

ART & CULTURE

Looking to go glam on FEB. 14?

Shahnaz Husain

Finally, it is the time of the year when everything around you seems lovely and beautiful. It's valentine's day. One of the most expressive days for all the couples out there.

For couples in love and hopeful singles, February is the Paris of all months. It's a time when we share precious moments with people we love.

It's a day to express love to the most important people in your life that can make anyone blush with delight-starting with yourself.

Valentine's Day is the perfect opportunity for you to bond and reconnect with your partner, girlfriend, boyfriend, husband, or wife.

Valentine's Day isn't just for those in a romantic relationship. And even if you are celebrating with a special someone, prioritizing yourself can make for an even better experience with your partner. After all, you can't fully love someone else until you love yourself first.

If you live apart, a surprise gift might be the perfect way to share the love this year. Not sure what to buy? Keep it classic - paintings, art objects and flowers like roses will always be well-received and create a sense of occasion. Twinned with a scented candle, Valentine's Day will be truly wrapped up.

Take advantage of sweater weather and escape into the wilderness, where you can relax by the fire and enjoy some

based one. Add a drop of water for a lighter coverage. Before applying foundation, apply astringent lotion if your skin is oily, or moisturizing lotion for dry skin. Wait for a few minutes to allow the skin to absorb it. Next, use concealer to cover up pimples and scars, if any. Or, use two shades of foundation. One shade should be as close to your skin colour as possible. The other should be a shade lighter if the blemishes are dark. Take a little light coloured foundation and apply it directly on the pimple or pimple scar. Avoid rubbing or smearing. Pat it into the skin. Then apply your normal foundation on the face and using a moist sponge, spread it evenly, going outwards. Remember the neck too. Blending is important to achieve a smooth finish then apply tinted loose powder on top to "set" the foundation. Or, use compact powder.

Blusher comes next, or you can apply it at the end. Use powder blusher. Pink or peach blusher would suit most skin tones. Apply on the cheekbones and slightly below it. Use your finger tips to dot the area with blusher. Then, blend with the brush, outwards and slightly upwards. Apply highlighter on the cheekbones. Highlighters should not be white. Choose from ivory or pale pink. Blend well.

For the eyes, use a brown eye shadow on the eyelids. Use the same brown shadow under the lower lashes, instead of eyeliner or kajal. Take a darker brown eye shadow and apply it on the upper lid, close to the upper lashes. The entire effect will be natural. If you want to line the eyes, use an eye pencil. Give your eyes a light touch of mascara. Make sure the lashes do not stick together. Brush them with an eyelash comb.

Wear a sun block for outdoor events during the day, this acts as a shield and also works as a good under base for your foundation accelerating its performance. Take proper sleep for at least eight hours during night. Lack of sleep will show on your face no matter how well you fashion your appearance. Put a drop or two of lavender oil on your pillowcase and try to relax. Sandalwood and Clary Sage are other good options.

For the night and for a more dramatic effect, use a dark brown, or dark grey eye shadow on the eyelids close to the lashes and stroke it upwards and outwards. For the smoky eyed look, line the eyes with eyeliner close to the lashes and then smudge the eyeliner slightly with a sponge tipped applicator. It should not be a harsh line.

Who ever heard of a Valentine's Day date ending without a goodnight kiss? Go with a soft pink or berry hue that are no more than two shades darker than your natural lip color is a good way to keep your lips colored without going overboard.

Exfoliate your lips the night before date night with a gentle lip scrub to remove dead skin cells to soften your pucker and improve the look and application of your date night lipstick. For the buttery soft and smooth lips, plain gloss can be enough for the day, or add a touch of gloss over light pink or mauve lipstick. Coloured gloss is also available. Avoid using lip liners and just brush the lips with lipstick, going for shades of pink, from pale pink, to rose or tawny pink. At night, go for rose, coral or bronze, or just stick to pink. Just don't forget to hydrate your lips with your favorite lip balm, salve, or conditioner after exfoliating.

Wear a light flowery or lemony fragrance, nothing too overpowering. Always be kind and confident. I think these two traits together make someone beautiful.

