



A Stitch in Time

India's first
haberdashery aims at
re-introducing Mumbai
to the joys of sewing

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Apichkari (water gun)-and-sewing-machine installation — covered up in bright, colourful patches along with beads, stones and sequins — welcomes the guests. The installation, which captures the creativity of maverick designer Manish Arora, leads one into a store that also abounds in colour. From zips, buttons and beads to laces, borders and woolen toys, the store brims with an infectious energy.

A one-stop-shop for all sewing needs, The Hab is India's first haberdashery, a fairly popular concept abroad. "Our aim is to make sewing a trendy concept. We want to inspire people to create, innovate and experience the art of sewing," says Chhaya Shriram of Usha International, which has set up the store.

Spread over two floors at Bandra's Linking Road, the spacious store that brings together design, craft and fashion demarcates different sections. The ground floor has a separate area devoted to buttons, stones, beads and sequins, and patches in myriad colours and sizes. Another corner displays laces, borders, zips and various stitching



(Clockwise from above) The first-floor library has books on sewing; the stitch library and the tools area; woolen toys at the store

tools — from threads, needles and pins to curve rulers, measuring tapes, footers for sewing machines, scissors and ironing boards.

This apart, the DIY sewing kits, woolen toys peeking out of glass jars and the stitch library that decodes the different types of stitches, are also its key features. The USP, Shriram asserts, is the fact that it is essentially an 'experiential store'. "We want to invite people to have a fresh, youthful and contemporary perspective on the art of sewing and accessory-making. The Hab offers experiences that encourage learning and creativity through workshops, demos and store exhibits, for all age-groups," she explains.

With its three activity zones — a sewing demonstration zone, a self-

learning zone and a professional training and workshop zone, the store has already gained popularity among the Bandra residents. It plays host to birthday parties while providing children with a fun educational experience. It also has grown-ups, especially mothers, who are rushing to sign up for their sewing classes.

"We teach how to sew and embellish, apart from others skills that enable an individual to tailor make an item. Our workshops are limited to a small group for the best interactive and learning experience," adds Shriram.

The added attraction of The Hab is the first-floor library that stocks 100-odd books dedicated exclusively to sewing.