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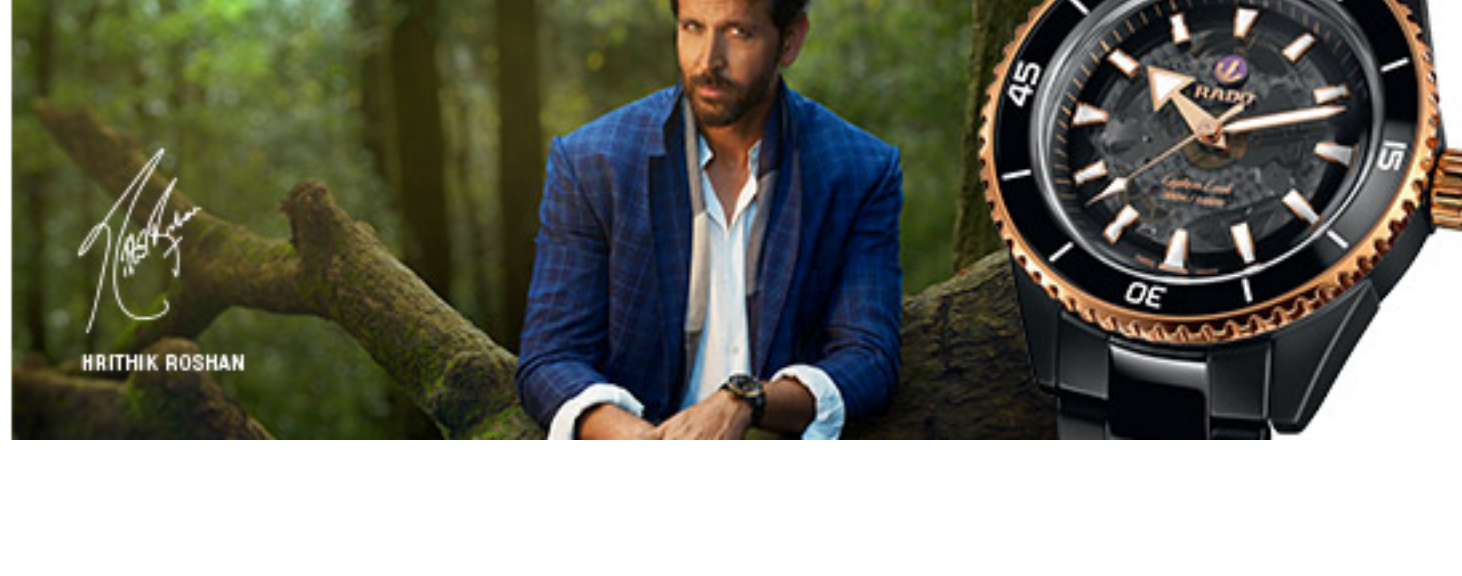
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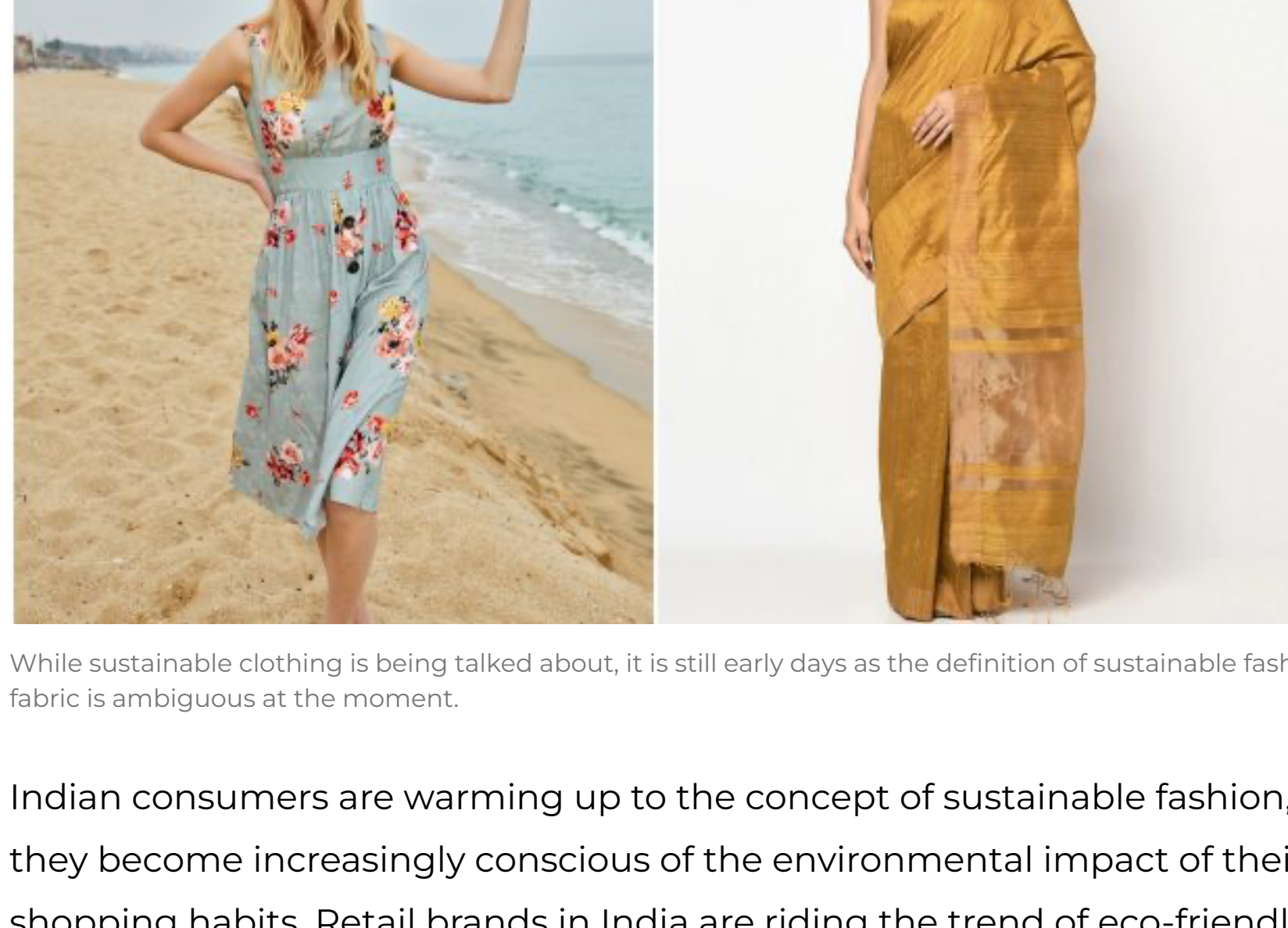
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## Conscious fashion

