



August 27, 2020

Espresso

Magazine

Grub Hub

Relish The Flavours Of
Uttarakhand

Divya Dutta

My second book is a memoir of my Journey

Fashion

India Couture Week 2020

Photographer - M fahim.
Makeup - rehman
Hair - Jaya surve
Outfit - M&S



 IZHAAR®

EDITOR'S LETTER



September is all set to put the mood for a cord of festivals that flows over the next couple of months. But nowadays it's a different story everywhere. The Pandemic has hit a pause on our lives. We all don't know when all of this will be over. We pray, hope, finger crossed for some miracle will happen and everything will be normal. We all drive to believe that our life will be back to normalcy.

In this month, we featured a new version of India Couture Week, presented by Fashion Design of Council of India in collaboration of Hindustan times. Anju Modi, Gaurav Gupta to Manish Malhotra, where each designer showcased their canvas, and their craft in a unique way.

Our beauty regimens comprised of mess-free makeup while wearing a mask and egg white beauty hacks.

Indulge into an exclusive interview and beautiful picture of Divya Dutta as our cover girl. Listen to the behind the scene story of Bandish Bandits with director duo Amritpal Bindra and Anand Tiwary. We are here with more interesting flavours in this month. Sprite up your spirit and get set for the healthier and greater festive month ahead.

Rituparna Sengupta Basu
Editor
www.expressomagazine.com

Fashion

India Couture Week 2020

Classy Sapphire collection by *Archana Aggarwal*

Wabi-Sabi Leather by *IZHAAR*

"The Princess Edit" by *Tanishq*

cover story

Exclusive Interview with
Divya Dutta

runway

Kerala - God's Own Country

celeb talk

Prakash Jha

Maahesh Narayanan

beauty

Egg White Beauty

6 Ways to Mess Free Make Up

Editor-in-Chief

Rituparna Sengupta Basu

Art & Creative

Gourav Basu

Editing & Proof

Nabanita Dutta

Social Media Head

Akash Goyal

Content & SEO Specialist

Shashank Sharma

Visit our page

@expressomagazine

expressomagazin1

expresso-magazine

www.expressomagazine.com

CONTENTS

grub hub

Snack Smart, Snack Right With Walnuts
Relish The Flavours Of Uttarakhand
Chef Pawan Bisht

special story

EVOLUTION - A Brief Account Of
A Film Maker's Existence

rising star

Interview With *Anand Tiwari &
Amritpal Singh Bindra*

fashion

Post-Pandemic
First Ever Digital Edition



INDIA COUTURE WEEK

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

 **Hindustan Times**

Name Is Love Gaurav Gupta

Gaurav Gupta Studio is proud to open the first-ever-digital show in India in association with FDCE's ICW 2020 (India Couture Week).

The pandemic and the lockdown; that followed shortly after, gave us a moment to hit pause on our lives. It was a moment to reflect on our actions, relationships, beliefs, the power of art, fashion and creativity.

A narrative that stirs the existing dialogue, with love where boundaries are patched. Where narrow corridors of division, cults and definitions are pushed far and wide to make space for love—the only name that matters. The story is not shy, it's not angry. It aims to rise above the storm and focus all its light on love.

Love: love for self, love for all genders, love for all body shapes, love for all ethnicities, love for all sexualities. Love for inclusivity. There is a new wave of social change in India which has been exposed only in pockets but hasn't received a mainstream platform—the campaign is meticulously curated in order to uphold authenticity and capture a true sense of rawness which is vulnerable yet utterly endearing at the same time. A beautiful stories where differences and sexualities were not just accepted but celebrated.

We were enamoured by these individuals' sheer optimism; their experiences felt familiar yet bold and their stories needed to be heard.

Ace designer Gaurav Gupta, to represent their courage, their candour, their honesty and their interpretation of love in its most real form.

From Anjali Lama: a trans-female supermodel, Tarun: a non-binary model taking the forefront in International campaigns and owning his feminine and masculine side gracefully in front of the camera, Nitya: a body-positive woman, Vee: a trans-male model effortlessly showcasing his true self, two boys in love with each other-Rudra and Anurag to two girls in love with each other-Manauti and Anjali, happily living-in with their parents.

Celebrating all kinds of love, indeed a revolutionary and emotional moment to be seen and celebrated.

Navkirat Sodhi, the magical poetess has written and recited 'Name Is Love'.

Gaurav Gupta's message resonates and connects with millions of people who are facing prejudice or feel inhibited to express themselves due to the pre-conceived societal norms; hope that their voice can create a ripple of change.



Timeless by Suneet Varma

Designer **Suneet Varma** presents a top-notch dazzling shining his new collection-Timeless by Suneet Varma in the first-ever digital format of India Couture Week 2020.

His collection had to have an attractive combination of sensuality and glamour. His timeless costume again shows beyond any doubt his firm, determined dedication to artistry.

The collection is a modern and Theatrical representation of the modern Indian Woman who lives in the "today" - yet embraces the romance of traditional Indian couture - which is like a sixth sense of seduction. It has its own vocabulary and language, like an elaborate braid entwined with history, myth and tradition. It may be modern, Whimsical or demure- but always magnificent and carefully crafted. The Mix of Traditional Motifs with Abstract artworks enhanced by the age old Crafts of India make for a Perfect – Feminine , Romantic and Modern Woman. Models stroll in heavily emblazoned saris, lehengas and gowns which crafted with sequins, mirror, and zardozi work. This collection also showcases an extraordinary blouses with tulles and ruffles, some cheery shades, aside from the gold, silver, pastels.

Talking about his timeless collection Suneet Varma shares, " I believe Fashion is the politest way of speaking about sex- But i like the subtle unspoken word, left to the imagination of the wearer. The glamour and sensuality in this collection comes through the use of sheer and lucid fabrics, the delicate placement of embellishments, the drapes and the unexpected details- and what they reveal or conceal."



The Power Of The Nature Amit Aggarwal

In a breathtaking digital experience at the first digital India Couture Week, **Amit Aggarwal** harnesses the power of the ocean, sky, and earth, in showcasing his new Couture 2020 collection.

Amit Aggarwal is a confessed traditionalist. Couture for him lived within the tactile experience of touch and feel. 2020 however demanded a change, and Amit turned to his eternal source of inspiration- nature to lead the way.

As we experience the world through the safety of our homes, the oceans continue to churn, the wind continues to blow and the sky still holds her secrets and celebration from sunrise to twilight.

Their freedom and lightness is a promise of new beginnings every moment. This collection depicts the weightlessness of the ocean, the caress of the wind, and the cradle of earth as they nurture you in their promise.

The collection displays Amit Aggarwal's signature aesthetic of futuristic biomimicry encouraging you to embrace the present and see beyond through the portals of time manifested in reimagined industrial material and signature polymers.

"Couture for me is a feeling of wearing an outfit that is made especially for you, embodying your spirit and aesthetic. We always tread a balance of the surreal and functionality of the garment and it's exciting to translate that vision into a digital experience. At the heart of it is our constant brand story of intricate craftsmanship and hand embroidery", says the designer.



"Lotus Pond" Rahul Mishra

Designer **Rahul Mishra's** collection at the Indian Couture Week 2020 was symbolized of his deep affection for nature.

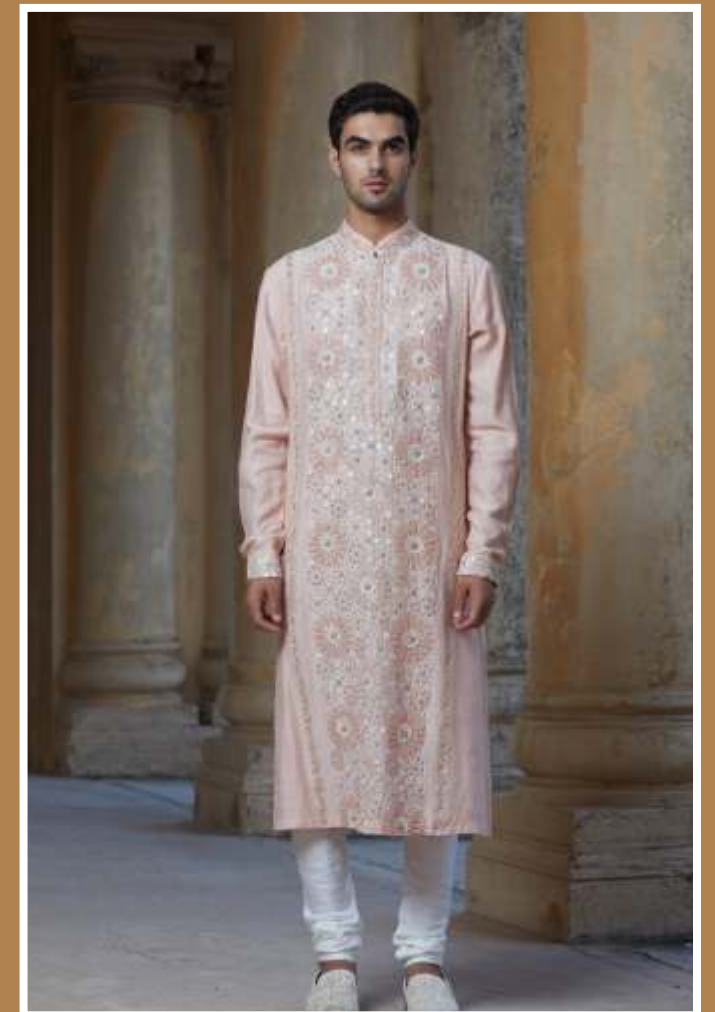
The collection named, "Lotus Pond", was an ode to the evolving ecosystem of aquatic plants, fishes, planktons, dragonflies and butterflies - all brought together by the sublime lotus. Garments symbolise hope and optimism for a better future, splashed with twisted flora and fauna embroidery, jaali-work, mirror-work, motifs and hand-cut appliques in the design and formation of flowers and butterflies.

The virginal lotus ponds with life sprouting in diverse forms, the psychedelia of the underwater-scape, replete with striking hues and textures, and the symphony of birds and butterflies inspire the craft behind "Lotus Pond".

This collection is one of the most significant collections, an organic extension of Paris Haute Couture collection, 'Butterfly People'.

Through this collection as a creative expression, we are served a reminder of the quote by Hans Christian Anderson, that indeed "Just living is not enough. One must have sunshine, freedom and a little flower."

The Earth Overshoot Day marks the date when humanity exhausts the nature's budget for the given year. This year it arrived on August 22, twenty-one days later than the previous year, keep growing sustainably and empowering our communities.



Épouse Moi à Jaipur Marry Me in Jaipur

Falguni Shane Peacock



Ace designer **Falguni Shane Peacock** showcased Bridal Couture collection 'Épousez Moi à Jaipur' or 'Marry Me in Jaipur' at India Couture Week 2020, presented by Fashion Design Council of India in collaboration with Hindustan Times, is inspired by affinity with the 'Pink City' of Jaipur. For the first-time-ever, a couture collection has been dedicated to the brides, by foraying into the color red - a significant color for an Indian bride. The striking Lehengas are replete with motifs inspired from Jaipur's architectural marvels, its heritage palaces, the traditional arches and adornments in the form of animal motifs, such as those of peacock, birds, butterflies, elephants and other floral and foliage embroidery forms. Falguni Shane Peacock's fashion film named "Spectacle Privé takes viewers backstage, giving private access, to witness the intrinsic effort put into every aspect presented in each look.

"We used this democratic, new platform to present our inspirations and to tell the stories of our design concepts and how couture comes to life for us," says Falguni Shane Peacock.

The short film encapsulated all the backstage drama including makeup touches to a model to someone adjusting a choli of a gown. Showstopper Shraddha Kapoor looks gorgeous alluring in a bridal red raw silk Lehenga with fuchsia pink and emerald green silk and metal thread work details. She gently flirts and play with the camera. The Lehenga is embroidered in gold and adorned with crystals, stones, beads and sequins on floral motifs, elephant motifs and baroque detailing. The ensemble is styled with a handcrafted blouse with grid work and floral motifs with emerald green stone tassel details, along with a red tulle dupatta with scallop borders and tassels.

