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PARTY & BEAUTY

The Telegraph



PARTY

A PARTY THAT RAN 48 HOURS STRAIGHT! THAT WAS APEEJAY SURRENDRA CELEBRATING 100 YEARS IN HYDERABAD. t2 WAS THERE

Hedonistic Hyderabad

Handing out flutes of champagne and strings of gleaming pearls, the Pauls welcomed their guests graciously, playing the perfect hosts. Breakfast became brunch became lunch. Siesta and shopping later, it was time for cocktails and dinner. The theme: jewel colours. Ruby red, emerald green, coral, topaz, sapphire.... Spotted: Malini Ramani, Tarun Tahilliani, Ritu Kumar, Subodh Gupta, Hyderabadis Sriya Saran and Pinky Reddy. Familiar faces from Calcutta included Sanjiv Goenka, Harsh Neotia, Utsav Parekh, Arjun & Jessima Kumar, Raj Mahtani, Lovey, Shantu Dudeja, Ratul Sood... **SHRADHA AGARWAL** lived it up!



Priya and Priti Paul

(Top) Malini Ramani, Sriya Saran, Pinky Reddy, Sanjiv Goenka and Harsh Neotia; (below) Ramona Narang Rodeffa with Karan Paul

DAY 2

11.00 AM



01.00 PM



The White Mughals tour was initially slated for 3.30pm on April 2 but was brought forward in the day so that we could wind up by the time of the loss. "We will start with a tour of the Paiga tombs. Then we will go to the former Residency, now Osmania University Women's College, where William Dalrymple will join us for a talk." William Dalrymple! First reaction: Wow. Quick second reaction: Damn. I haven't read anything by him. In fact just last week a colleague told me that a chick lit fan like me shouldn't even bother. Time for cheat sheet. My car mates are well read. Phew! One of them is a member of a book club back in Colombo (She wore a Sri Lankan tee).

The Paiga tombs were beautiful. Of course they were jewel-encrusted (though now no more). Everything in Hyderabad is pretty bejewelled. The Residency was another experience altogether. It's in a shambles but speaks to you nevertheless.

William arrived straight from the airport. Beginning with the love story of British Resident James Achilles Kirkpatrick and Nawab's grandniece Khair-un-Nissa, he spoke about his book, its implications and modern-day context. When he read the letter written by Kitty Kirkpatrick to her grandmother, it was difficult to fight back tears. We caught up with him soon after.

Question: Your books are hard to read, I have been recommended to stay away. Will non-serious readers be able to read *White Mughals*?

Answer: (Smiles) I think it's best to start with *City of Djinns*. *White Mughals* is a bit slow. Rush through the first 100 pages and get straight into the love story. You will be fine.

Question: Really?

Answer: Yes! The sex is on page 106! (LOL)

And with that it was time to get the book signed. And pose for a picture!

09.00 PM

Bickram Ghosh presents a Rhythmscape performance



10.00 PM



Rita Banerjee rocks it with retro

10.30 PM



Funnyman Papa CJ had everyone including Mani Shankar Aiyar in splits

POST-11 PM



Qawwali in the courtyard followed by a second round of Bickram and his boys before the party carried on till sunrise!



PARTY

02.00PM



The sun was shining. The kids looked happily entertained. Around clowns, jugglers and balloons. The ladies looked glam. The staples: sunny shifts or bohemian maxis, supersized shades and lip gloss. The men wore their summer day uniform — white linen pants or shorts with bright tees. The food was fantastic, the spread was spreading with each progressive meal. Lobsters and oysters, sushi and sashimi, Kanjeevaram idlis and, of course, Hyderabadi biryani... I asked executive chef Mandear Sukhtankar how we managed to feed so many people. His reply: "Madam feeding is not the problem. Ask me how I managed to please so many people!"

10.50PM



Yes we all watched how India won the match. But did you watch it with artist duo Subodh Gupta and Bharti Kher, writer William Dalrymple and fashion guru Manish Arora? Ha, I did! The last 10 minutes were most fun. The winning six done, the Sachin-on-shoulder victory lap began and William's three words said it all: "And it's done!"

11.05PM



Match over, the party had just begun. The theme of the night was glamorous disco. Shiny disco balls were strewn all over. And then a never-seen-before sea of sequins descended — bling in its most beautiful avatar.

04.00PM

Stalking someone is not fun. Especially if your target is on a holiday and you, too, are on a working holiday! Short of singing *Every Breath You Take, Every Move You Make*, I followed **ROHIT BAL** around lunch all day. Thank god he had decided to don neon green, making him tough to lose. Finally, when I got him at 4pm, the wait was worth it. (And I didn't even have to postpone pearl shopping!)

You are designing a suite for The Park...