The concept of sustainable fashion is gaining ground in India

Written by [Vaishnavi Gupta](#)

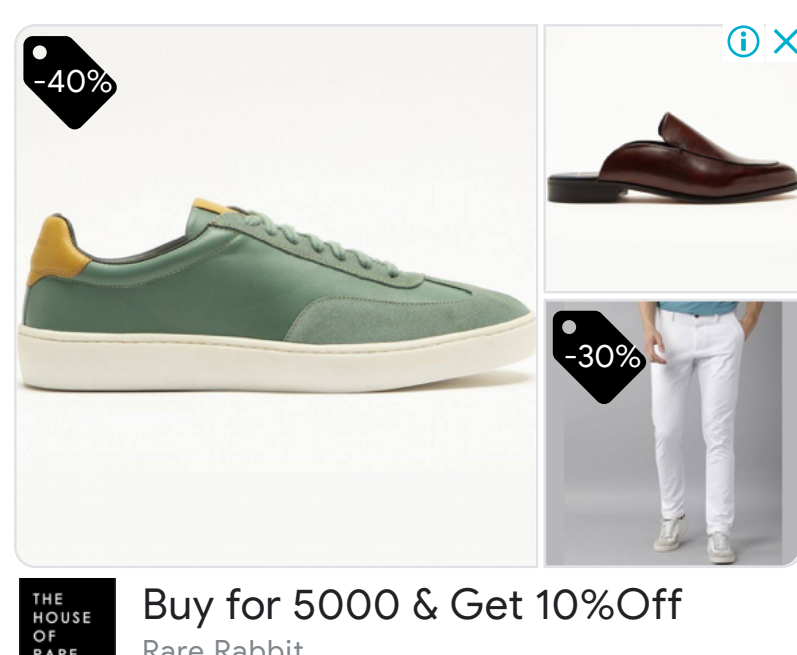
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While sustainable clothing is being talked about, it is still early days as the definition of sustainable fashion and fabric is ambiguous at the moment.

