

How about a slim-fit kanjeevaram?

The heavy, hand-woven silk *saris* from Kanchipuram are getting a contemporary and easy-to-wear makeover, writes Latha Srinivasan



In vogue now are trendy colours like hot pink, bright yellow and fire engine red

Not long ago, Vidya Balan was dubbed one of India's worst dressed celebrities. And then she switched over to the six-yard drape. Today, her kanjeevaram *saris* are celebrated as much as her acting talent. With designers like Sabyasachi and Gaurang Shah turning their attention to the kanjeevaram, this traditional and timeless weave, which would once be pulled out only during weddings, is getting a contemporary twist in designs, colours and textures.

The kanjeevaram has evolved into a modern-day must-have for the young and trendy, with its myriad designs, enticing colours and innovative concepts. Traditional motifs like the temple design (since it originated in the temple town of Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu), peacock, parrot, dots, paisley and elephants have always been popular. But now you also find geometrical and asymmetrical designs, large motifs, bigger borders and lighter, easy-to-wear *saris*. "An interesting innovation is the way the *pallu*, body and the border are woven," says Gaurang. "They are woven

independent of each other and then interlinked." For his Ardhagini collection, Gaurang blended *kalamkari* with the kanjeevarams and also integrated them with *uparas* to create a soft and sensual feel.

Retailers too have started to reinvent the *pattu sari*. Jeyasree Ravi, who hails from the Nalli Chetty family in Chennai, set up Palam Silks to make silk *saris* youth-friendly and an everyday wear. Her first step was to introduce lightweight *saris* woven out of pure silk and *zari*. She also moved away from the traditional *araku* (red), blues and greens and brought in trendy colours like hot pink, bright yellow and fire engine red.

Beyond mango *buttas* (dots), newer patterns and abstract designs started occupying centre stage in her kanjeevarams. Ravi went on to introduce "concept *saris*" like tattoo *saris* as well as slim-fit and 'UltraLite' silks. In the films *Chennai Express* and *Happy New Year*, she designed some beautiful drapes for Deepika Padukone.

Along with the kanjeevaram *saris* have evolved the blouses to go with them. Plain blouses are passé. Those embellished with *dori*, *zardozi*, crystals and *kundan* in fabrics like velvet and brocade are in. Miss World 2008 run-

ner-up Parvathy Omanakuttan, who swears by her mother's kanjeevarams, says, "Today, if I am confused about what to wear for an Indian function, I just pick up one of my mother's *saris* and team it with a sexy blouse. Add to that a simple neckpiece and earrings, and it's a perfect outfit."

Stylist Neeraja Kona, who works with leading stars from the South like Samantha, likes to pair these *saris* with antique gold jewellery and jasmine flowers. "Samantha too is a big fan of kanjeevarams and loves to experiment with modern *zari* borders and bright colours," says Kona.

The beauty of the kanjeevaram is that it hides the flaws and adds to the grace, style and class of the wearer.

The December music season in Chennai is the ideal time to experience the wide variety that exists in kanjeevarams. Renowned Carnatic vocalist M S Subbulakshmi used to wear a particular shade of blue that came to be called "MS Blue". Singers today like Aruna Sairam go for trendy, swarovski-studded kanjeevarams. And Sudha Raghunathan, who wears only kanjeevarams for her concerts, is rumoured to never repeat a *pattu sari*.

Painstakingly woven, these silk drapes understandably come for a price. The range begins from ₹3,500 and can go up to ₹1 lakh or even more — depending on the intricacy of the work on the *sari*.

Infra sector hit by roadblocks

GIRJA SHANKAR KAURA

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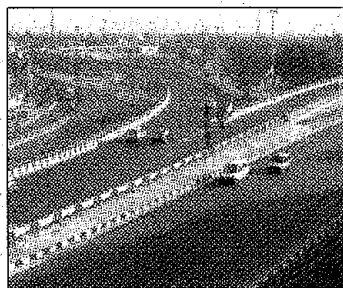
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The infrastructure sector continues to be clogged by bottlenecks, which has also resulted in it accounting for one of the highest stressed advances by public sector banks (PSBs), says the Economic Survey. However, it adds that a slew of steps are on fast track to help it grow.

"Infrastructure, iron and steel, textiles, mining (including coal) and aviation, hold 54% of total stressed advances of PSBs as on June 2014," it said adding the exposure of PSBs to infrastructure stood at 17.5% of their gross advances and was significantly higher than private sector and foreign banks.

It said unfavourable market conditions and delayed investments in the past few years resulted in an "alarmingly high rate" of increase in stalled projects which, as of December-end, stood at a staggering Rs 8.8 lakh crore.

Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) framework in infrastructure sector needs restructuring to lift finan-



Bad loans

- Infrastructure sector accounts for the highest stressed advances by public sector banks at 54%
- Value of stalled projects as of December-2014 stood at a staggering Rs 8.8 lakh cr
- PPP framework needs restructuring to lift financial stress and to revive the interest of private sector in infra sector

cial stress burdening the projects and to revive the interest of the private sector, the Survey said.

"In infrastructure, the focus has been on resolving long-pending issues such as pricing of gas, establishing processes and procedures for transparent auction of coal and minerals, and improving power generation and distribution," it said.

दिल्ली पुलिस के जवान पहनेंगे खादी

नई दिल्ली | दिल्ली पुलिस के जवान अब खादी के कपड़े से बनी वर्दी पहनेंगे। खादी को बढ़ावा देने के लिए पुलिस मुख्यालय में आयोजित एक समारोह के दौरान पुलिस आयुक्त बीएस बस्सी ने दिल्ली पुलिस के अधिकारियों एवं जवानों को वर्दी के लिए खादी का कपड़ा वितरित किया। इस दौरान पुलिस मुख्यालय में खादी ग्राम उद्योग के संयुक्त सचिव अनिल कुमार भी मौजूद थे। पुलिस आयुक्त ने कहा कि अभी तक दिल्ली पुलिस के जवान और अधिकारी टेरीकॉटन कपड़े से बनी वर्दी पहनते थे। यह कपड़ा न ही ईको फ्रेंडली है और न ही पुलिस कर्मियों के लिए सुविधाजनक है। इस कपड़े से बनी वर्दी को गर्मी के मौसम में पहनने के बाद पुलिस कर्मियों को असुविधा होती थी। अब खादी ग्रामोद्योग द्वारा तैयार किए गए विशेष कपड़े खादी पॉली वस्त्र का इस्तेमाल पुलिस की वर्दी के लिए किया जाएगा। इससे पुलिस कर्मियों को न केवल सुविधा होगी बल्कि खादी ग्रामोद्योग को बढ़ावा मिल सकेगा।