

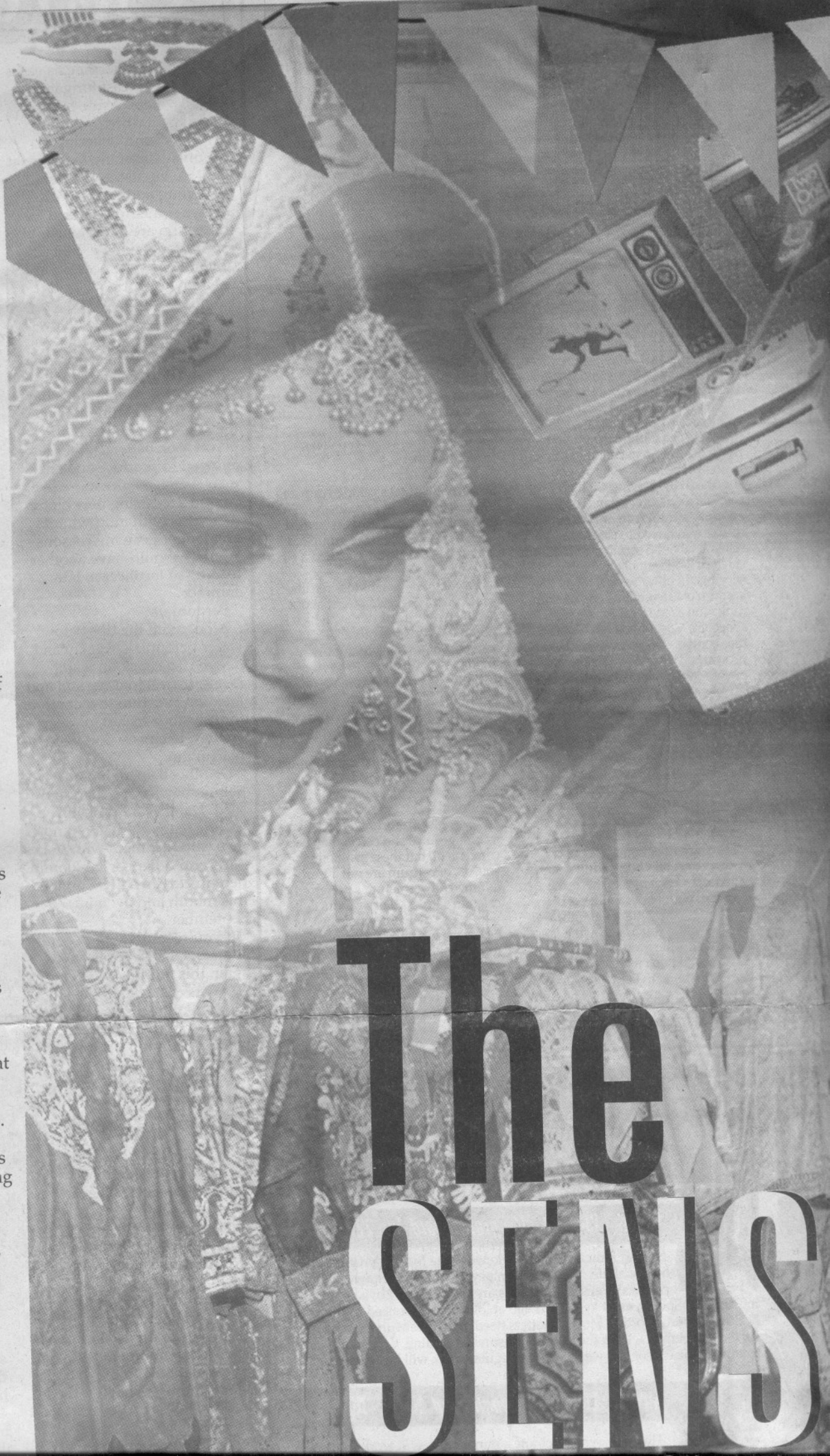
Jahez refers to a very ancient marriage practice of

our society where gifts of cash or other valuable items were given to the bride and exchanged between the families of bride and the groom. Its purpose was to cultivate a good relationship by showing respect towards the other family. It also meant to provide some essentials required by the bride in order to begin her new life in a new place with her groom.