Indian consumers are warming up to the concept of sustainable fashion, as they become increasingly conscious of the environmental impact of their shopping habits. Retail brands in India are riding the trend of eco-friendly shopping by introducing sustainable offerings. Fashion brand Indian Terrain, for instance, created a sustainable fashion line in 2020 in partnership with Fairtrade India; and in April this year, Madame launched its Eco Aware collection. Several new brands have sprung up in the sustainable fashion space over the past few years. These include DaMENSCH, ANI Clothing, Sparsh Organic and The Pant Project, among others.

According to a report released by The Business Research Company in 2020, the global ethical fashion market is likely to grow from \$6.35 billion in 2019 to \$8.25 billion in 2023 at a CAGR of 6.8%.



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## Natural shift

Madame has developed designs that minimise textile waste in the manufacturing process. The brand plans to reduce its carbon footprint by at least 80%, and become carbon-negative by 2030. Currently, the overall contribution of its sustainable clothing range to its business is around 3%. "We have carefully priced our sustainable collection in the Rs 1,699-2,999 range. Currently, we are targeting millennials and Gen Z consumers in the metro cities, as they are willing to pay a high price for a responsible product," says Akhil Jain, Madame's executive director.

Brands are creating apparel ranges that appeal to consumers' modern sensibilities by combining age-old textiles, craft, and production techniques with contemporary styles. Taneira, Tata's ethnic wear brand launched in 2017, recently launched a collection of sarees inspired by the flora and fauna of the forests, using natural fabrics, sourced from weavers across India.

Woodland forayed into the sustainable space with its Pure Green t-shirts made from recycled plastic bottles that are sterilised and processed into fibre strands. "Our sustainable range is available both online and offline, targeting the youth specifically. The prices of these products are around 5-10% higher compared to our basic products," says Harkirat Singh, managing director of Aero Club, the parent company of Woodland.

In 2020, Raymond Group collaborated with [Reliance Industries](#) to launch an eco-friendly range of fabrics called Ecovera, that is produced from recycled plastic bottles using biofuels and energy-efficient processes.

## Cost of sustainability

While sustainable clothing is being talked about, it is still early days as the definition of sustainable fashion and fabric is ambiguous at the moment. Rachit Mathur, partner and managing director, BCG, says, "Whether it is cotton and raw materials sourced the right way, or the fabric construct being eco-friendly, or washes and dyes being degradable — the norms and best practices are not well known."

Being a sustainable fashion brand entails high expenditure. Setting up sustainable practices throughout the value chain — right from sourcing of fabrics, demand planning and manufacturing, colouring, stitching, etc, to the logistics and last-mile delivery to the store/ end consumers, to finally the reverse logistics and disposing of excess stock — could be challenging for companies. Rajat Wahi, partner, consulting, Deloitte India, says, "All of these processes come at a high cost. And if the end consumer is not willing to pay a higher price and wants to have fashion for a season, it is not feasible for retailers to invest in this."

