

August 27, 2020

Espresso

Magazine



Abhishek Banerjee

Acting is present
in your eyes

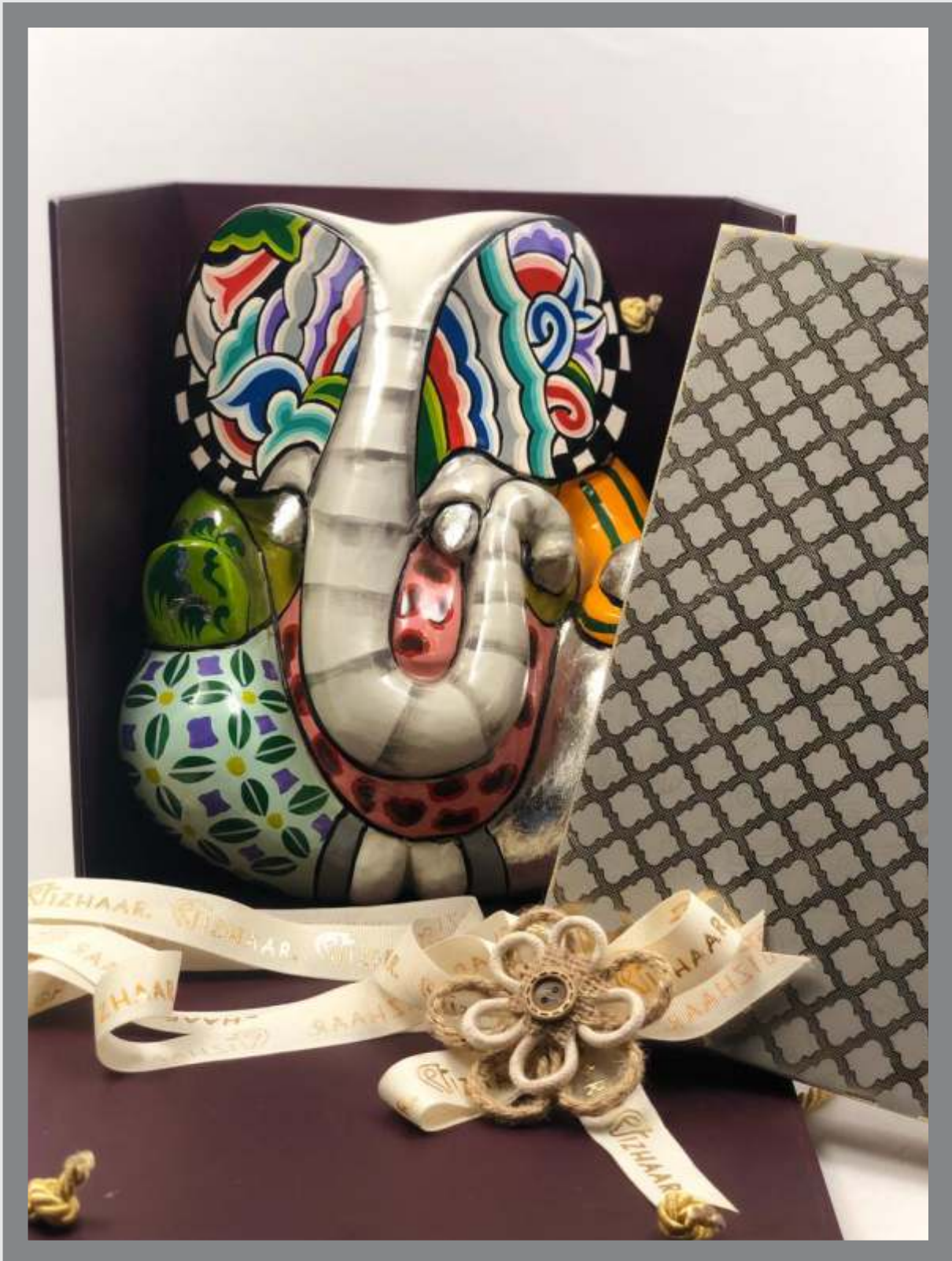
Vidya Balan

Shakuntala Devi
made so many
people fall in love
with Maths

Grub Hub

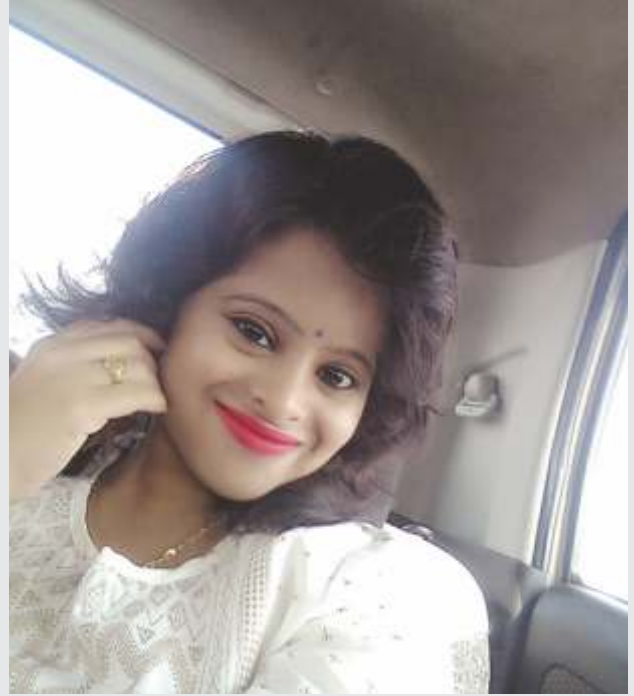
Onam Special
Delicacies

Stylist - Anchal Notani
Photographer - Girish Rajput
Designer - Kunal Maroo



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EDITOR'S LETTER



Novel Coronavirus pandemic has completely changed the way we have been living. While the cases in India are still raising, we have accepted the new normal way with such restrictions and precautions. We are even gradually rolling back to our daily routine, 'social distancing' and 'stay-at-home' are becoming a norm for us. Over the past few months we all faced some harsh realities of life where many lost their jobs, businesses have shut down, with depression grasping our mind even in a worse way. The lockdown has had a terrible dreadful impact on everyone including the showbiz industry. With the Covid-19 crisis keeping the movie theatres shut, filmmakers have decided to skip the theatrical release of their films and go straight to digital release. The same is with Shakuntala Devi and Virgin Bhanupriya. We have featured our super-talented Vidya Balan and extremely bold Urvashi Rautela in this month's release.

The month of August marks the beginning of the festivities across the country. Krishna Janmashtami to Ganesh Chaturthi, Onam etc, this month heralds the arrival of one happy occasion after another.

The festival calendar becomes dull this year. This pandemic has allowed us to redesign our lifestyle and has changed the way of major festivals with Krishna Janmashtami, taking the virtual route for social distancing.

In this month we celebrate the festivals fully. You would love to checkout mouthwatering Onam and Ganesh Chaturthi recipes, our fashion and beauty page goes into a new collection of Lable Asha Gautam, special festive touch to your look this Onam plus a bold, bright distinct interview with your beloved "PaatalLok" fame Abhishek Banerjee aka "HathodaTyagi".

And what are you waiting for, rush your way through to our cover story and cuddle with it digitally?

Rituparna Sengupta Basu
Editor
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Masterpiece 2020

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MASTERPIECE 2020

Blend Of Creativity, Skill And Traditional Crafts

Cherry Red Paithani

Folk Art Double Ikat 2

Label **Asha Gautam** recently launched their new collection **MASTERPIECE 2020** considering the festive season is around the corner. The signature pieces feature intricate weaves in the richest of yarns, done by master weavers in various clusters across the length and breadth of India. Each masterpiece takes seven months to a year to be fully developed. From floral and geometric motifs on Banarsi Rangkat and Kinkhabs to silk and tissue Paithani done in both silver and gold zari along with motifs inspired from natural habitat to nandi bail and folk art motifs on Double Ikkats to Bandhani technique done on Kanjeevaram sarees. **The MASTERPIECE 2020** showcases a beautiful blend of

creativity, skill and traditional crafts this collection displays an eclectic range of designs. Expect to see some Paithani appliqué on heavy duty lehenga and paired with bandhani, patola and organza dupattas. Hand embellishments and embroideries such as cross stitch, petit point, zardosi, mukesh, resham and gota are the hero elements in most cholis and dupattas. Festive colours such as cherry tomato, amber yellow, twilight blue, violet, mimosa yellow, fuchsia pink and bottle green are used extensively in the collection aligning the pieces with the theme of celebrations and festivities. This collection have merged crafts, incorporates new techniques, played with textures to give an exclusive aesthetics.

Banarasi saree

Kinkhab Real Zari Banarasi Saree

Paithani Saree

Patan Patola 2

Patan Patola

Paithani lehenga with Organza dupatta

Paithani Lehenga With Bandhani Dupatta

Paithani Saree 2



ONAM SPECIAL

Add Special Festive Touch To Your Look This Onam

Marking the beginning of Kerala's harvest season, Onam is celebrated with great fervour and enthusiasm across India and especially in 'God's Own Country'. Interestingly, this festival also marks the beginning of the festive season in India, with Navratri and Diwali all following suit. So, our recommendation is that you start planning in advance – not just for Onam, but also for the other festivities that are soon coming your way.

This festive season, adorn traditional Kerala style jewellery from Kalyan Jewellers' Collection. They offer a wide array of intricate designs with contemporary and traditional motifs that are bound to add a touch of grandeur to your Onam look. Whether you want to keep it simple with a statement ring, or dress-up your look with an elaborate choker, Kalyan Jewellers has you covered.



With the **Gopura Nagapadam** necklace, **Maanga Maala**, a longer **Nagapadam** haar and those stunning **Jimikki** earrings, Actress Vaibhavi is a vision in off-white **Kasavu** sari.



Palakka Maala

No Malayali Onam look is complete without the goodness of the green *Palakka Maala*. While it is a typical Kerala design, the exquisite nature of this work and its regal banyan leaf motif has made it a cross over the piece.

Kada Bangle

Inspired by the *jaali* work of the royal darbars, this bold *kada* bangle, has a tinge of orange added to its gold finish. The rubies embedded give a slight touch of elegance and make the piece look more effervescent and vibrant with two different cut designs on each side.



Gold Necklace

Radiate royal elegance and charm as you accessorize your outfit with this alluring gold necklace from Kalyan Jewellers collection. This piece is distinct in its design and has the Goddess motif carved into each leaflet. The rubies add to the beautiful contract of this design.

long haar

Inspired by traditional temple-jewellery designs, this long *haar* marries the Vedic cylindrical good-luck amulet with an uncut diamond-studded Goddess motif pendant. The piece exudes elegance and pairs beautifully with the traditional off-white Onam sari.



Choker

If you are looking for something grander, this choker version of the *Mulla Mottu Maala* or the traditional Kerala style jasmine bud design, is what you could go for. This beautifully crafted choker is embellished with red rubies at the top, giving it an intricate floral design in the middle along with the string of jasmine buds and a pendant at the end of the choker.