As the last step, touch up your nails, smooth your strands, and spritz on some perfume. You're ready to go!

(The author is a beauty expert)



VALENTINE DAY SPECIAL

hot chocolate. Take a scenic hike together and enjoy all the beautiful sights and the fresh air - it's a great way to bond while getting some much-needed time to unplug, too.

If you've got a new boyfriend, a hot date, or a tried-and-true love, Valentine's day gives you the perfect excuse to pamper yourself to look romantic, sweet, presentable, attractive with flawless looking radiant skin with youthful glow.

Water based moisture is key for glowing skin. Moisturizers provide a good base before applying any makeup. Moisturizers which are formulated with shea butter, dimethicone, ceramides, hyaluronic acid and aloe vera water help provide long-lasting hydration. Hydrate and nourish your skin every night before sleeping.

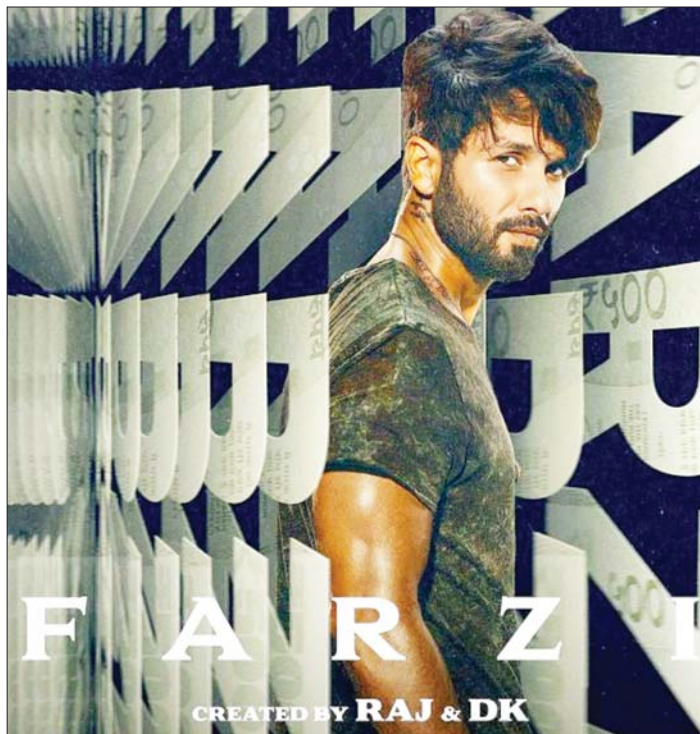
If your skin is clear, leave out foundation during the day. Use baby powder, or compact power. Pay more attention to the oily areas of the face, like nose, forehead and chin. Press the powder all over the face and neck, with a slightly damp sponge. This helps it to set and last longer.

If you want to use foundation at night, choose a water-

BOLLYWOOD-BUZZ

A fun and thrilling series

Raj Nidimoru, Krishna DK, Sita R Menon and Suman Kumar's story is superb and has all the trappings of a fun entertainer. Raj Nidimoru, Krishna DK, Sita R Menon and Suman Kumar's screenplay is entertaining and yet simple to comprehend. The series is peppered with several fun and thrilling scenes that keep the interest going. However, the pace is a problem and a few plot points are difficult to digest. Hussain Dalal's dialogues (additional dialogues by Raghav Dutt) are one of the best parts of the show. The dialogues between Michael and the finance minister, especially, are too funny. Also, Sunny's dialogue on middle-class and loans is hard-hitting yet hilarious and can go viral.



Raj Nidimoru and Krishna DK's direction, as always, is effective. Simplicity is their biggest strength. Though the series speaks about fake currency, cross-border terrorism, covert operations etc. it never gets heavy or confusing. At the same time, they don't attempt to spoon-feed the audience as well. For instance, one has to see how they have explained the art of making the perfect fake note, to the extent that it might inspire people to try it at home! Moreover, they have a certain kind of sense of humour that works big time with the audience. That kind of fun is very much present here and adds to the overall entertainment quotient.

