



RELAX. THE WEEKEND'S HERE

brunch

JAN 11, 2025



Separate checks



Break-ups are messy enough. Shared Instas, pets, presents and playlists make them messier. See how couples now split the spoils of modern life

Rude Food Sri Lanka is waking up
Catch the light How to dress for the cameras, every day

Free weekend e-magazine of the Hindustan Times

contents

front

This week,
we're...

Taking Tabi shoes off,
not feeling Beta,
supporting Millie and
Chloe, but not Tom,
and skipping the
grapes **03**

Snap into
focus

You never know when
someone's going to
take a picture of you.
Here's how to look
camera-ready **05**

Work it out

College friends
ditching plans of a
weekend getaway?
Check in with
colleagues
instead **08**



Love, loss & long division



You can end a relationship. But how do you divide
a shared Insta? Can you sue for custody of dogs?
See how couples now tie up loose ends **11**



Rude Travel

Sri Lanka is moving towards a better future.
Meanwhile, its hotels and tourist spots
showcase the best the nation has to offer **17**



Spectator

Airports aren't a lawless zone. Air travellers
need to stop normalising lax behaviour **20**

Drawing Room

Why G Ravinder Reddy's depictions of
female bodies make Samyukta Madhu feel
seen and represented **22**

back Listicle

All the clues we
missed in these 10
movies **24**

Personal Agenda

Actor Durgesh Kumar
opens up about his
bad habits and secret
cravings **28**

This week, we're...

Team Brunch

letters@hindustantimes.com

Planning an exit.

Tom Holland has announced that whenever he becomes a dad, he'll step back from the spotlight: "Golf and dad. And I'll disappear off the face of the earth". Okay, calm down, Tom. We love you, but we hardly see you anyway. How about you do more while you're still around, so we can actually miss you later?



Making it official.

Actor Chloë Grace Moretz snuck a ring pic into her end-of-year Insta carousel. Fans noticed, and believe she's engaged to girlfriend Kate Harrison. The men are heartbroken. Has she been into women all these years? Women are heartbroken too. One commented: "Play 'That Should Be Me' by Justin Bieber". How cute do they look together!



Age appropriate.

Millie Bobby Brown, 20 years old, has hit back at haters who said she looks twice her age. "Women grow!! Not sorry about it," she's posted on her story. It's unfair to expect her to stay the 12-



INSTAGRAM/
@MILLIEBOBBY
BROWN

year-old Eleven we saw in Stranger Things. Her beauty line, Florence by Mills, doesn't have anti-ageing stuff either. Maybe the trolls need to do some growing up, too.



Mourning Perry's legacy.

Perry, who inspired Donkey in the Shrek movies, has passed away at age 30. Perry was five, and frolicking in his pasture in Bol Park, California when animators discovered him. The head shake, the trotting, the quirks, they're all Perry's mannerisms. RIP, OG Dunkäe.





Sending kisses. XO Kitty is back with Season 2, and not only do all the characters have a massive glow up, there are hints of some new, complicated love triangles. Kitty blows a flying kiss in the trailer, and it appears to land on Minh's cheek, not her S1 BF Dae's. Such validation for those of us with second-lead syndrome! Sorry, Dae. We love enemies-to-lovers more. #IYKYK

Getting beta.

Attention, those in a situationship. If you're planning to have a baby, know that the kid will be part of Gen Beta. He/she/they will live long enough to see the 22nd century. What awaits them? A smaller human population, jobs we haven't invented yet, a climate change battle we lost and passed on to them, vacations in space, better healthcare, AI teachers. Damn, son.



ADOBE STOCK

Having grape

expectations. Were you one of the weirdos who ate 12 grapes at midnight on Jan 1, making 12 wishes to follow a TikTok-famous Latin-American ritual? You caused a fruit shortage. Did it work? Are you rich now? Have you fallen in love? Did a single wish come true? At least you started 2025 eating healthy.

Wiggling our toes. 2025 has blessed us with our first weird trend: Tabi shoes, the ones with toe separators. They seem to be inspired by the socks grandma wears with chappals on cold days. Brands say the shoes have more stability and balance. We're saying they look uncomfortable. And ugly. Hard pass. 



Burst. Boomerang. Beware!

How to style yourself in a world where everyone's whipping out their camera all the time, every day

Tanisha Saxena

letters@hindustantimes.com



In an era when every moment could become a post, and every outing has the potential to go viral, there's no downtime for chicness. The cameras are everywhere, and at some point, everyone gets into the frame. Being perpetually photo-ready takes prep, creativity, and attention to detail. It's more about how you style than how much you spend. Stylists Anisha Gandhi and Priyanka Srivastava, who keep celebrities such as Richa Chadha and Kalki Koechlin in the spotlight, share their top tips.

● **Prep school.**

"Only 10% of style is creativity," says Gandhi. "The rest is preparation." Insta-worthy clips don't come out of random closet picks. So, examine everything you own, including underwear, accessories and shoes. What doesn't fit will only drag a photo down. What bunches up, pops open, looks sheer under bright light,

is faded or unflattering will look exactly that in front of a camera. Invest in seamless innerwear and pick them in deep-nude colours. Avoid white lingerie. It becomes visible under thin fabric with a camera flash or bright lights. And send small fixes for alteration. "Never underestimate the power of a perfectly tailored outfit. It not only looks good, but being photo-ready at any time also boosts your confidence," adds Srivastava.



Always at hand

To stay ready for the lens at all times, stock your bag with...

- A **mattifying powder** for touch-ups
- Anti-frizz **hair spray** or serum
- A **scarf** to play up a look
- A bold lipstick and eyeliner
- A **hair clasp**



Build a wardrobe base of versatile staples such as structured blazers or tailored jumpsuits. Add experimental touches, such as neon accents or metallic fabrics.

