

# Entrepreneurs Today



## 40 UNDER 40

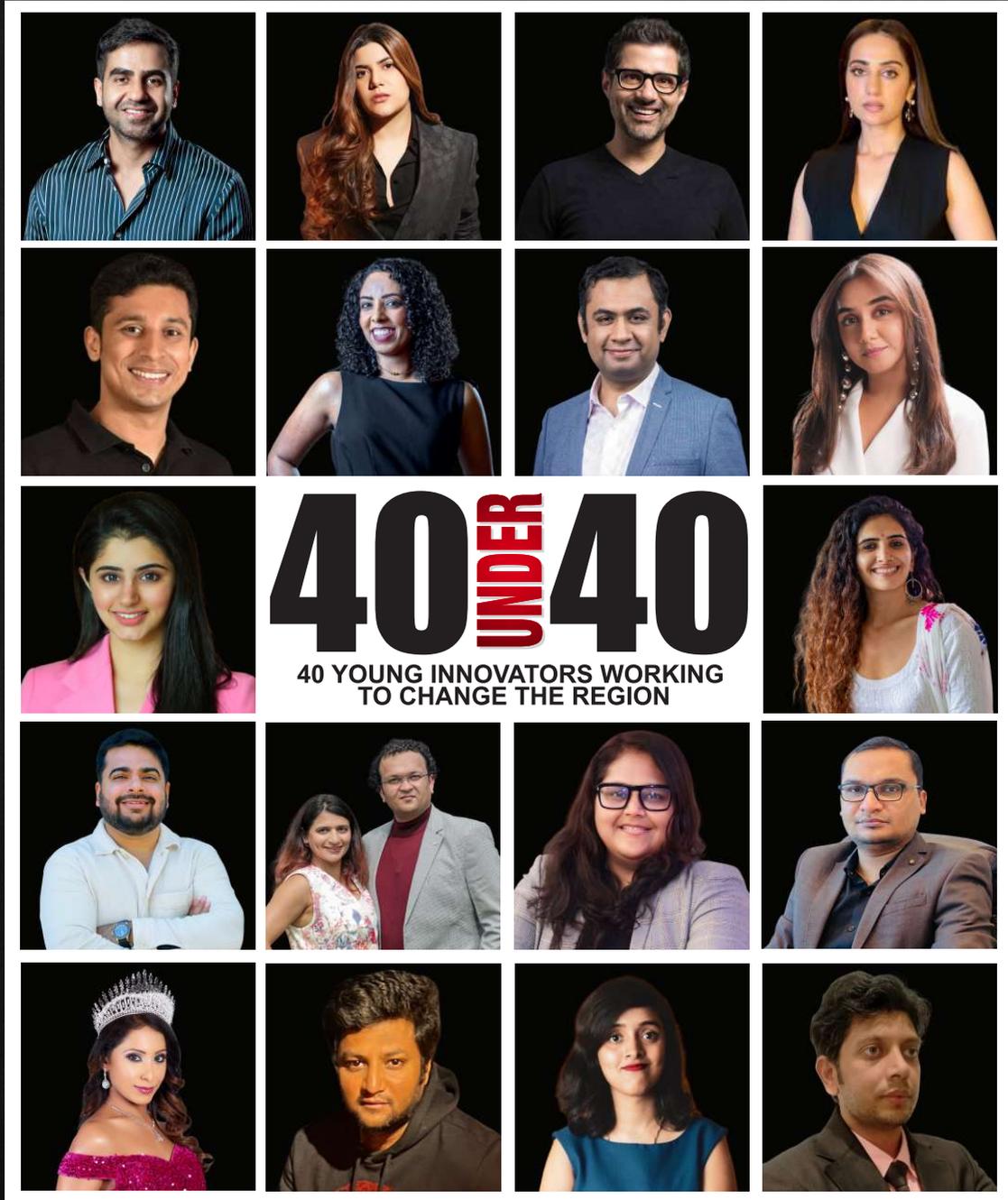
40 YOUNG INNOVATORS WORKING TO CHANGE THE REGION



**40**  
**UNDER 40**  
**AWARD 2025**

# Entrepreneurs Today

**Meet The Young, Ambitious Disruptors  
Who Have Paved New Road In There Wake In The World Of Design,  
Entrepreneurship Technology, Digital Content  
And Much Else And They Are Here To Stay.**



**Establishing Yourself In An Industry By Changing  
Its Rules Is What Our Subjects Have Done. Their Entry Into Their Fields Have Changed The Game,  
And Helped Us Rethink Its Dynamics. And They Did It Before They Hitting Forty**



**NIKHIL KAMATH**

Category: Finance

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# Nikhil Kamath's Journey From School Dropout to Billionaire



“Ultimately, businesses that don't consider their broader impact will be left behind, not just by consumers, but by the market itself.”

The 38-year-old Nikhil Kamath, hailing from Karnataka, is the co-founder of Zerodha, True Beacon and Gruhas. A less known fact about Nikhil is that he has always been a little unconventional in his approach and is a school dropout after 10 and has no formal degree.

Nikhil had always had the entrepreneurial spark in him since childhood. It was when he was in 9th standard that Nikhil got a taste of business when he got the opportunity to buy and sell phones. Even though it started small, the side hustle gave him enough to reinvest his earnings for growth. However, he soon had to stop when his mother got to know about his little side hustle.

Despite the lack of formal schooling, what helped Nikhil build his own path was reading extensively on his own, which compensated for what he would have learned in school and universities. Nikhil began his professional journey in 2006 as a sub-broker and launched Kamath & Associates with his brother, Nithin Kamath.

His other venture, True Beacon, co-founded in 2020, was launched as an asset management firm for ultra-high-net-worth individuals. Meanwhile, Gruhas, launched in 2021, focused more on real-estate investments and prop-tech. In 2023, Nikhil also launched his own podcast, 'WTF is,' where he interviews public figures and entrepreneurs.

## About Zerodha

The Kamath brothers' second venture, Zerodha, was launched in 2010 with a mission to break away from the barriers that hinder traders and investors, offering a seamless and affordable platform for their financial growth.

In terms of where the name came from, the company's name “Zerodha” reflects the visionary approach of both founders. By combining the concept of “Zero” with “Rodha,” the Sanskrit word for barrier, the Kamath brothers' decision to choose the name suggests their commitment to reducing and eliminating the barriers often faced in the Indian trading ecosystem.

Through its disruptive pricing models and modern technology, Zerodha has achieved remarkable success, emerging as the largest stockbroker in India in terms of active retail clients. With a staggering client base of over 7.96 million individuals, Zerodha has become the go-to choice for traders and investors across the country.

The impact of Zerodha's innovation and user-centric approach is evident in the sheer volume of daily transactions. Millions of orders are executed through Zerodha's investment platforms, accounting for a remarkable 15% of all Indian retail trading volumes.



## Nikhil as a Philanthropist

Also known to be a philanthropist, Kamath has pledged 50 percent of his wealth to causes through The Giving Pledge. As of 2025, his net worth stands at 260 crores USD. In 2021, he was also part of a charity chess match against Viswanathan Anand.

## Major Wins

Some of Nikhil's major wins include being recognised as Entrepreneur of the Year 2016 by Economic Times. He has also made it to Forbes 30 Under 30 and Billionaire Lists 2020 and 2023. He was also featured in the Self-Made Rich List in 2022. Some of his game-changing investments are Licious, Third Wave Coffee Roasters, and Nas Academy.

## Crucial Takeaways

What does it take for a startup to be successful? Nikhil suggests a simple formula to identify businesses that are bound to succeed. He says,

“Ultimately, businesses that don't consider their broader impact will be left behind, not just by consumers, but by the market itself. When I look at startups beyond the usual metrics like scalability and market size, I'm asking: Does this solve a real problem? Does it make a tangible difference to people's lives? If it's environmentally or socially relevant, it's a win-win.”

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# ANANYA BIRLA

Category: Music & Business

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# An Ode To a Dream of Being a Musician and an Entrepreneur

“There are not many musicians from India who are working internationally in pop. My aim is to change that and show the world that we have so much more to offer.”

Ananya Birla, 30, the eldest child of billionaire Kumar Mangalam Birla, is the director of Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail Ltd.

## Entry into Family Business

Apart from her role as the director of Aditya Birla Fashion, Ananya is also the founder of Svatantira Microfin, a company aimed at providing microfinance to women from rural areas. She said,

“Svatantira was the very first company that I founded with a vision to provide financial services to every woman in every corner of Bharat, to bank the unbanked.”

One of her recent works includes introducing Sophius, the beta version of the AI platform that plans to expand nationally. Apart from this, she is also associated with several other Aditya Birla Group companies, such as Grasim and Hindalco.

Looking back on her journey, regarding the expectations of being a 5th-generation entrepreneur, she reveals,

“I think all the expectations are self-imposed. No one has made me feel that pressure; I have done it to myself.”

## Ananya's Background

Ananya or Ananyashree Birla made her first single debut in the year 2016, and since then, Ananya has collaborated with names like Sean Kingston, Afrojack, and Mood Melodies.

Ananya is an alumnus of the American School of Bombay, Mumbai, and has also studied at the University of Oxford, England.

She was also the first Indian to sign with Maverick Management in Los Angeles back in 2020. Some of her major milestones include winning the ET Panache Trendsetters of 2016 award for Young Business Person and getting listed as one of GQ's Most Influential Indians of 2018.

Birla's musical talent has crossed international boundaries, accumulating an impressive total of over 350 million combined streams. Her noteworthy achievement lies in being the inaugural Indian artist to attain platinum status in India for an English-language single. However, Ananya has faced a lot of prejudice against her talent due to her family name. She opens up,

“Every single A&R in the music world that I met said, 'Drop your last name. No one's going to want to listen to your music.' And I'm like, 'You know what? This is who I am. I am a Birla.'”

The singer, however, announced in 2024 that she would be leaving her music career to focus more on her businesses. Till now, Ananya has tried on many hats, and the journey has not been easy at all. She shares,



"I think I'm still trying to figure out the best way to balance it all. Every day is a new challenge, every day looks a little bit different, and that's what keeps me going as well.

## Creating Impact

Svatantira Microfin successfully finalised the acquisition of Chaitanya India Fin Credit. With combined assets under management (AUM) soaring to Rs 12,409 crore, Svatantira Microfin now serves an extensive base of over 3.6 million active customers.

Apart from Svatantira Microfin, Ananya Birla is also dedicated to creating an impact across diverse social domains. With the hope of achieving much more in the future, she shares a note with entrepreneurs:

“It's your life. Live it on your own terms because, at the end of the day, when you go to sleep, it's just you and your pillow. The human condition is meant to be messy, and the sooner we embrace that, the more we can make of it. Personally, I have learned and grown the most through tough times. I don't believe life is black and white; instead, it's filled with shades of grey, and it's okay not to be okay in that grey. If you feel a certain way, it's important to embrace it.”

Quotes taken from several of Ananya Birla's interviews.

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**ASHISH HEMRAJANI**

Category: Entertainment

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# The Drunk Text that Gave **Ashish Hemrajani** a Startup Idea

“I never let emotions override my intellect. The intent is important, not the action. And it is the intent that drives me.”

An Indian entrepreneur, Ashish Herajani, is the founder and CEO of BookMyShow, one of India's largest online ticketing platforms

The founding of BookMyShow happened by chance, with Ashish sharing his business idea with his boss through a drunk text message back in 1999. Surprisingly, his boss responded with full support, saying, “No problem. Go for it.” A bit unexpected, but that was the start of the idea of building the venture.

Ashish established the parent company, Bigtree Entertainment, in 1999. A Sydenham MBA Marketing graduate, Ashish transitioned from roles in Account Management and Client Management at J. Walter Thompson, an advertising firm, before starting his own venture.

## Building BookMyShow

Not a very well-known fact: before becoming BookMyShow, the ticketing giant originally started as 'Go For Ticketing,' later transitioning to 'India Ticketing' in 2002. In 2007, the company held a name-suggestions contest for its staff, during which an intern proposed the name 'BookMyShow,' and that's how the name came to be.

Launched in 2007, with a presence in over 650 towns and cities, the platform caters to millions of customers, offering a wide range of entertainment options. Over the years, it has transformed from an online film ticketing platform to a comprehensive solution for managing live entertainment events, including concerts, sports, and more, maintaining the highest standards globally. Ashish believes,

“It is all about going out and trying. But don't follow the herd. You have got to be very clear about why your idea or you as a person will succeed in this environment. How disruptive your technology is.”

The Indian online ticketing market, as per a RedSeer report, has reported a quarterly revenue of \$28 million, with 50% of the industry's earnings attributed to movies, followed by events. In 2017, the online ticketing sector, encompassing sports, concerts, and live entertainment, generated nearly \$330 million. Notably, the online ticketing industry is expected to witness a 20% CAGR by 2020, and within a decade of its establishment, BookMyShow has achieved a 40% CAGR in revenue, securing a substantial 90% market share.



## Major Wins

BookMyShow has achieved a commanding position in the online ticket booking industry, boasting over 50 million app downloads and consistently selling more than 15 million tickets each month.

Additionally, BookMyShow has secured exclusive partnerships with major sports teams, such as IPL franchises Mumbai Indians, Kings XI Punjab, Delhi Daredevils, Pune Warriors, and Rajasthan Royals, and became the exclusive ticketing partner for the Formula 1 race in India. The company's remarkable growth is reflected in its increasing revenues, which have surged from INR 391 crore in FY2018 to INR 563 crore in FY20.

The platform records an impressive 2 billion annual page views and serves a vast customer base of over 30 million users across 650+ towns and cities, covering 4500+ screens. The company has attracted substantial funding from renowned investors like Stripes Group, Network 18, Accel Partners, and SAIF Partners.

The journey has been a long one, but Ashish has always been mindful of the risks he was taking and the path he wanted for himself. Lastly, as he says,

“High winds doesn't make great sailors, light wind sailing makes great sailors...they equalise everything.” 

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**KUSHA KAPILA**

Category: Content Creation

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# Influencer Turned Bollywood Star **Kusha Kapila**

“The biggest change in me over the last year is that I have become disciplined with my routine. That's why there have been some visible changes in me, physically and otherwise. I used to be extremely erratic, not sticking to a routine at all. But now I do, and I feel like it's like writing a love letter to yourself.”

An internet sensation, Kusha Kapila came into the public eye as an influencer because of her humor and Punjabi aunty skits. As seen in *Thank You For Coming* and *Sukhee*, there is a lot to her story, which remains untold.

## A New Delhi 'Kudi'

Hailing from New Delhi, Kusha holds two degrees in English literature from Indraprastha College for Women and earned a bachelor's in design from the National Institute of Fashion Technology.

In terms of her professional career, she has worked as a Fashion Editor at Times Internet and Head of Digital Content, Strategy & Brand Communication at RockNShop.com. Kusha was also a Copywriter at SapientRazorfish, a Trend Analyst & Features Writer at Fashion Forward Trends, and a Fashion Correspondent at Apparel Online.

Growing up, her career choices have always been the opposite of what is considered conventional, and despite the reproval from people, she aced the task of finding a niche for herself.

In one of her interviews, Kusha talks about her journey as a creator and how she sees creativity as a process rather than a series of events. She believes that the process should be one of self-care and reinvention.

