

Expresso

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Magazine

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Collection - Anju Modi

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Scintillating
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Grub Hub

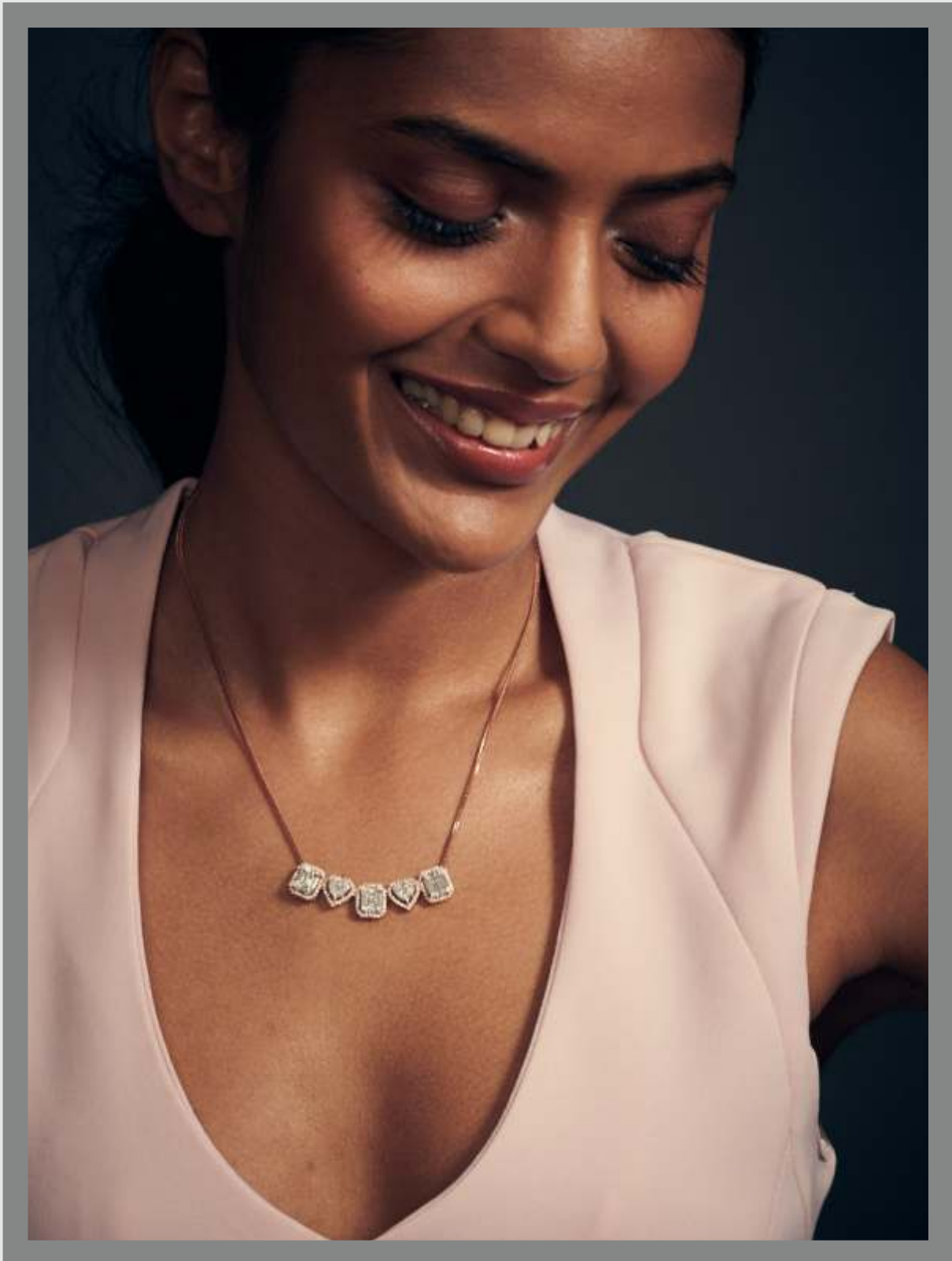
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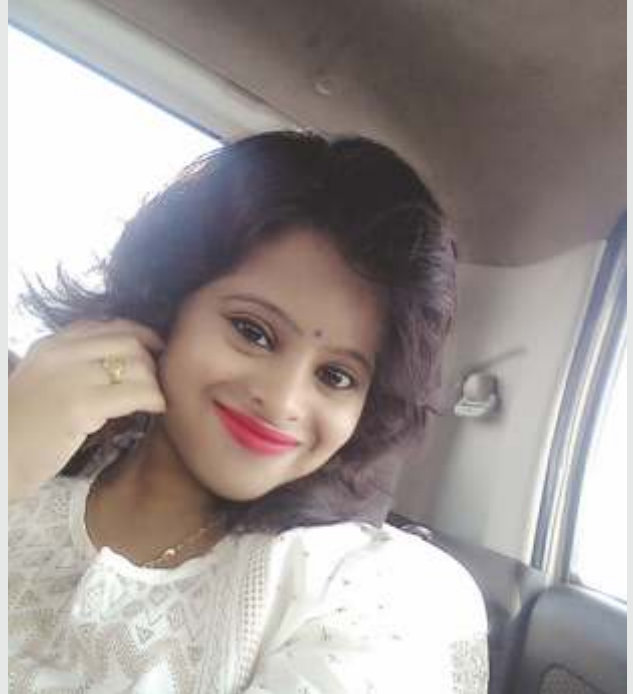
The Complete Woman

Arpita



ARCHANA AGGARWAL
TIMELESS JEWELLERY

EDITOR'S LETTER



We moved through this pandemic era of agony and challenges! Now we are already entered in the last month of this year. A fresh and new dawn of 2021 knocking at the door. This year is unusual, there's negativity all around the world. 2020 will probably be recorded as one of the most addressed year in history. We have lost our near and dear ones. Many eminent personalities lose their lives.

Let's Ring in Christmas with a new normal way. The celebrations are going to be very different than before. This month we celebrate Christmas and New Year with some special and unique way. Most of the world to stay inside their homes, we brings to you exclusive recipes.