PHOTOS: SHUTTERSTOCK

● The breakdown.

Life's too short to make new styling decisions every morning. "Create a capsule wardrobe for the week,"

recommends Gandhi.

"Lay out each day's outfit, match them

with accessories, and photograph each look."

Iron what's needed, fix

what's fraying in advance. It gives you

a good idea of what each fit looks like in front of a camera.

● Get real.

Blah looks make for blah photos. "Step out of your comfort zone with calculated risks," says Gandhi.

"Incorporate this season's maximalist trends with bold accessories such as statement necklaces

or sculptural earrings."

Try not to look like a store mannequin. "Your style is your identity. It should be an authentic reflection of who you

are." Srivastava takes it up a notch: "Style should also reflect who you want to be. It's about bridging the gap between your self and your aspirations." She recommends building a wardrobe base of versatile staples. "High-waisted cargo denims, matching caps, sneakers and light gold accessories are my all-time favourite looks."

● Sense the

pattern. Busy prints rarely photograph or film well. "Fine checks and thin pinstripes can distort under certain lighting," cautions Srivastava. Who wants that? Instead, pick bigger, high contrast prints, block colours, muted metallics and no more than two or three colours in an outfit for a clean, sophisticated look. Saturated colours (a deep red, a bold turquoise) will stand out in low light and hazy selfies. Textured fabrics – smocking,





It helps to lay out each day's outfit and photograph it. To stand out, master contrasts: Formal and casual, bright and muted or Western and traditional elements.



micropleats, chunky knits, thick weaves – hold their shape rather than flow with the body's dips and curves. Do a quick check in the mirror to confirm that they don't create odd angles, especially at the waist and hip.

● **Mix it up.** The key to standing out lies in mastering contrasts: Bright and muted, formal and casual, and Western and traditional elements. "Pair a silk sari with a leather jacket, or add silver jewellery to a power suit," says Srivastava. "A satin slip dress paired with a tailored trench coat is an understated, yet bold combination," says Gandhi. Button up the coat for one set of pics, take it off for another.

● **Extra touches.** "Minimalist jewellery is timeless, but don't shy away from bold pieces to elevate neutral

ensembles," advises Srivastava. Diamond studs, chunky gold hoops, a tennis bracelet, or a statement clutch will catch the eye, and the lens. And for the face, it helps to subtly highlight the features with mascara, nude eye shadow, the blackest black liner, and a cool-toned lipstick. Most make-up artists recommend using concealer for spots or areas of discolouration, rather than a full face of foundation. "This way, you're always camera-ready without seeming overdone." Flyaway hair can ruin even the best moment. Loose waves, a polished bun, side-parted ponytails, or sleek middle parts are universally flattering and photograph beautifully. "Learn what hairstyle works for you, whether it's soft curls for volume or straight, smooth locks," says Srivastava. 🌸

Out of office, with the team

Colleagues are turning into travel buddies. No, we're not talking about the office trip. See why work vacays might be the next big thing in travel

Mansi Shah

letters@hindustantimes.com

Dhruvi Khanvholia (third from left) took a trip with former and current colleagues to Delhi, Rishikesh, Haridwar and Triyugnarayan last year.

Most of us can't make it through the workday without wishing for that one co-worker to stub their toe against the desk. Some of us, however, are readily having after-work drinks with our colleagues. As we pour ever more of our lives into our jobs, groups of office buddies are increasingly vacationing together (outside of the mandatory off-site). And the travel industry is watching sceptically, but keenly.

"Shared frustrations about work often turn into shared laughter over drinks. This makes domestic nightlife and entertainment destinations a big draw," says Rikant Pittie, co-founder of the travel portal EaseMyTrip.

CEOs and upper management aren't likely to take off on a break together. It's junior and mid-level professionals, in groups of four to six, who are likely to earmark a long weekend for a getaway. ➔





Groups of office buddies are increasingly vacationing together. In June 2024, colleagues Arzoo Jajodia and Dhruvi Shah Mota (above) planned a four-day trip to Goa. They're not colleagues anymore, but are planning their next vacation soon.

SHUTTERSTOCK

"Mixed-gender groups are common, reflecting workplace dynamics," says Devendra Parulekar, founder of hospitality and property management company, SaffronStays.

Colleagues vacation differently, say industry folks. They're all looking to unwind from the same level of work pressure. Additionally, each is an earning member, open to new experiences and keen to exercise some degree of social signalling. So, they tend to spend more than groups of friends and families. "Group dinners, cocktail hours, and beachside gatherings are popular, but these trips are primarily about shared experiences," says SD Nandakumar, president and country head for holidays and corporate tours at SOTC.

Working it out

Dhruvi Shah Mota, 37, and Arzoo Jajodia, 38, worked in different departments of a tech startup in Mumbai a few years ago. Both realised quickly that they had more in common with each other than with their other colleagues. In June 2024, they planned a four-day trip to Goa. "We ate lots of food, chilled on the beach, got foot massages, danced, made memories," Shah Mota says.

Shah Mota has since joined the family's cinema exhibition business. Jajodia has moved to a finance company. And yet, they're planning their next trip. "My existing friends have family responsibilities," Shah Mota says. "I've travelled with them too, but it's more difficult to plan now."

In Pune, Dhruvi Khanvholia took a trip to Delhi, Rishikesh, Haridwar and Triyugnarayan, with five former and current colleagues, all engineers, in September 2024. The makings of the friendship were already there, she says. "We would spend more than eight hours together daily in the office. We ➔





Colleagues vacation differently. A trip is more driven by experiences and Instagrammable activities. And it's also fun when, like Khanvholia's buddies, the group is up for anything.
SHUTTERSTOCK

knew we would get along even before the trip. So, when the chance to take a holiday arrived, we jumped at it.”