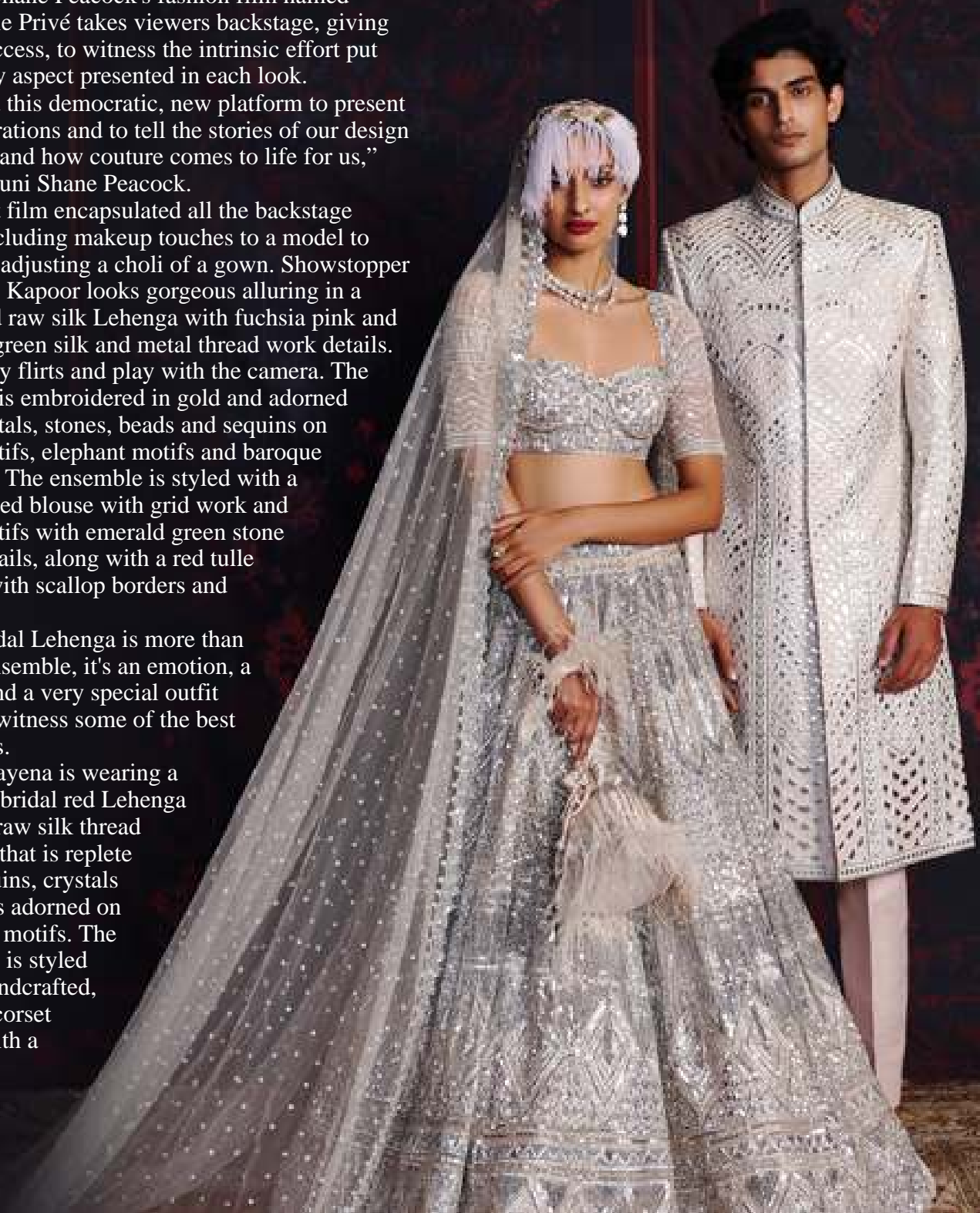
A red bridal Lehenga is more than just an ensemble, it's an emotion, a feeling and a very special outfit that will witness some of the best memories.

Model Dayana is wearing a bespoke, bridal red Lehenga with red raw silk thread detailing that is replete with sequins, crystals and beads adorned on gridwork motifs. The ensemble is styled with a handcrafted, cropped corset blouse with a

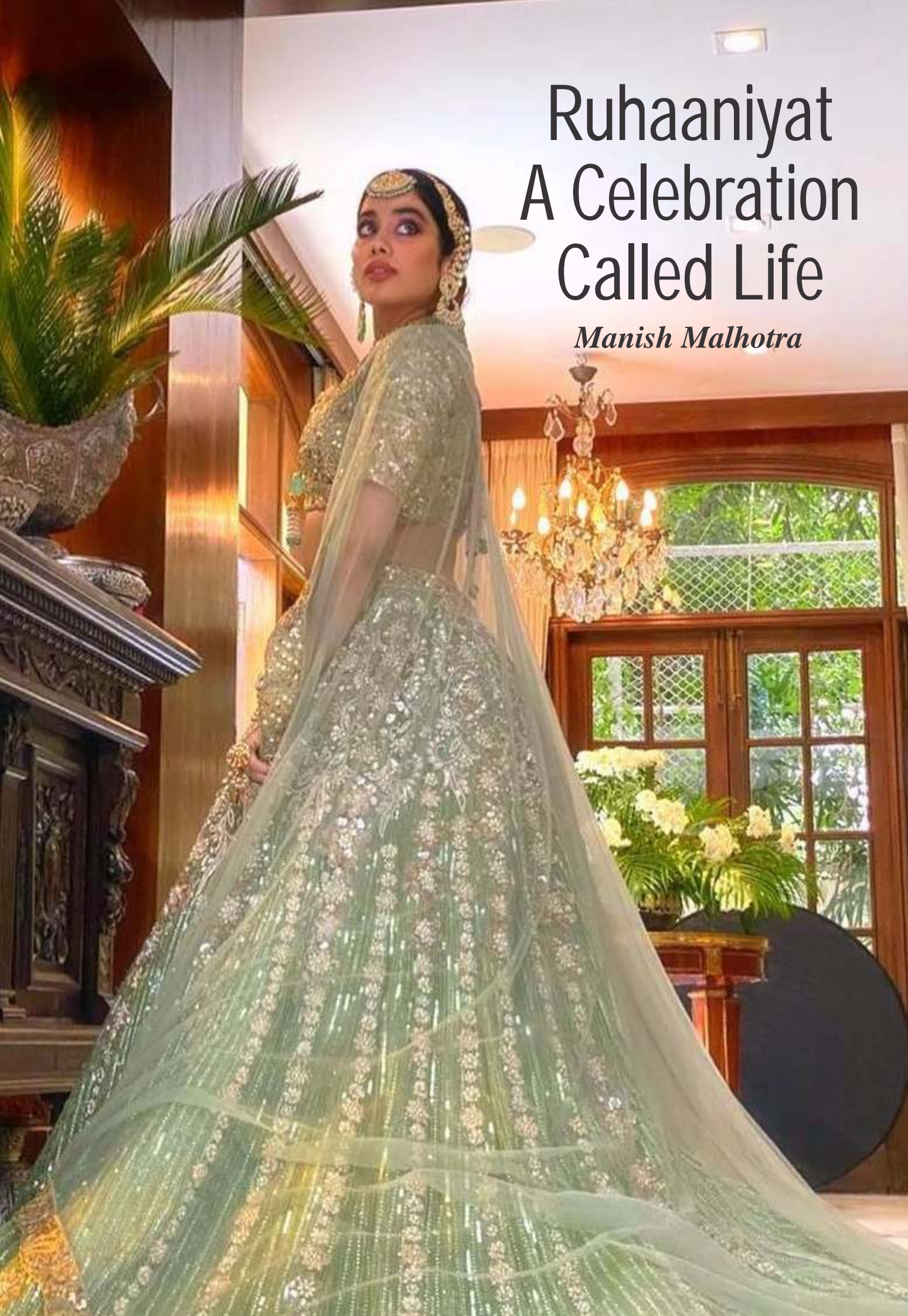
fan panel and Dori, along with a tulle dupatta encrusted with crystals.

On the other hand Model Reha is seen wearing a bespoke, bridal red Lehenga with golden embroidery that is replete with numerous stones, crystals and bead adorned on floral and foliage motifs. The ensemble is styled with a handcrafted, cropped corset blouse with deep neckline and tassels detailing, along with a tulle dupatta encrusted with crystals.

All the collections are glamorous and would certainly be an astonishing experience for every bride who wish her D-day to be special.





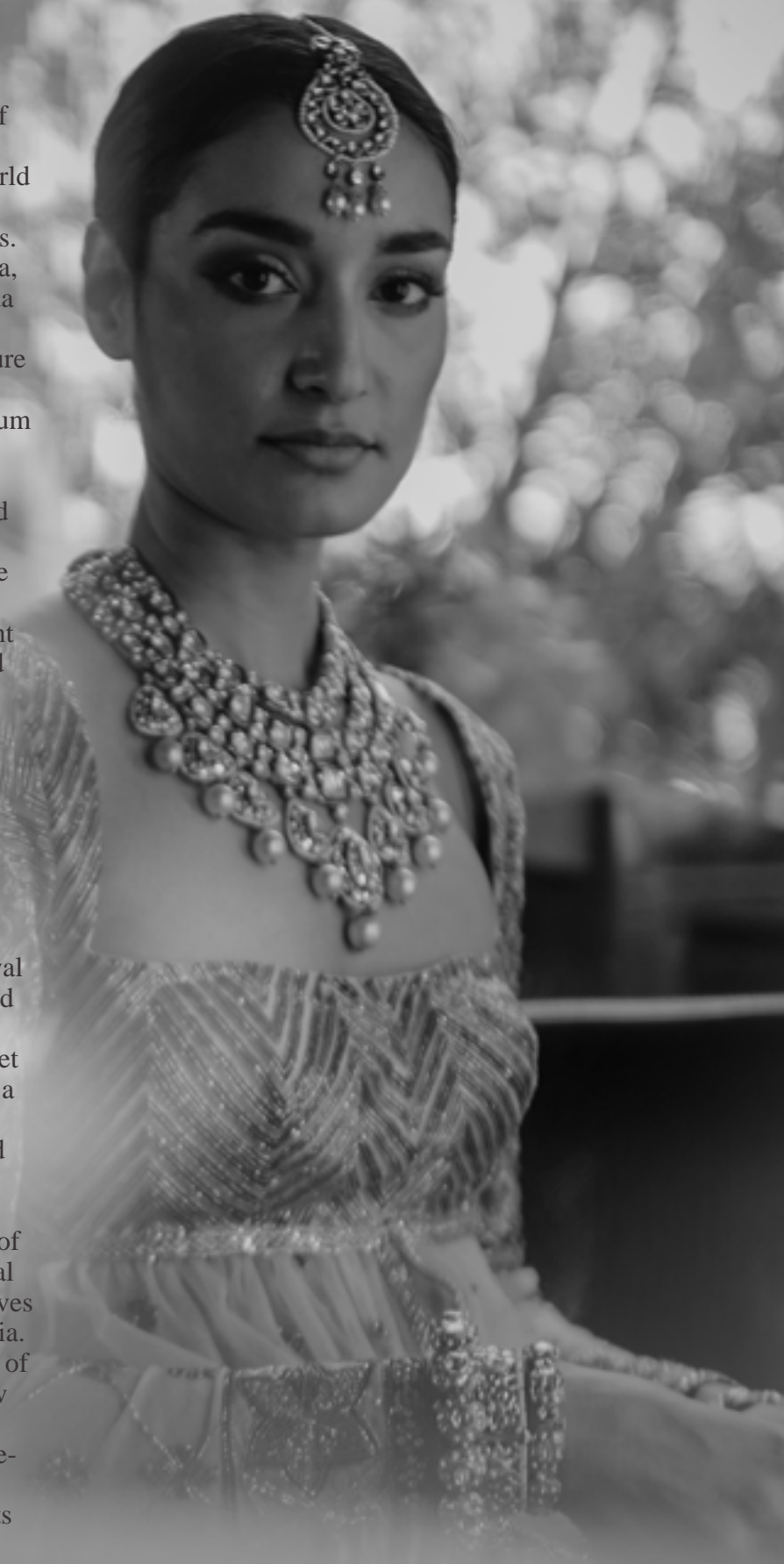


Ruhaaniyat A Celebration Called Life

Manish Malhotra

The first-ever digital India Couture Week 2020, presented by Fashion Design Council Of India in the collaboration with Hindustan Times, finished off with ace designer **Manish Malhotra's** couture collection, 'Ruhaaniyat'. The collection is a celebration called life, a tribute to our diverse heritage and soulful artistry of the Indian craftsmen. The Nazakat of Awadh and the vibrance of Punjab, a story of over thousands of years of the people, their life and emotions. The range is charmed by the majesty of old-world regalia and takes the liberty to re-interpret the look in a more suitable palette for modern tastes. Revisiting the material milieu of the Mughal era, the collection comprises of kalidar kurtas, khada dupattas, ghararas, izar salwars for women and jama, angrakha and heavy shawls for men in pure and cotton silks, mashru, velvets, and muslins. At the mere glance, it invokes the period magnum opus styling and appeal. The collection constitutes a big identity of Mughal cultural nuance with its rare, never-seen, and never-used before archival fabrics that brings forth the real fraction of the Mughal repertoire. These vintage textiles are over a century old and discern one with its unparalleled finesse. It comprises accent borders that are zari-woven in original gold and silver. The fabrics are hand-basted and hand-quilted for the aesthetic continuity, and palettes are strictly maintained to match the hues of natural dying like teal, pistachio green, dusky pink, grey, and maroon. The voluminous silhouettes, deft embroidery, fine layering all emerge together to form a harmonious Mughal sense of style.