On the flipside, the show also has its share of shortcomings. Raj-DK's last outing was THE FAMILY MAN, which has set a benchmark. Its success has also increased the expectations for FARZI. In that regard, FARZI doesn't reach the level of the Manoj Bajpayee-starrer. The series, at times, moves at a snail's pace. Instead of eight episodes, ideally it should have been 6 episodes long at the most for a better impact. Secondly, there are loopholes in the narrative. The track of Madhav suffering from a brain condition is weak. It's bewildering that Sunny didn't immediately consult a doctor when he found out that Madhav had started forgetting things. Madhav, despite being righteous, doesn't inform the cops when he learns about Sunny's fake currency business. Also, Madhav never remembers that he had caught Sunny red-handed. Maybe, this is a part of the condition but it is never properly explained to the viewers. He also never

tries to find out how Sunny became so rich all of a sudden. The same applies to Sunny and Megha's track. Megha hardly gets suspicious despite Sunny being unavailable for days on end and it's unconvincing. The finale, lastly, is a bit underwhelming, especially with regards to Michael's track.

FARZI begins on an intriguing note. Sunny's introduction is engaging, especially the circumstances that compel him to take up the illegal currency printing route. The quirky humour scenes work big time, be it a young Sunny cutting bun for his birthday, Michael taking his son out a treat (which ends in a disaster), Sunny and Firoz getting almost caught for using fake note at a wine shop, Sunny, Firoz and the gang stealing paper etc. However, the best is reserved for the scenes of Michael and the minister, particularly when the former drunk-dials the latter. Had this been a film scene, it would have led to a frenzy in cinemas. Three scenes that stand out for being nail-biting are Megha inspecting the printing press, madness in Bangladesh and the ship sequence. The scene where Sunny and Megha are listening to the same phone conversation, without being aware of it, is smart. On the other hand, the track of Sunny and Madhav, though touching, doesn't work as intended as the base is not strong. Some scenes also seem unwanted and needlessly drag the show.

Speaking of performances, Shahid Kapoor looks dashing and as expected, delivers a splendid performance. He also shines in the action scenes. Vijay Sethupathi is outstanding and rocks the show with his deadpan expression and sense of humour. In the scenes with his in-laws, he also moves viewers. FARZI also is a good way to introduce him to the Hindi audience before his big Bollywood breaks, especially the Shah Rukh Khan-starrer JAWAN. Raashii Khanna puts up yet another confident show after RUDRA: EDGE OF DARKNESS [2022]. Bhuvan Arora leaves a huge mark. Zakir Hussain brings the house down and the show goes on a different level in his scenes. Kay Kay Menon is dependable as always and two scenes where he stands out are his entry sequence in the Nepal hotel room and when he tells Sunny to come on board. Amol Palekar is lovely, though his track is weak. Regina Cassandra (Rekha) is superb as Michael's wife. Chittaranjan Giri (Yasir Chacha) has an important part and does well. Chittaranjan Tripathy (Lawyer), Anna Ador (Svetlana) and Ajay Jadhav (Inspector Shinde) are damn good and are memorable despite limited screen time. Vijayakumar (Jitu Kaka) gets limited scope. Kubbra Sait (Saira) is fair but doesn't have much to do and hopefully, will have a meatier role in the next season. Saqib Ayub is damn good and raises laughs. Others who do a fair job are Shiv Dev Singh, Happy Ranajit, Suyash Zunjurke, Lokesh Mittal, Kavya Praveen Thapar, Jaswant Dalal (Shekhar; Michael's associate), Saurav Chakrabarti (Jamal; Mansoor's henchman), Vivek Madaan (Arjun Nayyar; Rekha's friend), Nilesh Divekar (Bilal), Divyam Shukla (Vyom), Padma Damodaran (Journalist Kamala Thakker), Govind Pandey (MLA Kesari Doshi) and Jehangir Karkaria (Kersi Dubash). Finally, Uday Mahesh (Chellam Sir) is a big surprise and will surely put a smile on the viewers' faces.

On the whole, FARZI is a fun and thrilling series with the performances of Shahid Kapoor and Vijay Sethupathi being the icing on the cake. However, the impact is affected due to the long length and certain loopholes in the script and hence, it doesn't reach the level of Raj-DK's previous outing, THE FAMILY MAN.