Planning was easy – they were all between the ages of 24 and 28, and roughly in the same salary bracket. It made setting a budget (and stretching it a bit) easy. “At each of the places, we had certain things we wanted to do for sure, such as river rafting in Rishikesh and the Ganga aarti in Haridwar,”

Khanvholia recalls.

In the know

Travelling with colleagues and not old buddies is also freeing, in a way. “There’s lower emotional investment – you don’t have to have deep meaningful conversations,” says Aditi Surana, behaviour expert and high-performance coach. “Plus, everyone has to behave themselves, at least a little bit. So, everyone gets a break, but without the emotional expectations that friends typically have.”

No wonder hotels, booking services and tour operators are excited about the new segment. It’s good for business – theirs as well as of the companies the vacationers work for. “Travel companies should prioritise digital advertising on platforms such as Instagram, where this group is most active,” Nandakumar says.

Rikant suggests that operators throw in referral discounts, points-based deals and corporate tie-ups the way bars at office hubs already do. Hotels with Wi-fi and work nooks will do especially well.

Bosses, meanwhile, are likely to look on with slight FOMO. 🍷

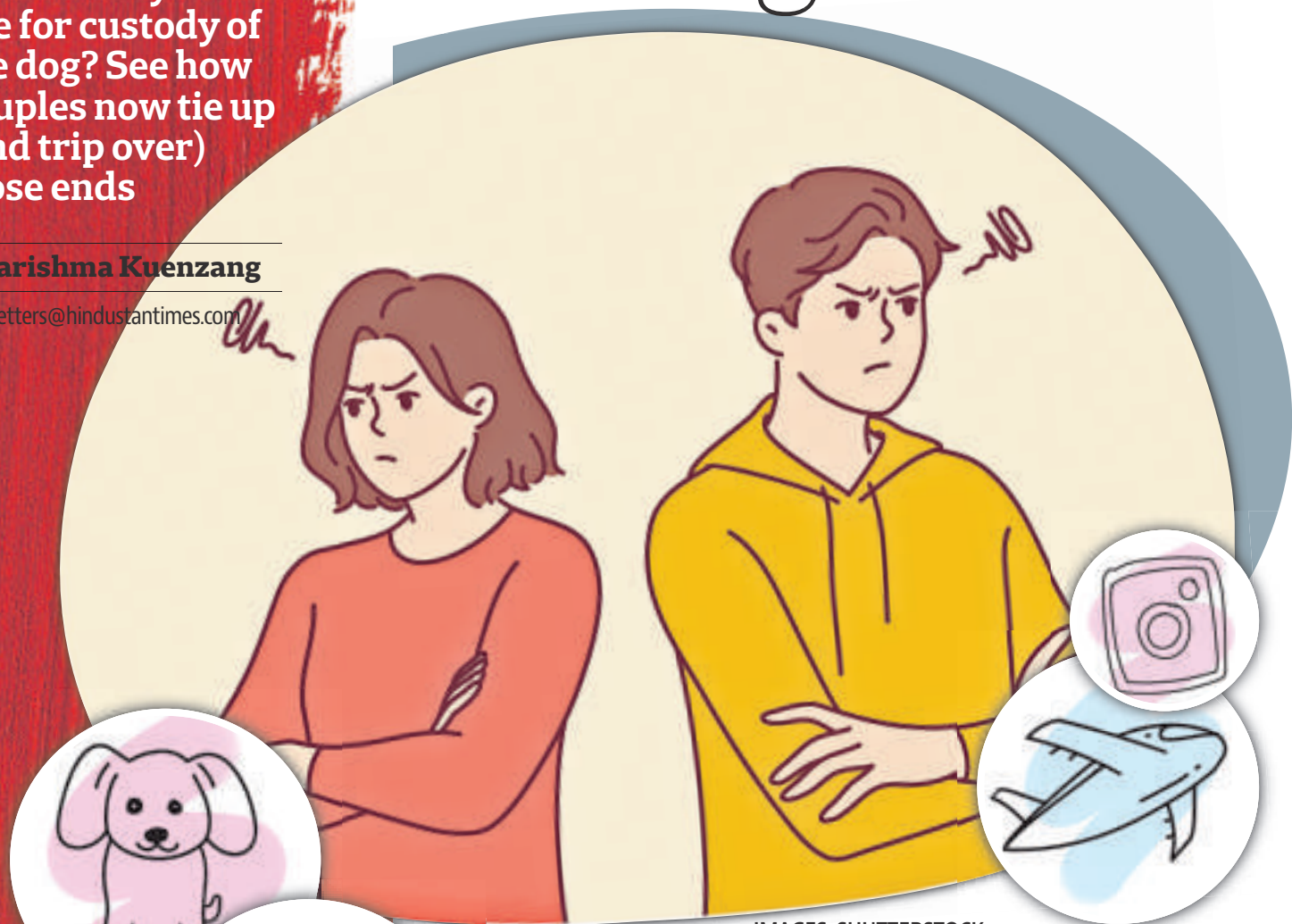


You can end a relationship these days, divvy up friends too. But how do you split a joint Insta or air miles? Can you sue for custody of the dog? See how couples now tie up (and trip over) loose ends

Karishma Kuenzang

letters@hindustantimes.com

Love, loss and long division



IMAGES: SHUTTERSTOCK

Breakups can bring out the worst in people. Delhi lawyer Abhey Narula knows at least one spouse who stole every left shoe from their partner's wardrobe, in a petty attempt to get even. One mother offered her husband absolute custody of their child, but valued the kid at ₹50 lakh.