Furthermore, there is a lack of awareness about the need to switch to sustainable alternatives, analysts say. "The industry and the government need to build awareness around the 'why' of sustainability, especially in fashion. Education to drive category demand is the first step, though. Till then, this sub-segment in fashion will stay sub-scale, and hence, pricing and supply chain will stay expensive and inefficient," Mathur adds.

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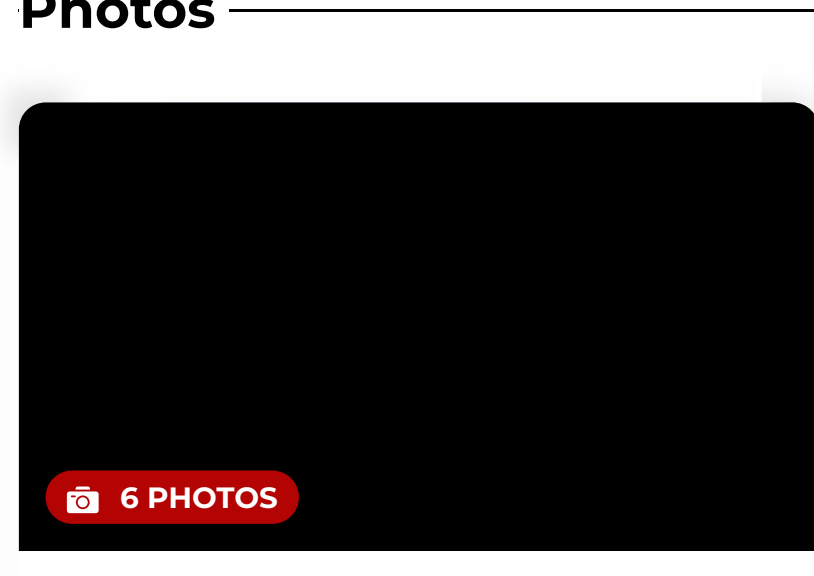
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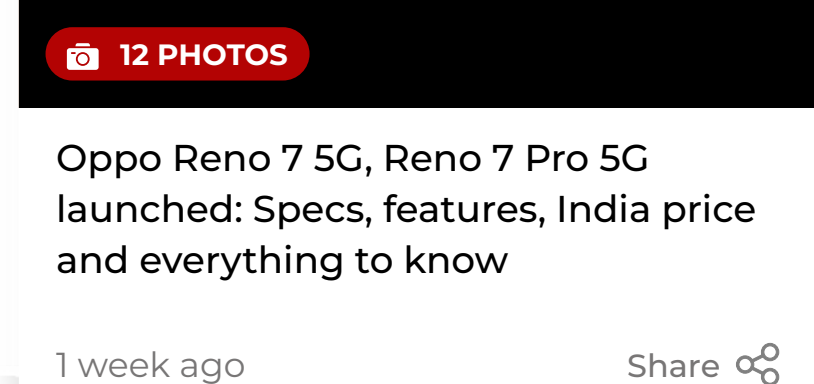
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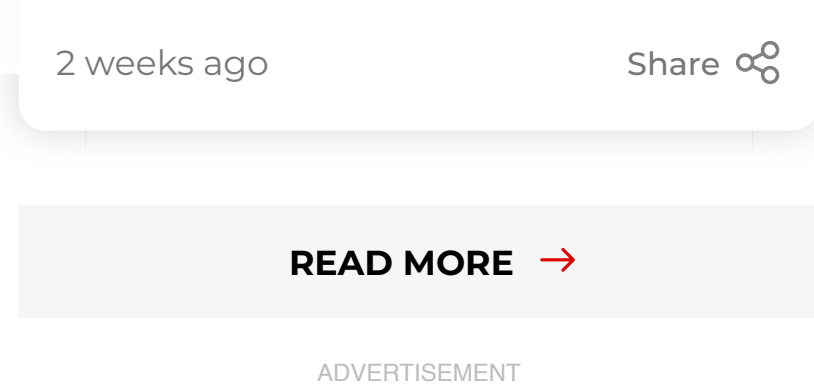
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