



# Woman's World



pg 16-17 See how some Bollywood hotties fared on our fashion scale this week

**ADC**

pg 19 We give you a few quick tips to help get your baby to stop crying

Afternoon Despatch & Courier

MUMBAI | THURSDAY, AUGUST 23, 2012



>> When you're alone at home, lock all your doors and don't open to strangers to keep yourself safe

# ARE WE SAFE?

**Has Mumbai ceased to be a safe zone for women? After the recent crimes against women, it's better to be prepared when it comes to your safety. Rhea Dhanbhoora & Gargi Bansod tell you how**

Of late, the city is seeing an alarming rise in the number of women being attacked and murdered. With the recent case (the fourth within 15 days in the city) of another woman in Santacruz being found naked and murdered, the shocking lack of safety for women in the city is no joke. While the courts and states discuss whether to make molestation a non-bailable offense and the city's support groups are up in arms over the murder, rape and molestation cases reported in the city, here's a quick guide to keeping yourself safe.

### FIGHT FOR YOUR RIGHTS

Anita Hada Sangwan, treasurer of Prem Mandir Sansthan, believes that it's time women fought for their rights and for their safety as the situation doesn't seem to be getting any better. The talk show host, writer and member of Justice for Women says, "Women in India, like the rest of our population, are suffering from a divide. We have independent women who fight not only for their rights but also their sisters. On the other hand, we have women who have no idea about their rights and have no voice. Each one of us has to understand this and reach out to lend each other a helping hand. This gap must be bridged quickly. It is a battle being fought at every doorstep, every road and corner. Women have rights too and will be respected."

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# ADC

## Afternoon

MUMBAI & COAST

8hrs | 4hrs | 6hrs | **48hrs** | 8hrs | 12hrs | 16hrs



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- « **Food**  
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- « **Store**  
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- « **Travel**  
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**8 PAGES THIS FRIDAY! BOOK YOUR COPY NOW!**

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## SPEAK OUT

While several women in India enjoy equal pay and adequate safety, the majority of women in our country are, as Sakshi Kumar, who conceptualised Justice for Women, puts it, unsafe and unhappy. She says, "Women in India are unsafe, unhappy, unappreciated and underpaid. Sixty six years down the line, Indian women are far from being independent. We still depend on our fathers, brothers and husbands for security, if not money. Our basic human rights are offended on a daily basis with different excuses, be it the favour of a brother, dowry system or unequal pay at the workplace. There is a need to secure our women and give them opportunities to let their voices be heard."

For PR professional Nidhi Thakur, the situation in India has always been dismal for women. What she thinks has changed is awareness and people's willingness to get involved in the fight to be heard. She says, "The situation for women has always been dismal in India, although it's coming to our notice a lot more now than it did before. What's worse is that in recent times, we see the ugly reaction of our administration when it comes to this injustice. Apparently, no matter how heinous the crime against women is, it is always the girl's fault. Either she is dressed inappropriately, or was at the wrong place at the wrong time. Being a woman is her mistake."

Actress Pooja Bedi is saddened by the state of women's safety in the city, but she is also determined to get justice. She strongly voices her opinion, "Crime is everywhere, not just Mumbai. What we need is swift sentencing and severe punishment. There are so many rape cases, but



how many times have we heard that criminals have been put away for life? Swift sentencing and strong punishment will serve as a deterrent for criminals. We need to send a message that no crime will be tolerated, against women, children or any human being."

Anchor Shruti Seth concludes with the thought that worries every woman in the city. She says, "We used to take pride in saying that Mumbai is the safest city for women. No matter what clothes, what time or what mode of commuting, we could travel without worry. But if such things are happening at your doorstep, I really don't know what to say. It's very sad."

## BE CAUTIOUS

It's better to be safe than sorry. Here's how to keep yourself protected at home or outside:

### AT HOME

- If screaming for help isn't getting any attention, scream fire. Less people are willing to get involved with an attacker but more will respond to a general cry for help.
- When you're at home alone, keep your doors locked, no matter how safe your society is.
- Don't take the stairs as far as possible. It is the easiest place for attackers to strike.
- Keep an emergency number on speed dial and keep your phone near you so that you are able to reach it in time to call for help.
- Ask your security not to allow people to enter your building without calling up or signing in at the gate first.
- If you think someone has followed you to your door, never take out your keys and open it. Instead, ring a neighbour's bell and ask to be let in — no matter how late at night it is. It may be embarrassing, but it will keep you safe.



>> Enroll in a self defense class so that you can fend off an attacker.

- Get a double door with a grill and never open it when you're taking in post or courier. Don't open your door unless you're sure of who's on the other side. Remember to get one that can't be opened from the outside.
- Don't get in a lift with a suspicious person.
- Always have your keys ready so you're not standing at your door and fumbling with them.
- Have alarms set up in your home that you can reach easily and without being noticed.
- Have a security camera prominently placed outside your door. The more protected you look, the less an attacker will strike.

## WHILE TRAVELING

- Attackers look for women who are distracted, so don't talk on the phone or wear earphones while traveling.
- When you're alone, make sure you're not an

### WARNING SIGNS

Date rape drugs and spiking of drinks is becoming commonplace, so it's better to be safe than sorry. However, if you're out and you begin to feel incredibly sick or drunk for no reason, ask a friend to take you home or to a safe place and don't under any circumstance, accept help from a stranger — even if it is another woman. If you're alone, go to the management or security of the place you are at or call the police if you're on the road. Don't hesitate to make a fuss if you feel as though someone is invading your personal space. There's no time to be polite in a situation where you feel threatened.

easy target. All four women attacked in the city had their throats slit or were strangled. Scarves and ponytails are easier to grab.