Acting is present in your eyes and dialogues are just a meager accessory

Rituparna Sengupta Basu

Casting director Abhishek Banerjee started his career as an actor in Aamir Khan Starrer superhit socio-political movie Rang De Basanti, almost a decade ago. Over the past few years, he made a mark in this showbiz industry with his significant portrayal of the character. The ease that he brings to playing the character is really above any appreciation. For the past 10 years, he was doing a tremendously good job as a casting director under his company Casting Bay along with his partner Anmol Ahuja. Now he has awestruck the audience with his mesmerizing acting skills. In Paatal Lok as Vishal 'Hathoda' Tyagi he just kept on going with his multi-characteristic skills. On the account of Pataal Lok and many other Abhishek unfolds his journey, being himself and so on.

Stylist - Anchal Notani
Photographer - Girish Rajput
Designer - Kunal Maroo

Abhishek Banerjee



Expresso: It has been four months since Pataal Lok released, so how are you feeling?

Abhishek : I am quite happy with the responses I am getting. We all have gone through that feeling in childhood when we use to clear our school examinations with flying colors. So, this feeling is somewhat like that also, as I am staying alone currently, so I am kind of celebrating my happiness.

Expresso: You have played different characters in Pataal Lok, so how did you groom yourself for those?

Abhishek : Well, I have not been through a lot of grooming. I just studied the socio-political background of the character, from which society he belongs, his socio-political condition, which he is facing, how oppressed he is as a minority, etc. So, I had to understand these crucial points and had to feel how it feels when an entire society rejects you. It feels extremely bad when your relatives fight for property and their share, so I had to relate to that. After all these, I tried to relate myself with grief, and this is how things became easy for me. Throughout the show, I only had three dialogues, and the rest of the acting has been done with eye expressions. A person's eye is the only thing by which you can understand what he or she is trying to tell. When we were trained for acting, our mentors used to say that acting is present in your eyes, and dialogues are just a meager accessory.

Expresso: What made you grab the offer for Pataal Lok in one go?

Abhishek : I was involved with casting for a long time, and back in that time, Stree was released. So, Sudip Sharma watched Stree and another movie Aaji, which is available on Netflix. After that, he then asked me to give an audition for the series. So, I thought that it might be for Ansari since my character in Stree was quite a positive one. But, when he narrated a small background about the character, it seemed much like a challenge, so I took it. If I would have failed to portray the character, then it would have been a major fail, and I would have rejected myself. But, fortunately, I successfully portrayed the character, and people have given a great response, and I am quite happy.

Expresso: Did you face any breakdowns while playing such negative roles?

Abhishek: I did face a lot of breakdowns when playing such a role in the show. You see, when you feel someone's pain, it automatically hurts you. The way my character spends his life faces the problems did hurt me, and I cried too.

Expresso: Post shooting, did you face problems while coming back to your original self?

Abhishek: This is something that I feel happens with time. The set for me was like a classroom, and once my shoot gets over, I am out of my classroom. This means that I do not have to be in discipline after my class. Similarly, once my shoot gets over, I used to come back to my original self. But yes, after coming back to my home, I regularly did some homework like I use to read my scripts, and if not, then I used to understand and analyze the character that's it. I never took back my characters' back home.

Expresso: Do you relate yourself to the character?

Abhishek: After lockdown, I did start relating myself with the character since things are quite gloomy and empty. We do not have anything to do right now and living an abundant life. I now understand that abundance, his emptiness as well as his patience these days.





「When I play such dark characters, I simply feel powerful ...」

Expresso: Any difficult scene in this series?

Abhishek: I would say that guruji's scene where I had to cut the finger on behalf of Eklavya. So, that was the most difficult scene.

Expresso: What is the best moment of shooting Pataal Lok?

Abhishek: The last scene is my absolute favorite where I, as well as Jaydeep, both were standing while pointing the gun towards each other. Even though the scene does not have dialogue, but the way we were expressing millions of words through eyes was outstanding. While we were shooting for the scene, we did feel the situation as well as the scenario during that time.

Expresso: How did you feel after working with Sudip Sharma?

Abhishek: He is a very knowledgeable person and is quite aware of the social as well as the political things happening around us. Even after being such a knowledgeable person, he is a very jolly and fun-

loving as well. Since he is a writer, I respect him a lot. I feel that writers are great teachers and have knowledge of many things that we do not know. So, throughout the shooting, I have learned many things from him, and due to this reason, I had a great experience working with Sudip Sharma.

Expresso: Share with us some experiences you had working with Neeraj Kabi and Jaideep Ahlawat?

Abhishek: I have learned a lot from them since both of them have been in the industry for years. Even though I had only one scene with Neeraj sir, but it was fabulous. While working with Jaideep, he taught me a lot of interesting things. I was facing problems with showing emotion, so he then suggested using glycerin. The idea was quite good since I thought that I would have to do the emotional scenes on my own. I am still learning various sides of acting, and I use to believe that acting comes only from emotion. But, he taught me that emotions do not work all the time. So, you have to use makeup, prosthetics, and props for it.





Expresso: *We have seen you playing dark characters, so are you fond of playing such characters?*

Abhishek: I would not say that I am fond of, but I would say that I enjoy playing them. It is because dark characters give you power, which is impossible to feel in real life like we all are feeling in this situation. So, we human beings are powerless, and when I play such dark characters, I simply feel powerful.

Expresso: *How would you describe your journey from being a casting director to actor?*

Abhishek: Certainly a very hardworking and learning journey. I have worked as a casting director for almost eight to nine years, and then I opened my company. Once I was scared of giving auditions. As an actor you can't always wait for the right role. After that, I gave an audition and got selected for Stree. Just like people believe in court and when they win any case, they feel proud, so the same thing happened with me too. When I got selected for Stree, I felt blessed and understood that if you are hardworking, then you can certainly become an actor, but you will have to work hard for it. When a small impression get recognized, as an actor you dreams become reality.

Expresso: *So you always wanted to be an actor?*

Abhishek: Yes, I have always wanted to be an actor since childhood. When I was in the eleventh standard, my attention towards acting was stronger compared to studies, and due to which I was scoring low marks. One of my school teachers once taunted me regarding my passion for acting, which I took in a positive way. So, I realized that I should shift my interest in acting. Then I took admission to college from where I started learning theatre and finally came to Mumbai.

Expresso: *What have you learned with time?*

Abhishek: I would say patience.

Expresso: *Since you are a casting director, what are the qualities you look for in a potential actor?*

Abhishek: If someone wants to be a successful actor, he or she has to use the presence of the mind. I analyze this thing when someone comes for an audition, and apart from using just props, using the presence of mind is something I feel is extremely necessary. Also, I analyze how that person is creating a scene with his or her mind and then performing it.

Expresso: *Is there any actor whom you have spotted once has now become one of the faces in the industry?*

Abhishek: There are many I would say such as Sidhant Chaturvedi, Zeeshan Ayyub has certainly established their name successfully in the industry. Then Avinash Tiwary is yet another successful face who has made a massive place in the industry.

Expresso: *What is the biggest risk you have taken till now?*

Abhishek: The biggest risk according to me is certainly coming to Mumbai for acting.

Expresso: Among the various characters you have played, which one is your favorite?

Abhishek: It would be Hathoda Tyagi since this character has given me a name in the industry as well as satisfaction.

Expresso: What is your dream role?

Abhishek: I have not thought about it in particular. For me, acting is something that I feel is a matter of experience. I have never planned about utilizing it in different ways. But, I am very much eager to play the role of Jake Gyllenhaal since I am completely in love with the character. If you ask me as an audience, then I would say the character played by Keanu Reeves is my favorite, and I want to play the role.

Expresso: One thing that you have discovered recently about yourself?

Abhishek: I can be quite calm and peaceful even there is huge chaos going on outside.

Expresso: What brings a smile on your face, mostly?

Abhishek: It is very easy to bring a smile on my face with any joke, anything positive, any small act or even a compliment makes me happy.

Expresso: Mention three things which people don't know about you.

Abhishek: I am a great cook, obsessed with traveling, and I cannot

listen to you even if you are talking to me, especially if it is not something exciting.

Expresso: You mentioned that you can cook well, so name some dishes that you have prepared till now.

Abhishek: I have made a lot of new dishes, or you can say that most of the time, I use to cook between my wife and me. I have prepared both veg and non-veg items like biriyani, Chicken Chettinad, Afghani omelet, and many more.

Expresso: What is your upcoming project after Kaali 2 and Pataal Lok?

Abhishek: It is Helmet and Aankh Micholi. Both are from Sony Pictures, and Helmet is Satram Ramani's, and Aankh Micholi is Umesh Shukla's. Dino Morea has directed Helmet. Aparshakti Khurana, Pranutan Bahl, and I would be there. In Aankh Micholi I, along with Mrunal Thakur, Sharman Joshi, Paresch Raval, and Abhimanyu Dassani will be there.

Expresso: Any series that you have binge-watched recently?

Abhishek: Recently I have watched Ozark.

Expresso: What is the last thing you have Googled?

Abhishek: I have Googled about The Ancient History of Bengal.

Expresso: Any funny things with which you have come across recently?

Abhishek: Every day I come across something funny. I am a funny person, and funny does not mean my wit, but I do something funny throughout the day.

Expresso: How would you describe yourself in a hashtag?

Abhishek: It would be a hashtag survivor.

Stylist - Anchal Notani
Photographer - Girish Rajput
Designer - Kunal Maroo

RUNWAY



By Sangita Marda Agarwal

Story teller & Sunrise watcher

Co-Founder - 33 & Third Studio x Lab

Berlin met me like an acquaintance. Someone who is distant at the first go but maybe will warm up to you later to ride your senses. My first impression of Berlin, when I stepped out of the aircraft, was cold. In more ways than one. The temperature outside was 1 degree and the forecast was that it would snow.

The drive to our apartment at 61, Frankfurter Allee was about an hour long. The Tryst began with the sights of the frozen river Spree, outside my car window.

The trees lined up on both sides of the road looked naked with the needle-like stems pointing heavenward. Graffiti on the wall greeted us at most turns and the city seemed, well how do I put it - not so warm or friendly.

Paula, our hostess at the apartment, was surprisingly chirpy and made me feel instantly welcomed. Later in the afternoon, I stepped out to inhale Berlin. A short subway ride took me to the Brandenburg Tor station.

The Brandenburg Gate is an 18th-century neoclassical monument which was commissioned by King Fredrick William II

of Prussia as a sign of peace.

From 1961 to 1989 this gate symbolised divided Germany as the Berlin Wall shut off access to the gate both for east and west Germans. One block north of the gate stood the formidable Reichstag building which houses the German parliament.

As I continued walking past the Checkpoint Charlie - I was excited about seeing the remnants of the fallen Berlin Wall.

