

Salud days

Lahore-based Muhammad Harris has expanded his startup Daala to deliver "customised" homemade salads at your doorstep



In this day and age, innovation is the buzzword. The need to solve problems is often what paves the way for growth and innovation. Indeed, such is the case with Muhammad Harris, the founder and CEO of Daala, a Lahore-based startup that offers the facility of booking vehicles for carrying supplies from one place to another, who has recently launched a co-business venture, interestingly named Salud.

Harris hails from a family where most people didn't receive any formal education. His father is in the wholesale business of vegetables at Sabzi Mandi in Lahore. Harris became the first person in his family who studied at the University of Engineering and Technology (UET) to become an engineer and later pursued philosophy and law at the University of the Punjab. On the side, he was helping with his father's business. He says that in Pakistan, the logistics of supplying goods to the local markets are extremely messy: "The suppliers have the contacts of truck drivers who have to supply the vegetables. If one of them is unavailable this can lead to problems in arranging a replacement on a short notice." One odd incident of delayed delivery caused Harris to reassess the situation and think up a solution. Next, he

went about surveying the major markets of Lahore to see how common the problem was. He found that the problem was faced by even by those in the major markets in Lahore, including Urdu Bazaar and Shah Alam.

Harris wanted to create a platform that would "make lives simpler for both the supplier and the retailer." Soon, Daala came into existence. This was some two years ago. Harris claims that through the Daala mobile app "you can book rides to pick up and drop off supplies." Daala went beyond making things more efficient for businesses. An average user could use the service to transport bulky items from their residence or workplace that were too difficult to be transported via urban vehicles. While this was already being provided by other services, Daala brought some innovation. To quote Harris, "For the first time in Pakistan, we offered to insure the items being transported, even if the travel time was very short, like 30 to 40 minutes." Harris wanted to make his startup unique by giving it some personality. He says that those who drive the vehicles are called "Lalas." "In Pashto, Lala means 'brother,' and it's a respectful form of address." Their slogan, "We move your load," is also quite catchy. Unfortunately, despite its po-

tential, Daala hit a snag. Lack of funding from investors meant that Harris could not mount the business on a significantly large scale, nor market it as effectively as he wanted to. The setback did not dishearten Harris who had already started thinking about his next project. He says he had been noticing an increasing number of stalls outside restaurants and on roadsides "which sold fresh salad that was anything but fresh." He hit upon the idea of starting the business of home-made salad boxes that would be delivered at your doorstep. He named it Salud. "It's a Spanish word meaning bon appetite. We often hear it in shows like Money Heist. I felt that this could be a good name for the startup," he says.

Again, Harris didn't jump into this without doing his homework. "I asked around, among my friends especially, and realised that this kind of a service would suit the working women in particular," he adds. "When they return home from work, many don't have the energy and time to prepare salads. A ready-made salad box should come in handy." Men in their 30s and 40s are another target audience — "Those who go to offices, if they require something to munch on, especially in lunch hours and want to avoid unhealthy food or are conscious of their weight etc, a salad box made with fresh, raw vegetables is just what the doctor ordered." Salud is a subscription-based service, where people can sign up for weekly or monthly service and decide how often they want the salad delivered to them. The consumers can also order salads that are customised to their preferences. In any such venture, hygiene is of paramount im-

portance. Harris claims that the entire setup in their home kitchen is clean, and the chefs wear aprons and gloves when preparing salads. "We also use food-grade cutting boards and cutlery. Lemon juice and vinegar are used for salad dressing which also help kill bacteria. I am sure the [hygiene] aspect will prove to be our USP," he says.

The salad boxes are transported in ice boxes to keep them cold, but over time Harris plans to expand to the Cold Chain Temperature Controlled system in which the salad boxes would be transported inside fibre glass boxes with gel layers that will control the temperature.

