

ELLE VATE

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INSPIRING **BAWSE**

WOKE Badass

GENEROUS

Kind meet the women
who run our world

They make India

INVINCIBLE

HONEST INCLUSIVE

mad Fearless **INTUITIVE**

BRILLIANT

#BEMOREELLE

Neerja Birla

This year, Neerja Birla was named by World Economic Forum as Woman Of The Decade, for her work in community mental healthcare. MPower, founded just three years ago by Birla and her daughter Ananya, in an attempt to raise awareness about mental health in the country, has already impacted the lives of 17 million people. Birla herself has had a brush with post-partum depression, and having three kids herself, has seen many adolescents deal with issues at a young age. She believes that creating awareness around health issues can help win half the battle. Like any other disease, mental health affects people from all walks of life and their aim is to break the myth that being successful or having money or fame means you can't be facing depression, anxiety or clinical disorders such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder. The idea is for people to be able to feel okay with not being okay. The Centre, which is based in South Mumbai offers a range of services, from consultancy to professional psychiatric and psychological help bundled with a holistic approach, which includes music and dance therapy, for instance. The Foundation, also in South Mumbai, was launched late last year to further broaden the scope of those services to other members of society at subsidised rates. MPower has been active in participating in on-ground sporting events like the Mumbai Marathon and curating the annual MPower Fest. Next on Birla's agenda is expanding to Bengaluru and Delhi as well as tier two and three cities.

— AABHA BAKAYA

The idea is for people to be able to feel okay with not being okay



Cotton jumpsuit, ₹10,500, **Notebook**. Leather heels, metal bracelet; both Birla's own. Metal ring, ₹3,000, **Cornerstone** at **Minerali**

After returning from The University of Texas at Austin in 2001, Ameera Shah took on her father's stand-alone pathology lab in South Mumbai, and over the last decade and a half, has turned it into the corporate behemoth it is today: 2,000 centres and 4,500 employees across 18 states. It wasn't an easy journey, but Shah didn't give up. She secured backing from private equity players like Warburg Pincus and Kohlberg Kravitz Roberts, and a major funding round by Carlyle in 2015. Last year, Metropolis Healthcare recorded revenue of ₹650 crore. She has also evolved as a leader, and an inspiration to women entrepreneurs, setting up her own digital platform, Empoweress, a year ago, to encourage young women looking to build their own businesses by providing mentorship. 2018 has been a landmark year, as Metropolis Healthcare filed for an IPO in September to raise ₹1,500 crore. And next, Shah is turning her attention to acquisitions in India and overseas, and also plans to invest big in technology. "The idea is to transform Metropolis from being a bricks-and mortar services firm to a digitally empowered, omnichannel healthcare and wellness focused company."



Ameera Shah

Satin jacket, ₹9,500, **Payal Khandwala**. Cotton pants, ₹2,590, **Zara**. Leather heels, Shah's own. Metal earrings, ₹1,200, **Sakshi Jhunjhunwala** at **Minerali**. Metal ring, ₹3,000, **Minerali**

Photographs: Prarthna Singh; Styling: Akshita Singh; Hair and make-up: Jean-Claude Biguine, Mumbai; Assisted by: Pujarini Ghosh, Pratiksha Ladage (Styling)

Nadia Chauhan

From topping *IMPACT*'s list of 50 Most Influential Women to *The Economic Times*'s 40 under 40 and *Forbes*'s Tycoons Of Tomorrow—it's been a coming of age for Chauhan, the scion of Parle Agro, which owns Frooti, Appy, LMN, Hippo and Bailey. It is the largest Indian food and beverage company. Nadia Chauhan joined its operations in 2003, and has been credited with revamping some of the company's signature brands, like Frooti. She also brought out new innovations like Appy Fizz (2005), positioned by the brand as the "champagne of food drinks", which has been a runaway hit, and is well on its way to becoming a ₹1,000-crore brand in the next two years. Chauhan has aggressively pushed innovation, along with improved sales and distribution strategies, in her goal to make Parle Agro the number one food and beverage brand in India.

— AABHA BAKAYA



Rashmi Daga

There are few women leaders in the unicorn club (start-ups with a valuation of US\$1 billion), but Rashmi Daga is well on her way to changing that. Within three years of launching the healthy food-tech company FreshMenu, she has already hit 5,00,000 orders a month in an extremely competitive delivery market, and expects to achieve a revenue of ₹300 crore and become profitable by the end of the 2018-19 financial year. She is also currently reported to be in talks to close a Series-C round of funding for approximately ₹500 crore, which will reportedly catapult the company's value to over ₹1,600 crore, and fuel her plans to set up new kitchens and expand to several new cities (FreshMenu currently only operates

in Bengaluru, Mumbai and NCR). Before turning entrepreneur in 2014, Daga, an IIM-Ahmedabad graduate, led and managed several start-ups in capacities ranging from sales to operations. FreshMenu offers rotating menus of world cuisine, and includes healthy options like keto-friendly meals and salad options, and is delivered by its own delivery agents. Its biggest differentiating factor is that it operates from about 35 cloud kitchens—most places usually have one big centralised kitchen, but having cloud kitchens means your delivery time is shorter and more efficient. Due to these disruptive strategies, FreshMenu's end-to-end turnaround time is fast, and makes it a key player in the segment.

— AABHA BAKAYA



Photographs: Manasi Sawant (Adwaita Nayar, Falguni Nayar)

Falguni Nayar & Adwaita Nayar

Online store Nykaa changed the way we shop beauty by becoming the most comprehensive retailer of local and international brands, including its eponymous private label. It is the vision and business acumen of banker-turned-entrepreneur Falguni Nayar that led the company to a turnover of ₹570 crore (for 2017-18). And since she jumped in as head of retail, Nayar's daughter Adwaita, too, has proved a visionary, setting up 22 offline stores in 10 Indian cities in just three years. Recently, the Nayars added a whole new chapter, Nykaa Design Studio, to showcase the best of Indian fashion.

— MAMTA MODY



"Dare to dream, don't shy away from hard work, and never let the fear of failure deter your plans"

Cotton dress, price on request, **Lovebirds**