## Charting New Waters

Kusha grew up in a family where it was the job of men in the family to manage or handle finances. As a result of this, it took a lot of learning to change her relationship with money and manage finances. She shares,

“Investment can start with any amount of money. That's the beauty of it. It's not about how much you're investing but rather about when you start. The real game is about sitting on your investments, just like sitting with your thoughts, letting it happen and grow over time.”

One of the best and most fulfilling things that came out of her journey was building her own home. She reveals,

“One of my dreams was to become a homeowner, and I achieved that. Understanding the entire process, from registration to construction, was no easy task. Especially figuring out things like which raw materials to use, the water supply system, the generator setup, and the water tank. It's these things that truly make you an adult.”



## The Social Media Pressure

Going viral is not always about name and fame; there are numerous pitfalls due to constant comparison, superficial validations and trolls. The only way one can deal with the pressure is by figuring out the audience and being true to oneself rather than jumping on the bandwagon of different trends.

It was Kusha's debut in the show *Son of Abish* in 2014 that laid the groundwork for her future in social media. Her satirical portrayal of 'Billi Masi,' a South Delhi woman, also made her a favorite amongst the masses and made her an internet sensation. Lastly, as a note to the next-gen influencers or creators, she says, “When you are a creator, with time you need to become aware that this isn't linear. Being on the internet is never linear. You may put out good content with the right intent, and it may or may not be perceived that way. You're opening yourself up to everyone. You're no longer performing in a closed room in front of relatives. So when you put yourself on the internet, everyone will have an opinion about you.”

*Quotes translated from Kusha Kapila's interview with Ayush Shukla*

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**VIDIT AATREY**

Category: E-commerce

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# Vidit Aatrey's Journey With Meesho

“Tough times build tough teams. Back in 2016, we were capital-starved and still a bit away from PMF. But that tough time led to the Meesho culture we feel proud of and are preserving even today.”

Meesho, which translates as “my shop,” was co-founded in December 2015 by Vidit Aatrey, an IIT Delhi grad. Vidit has always had an entrepreneurial spirit, and right after completing his degree, he wanted to build a social commerce network with Indian roots that enables no-cost home-based businesses for small companies and individuals.

To present, [Meesho](#) has shipped orders from more than 100,000 registered suppliers to more than 26,000 pin codes in over 4,800 locations. brings e-commerce to India by generating over Rs 500 crore in revenue for business owners and serving clients in more than 4,500 Tier 2+ cities.

## Inception

Meesho began its journey in December 2015 with the help of two IIT Delhi graduates. They founded Meesho, a social commerce platform that enables users to resell products utilising their social networks such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and others.

Vidit Aatrey, the founder and CEO of Meesho, made the decision to leave his position at InMobi and launch his own business in 2015. Then he co-founded Meesho with Sanjeev Barnwal, its founder and CTO. They both graduated from the same class (2008–12) and had the same concept to create a platform to support MSMEs (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises).

The Bangalore-based startup wants to create an ecosystem where anyone can launch a business without needing to invest money. Along with boasting over 2 million resellers, the business also claims to have over 20,000 Meesho suppliers from over 500 towns. Sellers can make money with Meesho by adding a gross margin to every transaction. Meesho operates on a commission of roughly 10-15%.

Meesho was first launched in 2015 under the name FASHNEAR. Similar to Swiggy or Zomato, FASHNEAR operated on the same principle. Customers were able to purchase clothing and fashion accessories from local stores through FASHNEAR, which dealt with fashion-related commodities. Customers could order from these local stores using the FASHNEAR app, and delivery people were available to deliver the goods. Local businesses that offer clothing and accessories could register with the app.

However, the founders immediately began to identify several problems with the FASHNEAR business model. Consumers' lack of care for purchasing clothing from local stores was one of the biggest problems they identified. Furthermore, rather than selling their goods locally, the shop owners hoped to boost sales by selling their goods online in other parts of the nation. Vidit and Sanjeev were motivated to develop a better business model through these issues. Fashnear was renamed “Meesho” before the end of 2015.



## Challenges

When Meesho first started off, online retailing was getting more and more popular, but there were challenges including a lack of supply, transportation, alternative transaction methods, and so on.

Vidit claims that because they have always supported the expansion of small businesses, they have never kept any inventory in their own warehouses. Nevertheless, procuring supplies was difficult because of the lockdown brought on by COVID-19. Things were still difficult, despite the government slightly easing restrictions on transportation.

## Major Wins

More than 13 million entrepreneurs are allegedly connected to Meesho through their platform. The fact that women make up the majority of business owners is noteworthy.

Apart from that, till now, some of the awards he has received are Fortune 40 Under 40 (2021), Economic Times 40 Under 40 (2021), Forbes 30 Under 30 (2018) (India and Asia list), Entrepreneur 35 Under 35 (2019), India's Most Innovative Company (2020) by Fast Company, Young Turk Startup of the Year (2020) by CNBC (awarded by Finance Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman), First Startup Investment by Facebook in India, LinkedIn Top Startup (2019) and (2020), Y Combinator Top Companies (2019). 

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**SHRUTI SHIBULAL**

Category: Hospitality

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# Shruti Shibulal is the Flagbearer of Responsible Luxury in Hospitality

“Patience is the key to lasting fitness. There are no one-stop or overnight solutions. Several things - such as your sleep patterns, diet, and stress levels - play an equal and important part in achieving overall wellness. I am now learning to be more in tune with my body and to trust my instincts.”

India's next-gen entrepreneur and the heir of Infosys co-founder and CEO S. D. Shibulal, Shruti Shibulal, has launched a 30-room boutique property in Coorg. A partner of two restaurants in Bangalore and owner of a resort, Tamara, Shruti's vision is to expand Tamara as a countrywide chain.

Having done her schooling in Bangalore and her undergraduate at Haverford College, Philadelphia, Shruti went to Columbia University for her business school.

Today, as the CEO and Director of Tamara Leisure Experiences, Shruti is working towards her dream of making Tamara synonymous with responsible tourism. With her resorts and hotels based out of South India, she also has plans to expand in Germany.

Shruti is also the Trustee of Advait Foundation and SD Foundation, where she is involved in providing educational opportunities and healthcare to underprivileged sections of the society. She is also the Trustee of WEP, the Women's Education Project, which works towards empowering women from vulnerable backgrounds. Moreover, she is on the Governing Board of ATREE, Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and Environment.

## An entrepreneur at heart

Shruti also launched SAATHIYA, a hospitality skilling program that helps youth become more employable within the restaurant and hotel industries by helping with industry-relevant skills. Regarding the course of her journey, she says,

“I think you just have to get a perspective. You just have to sit down and accept that I can only do so much. Accepting that and doing the best that you can. I don't think the guilt totally goes away. I really don't. I think I've struggled with it too, on a daily basis. But it helps if you have mentors who have your back.”

Shruti has also introduced Lilac, a service apartment brand, that plans to expand from South Bangalore to Bangalore and Madurai. Another prestigious project in her



portfolio is Palma Laguna in Alleppey, a luxury serviced villa known for blending traditional Kerala naalukettu architecture with modern architecture.

Shruti believes that the key to having a successful business is to invest in staff and make sure they are happy and well-cared-for. This, in turn, makes sure that the guests have an extraordinary experience during their stays. Her only advice to busy entrepreneurs is to understand that the journey, even though tough, is always rewarding with the right support.

Looking back, Shruti owes her success and lessons to her parents, S.D. **Shibulal and Kumari Shibulal**, for teaching her how to maintain work-life balance and the importance of giving back. She also emphasises the need to have a fit and active lifestyle to have a fulfilling life as an entrepreneur, no matter how busy you are. [E](#)

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**HARSHIL MATHUR**

Category: Fintech

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# Getting To Know the Founder of Razorpay, Harshil Mathur



“In the startup journey, you are always on a fast-moving treadmill and just trying to keep up. So it's very hard to remember how long it has been—you're moving from challenge to challenge, issue to issue, problem to problem... solving it, moving on, growing.”

Harshil Mathur is the co-founder of Razorpay, a significant player in the banking and digital payment sector. Based out of Bangalore, as of 2022, the company's valuation today stands at \$4.76B - \$ 7.97B. Razorpay is an online payment system platform that offers various banking options like credit cards, debit cards, UPI and other popular mobile wallets. One of the largest payment aggregators in the market, the platform is used for hassle-free payments in India.

In terms of how the journey started, Harshil and his co-founder, Shashank Kumar, were classmates at IIT Roorkee and faced several rejections in finding banks who would partner with them. Eventually, it was HDFC Bank that partnered with Razorpay for their payment gateway system. Even though the initial journey of finding partners was tough, today most of the banks work with Razorpay to enable payment acceptance for their businesses.

## Getting Started

In terms of how he started, it was after identifying the dismal state of the online payments system in India that Harshil decided to quit his full-time job as a Wireline Field Engineer at Schlumberger to build Razorpay with Shashank in 2014. Today, as the CEO and co-founder of the company, he is on a mission to simplify payments in India.

Currently, the company is one of the fastest-growing neobanking companies and is backed by GIC, Sequoia Capital, Ribbit Capital, Matrix Partners, Tiger Global & Y Combinator.

## What Lies Ahead?

In terms of what lies ahead in the future, Harshil has big plans for the company and looks forward to Razorpay leading the fintech revolution globally. He is also looking forward to expanding the global footprint of the company to be seen as a seamless financial solution provider for businesses internationally.

In 2024, Harshil, along with his co-founder, built an investment program to help startups with the usual challenges they face. He says,



“Each time I speak to a business owner, I am convinced that there are so many business problems yet to be solved with technology. Today, to enable that, we are launching Razorpay's Venture Investment Program to supercharge India's B2B startup ecosystem with funding, mentorship and access.”

Harshil knows how difficult it is for entrepreneurs to gain a footing with support. Since he has been there, he believes in extending a helping hand to these startups. Giving a chance to other startups to be the next big thing, Harshil recently said,

“Every billion-dollar company starts small. The hardest part? Getting noticed.

So, we're making space—literally! A 20x20 ft digital screen on Razorpay's facade in Bengaluru, just for early-stage startups. This is just a start, we will be opening bigger doors for early-stage startups! Because #TheNextBigThing deserves the spotlight. And there's more to come.”

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**PRAJAKTA KOLI**

Category: Content Creation

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# Radio Dreams To Stardom of Prajakta Koli

“Be Patient. You're Becoming A Version Of Yourself You've Never Been Before.”

With a head full of dreams to become a Radio Jockey someday, Prajakta Koli couldn't have known what life had in store for her. Today, she has made her way to YouTube, Television, activism and even authorship.

Born and brought up in Thane, Prajakta studied at Vasant Vihar High School and completed her graduation in Mass Media from V.G. Vaze College of Arts, Science and Commerce in Mulund. Coming from a humble family where her father was a restaurateur and her mother a teacher, Prajakta never really imagined becoming an internet sensation.

Since her childhood, Prajakta has been drawn to the idea of being a radio jockey and connecting with people to express her creativity. While her career as a radio jockey did not last long, she made sure to make lemonade with the lemons she had. Initially, she worked on creating relatable content about her life in Mumbai. Soon, she was approached by a talent agency that encouraged her to create content for YouTube.

Prajakta eventually started creating lighthearted sketches that made the audience laugh and engage with her content. Over time, her content has grown to include social advocacy, where she talks about major social issues. Some of the social issues she often talks about in her content are body shaming, gender inequality, climate change, and mental health, among others.

## Major Wins

A reader herself, a major win for Prajakta has been to publish her own book. Since 2020, Prajakta Koli has been featured in *Mismatched Season 2*, *Jugjugg Jeeyo*, *Yeh Shaadi Nahi Ho Sakti*, *Neeyat*, *Zindaginama*, *Comedy Premium League*, *Pretty Fit*, *Yugantar*, and *PA-Gals*.

Apart from that, some of the recognitions she has received over the years include being listed under *Forbes 30 Under 30 2019*. She has also won other awards like *Climate Influencer of the Year* by NDTV, *UNDP India's Youth Climate Champion*,

*"Star Influencer Award"* by Femina India, and the *"Influencing Youth Icon Award"* by The CSR Journal Excellence Awards.



Prajakta was also nominated for the *Bollywood Life Awards*, the *Bollywood Hungama Style Icons Awards* for the *Popular Award for Most Stylish Digital Star of the Year*, the *Viewer's Choice Award for Best Jodi* by ScreenXX Summit & Awards, and the *Digital Influencer of the Year* by Grazia Millennial Awards.

## The Takeaways

One of the crucial lessons Prajakta has learned over the years as a content creator is that if your work does not get traction, you need to change your strategy and innovate. Another difficult lesson was to learn how to embrace discomfort for creativity; it is by stepping out of your comfort zone that you can get breakthrough ideas 📌

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# TANUSHKA KAUR CHADHA

Category: Bespoke & Luxury Travel

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# Tanushka Kaur Chadha's Jastans Is Reimagining Travel with the Art of Conscious Luxury



*Success is Not Just About Growth; it's About Growth with Grace, Responsibility, and Impact."*

The 40 Under 40 nominee, Tanushka Kaur Chadha, is the co-founder of Jastans Bespoke Luxury Vacations, a boutique travel house that provides personalised, high-end journeys with purpose. She leads JBLV with a hands-on sensibility, turning client conversations into carefully curated itineraries that feel personal rather than packaged.

JBLV began as a boutique vertical within Jagsons Travels and has since grown into a standalone identity under Tanushka's guidance. Her industry experience and attention to detail shaped that transition, turning it into a brand with its own voice.

*"We curate bespoke, high-end itineraries that reflect the desires and values of our clients, while also promoting eco-conscious tourism and responsible travel practices. From exclusive resort partnerships to immersive cultural experiences, we ensure each journey is memorable, meaningful, and mindful of the planet."*

For Tanushka, travel is a way to broaden perspectives, slow down, and connect. Under her leadership, JBLV offers luxury that feels intentional, soulful, and sustainable.

## The Initial Inspiration

Her education was less about studying abroad and more about learning under the mentorship of her father, Harmandeep Singh Anand, preferring real-world exposure over the former. That early apprenticeship taught her the craft of travel planning and an eye for what makes a trip quietly transformative. She recalls,

*"I remember him telling me that books won't teach you what I can with my years of experience. That laid the foundation for my journey."*

The idea to turn that intangible came from something more personal. Her husband, Jaskaran Chadha, recognised how she curated experiences and encouraged her to build a dedicated brand. Her father-in-law, Amardeep Chadha, backed that belief, convincing her that this was a space where passion could scale into a meaningful business.

*"They believed that this was something I was truly gifted at, and that gave me the confidence to take the leap. My husband also feels that the travel industry holds immense potential and offers significant opportunities for growth. That is how Jastans was officially born. And in just two short years, the brand has grown faster and more meaningfully than we could have imagined, proof that passion, when nurtured by the right people, can become something truly powerful."*

Today, every itinerary pairs exclusive stays with immersive cultural encounters and eco-conscious choices, so guests leave refreshed and the places they visit benefit too. The aim is not spectacle but depth, where slow, intentional travel replaces conventional tourism.

## The Competitive Edge

Jastans is a boutique travel atelier that treats each journey as a handcrafted piece of work. They do not sell packages. They listen, translate a client's personal story into an itinerary, and design every touchpoint so the trip feels genuinely yours.

What sets them apart is the depth of personalisation. The team spends time understanding client needs and travel intent, then matches those with handpicked partners to make the trip feel intimate, surprising and purposeful.

