editor's letter

Left: Gods in couture; below: Preity Zinta, Manish Malhotra and Kajol; far below: Team India after winning the T20 World Cup

Blue god Lord Krishna and his pretty consort Radha are now on the glitterati list. Glitter, shimmer and dainty floral patterns adorn their blue-and-orange chiffons, created and styled by Bollywood's fashion guru Manish Malhotra. The designer's 'offering' to the deities at Mumbai's Iskcon temple is not just an amusing story of gods in couture. It is relevant too. As Bollywood's chiffon-and-Swarovski sensibility dominates the catwalk and much of populist culture, it's perhaps time to stop being judgemental. Let's question why a designer – who styles brides, bridesmaids, models and heroines – would also design for a god. Would Donatella Versace have the gumption to dress the Holy Ghost? But 'Manish Malhotra for Lord Krishna'! Now that's a peculiarly Indian label. When you cross the Indus, as Alexander the Great realised many centuries ago, things change the way India changes them.

Last month's WIFW spring-summer 2008 tailored this idea to perfection (p.158). The genie called Indian Fashion has finally found its bottle. Not only are Indian designers revelling in it but some very celebrated international collections of Fall-Winter too savour a distinct Indian flavour. Indian fashion may not have arrived but this is a well-timed point of departure.

Departure may be what we need from our knee-jerk responses to domestic violence. At the *Marie Claire* What Women Want Forum debate on inter-partner violence, chaired by campaign ambassador Dr Kiran Bedi, I was taken aback by audience reactions at the mention of battered husbands. Sighs of sympathy or claps of admiration came up when a violated woman spoke, but stories of beaten men only raised sniggers. How odd is that? Last time, after our report on dowry, some readers wrote back asking why we did not emphasise the misuse of women's laws by women. I don't want to make a big case of that given the lopsidedness in the numbers of those who need the laws versus those who abuse them. But undoubtedly, there is a world of difference in attitudes towards male and female victims. Making light of a violated person because he is male turns the justice argument entirely on its head. What do women want? Justice for everyone or just justice for themselves?

Justice is done, screamed the frenzied crowds when Team India came back with the Twenty20 Worldcup. To quote C.L.R. James, "What do they know of cricket who only cricket know?" Not writing about that would mean not writing about India. When former captain and now TV spin doctor Kapil Dev danced on a news channel floor to celebrate the moment and people shouted *Chak De India*, it was clear that this a nation hungry for victory.

More victories is just what we need.

Shefalee

Shefalee Vasudev

EDITOR'S PHOTOGRAPH: MEETESH TANEJA