Around the world, uncoupling is tricky. In Chile, divorce wasn't legal until 2004. In Japan, divorce is



In the US, assets acquired during the course of a marriage are taken into account at divorce, irrespective of who acquired them. Indian law has no such concept

easy, there's child-support too; but children only see the parent they live with. In the Philippines, divorce remains illegal for all but the Muslim minority. "In the US, assets acquired during the course of a marriage are taken into account at divorce, irrespective of who acquired them," Narula says. "Indian law has no such concept."

So, couples bicker over property, savings and, increasingly, the detritus of modern living. See what's up for grabs today.

Shared Netflix, Amazon, Apple and Spotify subscriptions

Seems trivial, considering how easy it is to cancel a joint plan and start a solo one in minutes, but what about all those carefully curated preferences? Young people, especially, are anguished at the idea that their playlist or wishlist, which took years to build, can vanish at the click of a button.

Curation is an art. But creating playlists is not considered intellectual property in any country. So, couples can contest payments made to the services, but can't fight over ownership of their accounts.

"Ideally, the person who originally signed up for the service and pays for it should keep the account," says Narula. Chandni Tugnait, psychotherapist and founder-director of Gateway of Healing, says that with shared accounts, couples might consider splitting any remaining subscription period fairly. Or avoid the mess and give your playlists a fresh start, like you're doing with your life.

The @Handle that took two to build

The Insta page where your #CoupleTravelGoals went viral, the YouTube food channel that both spouses built content for, the archive of video clips,





Young people, especially, are anguished at the idea that their playlist or wishlist, which took years to build, can vanish at the click of a button after a breakup.

the beauty catchphrase, the DMs where deals were made... If your intellectual property was not registered as a business, there's no law over who gets the spoils. Narula gives his clients three options: To register it as co-owners (even during or after a breakup) so as to regulate use and share royalties and profits; to buyout the other person and continue the business solo; to jointly close the IP and archive the account.

The cleanest way out? Just ending a joint

venture. "Most of my settlement terms include an undertaking by both parties that they shall not post abusive, defamatory things about their partner or spouse after parting ways, and not share photos of each other either," he says. "After relationships breakdown, it's possible that one person moves on faster than the other, prompting the other to take to reminiscing or libel. Formally acknowledging these stipulations is better at keeping parties in line."

One of Tugnait's clients, who had jointly built an online following with her partner, knew that each had contributed to the project. "One partner compensated the other for their share of the IP in exchange for full ownership. It was chaotic but we got there."

Credit card points

It's not uncommon for even unmarried couples to pool their spending to maximise loyalty points on a single card. So, when the points are enough to trade ➔



Unless specifically given for the use and enjoyment of both spouses, wedding presents are presumed to be for the wife and therefore hers



for international flight upgrades, but the couple will no longer vacation together, who gets them? Narula says that rewards are tricky: They are non-transferrable and joint spending is hard to track. "Parties can mutually arrive at an approximate value for these so they can be divided," he says. "A judicial officer may value them based on what they can currently being redeemed against."

Couples with kids tend to pass on hard-to-split assets to their children. American banks view points as assets, and often allow for them to be divided when a joint account is closed. In India, "use the points for a mutually agreed-upon purpose, like a final shared expense or a gift card that can be split," says Tugnait.

Wedding presents, heirlooms and all those photo shoots

A bride's jewellery, gifted at the time of her wedding, is considered streedhan, and is recognised as her own property under Indian law. Wedding presents, however, are murky territory. "Unless specifically given for the use and enjoyment of both spouses, they are presumed to be for the wife and therefore hers," Narula says. "In India, newlyweds are usually given money. If that money was used to purchase assets, it's up to the couple to divide them."

Gifts from the bride's family typically go to the bride; those gifted by the groom's family are retained by the groom, says Dr Tugnait. But when divorces get ugly, she's sometimes had to mediate.

Heirlooms such as art, antiques and collectibles are easier. Those gifted to the bride by her parents (at the wedding or after) are hers. Those gifted to her by the groom's family (at the wedding) are hers to keep too. ➔