The centre of the attention of the show, was the beautiful Janhvi Kapoor who glanced like a royal bride, she looked divine in ravelled embroidered mint green and gold lehenga pair with embellished blouse with plunging neckline, a net dupatta with embroidered border. Teamed with a gorgeous heavy neckpiece, maangtika, earrings accompanying hair tied in bun, kohled eyes and dark lip shade added a final touch to the look. There are countless emotions embedded in our historical narratives, but the aesthetic universe of the Mughal era stands out distinctive. The visual imagery of clothes, make-up, and jewellery serves as one of the most refined craft treasures in India. The collection breaks-away from the aesthetics of fast-fashion couture and aims to revive the slow and purist workmanship of our indigenous craftsmen and artisans. It seeks to recall our age-old craft and techniques while keeping the first line of inspiration from the most enduring facets of Mughal living. Its art and architecture – vintage gardens, palaces, paintings, jewellery, museums, and costumes that are immortalized in the grand and diverse culture of India.





SURKH

Reynu Taandon

Under the glitz of the candles, the backdrop of the alluring fort, a long history resonates with Designer **Reynu Taandon's** costumes which are the blend of ancient crafts, traditional weaves, and contemporary artworks.

Compose yourselves for an assemblage that is tastefully crafted, distinctive with exotic motifs & rich hues & coquettish enough to make your heart skip a beat as Reynu Taandon Unveils SURKH at the FDCI India Couture Week 2020.

SURKH is an expression of keeping your values in this contemporary world, where every bride wants to dress as a traditional dulhan. It is a collection that draws its inspiration from the contemporary bride, a girl that re-conceives fashion with all that's modern and minimalist with a traditional twist. The collection will feature the traditional and timeless dream colors of the bride. From heavily embellished baby pinks, fuchsia, fuchsia reds to reds, there will be classic pieces, tone-on-tone lehengas, Anarkalis, traditional Saris, Sharara and Gharara will make a statement without stealing the light off of the bride.

The collection is a mix of four ever merging yet distinct colors. They have been selected keeping in mind every part of the day and how best it will suit the bride in these wedding times be it morning, sundowner, or an evening wedding. For Reynu Taandon, this season is all about taking a leap into clashing kaleidoscopes of color where every color has its own inspirational factor.

The entire collection this time will be a complete hand woven, eco-friendly chanderi collection with lots of light zari work, block-printing, gota patti work, patchwork, and the zardozi work. She wants her brides to look elegant maintain the old world wedding charm in a contemporary way and thus have named her collection SURKH.



'Gulenaar'

Dolly J

With the new normal way, the Fashion Design Council of India brought the first-ever digital edition of the India Couture Week 2020.

Tranquilizing background track along with Urdu alfaaz, designer **Dolly J's** impressive collection 'Gulenaar' is suspended between dream and reality. Keeping the current scenario in mind the ensemble is elaborate yet, “functional bridal wear”.

Intricate handwork of silver and gold threads has taken prominence in the show and made it all more eye-catching. The collection has been specially designed keeping Indian weddings in mind. Heirloom chikankari has been given a new avatar with western drapes. Cape sleeves and floor-kissing skirts are classic, romantic, and ideal for red carpet occasion or a cocktail party.

A Special fabric which is Luxe silk organza, woven with jacquard, for discerning brides. Pastels and jewel tones be in control of the collection. Singular in their exquisiteness and elegance, each ensemble is a piece of art and time-intensive.

Ruffles, feathers, and tangled adornments were easily seen in this collection. Designer Dolly J added a contemporary touch to her the bridal apparel.





Classy Sapphire collection by Archana Aggarwal - Timeless Jewellery



Sapphire, the birthstone of September, is most desired in its pure, rich blue colour but is available in various colours including pink, yellow and green. Many sources list that Sapphires are believed to symbolize wisdom, virtue and good fortune. In an engagement ring, Sapphire means faithfulness and loyalty.

Typically, Sapphires appear as blue stones, ranging from very pale blue to deep indigo, due to the presence of small amounts of titanium and iron within the crystal structure. The most valued shade of blue is

the medium-deep cornflower blue. The Sapphire collection includes neckpieces, bracelets, earrings to name a few. The irresistible collection includes pieces for daily wear as well as statement pieces for special occasions. "Every piece I make is a style statement. The label is a celebration of today's woman who is feminine yet strong", adds Archana Aggarwal.

Price: On request

**Showroom: Ambawatta One, H
5/3-4, Kalka Das Marg, Mehrauli,
New Delhi 110030**

Wabi-Sabi Leather by IZHAAR

Based on the philosophy of finding beauty in imperfection, Wabi-Sabi is modest and underplayed. It is about embracing imperfections and personal authenticity. Wabi-Sabi celebrates the attraction of products with time worn imperfections, weathering, cracking and textures and thus, leather as a material, is the epitome of this look. Since quality and durability are important things to consider, Izhaar have always believed in re-usability and sustainability, and therefore this collection is one which reflects their motto the best. Their collection combines simple shapes with organic colours, making this a multi-faceted solution for most gifting classes. To ameliorate the richness of each product in this collection, there are pure brass beads studded on the edges, making it more robust and tasteful.





"The Princess Edit"



Mia by Tanishq, one of India's most fashionable jewellery brands brings for the very first time, a new collection 'The Princess Edit' based on 7 popular Disney Princesses and their distinctive traits. The fascinating and exciting collection is an addition to Mia's fine jewellery portfolio of 14 Karat gold and diamond jewellery.

Each of the Disney Princesses possesses admirable traits; whether it is Cinderella's kindness or Ariel's adventurous spirit or Belle's intelligence, Rapunzel's curiosity, Mulan's courageous attitude, Jasmine's independent nature or Snow White's optimism, one can choose the

trait that reflects them the most and be a #princessinaction in today's modern-day. These iconic Disney Princesses with powerful personality traits have always been regarded as having remarkable influence during our early childhood days.

This new collection is an ode to the powerful attributes of Disney Princesses that the Mia woman resonates with, making her a #princessinaction in everyday life. The collection has a variety of Disney Princess themed pendants and earrings crafted with coloured stones and set in Rose Gold and Plain Gold.



cover story

Irrfan, is one of the finest
we've had in the industry

Rituparna Sengupta Basu

Divya Dutta has been in the entertainment industry for a long time. The Ludhiana born actress has several Bollywood, Punjabi, Malayalam, and even English films to her name. Dutta's debut in Hindi movies came in 1994, and she's had some impressive appearances. In 2004, Divya prominently entered the spotlight, with critics and audiences praising her performance in 'Veer-Zaara.' Since then, she's gone from strength to strength, including winning the IIFA Award for Best Supporting Actress, for her role in 'Delhi 6.' She also the recipient of the National Film Award for Best Supporting Actress in the social drama, 'Trada.'



Divya utta

We have seen Divya essaying several roles to perfection. She's appeared alongside some legends in the industry and has carved a place for herself in fans' hearts. Here, we see a more personal side of the veteran

actress, as she sits down with Team Espresso. From her history in Bollywood to filming during the COVID-19 pandemic, Divya bares her heart out in this interview. She's spoken of her most recent project, her upcoming films, and shows, and given us an insight into her preferences. For unfettered access to Divya Dutta's life and mind, read what she has to say.

Espresso: How do you spend most of your time in this lockdown?

Divya Dutta: Now that the lockdown is a bit relaxed, I have started going out for work. But mostly I'm home. Sometimes I go for a walk, or I go cycling and spend my time doing little things.

Espresso: What are the things you are missing during this lockdown?

Divya Dutta: I am missing my friends a lot and greeting them with big warm hugs. I miss being on a typical set like before when there were no apprehensions and precautions.

Espresso: Your short film "Relationship Manager" has been released recently. What made you say yes to the film?

Divya Dutta: I feel it's a very relevant concept, and because of the lockdown, a lot of these cases have also increased. It reiterates the fact that it can happen in any society's strata and not necessarily in the middle class or lower middle class or rural areas. It can happen to educated women from higher societies as well.



My second
book is a
memoir of my
films and my
film journey,
and I am still
not done
writing...





“*Film is my passion, it was great to be a part of an industry where I wanted to be. And learning without any godfathers around, learning my own way was quite a satiating journey.*”

Expresso: *This shoot happened during the lockdown. What were the challenges, and how was the shoot different?*

Divya Dutta: Well, everybody mostly did the shoot in their houses, and the DoP was clad in a PPE kit. There were very few people involved, which felt a little weird, but I think the film was shot very beautifully. Usually, there is a lot of hustle bustle on the set, and different people are assigned for various works. But here, it was like one person was doing the job for six people. But I am glad that the final product turned out to be nice.

Expresso: *From 1994-2020, you've had a long journey in Bollywood. How do you look back at it?*

Divya Dutta: I think it has been a great learning experience. Film is my passion, so

yes, it was great to be a part of an industry where I wanted to be. And learning without any godfathers around, learning my own way was quite a satiating journey. Making mistakes, going ahead of them, and finally making a mark is a good thing to look back and smile about.

Expresso: *Did you always want to be an actor?*

Divya Dutta: Absolutely! Even though I come from a family of doctors, I always wanted to be an actor.

Expresso: *You've worked with many great actors like Rishi Kapoor, Amitabh Bachchan, and Irrfan Khan. Any experience that you would like to share with us?*

Divya Dutta: There were plenty of magical experiences. For me, Rishi Ji and Mr. Bachchan have been my childhood idols. I have grown up watching them on the screen. It was definitely quite

For me, Rishi Ji and Mr. Bachchan have been my childhood idols. I have grown up watching them on the screen.

overwhelming to meet them, work with them, and know them personally. Mr. Bachchan had even come for my book launch. Both Rishi Ji and Amit Ji are such multi-talented persons that you learn so much just by observing them. Listening to their chats, or only talking to them is also an enriching experience. And Irrfan, of course for me, is one of the finest we've had in the industry. I have done four films with him, all of which had a lot of memorable moments.

Expresso: *Your film, Train to Pakistan, dealt with the partition of Punjab. Any memories of that film that you've carried with you?*

Divya Dutta: It was one of my first films, and I was a child at that time. Everyone was very protective of me and looking after me. I was also supposed to sing my own songs, and I was quite nervous about that. And then I also had to dance and choreograph for myself. So I remember that the entire unit would come to cheer me up even if they were not shooting. So yes, these are a few heartwarming memories that you carry with yourself. Most of my friends today are from Train to Pakistan.

Expresso: *You had an action scene in Badlapur. Can you tell us a little about that?*

Divya Dutta: I had a car chase scene, which was quite exciting to shoot, but I wouldn't call it an action sequence.

Expresso: *What is an important life lesson that you've learned in Bollywood?*

Divya Dutta: Well, I learned that in the industry, you have to basically look over your own self and be very self-reliant here. It's never the end of the road, and you have to continually feel like a part of a journey. Even after a superhit, you have to keep working hard.

Expresso: *We all get very emotional over rejection. As an actor have to ever had to face it? If yes, how did you handle it?*

Divya Dutta: Everybody has faced rejection somewhere or the other. When I was a newcomer, I had to face a lot of rejections. Sometimes I have been rejected even after signing a film. But I think my family was a big support. My mother especially would always tell that there is no harm if a film doesn't work out for me, and it's not the end of the road. And yes, I think that is absolutely true. Life moves on and gets you better opportunities. And I think; initially, the people I didn't get to work with I did better work with them later.