Sustainability is not an afterthought. Jastans favours eco-luxury properties, local suppliers, and community-centred experiences. Internally, they minimise paper and operational waste to keep the

brand aligned with what it asks of its partners.

Their network of exclusive resorts, guides, and cultural custodians, combined with Tanushka's hands-on sense for detail, makes Jastans feel more like a trusted friend planning the trip you would have taken if you had the time.

## Troubled Waters

Building a distinct identity in a crowded luxury market was the first test. Convincing clients to trust a new, young brand with high-stakes journeys required patience, flawless delivery, and steady proof that our promises matched reality.

Tanushka also shares that reconciling luxury with sustainability demanded creative problem-solving. Many assumed "eco" meant compromise. So, Tanushka had to design experiences that felt exclusive while also respecting local ecosystems and communities. She further adds,

*"We also faced the typical teething issues of growing a brand, scaling without compromising on personalisation, building reliable global partnerships, and managing operational complexities. We overcame these with the support of a visionary family, client trust, and a dedicated team who believed in our mission. Through every challenge, we remained agile, adaptive, and always client-first."*

## Celebrating Feats

Apart from earning recognition as a young, female-led travel brand that pairs luxury with conscious tourism, Tanushka has also designed over 100 bespoke luxury journeys across six continents, each built around an individual's values and intent.

Other milestones include building long-term partnerships with eco-luxury properties and local custodians, going fully paperless, and lowering our environmental footprint, growing quickly and responsibly within two years while retaining the core promise of handcrafted travel.

## A New Dawn

Within the next few years, Tanushka will focus on scaling JBLV carefully, and keeping the brand's soul intact. She plans to expand into curated ethical destinations where local communities and ecosystems benefit from tourism.

JBLV will launch focused verticals in wellness retreats, wildlife conservation journeys, and regenerative travel programmes. Moreover, the team will invest in intelligent tech to deepen personalisation and measure sustainability impact across every itinerary.

Partnerships will be local and long-term. JBLV will work with resorts, guides, and artisans to create authentic moments that pay people fairly and preserve culture.

*"Our vision is to position JBLV as a global leader in sustainable luxury travel, known for exclusivity, empathy, and responsibility."*

With a head full of dreams for the future, Tanushka signs off, highlighting one of her major takeaways from her journey,

*"Great things happen when you blend passion with purpose. Also, you don't have to wait for perfect conditions to begin. Start with what you have. Build what you believe in. And let your journey reflect who you are."*



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**KOMAL BHATIA**

Category: Food & Hospitality

**40**  
UNDER  
**40**

# Komal and PAZ Goa Café Bring the Spirit of Slow Life to Vagator Mornings

**“**The show must go on. Success often lies just one step beyond the moment you want to quit.”

In the heart of Vagator, North Goa, stands [PAZ GOA CAFE, a brand born out of passion and one woman's vision that is more like a reflection of its founder, Komal Bhatia.](#)

A solo woman entrepreneur, corporate dropout, fitness enthusiast by discipline, model by hobby, and free spirit by nature, four years ago, Komal set out to build her own brand in one of the most competitive markets in India. With a spirit for mindful living and spirituality, she wanted her brand to be rooted in the same essence of mindfulness, creativity, and authenticity.

Today, as a solopreneur, she is turning PAZ GOA CAFE into one of the most loved café in Goa, highly coveted for its outstanding smoothie bowls, the best coffee in town, and wholesome breakfasts.

## Pulling Back to the Shore

The idea to open her own café first took root during a lecture at Hindu College when Komal studied Maslow's hierarchy of needs. With her eyes closed, she saw a clear picture of self-actualisation, one of owning and running a café.

Before venturing out as an entrepreneur, she went on to work in corporate roles at Kotak Mahindra, Standard Chartered, and ICICI. Despite being in corporate, the pull to build never faded. Deep down, she knew she was meant to lead and to build something that could offer space and opportunity to others. It was during a sabbatical in Goa with her then-husband that the feeling surfaced again. Looking back, she reveals,

“Those months were filled with yoga, meditation, sunsets, and long stretches of introspection. By the end of three months, I had fallen deeply in love with Goa and even started looking for jobs as a restaurant manager. Despite several interviews, nothing materialised, and I found myself back in Delhi, returning to the corporate world.”

A year passed, and ICICI transferred her to Goa. Komal was on holiday at Prana café in Anjuna when the news came. Moving back to Goa helped her materialise her dream for PAZ Goa Café.

## Rhythm of Flavors, Music, and Energy

What makes Paz Goa special is the carefully curated mood and ambience. From the moment a guest walks in, they are swaddled with a sense of calm, connection, and a welcome that feels exclusive. The signature vibe around which the space is built entails retro music, a well-curated selection of cocktails and wines, and a playful “coffee rave” culture that celebrates both energy and ease. Food is scrumptious and memorable. Their breakfast and sandwiches have become local favorites, and the healthy menu and excellent coffee keep people coming back for the same comforting ritual. Komal adds,

“We've also earned a reputation for serving one of the best breakfasts in Vagator, especially our sandwiches, which have become a local favorite. Add to that our thoughtfully curated healthy food menu and some of the best coffee in Goa, and you get an experience that's more than dining.”

## Empirical Learning at the Heart

The entrepreneurial path for Komal has been full of trial and error, especially since it was her very first venture. Initially, she learned by taking inspiration from other cafés and testing her own concepts, and she learned faster from the things that failed than from the things that worked. She further adds,

“The biggest challenges, however, were people and positioning. Managing staff in a dynamic industry like hospitality is always complex, and competing in India's most vibrant and competitive market, Goa, was no less daunting. But with every struggle, the right people, lessons, and opportunities showed up, almost as if the universe was gently realigning my path.”

Since the competition was so fierce, she needed more than good food and coffee to stand out. To achieve this, Komal maintained a clear identity, consistent execution, and the courage to stay mindful rather than chasing the next new trend. Despite the challenges, what kept her going was perhaps her mindset to perceive each setback as a lesson. It helped her tighten operations, refine the menu, and improve the guest experience. Reflecting on her journey, she says,

“Today, when I look back, I can see how those difficult moments were actually the foundation of the strong, soulful brand that Paz has become.”

## Moving Up

“For me, success is best reflected in the voices of our guests.” One of the wins for Komal is that Paz holds a 4.6 Google rating from over 1,000 reviews. She asserts,

“What touches me the most is when guests evolve into genuine connections, those who become close friends, who remember me and Paz every time they return to Goa, and who care about our journey as deeply as we care about theirs.”

Komal is also appreciative of Paz's steady growth in sales and profitability, and that she has created a place that is both emotionally resonant and commercially sound. She notes, “It's also about running a cafe and inspiring countless young dreamers who aspire to create something of their own.”

Paz has also attracted attention from both the media and the influencer world. Komal was even invited by PechaKucha to speak about her life under the theme Women Who Dared to Think Different. Influencers such as BeerBiceps, Sumedh Bigli, Curly Tales, and LBB Goa have featured Paz. Local newspapers, including Gomantak Times and The Navhind Times, have also covered the story of her journey.

Additionally, Komal was recognised as the Solopreneur of the Year at the Goa SIBA Awards, National Solopreneur of the Year, while Paz was named Fastest Growing Café of the Year and Best Startup of the Year at the Real Imperial Awards.

## A New Dawn

One of Komal's plans is to take Paz beyond Vagator by building a careful, values-led franchise model that lets others bring the same calm, soulful experience to their towns. She highlights,

“We already receive frequent inquiries from guests who want to bring Paz to their own cities, which makes me confident that the brand has the potential to scale meaningfully. To achieve this, I plan to collaborate with experienced franchise consultants to create a sustainable model that protects our ethos.”

The vision is to have a place where people find peace, connection, and good food, whether they live nearby or are passing through. With a head full of dreams for Paz, Komal says that the real superpowers of entrepreneurship are resilience and consistency, and that the journey is never smooth. There will be times of doubt when one will feel like giving up. She signs off saying,

“In my second year, I even considered selling Paz due to low profitability. But I held on. Today, I'm grateful I didn't give up, because that persistence has brought us to one of the strongest positions in Goa's café scene.”



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**ABHIMANYU KHANNA**

Category: Employee Engagement Solutions

**40**  
UNDER  
**40**

# A Founder's Journey of Building One of India's Most Trusted Team Engagement Companies

In Conversation with Abhimanyu Khanna

**“**Success doesn't come overnight—it's built through consistency, integrity, and an unwavering focus on your 'why.'”

Abhimanyu Khanna is the founder and driving force behind TAB, a teambuilding and people engagement company he started in May 2008. Over the last 17 years, TAB has grown into a specialist in bespoke engagement programs that help organisations strengthen teams, surface hidden skills, and create lasting behavioural change.

Over the years, TAB has refined practical models for live and virtual engagement, delivering high-energy workshops, leadership sprints, and behaviour-first interventions that leave teams better equipped to do their work.

The approach is simple and founder-led. Every program starts with a clear objective. Abhimanyu says,

*“Our activities help to strengthen relationships and deepen the understanding of individual skill sets. You can count on us to deliver a fun, memorable event virtually or in person with great team engagement and lasting results.”*

Abhimanyu founded TAB after four years in quality and training at Aegis BPO. He started the business to bring a different kind of corporate training to market, one rooted in real experience, not theory. Detail-oriented and relentlessly pragmatic, he designs programs that teach leadership, teamwork, and change management. Today, TAB has grown on the strength of referrals and repeat business rather than salesmanship.

## Finding Inspiration

While climbing the BPO ladder, Abhimanyu realised something important was missing—work that mattered beyond the paycheck. He wanted to build teams, spark connections, and design workplace experiences that actually changed behaviour. He says,

*“That desire led me to start TAB Consulting, which began as a small initiative driven by curiosity and has today evolved into one of India's leading Employee Engagement and Teambuilding companies. What makes TAB special is that it allows me to live my passion every single day—designing programs that bring teams closer, foster trust, and create lasting impact—and the best part is, I get paid for doing what I love.”*

Today, for Abhimanyu, the work still feels the same. His work is hands-on, people-first, and outcome-driven, and the best part is that he gets paid to do what he loves, like create moments that bring teams closer and leave a lasting impact.

What sets TAB Consulting apart is its service. The team obsesses over execution and outcomes, so clients become their marketing—over 90% of their work comes from repeat business and referrals, which means they earn trust every time they deliver.

TAB doesn't sell off-the-shelf solutions. Every programme is bespoke, measurable, and led by people who have actually done the work with teams on the ground.

## The Journey

Abhimanyu faced several challenges while building TAB Consulting. Leaving a stable corporate job to prove that experiential learning could drive real business results was the first big leap. With limited resources and no prior business experience, he had to learn everything hands-on, from operations and finance to client management and team building. Establishing credibility in a market dominated by larger players and convincing clients to invest in bespoke team programmes instead of cheaper, off-the-shelf options took time.

*“Another major challenge was sustaining consistency over the years—ensuring that every project, regardless of scale, reflected the same passion and excellence. I overcame this by building a strong internal culture of ownership and continuous learning, where every team member treats the client's event as their own. However, these challenges shaped TAB Consulting into the trusted brand it is today.”*

Even though the journey has been long, Abhimanyu is proud of how far he has come. He asserts,

*“For me, the success of TAB Consulting is defined not by numbers but by the trust and loyalty of our clients.”*

Today, TAB is a recognised name in employee engagement. His major achievements include building a business where over 90% of work comes from repeat clients and referrals, developing repeatable, measurable programmes that work across industries and formats, and mastering seamless switching between in-person and virtual delivery.

He also created systems that let creativity scale without sacrificing quality, and turned a passion for people into a sustainable business that measurably improves how teams work.

## The Next Chapter

Abhimanyu plans to scale TAB's impact while staying rooted in passion and service excellence. He aims to expand across India and into international markets, introduce more innovative experiential formats, and use technology to make programmes more interactive and measurable.

Within the next few years, he also wants to strengthen client relationships and the company's internal culture so every delivery retains TAB's personal touch. His focus is to keep evolving, keep learning, and keep delivering experiences that inspire teams and transform workplaces.

With a head full of dreams for the future, Abhimanyu shares one of the biggest lessons he has learned that passion and persistence ultimately pay off. He believes that challenges are inevitable but prioritising clients and delivering real value makes growth a natural outcome, as both clients and team members are the greatest assets in a company that need deliberate nurturing.

He signs off with some advice to entrepreneurs,

*“Don't chase money, but chase excellence. When you put your heart into delivering value and keep improving yourself every day, success will inevitably follow.”* 

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# ANJALI KAKKADP AND VIMAL PATEL

Category: Enterprise Technology

**40**  
UNDER  
**40**

# RoundTechSquare is Building Smarter Systems That Make Businesses More Human With Founders Vimal Patel and Anjali KakkadP



*If your product or service doesn't genuinely solve a problem or make life better for someone, it's hard to build something that lasts."*

RoundTechSquare was co-founded by Vimal Patel and Anjali KakkadP with a clear, shared belief that technology should solve real business problems, not create new ones.

The journey began with both earning degrees as engineers at R.C. Patel Institute of Technology and then moving to California State University, Los Angeles, for their master's degrees. Those years shaped a shared vision that led them to translate their technical prowess into something more tangible. Before starting RoundTechSquare, Anjali led global programmes at 20th Century Fox and other tech firms. Today, she is a **Lead Technical Programme Manager at Google Maps** and brings product scale and programme discipline to every project.

On the other hand, Vimal spent years running large IT operations and vendor relationships at Trendz Beauty Group. He learned how systems must be built to scale and how operations shape delivery.

## About RoundTechSquare

RoundTechSquare builds websites, mobile apps, SaaS platforms, and AI tools with equal attention to strategy, design, and delivery. They treat each brief as a business challenge and own the outcome from concept to launch. The industries they serve include food, real estate, trading, healthcare, beauty, and education. The company also develops its own SaaS products, such as LiftSocial and Alumni Connection Hub, and will soon launch Aligned Rewards, an employee engagement and performance management platform. Operating between California and India, RoundTechSquare pairs a global perspective with hands-on execution. Anjali says,

*"What sets us apart is that we don't just build products; we build partnerships. We're as involved in a brand's strategy, design, and digital marketing as we are in their technology. It's a full-circle approach that helps our clients grow sustainably instead of chasing trends."*

## The Eureka Moment

What inspired Anjali and Vimal to take the entrepreneurial road was not a business plan, but real people. Vimal shares,

*"Friends, colleagues, and business owners would often ask us how to fix a tech issue, build a website, or make their digital systems work better. We started noticing a pattern: a lot of talented business owners struggled to keep up with technology, even though their ideas were strong. That's when it clicked, there was a real need for experts who could bridge that gap."*

Working in the US taught them what works at scale and what breaks in practice. They saw the processes, clear ownership, and product discipline in large organisations, and how painfully rare those skills were back home. That contrast became their north star. Looking back, they recall,

*"When we started, it was just the two of us taking on small projects, helping people get their websites or apps running. But soon, word spread, and those projects grew into full-scale partnerships. That's how RoundTechSquare was born; out of curiosity, empathy, and a desire to do something unique and profound with the experience we'd gathered over the years."*

## A Competitive Edge

What sets RoundTechSquare apart is that they build technology for the business behind it. Every product is crafted from scratch with attention to detail, so websites, apps, and tools solve real operational problems rather than piling on features. Anjali explains, *"We don't use templates or shortcuts. Each website, app, and tool is built from scratch to match the brand's goals and its audience."*

They also use AI sensibly to speed development, power growth, and automate routine work, but always with a clear business outcome in mind. And their support does not stop at launch. RoundTechSquare offers end-to-end delivery from domain and hosting to cloud integration and long-term maintenance, so clients never feel left out. Put together, the result is a 360-degree partnership that earns trust. Whether a brand is finding its first customers or expanding overseas, RoundTechSquare aims to make technology simple, useful, and repeatable.