Courtesy : <https://www.bollywoodhungama.com>

BUSINESS

Cricket bat industry in Kashmir stares into oblivion

The 102-year-old cricket bat industry in Kashmir has upped its standards over the years to compete with manufacturers that work with the famed English willow. But bat-makers fear a shortage of clefts might force closure of the 300-crore enterprise that provides livelihood to over 1,00,000 people.

"Ten years ago, 2.5 lakh to 3 lakh bats were manufactured in Kashmir. These days, 30 lakh bats are made every year," he said, adding that the industry's annual turnover was over 300 crore.

Kabir suggested that the government should consider allowing sapling plantations in the wetlands and on the riverbanks where willow trees used to be grown earlier.

"If willow trees are planted in these places again, the bat industry can survive," he said.



Excelsior/ Sajad Dar

"We have been manufacturing cricket bats for the past 102 years. The quality of our bats is good and approved by the International Cricket Council (ICC). So quality-wise, we are not lacking. We are at par with (manufacturers that use) English willow, if not better," Fawzul Kabir, spokesperson for Cricket Bats Manufacturing Association of Kashmir.

"This was evident from the fact that the longest six in the recent ICC Men's T20 World Cup in Australia was hit using a Kashmir willow bat," Kabir told.

The UAE's Junaid Siddique hit the 2022 ICC Men's T20 World Cup's longest six against Sri Lanka using a bat manufactured by Anantnag-based GR8 Sports.

However, the 400-odd bat manufacturing units are staring at an uncertain future as they fear a shortage of willow clefts might force their factories to close within five years. "Willow produce is dwindling fast and we fear that it might become extinct within the next five years. We have been requesting the government to go for a willow plantation drive to ensure a sustainable supply," Kabir said, pointing to the afforestation drives in Canada and Pakistan to underline his point.

He said more than one lakh people, not only from Jammu and Kashmir but from Jalandhar in Punjab and Meerut in Uttar Pradesh, relied on the industry for their livelihoods. "In a scenario where an industry is on the verge of collapse, the government needs to work on a war footing," he said.

Kabir said while the Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology provided them 1,500 willow saplings last year for replacement, each unit needs a supply of around 15,000 clefts a year. "As cricket is growing fast, the demand for bats will also increase. We had a dozen countries playing cricket two decades ago. Today, that number has gone up to around 160."

GR8 Sports Production Manager Mohammad Niyaz said the government had taken steps for plantation of willow saplings but it was not at the scale required to support the industry.

"More and more cricket leagues are coming up around the world and the demand for bats is only going to increase. While the industry can provide employment to artisans, finished bats can keep youngsters involved in sports and away from evils such as drug abuse," he added.

An Industries and Commerce Department official said while there was no dearth of willow in Kashmir, the main issue facing the units was a lack of modern seasoning technology and smuggling of clefts to factories outside Kashmir. "In Kashmir, seasoning of clefts is still done in the traditional way and it can take anywhere between six months to a year. It blocks precious capital of the unit holder and puts strain on his financial situation. This has, in some cases, led to the closure of a unit," the official, who is not authorised to speak to the media, said on the condition of anonymity.

The official said a proposal to set up a seasoning plant was approved a few years ago but was shelved due to the outbreak of COVID-19. "A new proposal to set up an electric or solar plant that will reduce the seasoning time to just 15 days is under consideration of senior officials," he added. Steps had to be taken to curb cleft smuggling from the Valley to factories in other parts of country, mainly in Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, the official said.

He said land measuring 20 hectares had been earmarked for growing willow trees that have been developed by scientists at Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology.

NATURE

GUL-E-ZOFA - The Holy Herb

Dr. Vikas Sharma, Abeeda Mushtaq

Hyssopus officinalis, popularly known as Gul-e-zofa, Zufah (in Urdu), Zufah-yabis (in Hindi), Hyssop (in English), Jufa (in Sanskrit), belongs to the Lamiaceae (mint) family native to Europe, Asia and Africa, however, it has naturalized in some areas of the USA.