I learned that in the industry, you have to basically look over your own self and be very self-reliant here.



Expresso: How do you deal with success and failure?

Divya Dutta: I think neither should get to your head. Failure shouldn't bog you down, and success shouldn't make you too proud that you change as a person. You have to be very stable minded giving your best to your work.

Expresso: Any childhood memory you have with your mother that you would like to share?

Divya Dutta: I have an entire book written on her, so yes, I definitely have a lot of memories. We were not a regular mother-daughter team. We've pulled off so many pranks together. Looking back, I feel I had a blast with my mother.

Expresso: Name three things that nobody knows about you.

Divya Dutta: Well, that I am a child-woman, a prankster, and a good cook!

Expresso: What is the best dish that you can cook?

Divya Dutta: I think all my mother's recipes.

Expresso: Name a book that inspired you.

Divya Dutta: Raseedi Ticket by Amrita Pritam.

Expresso: Recently, Amitabh Bachchan has praised your poems. How do you feel about that?

Divya Dutta: Oh! At the top of the world, absolutely! He was the reason I got into films, and then to have worked with him has been excellent. So yes, his praise is like an ultimate validation for me, and I am really overwhelmed.

Expresso: You have played a lot of characters. What is your favorite amongst them?

Divya Dutta: My character from Delhi 6.

Expresso: What is your dream role?

Divya Dutta: I don't think there is anything specific, like a dream role. It's a combination of a character, the director, your co-actors, altogether that makes it a dream role. So yes, there are many directors I haven't worked with yet like Zoya Akhtar, Anurag Kashyap, Vishal Bhardwaj with whom I would like to work.

Expresso: What is the biggest risk you have taken in your life?

Divya Dutta: To be an actor!

Expresso: Bollywood is now torn between controversies of outsiders and insiders. At any time, have you felt like an outsider?

Divya Dutta: I don't think it's about insider-outsider. I would rather say it's about favoritism and groupism, which I believe exists in every workplace that has opportunities. It happens in schools and colleges as well. So you have to learn to be with it, and once you excel in what you do, people will definitely notice you. And then you can carve your own niche. It's a part of life, and it just makes you stronger.

Expresso: What are the struggles you had to go through in this long journey of yours?

Divya Dutta: There was no battle, as such! You have to be very resilient and persistent, I believe. Most importantly, you have to be very passionate about what you do. Taking everything in your stride, all your difficulties, and turning them into success is what it is all about. And yes, work so hard that people cannot ignore you, and I think that is what I have done.

Expresso: What usually brings a smile on your face?

Divya Dutta: My little ones! My nephew, my niece, and my adorable pets.

Expresso: Could you tell us about your second book, which you started writing during the lockdown?

Divya Dutta: Well, it is a memoir of my films and my film journey, and I am still not done writing.

Expresso: Me and Ma, your first book is very heart-touching. What was going through your mind when you were writing this book?

Divya Dutta: I just wanted to celebrate my mother, who has been my biggest support system. That is what I wanted to bring out to people that this is what a perfect mother-daughter relationship is like and how it carves a niche for a child who knows that her mother ultimately believes in her.



Expresso: Since you are from Punjab, what is the one thing you miss about the place?

Divya Dutta: I miss everything! It's warmth, greenery, houses, fields, everything.

Expresso: What is a recent happy memory that you would like to share with us?

Divya Dutta: Meeting a few friends post lockdown and being able to go back to work. I think this brings me happiness, just being able to touch normalcy a little.

Expresso: One habit that you would like to get rid of?

Divya Dutta: I really want to get rid of my sweet tooth!

Expresso: You've shot in Calcutta as well. What do you miss about the city?

Divya Dutta: I fondly remember the local fish curry (macher jhol), which is cooked in mustard oil. I found it absolutely delicious. And yes, I miss eating 'sondesh.' I remember I had finished three packets during the time of Holi.

Expresso: Any memorable moment from the shoot in Calcutta?

Divya Dutta: Calcutta is a cultural hub, and it's beautiful. I have done a couple of films there that have captured the local markets, the nooks, and corners of the city, which really brings out the flavor of the city. I loved the street food that we would eat during the shoot. Overall it was an amazing experience in Calcutta!

Expresso: What are your upcoming projects?

Divya Dutta: My next film would be releasing on Netflix soon. It is Dibakar Banerjee's film, "Freedom." Then it will be Nitin Kakkar's film Ram Singh Charlie. I have done a web series, directed by Sudhir Mishra, which is awaiting release. Then there is Anubhav Sinha's satire, Abhi Toh Party Shuru Hui Hai. Next in line would be a comedy named Aankh Mein Choli. There are a few other films as well which have been stalled midway for now.



runway

God's Own Country

Kerala

「Where the mind is without fear
and the head is held high
Where knowledge is free
Where the world has not been
broken up into fragments
By narrow domestic walls.....
Into that heaven of Freedom!」



By Roopa Sengupta

The famous quotes from Tagore's Gitanjali is what one can think of in Kerala! Fascinating views, elegant sceneries, awesome weather, and incredible nature – no wonder its God's Own Country!

Having heard a plethora of amazing experiences, it was time for us to explore the southern parts of the country. And that is when we planned a small 3-day trip to explore one of the natural attractions of Kerala – the backwaters!

We took a flight to the capital city of Kochi and we spent a day there. Our sightseeing in the city of Kochi took us to Fort Kochi where we saw the famous Chinese Fishing Nets. The huge cantilevered Chinese fishing nets that droop towards the waters like over-sized hammocks have become a hallmark that represents Fort Kochi on the tourist map. The Chinese nets, made of teak wood and bamboo poles, work on the principle of balance. It was worth a visit!

The next day we drove down to Alleppey. Alleppey is known for their wonderful deluxe houseboats and life on the water. We had booked an overnight journey in a houseboat from Alleppey to Kumarakom and the journey cannot be described in words. The vastness and serenity of the backwaters need to be seen to be experienced. Sunset on the backwaters was

an ethereal experience and one wonders at the beauty and purity of nature. At sunset, the houseboat was moored to avoid the fishing nets that were on the backwaters and resumed its journey once the nets were removed at dawn. Lunch, dinner, and breakfast were prepared by an excellent cook on board and the local cuisine was unparalleled.

Early the next morning, we reached our resort, The Kumarakom Resort, on the banks of the backwaters. A beautiful resort, exquisitely landscaped with cottages built in traditional Kerala architecture. That evening, we made a trip into the village of Kumarakom to experience the cultural side of Kerala – a Kathakali performance! This was an experience of a lifetime as we experienced exactly how performances used to happen in the olden days in the villages. Right from makeup to wearing the costume which took almost 2 hours to a performance on a makeshift stage was mind blowing.

It was a memorable vacation and a must-do for all..... The backwaters cannot be missed in this lifetime and when in Kerala definitely do not miss out on the fish, the halwa, and the banana chips!

The famous quotes from Tagore's Gitanjali is what one can think of in Kerala! Fascinating views, elegant sceneries, awesome weather, and incredible nature – no wonder its God's Own Country!





I am aware of what is happening around, I find my stories there

Prakash Jha

Abir Majumder

India is a land of many gods, and we create a new one every day with our degree of idolatry. While faith and belief are essential for humankind's survival, in our nation, we sometimes give it too easily - opening ourselves to exploitation from some evil men. "Ashram" tells the tale of one such godman from the fictional city of Kashipur.

Baba Nirala manages to build an empire for himself, trading on the faith people put in the self-styled godman. His influence over the lower rungs of society is undeniable since he's often stood for them. In turn, they believe him to be the Messiah, giving him immense control and power over these individuals. Pammi is an innocent local girl who turns to the baba for salvation, but things are soon upended when a skeleton is found in the nearby forest land. With the city elections coming up, the air is tense, and everyone wants the case resolved quickly. There's just one problem - all avenues of the investigation point to the ashram. Perhaps the baba is not the holy man everyone thought him to be in Prakash Jha's masterfully crafted crime drama.

Jha hardly needs any introduction, having helmed iconic films like "Gangaajal" and "Rajneeti." The director sits with the Expresso Team here to share his thoughts about "Ashram."

Expresso: Ashram was finally released in MX player. So how are you feeling?

Prakash Jha: Quite good, and I am very thankful to all the people who have given an abundance of love and praise to Ashram.

Expresso: What is Ashram all about, according to you?

Prakash Jha: Ashram is all about conmen! They are people who disguise themselves as godmen and bring disgrace to religion.

Expresso: You cast Bobby Deol as a God-Man in Ashram. Was he your only choice for this particular role?

Prakash Jha: Yes, absolutely, he was my first choice as he is a commendable actor. And also because he has never been seen in that avatar. So yes, as they say, unusual makes unique!

Expresso: You released the disclaimer before the trailer launch; any particular reason behind this?

Prakash Jha: Yes, the reason was clear because this web series is not meant to hurt anybody's sentiments or religion or God. Hence we thought it would be suitable to release it.

Expresso: As one of the senior-most in the industry, how do you see the recent debate of Bollywood's insider vs. outsider?

Prakash Jha: I truly believe in hard work. If you work hard, you will get good work, and if you don't, no one can help you get it. Initially, you might get something, but you won't go ahead if the audience doesn't accept. The audience makes you start!

Expresso: Films now directly release on the OTT platform. Being a director, do you think that the OTT platform and the theatre both can co-exist

and move forward?

Prakash Jha: Well, I can't comment until they run parallel. So once this pandemic clears off, maybe, then we can say something.

Expresso: Ashram was set in Kashipur. What kind of challenges did you face in the shoot?

Prakash Jha: Kashipur is the fictitious place where Baba Nirala's ashram is set. We got all kinds of cooperation from there. There were many local actors and junior artists who participated in the workshops and cooperated a lot with us. Setting up the location for all the crowded scenes was, of course, very challenging. These things are always very daunting for assistants, but I think we managed pretty well.

Expresso: What is the best memory of shooting Ashram?

Prakash Jha: We were shooting under pretty harsh weather conditions. It was the month of January in Ayodhya, and it was freezing. But the actors were so well prepared, it was an absolute delight to shoot them.

Expresso: What is the message you would like to convey to the people after they've watched the show?

Prakash Jha: They should just enjoy the story and understand how these quacks function in the name of trust, faith, and submission.

Expresso: Most of your work, including Ashram, is based on socio-political issues. What makes you work on these subjects?

Prakash Jha: I am aware of what is happening around, and I find my stories there. I try to understand why something is happening the way it is. When the equations take shape, and the drama unfolds, I feel compelled to tell the story, and that's how it happens.



Expresso: This is the first time you worked for the web genre. What is the difference between the silver screen and the webspace?

Prakash Jha: The most significant difference is the time. The duration on the silver screen is two hours on average, whereas this is much longer. The web series gives you the opportunity of creating an arc for every character and consolidating them. It intertwines the main plot with all these characters' individual stories, and that's the thrill of watching a

web series. That's what makes it so enjoyable. We tried to do that, and I found it quite an exhilarating experience. And as far as shooting is concerned, it's exactly like how we shoot movies.

Expresso: After Ashram, what's the next project you are working on?

Prakash Jha: Ashram season 2 and then a few more are in the pipeline, which we will disclose soon.

A New Era In Movies: Mahesh Narayanan On C U Soon

Nabanita Dutta

India gets its first computer screen movie, 'C U Soon.' The novelty of the format aside, the movie deals with an extremely topical content - online dating and its possible perils. A couple meets on a dating site and decides to get married. But, when the groom's mother entrusts a family member to look into the girl and get details about her life, the results are shocking. It appears that the bride-to-be has some dark secrets. 'C U Soon' becomes a commentary on the dating culture where essentially strangers are clumped together in social situations without knowing much about each other.

Mahesh Narayanan helms this wonderful offering, and the Thiruvananthapuram-born director is known for works like 'Take Off.' In his career, Mahesh has developed a distinct style and has certain topics which appeal to him. Team Expresso has had the pleasure of talking to Mahesh Narayanan, where he's opened up about the thought process that went into 'C U Soon.'





period. Whenever one character is there in the location, we need the others there too so that they can emote the lines and deliver dialogues with the same rendering speed. All of us gathered under one roof. It somehow helped us. The challenges mainly took place while writing the film. It was not conventional writing, and I didn't have control over the actors or the camera you see. It wasn't like any other film shoot where I can see what is happening.