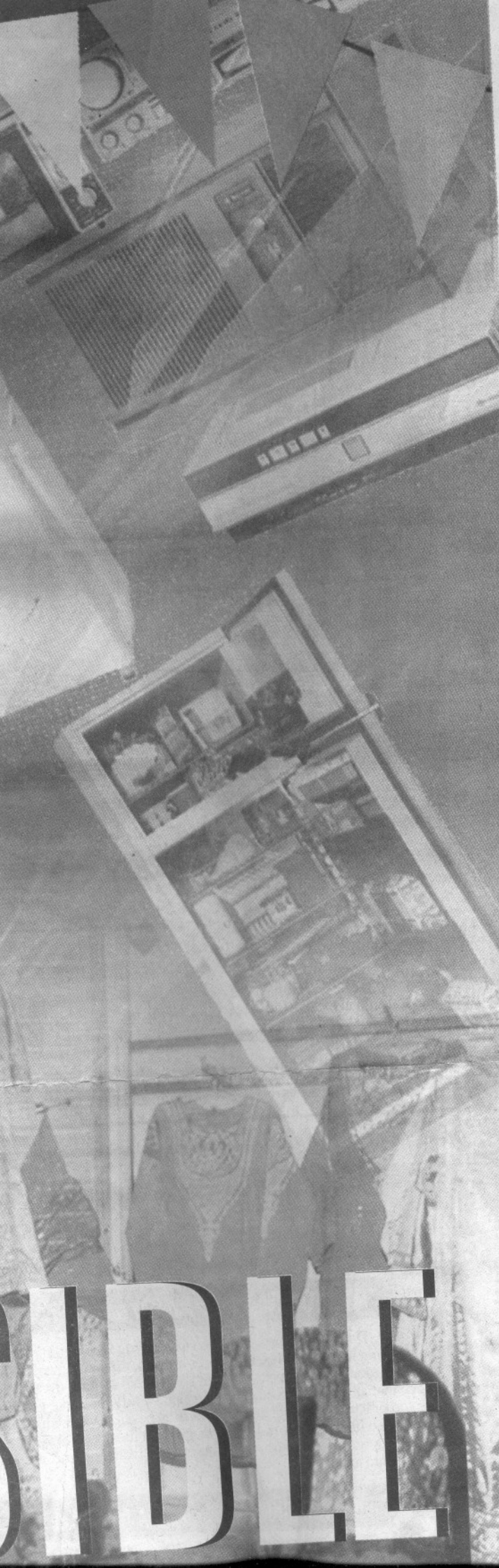
Unfortunately, *Jahez* has taken on a harmful form and meaning today. Although, it's an ancient tradition to enter into marriage with the "gift-giving", it has unfairly become mostly one-sided in recent times.

Rather than a voluntary act, it is now treated as an essential condition for marriage. Rather than providing useful items of everyday need, it has become more of a show of wealth and status. Even though we have a recorded history of our Prophet Mohammad, bestowing a few things lovingly, upon his daughter at her marriage, today using that as an excuse, we have gone totally overboard in our desire to hoard an impressive *Jahez* for our daughters.

Is there such a thing as a sensible *jahez*? It is worth trying to figure that out. We need to follow a simple rule or at least we can try and get rid of the showy part and keep the useful one. It is hard to deny the need for a few essentials when it comes to starting a new life for a couple. They may start on their own or live with their parents but there are certain things that they require to get along. Those who married against the wishes of their parents and were left on their own to fill an empty house with essentials will bear witness to the truth of this less fashionable



The SENS



ages in a bank locker.