## Navigating Challenges

Initially, there were several challenges while building the brand. They had to build a team from scratch and learn how to hire people who cared as much about craft as code. Finding the right talent took time and a lot of trial and error. Vimal adds, *"Over time, we figured out what kind of people we wanted on our team, what kind of clients we wanted to work with, and how to market ourselves in a way that felt right for our brand. Most of our growth happened through word of mouth and genuine networking. Our work spoke for itself, and our clients trusted us enough to recommend us to others. That organic trust became our biggest strength."*

There was no ready playbook for scaling. Every project brought a new question about process, delivery, and follow-up. Leadership became the real test. Managing different people, setting priorities, and making decisions that benefited the team and the client required new skills that they had to learn on the job. *"If there's one thing we've learned, it's that your own way of solving problems is what builds your identity. When you trust that, growth follows naturally."*

## The Milestones

*"For us, success has never been just about revenue or numbers. It's about how happy our clients are, how much they grow after working with us, and how proud our people feel being part of this journey. When we see a business scale because of something we've built, that's real success."*

Vimal and Anjali are proud of the fact that over the years, they have delivered products and platforms across the US, UK, Dubai, Ireland, Australia, and India. They have also worked with startups and large organizations alike, with clients who keep coming back for multiple projects. They further add, *"We've also grown a strong internal culture. Our team members are not just developers or designers; they're problem-solvers who understand the human side of technology. When they grow in their skills, take ownership, and feel proud of their work, that's another kind of success we deeply value."*

Moreover, they have brought AI and automation into real-world use cases, helping clients move faster and smarter by helping customers speed up decisions and scale operations.

## A New Dawn

The next chapter for RoundTechSquare is quietly practical and deliberately ambitious. They believe AI should make businesses more human, not replace them, so their roadmap focuses on building smarter systems that help teams work faster, make better decisions, and scale with confidence. The immediate milestone is the launch of Aligned Rewards. It is a people and performance platform built to improve goal setting, employee recognition, and day-to-day productivity. They have combined AI automation with real behavioral insights so managers can reward the right work and teams can see progress that actually matters.

Alongside the product, they will keep strengthening the core services like web development, mobile apps, and SaaS delivery. Every client engagement will include pragmatic AI integrations where they add clear value, not novelty. They are already exploring how to safely embed large models into client workflows so their systems become both smarter and more helpful. Growth is not only technical. Vimal and Anjali will invest in customer success and onboarding so small teams can self-serve while larger organisations get hands-on support. Faster time-to-value and measurable outcomes will be the yardstick for every launch.

## The Takeaways

One of the lessons both co-founders learned is that ideas are only a starting point, and a business becomes meaningful when it creates clear value for real people, not when it chases features for their own sake.

They also learned to put people at the centre. Technology and AI are necessary, but they do not replace human intuition, creativity, or empathy. The teams and clients who thrive are the ones who keep people first. *As they sign off, they highlight:*

*"Focus on creating value, collaborate whenever you can, and stay human in everything you build. Success is not just about what you create, but how you create it and who you create it for. Keep experimenting, learning, and growing; your journey is just as important as the destination."*



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**VRUSHALI NEGANDHI**

Category: Advertising, Marketing and Media

**40**  
UNDER  
**40**

# Vrushali Negandhi Sets The New Rules of B2B Storytelling with Van Media

**“**Integrity and human connection matter as much as innovation. In a world leaning heavily on automation and AI, staying true to your values and nurturing personal connections sets you apart.”

A storyteller, content strategist, and entrepreneur, Vrushali Negandhi has been in journalism, content strategy, and event production for the last 17 years. What makes her special is that she blends research-driven insight with human-centered storytelling to help organisations communicate with purpose and authenticity.

Born in Belgaum, her career is a quiet lesson in grit and focus. She built VAN Media Ventures LLP from the ground up to solve the problem of B2B brands not being human enough when they should be speaking to humans.

Vrushali ensures that her leadership is shaped by empathy and excellence, and she designs events and campaigns that do more than inform, build trust and inspire action and connection.

Vrushali also co-founded the Council of Industrial Excellence and Innovation, a platform that pushes sustainability and knowledge exchange across India's cement and construction sectors. That practical, impact-first mindset feeds straight into her agency work.

## VAN Media Ventures

VAN Media Ventures is a boutique B2B communications and events agency that specialises in bringing together insight, creativity, and innovation to help brands build trust and make an impact. Vrushali shares,

“We specialise in B2B events, digital campaigns, and brand storytelling — turning complex ideas into meaningful conversations that educate, engage, and inspire. Every project we take on is designed to create real results, whether it's a thought-leadership conference, a digital awareness drive, or a complete brand repositioning.”

Vrushali believes in building relationships that go beyond work. With 17+ years of experience, she has cultivated strong networks across India and the Middle East, spanning pharma, manufacturing, software, infrastructure, and architectural products. In the first year of operations, she successfully brought 10+ brands on board, establishing a solid foundation for VAN Media Ventures. Her strength lies in a unique blend of industry fluency and creative clarity, delivering work that not only captures attention but also drives tangible results.

Vrushali's vision with VAN Media is to help organisations tell better stories. Their goal is to make complex work feel human and make communications count.

## Giving Voice to Dreams

After 17 years in journalism, media, and events, Vrushali wanted to build something that reflected her values, voice, and the way she believes work should be done.

Mumbai was the obvious place to start. The city had taught her resilience, curiosity, and how to turn her dreams into something tangible.

“I arrived here years ago with nothing but ambition and a love for storytelling. This city taught me resilience, creativity, and the beauty of starting from scratch. I wanted to give back to it by creating something meaningful — a space where ideas could grow and stories could create impact.”

Vrushali started VAN Media Ventures to close that gap, turning technical ideas into stories that connect and deliver measurable outcomes.

## A Competitive Edge

What makes VAN Media Ventures different is marrying strategy with emotion. We do not churn out content or run events for the sake of noise. We research, listen, and then craft stories that move people and deliver results.

Every project is built around measurable outcomes. They design campaigns to increase engagement, improve recall, and drive action. Their work routinely shows a 30 to 50 percent uplift in target engagement.

In an age of automation, Van Media keeps the human touch. Vrushali adds, “We bring a personalised touch, guided by a journalist's instinct for curiosity — turning data into stories that resonate. We blend insight with imagination, metrics with emotion, technology with heart, creating work that transforms rather than just performs. VAN isn't just a partner — we're a trusted extension of every brand we work with, turning vision into real-world impact.”

## Rocky Road

Convincing people that B2B communication can be bold, human and emotionally intelligent was the first real test. Many clients were comfortable with safe, corporate messaging that did not move audiences. Vrushali had to show that courage and clarity, when backed by evidence, deliver results. Scaling without losing the personal touch was another constant tension. VAN Media grew quickly but Vrushali refused to let processes turn work into noise. She built repeatable systems that protect the creative spark while ensuring every project remains research-driven and bespoke.

Keeping journalism at the heart of the work felt like swimming upstream. The answer was not to resist technology but to use it wisely. VAN combines data and tools with human curiosity so stories remain empathetic and memorable.

Winning trust required proof, not promises. Vrushali led with case studies, measurable outcomes, and careful design. That slow, honest approach is what turned sceptical clients into long-term partners. Reflecting on the journey, Vrushali asserts, “Looking back, these hurdles taught me that challenges are not roadblocks — they are opportunities to rethink, experiment, and evolve. By combining integrity, curiosity, and data-driven strategy, we didn't just overcome obstacles — we transformed the way brands communicate and cemented VAN's reputation as a trusted, impact-focused partner.”

## Call for Celebration

“At VAN Media Ventures, success is measured by the difference we make, not just the campaigns we execute or the events we host.”

“Even our curated events consistently earn 90%+ satisfaction ratings, turning B2B knowledge-driven conferences, summits, and workshops into immersive, memorable experiences. Each project is tailored and intentional, fueled by research and creativity, to ensure every touchpoint resonates.”

Apart from partnering with more than ten brands across India and the Middle East, working across pharma, manufacturing, software, infrastructure, and architectural products, she also co-founded the Council of Industrial Excellence and Innovation.

Ultimately, her biggest achievement is people. Building a team and a client list that trusts VAN to tell difficult stories with clarity is the outcome she values most.

## The Next Frontier

Vrushali plans to grow VAN Media Ventures steadily and with purpose. She will deepen the agency's footprint across the MENA and APAC regions, working with global brands that share a taste for thoughtful, research-driven storytelling, campaigns and events.

A priority is launching owned IP events that bridge knowledge and networking gaps in key industries.

Technology will play a supporting role. Vrushali intends to adopt AI tools to improve personalisation, optimise outreach, and measure impact more precisely while keeping the human touch and storytelling instinct at the centre of every story.

“To achieve this, we plan to invest in talent, nurture a culture of curiosity and creativity, and continuously refine our processes to ensure each project delivers measurable impact. Ultimately, our goal is to transform how brands communicate, helping them build relationships, not just reach, and consistently turn vision into impact.”

## The Takeaways

“The journey of building VAN Media Ventures has been a masterclass in resilience, curiosity, and purpose.”

Over the years, Vrushali has learned that persistence matters more than flash. Bold ideas will meet resistance, but steady work and patient persuasion turn skeptics into believers.

She also learnt that research and insight are the backbone of every meaningful campaign. Creativity without data can miss the mark, and data without human context can feel hollow. The sweet spot is where both meet.

Her message to budding entrepreneurs is, “Embrace curiosity, take calculated risks, and never compromise on purpose. Challenges are inevitable, but they are also the greatest teachers — and the ones that transform vision into real-world impact.”

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**HEMANT AGARWAL**

Category: Enterprise Technology

**40**  
UNDER  
**40**

# Hemant Agarwal's LocatR.Ai Is Transforming Field Operations for India's Real Economy



*It's simplicity that wins. Businesses don't want complicated tools. They want clarity, speed, and reliability."*

The 40 Under 40 nominee, [Hemant Agarwal](#), is the founder of [LocatR.Ai](#) and a tech entrepreneur with more than twelve years in the IT industry. Beginning his journey in 2012 while studying for a BBA (H) and a software engineering course, Hemant launched his first software development business while in college. Hemant has also led high-performing teams to build scalable SaaS platforms and enterprise solutions for clients across the globe. Throughout the years, all his ventures had a simple goal. He reveals, *"My focus has always been on blending technology with strategic business insights to deliver measurable impact."*

## About LocatR.Ai

[LocatR.Ai](#) is a comprehensive SaaS platform that digitises logistics, field operations, and workforce management. The platform includes a transport management system, last-mile billing and tracking, SIM-based tracking, GPS attendance and visitor tracking, AI-powered computer vision for operational insight, and field force management. What sets LocatR.Ai apart is its reliability in low-bandwidth environments. Many clients operate from remote last-mile hubs where mobile internet is the only connectivity. [LocatR.Ai](#) is purpose-built for those conditions, so operations keep running without trade-offs in performance or data quality. At heart, the platform reflects Hemant's belief that technology must be inclusive. As he says, *"It's not just a platform; it's a mission to empower businesses with tools that work where they're needed most."*

## Starting Small

There's always a spark that leads someone to entrepreneurship. Hemant's spark came from a small, practical problem. While studying in college, he built a school management system for a nearby school. That first project taught him that code has the power to solve real problems, and solving them feels better than waiting for permission. A sharper push came from a moment of frustration when he missed a job interview. He explains,

*"The real turning point came even earlier. Coming from a middle-class family with no business background, I always had a fear — "Will I get a job? And if I do, will I be able to keep it?" At that time, I believed earning Rs. 10,000-Rs. 15,000 a month would be enough. One day, a friend invited me to join him for a customer support job interview. We reached the Kolkata office, but I was stopped at the entrance because I didn't carry any ID proof. My friend had his PAN card and got in. I didn't. That moment hit me hard. Not just the rejection, but the realisation that I needed to take control of my future."*

Watching his friend walk in and knowing he was stopped at the door made Hemant decide to take control of his future rather than depend on someone else's hiring cycle. He started from a 200-square-foot garage with two tables and no outside funding. Every rupee he earned went back into the business. Early work ranged from simple websites to a taxi dispatch system for a New York client in 2015, a project that taught him how to build systems that scale and stay online. In 2017, he launched GEMEYE and later developed LocatR.Ai, a platform for transport, last-mile billing, field force tracking, and AI-powered computer vision. With a vision that technology should be accessible, LocatR.Ai is optimised to work in low-bandwidth conditions, so last-mile hubs and remote teams can use it without compromise.

## The Real Deal

What makes LocatR.Ai different is the idea of building technology around real users, not the other way around. The platform is intentionally intuitive and purpose-driven. Features solve clear operational problems rather than clogging dashboards with vanity metrics. Teams pick it up fast and get useful insights on day one.

They also offer customisation at scale. Modules are tailored to a client's workflow and plug together seamlessly, so transport, last-mile billing, tracking, and field force management behave like one system, not four separate tools. Customer service is not an afterthought. The team treats a client's problem as its own, responds quickly, and fixes root causes rather than papering over symptoms. Technically, LocatR.Ai acts as a unified supply chain OS. Pre-integrated modules reduce friction, shorten deployment time, and lower training overhead. The result is a faster time to value and a clear ROI for customers.

## Troubled Waters

As a first-generation entrepreneur, Hemant started without a playbook. There was no inherited wisdom, so every part of the job had to be learned on the fly, from writing professional emails to managing clients and building teams.

Working out what businesses actually need was another hard lesson. Many platforms expect users to adapt to default features. Hemant realised that would not work for his customers, so he insisted on simplicity and purpose. Speed and iteration became a survival skill. He adds, *"In my earlier ventures, I saw how waiting for a 'perfect' product can delay impact. So now, we launch fast, gather feedback early, and keep improving. If you fall in love with your product too much, you risk losing sight of the business. The real magic happens when you co-create with your users."*

## Celebrating Feats

One of Hemant's major accomplishments is launching LocatR.Ai as a full-stack supply chain OS with integrated modules. He also built the platform in a way that it runs reliably in low-bandwidth environments, unlocking digital transformation for remote last-mile hubs. Moreover, Hemant scaled LocatR.Ai across multiple industries from logistics and distribution to field operations, with clients across India and beyond. Other achievements include moving from a 200-square-foot garage to a full-fledged tech team delivering enterprise-grade solutions globally, and achieving strong client retention and high adoption rates for core modules.

Featured in various publications, Hemant is also proud of winning the 40 Under 40 Awards in enterprise technology. However, for Hemant, the real achievement is that the customers in remote locations can now run their operations confidently on low-speed mobile internet, and that change is worth more than any dashboard number.