We featured "The Complete Women....Arpita Chatterjee" as our cover girl in this issue. Arpita Chatterjee, one woman- an actor, dancer, singer and entrepreneur. She mostly appears in Odia and Bengali film Industry. Energetic, lively Arpita Chatterjee has not just taken her name to the top of this Bengali film industry, she also stands as a true inspiration to the many woman who wish to tap into this entertainment world.

Temperatures are dipping and trendy accessorizes to raise your style quotient with ace designer Anju Modi's Winter Festive Collection. Kirti Kulhari spill the beans of her latest series Criminal Justice: Behind the closed Doors. Read on to find the behind the secret story of 'Cheeni' with Bengali actress Madhumita and Aparajita Addya.

Let's pray for a better 2021. Wishing you all a happy Merry Christmas and Season's Greetings.

Rituparna Sengupta Basu
Editor
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Shilpa Shukla

Editor-in-Chief

Rituparna Sengupta Basu

Art & Creative

Gourav Basu

Editing & Proof

Nabanita Dutta

Social Media Head

Akash Goyel

Content & SEO Specialist

Shashank Sharma

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FASHION & LIFESTYLE

Let's Warm Up With Vogue

Winter has officially entered and so has the hunt for all things cozy and warm. Harsh winter outing wants a statement toasty additions in a wardrobe.

Designer Anju Modi brings to you a new Woollen capsule collection to look upon the winter-stunning garments for this season. She offers a trendy styles with a hint of chic and a rich dose of outfit. The range exhibits a gamut of jackets, capes, tunics, stoles, masks and more.

If you just want to flaunt your basics, Scarlett red jacket comes with an attached stoll- a stoll which is as versatile as you, is the perfect addition to your winter wardrobe. Style it with some chunky boots and high-rise jeans for a bold look.

Opt Grey woolen angrakha jacket uplifted with thoughtful red details to give your wardrobe a fresh new look. You can complete the look with a neutral coloured beanie for some extra warmth and a cutesy touch. If you dressed up an asymmetrical woolen mustard caps that's as versatile as you.

Staying true to her roots, Anju Modi has taken to the Indian textiles like Pashmina, Cashmere and the like for the said collection. Taking the notch a little higher as always, the range features Indian silhouettes that have been altered in a contemporary fashion. These pieces are versatile in their use and are truly sustainable.



Light Up Your Mood This

Christmas

With the music of carols knocking on the door and houses decorated in hues of white, green, and red; Christmas is the time that fades the worries and paves the way for hope and happiness in everyone's heart. It is the time when your favorite Santa leaves you pleasantly surprised with lovely gifts and warm wishes. To make the festival even more joyous and filled with positivity in the times of Pandemic, Ferns N Petals and Izhaar launches their new Christmas collection, which will instantly put you in a celebratory mood and make your Christmas full of jingles. Let Santa bring his gifts - the Izhaar way this Christmas!

Christmas Trees & Plants

The feeling of x-mas festivity is incomplete without the well-decorated Christmas trees that symbolize eternal life and growth. The company is offering a variety of artificial x-mas plants which come in a DIY kit and gemstone wishing trees along with a range of traditional real plants like red & white Poinsettia, Christmas Tree, Araucaria, Cyprus etc. potted in Santa smiling face or "Merry Christmas" printed pots. These plants are available in various combinations of Tree Shaped Dry cake, Chocolates, etc. and ranges from Rs.449 till Rs.2299.

Plum and Cream Cakes

From gluten-free cakes to midnight delivery, Ferns N Petals has a range of indulgent cakes in all flavors and preferences to deliver at your doorstep without you worrying about the timely delivery and hygiene. One can order from a variety of traditional dry cakes or relishing flavors of the cream cake made with premium quality ingredients. The cakes are available in designs like X-mas tree, snowman, Santa castle, and many others.



Personalized Gifts

This Christmas let's unwrap the miracle and bring a cheerful smile to your loved ones' face with the perfect personalized gifts designed to make this festival even more memorable. From Xmas themed Personalised LED cushion to Merry Christmas bottles mugs and surprises filled X-mas stockings, all these gifts can be further customized for a personal touch to surprise the recipient.

Izhaar Collection

Izhaar, your One-Stop Shop for Luxury Gifting, always has a solution to make your occasions grand & high spirited. Their trending gift category includes quirky and innovative items such as Ebony Manka Collection, Gingham Cappuccino Collection, Christmas Gifting Hamper, Golden Manka Collection, Cougar Collection and Panther Collection to name a few.

Celebrate the auspicious occasion of Christmas by gifting your dear ones with something truly festive special. Izhaar believes that gifting for any occasion is an experience & expression of joy and the products are curated with love keeping in mind the spirit of love, joy, holidays & celebrations.



Expression of Love

Santa only has one love language: gifts. Throughout the world, gift giving have defined the Christmas & New Year season. A tradition; though evolved with time but the essence of which remains till date – exchanging gifts, the warm, fuzzy feeling when you give or receive one, a memory keeper... It is an expression of love, gratitude & bonding. With a plethora of options available in stores and online, finding the perfect gift for your loved ones is a cumbersome process.

To solve this perplexity and add more delight to this contagious spirit of festivals, a few exclusive Fashion & Jewellery brands have curated exceptional pieces for all your gifting wishes and fancies.

Shi Fashion has curated special gift boxes with semi-precious bracelets, earrings and contemporary necklaces that make a beautiful favour for the modern Indian woman. A warm gesture for keeps; Shi gifting is a great choice for gifting to friends, family and clients, as a welcoming gesture or a sign of gratitude. The brand also has options for customization and redesign, on their unique collection for any theme or occasion – giving a personal touch to gifting.