The cost of the bridal dress varies from person to person, but just remember that it is a dress which you cannot wear easily very often after that day.

How many times you hear women feeling sorry for spending so much on an outfit they only wore once. And the same is true for the rest of the formal and informal dresses. Calculate how many you will need and limit yourself to that number. Fashions change continuously, and it is pointless to have a wardrobe full of clothes with horrendous embroideries, and outdated *dabka* work, you never want to look at again.

Choose your furniture wisely, picking things which again you will need immediately. Electronics are also mostly there in order to add the touch of extravagance to the *jahez*. It is wise to select carefully, and thoughtfully. If the bride is going to live with her in-laws than giving her all the electronics like refrigerator, freezer, sewing machine, washing machine etc. will be useless as they are already there in any household.

Kitchen ware and other accessories should be such that you feel comfortable using. It is never too late to keep adding stuff to your home, and for that a little saved up amount doesn't hurt anyone.

A very stupid practice which one comes across, is when the girl's parents sell off a part of her inheritance like a plot of land or so, in order to gather all these titbits like an expensive bridal dress, jewellery, crockery etc. for her wedding. Without realising they exchange very temporary things for something that could actually give her financial protection in the future, and can also grow in value unlike the perishable goods they replace it with. It is the worst

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true that essentials are difficult to define and people without asking for it still expect a lot to be provided under that cover.

What the 'bride to be' needs to keep reminding her family and herself from time to time is that she needs to draw the line somewhere and stay within a pre-set limit. This range for the *jahez* must be carefully decided upon with mutual consultation of the family, amongst themselves. It can be hoped that today we have

INJILA ZEESHAN says we should limit *Jahez* to only what the couple will need to set up a new home

reached a stage in which the brides' family, who bear the larger burden during most of our marriages, will not subject themselves to the wishes of the groom's family and will not be dictated about the *jahez*

in the form of a list, given to them by the parents of the groom.

Clearing that out of the way, let's move on to figuring out what is a must and what can be easily dropped. It is amazing to find that

females still insist on making 100 *goras* and feel proud of the fact that they wasted that amount of money and time on doing so. Or equally ridiculous is the fact that some mothers give utensils and expensive crockery of no use to their girls simply because they got it in their *jahez* from their parents and they feel they must keep the tradition alive. These things are hardly ever utilised, ending up as decoration pieces on shelves. Some go overboard when it comes to furniture. Others feel jewellery is the biggest



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Jahez

status symbol as if it is going to guarantee happiness for the bride.

The custom of *Jahez* can be made a little more sensible by setting new standards, so that it gets

one, which looks delicately pretty and comes at an affordable price too. If we encourage such practices and our media has a big role to play in this, we can help

selves, feeling to be dressed according to the latest fashion. Who can stop the spendthrifts from showing off? But even a pretty girl who is overdone can look ugly,

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more affected by trends and fashions. For example, the latest fashion in bridal jewellery is to wear a not too heavy set and also just a single

give such an option to those girls who without feeling low about not having too much to spend on gold, can still feel good about them-

loaded from head to foot in gold, wearing something so elaborate that it makes it difficult for her even to move. Buy stuff that you can use easily

example of maintaining pretentious values. Those who can afford an extravagant wedding, and wish to present their daughter with expensive things must also try and maintain some kind of a sanity about the kind of expenditure they are doing. They can present their daughter with something substantial like property, to ensure her economic independence if need may be, instead of wasting their money on piling up show things for everyone to get envious of for a short period of time.

It remains undoubtedly, an ideal situation *would be where the groom and the bride refuse to accept any presents in the name of *jahez*, but if we cannot get rid of this practice we can help make life easier for people who might not belong to the upper class of our society. Whether you have loads to spend or whether you don't, every one of us must make an effort to cut down on our *jahez*, limiting it to only what the couple will need to set up a new home.*