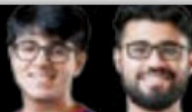


INSIDE:



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INDIA'S PSU GOLD RUSH

**The story behind PM Modi's cryptic clue to invest in
PSU stocks and how India's lithium discovery presents
the next multi-bagger opportunity**

Rs 150



Abraham & Thakore

Raghavendra Rathore

K.V. Shridhar

98 Generative AI & Fashion

Generative AI is making inroads into practically anything everything. Leading fashion designers debate its pros and cons for their industry

Pearl Uppal

Prashanth Kaddi

EBA WINNERS: COMPANIES

- 58 Aye Finance
- 59 Imperative Business Ventures
- 60 Search Ends
- 61 Jeena Criticare Logistics
- 62 CSM Technologies
- 64 Multi Décor India
- 65 New Street Tech
- 66 Elanpro
- 67 Chandra Fabrics
- 68 Ostrich Mobility Instruments
- 69 Sakhi Utpadan Samiti
- 70 Quiklyz
- 72 Prismatic Softwares

INDIVIDUALS

- 73 Aakanksha Bhargava, CEO, PM Relocations
- 74 Divij Bajaj, Founder & CEO, Power Gummies
- 75 Shubhika Jain, CEO & Founder, RAS Luxury Skincare

76 Mayurakshi Das, Founder & CEO, Elixir AI

77 Anita Tejwani, CEO, TheySway

78 Kishore Indukuri, Managing Director, Sid's Farm

79 Imbesat Ahmed, CEO & Co-founder, Filo

80 Sudhanshu Agarwal, Director & Promoter, Citykart group

81 Taniya Biswas & Sujata Biswas, Co-founders, Suta

82 Barriers Galore

Women enterprisers have taken giant strides, yet they lead only 20 per cent of the MSMEs in India. A look at the hurdles that still hold back women in business

84 EBA 2023 in Photos

Snapshots from the 5th edition of BW Businessworld's Emerging Businesses Summit & Awards that brought together industry experts, entrepreneurs, investors, and emerging firms to discuss and accelerate the growth of Indian MSMEs

92 BW Event

A photo perspective on the inaugural edition of the BW Flex Spaces Conclave and Awards, which provides a platform for industry professionals, thought leaders, and experts to convene and delve into the realm of third party operated spaces

102

Last Word

Ashu Shinghal, Managing Director, Mahanagar Gas on the city gas distribution major's preparedness for meeting the demand for natural gas in future and much more

TOTAL NO. OF PAGES 104

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Generative AI meets Fashion

Leaders in the fashion industry say generative AI will enhance consumer experience, and help market better, but there might be challenges around aspects such as originality and provenance

By Jyotsna Sharma

Designers Abraham
& Thakore



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YOU MUST be familiar with the term generative artificial intelligence (AI). It has likely popped up in your reading material or spoken about by peers. It has been around for a while now. Over the years, there have been advances, and recent developments have enabled it to progress to creating information such as realistic images, videos, and audio through simple prompts.

For those of you wondering what it is, think of ChatGPT — it is a good example of generative AI. In addition to the advantages, your mind will pull up a list of concerns around the use of such technology. There has been a lot of conversation regarding ethics, the provenance of the information, fake news, plagiarism, cybersecurity and, most of all, the future of



Photograph by Oneinchpunch

specific roles for working professionals.

At *BW Businessworld*, we decided to delve into this space and look at the use of generative AI in fashion. We spoke to top fashion designers and leaders in the industry to understand how it will enhance the space and the challenges we can expect. Experts believe that for the fashion industry,

generative AI will help market products better and provide an enhanced consumer experience. A recent McKinsey report suggests that within the next three to five years, generative AI could add around \$150 billion or more to the operating profits of the apparel, fashion, and luxury sectors.

Augmentation and acceleration

Pearl Uppal, Creative Head and Founder of Talking Threads, says AI is not just automation, it is about augmentation and acceleration — and, that means opening up new creative space. She believes it will allow creative thinkers in the fashion industry to explore new styles and materials, as well as new ways of manufacturing, and marketing. “As a creative director, I am rooting for the benefits that the foundation models and generative AI

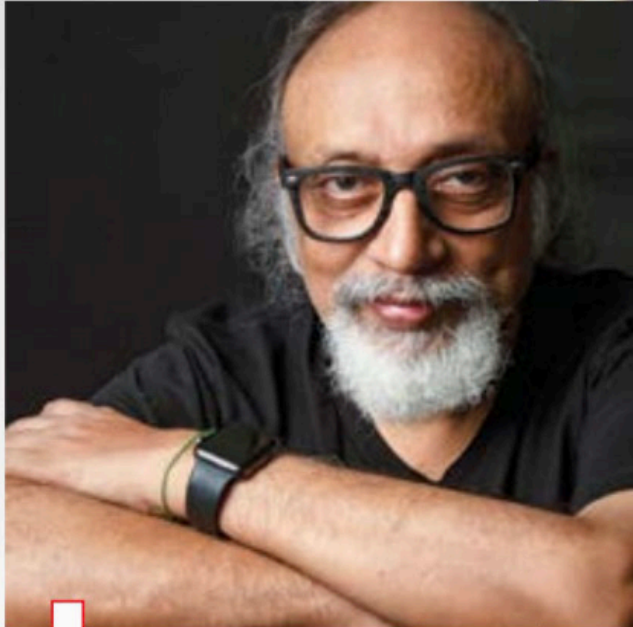
Generative AI's current capabilities, despite limitations, have already begun revolutionising the fashion retail landscape

can deliver across the fashion value chain, particularly in augmenting the efforts of our designers and artists — converting sketches, mood boards, and descriptions into high-fidelity designs, and creating newly enriched product ideation and variations from past product lines and inspirational imagery,” she says.