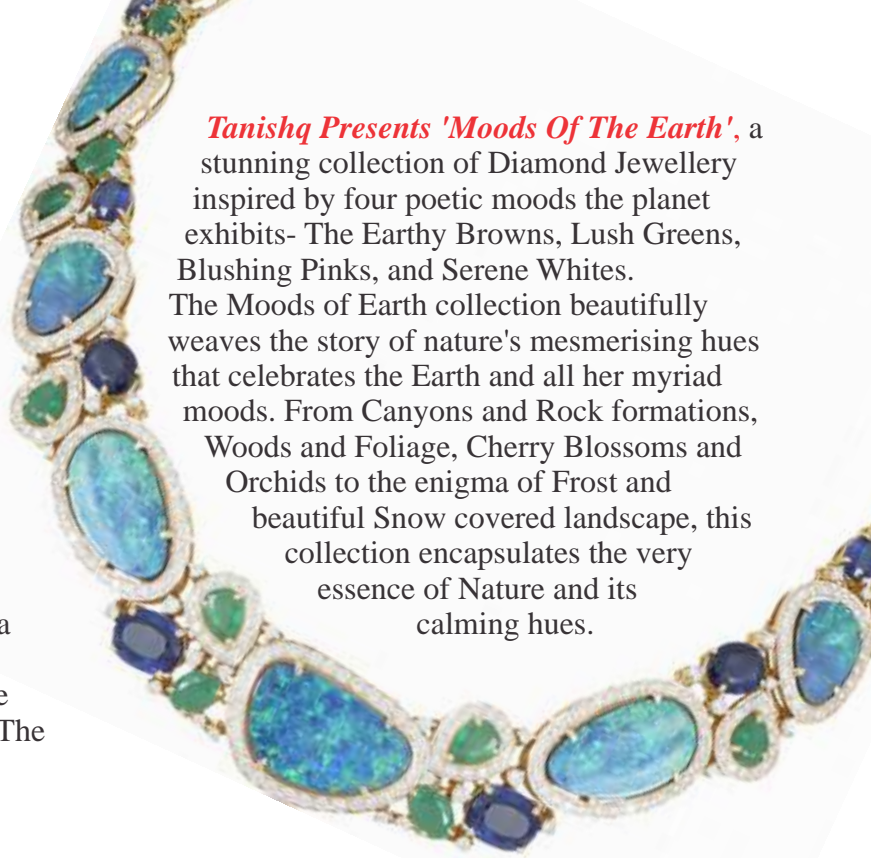
Add cheer to your season's greetings and amp your jewellery chest by treating yourself to **Mia's** extensive range of stylish designer pendants, neck pieces, rings, bracelets and earrings. From dainty pieces in rose gold and diamonds to quirky and stylish designs in silver jewellery collection. This season, gift with smile, a warm hug and lots of love with **Mia by Tanishq**.



If you are eyeing on fine jewellery, as a way to share good wishes and love with your inner circle, **Avama Jewellers** is where you need to be. Handcrafted with love, the brand's exquisite gifting selection ranges from pendants and bracelets carved in precious metal like gold and silver – making your gift a special one.

Jewellery Designer **Archana Aggarwal** comes up with their all new collection for such occasions. Each piece in this collection is unique, light, lively and lovely; a perfect balance of color and gold, shine and style, expanse and dense, the collection is crafted to bring balance and grace. The collection includes a comprehensive range of necklaces, pendants, earrings, bracelets and bangles appropriate for the function. Every piece make is a style statement. The label is a celebration of today's woman who is feminine yet strong.

Tanishq Presents 'Moods Of The Earth', a stunning collection of Diamond Jewellery inspired by four poetic moods the planet exhibits- The Earthy Browns, Lush Greens, Blushing Pinks, and Serene Whites. The Moods of Earth collection beautifully weaves the story of nature's mesmerising hues that celebrates the Earth and all her myriad moods. From Canyons and Rock formations, Woods and Foliage, Cherry Blossoms and Orchids to the enigma of Frost and beautiful Snow covered landscape, this collection encapsulates the very essence of Nature and its calming hues.



Tips and Tricks: Tackle Oily Skin In Winter

Dr. Blossom Kochhar

There is never a time where you can relax your beauty regime. Winter is no exception. It brings its own problems. During winters, those with oily skin live under a misconception of not maintaining an extensive regime. Winter skin care certainly requires changes in the beauty routine but not a complete abandonment of the products. Here are some tips that will be handy during the months of winters.

Cleanser: Oily skin demands a gentle cleanser that removes excess oil without completely taking off moisture from the face. Wash at least twice a day to take dirt, grime and pollution from your face.

Toner: Use a toner that balances the oil on your face at the same time prevents acne or any other breakout.

Oiling: A face oil that hydrates your skin without making your oilier would be of great help during winters.

Moisturiser : It is very common that we skip this tip to avoid the skin being thicker and greasier. Instead of a thick moisturizer or cream, opt for an oil-free moisturizer to protect your skin from drying and maintaining moisture on your skin.

Sunscreen : Apply a lightweight or gel-based sunscreen that protects the skin from the sun. It also helps your skin from any further damage even during winters.

Exfoliation : Exfoliation is one of the major steps in winters as it helps remove dead cells. But remember not to over scrub your skin. Use a mild or homemade scrub to avoid damage to your skin.

Facemask : Banana face pack is the most effective and moisturising face pack. Take a banana, 1 tablespoon honey, a quarter teaspoon of cream or milk powder and 2 drops of sandalwood oil. Mix these ingredients well and apply on your face. Let it on for 20 minutes, rinse off afterwards and apply a moisturiser in the end.

Make-Up Products : While you pick your foundation, make sure you pick a water-based lightweight foundation that provides a fine look on the skin rather

than a greasy look.

Apart from these there are certain things that should be noted and taken care of.

Hydration : It is very common that we don't feel very thirsty in winters. But it is extremely important that we drink at least 8 glasses of water. It not only hydrates your skin but flushes out toxins from your skin.

Diet : Winters often tempt us to indulge in sweet and fried foods. Please make sure that we include ample fruits, greens and vegetables in our daily diet.



DIY Treatment For Dry Scalp

Dr. Blossom Kochhar

We all are set with body butters and creams for our skin this winter. What about your dry scalp? Dry scalp gives you those itchy white flakes that can be an embarrassment for many.

I would like to suggest some tips to protect your scalp from drying out in winters:

- **Stop Washing you Hair Often:** Washing your hair often reduces the production of oil in your scalp making it dry.
- **Avoid Hot Water for your Hair:** Excessive heat or hot water dries out your hair and scalp. It damages and breaks the hair.
- **Drink a lot of water:** Hydrating your body also helps to control dryness in the scalp.