Yes. Priya (Paul) is a very dear friend and I love her. When she asked me (to design the suite), I didn't even think twice about it. It was an immediate affirmative. It's a beautiful space, magnificent and large. She knew the look she wanted. It was a contemporary version of decadent India. So whatever I do has to have that Indianness to it. I love that OTT feel. There'll be some craftwork — whether from Rajasthan or Kashmir. When you walk into the room, you shouldn't be able to tell the place — it could be India, Egypt or Morocco... you have to keep wondering where you are. The intelligent will understand that it is a combination of many places. It is a melting pot, a confluence... it has to represent what Priya wants for her hotel. Like the rest of the hotel, it will be global but with an Indian soul.

You are skipping the Wills Lifestyle India Fashion Week this season...

I have been doing it since the beginning and have only missed the last two seasons. I think fashion weeks are best left to the youngsters, the Gen Next as we call them. I can always do shows on my own. I anyway make a new collection every season for my stores. The business I get is all from my stores. Fashion week is best for the young designer who wants to focus on international buyers and the European market. I have identified my market. I want to be in India and nowhere else. I want to do shows in my space. I can't be bothered about doing shows where I am told which logos have to be put on the stage!

We know your lifestyle has changed after the health scare. Have you changed as a designer too?

I can't ever change as a designer. My style sensibility is the same. It is rooted within me. My work is an extension of who I am; it's everything that I stand for. That includes my value system, my aesthetics and my passion. As a designer, the only thing that has changed is that I am more prolific and focused. I have more energy and time. As I always say, I am lucky to be born twice in one lifetime. Everything is bigger, brighter and shinier! And yes, my relationships are more cherished. People I loved, I now love even more. People I hated, I have forgotten how to hate.

And finally, what makes you 'you'?

Just the fact that I am myself. I don't need to be anyone else, I am happy with who I am. There is no need to be false. What you see is what you get. Not just today, but for the last 22 years.



PARTY

11.20 PM



Three designers, each a Delhi doyen, took centre stage minutes after the match. The girls looked gorgeous. Tarun Tahiliani's deliciously dreamy drapes, Manish Arora's call-it-what-you-like-but-you-will-never-get-it-right creations and Rohit Bal's breezy beauties. A fashion night that made 'fantastic' and 'fabulous' — the fash frat's favourite words — sound so feeble.



MIDNIGHT



Midnight moments belonged to Jamaican-American actress and singer Grace Jones. She rocked the makeshift stage at Aqua in a black bodysuit, quickly changing her looks with wigs and capes. The party went berserk as she sang *Strange*. Then the Bond bad girl (think *A View To A Kill*) turned around to shake her stuff, and there was no stopping her!

THREE REASONS TO FALL IN LOVE WITH THE PARK @ HYDERABAD



THE DESIGN DETAIL

The property is a design delight. The Park logo finds place as a *jaali* on the exterior and when lit up the effect is magical. Inside the country's first green hotel (environment-friendly) antique Indian dome-like structures hobnob with hip chandeliers. Housing 270 rooms, each floor split as per the jewel tones they imbibe (ruby, coral, emerald, peridot and sapphire), most of these overlook the vastness of Hussain Sagar Lake. The design details don't cease to mesmerise. Funky yet ethnic, contemporary yet so craft-intensive. And so innovative! (Aqua's pool floor actually doubles as the ceiling for their club Kismet.) The Pauls have got designers Rohit Bal, Tarun Tahiliani, Manish Arora, textile designer Jean Francois Lesage and artists Subodh Gupta and Bharti Kher to do a suite each. Carbon (bar), Sicca Bar (cigar lounge), Kismet (club), Verandah (restaurant)... each of their outlets is something else.



AISH: THE RESTAURANT

Designed by Tarun Tahiliani, Aish transports you to an era gone by. The look is signature Tarun — beige, luxurious and decadent. The floor is marble inlaid with mother-of-pearl, as if someone has scattered flowers on the floor. Swarovski lights glitter with the sparkle of Golconda diamonds. Crushed crystal has been encased in sheets of glass to form partitions. Raja Deen Dayal's original photographs are mounted on the walls. Antique chandeliers hang from the ceiling.

And then there's the food. The signature restaurant serves Hyderabadi (read Nizami) and Andhra (read Telugu) cuisines. The recipes come straight from the roots — Nawab families to local roadside restaurants. Must-try? Biryanis of course. Both Kachcha Gosht and Sufiana Pulao.



AURA: THE SPA

No Buddha statue here, you are greeted by a shiny silver sculpture and shinier, more silvery cushions. Their packages are inspired by the local culture, be it The Great Mughal, Nawabi Experience or Dayar-e-isque. The 'amethyst' steam room boasts of chromotherapy and very much like a discotheque changes colour every few seconds. Inside the treatment room, everything is perfect — from the temperature to the height of the pillow.