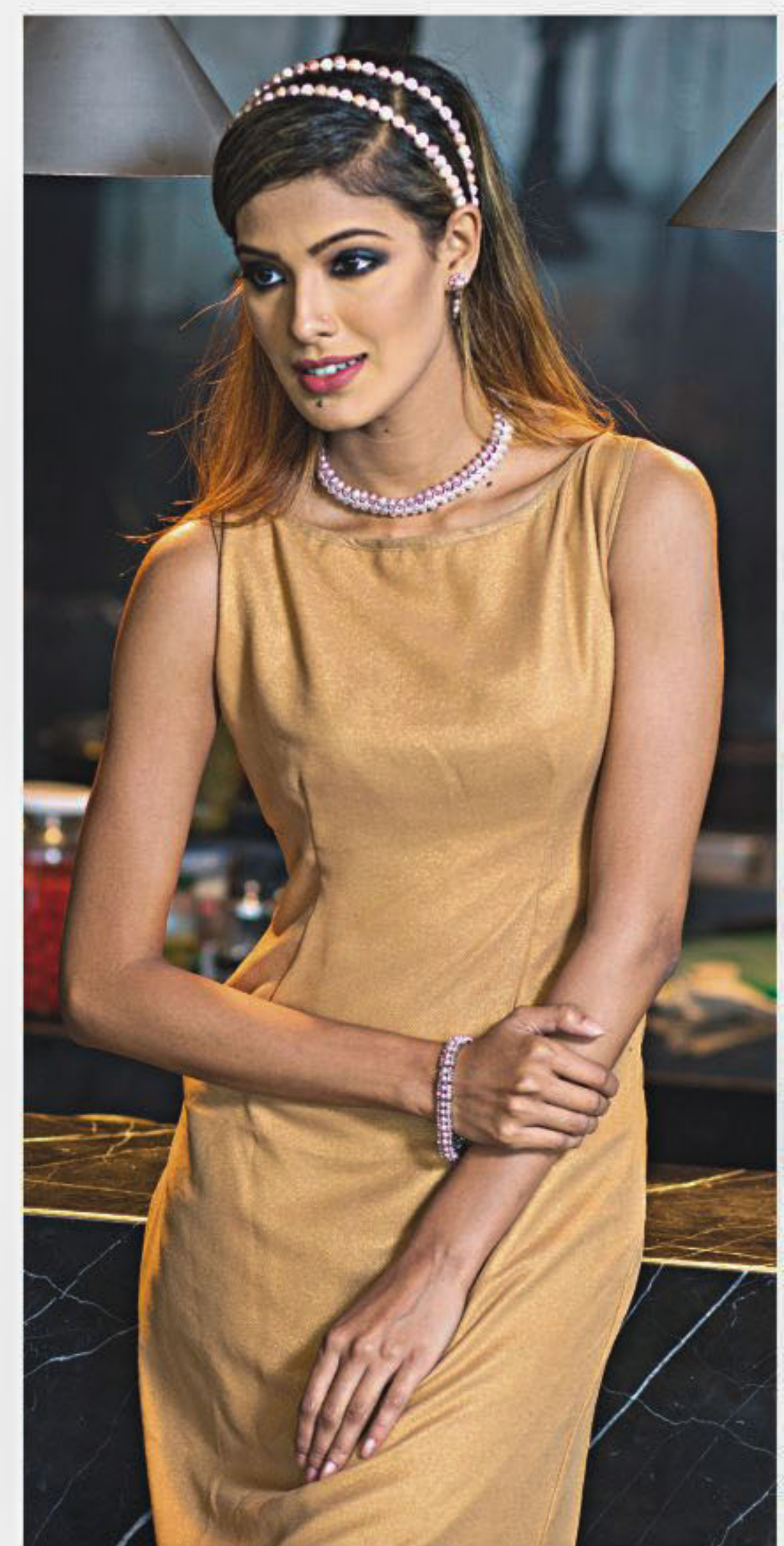


A PEARL for every occasion



The most basic, yet classic essential item associated with pearls is the single strand of small to medium pearls, and their companions-- the stud pearl earrings. If the occasion calls for a bit more glamour, increase the strands to three, and add drop earrings to it. For example, a work meeting calls for a single strand hugging the base of your neck, but the more elaborate version, in many layers or a sautoir, is suitable for an evening with the girls. Audrey Hepburn in *Breakfast at Tiffany's* black dress is not remembered just for being black!



On days we want a bit "more" than just studs, earrings can be danglers, pearl studded hoops or even chandeliers. A very simple yet fun design is the one where pearl earrings resemble a bunch of grapes—a cluster of elegant whimsy.

Modern designs in abstract styles are a sure-fire way to add the right dose of oomph to any outfit. Try pairing a pile of longer strings against dresses made in solid colours and structured silhouettes. For more flowy dresses, chokers can do the trick, and a cold shoulder or a strapless dress can be paired well with layered pearl strands.

A Bengali traditional wedding trousseau remained incomplete without the pearl choker, with one or three gold pendants, and often came as a set with earrings and bracelet, to perfectly pair with a sublime jamdani. And the "mantasha," an elaborate cuff with a wide belt of pearls, was also a permanent crowd favourite for long—most often worn with heavy katan silk saris. Soft silks and pearls are a dream combination, the jewels natural luster perfectly complimenting the material's soft understated sheen.

A delicate strand of pearls as a bracelet is perfect for everyday use, whereas a large one woven from asymmetric pearls to make a charming statement piece. Chiffon saris and pearl layers are a chic combination endorsed and made eternal by one of the earliest fashion icons of the Indian Sub-continent—Gayatri Devi of Jaipur.

Also, modern technology has allowed us the boon of having the

option of pearls dyed in many a hue. So, apart from the naturally occurring cream, off-white, pink and black, now there is a large array of shades to choose from—metallic golds and silvers to royal blues, deepest purples, tangy oranges and verdant greens—name it and the shade is probably available. Which means, no matter what colour spectrum you pick for your special occasions, a suitable shade in pearls can be found.

Another very interesting use of pearls, particularly suitable for dressier occasions, is to weave pearls into the braid or insert them into achic understated bun. Pearl studded hairpins can also be used similarly, to add some dazzle to a Bengali belle's precious mane.

With fans as varied in taste as Grace Kelly and Lauren Bacall, to modern sirens like Rihanna and Rita Ora, and Vidya Balan and Sonam Kapoor nearer to the home turf, pearls seem to really be a fashionista's best friend, regardless of sartorial preferences.

So there, no matter what the occasion or outfit that faces you, this jewel of the ages remains open to experimentation and on trend as ever.

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