Healthy diet : Include a lot of fruits and vegetables into your diet including proteins which are good for your hair and scalp.

I would also like to recommend some home remedies that could be beneficial for your dry scalp.

Cleanser : Take a cup of coconut milk and 2 tablespoons of besan (gram flour). Apply on your

scalp and hair. Massage gently and leave it for 5 minutes. Rinse off well with lukewarm or cold water.

Massage oil/ Toner : Take a tablespoon of coconut/olive oil. Add a teaspoon of castor oil. Add 3-4 drops of lavender essential oil in it. Heat a little and massage it gently in your scalp and hair at night. Shampoo it in the morning. You may follow this at least once a week for better results.

Pre-Shampoo Conditioner : Mix 1 tablespoon of castor oil, 1 tablespoon of glycerine, 1 teaspoon of cider vinegar, 1 teaspoon of protein, and 1 tablespoon of mild shampoo. Apply this onto your scalp and leave it on for 30 minutes. Shampoo your hair with warm water.

Post Shampoo Rinse : Add a 5-10 drops of tea tree essential oil into the bath water and use this solution as a last rinse to your hair.



COVER STORY

*One Woman,
Many Roles -
Actor, Singer,
Dancer, Model,
Entrepreneur*

Rituparna Sengupta Basu

From a homemaker to a writer, producer, and an impeccable actor, **Arpita Chatterjee** is one of the finest personalities who has contributed a lot to the Tollywood industry. From *Asukh*, *Dutta vs. Dutta* to *Satyanweshi* and *Bodhon*, she has come up with some outstanding works. Apart from an actor, she is an entrepreneur as well and is working in the healthcare industry. With her incredible acting and entrepreneur skills, she is not only riding high on success but also setting new boundaries for women. After the recent release of "*Guldasta*", the Expresso team caught a sneak peek of her personal life as well as her professional life.

Expresso: How have you utilized your quarantine period in 2020?

Arpita : Well, from my perspective the quarantine phase was very lengthy, but I took it very positively. Keeping everything aside, the financial condition was something that was troubling all of us. Barring the financial instability, the quarantine time taught me many things, and the learnings will always remain priceless for me.

Expresso: What have you realized as a person in this tough time?

Arpita : Honestly speaking, I have learned the value of life. Don't we all agree that we value money but keep ignoring life? However, this quarantine worked in a positive way, and I understood the significance of life.

Expresso: What makes you think "*Abbar Kanchenjunga*" will be a different project than what you have done so far?

Arpita : You see, the entire world of Cinema is now live and is in front of the world through the OTT platform. There is nothing as such like different projects as somewhere in the world the same would have been done by someone else. It could be in any other region, country, or language and that's what I keep in mind while accepting any offer.



Expresso: What is the most exciting thing about your character in "Abbar Kanchenjunga"?

Arpita : Well, if you ask me, I cannot choose any one exceptional trait of my character. Whenever I accept any offer for a film I judge three things, I first analyze the story, then my character, and my equation with the director. "Abbar Kanchenjunga" is certainly nothing exceptional.

Expresso: Describe in a few words your journey from being an actor to a successful wife and a mother.

Arpita : The journey is quite fascinating until now, and I am sure that it will be great too in the future. It helped me to enrich myself as a person and supported me to be a complete woman.

Expresso: Your Bollywood debut was in 2014. After that, we have never seen you acting in Bollywood movies. Was it a conscious decision not to do any Bollywood movies or it is just waiting for the right project to come?

Arpita : I am just waiting for the right project to arrive.

Expresso: How do you look back to 2020?

Arpita : Overall, I would say that this is a cursed year. Even before COVID-19 hit, almost eight to ten films were lined-up for release. My schedule was planned in a manner that there was a release of two movies every alternate month. But things did not happen the way they were actually planned. Now, the best thing that happened to me this year was my Delhi-based startup company was taken over by an infamous fat company. So, summing up things, 2020 was not about everything going negative.

Expresso: What exactly does your startup company deal with?

Arpita : Well, I along with my team started with a health-related app named 'Saheli'. Here we have included various health-related contents in different languages and is all about pregnancy care. I hope you are aware of the waiting area in any doctor's clinic or diagnostic centers; well, we also produce various audio-visual healthcare-related contents for the same "waiting area

television". Nowadays, I am working on other things as well about which soon everyone will come to know.

Expresso: Guldasta didn't do well at the box office as expected; do you think it can create extra pressure on your upcoming project?

Arpita : I do not think that it will somehow affect my upcoming projects. It is because I have received positive feedback regarding my performance in the film, which I am quite happy with. Next, the timing when the film was released was not right since the pandemic was not over yet by then. As people were quite panicked and not mentally ready to watch films due to the virus spread; moreover theatres were running with the 50% occupancy rule. Hence, considering these things, I do not think that the timing was perfect for the release of 'Guldasta.'

Expresso: Theatres are gradually opening, and many films are releasing too but people are still avoiding theatres. What are your views on it?

Arpita : Well, fear is the factor which people are considering when it comes to visiting theatres. After all, the threat of COVID is still not over yet. I feel that watching films in theatres is a complete family matter and you will hardly find anyone who loves watching films alone. Considering this thing, going to the theatre is still a matter of threat to everyone. However, once the vaccine arrives, the situation will get better once again and things will eventually fall back into their place.

Considering the situation we are all in, the fifty-percent occupancy rule, and the mind-set of people, it is better if the producers think about releasing the films on OTT platforms. I mean, if these platforms offer a good deal, then it is better not to hold the release for the theatres.

Expresso: You have played bold characters before. What do you think is the most challenging factor in playing a bold character?

Arpita : Honestly, I have not thought about segregating my profession based on the characters. You see, I am a professional actor, and according to the script and the directors' command, it is my professional responsibility to

“
The best thing that happened to me this year was my Delhi-based startup company was taken over by an infamous fat company. So, summing up things, 2020 was not about everything going negative

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deliver quality acting. What matters the most is whether my work is satisfying the need of the director and the audience is appreciating it.