In India, it is found in the Western Himalayan region from Garhwal to Kashmir at an altitude of 1800-2400 m. The existence of several common names for the same plant species in different areas may confuse end users for selection and utilization of a genuine drug. The authenticated plant which is identified as Gul-e-zofa is *Hyssopus officinalis*. The other plants substituted for Gul-e-zofa are *Nepeta bracteata*, *Nepeta ispanica* and *Nepeta micrantha*. The plant is mentioned many times in the Bible as spiritually purifying, giving it the moniker of "The Holy Herb." In its natural habitat, it grows on dry banks, among rocks and ruins with a height ranging from 50 to 120 cm.

Gul-e-zofa is gaining increased importance as a minty flavor, condiment and spices in food industries as well. Due to its fresh, clean and pleasant aroma, dried leaves are often placed in cupboards and coatrooms. It is an ornamental plant and gardens or areas along walkways are often decorated by its bright flowering shrub. Gul-e-zofa has a particularly fine odour, significant in the perfumery industry. Its volatile oils are used as a fragrance component in soaps, perfumes, creams and other cosmetic products, as well as in aromatherapy. The herb possesses numerous valuable therapeutic properties and is used for healing respiratory diseases such as tuberculosis, asthma, coughs, sore throat, respiratory infections, fevers and the common cold. It is also used in baths as it relaxes peripheral blood vessels and promotes sweating. Preparations of this plant are effective in curing some digestive and intestinal problems, including liver/gall bladder conditions, intestinal pain and gas, loss of appetite, urinary tract infection, menstrual pains and cramps and formation of kidney stones.

Flowers of the plant are useful for green salads or vegetables, in various sauces and gravies and for baking pita bread. Whole herb chopped in small pieces is used for soups, stews, and herbal teas, while fresh leaves alone are suitable for seasoning of soft cheeses (feta and cottage cheese, in particular), flavored butters, sandwiches and pasta dishes. Bright and aromatic flowers of hyssop attract honeybees and honey from these bees is of high quality: clear, golden in color, with a specific and very pleasant taste. Gul-e-zofa could be cultivated as a honey herb. A medicinal preparation of Gul-e-zofa, so-called hyssop oxymel, is made from the fresh or dried herb, macerated in honey and some apple cider vinegar. Gul-e-zofa extracts and EOs possess insecticidal properties against flies, flea beetles, green caterpillars, mites, larvae of some worms, cabbage moths, slugs, etc., but they attract humming birds, butterflies, bees, etc., who are good pollinators for the plants growing in its neighborhood. Gul-e-zofa oils, exhibiting toxic, antibacterial and antifungal properties are used against many plant diseases, for example, potato's late blight.

Tea prepared from the green tops of the plant not only has an agreeable flavor, but also can help digestion of fatty foods and shows anthelmintic activity. Decoctions or EOs of Gul-e-zofa could be used on the skin for treating burns, frostbites, bruises, skin irritations and diminishing the effects of skin aging. Gul-e-zofa oils are active against drug-resistant clinical herpes simplex virus type 1 (HSV-1) and HSV-2 strains and for treating skin disorders, such as dermatitis and eczema. The plant extracts exhibit antibacterial activity to acnes, as the causative bacteria of acne. Some patented cosmetics and skin-conditioning and anti-wrinkle topical formulations contain Gul-e-zofa EOs and ethanolic extracts. The plant essential oil is also used externally to treat toothache, earache and rheumatism. Gul-e-zofa volatile oils are also suitable for massage and effective against poor blood and lymph circulation, as a muscle-relax-



ing treatment. In addition, crude extracts of dried leaves have shown strong anti-HIV activity and may be useful in the treatment of patients with AIDS. It is also used as an expectorant, carminative, anti-inflammatory, anti-catarrhal and antispasmodic in traditional medicine in many parts of the world.

People who are pregnant or nursing should avoid Gul-e-zofa. Miscarriage is possible while taking this herb. It is also recommended that children avoid taking Gul-e-zofa. This is because seizures are a possible, severe side effect that can occur when taking this plant.

(The authors are from the Division of Biochemistry, SKUAST-Jammu)