Expresso: *While making this kind of a film, how much inspiration did you take from the Hollywood film Searching?*

Mahesh Narayanan: Well, I am

inspired by many films while writing a story for the screen. There was this one particular film which I had seen in film school in 2002 that used Yahoo Messenger DOS chat formats. So yes, even that film inspired me while I was writing for this. There were many other films, and yes, of course, Searching was one of them. It had a much finer format. But there were many parts in Searching I felt that the format became superior to the content. The content was not so much emotionally appealing to the audience. So, I wanted to make a film where people slowly forget about the format and move into the content of the film. In that way, I think I have succeeded in communicating the film to a larger crowd.

Expresso: *Why did you choose this kind of content for the film?*

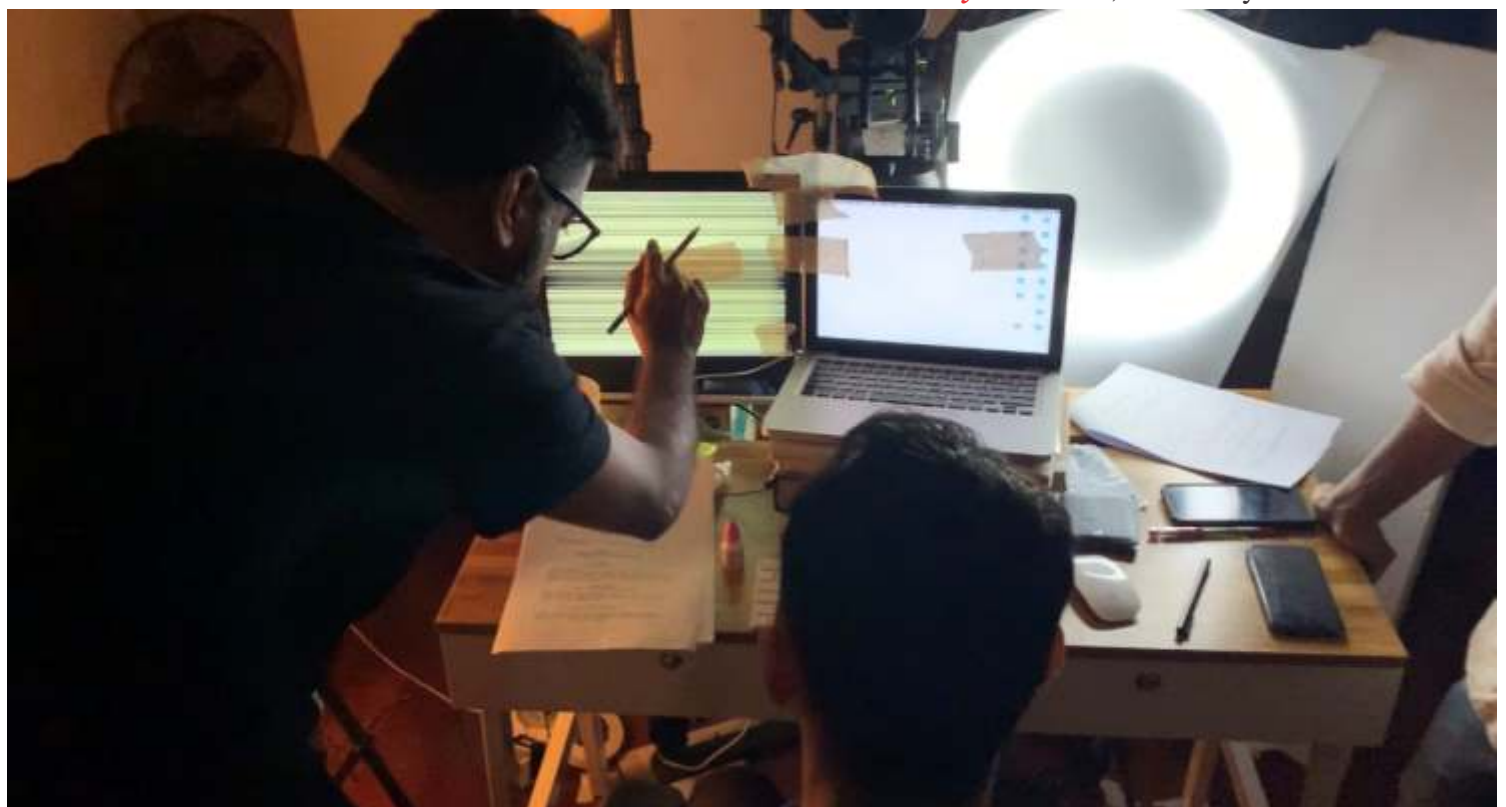
Mahesh Narayanan: This was made as an experimental format film. I had another film that was supposed to be released in April, but it was not possible because of the lockdown. So naturally, everybody was very depressed and upset about it. That was when we decided on doing something experimental. We didn't want to term it as a feature or a short or anything like that. We were working with a limited crew, and this is mostly a work-from-home shoot.

Expresso: *It is completely a computer-based film which is also emotional. What challenges did you face during the shoot?*

Mahesh Narayanan: We had to assemble altogether for the film. And this was during the tough lockdown

Expresso: *Darshan and Roshan were your first and last choice for the cast?*

Mahesh Narayanan: Yes, absolutely!



Expresso: *Being the director of the film, is there any particular scene close to your heart?*

Mahesh Narayanan: My main inspiration behind this film came from a video sent by a friend of mine. It was sent by a girl from the middle-east to her parents, imploring them to rescue her and take her out of that place. That scene comes in the film too in a certain way as the film entirely revolves around it. There are

Mahesh Narayanan: See, I believe theatres will always be there, and resorting to OTT releases is just something temporary for the pandemic period. And once we pass this phase, I am sure people will come back to the theatres. However, OTT gives a lot of freedom to films like C U Soon to be executed. The audience can pause the film whenever they can't understand something, rewind, and then watch it again.

I believe theatres will always be there, and resorting to OTT releases is just something temporary for the pandemic period. And once we pass this phase, I am sure people will come back to the theatres.

so many million stories we have seen and heard around this topic. So yes, I would say that moment in the film is very close to my heart.

Expresso: *What is the best memory of C U Soon shooting?*

Mahesh Narayanan: Every day, it was a new kind of R & D. A new research, a new development in something would happen all the time. So there was not one particular best moment, so to say.

Expresso: *Films are now directly released on the OTT platform. As a director, do you think theatre and OTT can co-exist?*

That is more interactive, I believe.

Expresso: *How was your experience with Fahad Faazil?*

Mahesh Narayanan: He has been a very close friend for a long time. So in that way, we simply work as friends. There is no professional actor-director relationship between us. This film is also a part of friendship.

Expresso: *What is your upcoming project?*

Mahesh Narayanan: I have a film which is already made and is just awaiting release. It was made much before C U Soon, so I am focusing on that right now.



Egg White Beauty Hacks For A Clear Face

Dr. Blossom Kochhar
Founder & Chairperson of the Blossom
Kochhar Group of Companies institutionalized

When I say going to your kitchen for all your beauty troubles is a great idea then I mean it because there are some great ingredients that you can pick directly from your kitchen and it will give you the best skin ever. Similarly, there is one thing that I love to include in my packs, and beauty treatments is Egg white. It has a plethora of minerals, vitamins, and proteins that can do wonders for your skin.

Eggs are naturally rich in nutrients and offer a large number of health benefits, particularly egg white is highly beneficial to enhance our beauty. Here are 6 benefits of using egg whites to enhance your appearance.

Egg whites have been used for many decades to get beautiful skin and make the hair shiny and lustrous.

One thing that egg white is great for is anti-aging. Take 1 teaspoon of egg white mix it with 2-3 drops of

patchouli essential oil and apply it all over your face. This will help in tightening your skin and remove fine lines. Another pack that you can make at home is by mixing 1 teaspoon of egg white with a half teaspoon of honey. This will pack your skin and also nourish it at the same time. Using these packs once a fortnight can help in removing wrinkles.

A great ingredient that helps in pores cleaning and giving clear skin. Mix a spoon of egg white with 1 teaspoon sugar and 1 teaspoon of cornstarch. Use this especially for blackheads, as the sugar will exfoliate the pores, cornstarch will absorb all the dirt and blackheads and egg white will tighten the pores so that no more dirt can come into them.

Those with oily skin can mix egg white with a half teaspoon of lemon juice and 1 teaspoon of honey, this pack will cut down the oil and also help in lightening the skin tone.

6 WAYS TO MESS FREE MAKEUP WHILE WEARING MASK

Dr. Blossom Kochhar

Founder & Chairperson of the Blossom
Kochhar Group of Companies institutionalized

Wearing masks is something we all must do today, so our lifestyle has to evolve to adapt to that new normal. This includes makeup. Those of us who can't avoid wearing makeup struggle with it coming off on masks. Does this mean we ditch masks and risk our lives? Absolutely not.

You can do many things to prevent your makeup and lipstick from smudging underneath masks, and these techniques go a long way in preventing your makeup from coming off. So, try them, wear your masks, stay safe, and thank us later!

- Rather than using a foundation that might get messed up, use a BB cream. Further, use a tinted powder over your BB cream that matches your skin tone. This will pack your base and

make it smudge-free.

- Use a water-proof lipstick, better use a lipstick Stainer. It will not leave a mark on your mask and won't smudge under it. Remember to line your lips before or after the lip Stainer, as it will give a clear definition to your lips.
- With eye make up you can go to town. Use a light color shimmery eye shadow, for daytime use a cream or copper shadow, and for the night opt for gold eye shadow. Apply it from the eyelid right to just below the eyebrow. Then apply a darker shade in your socket, like a dark brown.
- Use eyeliners, you can even opt for blue or green liners. You can also opt for graphic eyeliners to draw attention to your eyes. Wear a kajal as it enhances your eyes. The whole idea is to highlight the eyes as most of the face is covered with a mask.
- Always use waterproof mascara, especially during monsoon. But do not wear heavy mascara.
- Use a powder blush rather than a creamy one as it will not leave a stain or will not look like a patch just above your mask. Just use a hint of blush and blend it well.



Snack Smart, Snack Right With Walnuts!

Nmami Agarwal
Founder and CEO- NmamiLife



Seeded Walnut Lavosh Crackers

We've always believed walnuts to be 'super nuts'. In fact, over the years, research has proven that walnuts are packed with nutrients to support the heart, brain, and gut. Not only do they have prebiotic properties that enhance the growth of beneficial bacteria in the gut, but they also act as an excellent source of plant-based omega-3 ALA, which is essential for heart health.

Moreover, considering the times that we're living in, the Food Safety Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) recently suggested incorporating foods like walnuts into one's diet to maintain optimal immune function and good health. As per FSSAI Eat Right During Covid-19 Guidelines, vitamin-B rich plant-based foods such as walnuts helps strengthen the nervous and immune system. They are a simple snack that can keep you full and satisfied in between meals, thanks to a combination of key nutrients, including plant-based protein (4g/28g), fiber (2g/28g), and omega-3 ALA (2.5g/28g).

So there you go! You now have all the more reason to start snacking on walnuts, and we're happy to pitch in with some ideas. Choose the one that works best for you and prepare to give your diet a major health boost, with the help of walnuts.

Your breakfast buddy

A handful of walnuts makes for an excellent way to begin your day. You can also blend some walnuts into a smoothie or turn it into a silky smooth spread to eat with toast.

Your go-to noon fix

Feeling those hunger pangs come noon? Instead of opting for an unhealthy snack, keep a small box of walnuts handy. If you've got the time, you can always whip up some honey walnut energy bars to tide you over until it's lunchtime.

Your afternoon pick-me-up

Sometimes, you need something to lift you up from that lazy afternoon slump. And isn't it better to choose a healthy option such as walnuts instead of heading straight for those packets of processed food? Snacking on some walnuts is a great way to keep your tummy and yourself, full and happy in the afternoon.

Your post-workout snack

Exhausted after that intense workout? Don't worry. Walnuts are an excellent refuel snack after a taxing workout. Munch on a handful even as you ride that after-workout happy high.

Your diet pal

Trying to manage your weight by watching your



Pumpkin Battered in Walnuts

calories? Incorporate walnuts into meals and snacks for a simple and convenient way to add important nutrients that will help you stay fuller longer. Feeling full, or satiated, can play a role in how much you eat and help with weight management. Plus, walnuts definitely make for a tasty snack!