Perhaps like some of you reading this, my knowledge of Berlin was restricted and centred around this Cold War creation. I knew little else about the city.

We continued walking till we reached a macabre site called the 'Memorial of the murdered Jews of Europe'. Two thousand seven hundred and eleven concrete grey coffin-like slabs are arranged here in a grid pattern on a sloping field to commemorate the holocaust.

A sense of uneasy loneliness and despair began to engulf me the moment I entered this site. Cold waves jolted my spine and I thought I would get lost in this labyrinth.

I wanted to run out of this grid which seemed symbolic of the tyrannical discipline and bureaucratic order that kept the



killing machine grinding, to exterminate more than three million innocent Jews. A feeling of entrapment and claustrophobia engulfed me as I thought of those who were unburied and thrown into unmarked pits to die in anonymity.

I thought of the brutality of war, it's tragic results and the Nazi hatred.

Are the Germans remorseful or ashamed of this past? Just as I was thinking about it we came across a parking lot beneath which I was told lies in complete ignominy, the remains of the most hated man in history- Hitler.

As the sun began to set, I decided to take the subway back.

A couple was doing the tango to the music of the double bass near the station landing. People were striding in and out of nowhere. I got down at the Postdamer Platz, an urban chic neighbourhood buzzing with cafes, restaurants and life!

Buskers were playing music on the street corner. Suddenly the city looked so eclectic, so different.

While I sat soaking the vibe around and eating an early meal - I thought of how Berlin reflected in a day the three iconic periods: World War II, it's Cold War division into East and West, and its current moment as a global creative capital.

It was time to return to the apartment but I knew I was already falling a little in love with this enigmatic city.



CELEB TALK

Shakuntala Devi made so many people fall in love with Maths

Vidya Balan

Conversation with **Rituparna Sengupta Basu**

Shakuntala Devi is a biographical film that shines a light on the woman who's famously known as the human-computer. However, she was more than that - she was a loving mother and a staunchly feminist woman who wrote one of the most empathetic works on homosexuality at a time when the subject was taboo in Indian society. Shakuntala Devi's contributions are endless, but the film focuses on the more tender aspect of the mother-daughter relationship.

Vidya Balan needs no introduction, and the star once again does a fantastic job, bringing the legendary lady's story to life. Here, Vidya Balan joins Team Expresso to share her thoughts about the movie.





Expresso: What made you take the role of Shakuntala Devi?

Vidya Balan: Well, you see, when I was given the role, I didn't know much about her. I only knew that she is regarded as the "human computer" and has made Indians proud everywhere she has been to. And yes, of course, I knew that she is a holder of Guinness Book of World Records. But yes, through the film and what Anu Menon shared with me, what a fantastic personality she was. And I also heard all the inspiring stories of her life. But just like us, she had her struggles, and she lived unapologetically and did what she wanted to without limiting herself to only one thing. She had dreams, and she achieved them.

Expresso: What is your honest relationship with numbers? Did you face any difficulties in remembering the numbers during the shoot?

Vidya Balan: Not really. I wouldn't say that was much of a problem because I have a thing for numbers you see. As a child, I was good at Maths, and it was very easy for me to remember phone

numbers, birthdays, and all you know. However, then the practice went off as I took arts and sociology. Also with mobile phones now we don't use our minds a lot. But with the film, it felt great that I still have the ability to remember numbers quickly. I didn't need any cue cards or prompting for that. I remember this one scene of the Guinness Book that we were shooting, and I gave that scene in one take. But what was challenging for me were the Maths shows. Her maths shows were like magic shows, you know! There was style, flair, flamboyance, and an aura that we had to capture. The recordings of her maths shows were a great help in this regard, and ultimately it was an absolute thrill to shoot these scenes.

Expresso: Everything has changed in this lockdown, including promotions. Do you feel any differences between earlier promotion and now?

Vidya Balan: Earlier it would be all the madness where we would meet at one place get ready and leave, and it was different altogether. Now we have video calls and this is going to be the new normal.

Expresso: *How did you groom yourself for this character?*

Vidya Balan: The main credit goes to Anu Menon. I spent a lot of time with Anu to understand Shakuntala Devi. The film was particularly challenging because of the maths shows. I would hear all the tapes. There were so many layers to her personality that capturing the entire essence of her character was both exciting and challenging. We tried a lot of costumes and many other things. The fact that generally in some of my films I've to wear very simple costumes and sometimes only one. This film allowed me to be all glamorous and fun, and with different stages of her life, the costumes also changed. The entire credit for this goes to our designers, stylists, hair, and makeup artists. They did a fantastic job.

Expresso: *What is the similarity between you and Shakuntala Devi?*

Vidya Balan: The similarities that we have are that we both love to live life to the fullest. We both laugh our hearts out and have similarities in our take on life.

Expresso: *Beyond intellectuality, she had a unique sense of humor, what is your point of view on this?*

Vidya Balan: As humans, when we think about a genius very faintly, we think about a male. Shakuntala Devi was someone different, and I would as a kid too always wonder, do these geni eat? Do they burp? Do they take a bath every day and so much more. When I got into the character, its all flesh and blood, and they do live like humans only. Her maths shows were full of laughter, style, humor, and everything that changed how people perceive Mathematics. I think the fantastic sense of humor she had didn't let a lot of people look at maths as dull and boring. Shakuntala Devi made so many people fall in love with Maths because of how she looked at it.

Expresso: *What do you wonder most in Shakuntala Devi?*

Vidya Balan: How did she do these things? Shakuntala Devi, during that time, thought way ahead of the present. She was an extraordinary woman. She never received a formal education, and for a woman at that time to have had such tremendous achievements without basic education is incredible! You see, she was not just a mathematic magician, but was so full of life and had such a

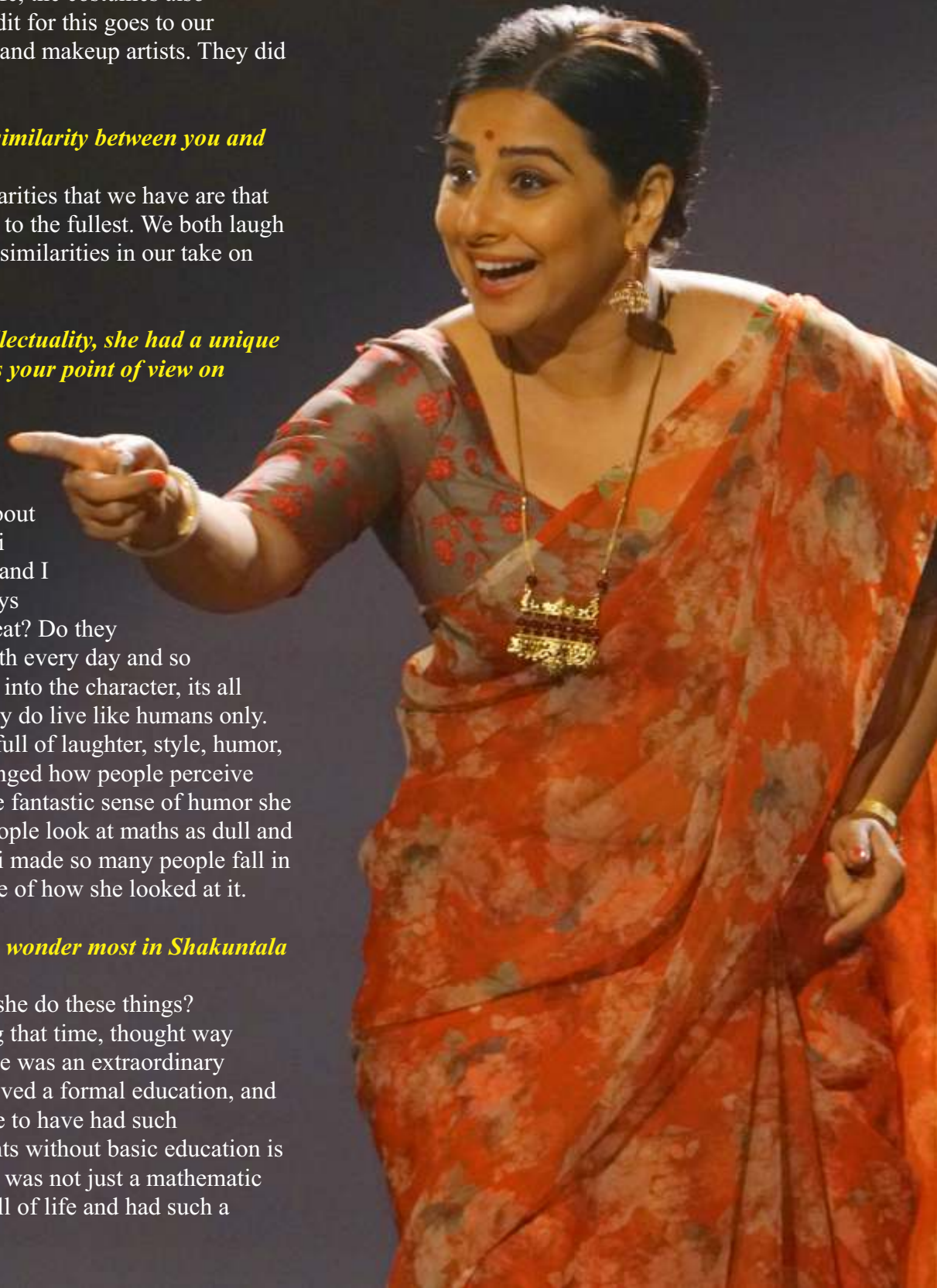
vibrant personality. It just keeps you mesmerized.

Expresso: *What are the things you learned from her life?*

Vidya Balan: Maths is in everything. Her story is inspirational and makes you see how if we believe in ourselves, the world is our oyster. For someone who hasn't been to school, such incredible feats are indeed marvellous achievements.

Expresso: *In your childhood, were you afraid of math by any chance?*

Vidya Balan: No, I liked Maths and had a good





relationship with numbers. I would get good marks too. The touch was left later on, but with this film that loves for numbers was rekindled, and I was happy to see that I still can recollect numbers easily.

Expresso: What are the things an actor should keep in mind while doing a biopic?

Vidya Balan: You know, when you do a biopic, it's more the essence of the person that needs to get captured. You don't imitate the person or mimic the person. I think that was a big learning.

Expresso: How difficult is it for you to get in a rhythm after lockdown?

Vidya Balan: I'm happy that I got to spend so much time at home. In between films, I rarely get to do that. Siddharth and I have got so much time to spend together after a long time. I did a lot of things, you know, tried my hand at cooking, looked up content, did various household activities. Also, it felt unrealistic to see the beach empty. Sometimes it felt like my private beach! So it wasn't very difficult for me to spend the time.

Expresso: You are surrounded by a crew of women, mostly for this movie, and it's a biopic of a woman too. How does it feel like?

