and half a lemon's juice. Cook till the strawberries release their liquid and dry a little. (3-4 mins cooking time in total on a high flame.)

Place the baguette slices on an oven dish. Drizzle some extra

virgin olive oil over them and sprinkle some salt. Place a strip of mozzarella cheese, and then spoon some onion on top, capping it with a strawberry.

Place in a pre-heated oven at 180 deg for 12 - 15 mins. (When the baguette starts going a dark golden colour, and the cheese is beautifully melted, that is your cue to take it out of the oven).

Serve as soon as you can with a garnish of chives, or finely grated mint, and a sprinkle of freshly ground black pepper.



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31-D/E, Gulberg III, Lahore, Pakistan

www.cirospomodoro.pk

the DARK KNIGHT

By Summer Nicks



After almost two years of political upheaval, Bangkok is back on the tourist map and on its way to reclaiming its ranking as one of the region's most ideal travel destinations.

'Same same, but different!' The backpacker's T-shirt philosophy aptly *sums up* *Khrung Thep Maha Nakhon* (Bangkok's name in Thai) meaning "city of angels"; a place where the tastes of the world are mixed into an exotic, often-spicy dish that can never, ever be boring. A giddy blend of modern and traditional culture, this fused Bangkok is hailed as the "Venice of the East" because of its rich customs and of course, many canals. It offers an assortment of attractions, charming vistas and fun activities, which have again made it the ultimate travel destination for so many. The contemporary aspect is that it's a large, bustling city of some 6 million people. Being the capital, it is the administrative centre and the heart of the country as well. Here skyscrapers and modern buildings compete for space against the skyline. Pubs, clubs, restaurants, galleries, markets and other modern amenities entice. But despite its modern trappings, Bangkok is firmly embedded in tradition. All characteristics of Thai culture are revered here, as they are in any rural or less urban part of the country. Rituals are carried out on a daily basis. Like elsewhere in the country, monks accept their daily alms and people of all ages pray and make merit at one of countless temples. You can be fluttering around at MBK's shopping heaven or floating through a two-hundred-year-old monastery, the morning in the 21st century, the afternoon in antiquity.

Like elsewhere in the world, Thailand has seen an explosion in retreats and spas over recent years. But Thailand's spas are among the best in the world, built on a centuries old tradition of massage, time-honoured medicine and holistic healing. Visiting a spa while you are in Thailand will certainly leave you feeling rejuvenated and refreshed for the next leg of your journey, for the trip back home or straight to your airline office to extend your visit.

Bangkok – the city has not lost its charm and still remains one of the region's ideal travel destination.

Though possibly not a country that springs to mind when people think about great paintings or sculpture, Thailand has countless art galleries. Some galleries are private and display the work of contemporary artists, while others focus on Thailand's traditional art forms. If you like visiting galleries take some time out to discover exactly what the kingdom has to offer. You won't be disappointed and just may take home with you the piece you never thought you had missed.

Finding somewhere to stay is also a piece of cake. Whether you are on a budget and care for the raunchy market area and backpacking hangout of Khao Sarn Road for under 20\$ a day or something a little more upscale like the Sukhimvit up to the 1000\$ mark, the city prides itself on its array of accessible accommodations. From '6-star' hotels, to moderately priced guesthouses on almost every corner, you'll never be short of choice.

Then there's the glorious, glorious food. Bangkok offers some of the best food on the planet – 'authentic Thai' cuisine – alongside the very best dishes from the four corners of the globe. While finishing up an a memorable, not to mention, palatable dish, the legendary nightlife awaits you. It offers an unparalleled range of entertainment – bars and go-go, shows, concerts, and cinema – almost everything you could possibly want is available here. The saying, 'What Happens In Vegas, Stays In Vegas', also applies here.



THE CITY AT NIGHT

Being the regional hub, with one of the world's busiest airports, Bangkok has become one of the most important cities in the area. As with the rest of the country, banking services are efficient and reliable, and telecommunications services are equally good. An international standard telephone network and high speed Internet facilities help you keep in touch, whether you are there on holiday or on business. The BTS 'Sky Train', elevated railway and the MRT 'Subway', underground railway, alongside a highly developed system of expressways and toll ways makes travelling around Bangkok as convenient as travelling in any major city.

Bangkok is not just a city to visit briefly on your way to somewhere else. It is a place so rich in experience you will want to visit it time and time again. ■



PARAGON SHOPPING CENTRE



THE LEBUA STATE TOWER



THE BED SUPPER CLUB

PAPER Recommendations

WHERE TO STAY

Swissotel Bangkok 2 Somkhit Lumphini, Pathum Wan, +66 (0) 22530123 www.swissotel.com

The Peninsula Hotel 333 Charoennakorn Road, Klongsan +66 (0) 2-861 2888 www.peninsula.com/bangkok

The Mandarin Oriental 48 Oriental Avenue; tel+ 66 (0) 2659 9000 www.mandarinoriental.com/bangkok

The Eugenia 267 Soi Sukhumvit 31; tel: +66-20 259- 9011-7 www.theeugenia.com

Siam Kempinsky 991/9 Rama 1 Road(behind Siam Paragon Shopping Mall); tel +66 (0) 2162 9000 www.kempinsky.com

Marriott Hotel 257 Charoennakorn Road, Samrae Thonburi +66 (0)2-651-9501 www.marriott.com

Maduzi Hotel 9/1 Ratchadapisek, Sukhumvit Road, tel; +66 (0) 2615 6400 www.maduzi-hotel.com