Expresso: Do you think of directing or producing a movie in the future?

Arpita : Well, I do not know. People tell me that I can direct and produce films. They have seen those parts and the abilities in me, which I have not noticed yet. As of now, if you ask me, I do not have such plans for directing or producing films or in the future. However, if I get a chance, then I will definitely grab the opportunity.

Expresso: You have an array of exciting films lined up in 2021.

What are your personal expectations?

Arpita : Expectations are common like people will love the films, and the producer will get good feedback as well as positive reviews. Besides, I am hoping that people will appreciate my contribution and hard work for the films in the upcoming year.

Expresso: Tell us something about your upcoming projects.

Arpita : After 'Abbar Kanchenjunga,' there is a backlog project, 'Abar Bochor Kuri Por', which was delayed due to COVID-19, that's again Abir and we are planning to complete it soon. Another project is 'Mayamrigoya', which is a periodical film and is based on Tagore's story. We have Indranil and Ritabhari Chakraborty as well in it too. These two are almost finished, and we are waiting for them to release..





Me And Myself

Expresso: *3 things you want in your bucket list?*

Arpita: Its actually one thing only. Peaceful life in European countryside, loving while being loved.

Expresso: *Who is the man behind your success?*

Arpita: Barun, my friend and business partner.

Expresso: *What's your favourite food?*

Arpita: Depends on my mood.

Expresso: *Define your style in one word.*

Arpita: Elegant.

Expresso: *The first thing you do after wake up?*

Arpita: Send one good morning message.

Expresso: *Whats your favourite outfit?*

Arpita: Jeans.

Scintillating *Singapore*

By Roopa Sengupta

Before going to Singapore, I had been wondering why such a small country could make itself one of the greatest countries in the world and why did so many people choose Singapore as the transit point when traveling in Asia. After my 3 days in this "Garden City", I finally found the secret of its success.

Like other developed countries, Singapore is clean and well-organized where the people are very friendly and hospitable. But when you start to go deep into the details of this country, you will find that Singapore gives the best service than any other country.

Singapore is one of my favourite holiday destinations in the South East Asia. Each time I visit it, I fall more and more in love with this beautiful country. It is an ideal place for a short holiday and has a lot to offer its tourists.





Here is my list of places to visit in Singapore.....

Gardens by The Bay

Gardens by the Bay is a beautiful indoor park located in Central Part of Singapore near Marina reserve. It is an award-winning horticultural attraction which houses around 200-250 rare plants. It is a beautiful place close to the water front and is a definite must see.

A 20-minute walk around the river and watching the city all lit up is breath-taking. The walk takes one to a food court which serves extremely tasty food at very reasonable price.

The Singapore Flyer

Similar to the London Eye, this is a pretty recent attraction. The Singapore flyer is the world's largest observational wheel. It provides you with a breath-taking view of the surrounding areas. One can view the China sea and glimpse the neighbouring Island countries of Indonesia & Malaysia. The entire round takes about half an hour. The view is to die for, so do not miss this 30-minute ride!

The Merlion Park

Merlion Park is a major tourist attraction located in the Central Business district of Singapore. The Merlion is an imaginary creature – Half fish, Half Lion and is the mark of Singapore in many ways. There are two Merlion structures on the premises, one is 8.6 metres tall and the second one is 2 metres tall. The location itself is a very picturesque as it is located by the river, facing the Marina Bay. A perfect location to spend a beautiful evening. One can also take river cruises from the Merlion Park in the bumboats and explore the places by the river.

The laser show from atop the Marina Bay Sands at night is amazing!

The Jurong Bird Park

Jurong Bird Park is an aviary and tourist attraction in Jurong, Singapore. It is one of the parks managed by Wildlife Reserves Singapore with Singapore Zoo, Night Safari and River Safari.

Sentosa Island

Definitely one of the most fun places to visit. Sentosa is a man-made island and is like a huge theme park with lot of fun things to do. Free buses run around the Island to take you from one place to another. You definitely must spend at least 2 days on Sentosa because there is just so much to see! Have fun at the Theme parks, Visit the fantastic beaches of Palawan & Silosa, enjoy the water sports & the Bars surrounding them, or just relax.

The island also has the S.E.A. Aquarium and enjoy the marine life at close quarters. The Aquarium hosts more than 800 species of marine animals. Watch the dolphins dance and play to music and it is very awe-inspiring.

Sentosa Island also has Universal Studios. South East Asia's First Hollywood movie theme park, it features enticing rides, entertainment and thrilling attractions! Here you can find seven movie themed zones, from Transformers, Shrek, Jurassic park etc. You have to spend an entire day here. It is like walking on the sets of the blockbuster Hollywood movies.

China Town

China Town is lined with colourful mom and pop tiny stores and stalls selling authentic Chinese food. It is a bustling district decorated with bright red lanterns. One can buy Chinese tea, medicines, silks, toys and souvenirs. China Town is famous for its Sri Mariamman Hindu Temple, the oldest temple in Singapore. Be sure to check out the Buddha Tooth Relic temple as well.

Little India

Little India is just that – a slice of India reproduced in Singapore. There isn't much difference between real India and Little India. Little India dates back to over 200 years.

Orchard Road

Don't miss the chance to explore Orchard Road and shop there. The road is flanked on both sides by tiny boutiques, spas, beauty salons, hotels, offices, entertainment spots, restaurants, bars, malls and cafes.

Singapore is one of the countries which has flights coming on from almost every country. The Changi Airport is beautiful, huge and is a shopping mall as well. The city has extremely good transport facility like bus, Metro and cabs. Connectivity within the city is easy.

Singapore has so much to see and enjoy. Explore the city with a map and an open mind and one will be delighted with the cultural amalgamation and lovely sights. There are numerous places to eat starting from food courts in malls to fine dine restaurants.

The best areas to stay in Singapore are Orchard Road, Marina Bay, Sentosa Island, China Town or Little India.

Singapore is hot and humid so pack clothes that are light and comfortable. Shorts, T-shirts and flip-flops are acceptable almost everywhere, though higher-end restaurants and bars call for more stylish attire; consider bringing at least one evening dress or long-sleeved shirt and trousers, and dress shoes.