Vidya Balan: It feels great. I think this is the most complex character that I have played. For Shakuntala Devi, a lot of the team members are females, so it's different energy together.

Expresso: Films now directly release on the OTT platform. Do you think that the OTT platform and the theatre both form can co-exist moving forward?

Vidya Balan: Well, most films are made for the big screen, and releasing on box office gives you an idea that so many people have seen it and all, but considering the current situation, OTT is the best choice. And I am very happy that Shakuntala Devi is releasing on Amazon Prime. Right now, people are just sitting at home, and a film like this is surely going to entertain them.

Expresso: What is your best memory from the shoot?

Vidya Balan: I enjoyed all the scenes involving the maths shows. When we

“

I liked Maths and had a good relationship with numbers. I would get good marks too ...

”





Photography : Dabboo Ratnani



researched her shows, we saw that she would have a lot of fun during these shows and so we tried to put in that element in the film. She would do something new in every show. Apart from this, I think meeting her daughter, Anupama Banerjee, in London and spending time with her was very special for me. She was very forthcoming in sharing details about Shakuntala Devi's life.

Expresso: *Any scene from the film that is close to your heart?*

Vidya Balan: Yes, of course, there are many such scenes, but I would prefer not to disclose any of them right now before the audience has seen the film.

Expresso: *What, according to you, would compel*

the audience to watch Shakuntala Devi?

Vidya Balan: That she was not just a great mathematician. Apart from that, she tried her hands on everything; she got into politics. Also, she was the first person to write a book on homosexuality, which is brilliant. She later was also into numerology. We have shown the life of a person in just two hours and tried to cover as much as we can, which is a challenge.

Expresso: *What are your upcoming projects?*

Vidya Balan: 'Sherni' was being shot right before the pandemic. It is Amit Masurkar's film that we were shooting in Madhya Pradesh. But obviously, we had to stop the shoot and come back to Mumbai. So hopefully, after the monsoons, we can resume shoot for that.

Urvashi Rautela Shares Thoughts on Virgin Bhanupriya and Female Autonomy

Nabanita Dutta

Virgin Bhanupriya is a fantastic addition to Zee5's roster of comedy films. Helmed by Ajay Lohan, the movie delves into the mind of a girl who has come of age and wants to experience all that life has to offer. As a smart and qualified college girl, Bhanupriya realizes that she has missed out on sexual experiences. Rukul, her progressive friend, nudges the virgin Bhanu - as Bhanupriya is affectionately called - to have an intimate encounter. Needless to say, the situation escalates to a humorous comedy of errors.

Urvashi Rautela of Great Grand Masti and Sanam Re fame plays the role of the titular Bhanupriya.

Recently, Espresso Magazine caught up with her, to hear her thoughts about the movie, the character, and her experiences.



Expresso: With *Virgin Bhanupriya* finally releasing on the OTT platform, how are you feeling?

Urvashi Rautela: I am very excited and happy. Because of Zee5, more than 200 countries can watch the film now. I am delighted that people from Africa, the US, Dubai, Middle East will get a chance to watch our movie. Excited that the reach is so extensive and that so many people can enjoy watching the film.

Expresso: After *Hate Story 4*, this is your second women-centric film. What about the script that made you feel like saying yes for the film?

Urvashi Rautela: Well, the narrative of the film is about a conservative girl who wants to fall in love on her terms. It is a very straightforward comedy, and I think the audience will enjoy watching this. That is why I felt like doing this film, and of course, I am playing the protagonist of the film, which is a strong role to play. Bhanupriya's character is very well written, and I have really loved playing this role. It's a fun film, and it's always good to be part of such a project.

Expresso: Can you relate to the character of Bhanupriya?

Urvashi Rautela: Yes, I think I can pretty much relate to Bhanupriya. She is a conservative and responsible child of her parents. So yes, I do find the character quite relatable.

Expresso: What is your best memory from the shoot?

Urvashi Rautela: To be honest, every day on the set was extremely fun-filled and memorable. It is a comedy film as I said; hence we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves during the shoot. And all the memories from the entire shoot are very special for me.

Expresso: What is your favorite scene from *Virgin Bhanupriya*?

Urvashi Rautela: Well, I would say the scene where Bhanu (Bhanupriya) is about to get married is my favorite.



Expresso: As you know that our society has a very orthodox opinion of virginity. Would you like to say something in this regard?

Urvashi Rautela: I think it is a very circumstantial concept. Girls shouldn't come under any pressure about this. Yes, it is a very stigmatized concept in our culture, but we should realize that it is our body, and somebody else's opinion shouldn't bother us so much. It's a personal choice, and people should learn to respect that.

Expresso: *Virgin Bhanupriya* releases tomorrow. What do you think the film has in store for the audience?

Urvashi Rautela: I think people will really have a good share of laughter and entertainment. As I said before, this is a comedy film, and good comedy films are a little rare. So yes, I think there is some good comedy for people to be excited about.

Expresso: Recently, you had shared a video with Sushant Singh Rajput. Tomorrow will be one month since his demise. Do you have any fond memories with him?

Urvashi Rautela: Sushant was an extremely bright and intelligent person. We had performed together in award functions, and yes, I definitely have many such fond memories with him. I wish that people always have a loving memory of him, and they remember him through the wonderful films that he did. People should keep him really close to their hearts.

Expresso: How was your journey from 2013 to 2020?

Urvashi Rautela: I would definitely say that it has been a wonderful journey. I am grateful to everyone who I have worked with and all those who have blessed me. I feel I have done more than I expected, and I am thankful for that.

Expresso: What are the new things that you have learned along the way?

Urvashi Rautela: Well, I have been lucky to work with some amazing filmmakers, and it is always an amazing experience to collaborate with learned people. I think that way; my journey has been very enriching.



Expresso: *What is the biggest risk you have taken so far?*

Urvashi Rautela: I think doing women-centric films is itself a big risk. And this is my second woman-centric film after Hate Story 4. So yes, in my opinion, that is a big risk and a good one for me.

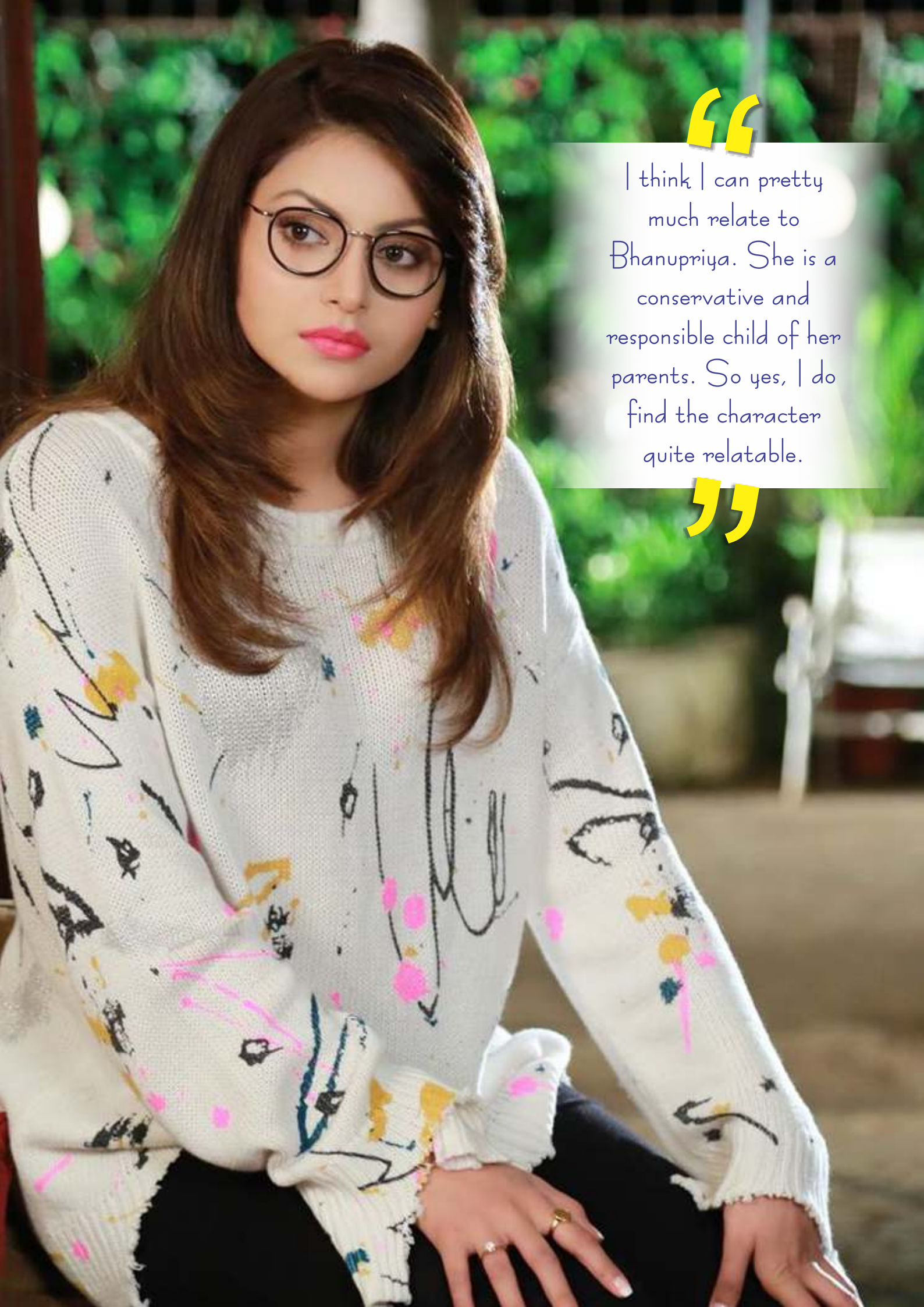
Expresso: *Apart from being an actor, dancer, and a fitness freak, is there anything else you want to explore?*

Urvashi Rautela: Singing! I got many opportunities to sing in many of my films, but I couldn't do it at that time. So yes, I think I would love to explore that.

Expresso: *You are from Uttarakhand. Tell us something that you miss about the place.*

Urvashi Rautela: Firstly, I really miss the nature. Apart from that, yes, of course, I miss the people and the civilization of the place.





“

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”



Expresso: *What are the three things that nobody knows about you?*

Urvashi Rautela: Well, I think it would be that I am a very loyal, very sincere, and a highly disciplined person.

Expresso: *What helps you beat the stress?*

Urvashi Rautela: I try to be happy and positive as much as I can. I think that really helps in coping with stress.

Expresso: *What attracted you towards acting?*

Urvashi Rautela: Well, you see, I have a very simple and honest answer to this. I have always loved acting and have been very passionate about it. I think these are enough reasons to be attracted to something.

Expresso: *Do you follow any beauty tip on a regular basis?*

Urvashi Rautela: I do make it a habit of exercising regularly, which helps me a lot.