Harris currently manages the business from his residence in Hassan Town on Multan Road. The orders mostly come from his acquaintances, but he is hopeful that good word will spread. He also hopes that given sufficient investment and time Salud has the potential to reach greater heights. "Currently our business model is one of B2C (business to customer) where we have a mobile app for people to order customised meals for themselves. Our next goal is to implement B2B (business to business), and you will see freezers with our products at some of the major grocery chains in the city." A bright young man, Harris is also keen to inspire other people looking to launch their own startups. He has a word of advice: "Innovation in business is the key. It is required, especially in a country like Pakistan where we need to provide the customers with what they want by making things simpler and easier for them. A successful business should aim to do that."



"Saba Qamar is very daring, experimental and doesn't mind taking risks." – Alishay Adnan



We often see our favourite celebrities appearing in their finest evening attire at various red carpets, film promotions and premieres. More often than not, these stars are lauded for their stunning sartorial choices. And that leaves us with the question, who exactly is picking out those artfully stylish outfits? This is where celebrity stylists come in. Nowadays, celebs rely on stylists to work their magic and create a signature look that doesn't only turns heads, but also makes them stand out from the rest.

Just recently, actor Saba Qamar was spotted looking absolutely gorgeous for her latest film Kamli's promotions and movie premiere. Celebrity stylist and image consultant Alishay Adnan was responsible for coming up with such stylish moments for the talented and versatile actor, who has done a phenomenal job in the film. We caught up with Alishay, who has been styling for almost seven years now, and is the brains behind styling Saba for her recent gigs. Alishay started her career as a stylist at Daraz.pk and even-

tually became the marketing manager for women's fashion. "My heart was always in styling so I after my job I took it up as a freelance career and ever since I've been a stylist. It has been great because I enjoy working with different people, different brands and different projects. I feel that my creativity only grows when I'm putting myself in various situations, around different people," she tells Instep.

The celebrities she has worked with include names like Mahira Khan, Iqra Aziz, Sanam Saeed, Ayeza Khan, Urwa and Mawra Hocane, Syra Yousuf, Hania Aamir and Ayesha Omar among many others. For the media junket, Alishay wanted something fun and more playful. "Though it was again a pant suit, I chose a very bright orange colour and colour blocked it with a pink shirt. The main idea was to give happy and summery vibes," she shares. "For her hair, I decided to go for a young look – high ponytail, half dyed hair with a nice blow dry. I felt that fresh makeup like light pink lips and flushed cheeks would go well with the overall look, so we opted for

that," she adds. The first event was the press conference and according to Alishay Adnan, she likes to dress Saba Qamar according to her personality. "She is very daring, she's experimental and doesn't mind taking risks," she says. "I didn't play it safe and went with a zebra printed suit and paired it with a neon shirt because it showed off her bold personality and the way she carried the look was so amazing," explains the stylist. As for her makeup and hair, Alishay went with a soft, makeup look and gelled back ponytail that oozed confidence.

This look was created for a photoshoot and Alishay chose an all-white ensemble simply because it screamed sophistication. "I wanted to keep it classy but with a twist. So, I added a playful element by going for a printed shirt inside that had a dramatic collar," elaborates Alishay, adding that she wanted the collar to pop out and show the print. "I styled it to reflect Saba's daring personality and give that oomph factor to her entire look. Because everything else was already going towards the sophis-

ticated side, I tried to aim for sexy as far as her makeup and hair was concerned. I gave her a gelled back hair look for that androgynous, strong woman vibe." The movie premiere was obviously a dream come true. Alishay reveals that she opted for an outfit by designer Zain Hashmi, whom she discovered recently. "I think his work is so phenomenal and bold. I love the way he plays with cuts, which are very feminine – perfect for someone like Saba Qamar. So, for the premiere, I chose a body hugging, off-shoulder gown which enhanced her hour glass body and made her collar bones stand out so beautifully. Moreover, the colour complemented Saba's golden complexion. We gave her a cape just to add some character and drama to the outfit." The hair and makeup was all about soft curls pinned behind the ears and a very glowy, dewy look with defined eyes, natural lip colour and perfect contouring to enhance her features. For accessories, the stylist went with diamond and emerald earrings by Sherezaad jewellery which gelled well with the entire look.