- The city is not as safe as it used to be. Avoid being in empty parking lots or dark alleys.
- If you're driving, even if it's daylight, make sure you keep your doors locked, especially at signals or in traffic. You'll often be so caught up trying to maneuver through traffic that you won't realise when there's a shady character around.
- When you get in your car, immediately lock the doors. Don't get distracted putting your bags down or putting your music on, as you make an easy target if you're in the car with the doors unlocked and seem distracted.
- In a crowded area such as a station or during a festival, stay alert and watch the crowd around you. You're more likely to be a victim if it's a noisy area where people won't be able to tell if it's your screams or just part of the uproar.
- If someone is tugging at your bag, let it go. Your belongings are not as important as your life.
- Don't leave your food or drinks unattended in public and don't accept anything from a stranger. There's always the risk of spiking and drug assisted rape is, unfortunately, becoming

increasingly common.

- It's good to know your self defense, but running is your best defense. You should know enough to distract or disable your attacker — don't stay and fight, it's not worth the risk.

## AVOID IT

Senior International Krav Maga Federation (IKMF) Instructor for Maharashtra, Sadashiv Mogaveera gives us a few tips on how women can avoid being targeted:

- Be alert, understand the situation. A woman whose body language is alert and purposeful is a hard target.
- Use instincts and common sense. Don't walk close to a corner when passing by an alley, don't walk on the side where cars are passing by behind you. This makes you a difficult target.
- Learn how to use your body and your belongings as weapons if the need arises. Heels, knees, elbows, teeth are all excellent weapons.
- Get trained in self-defense so you know how to handle such a situation.

## SAFETY FIRST

Here are a few items to keep at home and outside, to help you stay protected:

- **Pepper spray:** To keep you safe in public. You could also use perfumes or body sprays.
- **Alarms:** It's a prudent idea to keep alarms in your home. Get them installed so they're not easy to spot but easy to get to. Also get personal alarms that you can wear on your person.
- **Door lock:** A portable door lock is a good way to get a little added protection when you're traveling on your own.
- **Anti-rape condom:** We know you won't be wearing this at home, but when you're at a party or traveling alone, it's a good idea to source one.
- **Whistle:** To call for help, wherever you are.
- **Flashlight:** A flashlight can make it difficult for someone to sneak up on you and can also momentarily blind someone so you can escape.

## LEND A HAND

Started by Sakshi Kumar, Justice for Women is a movement to unite and change people's mentality. The group is not just about sharing experiences but looks at workable ideas to get results. They want to get women basic human rights and protect them against rape, murder and acts that curb our independence. Join the initiative by joining them on Twitter @justiceforwomen or by visiting their Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/groups/justiceforwomenindia](http://www.facebook.com/groups/justiceforwomenindia). You can also visit their blog [justiceforwomenindia.wordpress.com](http://justiceforwomenindia.wordpress.com) or their YouTube channel [www.youtube.com/user/TheJusticeForWomen?feature=mhee](http://www.youtube.com/user/TheJusticeForWomen?feature=mhee) to get involved.

## LEARN SELF DEFENSE

Whether the city is safe or not, being prepared for any situation is always a plus point. We suggest you sign up for some of these defense classes and be ready to kick some ass when the time comes...

**KRAV MAGA:** This self defense class trains you in the Israeli self-defense art, Krav Maga. It is simple and can be learnt in a relatively short period of time. It is based on real-life scenarios and threats, so it gives you a practical experience of handling a situation.  
**Cost:** ₹2,500 per month plus a registration fee of ₹1,000  
**Where:** Classes are held in Bandra (W) and Vile Parle (W)  
**Contact:** 9967044083

**DARE:** If you want to master those kicks and punches, the DARE program is your best bet. You can learn how to defend yourself verbally and physically and avoid situations that could lead to eve teasing. This program will ensure that you will not look like an easy target.  
**Cost:** Prices vary according to individual requirements  
**Where:** Classes are held across the city. Find out more by logging on to [Indiawomandefense.tripod.com](http://Indiawomandefense.tripod.com)  
**Contact:** 9820496752

**EXTRAMILE:** Extramile conducts various workshops every week and the self defense workshop is one of them. In this workshop, you'll learn to use your instincts before fighting back with all your strength. It will teach you to be aware of the situation you're in before reacting abruptly.  
**Cost:** Approximately ₹1,000  
**Where:** Follow Extra Mile on [www.facebook.com/pages/Extra-Mile-Café](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Extra-Mile-Café) for updates.  
**Contact:** 9004060766

**SHAOLIN KUNG FU:** This workshop will focus on increasing your flexibility, core strength and stamina through martial arts. You will learn basic animal attacks and kicks, self defense techniques and basic floor gymnastics which are useful in most situations.  
**Cost:** ₹3,000  
**When:** Up to September 29; Monday, Wednesday and Saturday from 8.30pm to 10pm  
**Where:** Pragnya Bodhini High School, Jay Prakash Nagar, Goregaon (E)  
**Contact:** 9167606469 or [www.gyaanexchange.com](http://www.gyaanexchange.com)

## HELPLINE NUMBERS

Here are some emergency helpline numbers that you can dial when you or another woman around you is in distress:  
**103:** This is a special police helpline which takes action on crime against women through police intervention.  
**1090 / 7738133133 / 7738144144:** Mumbai Police helplines for molestation  
**1298:** This number will connect women in distress to NGOs.