Siam@Siam Design Hotel& Spa 865 Rama 1 Road, Wang Mai, tel + 66 (0) 2217 3000 www.siamatsiam.com

Swissotel Bangkok 2 Somkhit Lumphini, Pathum Wan, +66 (0) 22530123 www.swissotel.com

The Banyan Tree Bangkok 21/100 South Sathon Road, Bangkok +66 (0)2679 1200 www.banyantree.com

RESTAURANTS AND NIGHTLIFE

Hyde and Seek gastro Bar Soi Ruamurudee, tel: +66 (0)2168 5152-3 www.hydeandseek.com

Bed Supperclub Sukhumvit Soi 11 tel +66 (0) 2651 3537 www.bedsupperclub.com

Cabbages and Condoms; Sukhumvit Soi 12, tel +66 (0) 2229 4610 www.pda.or.th/restaurant

Face Bar 29 Sukhumvit Soi 38; tel +66 (0) 2713 6048 www.facebars.com

The Met Bar Metropolitan Bangkok hotel; 27 South Sathorn Road, tel + 66 (0) 2 625 3333 www.metropolitan.bangkok.como.bz

To Die For H1 Place, 998 Thong Lo; tel+ 66(0) 2381 4714

Club Nove Thong Lo Soi 9, tel +66 (0) 2712 9991

Ice Bar 58/21 Thong Lo; tel: (66) 2381 6844

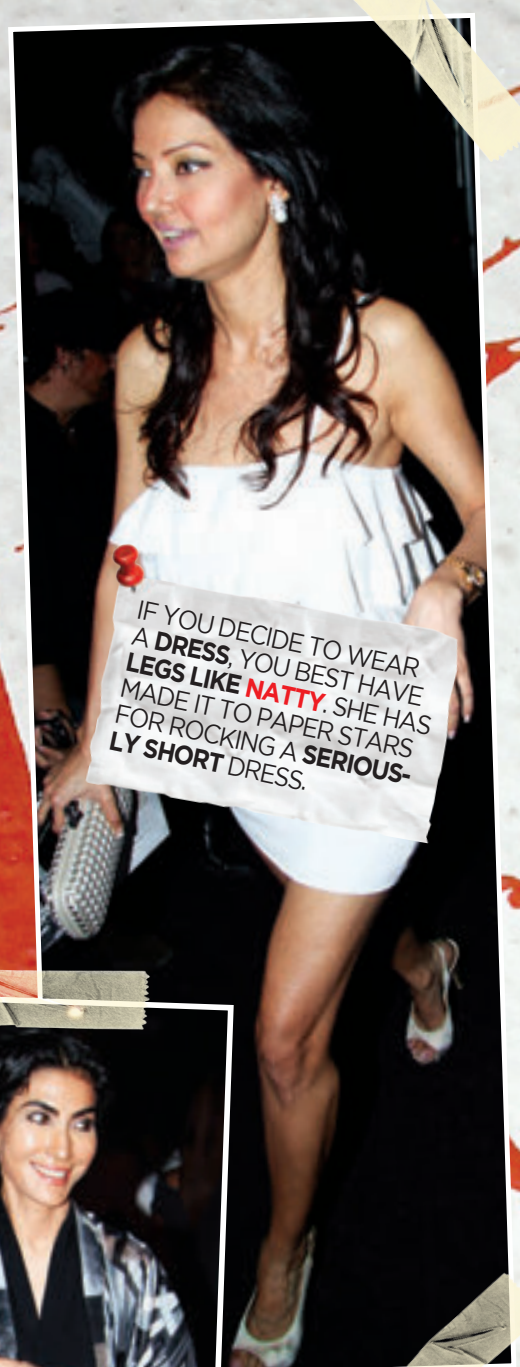
PAPER STARS

PAPER is always on the lookout for people with individual style. Here are the chosen five.

IMAN PASHA THE NEW STYLIST ON THE BLOCK HAS CAUGHT OUR ATTENTION AS SHE IS ALWAYS IMMACULATLY DRESSED. IMAN IS DEFINITELY SOMEONE TO LOOK OUT FOR.



IF YOU DECIDE TO WEAR A DRESS, YOU BEST HAVE LEGS LIKE **NATTY**. SHE HAS MADE IT TO PAPER STARS FOR ROCKING A **SERIOUSLY** SHORT DRESS.



SABENE SAIGOL IS ALWAYS AHEAD OF THE TIMES WHEN IT COMES TO STYLE. SHE SPORTS THE **MIDRIFF** TREND SEEN ON THE CATWALKS OF **ALEXANDER WANG**. WITH SEXY SNAKE SKIN **CHRISTIAN LOUBITONS** SHE DEFINITELY MAKES IT TO THE **PAPER STAR** TITLE.

MAHIRA IS NATURALLY BEAUTIFUL. WHAT SETS HER APART IS HER LAID-BACK, **NO FUSS** SENSE OF INDIVIDUAL STYLE. WITH HER LUMINOUS SKIN AND BARELY THERE MAKEUP, MAHIRA IS A **TRUE PAPER STAR**.



EMAN AHMED STOOD OUT AT KARACHI FASHION WEEK, WITH HER SUPER COOL BODY FOCUS OUTFIT AND AN ELEGANT HAIR STYLE. CARRYING A CLASSIC **CHANEL**, SHE IS A TRUE STYLE ICON AND DEFINITELY WORTHY OF **PAPER STARDOM**.



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