Expresso: *Is there a fitness mantra that you would like to share?*

Urvashi Rautela: I think to make it a habit to do some sort of exercise regularly and also stay hydrated. Drink lots of water.

Expresso: *Mention one thing that you learned during the lockdown.*

Urvashi Rautela: Yes, I did! I discovered that I am a peace lover.

Expresso: *What is the last film that you watched?*

Urvashi Rautela: Virgin Bhanupriya!

Expresso: *What is your upcoming project?*

Urvashi Rautela: My next film is ThiruttuPayale 2, which is actually the remake of the famous South Indian cinema.

5 Important Tips to Manage Curly Hair During the Monsoon Season

Curly hair is undoubtedly beautiful — but it can sometimes become a hassle to manage. And monsoon is one of those seasons when curly hair can be particularly troublesome. The humidity tends to add extra volume to the hair. At the same time, the hair can become dehydrated and frizzy very easily during this time — even resulting in hair loss.

If you're getting overwhelmed by your curly hair this rainy season, here are five simple yet effective tips to solve the problem.



Shampoo Your Hair 2-3 Times A Week

If excessive humidity starts making your hair frizzy, there might be a temptation to wash your hair every day. However, experts say that this is a big no. Stick to washing your hair 2-3 times a week, not more. At the same time, if you haven't already, switch to a shampoo that's designed for intense hair treatment, especially for curly hair. Mamaearth Argan Shampoo is a good option.

Be Liberal with Your Conditioner

Don't forget to condition your hair *each time you shampoo*. A liberal dose of conditioner is essential to maintain your curls and avoid that frizzy look — especially in the monsoon. If you're using the Argan Shampoo, then follow up with Mamaearth Argan Conditioner for better results.

Avoid Drastic Hair

Treatments

Monsoon is the worst possible season for dramatic hair changes — especially if you have curly hair. Avoid straightening or bleaching your hair during this time. If you want to add some highlights or touch-up your hair color, that should be okay. But avoid any kind of major chemical treatments— keep them for before or after the monsoon.

Treat Yourself with A Hair Serum/Hair Mask

If hair serum or hair mask isn't part of your regular hair care routine, this is the time to add it in. This will keep your hair and scalp hydrated and help you steer clear of that extra frizz. In fact, a hair mask isn't something that you should keep for special occasions — or use just once a month. It needs to become a part of your routine— making sure that you use it at least twice a week. Mamaearth Argan Hair Mask is a great option, especially if you're struggling with monsoon frizz.



Be Careful with Hair Oil

While hair oil needs to be part of your hair care routine for sure, there are certain things you should keep in mind. Excessive oiling during monsoon may weigh your hair down, even more, so don't leave it on overnight. Apply it before you shampoo your hair and just leave it on for an hour or two before washing it off.

Curly hair can seem like a curse in the monsoon, but this doesn't have to be the case. All you need to do is maintain a monsoon-friendly hair care routine and avoid the temptation to do anything drastic with those curly tresses during this season.



Lockdown Wedding Makeup Tips

By **Neha Suradkar**

Makeup and Nail Artist & Educator



All celebrations have taken a backseat during the lockdown and weddings are also either postponed or are happening at a very small scale. Monsoon has always been a deterrent for weddings, and along with lockdown, we are definitely going to miss the grandeur of weddings this year.

But, along with the problems that have been caused by the lockdown, there are a lot of opportunities that have been presented to the brides who are planning a lockdown wedding. There's work from home, so you are not exposed to outside elements like sun and pollution, and since you don't spend time travelling, you have a little more time on your hand. This time is a good time to spend taking care of your skincare and fitness regime. Self-care can be a priority now. Makeup is an important aspect of your look as a bride. Every bride wants to look gorgeous for the wedding and tries to get the best makeup artist for the same.

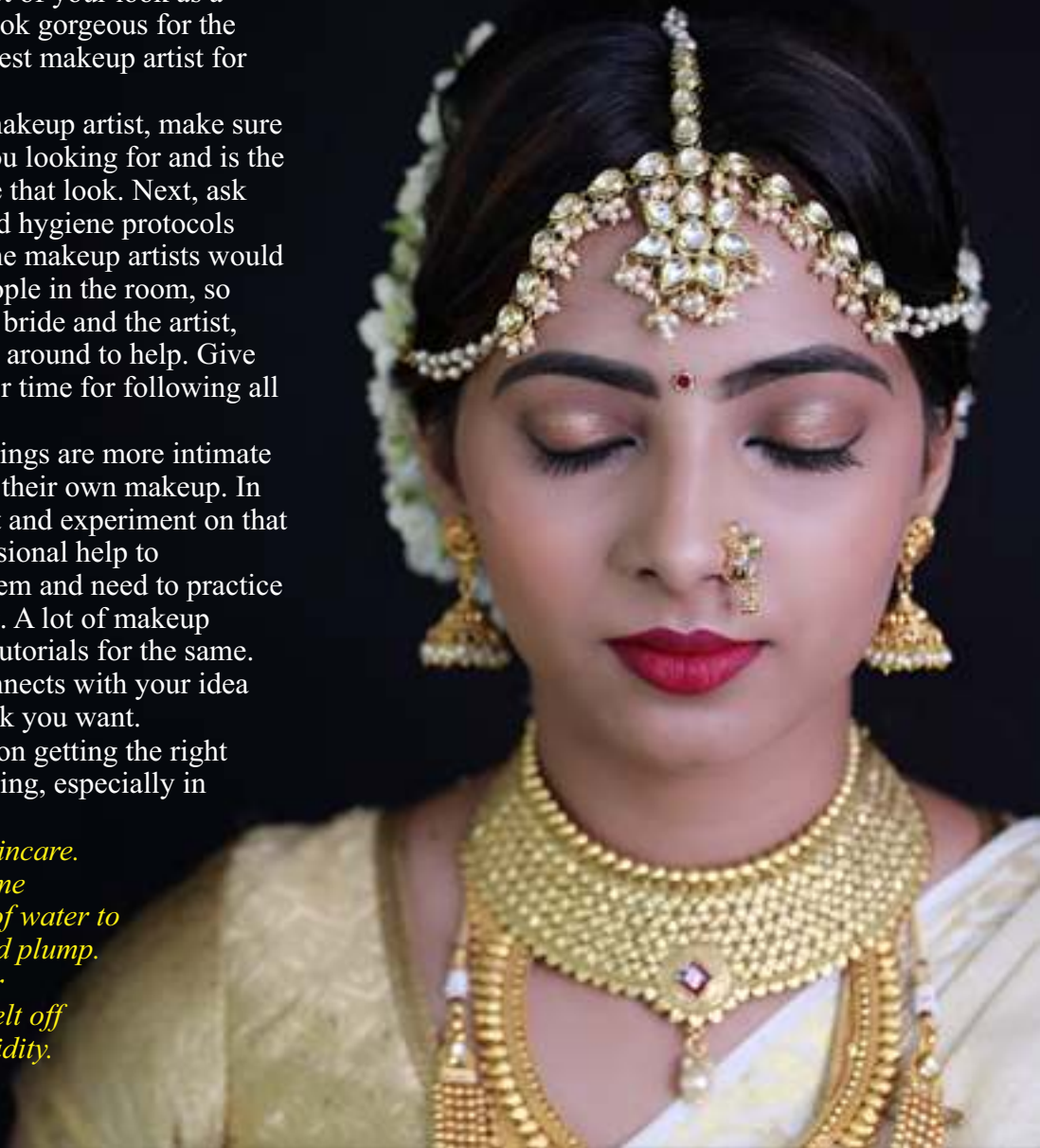
When you are talking to a makeup artist, make sure to discuss what exactly are you looking for and is the artist able to help you achieve that look. Next, ask them about what all safety and hygiene protocols they are following. Most of the makeup artists would advise not to have a lot of people in the room, so make sure that apart from the bride and the artist, there is only one more person around to help. Give yourself and artist some buffer time for following all the sanitization requirements.

But, due to lockdown, weddings are more intimate and a lot of brides want to do their own makeup. In this case, one can't just go out and experiment on that day. They need to take professional help to understand what works for them and need to practice 2-3 times to get the look right. A lot of makeup artists are conducting online tutorials for the same. You need to find one who connects with your idea and helps you achieve the look you want. Here, I am sharing some tips on getting the right look for your lockdown wedding, especially in monsoon-

- *Pay a lot of attention to skincare. Follow your skincare regime religiously and drink lots of water to make your skin healthy and plump.*
- *Invest in a good long-wear foundation that will not melt off your face in heat and humidity.*

- *Brows help to enhance your eyes and lift your face. Learn to do your brows well and look for good brow products.*
- *Know how to put strip lashes and practice to achieve perfection. They will enhance your eyes and add drama even while wearing a mask.*
- *Focus on eye makeup. Use a combination of cream eyeshadow as base and powder eyeshadow to top it up with shimmery colours like rose pink and champagne.*
- *Use waterproof mascara, eyeliner and kajal*
- *Transfer proof lipstick is a must. It will work along with the mask also.*
- *If you are wearing a mask, keep a touch-up kit handy to touch up your makeup when you remove the mask for pictures.*

Hope these tips will help you to rock your Monsoon Wedding during Lockdown!



Use Different Fruits On Your Skin For Magical Results

By Dr. Blossom Kocchar

Fruits have always been the best thing that you can include in your diet to be healthy and fit. And the same holds for your skin, fruits, especially seasonal fruits can do amazing things to your skin. Including fruits in your skincare routine can give you great results and help you get the oh so glowing and radiant skins. Today I am going to talk about some of these easily available fruits which you can include in your skincare routine:



Papaya – the fruit is magical to remove the dead skin and nourish the skin. Make a pack by squashing 2 tablespoons of papaya, add 1 teaspoon of milk powder to it, mix it thoroughly. Now add a squeeze of half a lemon and 1 drop of lavender essential oil in it. Apply the pack for 15-20 minutes and then rinse it off. You will see your skin will become smooth after the first use only.

Lemon – excellent fruit to brighten the skin, it is also a natural lightener for any hair on the skin, therefore acting as a natural bleach. Though be careful while using it, people with sensitive skin might be allergic to direct use of lemon, so always do a patch test first. Take some sandalwood powder, add the juice of 1 lemon in it and finally add 1 tablespoon of lemon. Mix all of it and apply it on your face and neck. This will lighten all your dark spots; continuous use will lighten the colour of your facial hair as well. This is an excellent pack for oily skin.



Avocado – this is a go-to for people with dry skin. It has vitamins & minerals that nourish the skin, so people with dry skin meet your new best friend! To make a pack, smash the avocado into a pulp add 1 teaspoon of milk cream to it and put 2 drops of neroli in it for skin elasticity. Apply the pack on your face for 15-20 minutes. Rinse it off.

Watermelon – this mineralises your skin and makes it brighter. Because of the minerals in it, it gives a natural glow to the skin. Smash 2 tablespoons of watermelon to get pulp, add 1 teaspoon of rice flour and 1 drop of jasmine essential oil. Apply the pack for 10-15 minutes and your skin will feel so fresh and rejuvenated.





