



Renuka Chowdhury



Vasundhara Raje



Dilip Cherian



Anita Lal

A Delhi weekend soiree

▶ **ANITA LAL**, the creator of the Good Earth brand and the grande dame of luxury lifestyle in India threw a dinner over the weekend at her 100-year-old palatial mansion in Delhi's Diplomatic Enclave to welcome the monsoons. But even such a delicious invitation could not coax the clouds to comply. Delhi remained resolutely dry and hot like an oven set by a meticulous chef preparing for a baste. Fortunately for Lal, her friends more than made up for the absence of precipitation, by showing up in all their finery. There was Congress MP from the Rajya Sabha, the irrepressible **Renuka Chowdhury**, the BJP's glamorous **Vasundhara Raje** looking svelte and glamorous ("After all I'm wearing Good Earth clothes," she said to us) journalist and TV presenter **Sunil Sethi**, art impresario **Amit Judge**, PR guru **Dilip Cherian** and a host of other Delhi denizens. Lal, and her husband **Vikram**, the ascetic and cerebral ex-chairman of the Eicher Group, are one of Delhi's most sought after and unusual couples. Well travelled and

read, they break every stereotype of how a major industrialist and his partner live. Vikram, for instance, retired from the chairmanship of the Eicher Group and has been involved in a number of voluntary organisations. (He is the president of Common Cause, a public interest organisation) and is active on the Goodearth Education Foundation, which runs over 70 balwadi schools).

Anita, herself the daughter of a Harvard professor, despite her extraordinary aesthetic sensibilities, is down to earth, approachable and interested in subjects far removed from her work.

No wonder their home played host to some of Delhi's most interesting people on Friday night. But, of course, the aesthete's hand was present. Strung from the antique chandeliers on her 100-foot ceiling were freshly plucked garlands of mogra flowers that gave the room a heady fragrance. "I could have ordered flowers," explained Anita, "But I have this old traditional flower man who comes over and makes these garlands."