Your late-night craving solution

Let's face it – we've all had some pretty serious late-night cravings! More often than not, it's easy to indulge in a piece or two of chocolate at such times. Next time, consider walnuts. Not only are they a healthier option for a late-night snack, but they also help you feel full, keeping you away from snacking on anything else until you hit the bed.

You see? Walnuts are super versatile and jam-packed with health benefits. So, make sure to incorporate a handful of walnuts into your daily diet and prepare to set off on the road to good health.



Mixed Berry Walnut Chia Smoothie

Relish The Flavours Of Uttarakhand

Aloo mooli ki Thechwani

Let's break the word thech means to crush and wani means curry a unique style of cooking where no knife or any kind of cutting or chopping gear is not used. Aroma of freshly ground whole masala and flavor from home grown organic ingredients makes it a must have dish when in Uttarakhand. **Chef Pawan Bisht** has come up with some delicate delicious recipes in Uttarakhand.

Aloo mooli ki Thechwani

Thech means crushing and wani means curry. Curry made by crushing the vegetables on sil batta

- Preparation : 15 mins
- Cooking : 30-35 mins
- Servings : 04 portions

Health benefits and nutrition factors

This dish is good source of Vitamin A, C,E, B6, copper, calcium, potassium and other minerals. Really good source of fiber. Thechwani works as immunity booster too. This dish gives you almost half the value of Vitamin C which is required by body on daily basis.

Ingredients

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| • Pahadi radish(mooli) | 1 medium size |
| • Pahadi potato | 2 medium size |
| • Chopped onion | ½ cup |
| • Chopped tomato | 1 medium size |
| • Chopped garlic | 1 table spoon |
| • Chopped ginger | ½ table spoon |
| • Dry red chilli whole | 3 to 4 no. |
| • Himalayan faran or Cumin seeds | 1 tea spoon |
| • Turmeric powder | ½ tea spoon |
| • Garam masala | 1 tea spoon |
| • Red chili powder | 1 tea spoon |
| • Coriander powder | 2 table spoon |
| • Asafetida (hing) | a pinch |
| • Mustard oil or ghee | 3 table spoon |
| • Water | 4 to 6 cups |
| • Salt | to taste |
| • Chopped fresh coriander | handful |

Preparation

- Wash and peel the potatoes and radish properly. With the help of sil (batan) batta (una) crush both of them into small pieces.
- Heat oil or ghee in a iron kadai. Add ginger garlic and sauté well. Now add crushed potato and radish and sauté well for 4 to 5 mins on a medium flame. Once done take the mixture out and keep aside.
- Now in the same oil or ghee add dry red chillies and cumin seeds. Once the chilli and cumin are sautéed well then add onion and tomato. Sauté well.
- Once sautéed properly start adding all the masala's one by one and cook well.
- Then add the potato and tomato mixture and add water to it.
- Adjust the seasoning and let it cook for 25 to 30 minutes or till the radish is cooked.
- Once cooked garnish with fresh coriander leaves and serve hot with chapatti or rice.



Pahadi chicken curry

| Pahadi chicken curry

- Preparation : 10 mins
- Cooking : 30-35 mins
- Servings : 04 portions

Ingredients

• Chicken with bone	500 gms (cut into medium size pieces)
• Mustard oil	½ cup
• Cumin seeds	1 tea spoon
• Big cardamom	1 no.
• Mace	1 no.
• Cinnamon	1 no. (small piece)
• Bayleaf	2 no.
• Cardamom	2 no.
• Chopped onion	2 cup
• Chopped onion	2 cup
• Chopped tomato	½ cup
• Fresh ginger garlic paste	½ cup
• Coriander powder	3 table spoon
• Red chilli powder	1 table spoon (or according to taste)
• Turmeric powder	1 tea spoon
• Garam masala	2 table spoon
• Salt	according to taste
• Chopped fresh coriander	handful

Preparation

- Clean and wash the chicken. Keep aside.
- Take a kadai or any cooking vessel. Put on a slow heat.
- Pour the oil. Once oil is heated add all the whole masalas (cumin seeds, big cardamom, mace, cinnamon, bayleaf, cardamom)
- Sauté well. Once the oil is flavoured with whole masala add the onion and cook till golden colour.
- Add ginger garlic paste once the onion is sautéed well.
- Cook well and finally add the chopped tomatoes.
- Sautee well and add all the powder masala one by one and cook well till the mixture leaves the oil.
- Now add chicken and mix it well with the masala.
- Cover it well with a lid and let it simmer till the chicken leaves all the water.
- Keep stirring in between. Once the chicken is almost done add hot water and adjust seasoning and consistency.
- At last sprinkle the fresh chopped coriander and serve hot with chapati or steamed rice.

Pahadi raita

| Pahadi raita

- Preparation : 15 mins
- Cooking : 05 mins
- Servings : 02 portions

Health benefits and nutrition factors

Use of mustard and Jakhya makes this dish really nutritious. Many people don't know the health benefit of Jakhya. This super food is useful in healing wounds and ulcer. It prevents malarial fever, leprosy, blood diseases and cure earache. The oil of Jakhya is used for treating infantile mental disorders and at the same time mustard seeds are high in calcium, iron, dietary fiber and proteins. It prevents heart attacks and offers protection against asthma.

Ingredients

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| • Peeled and grated pahadi cucumber preferably | 1 cup |
| • Hung curd | 1 cup |
| • Roasted jakhya seeds | 1 tea spoon |
| • Mustard seeds | 1 tea spoon |
| • Roasted cumin seeds | 1 tea spoon |
| • Fresh peeled garlic | 3-4 clove |
| • Red chilli powder | 2 tea spoon |
| • Turmeric powder | 2 tea spoon |
| • Salt | to taste |

Preparation

- Make a paste of mustard seeds, cumin seeds, garlic, red chilli powder, turmeric powder and salt.
- Take a mixing bowl. Add curd to it. Whisk well and add the paste and mix well.
- Now add the grated cucumber and mix well. Adjust the seasoning and at the last sprinkle with roasted jakhya on top of the raita mix well and serve.

Chef Pawan Bisht



promotional

Craving For Ghar Ka Khana, Nanighar Is Here Ghar Se Dil Tak

Luna Chatterjee

Staying far away from your native place is the most difficult part of your life. You missed your culture, your family, and you are deprived of delicious mouth-watering and finger-licking home-cooked food. But, fret not, Nanighar by **Ms. Debjani Mukherjee** sorts out all of your woes. Nanighar is a city-based food delivery app, providing tasty and healthy homemade food made at your doorstep.

This initiative has been taken, keeping in mind women empowerment while supporting homemakers around in realizing their long-cherished dream of becoming a successful entrepreneur. It also tried to bring back the traditional local culinary dishes like Pithe, puli, chital macher muthyaa, echarer dalna, mochar ghanto, and lots more from Bengali cuisines. Not only Bengali but it also serves Continental, Gujarati, Parsi, and other different mouth-watering cuisines.

Talking about the experienced actor Subhasree says, "This service provides an opportunity for both working and non-

working men and women to be their boss, and pursue their creative culinary skills while making decent earning. Maybe you are a young mom with small kids, or whose kids are grown up, and have ample time to utilize. Maybe you are a dad, who used to love cooking, but never could try because of a hectic work schedule. Whatever it may be, this platform is the doorway to nourish and earn using your culinary skill. This way, you can have a food business from your home."

On the other side, speaking about her association with Nanighar, Rachana Banerjee shares, "This service app is unique and much required for many staying away from home. It also helps mom chefs to become financially independent. I am an independent woman and always support women achievers".

Debjani has almost two decades of experience of heading sales & marketing with the top corporates in Eastern India, and presently she is a CEO and a mother of three daughters. She always believes, "We women are half of this beautiful universe."

In her own words, she has the bug

of making a sustainable difference with her ideas and providing solutions that have never been sought, or there is the main point to address. She prioritizes rising sustainable ecosystems, running successful ventures, and generating employment for many. Mainly, she tries helping women not only showing them the path to earn money but also to highlight their decision-making power and their achievements even when they are staying back at home. Nanighar, empowering women in their kitchen. From being a queen in their homes to getting into people's hearts through their culinary skills.

Therefore, folks get to savor all of these home-cooked foods, no matter in which corner of the country you are. You will be spoilt by the choices from Indian, Continental, to Gujarati, Bengali, Parsi, and other mouth-watering cuisines at your doorstep. You do not have to depend on your house cleaner or restaurant foods, order on a press of a button, choose from 1000 different cuisines, and have #maakahatkakhana anywhere and everywhere.



Order
**HOME
COOKED
FOOD**

- Fresh Ingredients
- Healthy & Hygienic
- Contactless Delivery
- Mom's Love



nanighar
ghar se dil tak

www.nanighar.com

GET IT ON
Google Play

Download on the
App Store



📞 **62899 61646**

special story

EVOLUTION

A brief account of a Film Maker's existence

The ride from Ranaghat to Kolkata has been enhancing, **Pritha Chakraborty**, a small town girl, has worked in many commercial, non-commercial projects including award-winning documentaries and fiction feature films. She took part in editing at Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute after completing Mass Communication from Xavier's, and made her debut as a feature film director in 2019 with 'Mukherjee Dar Bou' for Windows Production. It was appreciated by mass and critics alike open, and has been since running successfully in the theatres and have got positive reviews from film critics. She has received Tele Cine Best Debutant Director Award, 2019 for the same. Pritha Chakraborty shares her thought on the present scenario in the film making process.



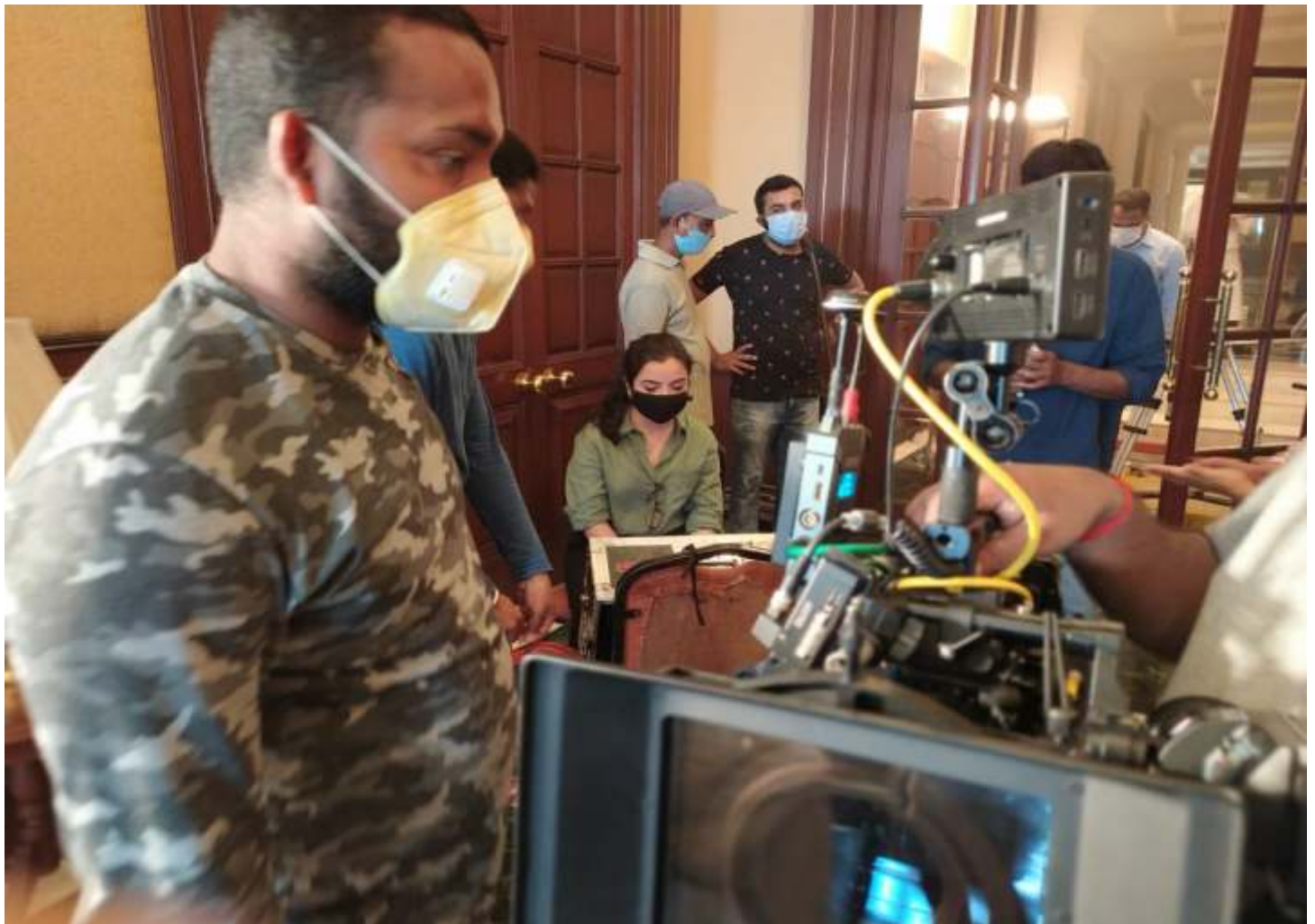
I have been planning the course of this year, since before this year started. I believe that when we plan the little things in our life, it affects our intended outcome. But a random event creates a chaos and throws our well conceived plans to disarray. The best we can do is to adapt to the new situation. To exist in the doldrum.