## A New Dawn

For LocatR.Ai's next chapter, the team wants the platform to become the default operating system for supply chain and field operations, not only for large enterprises but also for MSMEs, who are often left behind by traditional enterprise tech. They will expand deeper across India and enter global markets with similar last-mile challenges. At the same time, they will also add more AI-driven modules that do real work for users, from predictive routing to automated compliance and exception handling. Hemant's other plans include a self-serve onboarding flow that will let smaller businesses start quickly without hand-holding, and stronger integrations with third-party platforms will make LocatR.Ai plug and play across existing enterprise stacks. For larger clients, the product will remain highly customisable so each deployment delivers a clear return on investment. He explains that the execution will follow a simple playbook.

*"We'll achieve this by staying true to our core principles, building fast, listening deeply, and iterating continuously. We'll keep investing in our tech stack, our team, and our customer support, because we believe great products are built not just with code, but with empathy and execution. The vision is to simplify operations at scale and become the trusted digital backbone for businesses navigating the complexities of supply chain and field logistics."*

## The Takeaways

Over the years, Hemant has learned that starting something does not require having all the answers. When he began, there were gaps in experience, which he overcame by doing, not by waiting for a perfect plan. Another major learning has been the importance of empathy and making it a practical habit. He believes in treating a client's problem as your own, fixing root causes, and following up. He also learned to value small, repeatable habits over dramatic gestures. Daily learning, tidy processes, and respectful communication compound into credibility and growth.

Lastly, as he signs off, Hemant notes, *"Build with purpose. If your product solves a real problem, the market will find you."*

@entrepreneurstodaystaff



# SHREYAA SUMI

Category: Fashion

**40**  
UNDER  
**40**

# Shreyaa Sumi's Vision for Inclusive and International Representation with SSVJ Model Media

**“**Don't wait for the perfect moment, as tomorrow won't offer more time than today. Take that leap with courage in your heart, and craft your own extraordinary story of success. One step at a time.”

Shreyaa Sumi is an international model, entrepreneur, and mentor who treats fashion as a platform for purpose. She moves between runways in Los Angeles, New York, and Paris and runs SSVJ Model Media LLC in the United States, a company she founded to make representation more intentional and more inclusive.

Born in India and now based in the US, she built a career from scratch through persistence, training, and a clear sense of identity. Academic training in international business, filmmaking, and audio engineering sits alongside an honorary doctorate in media and fashion and the title of Mrs Universe Asia USA 2022, all of which inform her work at the intersection of creativity and commerce.

## SSVJ Model Media

SSVJ Model Media is both a production house and a talent ecosystem. The company produces editorial shoots, commercial campaigns, and short films while also mentoring emerging models and pageant talent. Each project is designed to tell a story and to give the people in front of the camera a path to lasting careers.

Shreyaa places equal weight on craft and care, teaching young talent how to present themselves, build professional discipline, and navigate an industry that often values image over substance. Her work is global in outlook and personal in approach. SSVJ Model Media works with brands and publications across continents while keeping mentorship local and hands-on. She says,

*“Here, creatives aren't just cast—they're cultivated. Behind every shoot is a story. Behind every model, a mission. We don't just create content; we build legacies. Empowerment isn't a tagline for us; it's our infrastructure.”*

## The Inspiration

Shreyaa's inspiration came from the intersection of craft and a market gap. She trained in international business and learned filmmaking and audio engineering, which gave her both a creative eye and the technical skills to make her ideas sing. Early internships at TV and radio taught her about storytelling.

Over the years, she realised that talent was everywhere, but the pathways to professional careers were scarce. Young models had promise, but not the mentorship, systems, or publishing platforms to turn promise into a sustainable life.

That gap became the spark. She realised the industry needed a platform that combined production quality, global reach, and hands-on guidance. So she built one. SSVJ Model Media is the practical answer to a simple belief that visibility should come with responsibility. She adds,

*“More than a business, it's a platform where individuals are empowered to shine, share their stories, and establish their presence in the global media and fashion landscape.”*

SSVJ Model Media is different because it is not a talent platform that trades moments for likes. It builds careers, one thoughtful project at a time. Moreover, she ensures that diversity and inclusion are at the heart of the company. She asserts,

*“My media campaigns resonate globally because they honor local voices and avoid one-size-fits-all messaging. I lead with originality over imitation and collaboration over competition. My only competition is who I was yesterday. I'm committed to evolving, building a legacy, and refining my own unique journey.”*

## Rocky Road

Shreyaa met the industry's glamour with a stubbornly practical mind. Early on, she realised that visibility alone does not build a career; it needs structure, mentorship, and dependable opportunities. Turning that insight into a functioning company meant learning the unglamorous parts of business while still performing on global runways.

Her achievements are proof of a career built on craft, mentorship, and measured visibility. Shreyaa is immensely proud that she holds the Mrs Universe Asia USA 2022 title and received an honorary doctorate in media and fashion for her contributions to the industry.

Her other achievements include walking major international runways, including Paris, New York, and Los Angeles, and collaborating with more than fifty global brands across campaigns, editorials, and commercials.

Her work has reached mass audiences through global billboard campaigns and high-visibility editorial placements. She was also recognised with the Asia's Women of Influence lifetime achievement award for sustained leadership and impact in fashion and media.

Moreover, she has built a mentorship ecosystem that trains and launches talent, and she runs pageant directorships that create international opportunities for contestants.

## The Next Frontier

*“At the heart of everything I do is a mission to build a lasting legacy—one that empowers others to dream big, break barriers, and redefine success on their own terms.”*

As for what's next, Shreyaa wants to scale SSVJ Model Media with quiet intent. She plans to grow the company's publishing and production wings, launch new creative ventures, and deepen the mentorship ecosystem that sits at the heart of the business. She also plans to expand globally, choosing each project for its potential to create lasting careers rather than momentary visibility.

On the ground, that means building stronger production capability, investing in premium editorial and film projects, and rolling out programmes that train and place new talent. She will expand pageant directorships and international partnerships so more contestants get meaningful exposure and steady opportunities. Technology will support the work, not replace it, with digital publishing, distribution, and curated campaigns that reach new markets while retaining a human touch.

*“My every step forward is driven by purpose, fueled by innovation, and anchored in the highest ideals. For me, progress isn't just about big leaps—it's found in the present moment. What you have now was once a dream, so celebrate it. I believe the future is shaped by today's choices, which is why I give my best to each moment.”*

With a head full of dreams for her future, Shreyaa shares some of the lessons she learned over the years.

She believes that true success isn't just about achievements. It's about the courage to begin, the connections we nurture, and the consistency we uphold. As she signs off, her message to budding entrepreneurs is,

*“Dare to dream boldly, take fearless risks, and surround yourself with people who elevate your vision. The road may be uncertain, but passion and perseverance will always light the way.”* **E**

@entrepreneurstodaystaff



# NIKHIL NAMIT

Category: Visionary & Serial Entrepreneur

**40**  
UNDER  
**40**

# Nikhil Namit — The Man Who Turned Setbacks into Empires

## “ The Making of a Fighter

Born in Aurangabad and raised in Kolhapur, Nikhil Namit's story begins far from the glamour of cinema or boardrooms. His parents were professors at the University of Mumbai, and he grew up in an environment where education was everything. But while he inherited their intellect, he learned his greatest lessons outside the classroom. “My father dreamed of seeing me become an IFS officer, but I was drawn to storytelling and cinema.”

As a young boy at St. Xavier's High School, Kolhapur, Nikhil was once caught cheating in an exam — a moment that would redefine him. He says, “I can still picture my father's face. That disappointment became my fire. I promised myself I'd never give him a reason to look at me that way again.”

Two years later, his parents were invited as chief guests at his school's annual day function. “That was my redemption moment,” he says. “I had earned back their pride — and more importantly, my own.”

After school, he moved to Mumbai to pursue Electronics and Telecommunication Engineering at Atharva College, Malad. Ironically, he failed his first year — a hard pill to swallow for the son of two professors. With his mother's steady encouragement, Nikhil chose to start over, turning that early failure into the turning point of his life.

Today, Nikhil Namit stands among India's most dynamic entrepreneurs. He is the CEO of Reel Life Production Pvt. Ltd., Founder of Urja Petroleum, Naadkhula Music, and NS Retails.

## The Dream That Refused to Die

At 12, Nikhil begged his father to let him attend **Superstar Salman Khan's** concert in Kolhapur in 1998. His father refused because of a math exam the next day — and instead made him study through the night. “I thought I'd missed my only chance to see Salman Khan,” Nikhil smiles. But destiny had already chosen its course.

Years later, Nikhil not only met Salman Khan but went on to work with him for over two decades, producing some of the actor's biggest and most loved films. “I fondly call him Salman Bhai now,” Nikhil smiles. Working with him has been a dream. Nikhil met another man who completely changed his life — **Atul Agnihotri**.

“Atul Sir has been more than a mentor — he's my Godfather. He told me filmmaking should be your passion, but find a business that sustains your dreams. This single line became my mantra and the foundation of everything I built. Everyone should have a guru in life, someone who guides, corrects, and grounds you. Atul Sir became that for me. I owe a large part of who I am today to him.”

## Fuel, Fire & Fortune

With that advice echoing in his mind, Nikhil turned his energy toward entrepreneurship. In 2008, he started Urja Petroleum — an Indian Oil fuel station on a highway near Aurangabad. Setting it up wasn't easy. “I often slept at the petrol pump while learning the oil trade first-hand, meeting Indian Oil officials, mastering logistics, and running operations until Urja turned profitable. For years, Nikhil split his week between Aurangabad and Mumbai — three days managing the pump and four days chasing his film dreams. With no experience or financial backup, he handled everything himself and built strong trust among customers.

Soon, they started selling over 400 KL of fuel per month, far exceeding projections. This success led to Urja Transport, which manages fuel logistics in Maharashtra.

**“I come from a simple background and built everything from the ground up — I'm a self-made man in every sense of the word.”**  
**From Fuel Pumps to Film Sets**

While Urja Petroleum grew steadily, Nikhil's creative spark never dimmed. Under Atul Agnihotri's mentorship, he became CEO of Reel Life Production Pvt. Ltd. during the making of *Hello*. “It was a huge responsibility, but Atul Sir's faith in me pushed me beyond my limits.”

Encouraged by Alvira Khan Agnihotri, he refined his craft at the New York Film Academy, Los Angeles, USA, gaining an international perspective on filmmaking and production management. Those months changed everything; they taught me how to think like a director, a businessman, and an artist — all at once.

Under his leadership, Reel Life Production delivered celebrated blockbuster hits — *Bodyguard* starring Salman Khan & Kareena Kapoor, *Bharat* starring Salman Khan & Katrina Kaif, *Radhe* starring Salman Khan & Disha Patani, *Hello* (based on Chetan Bhagat's *One Night at the Call Centre*), and *Farrey* starring Alizeh — with *Farrey* earning Alizeh the Filmfare Award for Best Debut (2023).

*Bodyguard* became the highest-grossing Indian film of 2011, sweeping awards nationwide and cementing Nikhil's reputation as a sharp, disciplined producer who could turn vision into victory.

In 2014, he produced *O Teri* — a project that didn't perform as expected. “That film was a tough lesson,” he admits. “But it taught me resilience. You don't stop after falling; you learn, evolve, and start again stronger.”

His work has taken him across the world — from attending the Busan, American, Berlin, and Cannes Film Festivals to filming large-scale projects across Dubai for *O Teri*, Abu Dhabi (UAE), Malta for *Bharat*, and Australia for *Farrey*. He shares,

“These experiences broadened my creative vision and taught me how to manage film productions across diverse cultural and logistical landscapes. Every set is a classroom, every country teaches me something new about art, about people, about patience. Filmmaking is not just art — it's architecture built from patience and purpose.”

## The Retail Reinvention

In 2013, Nikhil ventured into fashion and founded NS Retails, operating the *Being Human Clothing* franchise stores across Pune, Nagpur, Indore, and Surat. Within years, the company grew to nine outlets and was recognized for the highest-performing stores nationwide.

“Retail taught me business psychology — how people think, how they buy, what inspires them.”

## Naadkhula Music — The Sound of Success

When the pandemic halted the world, Nikhil pivoted again — this time to music.

He founded *Naadkhula Music*, a Marathi label that soon became a digital sensation for giving a platform to Marathi talent.

With chartbusters like *Mi Naadkhula* and *Aapli Yaari* crossing 100 million views and a one-million-strong YouTube audience, Naadkhula redefined regional music online. “Coming from a family of farmers, I've always stayed rooted in humility. No matter how far my journey takes me, I never forget where it began — in the simplicity of the soil.”

## The Next Frontier

The next chapter of Nikhil's journey is about creative evolution and expansion. Through his Dubai-based company, *NNKK Global*, he continues to bridge creativity, commerce, and consulting on an international scale across three key sectors — Creative, Arts and Entertainment Services, Information Technology Consultancy, and Medical Treatment Facilitation Services. Back home in India, Nikhil is expanding into the construction and infrastructure sector, even as he prepares to direct and produce new blockbuster films.

As an angel investor, he has previously backed and helped scale multiple start-ups across retail, agro, infrastructure, and technology.

A lifelong learner, Nikhil has developed strong expertise in both **technical and fundamental analysis in the stock market**, studying chart patterns, price movements, and company fundamentals to identify long-term value, and wants to continue doing that. His disciplined approach has yielded consistent results and outperformed markets over time. “I enjoy picking a stock, understanding the business behind it, and watching it grow — it's like storytelling,” he says.

“People often ask how I manage everything, “The truth is, I don't manage time — I master my priorities” After his father's passing, spirituality brought him peace and clarity. At home, Nikhil draws his greatest strength from his family — his wife Nisha, and their children Kiyaan and Kriday. “They are my anchor,” he says warmly. “No matter how intense life gets, one smile from my kids reminds me why I do what I do. And Nisha — she's my silent powerhouse. She keeps our world steady while I chase impossible dreams.”

Reflecting on his journey, Nikhil says, “I've learned that everyone needs a guiding force. I had mine, and I'll always be grateful. Atul Sir taught me that passion must rest on purpose. I may not have become the IFS officer my father dreamed of, but I've built something he would be proud of. The vision will always be to build a legacy institution that outlives me.”



**NABANITA DE**

Category: Enterprise Technology

**40**  
UNDER  
**40**

# Nabanita De's AI Privacy License is Leading the Global Autonomous Digital Asset Revolution

“40 Under 40 nominee Nabanita De is a visionary serial technology entrepreneur who is reshaping the future of privacy and AI. As founder and CEO of PrivacyLicense.ai, she's building the world's first privacy operating system for the AI era with their flagship product, [AI Privacy License](#), serving as the missing enforcement layer for the \$50 billion AI data economy, a revolutionary internet contract that serves as “robots.txt with legal teeth,” enabling creators and AI companies to work as partners, where they work together under a universal, shared, legally enforceable, machine-readable standard.

## Nabanita's Background

Nabanita De's record is wide and public-facing. As a master's student at UMass Amherst, she led the team that built FiB, a Chrome extension that detects fake news on Facebook. FiB won the Google Moonshot Prize at Princeton, ranked among the top five news stories of 2016, and attracted coverage in more than a thousand outlets, including Business Insider, the Washington Post, Wired, CNN, and the BBC. The project ran as a case study at over 40 universities worldwide and earned her an invite to the **Forbes 30 Under 30 Summit**.