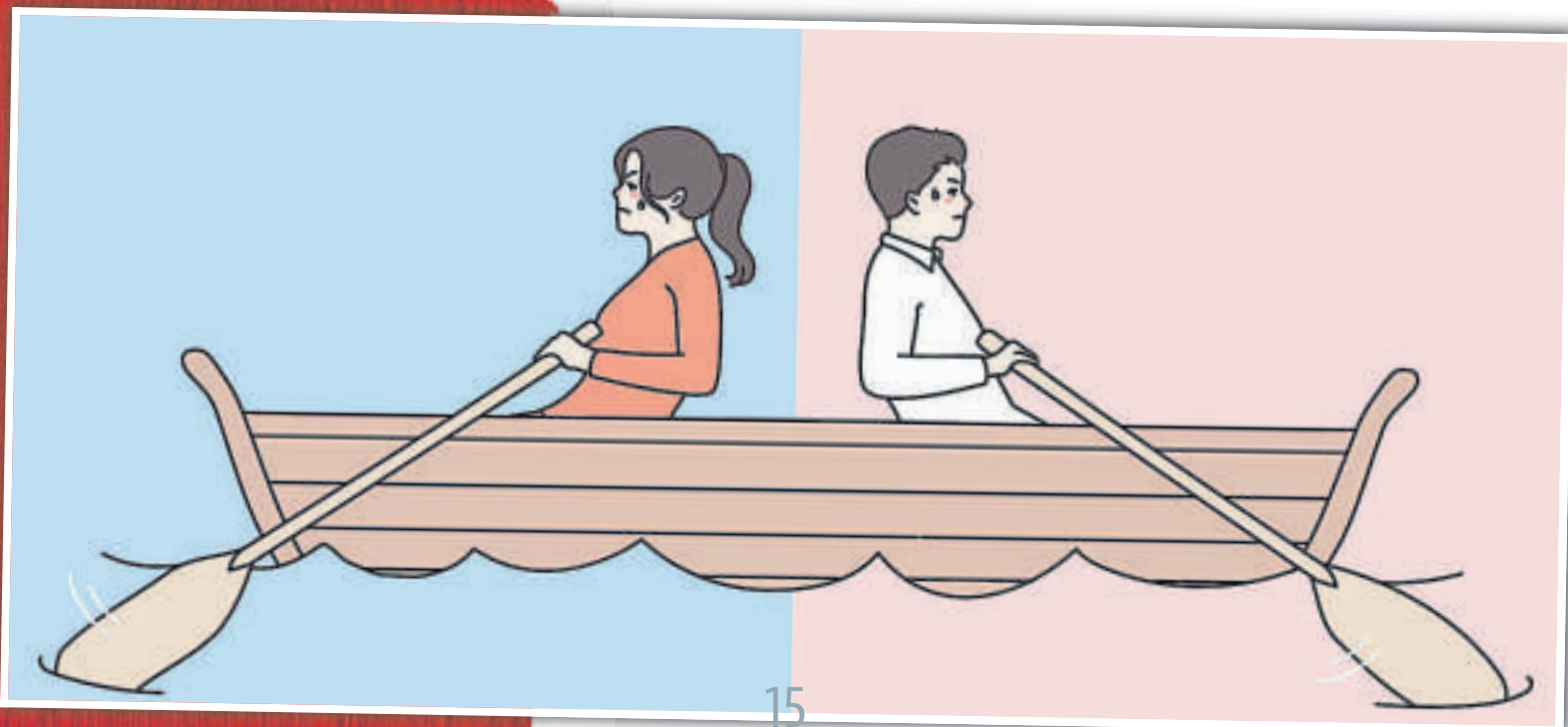


A new asset to fight over: Pre-wedding, wedding and honeymoon photoshoot images. Women typically request ownership

Many of Narula's male clients demand their valuable keepsakes back when a couple parts ways, and compensate the wife for it. Many willingly give up old treasures too – who wants a memento of a severed connection?

A new asset to fight over: Pre-wedding, wedding and honeymoon photoshoot images. Women typically request ownership, Narula says. Ownership, however, is different from copyright. Under Indian law, the creator of the images (in this case, the photographer) holds the copyright, and couples can add a privacy clause at the time of booking, to prevent visuals of their special day from being used on social media or commercially.

The couple (or either spouse) can buy the rights to the images from the photographer at any time, and is then free to share, archive or destroy them. The decision should be based on what helps you heal and move forward, Tugnait says. "If seeing the photos triggers painful memories, get the copyright and delete or archive them." Remember that the photos shot by all the guests are still theirs to keep. ➔





Parties rarely want to interact with each other after a breakup, so co-parenting a pet is not a popular arrangement



Plants, pets, and the sourdough starter

You both fed the dog, watered the monstera, got excited over the warm mason jar of bacteria. But Indian law recognises none of them as wards. So, there is no law to govern their co-parenting.

Dividing plants after a breakup can be surprisingly emotional, says Tugnait. “They symbolise growth and nurturing.” Rare species, raised with care over several years, tend to fetch high enough sums that impact a divorce. She recommends that each spouse takes cuttings from their plants to grow separately, if they both can manage gardens of their own.

Pets are trickier. “Parties rarely want to interact with each other after a breakup, so co-parenting a pet is not a popular arrangement,” says Narula. “It often comes down to who has the larger house. When one of

Tugnait’s clients split with her long-time boyfriend recently, neither wanted to give up their adored dog, Bruno.

So, Bruno spent weekdays with her and weekends with him. “Both people split vet expenses and coordinated Bruno’s routine, putting the pet’s needs first. It worked.”

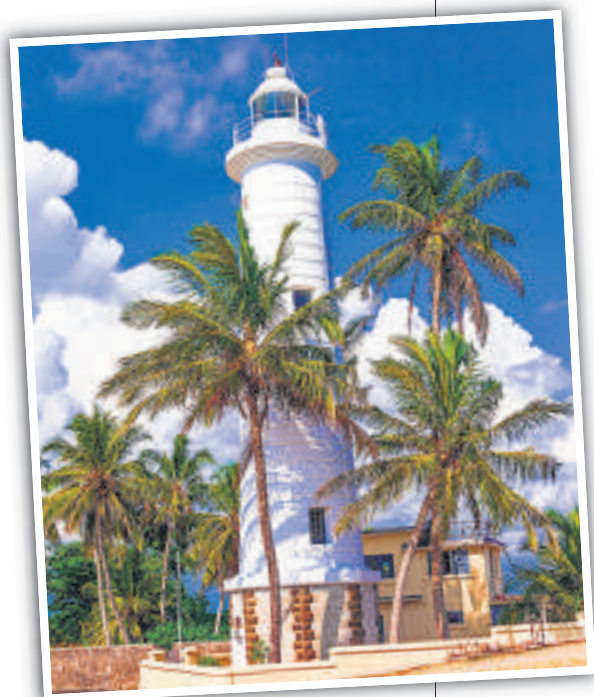
When it doesn’t, it’s best to soften the blow. “If you can’t give something up, offer something else in return,” says Narula. “One can keep all the plants if the other keeps the pet. It’s what I usually advise.”

PS: Sourdough starter is easy to share. Just take out 20g and place it in a clean jar with 20g of flour and 20g of water. To work well separately, the starter must be mature to begin with. As must you. 🌱

They're no longer coasting



VIR
SANGHVI



There's a lot to see in Sri Lanka, such as the lighthouse in Galle Fort. ITC Ratnadipa, which opened recently, is a symbol of Indian goodwill.