One of the unforgettable memories of my life is to see a houseful board in-front of the theatre on the first day of my debut film “Mukherjee Dar Bou”. Even after more than a year, the sound of rousing cheer and clapping at the climax of the film still echoes in my ears. This is a surreal feeling, one can't put this feeling into words. But I believe that this is the inspiration for many filmmakers to continue doing so and gladly I'm one of those.

Cut to one year later, March, 2020, the whole world had come to a standstill. It's still unbelievable in a country where that cinema is worshipped, a part of everyday life and we have almost spent a year without visiting the theater. Just like rest of the country shooting got stopped, theaters are closed, at one point everything got hazed. Many projects were halted at the mid-way, many releases got stalled, many films got shelved or postponed for an indefinite period. It's definitely a setback not only for Tollywood but for the film industry of the whole world. So during this prolonged lockdown, we all cinema starved audience

have been trying to feed ourselves content from online platforms, which has seen a huge gain in-terms of subscription. It gives you huge choices of films, series to choose from the convenience of your home. We saw many big releases from Bollywood had chosen online platform to release these films during that time. Though Tollywood has been patient with their decision of release till now, but anytime the game might change. Personally this has also had a footprint on how to plan my work, both in independent and commercial commitments. In the commercial front, I regularly had to direct advertisements from the confines of mine home, in this new normal. In between those commitments I caught on my Schedule for creating scripts for films and web series. Earlier last month I was taken by surprise when I got a call from International Documentary Association to be on their jury panel for the feature docs award. It has been an overwhelming experience so far.

Now the discourse is about whether it's a threat for cinema itself. Personally I feel just like in any situation, it has both positive and negative effect for the industry. When talking about the positives we have to acknowledge that because of on-line platforms now the audience have a huge platter of curated content to choose from. At this hour of social distancing, this is a convenient option. Many independent filmmakers, documentary filmmakers have finally found some hope to release their film without fighting for theatre



timings or screening places and take out their film to larger audiences. On other hand theatre being closed down for so long is a huge economic loss for the industry. Many small theatres are at the verge of permanently closing down due to lack of maintenance cost. Even if it opens in near future there is also no assurance of footfall or how the revenue will be generated after maintain all social distancing norms. So in a way if theatre release becomes a distant dream, then all big production houses will be turning towards Online platforms. So that will again bring back the same fate for independent filmmakers as they have faced in theaters.

I think whatever has happened in 2020 is so sudden and unexpected that everyone, be it an independent filmmaker to an established production house, they are still trying to figure out things to move forward. I'm optimistic by nature and definitely feel a theatre full of audiences will be part of our reality again. Even if it goes through evolution, cinema will survive and live because people will always love to see and hear stories that matter, stories that they feel connected to.



“

One of the unforgettable memories of my life is to see a houseful board in-front of the theatre on the first day of my debut film “Mukherjee Dar Bou”. Even after more than a year, the sound of rousing cheer and clapping at the climax of the film still echoes in my ears. This is a surreal feeling, one can't put this feeling into words. But I believe that this is the inspiration for many filmmakers to continue doing so and gladly I'm one of those.

- Pritha Chakraborty

”

rising star

My Favorite Track In Bandish Bandits is "Padharo Maare Des": Anand Tiwari

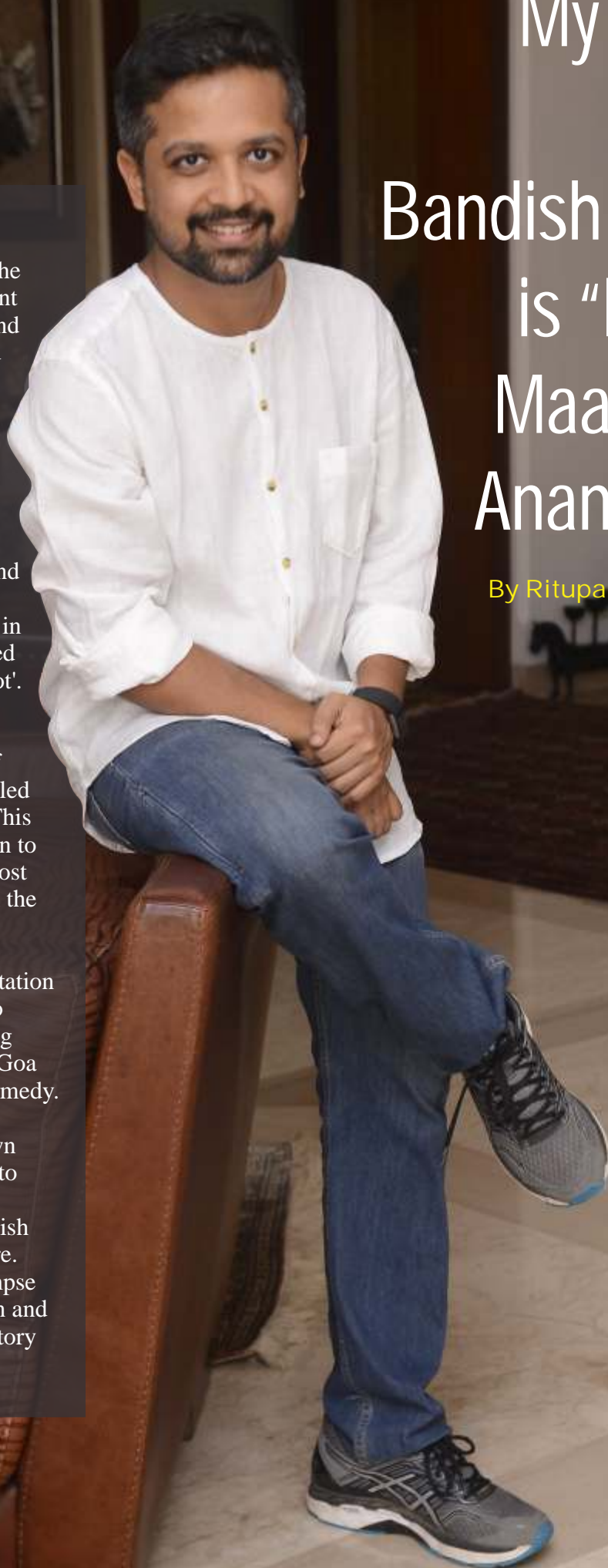
By Rituparna Sengupta Basu

With the huge knowledge in the world of entertainment and advertising, Anand Tiwari has set up and designed a niche for himself in this showbiz industry. He has shown his talent through his innovative creations like Detective Byomkesh Bakshi, and Udaan. He has debuted as a director in the feature film named 'Love Per Square Foot'.

Anand Tiwari is on-board as a director of Amazon Originals titled "Bandish Bandits". This musical show went on to become one of the most talked about series in the web genre.

He has earned a reputation in Mumbai; thanks to projects like 'Slumdog Millionaire' and 'Go Goa Gone,' the zombie comedy.

Here, Tiwari sits down with Team Expresso to share his journey, his thoughts about 'Bandish Bandits' and lots more. Read on to get a glimpse into the artistic vision and how the sweet love story was woven.



Expresso: How do you spend most of your time in this lockdown?

Anand Tiwari : I work a lot! I have been writing a lot, actually. We are developing various kinds of content, hoping that we can start shooting as soon as the lockdown is over.

Expresso: What are the things you learned in these hard times?

Anand Tiwari : I think the one thing I have learned is that I am still privileged that I can have two meals a day, and I live in a house. There are a lot of people who don't have that privilege. It's not just the pandemic; there have also been floods and other natural disasters that people have faced. And as storytellers or entertainers, I think if we can entertain people in these tough times and bring a smile on their faces, I think we have done our job then.

Expresso: Bandish Bandits has got immense success. How do you feel about it?

Anand Tiwari : I feel great! Classical music was somehow not reaching the youth of our country. With Bandish that has started, I believe. A lot of youngsters now want to take up classical music. What is very heartening is that people have been motivated by the dedication of characters towards music, shown in Bandish Bandits. They want to put in a similar dedication to their craft.

Expresso: Bandish Bandits is a unique name. What is the reason behind choosing such a name?

Anand Tiwari : Yes, there is a story behind this name. So, bandits are basically outlaws as we all know, and 'bandish' is a musical piece, and also in Urdu, it means shackles. So Bandish Bandits are those people who are revolutionaries in breaking the shackles and coming forward.

Expresso: What kind of music do you like?

Anand Tiwari : I love all kinds of music, and that is what we've also tried to showcase in Bandish Bandits. There is a bit of classical, indie, and pop. And even in my next projects, I would

like to experiment with all kinds of music.

Expresso: How challenging was it to make the 10 episode series?

Anand Tiwari : Crafting a story in 10 episodes has a very different grammar from a film. On one side, we had the story of 'bandits,' and on the other, we had to develop the Gharana story. So yes, this was quite challenging!

Expresso: You have taken two newcomers in your cast. How was your bonding with Ritwik and Shreya?

Anand Tiwari : Well, we shared a fantastic bond! Both Ritwik and Shreya are very hard-working actors and pretty talented too. We are lucky to be able to present their talent. And also, we developed a great friendship outside the series, which is really amazing.

Expresso: Which scene is closest to your heart?

Anand Tiwari : One was the jugalbandi scene, and the other is this reunion scene in the 10th episode about which I would not like to reveal much right now. Both these scenes had all the characters involved in it, and for me, it was very satisfying to shoot these two scenes. All the characters were involved in their own dynamism. Therefore, handling all the complexities of all the characters was quite exciting and challenging for me.

Expresso: How was your experience to working with Naseeruddin Shah?

Anand Tiwari : I have been his student, and yes, I have observed him very carefully too. Whatever skills of the direction I have today, has been learned to a great extent from him. So when I was discussing the scenes with him, it felt like I was talking about things he has taught me, which felt quite overwhelming. I think working with him in this avatar was a big thing on my bucket list, which got ticked off. But I would like to remain greedy and hope that this opportunity comes back again and again.



Expresso: *You're a good director as well as an actor. Which genre is closer to you?*

Anand Tiwari : I like both! I love this medium with all my heart, and I just want to be involved in it. Whether it is as an actor, director, editor, or writer, it really doesn't matter to me.

Expresso: *What made you dive into the streaming platform?*

Anand Tiwari : So, the streaming platform started much later in India than abroad. And as storytellers, we had to make use of this platform. We were less resistant to changes. There were a lot of filmmakers who thought this was not the

p

platform for their kind of content. So we started telling stories on this platform before anyone else.

For example, when Amrit did Band Baja Baraat with YRF, it was one of the first to be released on India's platform. When we made Love per Square Foot with Ronnie Screwala, it was the first digital film of the country. Even Bandish Bandits is a web series that the entire family can sit together and watch.

So yes, we have never really worried about where the industry is but have always tried to understand what the audience wants and what will be the new technology in the next two years. So you see, don't try to keep up with industry trends, but rather look into the audience and cater to what they want only.

Expresso: *Is it more challenging to direct a web film than a feature film?*

Anand Tiwari : Telling a story through 10 episodes definitely has a different grammar, and yes, it is tougher as well. In a feature film, you see, it's only a matter of two hours with one interval. Whereas in a web series, there are ten intervals if it's a ten-episode series.