Her competitive track record includes winning more than 20 hackathons, including the Global AWS GenAI Hackathon, Microsoft Hack for Good, Techcrunch Disrupt Hackathon Qualifiers and MIT Media Lab's AR/VR hackathon. Her prize cabinet includes over 51 technology awards and scholarships, such as Uber Rockstar Leadership award, Facebook Scholar for Women in Cyber Security, Microsoft Grace Hopper Scholar, Facebook F8 Scholar, and Webby recognition. She has also volunteered for over 100 nonprofits and, as a UNICEF state lead, helped mobilize fundraising that contributed to \$134 million in US government support and assisted in passing two national legislative bills. During the pandemic, she built CovidHelpForIndia.com to streamline relief resources.

At 18, she launched Bluetooth Messenger, which reached 50,000 downloads and topped the App Store's New and Rising list. The app won the BITSAA Mantra Entrepreneur of the Year award, and she was named to the BITSAA Global 30 Under 30 list in 2022. She has also written 20 Forbes articles with 500,000 reads, *three Pulitzer Prize nominations*, and recognition on **Fast Company's World Changing Ideas** list.

*An exclusive peek into the 40 Under 40 interview with Entrepreneurs Today.*

**Interviewer: What led you to venture into this domain?**

**Nabanita:** “My vision was to reimagine privacy as the foundation of the next internet, creating a seamless, automated trust layer that empowers creators and companies to protect rights, unlock markets, and innovate without limits.

*With 12+ years of privacy and AI leadership at companies like Microsoft, Uber, Paramount, Fintech, Banks, etc, where I saved over \$5 billion in infra and compliance costs, I have experienced firsthand the crisis in global privacy compliance. She is creating a universal infrastructure that transforms privacy from a compliance burden into a competitive advantage. Eventually, I also founded the **Nabanita De Foundation**, which tackles humanitarian moonshot challenges through technology, entrepreneurship, and advocacy. The foundation has established partnerships with **Forbes**, **Audible**, and **Amazon**, and its initiatives have been adopted by 135 countries.”*

**Interviewer: What gap in the AI ecosystem were you trying to solve?**

**Nabanita:** “I watched Fortune 500 companies deploy armies of lawyers while seed-stage founders saw their launches stall for months over basic privacy questions. Meanwhile, AI companies were scraping the internet with no mechanism for creators to get credit or compensation, leading to billion-dollar lawsuits like the recent \$1.5 billion [Anthropic settlement](#), and also the creation of [AI Actors](#) with source faces of actors without credit or compensation, which are getting backlash over the Internet.

*In August 2025, when the EU AI Act enforcement began, AI companies faced €35M penalties but had no practical implementation path. I realized the industry needed what Martijn Koster did for web crawling in 1994 with robots.txt, but for the AI era, with legal teeth. So I built AI Privacy License.”*

**Interviewer: Is this really a fight between creators and AI, or something deeper?**

**Nabanita:** “First, the internet connected information. Now, AI learns

*from it. And what comes next will redefine them both. The internet has no shared rules for how AI uses content, and no infrastructure for creators and AI companies to work together. This isn't a fight between creators and AI. It's missing infrastructure at the internet's core. AI Privacy License is that missing layer: Your content becomes a self-enforcing, legally binding protocol, traveling across the AI ecosystem with its rights intact, automatically executing your rules anywhere it goes. It's upon the creators to define their own terms with training permissions, attribution, commercial use, NDAs, pre-clearance, and more. AI companies read them instantly, license in seconds, stay compliant by design, and innovate with trust. This is the infrastructure on which the next internet will be built. Transforming creative works into autonomous digital assets, self-protecting, self-enforcing, generating value for their creators, and providing AI companies with clear, compliant access.”*

**Interviewer: What's causing so many companies to struggle with privacy compliance today?**

**Nabanita:** “Privacy Compliance is Broken, and it's holding businesses back with manual workflows, siloed data, and evolving regulations. It costs businesses \$50B+ in fines and slows innovation to a crawl. The old approach particularly fails due to under-resourced teams, slow, manual processes, data silos everywhere, fragmented, fast-changing laws, massive penalties, no shared privacy language, disconnected tools, no universal standards, and unclear guidance for teams.”

**Interviewer: Do you see this as the beginning of a new infrastructure layer for AI governance?**

**Nabanita:** “In 1994, Martijn Koster built robots.txt, a simple machine-readable file and gentlemen's agreement. In 2025, AI systems no longer need a simple “block the bots or allow all” approach. They need nuanced systems with strategies for what happens after scraping is complete, a post-governance protocol. And given that AI now understands humans, this breakthrough is finally possible! AI Privacy License is the DNS of AI Compliance, a foundational layer that every AI company, creator, and organization will rely on, the legally binding data governance post-crawl protocol that works for BOTH AI companies, content creators, and organizations. [AI Privacy License](#) is backed by copyright and contract law, plus a missing implementation layer of EU AI Act Article 53(1)(c). It has already been adopted by creators from 42 countries in the first week of launch.”

**Interviewer: What challenges have you faced while building the [AI Privacy License](#)?**

**Nabanita:** “Building credibility as a solo founder in a space dominated by large players. As a woman of color building infrastructure-level technology, there is always initial bias in the industry towards whether women of color could create a universal standard. By my solution getting adoption in 42 countries in first week of release, I was able to prove my talent and product market fit for this groundbreaking solution as a solo founder. The other challenge was achieving adoption across 42 countries in the first week without a sales team. I built an organic, community-led GTM flywheel through Privacy Champions, consultant partnerships, open-source strategy, and thought leadership, proving the market urgency was real.”

**Interviewer: Our readers would like to know about the major milestone you have reached. Which are the ones you are most proud of?**

**Nabanita:** “One of the major achievements has been submitting my built products and winning major hackathons solo, including AWS GenAI Global among 3,000+ participants, with \$22K+ in total prizes. Also, I secured a position as an **IAPP Privacy Engineering Board Member**, the largest privacy association in the world, with access to all Privacy decision makers from Fortune 500 companies, alongside Axon, Cisco, Amazon, Snap, Infosys, Toyota, TCS, Google, Canva, HP, Mastercard, etc. We also built a Privacy Champions community of 120+ leaders from Meta, Microsoft, IBM, Visa, Unilever, KPMG, PwC, Samsung, TD, Discover, T. Rowe Price, Infosys, HCL, Siemens, Raymond James, Roku, Skyscanner, Hershey's, EXL, Imax, Grammarly, Loom, Tractable, ResMed, Lumin Digital, Imax, Paytm, Allegis Group, Occidental Petroleum, Yellow Card and more.

*Our other achievements include consultant Partnerships, exclusive Industry Networks, and thought leadership through a 1,642-subscriber newsletter. I was also featured on NASDAQ Tower, speaking at MIT, and partnering with NASDAQ, Wells Fargo, and others. We also have 4 patents pending and open-source adoption in 42 countries.”* 

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# MOHSIN MARGHOOB

Category: Cybersecurity and Digital Transformation

**40**  
UNDER  
**40**

# How Mohsin Margoob is Building Mociber at the Crossroads of Innovation, Integrity, and Global Growth, Creating Value and Transforming Change.

“ Founder and CEO of Mociber, Mohsin Margoob, leads a cybersecurity, business continuity, and digital transformation firm that helps Start-ups, SMEs, and large organizations to protect their present and build a secure digital world for future generations. He builds high-performing teams that understand the real-world problem and are committed to providing services and AI-driven solutions with **agility, innovation, intelligence, and trust.**”

Mociber's vision is to be a trusted strategic partner for start-ups, businesses, institutions, and government agencies that need resilient, future-ready infrastructure. The company works directly and through partners across India, the USA, the UK, and the Middle East, helping clients safeguard sensitive data and critical systems while enabling growth. As Mohsin adds, *“We are equally committed to returning to society and benefiting underprivileged and differently abled children, with education. In 2026, our target is to provide such children with education, especially those located in rural areas, collaborating with a Delhi-based NGO.”*

## An Early Start

Mohsin's interest in entrepreneurship took root in 2007 when he founded a software venture during his college years. He reveals, *“Later, this start-up had to shut down due to the dissolution of Lehman Brothers in the USA in the 2008 recession. Since the early days of my education, I have always been driven by an entrepreneurial spirit. Afterwards, I joined the corporate world and worked with many renowned Tier 1 MNCs and blue-chip companies based in the USA, the UK, the Middle East, and India.”*

While working in the Middle East, Mohsin foresaw that Gulf countries' governments were investing in cybersecurity and digital transformation, yet the market lacked niche talent and customized services, and innovative solutions. Existing players in the market favoured one-size-fits-all approaches and too often prioritized fees over quality delivery.

That experience shaped his mission. He shares, *“I wanted to simplify architectures, network designs, frameworks, standards, regulations, policies, procedures, compliances, audits, and to provide customer-first services and solutions with five core value propositions of the **right mindset, the right concept, the right team, the right solution, and the right delivery.** I started the company in 2019 in New Delhi, India, and later launched a new brand as **Mociber** in January 2025. Currently, our mission and vision are embedded with **VISION 2030, VISION 2047, and VISION 2050** of the digital revolution, resilience, and sustainability.”*

## Bridging Real Gaps

**Mociber** does not do sales but adds value and delivers impact. Each engagement is tailored around a client's real risk profile and commercial goals. The team understands client needs first, then designs strategies, programs, and solutions that fit the industry, the budget, and the level of advanced technical maturity.

They combine deep technical skill with strategic advisory. They also invest in future-enabling capabilities so clients are protected today and ready for what comes next, the unknown. What truly sets them apart is that trust and fairness are not marketing lines here. Mohsin runs the company with clear ethics, transparent pricing, and a focus on long-term partnerships.

## Troubled Waters

Mohsin's biggest early risk was leaving a highly-paid role in Saudi Arabia and trading financial comfort for uncertainty. That choice meant tight cash flows, long working hours, and convincing the family that the restart made sense. Winning trust in a security-driven industry was another hurdle. Clients expect proven pedigree and low tolerance for mistakes, and a young firm must earn credibility one successful delivery at a time.

Competing with large vendors proved to be difficult. What helped were, as he says, *“Referrals, consistently delivering results, investing in talent, and forming strategic collaborations. Those early hurdles shaped the resilience that defines me today.”*

## Celebrating Feats

**Mohsin Margoob** measures success by quality delivery, gaining trust, solving problems, and making the world sustainable. Mociber is mostly proud of having helped enterprises strengthen cybersecurity, migrate data centers, adopt cloud platforms securely, ensure compliance assurance, and obtain audit clearance. Each project focused on outcomes that reduce risk and keep the business resilient.

A recent partnership with a US product company brought a patented Zero Dwell Containment solution into their arsenal. They have also built strategic business partnerships across India and the Middle East to deepen local presence and speed deployment and project deliveries. They are also in conversation with AI-driven product companies for partnerships and open for business partnerships in Latin America, Canada, Australia, Singapore and North Africa as their expansion plan till 2030. Today, Mociber is valued less as a vendor and more as a **trusted** partner. That shift from transactional work to sustained collaboration is, for Mohsin, the company's proudest achievement.

## A New Dawn

As for the plans ahead, Mohsin wants to scale Mociber into a recognised global cybersecurity partner, focusing first on deeper footholds in the USA, the UK and the Middle East. He highlights,

*“We aim to expand internationally, build AI-powered security solutions, and nurture the next generation of cyber talent—all while keeping innovation and client trust at the core.”* With a head full of dreams and a clear vision for the future, Mohsin shares some of the key takeaways from his journey that can help budding entrepreneurs on their path. He has learned that resilience, adaptability, and integrity are non-negotiable in business.

He believes curiosity and ethics must go hand in hand. Challenges are the best teachers when you show up, listen, and iterate. He also urges everyone to build something that creates real value, not just profit, and the right customers will follow. Deliver outcomes first, and trust will come later. Finally, as he signs off, he advises,

*“Produce more talent like yourself, even better leaders, technocrats, and managers, and never forget a person who helped you in bad times, and support the education of children who cannot afford it.”* 

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**ARJUN SINGH**

Category: Fashion

**40**  
UNDER  
**40**

# How Arjun Singh's Dubai-Based Brand, Trillionaire, Is Giving Streetwear Its Soul Back



*Success doesn't come overnight. It comes with patience, consistency, and a lot of self-belief."*

[Arjun Singh](#) is the founder and creative director of [Trillionaire](#), a Dubai-based luxury streetwear brand that dresses a mindset as much as a body.

[Trillionaire](#) began as a question about value. Why should luxury be measured only by price? [Arjun](#) answered by turning discarded materials into bold statements. His debut collection, **Trillionaire Trash**, at **New York Fashion Week 2024** proved the point. It was not just about salvage and style but about redefining worth. Looking back, Arjun says the focus was on rethinking luxury as a state of mind, not price tags. In his own words,

*"Trillionaire is a label, a lifestyle built on confidence, hustle, and abundance. The brand was created to redefine what modern streetwear from this region could stand for. We are bold, global, and unapologetically original."*

In 2025, he took that idea to Milan Fashion Week with **Formally Streetwear**, a show that positioned Trillionaire as a global voice. From Dubai to New York to Milan, the brand blends youthful energy with the polish of luxury fashion. Each piece carries a clear intent of wearing your worth, thinking bigger, and moving with purpose.

Arjun treats design as a form of storytelling. He works closely with his team to craft pieces that feel lived in and aspirational at the same time. For him, the street is a stage where culture, identity, and ambition meet, and his clothes are made to be seen and to last.

Today, Trillionaire is more than a label. It is a small rebellion against the expected, an invitation to live abundantly and to make everyday style feel unapologetically original. So far, they have been featured in publications like *The Quint*, *Khaleej Times*, *The Times of India*, *UAE Stories*, and *the Bold Journey Magazine*.

## Rethinking Fashion

Arjun started Trillionaire because he saw a clear gap in the market. Streetwear had grown loud and overexposed, but there was no brand speaking to a generation that wanted presence without showiness and confidence without excess. He reveals,

*"There wasn't a streetwear brand that represented modesty, confidence, and luxury all in one language. I wanted to create something that spoke to a new generation that values both style and substance, where you can look powerful without being flashy."*

Dubai shaped the idea. Living where tradition and modern ambition meet taught him to value restraint and intent. Indian craft sensibilities anchor the details. He wanted pieces that read powerful and respectful at the same time, pieces that feel global but are rooted in identity. Arjun further adds, *"This mix doesn't exist in any other brand. From our signature yellow branding to our focus on quality and presence, Trillionaire differentiates itself by building a lifestyle, not just a label."*

Sustainability and craft were part of the spark. Turning discarded materials into statements taught him that value is created, not printed on a price tag. That practice became a way to question what luxury really means.

From that simple conviction, he built a label that starts conversations rather than chases trends. The early runway success in New York and Milan only proved one thing to him that when design carries meaning, the world listens.

## Navigating Troubles

Building Trillionaire from the ground up was far from glamorous. Production delays, sourcing finishes that matched the brand's exacting standards, and finding manufacturers who cared as much about craft as Arjun did all tested the team early on.

Credibility on the global stage did not arrive overnight. Without big investors or an established network in fashion capitals, every runway, every lookbook, and every show became a proof point. That pressure forced Trillionaire to be consistent and to let work speak for the brand.

Keeping authenticity while growing was a constant tension. It is easy to chase trends or quick partnerships that dilute a brand's voice. Arjun chose patience instead, growing deliberately and saying no to opportunities that would compromise the label's identity.