PHOTOS: ADOBE STOCK

Sri Lankans are still hoping for a better future. But in Colombo, its hotels are already prepped for success. And the local food is as delicious as ever

I was in Colombo when Dr Manmohan Singh tragically passed away. And in some strange way, there was a certain appropriateness about my choice of hotel. I was staying at the brand-new ITC Ratnadipa, already Colombo's top hotel, and one with a strong Manmohan connection.

The story goes that Manmohan Singh was concerned about the millions that China was pouring into Sri Lanka. He phoned Yogi Deveshwar, then the chairman of ITC, and asked if ITC would invest in Sri Lanka to demonstrate Indian goodwill.

Deveshwar agreed at once. He told me he thought long and hard about it before asking the hotels division to consider building a hotel in Colombo.

That is how the majestic ITC Ratnadipa, in the best location in Colombo, overlooking the sea, came to be built. Everything was planned on a grand scale: The largest guest rooms in Sri Lanka, an impressive lobby, an apartment wing connected by a sky bridge to the main hotel building, and several restaurants that brought the best of ITC to Colombo: Peshawari, Yi Jing, Avartana and the Indian Ocean Pavilion.

All of the hotel's 352 rooms are still not open, but the 260 or so that are available were packed out over the new year at the highest rates in Colombo. On New Year's Eve, 1,200 guests filled the restaurants. Well-heeled Sri Lankans dropped in just to check out the hotel.





Nihonbashi (above) serves authentic Japanese fare. It's 10 minutes away from the Lotus Tower, one of Colombo's iconic tourist landmarks.



As good as it is to see India shining bright in Colombo, it is also good to see Sri Lanka flourishing and thriving. Things have not always been wonderful. There was a terrible civil war, accompanied by the terrorism perpetrated by the Tamil Tigers. More recently, there has been an economic crisis.

But Sri Lanka bounces back. Colombo is no longer the sleepy town I first knew, but it is nearly just as charming. My wife and I spent a week in Lanka. We had made no plans, no restaurant reservations and did not get in touch with the people we know in Colombo.

It worked out beautifully. Most days we would go out for lunch or drive to a nearby beach or town and enjoy the change of scene. We spent nearly all of our evenings in our hotel, eating either the local food made by the Ratnadipa's Sri Lankan master chefs or letting the hotel's executive chef Anurudh Khanna organise meals at the hotel's many restaurants. We tried the Dal Bukhara at Peshawari, the hand pulled noodles at Yi Jing and the steak with pomme purée at the Indian Ocean Pavilion.

We went out for dinner only once, for an invitation that nobody could turn down. Dharshan Munidasa, Sri Lanka's greatest chef, had dinner with us at his new Nihonbashi, walking distance from our hotel, where he served amazing Japanese food (he is half Japanese) including sashimi of local tuna, lamb grilled Japanese style, ramen with prawns, and a remarkable dish of snapper fish on rice topped with a fried egg and finished at the table with hot olive oil.

Our lunches were simpler but delicious. We drove to Galle (pronounced Gaul like in the Asterix comics) and spent an afternoon at Amangalla, one of two Aman hotels in Sri Lanka. This is not an ➔





Amangalla (above) is one of two Aman hotels in Sri Lanka. In Colombo, history and modernity exist cheek by jowl, such as the streets surrounding the locales of Galle Fort.



The views expressed by the columnist are personal

Aman hotel of popular imagination. It opens onto the main road and dates back to 1715. For 140 years, from 1865 onwards, it was the New Oriental hotel, popular with sailors from all over the world who came to Galle. Aman took it over in 2005 and restored it to luxury standards.

On another day, we went on impulse to the beach at Negombo and ate hamburgers, mesmerised by the sand and the sea. And one day we spent an afternoon at the Galle Face Hotel (Confusingly, it is in Colombo not Galle.) This was Sri Lanka's greatest hotel once upon a time and could still be to Colombo what the Taj Mahal hotel is to Mumbai, if only they spent some money on restoring it. According to legend, every large international group has tried to get the owners to sell, or at least, to enter into collaboration so that the 160-year-old hotel recovers its former glory. But the owners have always refused.

I must confess to a weakness for old historical hotels. So we sat at the bar, ate Lankan curry and rice, drank the local Lion beer and thought of how things must've been in its glory days.

That's one of the many things I like about Colombo. History and modernity exist cheek by jowl. On the night of the 31st we did what we always do, stayed in and brought in the New Year on our own. But even as we ate our room service meal, we couldn't help looking out of the window to the seaside causeway below where at least 80,000 people had gathered to celebrate the arrival of 2025. There was a free concert. Fireworks lit up the night and a spectacular drone show took over the sky.

It wasn't necessarily glamorous or sophisticated, but it was full of joy, packed with life and completely real.

Like Colombo itself. 

It's time to clear the air



SEEMA
GOSWAMI



Airports shouldn't be treated as places free of rules. Dressing in pyjamas or being hungover isn't the hip thing travellers think it is.

PHOTOS: ADOBE STOCK AND SHUTTERSTOCK

At airports, pyjamas, hungover travellers, and lax norms abound. But do we really want to see people at their worst?

I was on my way back from my New Year break when it first hit me. Arriving at the airport at the unearthly hour of 6 am to take a flight back to Delhi, sleepy and bleary-eyed (I never can sleep when I know I have to wake up early in the morning), all I wanted was a nice cup of coffee to jolt me into consciousness. But as I walked to the coffee counter at the lounge, I realised to my horror that some of my fellow passengers were indulging in an entirely different kind of tipples. Some of them were cracking open cans of beers, others were pouring themselves glasses of wine (or was it Champagne?) while some others were hitting the vodka and gin. At 6 in the morning!

That's when the realisation hit me: When you are at the airport, anything goes. The normal rules and regulations of civilised behaviour no longer exist, and everyone does pretty much what they want. So, if they want to anaesthetise themselves with alcohol early in the morning before they get on to their flight (presumably so that they can knock themselves into senseless slumber once they are on board) then that's what they will do, without thought of being judged (and being found wanting).