Strengthen Your Nails with These DIY Hacks

By Dr. Blossom Kochhar

Let's face it, there are some things that you cannot hide and your hands & nails are a splendid example of it. Nails are easier to understand when they are compared to hair, both are primarily composed of dead tissue protein. Nails are healthy when you feel fit and eat a well-balanced diet. Vitamins A & B complex, plenty of citrus fruits, milk, honey, celery, cauliflower, nuts, and grapes are good for nails.

- Brittle and splitting nails are caused by lack of calcium. Get a packet of gelatin, put 2 tablespoons of it in a glass of water. Drink this regularly to have strong nails.
- Take 1 tablespoon of almond and castor oil, mix a little hand cream in it, and now soak your nails in it for about 15-20 minutes. Take your hands out and massage the mixture into your hands. This will nourish and moisturize your nails and hands too.
- Always use a nail strengthener especially if you get nail art done regularly.
- Do light tapping of your nails on a hard surface, not too hard to strengthen your nails.
- A manicure once a fortnight is very essential for an elegant look. Before every manicure soak your hands in a little warm olive oil for about 5 minutes.
- A healthy cuticle is very important for healthy nails. Remove all dead cuticle with an orange stick wrapped in cotton and dipped in cuticle remover.



Celebrate Onam With These Delicacies

Monsoon says just as a goodbye to South India, the aura is filled with happiness with the appearance of Onam, a remarkable momentous festival mostly celebrated in Kerala.

From the twistedly accessorized elephants to the wild Pulikali dancers, the giant snake boats lined up at the shore along with stunning, appealing, out of this world floral decorations. This festival sketch the entire state more colourful than no one can visualize.

This festival is incomplete without delicious, mouth-watering, finger-licking, appetizing, and yummy dishes. So what are you waiting for? Get set to lead with top picks of Onam recipes to celebrate the harvesting season of Kerala.

Coastal Vegetarian Stew With Kanthari Chili Oil

Recipes Curated by Chef Pawan Bisht

Preparation :- 10mins, Cooking :- 15-20mins
Servings :- 04 portions

Ingredients

8-10 florets of cauliflower, ½ cup green peas, ½ cup small diced carrot, 4-5 chopped fresh beans, 4 table spoon small diced potato, 2- 3 table soon chopped onion, 1 table spoon coconut oil, 2-3 whole peppercorn, 3 cloves, 1 bay leaf, 1 small piece of cinnamon stick, 1 slit green chili, 2 cup water, 2 cup thick coconut milk, Few curry leaves for tempering and few for garnish, Salt to taste, Kanthari chili oil for garnish (optional)

Preparations

- Take a cooking pan and keep it on medium heat. Pour coconut oil and sauté cinnamon, cloves, peppercorn, bayleaf, green chilli and curry leaves.
- Now add onion and sauté till golden brown. Once sautéed add all the vegetable and and sauté for some time.
- Now add water and start cooking the vegetable.
- Once the vegetables are almost half done add the coconut milk and cook till the vegetables are fully done and you get the right consistency.
- Adjust the seasoning, plate well and garnish with kanthari chili oil and fried curry leaves.
- Serve with hot idiyappam or appam.



California Walnut Fish Biryani

*Recipes Curated
by Chef Varun Inamdar*

Ingredients

- 4 slices king fish steak; on the bone.
- 1/3 cup California walnut powder
- 1 tablespoon garam masala
- 1 teaspoon red chili powder
- 1/2 teaspoon turmeric powder
- 3 teaspoons ghee
- 3 cups rice, cooked till 3/4 done
- 1/4 cup brown onion paste
- 1/4 cup fresh tomato purée
- 1 teaspoon garlic paste
- 1 teaspoon red chili paste
- 1 tablespoon saffron water
- Salt as required

Garnish

- Handful fresh pomegranate seeds
- Handful coriander leaves

Preparations

- Take a deep bottomed pan and ghee in it.
- Once it is heated, add garlic paste, red chili paste and sauté on high flame.
- Stir in brown onion paste, walnut powder and tomato paste. Cook till oil releases the sides of the pan.
- Add in powder spices and cook till the raw smell goes away.
- Add a cup of water and season with salt. Place the fish steaks carefully along with the walnuts and layer with rice.
- Splash in the saffron, water and cover with a lid.
- Cook on medium flame for 15 minutes.
- Just before serving, add the pomegranate and coriander leaves. Serve hot.



California Walnut Pudding

(A Healthy Twist to Traditional Payasam)

Recipes Curated by Chef Sabyasachi Gorai

Ingredients

1.5 liter milk, 220g ground California walnut halves, 15g sugar/jaggery, 200g Panko /bread crumb, 2 cinnamon sticks, 2 teaspoon lemon zest, ½ teaspoon orange zest

Preparations

- Boil Milk with cinnamon and zest, slowly add walnut and panko (bread crumb). 2. When it thickens up add sugar/jaggery, whisk together and pour in the serving bowl.
- Garnish with toasted walnut and serve hot or cold.



GANESH CHATURTHI SPECIAL

Off-Beat Recipes To Try This Ganesh Chaturthi

It is that time of the year again when, amid loud chanting of 'Ganpati Bappa Morya', people celebrate the homecoming of Lord Ganesh.

Colourful beautiful idols of Ganesh, the loud sound of 'dhol', some delicious mithai and the endless messages of 'Ganesh Chaturthi Chya Hardik Subhecha', - we Indians believe in 'Go grand or Go home' when it comes to celebrating this exhilarating festival.

Try out these off-beat recipes that are sure to leave everyone around you bedazzled and make your celebration special.

Baklava with Ice Cream

By Chef Rehman Mujeebur

Preparation :- 30mins, Cooking :- 2hours

Servings :- 10 pax

Preparations

- Preheat the bakery oven to 300 degrees. On a lightly floured surface, roll all 4 puff pastry sheets to fit a readymade baking dish, set aside. Grease pan with room temperature butter. Place 1 rolled sheet of puff pastry into the pan then grease the pastry sheet with butter.
- Place another layer of puff pastry on top, then grease with butter.
- In a medium bowl, combine properly chopped pistachios, honey, sugar, and water, and mix. Pour mixture over puff pastry sheets in the dish.
- Place another puff pastry sheet over the top of the mixture, and then grease it with butter. Place the last puff pastry on top and pour the remaining butter on top. Use a sharp knife to cut baklava in the shape of a triangle or square.
- Place baklava in the oven and bake for 90 minutes. The top of the puff pastry should be a light golden color and the papers should appear crispy.
- Meanwhile, chop the remaining pistachios into an almost fine dust.
- Allow baklava to cool and in middle stuff ice cream then garnish with pistachios.

Ingredients

- 1 kg puff pastry sheets
- 4 cups pistachios (Rough crushed)
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 2 cups butter
- 2 tablespoons water
- 1 cup finely minced pistachios (to garnish)
- 1 lit Vanilla ice cream brick to stuff





Gulabi Halwa

Preparation :- 30mins, Cooking :- 1 hours

Servings :- 10 pax

Ingredients

- Rose Petals fresh 1kg
- Milk 2 lit
- Mawa 2 cups
- D Coconut powder 4 tps
- Sugar 1 cups
- Cardamom powder 1tps
- Broken Cashew 2 cups
- Sunflower seeds ½ cup
- Desi ghee 1 cup

Preparations

- Fine chopped fresh petals first and then put in a karhai and 2liters of milk on a medium flame for 20-25 minutes, until it becomes a consistent mixture.
- Again put karhai on heat, add ghee and then add the mixture, simmer properly for 5-10 minute,
- Then add mawa, coconut powder, sugar, cashew nut and start fast stirring for 5-10 minutes,
- Then finally add sunflower seeds and cardamom powder and stir for 5 more minutes, Halwa is ready and serve it hot.

MONSOON SPECIAL

Indulge In A Lip-smacking Monsoon Snacks

Monsoon is a season that makes you feel lazy, puts all your plans on hold. With the onset of this season *Chef Suvir Saran* has come up with some delicate delicious recipes that one can try out at home and enjoy this dull lazy season.

Aloo Bonda (Potato Dumplings)

Makes 20



These potato dumplings are Maharashtra where people love to eat very spicy foods. Though they are often eaten for breakfast, I usually ate Aloo Bonda as an after-school snack while I was living with my family in Nagpur in western India. Made from spiced mashed potatoes that are formed into balls and dipped into chickpea flour batter and then fried, Aloo Bondas are amazing served with Tomato Chutney; though I admit that I love eating them with lots of ketchup too. In Mumbai, you get them as street food smashed between two slices of bread with hot green chillie and garlic chutney. Nandini, a dear friend from Southern India and now a consummate New Yorker, makes Aloo Bondas in advance and freezes them. She microwaves them alongside a glass of water to keep them moist. Be sure to save some of the filling to make Bread Roll as well if the mood so inspires.

For the filling

- 2 pounds (1 kilo/about 5 medium) red potatoes, peeled and quartered
- 1/2 teaspoon turmeric
- 1 tablespoon plus 1 1/2 teaspoons sea salt
- 1 1/2 tablespoons neutral oil
- 2 teaspoons mustard seeds
- 24 curry leaves
- 3 to 6 dried red chillies, coarsely crushed
- 1-inch piece gingerroot, peeled and minced
- 1 small hot green chillie (seeded and veined if you prefer a milder flavor), finely diced
- Juice of 1/2 lime



For the batter

- 1 cup chickpea flour (besan)
- 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- 1/4 teaspoon asafetida (heeng)
- 1/2 cup water
- 4 cups neutral oil
- Ketchup or Tomato Chutney

Preparation

Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add the potatoes, turmeric and 1 tablespoon of kosher salt. Reduce the heat to a simmer, cover, and cook until the potatoes are tender but not falling apart, about 25 minutes. Drain, transfer to a large bowl and set aside.

Heat the oil, mustard seeds and curry leaves in a large skillet over medium-high heat until the mustard seeds begin to pop, about 1 1/2 minutes. Add the dry red chillies and cook until the curry leaves become brittle, about 1 minute longer. Stir in the ginger and chillies and cook for 30 seconds, then transfer the mixture to the potatoes.

Mash the potatoes against the sides of the bowl until they are semi-smooth. Stir in 1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt and the lime juice. Take 2 tablespoons of potato mixture and roll into a small ball, repeat with the remaining potato mixture and set aside.

Heat the canola oil to 350°F in a medium saucepan. Meanwhile, make the chickpea flour batter. Whisk together the chickpea flour, cayenne pepper, remaining kosher salt and asafetida in a small bowl. Whisk in enough water so it resembles a thick pancake batter. Dip each potato ball in the batter and roll in your hands to evenly coat. Gently drop the ball into the hot oil and fry until it is golden brown, turning and basting often, for about 3 to 5 minutes. Transfer the dumplings to a paper towel-lined plate and serve hot with Tomato Chutney or ketchup.





