editor's letter

Right: Senior features writer Priyamvada Kowshik on the trail of the HIV campaign feature; below: Deepika Padukone takes pictures of team *Marie Claire*

We must try, but not too hard. Trying too hard shows as earnestness. The point is to be effortless. I tried too hard with the first draft of this letter and it didn't work. I tried to write intelligent things about fashion, beauty and photography because this is a year-end piece. Yet, I couldn't figure out what. Because, this time, it is small little things that have been buzzing in my head. I want to tell you that the title of Kiran Desai's book *The Inheritance of Loss* left me reassured, silent and frozen with thought. Why, I don't know.

And then on a complete tangent, I want to talk about this silly girl Rakhi Sawant, who collapsed crying on the TV show *Bigg Boss* in a bathroom with brown mascara tears running down her podgy face. What she is about? Is she for real or are all those 'feelings' of hers for the gallery? People tell me that if I write about her, she will get the publicity she is looking for. I don't care. I have to say that she leaves me with a crinkled, now-what? forehead every time. But even if Sawant is the nemesis of today's TV, I still need to write this letter!

So here is a compilation of unedited thoughts. A series of contradictions that we must face and resolve. I carry a Chanel lipstick in my *jhola*. The *jholawallas* tease me saying I have become 'Marie Claire'; whereas the fashionable ones say I am a *jholewalli*. For me, balance is about opposites. About finding the right mix between self-indulgence and social responsibility. I believe in contradictions and that antithesis leads to synthesis. I believe in enlightened self-interest; in Buddha and suburbia. In designers as well as activists. I believe in this life and the hereafter, and I also believe that if clichés are used well, they become literary metaphors. I believe that women need justice, not reservation. I believe in just wars and in peace. I believe that celebrities are overrated but I also believe that they sell. I believe that *Omkara* was the best film of this year and wonder why tabloid TV does so well. I believe that Sonia Gandhi is blessed by an ascendant *shani*. Like the rock band Supertramp, I have taken the long way home because I believe in my family. I have many friends and some of them believe in me.

They tell me not to write Happy New Year, because it will be plastered on every local bus. But let me say I believe in this year and in the next one.

Shefalee

Shefalee Vasudev,
Editor