But untimely drinking is just the tip of the iceberg. If you have spent any time at all in airports recently – and I am sure that most of you have – then you will know that this dismissal of rules extends far beyond the ➔





At airports, as with anywhere else, taking calls at full volume or watching music without headphones is just bad manners.



The views expressed by the columnist are personal

choice of beverage. Most of us would not want to be caught dead in our pyjamas in a shopping mall or in a neighbourhood park. But I have lost count of the number of people who turn up to the check-in counter wearing what can only be described as sleepwear. I know that the days when air travel was a glamorous activity that people dressed up for are long over. But even so, this seems to be taking the “being comfy on the plane” thing a bit too far.

You could argue, though, that how you dress does not really impact your fellow travellers, except at a purely aesthetic level. But what does destroy the peace is the propensity of people to have loud conversations on FaceTime without the benefit of earphones at the airport. And don’t even get me started on those people who watch videos on their phones and iPads or play games on top volume and look outraged when you suggest that they use their earphones.

What accounts for this complete lack of civic sense? Do we feel that when we enter an airport, we are entering some sort of other-worldly portal between two cities, a place where the norms of civilised behaviour can be thrown aboard without any fear of judgement or retribution? Do we believe that because we are surrounded by strangers and people who we will never see again in our lives, we are not required to present our best selves to them? Or is it that we feel so untethered from our daily lives at the airport, that we have come to believe that anything goes while we are there?

I really don’t know what the correct answer is. But I still think it’s worth asking the question. 🍷

A sculptor who turns heads



SAMYUKTA
MADHU



G Ravinder Reddy's sculpture, *Sitting Woman* (1997; top), shows realistic women's bodies. *Head* (2010) celebrates strong features.

PHOTO COURTESY SAMYUKTA MADHU



Curves, rolls of fat, and strong features are on full display in G Ravinder Reddy's work. It celebrates the real female form

You're probably familiar with G Ravinder Reddy's work even if you think you aren't. His monumental fiberglass heads of women have been displayed at Ambience Mall in Delhi, at Bengaluru's RMZ Ecoworld, at Phoenix Marketcity in Chennai, and for years, at the entrance to Bangkok's Central World shopping complex. Reddy's sculptures are captivating. They fill the space they occupy. So, even if you haven't been to an art gallery, a biennale, or an art fair, you've seen the sculptures; they've likely seen you too.

In particular, I'm impressed by two of his works: *Sitting Woman* (1997) and *Head* (2010). I saw the first piece while walking through Bengaluru's Museum of Art and Photography. She was nestled in a corner, almost hidden among the other works, her flash of deep blue, an unexpected reward reserved for those paying attention.

Sitting Woman sits on the floor, her legs wide open, unashamed and fierce. Her nude figure is polished to perfection. Light bounces off her lustrous blue skin. Her hair, tied in a bun, is decorated traditionally with flowers, in what seems an almost comical disparity with her undressed body. The smooth, glossy finish of her skin, the curves of her belly fat, and her deep, unyielding kohl-rimmed eyes drew me in.

Most importantly, her body mirrored mine. Her fat was located in the same places as mine! Where I spent years trying to hide my curves behind large hoodies and baggy jeans, here was a ➔



Reddy's works represent power, femininity and South Indian identity.

Digital artist Samyukta Madhu's work plays on themes of feminism, futurism, and South Asian culture.



Drawing Room is a fortnightly series that gets Indian artists to share their favourite work and what makes it so special.

The views expressed by the columnist are personal

representation of me as a South Indian woman. It felt like our bodies too were made to be seen and admired.

I saw Head at the Chennai mall, where it was surrounded by neon logos and signs. Like many of the artist's other busts, it's massive, imposing and powerful. Head, however is painted a rich gold and towers over the shops and eateries surrounding it. Its features are strong – large, deep-set eyes, elegant sculpted lips that hold a slight hint of condescension. It stands there like a mighty ship in the middle of an ocean of commerce.

For me, Reddy's works represent power, femininity and South Indian identity. It's rare to find art that does justice to these subjects simultaneously. I have always wondered about my place in the world as a South Indian woman, about the kind of impact I make. The sculptures provide me with answers to these questions.

When I first saw these works, I wasn't interested in Indian fine art. As someone who grew up online, I typically looked to the West for my definition of good art. It's only after I moved abroad that I realised how crucial my Indian identity was for my work.

I'm greatly inspired by art that plays with scale; works that forcefully take up space, command you to look upwards, or inwards. Reddy's work reminds me of the Venus of Willendorf figurine, discovered at a Palaeolithic site in Austria, and estimated to have been made 30,000 years ago. The Venus is smaller, but among the earliest depictions of feminine power, with her chiselled folds of fat frozen in time forever. She and Reddy's women are empowering images in a world where Photoshop and Ozempic seem to dictate standards of beauty. 🌸

Samyukta Madhu spoke to Noor Anand Chawla

Did you miss the signs?

Some films demand a rewatch, only to spot all the clues you didn't the first time. These 10 aren't your usual suspects. See what we did there?

Urvee Modwel

urvee.modwel@hindustantimes.com



1 Knives Out (2019). When detective Benoit Blanc (an unexpectedly perfect Daniel Craig) meets Marta (a fantastic Ana de Armas) for the first time, he looks right down at her shoes. There is a split-second look of shock. Then, through the movie, he makes comments such as, "Something is afoot" or "The game is afoot" to Marta. Subtle, but so clever.

2 Talaash (2012). This is more than a cop-and-villain chase movie set in Mumbai. Zoya Akhtar and Reema Kagti build a clever set-up and throw in plenty of clues. There's the dog barking at the beginning. But perhaps the biggest clue are the lyrics in the song at the opening credits: Jo rooh pyaasi hai // Jisme udaasi hai // Wo, hai ghumti // Sabko talaashe wahi // Samjhe ye kaash koi. Just Javed Akhtar being Javed Akhtar. Not everyone loved the ending. Well, too bad.