Sweet Potato Chaat

Serves 6 to 8

I recall the amazing char-grilled smell of shakar kandi, Sweet Potato Chaat, almost as fondly as I recall its flavor. As a child, I remember how vendors would approach our gate pushing their rustic old-world wooden carts outfitted with big griddles and fueled by burning coals, ready to provide my brother, sister and myself with this most delicious after school snack. The sweet potatoes were cooked until sugary and tender over hot coals and then were cut into cubes, fried, and tossed with spices like chaat masala, lime juice, cumin and salt. Sweet, sour, salty and savory, growing up in India was truly a feast for my senses. Though traditionally a street food, these potatoes make a welcome, exotic addition to any holiday or autumn table. Or, for fun, serve as a passed hors d'oeuvres in little paper cones.

Ingredients

- 1 kilo (about 5 medium) sweet potatoes
- 4 cups neutral vegetable oil
- 1-2 teaspoon sea salt
- 1 to 2 tablespoons Toasted Cumin seed powder (bhuna zeera)
- 1 to 2 tablespoons chaat masala
- 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon red chilie powder
- 2 limes, cut into wedges

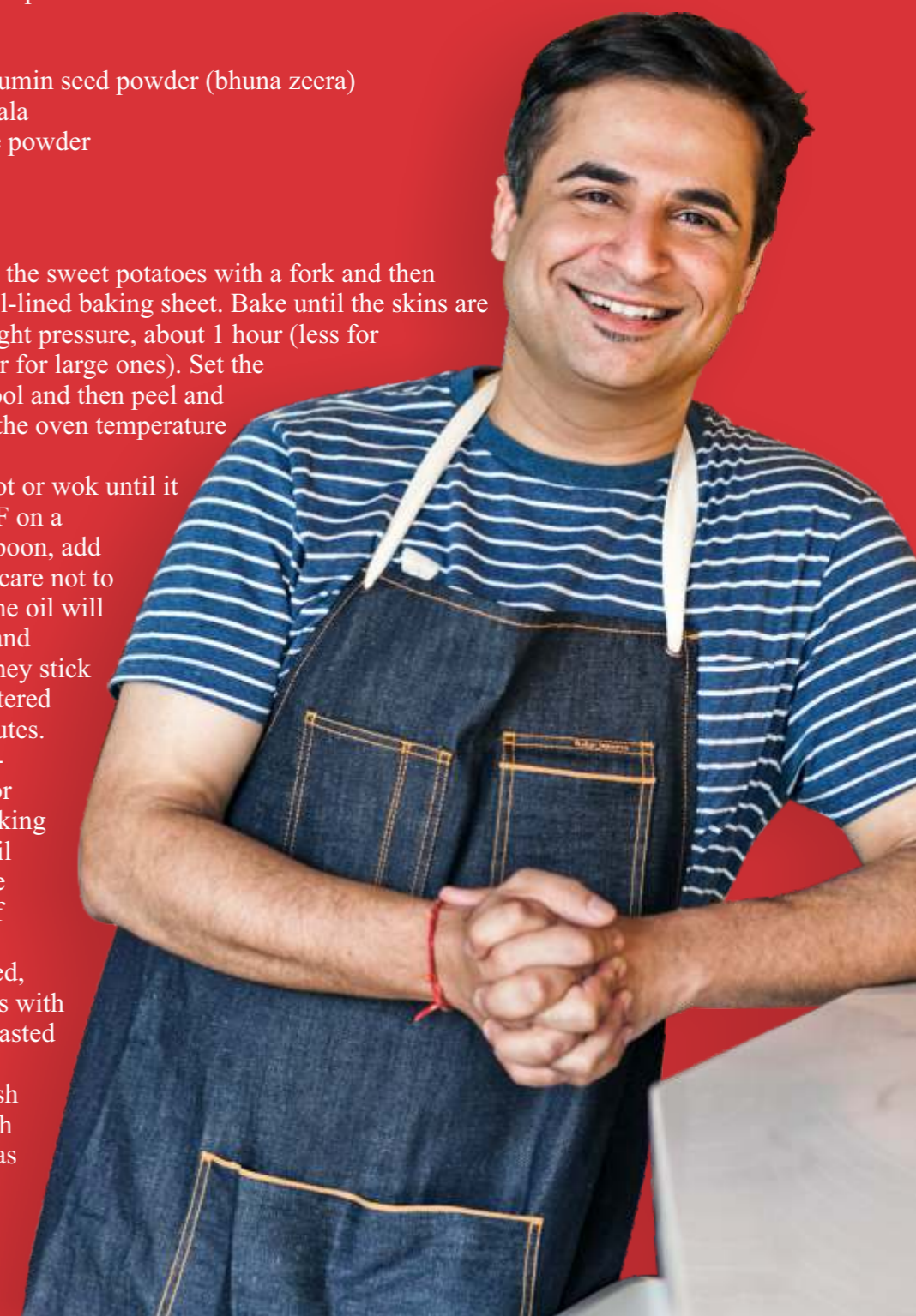
Preparation

Heat your oven to 450°F. Prick the sweet potatoes with a fork and then place them on an aluminum foil-lined baking sheet. Bake until the skins are baggy and the flesh gives to slight pressure, about 1 hour (less for small sweet potatoes and longer for large ones). Set the potatoes aside to completely cool and then peel and chop them into cubes. Reduce the oven temperature to 350°F.

Heat the canola oil in a large pot or wok until it reads between 325°F and 350°F on a thermometer. Using a slotted spoon, add about 1/4 of the potatoes (take care not to overcrowd the pot, otherwise the oil will cool) and fry, stirring, turning and breaking the potatoes apart if they stick together. Fry until they are blistered and browned, about 4 to 6 minutes. Transfer them to a paper towel-lined plate and set them aside or keep them warm on another baking sheet in the hot oven. Let the oil return to 325°F to 350°F before frying the remaining batches of potatoes.

Once all of the potatoes are fried, transfer them to a bowl and toss with a few pinches of kosher salt, toasted cumin powder, chaat masala, a pinch of cayenne and some fresh lime juice. Taste and adjust with additional spices or lime juice as you like. Serve while hot or at room temperature.

Chef Suvir Saran



Relish the flavours of

Ardor 2.1



Now that we are all prepping up to bid farewell to Corona, it's time we give you some great news. Ardor 2.1, known for its thali innovation with having Modi Ji 56 Inch Bahubali Thali, United India Thali. Now they have come up with their Drool worthy "*Vedic Thali*" to help us forget the sadness and make our hearts and belly happy and made with decade old traditional cooking methods, the ones our nanis and dadis taught us. Remember cooking in earthen pots on dheeme aanch?

The thali includes dishes which are light to digest. Even the spices are made by themselves because they are aiming to prevent the use of processed food items.

Naming few of the dishes like Sapsamagri Paneer, Laal Saag, Anjeer ke Kofte, Besan Coated Arbi ke Patte, Aloo Karela ki Pitika, Mandua Roti etc. they have used ingredients like kaali mirch, sauf, laung, bhurangi, kachi haldi, Echinacea, Jakhudi, Javitri, Shankhpushpi, Daal Cheeni to prepare the most authentic food items that'll help you create a strong

immunity system.

Dishes like Laal Saag which is high in iron, anjeer (fig) ke kofte which is also extremely healthy for the body, Aloo Karela Ki Pitika, Patra -Besan Coated Arbi ke Patte, Mandwa Roti which is a mixture of wheat and bajra to add to the nutrition level of the thali.

To add to that, they are also preparing home-made butter with fresh milk, to prevent the use of any processed items and serve you everything that is healthy and safe.

Plus, they also have Chawanprash Icecream for desserts, where they have mixed binders with chawanprash to give it a perfect sweet and tangy flavour. Known as one of the most popular immunity boosters, chawanprash has got a complete makeover at Ardor 2.1.

Not are they ensuring to serve you safe and healthy food, but are also making sure that you feel safe when you dine in @ Ardor 2.1

Price of Thali – RS/- 499 plus Taxes

Serves : 1-2 people

Address : N 55-56, Outer Circle, CP, New Delhi 110001

Reservations: 9811766888



Myriad Forms Of Ganesha

Lord Ganesha, the divine name that symbolizes consciousness which is omnipresent. Lord Ganesha is the same energy which is the reason behind our universe- the energy from which the world was manifested and the same energy where the universe will unite and dissolve.

Among all the eminent artists of the nation, *Swati Pasari*, one of the most well known artists based in Kolkata, she has captured various moods and forms of Lord Ganesha in her paintings and sculptures. While in some artwork she depicts Lord Ganesha as the source of every beat and tune that binds the universe into a beautiful musical symphony. In another of her painting, she depicts Lord Ganesha as the source of ultimate wisdom, of peace and the centre of the universe to which we are all connected, from which we all get our source of peace.

She has always considered Lord Ganesha to be a constant source of inspiration and joy even during the most difficult times of her life. Her art never fails to depict that Lord Ganesh is also a beautiful source of joy, inspiration, vitality and life. The beautiful and abundant use of colours denotes all the positivity and vitality that Lord Ganesha often brings to our life.

Her portrayal of Divine Lord celebrates the fact that Lord Ganesha does not dwell outside us but forms the very centre of our life, our existence.



Artist Swati Pasari



Delightful Ganesha Comes Home

Celebrate the auspicious occasion of Ganesh Chaturthi when Parvati Putra was reborn as Ganesha by gifting your dear ones with something truly special. Each product of *Izhaar* is handcrafted meticulously for this auspicious occasion. Starting from miniature Lord Ganesha Idols that have intricate gold & silver detailing to bigger hand-painted Ganpati murtis. They are so beautifully crafted that one can identify the expressions on the murtis. It's as though they've come to life! Statement pieces ranging from metal trays & jali boxes to Lord Ganesha pearl vandanvar! You'll find exquisite Moroccan Dome & Platter, Jewel Tray with unique bowls & canisters. Any occasion is incomplete without sweets! *Izhaar* Gourmet features divine handcrafted edibles; modaks, chikkis topped with rose petals, aatagond ladoos & handmade pistabadam barfi! *Izhaar* believes that gifting for any occasion is an experience & expression of joy and the products are curated with love keeping in mind that very emotion!



Working With Anand Tiwari Was A Blessing For Us : Shreya Chaudhary and Ritwik Bhowmik

Nabanita Dutta

Bandish Bandits on Amazon Prime has been turning heads as the personal and professional lives of two individuals clash. Tamanna and Radhe both hope to make their names in the music industry, but resentment and jealousy creep in when their careers do not move at the same pace. The former's a pop singer, while the latter's into classical music. Their different characters attract, but at the end of the day, they are left wondering whether opposites can make it together in the long haul. The romantic drama questions how much we are willing to adapt, and whether we place love before ourselves.