## What's Coming?

The next chapter for Trillionaire is growth with intention.

They will take the brand to more cities and more runways. The plan is to do international showcases in Paris, London, Tokyo, and Los Angeles over the coming seasons.

Product expansion will follow the same rule that has guided the label so far. New collections will stay true to the Trillionaire attitude while introducing more lines. The team will also build immersive pop-ups and branded experiences. These will be places where people can feel the brand rather than just see it. Arjun explains,

*"I want people to feel the energy and story behind each line. Every collection launch will be treated as an experience, blending fashion, music, and storytelling."*

The goal is to build a global calendar of Trillionaire moments that are bigger, bolder, and more personal than the last. Grow the community before the numbers. Keep the design honest and the voice unmistakable. Arjun's vision is to make **Trillionaire** one of the most recognised and respected names in international streetwear.

## Words of Wisdom

One of the lessons Arjun has learned is that ideas are easy and discipline is rare. Having a clear vision and sticking to it day after day is what turns a good idea into a real brand. Along the way, he also realised the importance of starting where he was and building with what he had. Waiting for perfect timing or big investors only delays the work that matters.

He also believed that rejection, delays, and setbacks are tools, not excuses. As he says, the world will doubt you until it can't ignore you for your work. Lastly, as he signs off, he says,

*"Move with purpose, not pressure. Don't chase validation, but chase progress. Surround yourself with people who believe in your vision, and never compromise your originality to fit in. Most importantly, stay humble, stay hungry, and keep creating. Because when you move with authenticity, your work will speak long after you do."*



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**HARSH BHUTA**

Category: Finance

**40**  
UNDER  
**40**

# Harsh Bhuta: Charting a Distinct Path in Advisory with Vision, Integrity, and Impact

“ Managing Partner, Bhuta Shah & Co. LLP | 38

At just 38, Harsh Bhuta, Managing Partner at Bhuta Shah & Co. LLP (BSC), has not only expanded the footprint of a legacy firm but also infused it with a future-ready vision that combines deep domain expertise, unwavering integrity, and strategic foresight.

A second-generation professional, Harsh represents a rare blend of tradition and innovation. Founded in 1986 by his father, Mr. Shailesh Bhuta, BSC has long been respected for its credibility in tax law. Under Harsh's leadership, the firm has evolved into a multidisciplinary powerhouse with strong capabilities in M&A, private equity, tax structuring, and cross-border advisory.

## From Big Four to Building Legacy

Harsh's formative years included tenures at PwC and EY, where he honed his technical grounding and global perspective. But it was in 2015—when he chose to return to BSC—that his real journey began.

“I saw an opportunity to create something enduring. India was at an inflection point—businesses were growing more complex, and clients needed holistic, high-caliber advisory under one roof. My goal was to build a firm that could not only match global standards but also lead with values,” says Harsh.

He brought with him the rigor of the Big Four but built on BSC's foundation of trust to scale its offerings. Today, the firm supports owner-managed enterprises, family offices, and multinational corporations alike with strategic financial solutions that go far beyond compliance.

## Redefining Value in Professional Services

At the heart of BSC's advisory practice lies an uncompromising commitment to value creation. Harsh and his team have led over 120 cross-border deals, advising on complex structuring mandates in sectors such as technology, infrastructure, and pharmaceuticals.

“Our edge lies in being strategic problem-solvers. We understand that no transaction exists in a vacuum—it must align legal, tax, commercial, and operational realities,” explains Harsh. “That's where our multi-disciplinary approach becomes invaluable.”

It's not just the deals but the firm's client-first philosophy that has earned it enduring partnerships. BSC's reputation is built on clarity, confidentiality, and delivering outcomes—time and again.

## Scaling with Structure, Culture, and Technology

Growing a legacy firm in a rapidly changing landscape wasn't without its challenges. Scaling operations across geographies while maintaining service consistency was a major hurdle. Harsh responded by implementing a hub-and-spoke model, backed by technology-enabled platforms and decentralized leadership teams. Today, BSC operates from eight locations in India with plans underway for international offices in Dubai as well.

Talent, he notes, is the lifeblood of a knowledge firm. “We invest heavily in recruiting, mentoring, and retaining the best minds. Our structured training programs, campus partnerships, and internal alumni initiatives have helped create a high-



performance, collaborative culture.”

BSC now boasts a team of over 300 professionals—up from 70 when Harsh joined—with 15+ partners driving growth across verticals.

## Thought Leadership and Impact Beyond the Balance Sheet

Under Harsh's stewardship, BSC has emerged not just as a service provider, but as a voice of authority in the advisory space. From publishing white papers on regulatory trends to speaking at industry forums, the firm has actively contributed to shaping discourse.

Their “BSC Cares” initiative, focusing on employee well-being, has been instrumental in reinforcing a values-driven culture. “A firm is only as strong as its people,” Harsh believes. “We're building not just a company, but a community.”

## The Road Ahead: Expansion, Innovation, and Purpose

Looking forward, Harsh is focused on broadening BSC's capabilities into startup advisory, cybersecurity, and blockchain consulting. His ambition is to embed AI, machine learning, and analytics deeper into the firm's service delivery, enhancing accuracy and insight.

“We're evolving from being advisors to becoming long-term strategic partners,” he says. “That requires not just knowledge, but the ability to anticipate, adapt, and align with our clients' future.”

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**ISHA AMBANI**

Category: Retail

**40**  
UNDER  
**40**

# Isha Ambani is the New Fashion Shark

“We are living in times of exponential changes. The world is changing, the world is innovating, and if we are to survive in this fast-changing world, we too must innovate. So, for everyone present here today: Be ready to embrace the change.”

A graduate from Yale University with a double major in Psychology and South Asian studies, she completed her MBA from Stanford University in 2018. Before joining Reliance Industries, Isha previously worked as a business analyst at McKinsey & Company in 2014.

Executive Director of Reliance Retail Ventures Limited, Isha Ambani has played a crucial role in the advancement of Reliance Retail, which now has over 18,500 stores in India.

Under Isha's guidance, Reliance Industries is currently operating in sectors like fashion, groceries, electronics and healthcare. A few well-known brands by Reliance are AJIO, Tira, Dunzo, Netmeds, Reliance Digital, and Reliance Trends. She was also the one behind conceptualising and launching Jio in India back in 2016. She was also actively involved in the launch and operations of the Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre in Mumbai.

Also a part of the advisory Board of the Yale Schwarzman Center, she is on the Board of Trustees of the Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art, Jio MAMI, and the Dia Art Foundation.

## Expanding Tira

Headquartered in Mumbai, India, Reliance Retail launched its e-commerce cosmetics venture Tira Beauty around April 5th, 2023.

Founded by Isha Ambani, the venture aims to be at the top of the shopping experience. In a previous press conference, Isha expressed her enthusiasm and said,

“We are excited to bring the Tira experience to our Indian customers. With Tira, we aim to break down barriers in the beauty space and democratize beauty for consumers across segments. Our vision for Tira is to be the leading beauty destination for accessible yet aspirational beauty, one that is inclusive and one that harbours the mission of becoming the most loved beauty retailer in India.”

Tira made its debut with a 4,300-square-foot store in Mumbai's BKC area, located in the Jio World Drive Mall. With several stores across Maharashtra and Delhi, Tira has expanded its online reach to over 100 cities.

Unlike the other beauty and shopping stores in the market, Tira has distinguished itself by introducing some unique features that are exclusive to customers buying from Tira Stores. The prices of the products are on par with those of their competitors. In fact, there are heavy discounts, if nothing more, to get more customers to try their products.



One of Tira's standout features would be the electronic vending machine that dispenses free product samples with a simple OTP. The system has particularly gained traction among customers, as not many competitors offer these benefits.

## Major Wins

Till now, Isha has been featured in Forbes' 30 Under 30 Asia (2015), Forbes Asia's Power Businesswomen (2020), Twelve Most Powerful Upcoming Businesswomen of Asia by Fortune India, and The Economic Times' Most Powerful Women in Business. Some other recognitions include The Times Power List, GenNext Entrepreneur Award – Forbes India Leadership Awards (2023), Maharashtra of the Year (2024), TIME100 Next List, Hurun India Under-35 (Rank 31), and Icon of the Year – Harper's Bazaar Women of the Year Awards (2024).

Moving forward, Isha is looking forward to bringing the best of fashion to Indian consumers. Moreover, Isha is confident that they will be doubling their retail business in the next 2 years.

Some advice she has for future entrepreneurs is,

“Be prepared to take up Science & Technology as a career option because Science & Technology hold the key to the future. The majority of future jobs are going to be in those realms. So, break the shackles of tradition, challenge yourself, and be the changemaker.” 

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**RICHA KAR**

Category: E-commerce

**40**  
UNDER  
**40**

# How **Richa Kar** is Pioneering the Indian Lingerie Retail Industry

“If you are strong, focused and passionate about what you want to do, everything falls into place.”

Richa Kar, founder of Zivame, hails from Jamshedpur and belongs to a middle-class background. Having pursued engineering from BITS Pilani, Richa later got her MBA degree from Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies (NMIMS) in 2007.

It was after a brief stint in IT that Richa later moved into retail consulting with Spencers and SAP, where she learned the ropes of the retail sector. While working with the SAP clients, she often got to know the various businesses, and that's when she learned about the challenges women face while shopping for lingerie. After noticing a market gap, Richa saw a market gap and decided to build an online retail platform herself for intimate wear of women.

The idea of building Zivame was first conceived in 2011, the same time around which Richa resigned from SAP. Initially, she spent most of her time researching the lingerie retail market in India and consumer behavior, and soon enough, she was able to onboard brands like Triumph and Jockey. In August 2011, she finally launched Zivame with an investment of 35 lakhs.

Despite the journey being pretty tough, Zivame gained traction eventually. In 2012, she even secured \$3 million in funding, followed by \$6 million in 2013 and \$40 million in 2015.

As of April 2025, Zivame's valuation stands at \$91.6 million, and it offers more than 5,000 styles in over 100 sizes. The brand also expanded from its online-only store to retail outlets all across India. Looking back at the time when she started and how far she has come, she says,

“I guess conviction in one's belief is the greatest driver. If you are strong, focused, and passionate about what you want to do, everything falls in place. Being able to fulfill a certain need is most gratifying. It's gratifying, but it's never easy. Thousands of women in India have found a respectable way of making their intimate choices of gratifying feeling.”

The idea to build Zivame came from the mission to address the discomfort women face in India while shopping for lingerie. Because of this, they even



introduced fit consultants, home trials and fitting lounges. And since she has big dreams for the brand, she made sure to hire men and women who shared the same vision for Zivame.

The journey has not been a cakewalk, and there have been several sacrifices along the way. Richa even had to rush through her entire wedding so that she could go back to her work the next day. For her work, she even had to skip vacation time again and again. However, she acknowledges that it was not just her but also her family who made instrumental sacrifices for her to get where she is today.

There have also been several criticisms on the journey, but what helped was having a strategic foresight of what you want and strong determination. Today, Richa is pioneering India's lingerie retail sector with Zivame. She believes, “If the criticisms are constructive, take it in; if not, walk past. Failures and setbacks are a part of life. When you are focused and hardworking, your journey to success is not too far.” 

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**RUPIN SUCHAK**

Category: Design

**40**  
UNDER  
**40**

# Rupin Suchak is Redefining How Stories, On Screen and Off, are Told Through Design

“ At 38, Rupin Suchak has already carved a distinctive niche in India's production-design landscape. A NIFT-trained communication designer, he spent four formative years under Sabu Cyril, widely regarded as India's most influential production designer, where he honed his ability to translate narrative into space at a scale few newcomers encounter. In 2012, Suchak launched his own studio, Goiz Argi, and quickly made his mark with projects like Happy Ending, Ki & Ka, Spyder, Padman and Dear Zindagi. His quirky, character-driven sets, most memorably the train-served home in Ki & Ka, captured both public imagination and industry attention.

Since those breakthrough years, Suchak has partnered with some of Bollywood's most acclaimed directors, Sanjay Leela Bhansali, R. Balki and Gauri Shinde among them—to realize their cinematic visions. His collaborations span the country's top production houses: Dharma Productions, Red Chillies Entertainment, Excel Entertainment and D2R Films. With each project, he amplifies the story through design, whether by crafting immersive period palaces or by injecting offbeat whimsy into contemporary settings.

Beyond the silver screen, Suchak's design sensibility now permeates celebrity interiors. His client roster reads like a corps d'élite of Hindi film and music. Some of the work he has done includes Alia Bhatt's residence and office, Neetu Kapoor's workspace, Sonakshi Sinha's home, and Sunidhi Chauhan's rehearsal studio in Mumbai's Oshiwara district.

It is the word of mouth and the industry friendships that led to his rapid expansion. His work for R. Balki and Gauri Shinde on Dear Zindagi and Ki & Ka led directly to their commissioning him for their own office, which in turn attracted further high-profile referrals.

Most recently, Suchak has ventured into the F&B segment, applying his production-design expertise to real-world hospitality environments. His first standalone restaurant project, a Japanese concept discovered via Instagram, required translating cinematic scale into functional dining spaces.

“Films prepare you for every kind of job,” he says, noting that the primary shift lay in the precision of detailing and the operational demands of a live venue. The result, he believes, demonstrates that narrative-driven design can thrive outside film studios.

Underlying Suchak's diverse portfolio is a singular philosophy: full immersion. From the moment he receives a brief, he explains, he starts thinking offbeat. Design is about fun and confidence, and he never wants to feel a lack of ownership over what he has created. This appetite for “madness in design” drives him to outdo each previous project in creativity and craft.