Originality could come into question

Noted designers Abraham & Thakore feel that while AI will undoubtedly disrupt the entrenched processes in the fashion industry there will be many benefits. Enhancing consumer experience by enabling personalised consumer analysis will help understand consumer needs better. They see value being added to trend analysis, which will help in planning new collections and product launches effectively. Further, designers would have access to multiple resources in pattern, colour, and form along with all the other tools required for the creative process.

“However, a word of caution. What makes fashion special is the personal connection between designers and their crea-



K.V. Shridhar, Chief Creative Officer, Nihilent



tions. If AI takes over certain design tasks, this connection could be diluted and will lack the depth of creativity and originality that human designers bring to their work," they say.

Understanding the consumer

Renowned designer Raghavendra Rathore believes AI is still in a nascent stage, but what lies ahead promises to revolutionise every facet of society. He says, "The Raghavendra Rathore Jodhpur brand has been progressive in embracing AI, not merely as a novel technology but as an integral tool. We utilise AI to enhance the design process and, more critically, to understand the behaviour and preferences of our clientele. This innovative approach allows us to anticipate and respond to client needs, shaping designs that resonate with their tastes and aspirations".

Enhancing fashion retail

K.V. Shridhar, Chief Creative Officer of Nihilent, the global consulting company, says the power of generative AI is unveiling a mere preview of the future's boundless potential. Witnessing real-time ramp walks with personalised fashion choices is just the beginning. Generative AI's current capabilities, despite limitations, have already begun revolutionising the fashion retail landscape.

"Our journey in applying generative AI to prominent fash-



Pearl Uppal, Creative Head and Founder, Talking Threads

Generative AI is enabling customers to unleash their creativity with interactive, customisable in-store experiences



**Prashanth Kaddi, Partner,
Consulting, Deloitte India**

ion brands in the US and South Africa has yielded extraordinary results. While its applications are versatile, some of the most impactful transformations occur behind the scenes. Through tools like MidJourney & Stable Diffusion, we are rapidly crafting intricate visual merchandising prototypes, enhancing efficiency and creativity”, he shares.

Intriguingly, generative AI is driving our future-focused experiments, allowing customers to unleash their creativity with interactive, customisable in-store experiences. With technology as the enabler, we are propelling fashion into a realm of endless imagination and innovation, he says.

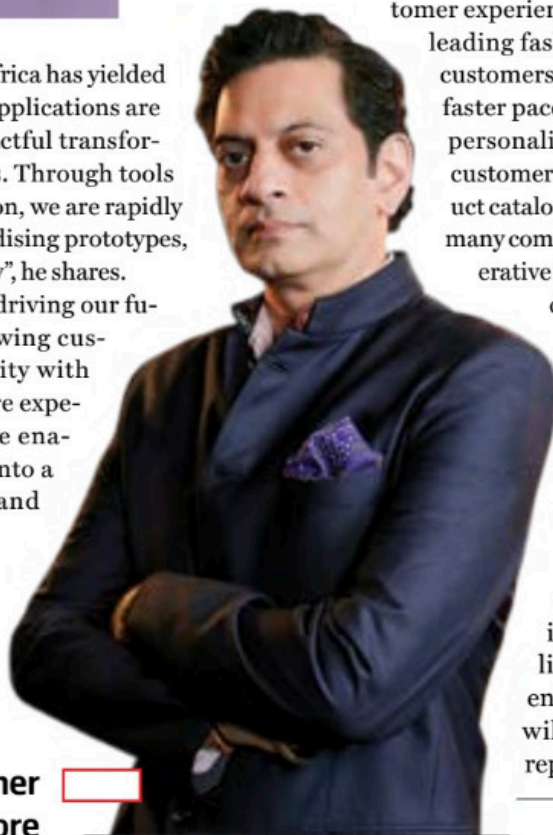
Expert speak

Prashanth Kaddi, Partner, Consulting, Deloitte India, says the fashion industry is exploring generative AI to understand

customer needs, predict fashion trends, and enrich customer experience. “As a use case, we are helping a leading fashion jewellery company empower customers to generate new designs at a much faster pace. Generative AI is bringing hyper-personalisation of products and improving customer experience by offering better product catalogue. While it is an exciting space and many companies are investing in adopting generative AI to up the fashion game, there are

challenges such as the vulnerability of copying AI-generated images and infringement issues. With the right guardrails in place, such as Deloitte’s Trustworthy AI framework, these can be mitigated significantly”.

The fashion industry is ready to embrace generative AI, albeit with caution. Designers are looking at using generative AI to delight their consumers by providing enhanced consumer experience. We will continue to watch the space and report on future developments. **BW**



**Designer
Raghavendra Rathore**

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