Shreya Chaudhary and Ritwik Bhowmik star as Tamanna and Radhe, and their chemistry makes the show all the more endearing. Recently, Expresso Magazine caught up with them, to know their thoughts about the show and the characters they play. Here's what the pair from the series had to say about their experiences.

Expresso: Bandish Bandits finally released, so how did you feel?

Ritwik: I felt overwhelmed. We had done a lot of hard work for it, and now it finally released on Amazon Prime Video. It was great fun altogether.

Shreya: I was excited and hoped that our show entertained the audience. Also, I hoped that Bandish Bandits put a smile on everybody's face.

Expresso: What made both of you to accept the offer for Bandish Bandits?

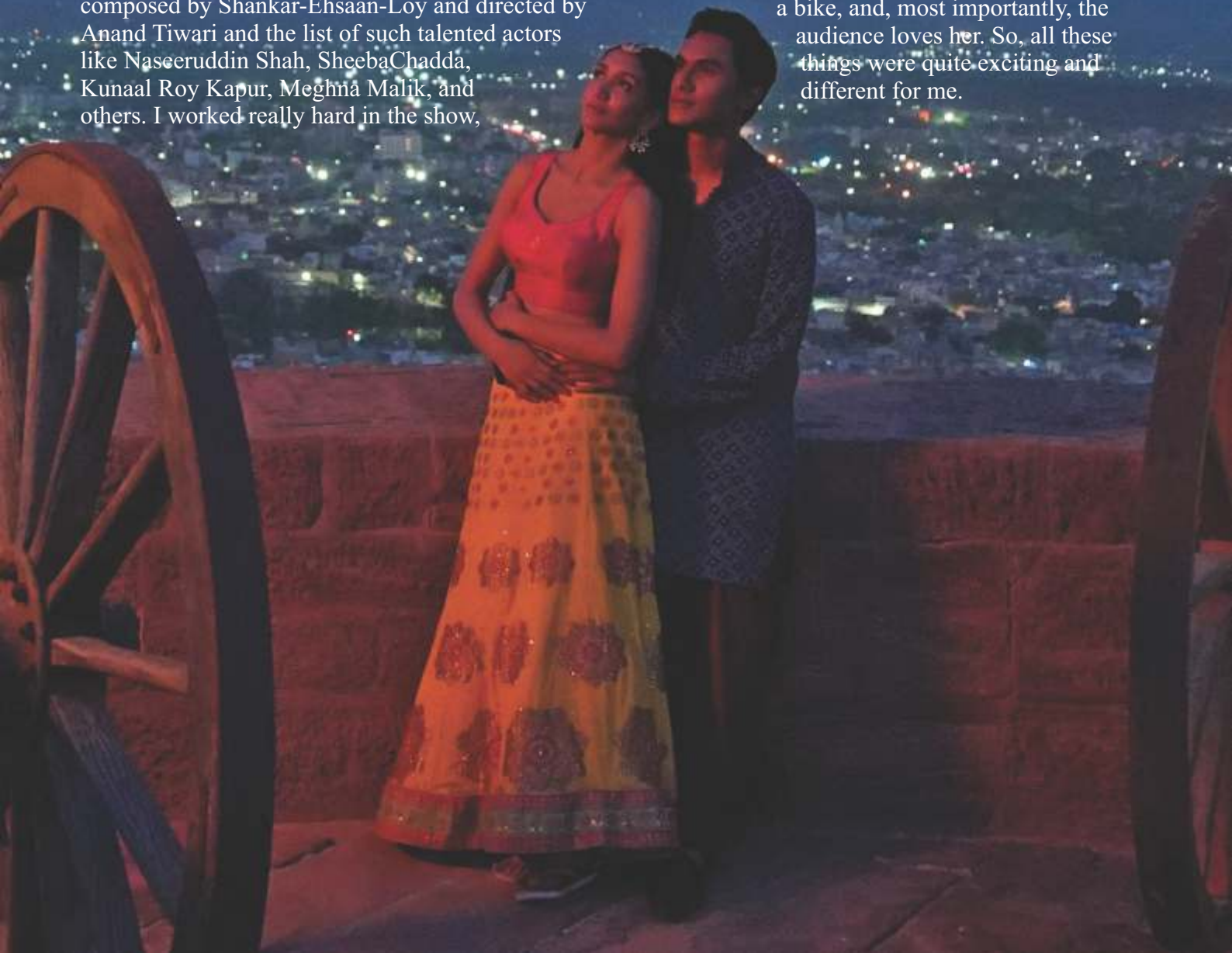
Ritwik: If you asked me, I could literally hand over a script that would give you all the reasons behind accepting the offer for Bandish Bandits. The first and foremost reason was, it is a musical show, and since Amazon Prime aired it, the whole country would be viewing it. Then the music has been composed by Shankar-Ehsaan-Loy and directed by Anand Tiwari and the list of such talented actors like Naseeruddin Shah, Sheeba Chadda, Kunaal Roy Kapur, Meghna Malik, and others. I worked really hard in the show,

and I feel lucky that the show chose us, and I am happy to be a part of it.

Shreya: I did not choose the show, rather the show chose us. I had to give audition for Bandish Bandits, and after reading the script, I instantly said yes to the show, and once you watch it, you will understand why I accepted the offer. It is just the story, the premise, and two different musical worlds, which the audience has not seen before. This is something that turned out to be the USP of the show for me.

Expresso: Do you relate yourself to Tamanna?

Shreya: I am quite different from Tamanna in many ways. If I talk about the basics, then Tamanna's upbringing, her profession, her ideologies are quite different from me. Apart from that, the way she dresses up, her overall look and other things are also not similar to me. But, the funniest thing is for seventy-five days. I got the opportunity to be a different self. It gave me a lot of confidence and power, and the character had been developed in such a way that it used to give the freedom to transform myself. Tamanna is quite passionate about music; she has a band, sings pop songs, rides a bike, and, most importantly, the audience loves her. So, all these things were quite exciting and different for me.



Expresso: *Did you find any similarities with Radhe?*

Ritwik: Honestly, in the very beginning, I found Radhe quite different from me, and I used to think that why this character is so different. But, while working for the show and playing the role, I understood that somewhere there was a Radhe hidden inside me for years. Actually, a few years back, I was like Radhe, but there are many traits of Radhe that I had once. So, today, I can proudly say that Radhe is to some extent like me, and is a part of my life. Throughout the shoot, I adapted many qualities from him and learned a lot of things.



When you watch the show, I hope that you will feel that I am a classical musician. If you feel so, then the whole credit would go to Akshat Parekh.

Shreya: It was both challenging as well as exciting since my character was a musician, a pop singer. Workshops were being arranged for us, and we also had a music coach Akshat Parekh. He helped us a great deal throughout the shoot, and even he used to come to shoot when we performed. Tamanna had this quality that she used to remain excited when performing, and I won't say that she is an amazing singer, but she is quite passionate about it. Apart from that, Vijay Ganguly and his team were there, who choreographed me. Since he had

a home studio and is a, so there was a music supervisor who kept on training me about various technology and music and other miscellaneous things. So, these things were quite clear for Anand Tiwari and his team, and they made it sure that things should look natural.

Expresso: *How did you groom yourself for the show, and how challenging it was for both of you?*

Ritwik: I won't say that we had to face a lot of challenges to groom ourselves, but it is not true. We all, Anand Tiwari, Akshat Parekh, and we worked together for grooming the character. Honestly, none of us ever felt that it is very challenging. Instead, the process was quite fun and exciting. I thought that playing the role of a classical musician is quite tough since it takes a lot of time to understand and master classical music. But, we did not have time to learn. So, whatever I have learned throughout this time, I accepted the entire process with lots of love. Today, I can proudly say that I have become a better fan and also a knowledgeable audience of classical music.

Expresso: *Can you share with us some memorable shooting experience?*

Shreya: Every day, something new used to happen on set. We got to learn about a lot of unique musical instruments. The entire shoot has been done in Jodhpur, and someday we used to enjoy delicious foods since Jodhpur is famous for its delicious dishes. So, all in all, every day was memorable.



Before Bandish Bandits,
I was not a big fan of
sweets, but later on, I
became an addict,
especially towards
'Ghewar.'



Ritwik: Once we were shooting in Bikaner for the song 'Garajgaraj', which is based on Raag Megh Malhar. It has been heard that whenever this Raag is being sung, it starts raining. People consider it as a myth that has been passed on to generations. Three days were being allotted for the song, and it was summer in Bikaner when we were shooting for the song. The temperature used to be around forty to forty-five degrees. But, whenever we used to start shooting for the song, it used to start raining cats and dogs. Even the locals of Bikaner told us that they had not seen rains during summer ever. So, the people were quite happy about it, but we were facing a lot of problems whenever we are attempting to shoot. It was a divine experience, I must say.

Expresso: How was your experience working with Naseeruddin Shah and Anand Tiwari?

Ritwik: It was an amazing experience working with such a talented actor like him. I am literally blessed that I got the opportunity to work with him. I always wanted to get an opportunity to work with Naseeruddin Sir and try molecule close to acting like him. Bandish Bandits is my debut project, and he played my grandfather in the show. So, what else can I expect from my life? It was like a dream come true experience for me. Previously, I used to know him as a good actor, but after working with him, I understood that he is one of the finest human beings I came across. Today, I am even a bigger fan of him and lucky as well.

Working with Anand Tiwari, I feel, was a blessing for me. I feel that I have definitely done some good deeds in my past; that's why I got the chance to work with him. He is an amazing person in terms of a friend, a guide, a director, a mentor, and almost everything. He has turned out to be my elder brother now, and honestly, I could not have asked for a better director to work with being my debut show.

Expresso: How was your experience working with Anand Tiwari?

Shreya: It was a dream come true for me. I met him a few years back when shooting for an advertisement. After returning, I even told my mom and dad that I wish I get a chance to work with him as a director. I met him when his 'Love Per Square Foot' was released. After one year, I got a call for giving audition for Bandish Bandits. So, I feel that I manifested the idea of working with Anand Tiwari. I am lucky that he came to my life, and just like Ritwik, I share the same equation with him.



Expresso: Which thing of Rajasthan both of you are missing right now?

Ritwik: I would say food, local people, and almost everything of Rajasthan.

Shreya: Before Bandish Bandits, I was not a big fan of sweets, but later on, I became an addict, especially towards 'Ghewar.' It is a local sweet dish of Rajasthan and is quite delicious. I loved it so much that I remember when returning to Mumbai, I packed almost two to three kilos of 'Ghewar.' As soon as the lockdown gets over, I want to go back to Rajasthan.

Expresso: What would be your message for the audience regarding Bandish Bandits?

Shreya: I hoped that they'd show love to Bandish Bandits. I wanted the music world, which was open to us, should be opened for others as well.

Ritwik: It was a great experience working in the show. Hopefully, Bandish Bandits managed to put a smile on faces, especially during this tough time.





Stars Welcome Lord Ganesha





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