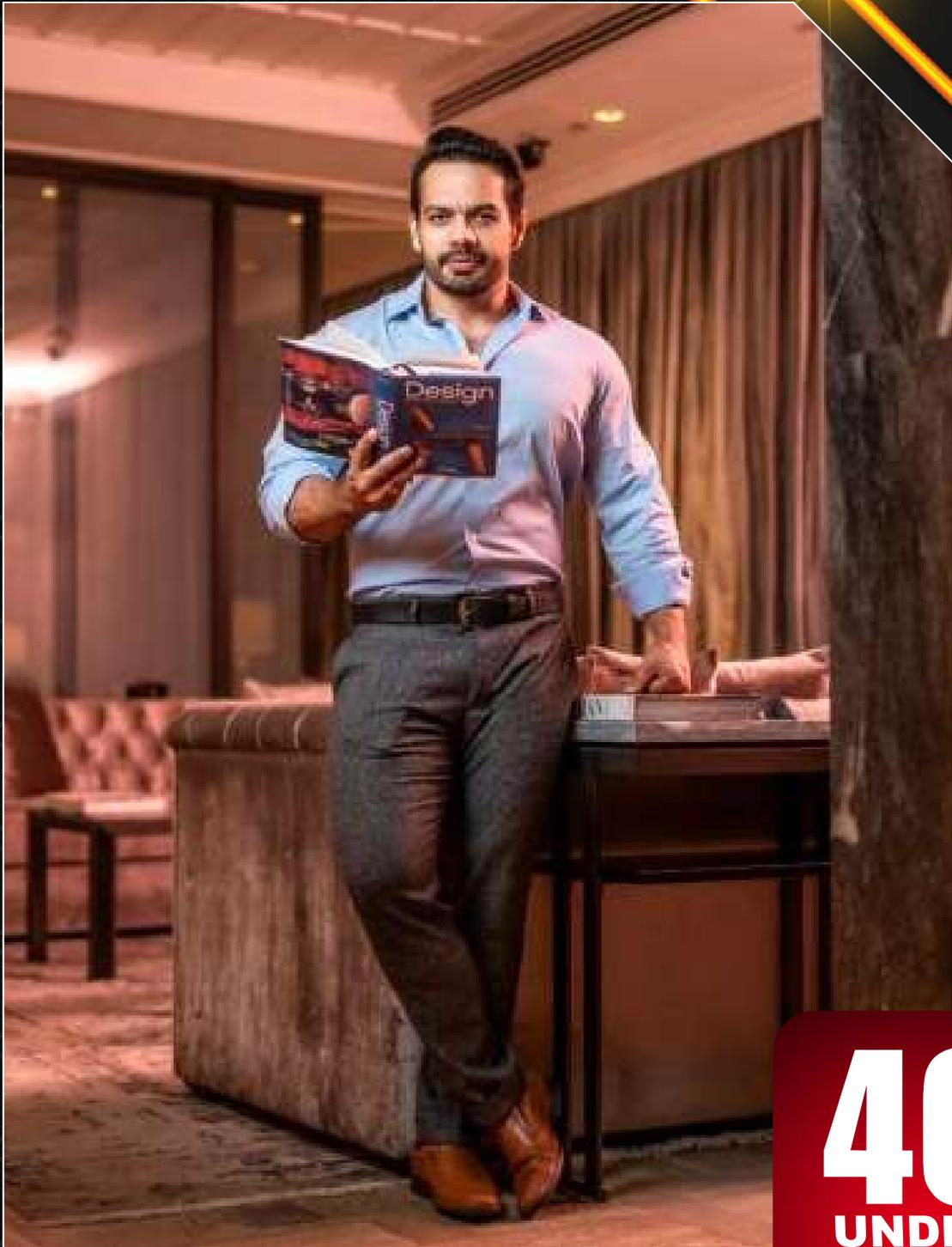
Asked to name his favorite and most significant works, Suchak singles out two very different projects. His current favorite is the house he's designing for actor-comedian Aparshakti Khurana, an ongoing interior commission that showcases his evolving residential style. Yet he regards his first independent film assignment, Ki & Ka, as the most pivotal, as it broke stereotypes in design, like the miniature train network that carried food across the set.



In every commission, from studios and homes to restaurants, Suchak insists on one non-negotiable step: sketching by hand. Despite all the software available, his ideas always start with a pen on paper. This tactile beginning ensures that his vision remains intimately tied to his own creative impulse.

Looking ahead, Suchak does not dream of ever-larger scales but of ever-deeper involvement. Whether it's a bathroom or a ballroom, he wants to be a hundred percent invested in the most offbeat way possible. In a career already marked by high-profile collaborations and boundary-pushing concepts, Rupin Suchak shows no sign of slowing his quest to redefine how stories, on screen and off, are told through design. [f](#)

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# GAURAV TANEJA

Category: Fitness & Lifestyle

**40**  
UNDER  
**40**

# Gaurav Taneja's Journey from Airline Captain to YouTube Star and Startup Founder



Gaurav Taneja, better known to his 3.4 million YouTube subscribers as “Flying Beast, is also a full-time airline captain by profession.

Gaurav, an IIT Kharagpur alumnus with a B.Tech in Civil Engineering, juggles his aviation career with two of India's largest YouTube channels.

## Gaurav's YouTube Vlogs

Flying Beast and Fit Muscle TV together attract over 33 million monthly views; in 2019 alone, Flying Beast amassed more than 293 million views, making it the country's top vlogging channel that year. A certified nutritionist and competitive bodybuilder, Gaurav has secured multiple national and state bodybuilding titles.

His other vlog, 'Rasbhari Ke Papa,' initiated on July 8, 2020, is dedicated to gaming content and rapidly gained a substantial subscriber base.

He has produced several popular vlogs, including "John Abraham Shows his Bike Collection," "Best Flight as a Captain," and "This Custom Made Personal Gift Made Her So Emotional."

In an interview with Raj Shamani published October 16, Gaurav recounted that he was terminated from AirAsia for raising safety issues and noted that regulators later echoed his concerns. Instead of retreating, he pivoted fully to digital content and now claims to earn more each month than the CEO.

## Entrepreneurial Spirit

Transitioning fully into digital content creation during the COVID-19 pandemic, Gaurav expanded his entrepreneurial pursuits by co-founding BeastLife, a fitness and lifestyle brand, and Rosier Foods, known for products like organic ghee.

## The Shark Tank Episode Controversy

On Shark Tank India, Gaurav pitched a fitness-and-lifestyle venture but clashed with the Sharks over valuation and strategic vision. Mittal's remark that Gaurav was ill-prepared struck a nerve; the two walked out after failing to agree on terms. In the days following the broadcast, both Gaurav and his partner have publicly critiqued the show's format and defended their business acumen.

Gaurav's journey exemplifies adaptability and determination, transitioning from an aviation professional to a successful content creator and entrepreneur while navigating challenges and controversies in the public eye.



## The Achievements

Gaurav has excelled in bodybuilding, securing the title of Mr. Delhi in 2014 and competing nationally for four years. He has also amassed millions of subscribers and established himself as a leading fitness and lifestyle influencer in India.

His contributions have been recognised with awards, including the Best Lifestyle Blogger - Male at the 2020 Bollywood Life - Instagram Awards and a nomination for Best Fitness Blogger at the 2023 Bollywood Life - Social Media Awards. Additionally, he was honored at SheThePeople's Digital Women Awards for his brand "Flying Beast."

## The Life Lessons

Gaurav emphasises the importance of pursuing one's passions, noting that engaging in work aligned with one's interests prevents feelings of fatigue and fosters dedication. He also understood that success isn't solely defined by financial wealth but varies based on individual aspirations and contentment.

Additionally, Gaurav underscores the value of resilience and adaptability, advocating for unwavering commitment to one's objectives while remaining flexible in tactics and being hands-on in every endeavor. Collectively, these insights underscore his belief in passion-driven work, personalized definitions of success, and the necessity 

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# SOUVIK BISWAS

Category: Rising Foodpreneur of the Year 2025

**40**  
UNDER  
**40**

# Souvik Biswas is Setting the Restaurant Scene Ablaze in Lodha Palava City

**“**I believe passion is only powerful when paired with purpose—and Nine Bees & Co. is the result of that belief.”

In a freewheeling chat with *Entrepreneurs Today*, we look at the journey of Souvik Biswas, the founder of Nine Bees & Co. and a multi-cuisine restaurateur. Based in Lodha Palava City, Dombivli East, Nine Bees & Co. was founded in 2022 with a vision of building a space where 'taste, affordability and hospitality meet.' Souvik's decision to build Nine Bees & Co. came a decade after working in the corporate world, out of the desire to pursue his own passion for food, travel and exploring regional cuisines. Leaving a stable and comfortable job has not been an easy decision and it took a leap of faith that his vision would work.

Delving deeper into the inspiration, Souvik reveals, *“Travel taught me cultural appreciation and the importance of flavours rooted in tradition. Sports instilled in me discipline, resilience and the spirit of teamwork. And food, of course, has always been my creative outlet and source of joy.”*

With Nine Bees & Co., Souvik has managed to build a brand and bring all the elements of authentic experiences, consistent performance and a sense of community together.

## Unlike Any Other

Some aspects that set Nine Bees & Co. apart are its wide-ranging menu spanning across Indian, Chinese, Tandoori, Oriental, Continental and Biryani specialties, fried ice creams, boba shakes and the signature English breakfast. With a vision to be a lifestyle-driven food brand with a café-like ambiance that appeals to Gen Z, Nine Bees & Co. even delivers till 4 AM to serve the young night owls. Souvik further adds, *“What truly differentiates us is our deep understanding of our audience and our ability to adapt to their needs. Whether it's introducing the lowest-priced momos in the area with complimentary soup, launching a Work-from-Resto model for professionals, or curating cosy candlelight dinners for couples. Our offerings are designed to create value and memorable experiences.”*

## Navigating Challenges

There have been numerous challenges along the way as Souvik was bootstrapping his venture. Similar to many first-generation entrepreneurs, he had to work with limited resources and capital.

There was also an added financial burden due to the involvement of a former business partner. Soon after, Souvik lost his mother in 2024, which impacted him mentally and put a certain amount of financial strain on him. However, he understands that entrepreneurship is not always an upward trajectory. Souvik expresses, *“Challenges are inevitable, but your mindset defines your outcomes. Build with purpose, don't compromise on quality and never underestimate the power of a loyal team. To budding entrepreneurs — start small, stay consistent and let your passion be louder than your fears. The world rewards those who dare to dream and work relentlessly for it.”*

He also acknowledges, *“What helped me push through was a combination of strategic planning, sheer resilience and an unshakable belief in the brand. I am deeply thankful to my family and friends for constantly encouraging me to pursue my dreams. I focused on optimising operations, strengthening customer relationships and building a loyal team. These efforts allowed us to not only sustain the business but also evolve it into a growing local brand known for value, innovation and consistency.”*



## Celebrating Feats

Since the launch of Nine Bees & Co., the venture has made its name as a premier dining destination. Some of the offers, like the 'Work-from Restro,' have opened the restaurant to over 300 professionals who work remotely every month. Even the signature English breakfast makes up almost 15% of their morning revenue.

By deciding to deliver late at night until 4 AM, Nine Bees & Co. has made a lucrative business for itself by delivering to those who work night shifts or just stay up late, which has also increased their revenue by 25% on weekdays.

Today, 40% of their customers are returning clients, which speaks volumes of the work Souvik and his team are doing.



## Future Looks Bright

Looking ahead, Nine Bees & Co. is working on introducing children's culinary workshops and meal subscription services to broaden the revenue streams. Souvik also wants to expand his venture in other metropolitan cities, airports and shopping malls. He further adds,

*“I want to make our tagline, 'The Don of Flavours,' a nationally recognised brand. We're working on building a strong operational model, seeking funding and strengthening our team. Our next steps include turning the venture into a private limited company and enhancing our brand presence through strategic collaborations and high-impact campaigns.”* 

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**SHAAN PURI**

Category: Startup and Digital Innovation

**40**  
UNDER  
**40**

# Curiosity Doesn't Kill the Cat It Makes you Millions

**“**What you work on is far more important than how hard you work.”

A serial entrepreneur, investor and co-host of the widely popular 'My First Million' podcast, Shaan Puri has come to be well-known for his quirky insights about businesses, startups and digital influence. The sharp, no-nonsense thinker, or the 'idea dealer,' as he likes to call himself, first began his career by founding a sushi restaurant. This was before he finally moved to the tech sector.

In 2019, he sold one of his companies, Bebo, a startup studio, to Twitch. Today, he is a sought-after figure in the startup community because of his skills in identifying market gaps and scaling businesses.

At the moment, he is building multiple \$1 million businesses through his latest initiative, also known as “All Access Pass.” The initiative is some sort of an experiment that documents him building the businesses in real time.

## What makes a business a success?

While the majority of entrepreneurs believe it's the product and service that makes or breaks a business, Shaan believes it's actually curiosity that serves as a fundamental driver of success. He also holds the opinion that the most lucrative businesses can be found in the overlooked niches.

Shaan also believes that a lot of the entrepreneurs often stray from the garden path by prioritising things that don't move the needle. Instead, they need to shift their focus to something that's lucrative. To do that, you have to focus on the main thing. As he says,

“There's one problem with 'over thinkers'. They are never over thinking about the right thing.”

## Surrounding yourself with the right people.

There is a lot of power in being surrounded by the right people—high-caliber individuals. Back when he was in the initial phase of building his own venture, he created numerous mastermind groups and held networking dinners, which have positioned him today as one of the top entrepreneurs. Often, he is even known as the 'glue guy,' who brings important people together.



Shaan's podcast, 'My First Million,' has reached millions of listeners due to its success in sharing valuable insights about entrepreneurship. He is highly active on the X platform (formerly Twitter), which has helped him in reaching even more people and has made him a resourceful mentor from whom entrepreneurs often seek advice and practical insights about business.

For entrepreneurs to take their game up a notch, there are 3 shifts that needed to succeed. He explains,

“3 shifts: Find what feels like play to you, and work for others. Find a way to hang out with people who either have what you want or are chasing it as hard as you. Take a simple strategy and turn up the intensity.”

He also believes that those who think that following what the crowd does is the easiest way out cannot be more wrong. He asserts,

“Most people do what 'most people' do. This is a huge mistake. In the US, 50% of marriages end in divorce or separation. 60%+ of the population is obese or overweight. 70% of people have less than \$1k in savings. What most people are doing isn't working.” **📌**

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**DEEPAK CHAHAR**

Category: Sports

**40**  
UNDER  
**40**

# The Story of Indian Cricketer **Deepak Chahar**

“ I don't care who is playing or who is not playing; my motive is to get fully fit and perform with the ball and bat 100 percent. If I do that, I will get my chances.”

Deepak Chahar is a right-handed batsman and bowler who plays for Chennai Super Kings for the Indian cricket team. He is also the first male cricketer in India who took a hat-trick in a T20I match and was recognised with the T20I Performance of the Year 2019. It was during the Ranji Trophy Debut that Deepak Chahar first rose to prominence, after taking 8 wickets for 10 runs.

Married to Jaya Bhardwaj, he first met his wife in an IPL match and decided to get married in Agra, his hometown.

Deepak's initial journey as a cricketer was not a cakewalk, and he succumbed to several injuries and fitness issues. Eventually, he was snubbed by Greg Chappell, then director of the Rajasthan Cricket Academy, as a young fast bowler.

Today, Deepak is known for his swing and how he picks wickets, especially in the powerplay overs. In terms of his educational background, he completed his schooling at D. Goenka Public School in Agra, where he even used to train. It was Deepak's father, Lokendrasingh, who first instilled the love for cricket as a way of making him more disciplined.

## Some of Deepak's Wins

Apart from being the first Indian male cricketer to take a hat-trick in T20 International, some of Deepak Chahar's other accomplishments include holding the record for the best bowling figures in T20Is and taking 6 wickets for 7 runs against Bangladesh in 2019. He was also given the T20I Performance of the Year award by the International Cricket Council (ICC) in 2020. Other wins include being a part of the Indian squad that won the 2018 Asia Cup.

Deepak was also the lead bowler in Rising Pune Supergiant before he joined Chennai Super Kings (CSK). In the 2025 IPL season, he was picked by the Mumbai Indians (MI).



## Entrepreneurship

Apart from cricket, Deepak is also into entrepreneurship and co-founded 2 ventures with his wife, Jaya, which focus on fantasy cricket and cricketing equipment. The Trade Fantasy Game, under JCDC, has a unique six-player format, which is not very conventional in the industry, having a format of 11. The app also focuses a lot on bringing in more innovative game features. Launched in 2023, TFG has over 30,000 players on a daily basis. By the IPL season, they look forward to crossing 3 lakh players.

With a plan to build a complete sports brand, Deepak is also the founder of D-NINE, established under LCDC Athletics Pvt. Ltd., that focuses on providing good quality cricket equipment, shoes and health supplements at affordable rates. In 2024, within six months, D-NINE had sales of 1.2 crore and partnerships with 30 distributors. So far, the two ventures have been doing quite well, and they are currently not looking for any external investments. [E](#)

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