CELEB TALK

Abir Sengupta

If movies do not release in theatres,
the transition will never come

By Abir Majumder

After Suraj Pe Mangal Bhari, Indoo ki Jawani becomes the another film to be released in theatres amidst this pandemic situation. Director Abir Sengupta, who makes his Bollywood debut with the coming-of-age comedy movie.

Kiara Advani and Aditya Seal starrer Indoo ki Jawani, revolves around the strong, vigorous protagonist's experiences on a dating app.

When real-life meet-cutes have been replaced by right swipes, the director believes it is fascinating to trace how love has evolved due to dating apps.

Expresso Magazine had an interaction with the director, Abir Sengupta who reveals why he chose to make his B-town directorial debut with the concept of dating app.

Expresso: Who inspired you to come up with such an outstanding concept?

Abir : Aah! One of my friends met a guy through an online dating app and after staying together for some time, they decided to get married. This news shook me since people usually do not marry someone whom they have met through a dating app. Besides, it wowed me like you met a stranger through an online platform, and went farther to decide that you want to get married and spend life together. Overall, everything fascinated me that how such platforms bring two people together from different places and land and remove the distance between

them. This is how I ended up with a story and a concept for Indoo ki Jawani. Also, I included some personal inputs like fun, chaos, and humor to make it entertaining and spicy. The story also depicts why to choose love over hatred and peace over war.

Expresso: Making a debut in Bollywood with a new theme of dating apps, do believe in such apps?

Abir : Well, I feel that dating apps are today's concept. If you look back, you will not find such things in the past. It has become quite relevant since I have met many people who are finding love through these platforms. I feel that people will somehow resonate with the idea as half of the young generation is already into it.

Hence, cinema should always be the mirror of society. I feel that when people will watch it, they should be able to match it with daily life. With this dating app concept and date gone wrong, I feel that the audience will be able to resonate with every bit of the film. This is what gave me confidence.

Expresso: Was Kiara always your first choice for the film?

Abir : Definitely, she was my first choice from the beginning. In fact, when I was working on the script, I already put her in the character of Indoo in my mind. When she accepted my offer, it was like a dream come true for me.



Expresso: Any quality of Kiara that you appreciate the most.

Abir : She is extremely dedicated to her work, which I love the most.

Expresso: From a glamorous Bombay girl to a small-town girl of Ghaziabad, how challenging it was to transform her?

Abir : Oh! Kiara is an outstanding actor. She is quite easy-going and this is something that makes her suitable for any role I feel. Kiara is from South Bombay, a completely modern city girl. But her role in the film is a small-town middle-class girl from Ghaziabad. She invested a lot of time in the pre-production, readings, and workshop days that made her transformation quite easy. When she was on the set, I never felt that I am working with Indoo Gupta and not Kiara Advani.



choosing a retro theme for the song and once you watch the film, you will understand the reason.

Expresso: How did you come up with the concept of the 'Dil Tera' song from the film?

Abir : You will understand the significance of the song as well as its concept only if you watch the film. Also, I do not want to ruin the viewing experience of the audience. I have a huge fascination with retro and I wanted to include it in the film. The song has an essence from the old era from the 60s to 90s. You will find an overall reference of Kashmir ki Kali to Rangeela throughout the song. There is a reason behind

Expresso: As you said that the retro concept attracts you more so are you coming up with more recreated versions in the future.

Abir : I would not say that you might see recreated versions; however, as I am inclined towards retro you will definitely notice something related to it in my films. From characters to songs, you will see a retro touch for sure. I am someone who is completely stuck in the retro era and I rarely watch Hollywood films. Even my music playlist is filled with retro songs.



Expresso: Any retro films that will remain close to your heart?

Abir : Well, I cannot pick one or two since there are innumerable films that are favorite. For example, Anand, Chupke Chupke, Mughal-E-Azam, Amar Akbar Anthony, Tezaab, and the list is never-ending.

Expresso: As Indoo ki Jawani has already released, what do you think about its impact at the box office?

Abir : Honestly, I am not worried about the Box Office release since the pandemic situation has not dissolved yet. Restrictions are still there; especially in the theatres, only fifty percent of occupants are

Kiara is an outstanding actor. She is quite easy-going and this is something that makes her suitable for any role I feel.

allowed. I just want this film to be a transition for the audience so that they can start going to the theatres and spread the word of mouth that theatres are safe. You see, when the lockdown was lifted, people gradually started coming out of their house. Therefore, I feel that if movies do not release in the theatres, the transition will never come. This is the reason my producers decided to release Indoo ki Jawani in theatres and I am happy with it.

Expresso: If you were asked to choose a scene from Indoo ki Jawani, that is very close to you, which one would you talk about?

Abir : Well, I would say that the entire film is close to my heart since I am the creator. Being a writer, I have put enough honesty and hard work to create every scene so it is tough for me to choose any one scene.

Expresso: A film that you would love to watch over ten times.

Abir : Honestly, I would watch Chupke Chupke over ten times.

Expresso: What are your upcoming projects? You have directed Bengali films too so are you coming up with Bengali films?

Abir : I am still working on my scripts and once I am done with them, I will start casting for the film. After that, I will talk about it.

I do not have any planning, but I definitely want to be a part of the Bengali film industry as much as I am inclined towards Bollywood.





“Cheeni”, directed by Mainak Bhaumik, is the essence of the ever-changing modernistic and flamboyant relationship between a mother and her cute, sugary daughter. It encompasses all the elements of human emotions - be it love, anger or humor. The bittersweet moments between the mother and daughter is slated to release this Christmas. Right before the release “Misti Maa” akka Aparajita Auddy talks about the film and shares with Team Espresso her adorable relationship with her mother.

My mother is unbelievable just like Cheeni's mother

By Nabanita Dutta

Aparajita Auddy

Espresso: 'Cheeni' released this Christmas so how are you feeling.

Aparajita Auddy : Well, I am both excited and nervous. You see the pandemic is not over yet and the movie theatres have just started to open. Although a film release after such a major lockdown is undoubtedly like breathing in the fresh air, still many are scared to come out of their house. However, I am quite confident about the film since it is a family movie and the story is unique.