Classical music was somehow not reaching the youth of our country. With Bandish that has started, I believe. A lot of youngsters now want to take up classical music

- Anand Tiwari



And you have to keep the audience entertained for these eight to ten hours. Now some people binge-watch, and the rest watch it maybe over six to seven days. So we have to keep in mind entertainment for both while making a series.

Expresso: You belong to a family of doctors. Did you always want to be a part of the film industry?

Anand Tiwari : Yes! I think I did. My parents made me watch Guru Dutt, Bimal Roy, Hrishikesh Mukherjee films quite early in life because they are also huge fans of these great directors. Yes, they did want me to become a doctor and were quite taken aback when I told them that I want to pursue this as my career. But I guess it is because they introduced me to such a brilliant cinema that became the love of my life. So yes, I am thankful to them.

Expresso: How was this journey from 2008 to 2020?

Anand Tiwari : Well, this journey began in 1989 when I was around five years old, and I had started watching films. Then when I got into theatre, I started to learn more about this medium. So yes, it has always been a learning experience for me. I was learning then as well, and I am still in the same process. I don't measure myself in the number of films I am doing. My journey in direction has only been for five to six years now, but the storytelling journey has been there for long enough, and I still enjoy it as much. In all these years, I have only tried my best to learn and not repeat my mistakes.

Expresso: Which director's work inspires you the most?

Anand Tiwari : I am a huge fan of Billy Wilder. Also, closer home, I

like the works of Bimal Roy, Guru Dutt, and Hrishikesh Mukherjee, Satyajit Ray. I also like Anurag Basu's work, and I have worked with him as an assistant director. I have worked with a lot of directors like Raju Hirani and Vikramaditya Motwane. It has been great learning from them, and I also love their work a lot.

Expresso: Have you ever felt that you could do better than what a certain director did in any film?

Anand Tiwari : Whenever I see a good film or a great actor's work, I always feel I wish I could do the same or come close to that. So no, I don't think I have ever felt that I could do better than somebody.

Expresso: Do you think the OTT platform will welcome newcomers, directors, and writers?

Anand Tiwari : I hope so! Till now, at least this has been a platform where new cast and crew are being encouraged. So I hope this doesn't become a platform where again there is the star system with star actors and new people don't get work. I believe that giving newcomers opportunities is a major way to keep the medium of storytelling new and fresh.

Expresso: Music is an important part of this show. What is your favorite track from the show?

Anand Tiwari : My favorite track is Padharo Maare Des, which is a very old bandish, and we got a chance to create our rendition of it.

Expresso: What is your next project?

Anand Tiwari : Well, as of now, my most important project is to see that more and more people get to watch Bandish Bandits and gauge the audience response. Only then will I be able to think of my next step.



A portrait of Amritpal Singh Bindra, a man with a dark beard and glasses, wearing a dark blue turban and a pink button-down shirt. He is sitting and looking directly at the camera.

rising star

Still and Still Media Collective To Make High-Quality Content

Amritpal Singh Bindra

By Rituparna Sengupta Basu

Bandish Bandits is the latest craze on Amazon Prime Video. The 10-episode show explores how the Radhe and Tamanna try to find their ways back to each other via music and shared tenderness moments. The acting and music have made Bandish Bandits a fan favorite, but in all the praise heaped on various quarters, one name stands out. Amritpal Singh Bindra's contributions are unparalleled. He's the co-creator, screenplay writer, and co-author of the tale.

Amritpal's vision guides the entire show, and Team Espresso has had the distinct pleasure of having a talk with him. In the interview, Bindra highlights his time with Anand Tiwari, he shares about their company Still & Still Media Collective and speaks of his entertainment industry journey.

Expresso: How are you spending your time in this lockdown?

Amritpal Singh Bindra: Well, it isn't going too bad. It was a little weird initially because we are not used to staying at home, not meeting people, not going out, etc. But now I guess we have all grown habituated to this, and things are going fine so far with me. And of course, I am very grateful for having a roof above my head and regular meals in this hardship. I am mostly reading and writing to spend my time.

Expresso: What are the new things you learned in this lockdown?

Amritpal Singh Bindra: Well, I did not acquire any new skill set, so to say, but I have increased reading a lot. So that is something extraordinary which has happened to me, and I am reading a lot more these days.

Expresso: Have you finished any new book recently?

Amritpal Singh Bindra: Yes, I have read a lot of books and watched a lot of documentaries, which I usually don't get time for.



Expresso: Your show Bandish Bandits, is a superb musical show. Why did you and Anand Tiwari choose this kind of a subject?

Amritpal Singh Bindra: Actually, there really is a very interesting anecdote behind this. Indian classical music is indeed a topic that has not been explored in cinema. We have a friend named Namit Das, whose father is an Indian classical singer by the name of Chandan Das. So he told his son that he has been working on a raag for 19 years, and after all that time, he has started understanding it. So this line which we heard from Namit intrigued us a lot. In today's world of internet, instant gratification, and overnight success, this man devoted nineteen years of his life to a single art form. So yes, this was the story that really inspired us to do further research and plan this series.

Expresso: Bandish Bandits is a mixture of pop and Indian culture. How challenging was it to work on this kind of content?

Amritpal Singh Bindra: It was quite challenging and difficult, to be honest. Firstly, Indian classical music is not too exciting or accessible to the modern-day audience. So making that appealing for them was our primary challenge. And a major part of this credit goes to Shankar, Ehsaan, and Loy, who not only wrote the lyrics and composed music for the series but also helped in writing the script. They gave us a lot of ideas about how things are, and our research team worked hard on it. They helped us understand how we can make the music interesting, engaging, and commercially viable for a large audience. And that was exactly what we needed as we did not want the audience to feel that we are documenting or preaching something. Instead, they should find it entertaining!

Expresso: Being the producer, how did you manage the budget of this kind of unique musical content?

Amritpal Singh Bindra: So once we formed a basic idea of what we wanted to do, we went around a lot of places with it, and ultimately we found great partners in Amazon Prime. They immediately showed interest in the content. Also, our relationship with them has been very strong. They have never interfered with our creative quotient. They helped us in every way possible. We shared our ideas with one another, took feedbacks, and made this show with a lot of love. So yes, it was a smooth collaboration that way. They have indeed been great partners by giving us this platform, and most importantly, they've never been miserly about the budget. We made the film the way we wanted to.

Expresso: Why did you choose Ritwik and Shreya as your lead cast?

Amritpal Singh Bindra: Well, they went through a very rigorous auditioning process and earned the roles for themselves. As creators of the show, we were clear on one thing that we wanted new faces for the show because we didn't want any baggage for these two

characters. At the same time, we wanted to welcome newcomers, encourage them, and give them this platform. So after several rounds of auditions, we finally discussed with our casting team and finalized Ritwik and Shreya for this.

Expresso: What is your best memory of shooting Bandish Bandits?

Amritpal Singh Bindra: Well, there are so many, it's really hard to pick one. This project has taken almost two to two and a half years of effort from us. From writing an idea to sharing it with people, involving a 100-150 people crew, the journey is always incredible. But if I were to pick one memory, I would say that when we were sitting behind the monitor and watching the climax scene of the jugalbandi between Ritwik and Atulji, it literally gave us goosebumps and a tremendous sense of satisfaction. There were slight rains in the scene if you notice. Well, those were actual rains in the middle of Bikaner that too in the month of summer. We only got to shoot 2-3 hours that day, and so we had to come back and shoot the next day.

Expresso: The entire shoot happened in Jodhpur and Bikaner. What difficulties did you have to go through during the shoot?

Amritpal Singh Bindra: To be honest, it is a fantastic and unique experience to shoot in Rajasthan. People are really warm and friendly. Also, so many shoots happen in Rajasthan that they are very familiar with the shooting culture. All it took was to speak to them a little politely when we needed people to be silent, or we wanted to shoot on a particular stretch of road. They were really cooperative and generous and helped us a lot. Initially, we had plans of shooting in Rajasthan during winter, but due to some problems in the scheduling, we ended up shooting in Bombay during winter and went to Rajasthan in summer. The heat was unbearable, but apart from that, shooting in Rajasthan was genuinely amazing.

Expresso: You and Anand Tiwari started Still & Still Media Collective in 2013. How has this journey till 2020 been for you?

Amritpal Singh Bindra: It has been a superb journey, I would say. Anand and I are great friends, and we have similar sensibilities and taste in films. It is why we formed the company together since we felt we're like-minded people. The company was established in 2013, but we started working since 2015. The first web series we made was Band Baja Baraat. That was our first major piece of work, which was for Yash Raj Films. It's great to work with Anand as we have a lot of respect for one another, and we acknowledge each other's creative potential as well. So yes, it's been quite amazing to pull this through.

Expresso: Why did you choose the name Still and Still Media Collective?

Amritpal Singh Bindra: Actually, this was taken from a poem which we felt suited our ethos. The kind of content we wanted to make absolutely matched with this title, and therefore we really got excited about it.

Expresso: What is the main motto of Still and Still Media Collective?

Amritpal Singh Bindra: To make high-quality content that is accessible to the largest demographic possible. We want to create very exciting content and tell stories of various kinds. But we want to do this engagingly and entertainingly to consume more and more people. We don't bother about the medium, be it Television or film or the web. What's important is that the audience should find it interesting.

Expresso: You have produced a film, web series as well as T.V. shows. Which genre has been the most challenging for you?

Amritpal Singh Bindra: Every genre comes with its own set of benefits and difficulties. But for me, personally, Television has been the most challenging medium.





Whatever training or understanding we had was oriented towards filmmaking, and we also got opportunities to make films. Similarly, when the digital domain came, we were among the first companies that started to make films in this medium. But Television was new for us. The format was quite demanding, and we didn't have much experience. But we always wanted to be a multimedia company, so entering this powerful medium was essential for us. T.V. required us to shoot a certain amount every day. Also, the budgets were tight. So yes, taking into consideration everything, T.V. has been the most challenging for me.

Expresso: Did you have a fondness for films since childhood?

Amritpal Singh Bindra: Well, how we look at ourselves right now is more as filmmakers, because we write, direct, and produce. So yes, I would say I always wanted to be a filmmaker. In fact, I have never loved anything apart from films. I never wanted to be a fighter, or a cricketer or a pilot that most kids want to be. I always wanted to get into this field.

Expresso: Do you carry any childhood memories with you?

Amritpal Singh Bindra: Oh, yes, of course! I have been born and brought up in Bombay. At that time, there were three cinema halls, Satyam, Shivam, and Sundaram in Worli. I would desperately wait for Fridays as this was that one day in the week when our whole family would go to the theatres and catch whatever film was playing. That is the fondest memory of childhood I have.

Expresso: Working with YRF is a dream for many. How was your experience of working with them?

Amritpal Singh Bindra: Yes, it was a dream, indeed, and it was a great experience as well. What has been really lucky for us is that we've got to work with some of the finest people and organizations in the industry,

like Disney, Viacom, Dharma, Amazon Prime, and many more. We've been fortunate in collaborating with some of the best indeed.

Expresso: You've worked with Hollywood as well. What is the difference between Hollywood and Indian cinema?

Amritpal Singh Bindra: The difficulties are different in both. When I was working in L.A., you see, I saw that films were planned in a very meticulous manner. It was essential to be detail-oriented for working there, no matter which department you were working for. The pre-planning stage was long and crucial and, of course, very efficient. That system was both exciting and challenging at the same time. There was no scope of getting lazy, and everybody had to be on their toes all the time. Over here, I would say the biggest challenge is the rising cost. The art of filmmaking is becoming exceedingly expensive, and the returns are not increasing in the same proportion.

Expresso: After Bandish Bandits, what is your next project?

Amritpal Singh Bindra: Both me and Anand are developing a lot of new content for all platforms. We are also in talks with many people and very excited to start our journey in films. In January, we announced a film with Dharma based on Rameshwar Nath Kao, founder of RNAW. We are extremely excited about that film. I am hoping we can make all those announcements in a better time and space. For now, of course, there is Bandish Bandits.

Expresso: What is the success mantra you have for upcoming producers?

Amritpal Singh Bindra: I believe the thing about success is longevity. Success is not about one or two hit films. It's about making a masterpiece every time.







Fashion & Entertainment Based e-Magazine

 @expressomagazine

 expresso-magazine

 expressomagazin1

www.expressomagazine.com