3 Se7en (1995). It's set in 90s LA. The town is gritty. The cop, Brad Pitt, is pretty. Morgan Freeman is jaded but intrigued as a serial killer picks targets who are guilty of the seven deadly sins. It's a crime drama on the

surface. But use the pause button during the rerun. When detectives discover the Sloth victim, they're ambushed by a photographer outside the apartment. This is our killer, played by Kevin Spacey, in disguise.

4 The Prestige (2006). Two magicians develop a lifelong rivalry and attempt to ruin each other's careers and lives. One guy wins. But why? Watch the opening shot: A pile of identical top hats and the voiceover says "Are you watching closely?" Oh, and keep an eye on Christian Bale's eyebrow scars through the film. Feel stupid yet?



5 The Others (2001). A rigidly Catholic woman (Nicole Kidman) lives with her photosensitive kids in a manor. What could go wrong? Kidman is convinced their house is haunted. Most of the hints in this are dialogues. The head servant says that the "death of a loved one can lead people to do the strangest things". Kidman shouts at her daughter, saying "Stop breathing like that!" She has migraines, a reference to how she died.



6 The Sixth Sense (1999). The first time around, it's the story of the kid who sees dead people. On second viewing, it a tale of grief, denial and moving on. Bruce Willis, therapist to the boy, was a ghost all along. There were hints all through: Willis wears the same clothes he died in, and he's not wearing his wedding ring. D'oh!



7 Scream (1996).

This mystery slasher was a huge hit that spawned uncountable sequels. And unnecessary remakes. But the OG has enough clues before Ghostface is ultimately revealed to be two killers, Stu and Billy, working together.

Stu asks Tatum to get a beer from the garage, knowing that Billy is waiting there to kill her. Also, Billy has no holes in his shirt after being stabbed several times. And Billy's first line? "It's just me".



8 Get Out (2017). A couple is going home to meet the parents. They're lovely. The gardeners are a little weird. Something's not-quite-right, which only makes sense at the end. At the start of the movie, Chris says, "I don't want to get chased off the lawn with a shotgun." A big clue there!

9 Hot Fuzz (2007).

Nick Frost, Simon Pegg, Bill Nighy, Olivia Colman play members of the small town and police. A second viewing shows how cleverly it was all set up. Not a line is wasted. The clue we missed: The names! Simon Skinner is the killer, Leslie Tiller is the florist... Genius.



10 Shutter Island (2010). "Why are you all wet, baby?" The recurring line from Martin Scorsese's film makes sense only at the end. Rewatch, armed with what you know of Leonardo DiCaprio's grieving, heroic character. In one scene, he watches a woman drink from an invisible cup; a glass appears in the next scene. Can you spot his wife wearing a cardigan; the exact sweater is worn by a patient? He's such an unreliable narrator. 🍷



JAN 11, 2025

HTbrunch

backstage

this is us

For advertising and marketing enquiries:

Gautam Buragohain
gautam.buragohain
@hindustantimes.
com

Find Hindustan
Times Brunch on
Facebook.
Follow **@HTBrunch**
on Instagram and
Twitter.

Drop us a line at:
HT Media Group,
8th Floor,
Lotus Tower,
Block A,
Friends Colony East,
New Delhi 110025.

Email: **letters@
hindustan
times.com**

Editorial

Editor: Rachel Lopez

Assistant Editor: Urvee Modwel

Correspondent: Christalle Fernandes

Principal Visualiser: Mandeep Dhir

Cover: Design by
Monica Gupta



{ A LITTLE EXTRA }

Brunch editor **Rachel Lopez** often needs more than one viewing to understand a movie. After seven (seven!) attempts, she remains stumped by

Inception. Who's in the bus? Why are they falling so slowly? Why are Cob and Mal preoccupied with sleeping, waking up and dying when they could be living a chill life either way? Whose memory has the anti-gravity scene? Don't other people on the team have memories and projections too? Inception is fun. She'll watch it again. Christopher Nolan's Interstellar, she understood immediately, but won't rewatch because it's so dull. Tenet, alas, is mostly a mess in an endless spin-cycle. 🌸



Durgesh Kumar

Actor, @Durgesh.Kumar.81

Urvee Modwel

urvee.modwel@hindustantimes.com

ADOBE STOCK



**Today
I'm
craving:**
Fish.

Currently I am:

Awaiting the release of Kartavya, an independent film titled Ratanpura, and Amiri, directed by Ashish Shukla.

High point in life:

When the film 'Satya' was released in 1998, and Manoj Bajpayee's work was appreciated.

Low point in life:

Being rejected by my first love. That pain has stayed with me even today.



On my playlist:

The only song I like is Jeena Jeena from Badlapur (2015). I listen to it on loop.

Advice I'd give my 18-year-old self:

That I should have taken my favourite subject in 12th grade.

My favourite Sunday memory:

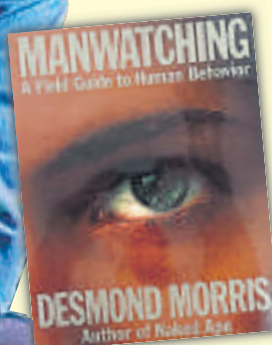
On one project, after working hard through the week, we would all gather in a room. Our mentor would join us, and we would discuss our acting and everything related to it.

My favourite bad habit:

Smoking.

If I could travel back or forward in time, I'd...:

Pursue my graduation on campus instead of doing it through correspondence.



Last thing I ordered online:

The book, Manwatching, by Desmond Morris. It's about acting. 🌸