Espresso: What made you accept the project?

Aparajita Auddy : Mainak when narrating the story for the first time, I instantly fell in love with it. Although the entire team decided to shoot the film last year somehow it did not happen. It was postponed due to some reason and was planned to begin with the shooting this year. But, due to nationwide lockdown, once again the entire plan changed. Mainak then told me that he is going to rewrite the story and begin shooting.

We sat for discussing the scenes and stories, especially about how to shoot amidst COVID. Finally, when I started going for shoots, he narrated the story to me once again, and I loved it. It is such a versatile film that every generation will love it, especially the bonding between mother and daughter.

Expresso: How did you groom yourself for the character you are playing in the film?

Aparajita Auddy : Honestly, when I heard my character in the film, I already played it in my mind. You see, being an actor, we need to relate ourselves to the character. Besides, I have seen many characters like the one I am playing in Cheeni, so I framed everything in my mind. These small steps helped me to prepare myself for the character in Cheeni.

Expresso: This is your first film with Madhumita Sarcar so how was your experience working with her.

Aparajita Auddy : This is the first time I am working with Madhumita. She is undoubtedly a good girl and such a dedicated actor. Besides, she is very sweet and this is something that made working with her easy. I still remember that every time she shot a scene, she used to come to me and ask about her performance. On top of that, she has the zeal to

learn new things.

Expresso: How was the on-set chemistry between you and Madhumita?

Aparajita Auddy : The on-screen chemistry was no doubt amazing. Once you watch the film, you will understand how beautiful it was. The young generation especially will be able to relate to the on-screen chemistry even more.

Expresso: If you had to pick any one scene from Cheeni, which one would you choose.

Aparajita Auddy : My favorite scene from Cheeni would be when my sister-in-law comes to my house to invite us to her daughter's wedding.

Expresso: What is your best shooting memory of Cheeni?

Aparajita Auddy : There is a dance sequence in the film where I was the choreographer. I had to shoot the scene with a 102 fever. I still remember that almost twenty to twenty-four shots were taken for the song. Surprisingly, no one understood that I was having a fever.

Expresso: Cheeni is all about a sweet and sour relationship between mother and daughter. Do you have any such memories with your mother?

Aparajita Auddy : My mother is the same as



Cheeni's mother. She never listens to me and does all those things, which are not supposed to be done. I always have to be in tension due to my mother. I still remember a few days back she suddenly called me and said that I am going to Thailand. My mother cannot walk properly since she is very weak. I even asked her not to visit Thailand since she will not be able to communicate with the locals over there. However, she managed to arrange her holiday with a travel team. Hence, my mother is unbelievable just like Cheeni's mother.

Expresso: *Any profession you love dearly after acting.*

Aparajita Auddy : Dance is my favorite hobby, which is close to my heart after acting; I even want to take it to the next level. I have my dance school and my students have even performed overseas. Therefore, I am looking forward to taking my dance school and my passion to the next level.

Expresso: *2020 is about to end so is there any special highlight from this year that you want to share with us.*

Aparajita Auddy : I have seen the worst this year since I do not remember sitting at home for more than six months. This year helped me to relive my relationships with my parents, my husband, and others. Besides, I was tested COVID positive. Even, I was having panic attacks that whether I will be able to recover from it, I lost my confidence, whether I will be able to work.

Expresso: *What are your expectations from 2021?*

Aparajita Auddy : All I am expecting is that the New Year has to be positive. It has to bring new opportunities and happiness to everybody's life.

Expresso: *Why people should watch Cheeni?*

Aparajita Auddy : The sweet and sour relationship between Mishti and Cheeni is the only reason people will watch the film. Moreover, the story is quite realistic and I am sure everyone will be able to relate to the characters and the incidents. These things will no doubt compel the audience to watch the film.



All I am expecting is that the New Year has to be positive. It has to bring new opportunities and happiness to everybody's life.



CELEB TALK



The courtroom scene is close
to my heart

By Rituparna Sengupta Basu

Kirti Kulhari

Expresso: What made you accept the offer for 'Criminal Justice: Behind Closed Doors'?

Kirti Kulhari : Well, the most important reason is the first season received positive reviews. Next is the central theme of the story, which is no doubt interesting. I feel that it is high time to focus on human trafficking stories and incidents, and Criminal Justice deals with such stories. On top of that, my character was quite complex and layered and I love doing such challenging roles. Also, how can I forget about the wonderful cast of Criminal Justice with whom I always wanted to work with.

Expresso: You do not have many dialogues throughout the show so how was the feeling?

Kirti Kulhari : I feel that speaking through eyes, hands, and body language is more interesting. Overall, I felt quite excited while playing my character Anuradha in the series.

Expresso: Is there any similarity between your character Anuradha and you?

Kirti Kulhari : I would say that there are not many similarities between Anuradha and me. If you watch Criminal Justice, you will understand that my character has many layers in the show. Hence, it is difficult to find similarities. Otherwise, she is someone who loves her family and is caring, which are alike.

Expresso: How was your experience working with Pankaj Tripathi?

Kirti Kulhari : He is an amazing personality, a talented actor, and most importantly a lovely human being. My experience with him in Criminal Justice was no doubt amazing. Throughout the series, he was the one who had maximum dialogue plays and made everything quite easy. All I can say is I had a great time while working with him.

Expresso: Do you have any memorable shooting experiences?

Kirti Kulhari : Well, it is difficult to point out anyone. I have uncountable memorable shooting experiences. However, there is one where I had to vomit while I was in jail. During shooting, the camera was tied to me. I have not done any vomiting scenes before. It was the first time for me. You see, vomiting scenes are quite difficult. So, I discussed everything with my art team and they described everything clearly, which was no doubt exciting and yet challenging.

Expresso: Any difficult scenes you had to do in the series.

Kirti Kulhari : Most of my scenes are difficult, you know. However, the climax scene in the courtroom of the series is something, which is important and relevant. It was very difficult for me to shoot.

Expresso: Mention any one scene from the series close to your heart.