In the picture

The new Netflix action-drama *Interceptor* sinks in its own absurdity

Interceptor ★

Starring: Elsa Pataky and Luke Bracey
Directed by: Matthew Reilly
Tagline: The world's last defense.

If you want to see just why Netflix is having trouble holding on to its subscribers, then look no further than *Interceptor*, a clunky, would-be action thriller (with nary a thrill in sight) that begs the question: do we really want to keep paying for this streaming service?

A formulaic plot, unrealistic situations, and terrible acting converge in one of the latest in what appears to be a string of predominantly subpar movies (*The Bubble*, *Choose or Die*, *Along for the Ride*, *Senior Year*, *A Perfect Pairing*) released by the streamer recently. Elsa Pataky stars as J. J., a U.S. Army captain who has just been reassigned to SBX-1, a remote platform in the middle of the Pacific Ocean and one of the two military outposts that are designed to intercept any nuclear warheads launched at the U.S. When terrorists take out the other interceptor site, leaving SBX-1 as America's last defence, it is up to J. J. to almost single-handedly stop attackers – led by Alexander Kessel (Luke Bracey) – from taking control of her station as well.

The bad guys have seized 16 nuclear missiles from Russian territory and intend to disable all U.S. interceptors so that they can attack America. Standing in their way is J. J.'s one woman army. She's fierce. She's invincible. She's entirely unconvincing.

The poor script and bad acting don't do much to elevate what is already a flimsy plot. Its essentially single-location setup – for these are the times of Covid – has potential but ends up feeling restrictive instead of inventive. There is no suspense, no sense of impending doom. It's all just a clichéd slog to a predictable destination. The leading lady is committed to the nonsense unfolding around her and the film may leave you wanting to find out what Elsa Pataky's workout routine is, but neither the actress nor her character is strong enough to carry the film. (An unamusing cameo by her husband, Chris Hemsworth, who executive produced the film, only makes you look at the product even more cynically.) The developments are so absurd that they border on parody. Matthew Reilly – the film marks the directorial debut of the Australian novelist – fails to imbue the proceedings with anything unique or distinctive, and doesn't even add enough thrill to the dumbness in order to at least make the action entertaining. The fact that this comically bad waste of 90 odd minutes was the number one movie upon its release on Netflix shows you what state the platform is in at the moment. The service has shown, time and again, that they are capable of making terrific content, and if they want to remain at the top of the streaming game, they seriously need to reconsider how they invest their resources and pick better projects to finance.

Rating system: *Not on your life * ½ If you really must waste your time ** Hardly worth the bother ** ½ Okay for a slow afternoon only *** Good enough for a look see *** ½ Recommended viewing **** Don't miss it **** ½ Almost perfect ***** Perfection



Norwegian climber in Pakistan to summit K2, Nanga Parbat



GILGIT: Norwegian female climber Kristin Harila is all set to summit K2 and Nanga Parbat, in her attempt to scale five 8,000-metre peaks in Pakistan in two months. The mountaineer arrived in Pakistan as part of her quest to beat the time record to summit the globe's 14 highest peaks in six months, Dawn reported. Harila has already climbed six mountains over 8,000 metres (26,250 feet) high, including Everest, in the last two months. The 36-year-old hopes to match or surpass Nepali adventurer Nirmal Purja and his ground-breaking 2019 record of six months and six days — an achievement that smashed the previous record and was profiled in a popular Netflix documentary — to change how the mountaineering world views women athletes. "In history and until now, it has been the strong macho men going out climbing mountains," Harila told AFP earlier. "When I talk to people that are not in this sport, they believe that men are more capable than women... If we are going to change, we need to get attention and show that women are just as capable." Male climbers and guides far outnumber women in the top tier of the sport, with only a handful of women mountaineers getting attention and sponsorships for their expeditions. Out of nearly a thousand climbers who visited Nepal's famed Himalayan peaks this year, only around a fifth were women, according to Nepali government data. Harila's first notable climb was on Tanzania's Mount Kilimanjaro in 2015, but she made headlines last year for becoming the fastest woman to travel between the summits of Everest and Mount Lhotse in Nepal.