Kirti Kulhari : Again, I cannot choose anyone from many. The courtroom scene was quite crucial for the show thus making it my absolute favorite and close to my heart.

Expresso: The upcoming year is lined with uncountable shows for you so what are your expectations?

Kirti Kulhari : I am only expecting that people will appreciate my work. Every time I do something new, they will give good reviews and value my hard work.

Expresso: What would be your message for the audience?

Kirti Kulhari : Well, I would say that 'Criminal Justice: Behind Closed Doors' is a wonderful show due to the interesting storyline. Besides, the entire line of actors and their hard work is something, which is undoubtedly commendable. Hence, the audience must watch this series as it will give a perfect dose of suspense and thrill to make this Christmas memorable.



Theatre will remain the most challenging sphere

By Nabanita Dutta

Actor Shilpa Shukla portrays the character Ishani Nath in criminal justice behind the closed doors. She considered honestly that her character was so well written and appealing that she accepted the offer. In a recent conversation with us Shilpa opened up about her character, why she choose the project and her working experience with Pankaj Tripathy, Kirti Kulhari and Anupriya Goyenka.

Shilpa Shukla



Expresso: Criminal Justice: Behind Doors is about to release so how excited you are.

Shilpa Shukla : I am quite happy and thrilled since I feel that it is one of the best ways to end this year and on a good note.

Expresso: Why did you accept the offer for this series?

Shilpa Shukla : Well, I honestly did not find any reason to reject the offer for 'Criminal Justice'. It has been a long time since I did some interesting work. Besides, it feels great to work with such an amazing set of actors and a director. Also, when I read the script, I loved it immensely. Hence, all these things compelled me to accept the offer for the series.

Expresso: Tell us something about the character you played in the show.

Shilpa Shukla : My character is Ishani Nath, a woman in prison. She is a strong and self-motivated character. Ishani knows everything about the things she wants from her life and overall, it was quite fun playing such a character.

Expresso: How was your working experience with Pankaj Tripathi, Anupriya Goenka, and Kirti Kulhari?

Shilpa Shukla : I feel that they are some amazing actors that this generation is witnessing. Besides, I feel that when you have such talented co-actors, your performance automatically improves. I met Kirti almost ten years back when I was behind the camera and she was in front. Back then, I loved her performance and knew that she will turn out to be an amazing actor. Finally, we met once again on the sets of Criminal Justice. Coming to Pankaj Tripathi, I have known him for years and have worked with him too, and Anupriya is yet another amazing artist. The entire ensemble is quite exciting and sharing screens with them was altogether an amazing experience.

Expresso: What is your best memory of shooting?

Shilpa Shukla : I would say that going on sets after five months of lockdown. Although everyone was following the safety precautions, I realized how important it is to be around people. When I reached the sets and saw everyone, the feeling was surreal and this is something impossible to express in words. For me,

this is the best shooting memory.

Expresso: How do you choose and prioritize your characters for various projects?

Shilpa Shukla : The only thing that I try to avoid is repetitive characters. My only focus is to bring something that will be unique to the audience. If the script asks me to offer new sides to the character, I will accept such roles.

Expresso: You worked in films and now in OTT platforms so which one do you prefer? What are its challenges?

Shilpa Shukla : You see I come from theatres and it is quite challenging. Besides, if you compare films and web series with theatre, then also the theatre will remain the most challenging sphere. The reason behind this is you get only one take; however, in films and web series, you will get multiple takes. Web series are quite a new concept as it gives the process of theatre and the taste of a movie. Hence, it is impossible to choose between any two mediums. For me, I am okay with both films and web shows since my only goal is to connect with people.

Expresso: Due to COVID, the promotion methods had to be changed so how challenging it is for you.

Shilpa Shukla : The new promotion method is okay with me since I feel that social connection is becoming better. Otherwise, the usual methods of promotion involve other

things too. The new way post-COVID promotional method helps in establishing a better one-to-one connection. Although I am missing the fun with the team otherwise, I am happy that we are accepting the challenges efficiently.

Expresso: Any message you want to give to the audience.

Shilpa Shukla : The audience loved season one and made it successful, and the second season will take everything to a new level altogether. They are the real judge of our performances. All I can say is they will witness one of the best shows of this year and I want to thank all of them since I am sure that they will love the second season of 'Criminal Justice: Behind Closed Doors.'



Festive Flavours To Life Introduced An Unique

Christmas Cocktail

As the Christmas Carols and Santa's sleigh pave their way to mark this joyous time of the year, Expresso Magazine brings to you an exclusive Cocktail recipes for Christmas lover, brimming with flavours of the celebratory season.



X'MAS NEGRONI

Ingredients

- 25 ml Beefeater London Dry Gin
- 25 ml Sweet Vermouth
- 25 ml Bitter Aperitif

Method

- Add all the ingredients into a mixing glass with ice and stir until well chilled
- Strain into a rocks glass filled with large ice cubes
- Then garnish with a cinnamon stick, clove studded orange peel and a star anise

| FRENCH 75



Ingredients

- 20 ml Beefeater London Dry Gin
- 10 ml Lemon Juice
- 20 ml Mulled Wine
- 5 ml Sugar Syrup
- 60 ml G. H. Mumm Champagne

Method

- Add all the ingredients except the champagne into a shaker with ice and shake until well chilled
- Strain into a champagne flute or tulip
- Top with the champagne or sparkling wine
- Garnish with fresh berries or a lemon twist

| Ren spiced Hot Chocolate

Ingredients

- Vodka -60 ml
- Grated Dark chocolate -3 spoon
- Hot milk -150 ml
- Cinnamon powder - as require
- Sugar cube-2
- Whipped cream top up with cinnamon seasoning

Method

- Build up all the ingredients together and mix them.
- Pour it in a glass jar
- And garnish with cinnamon powder and chocolate shavings

*Curated by
Rajasekar
Bar Executive, R-Bar,
Renaissance Bengaluru Race Course Hotel*



| Godfather

Ingredients

- Scotch whisky 100ml
- Amaretto 50ml
- Double cream 100ml
- Ground nutmeg a couple of pinches

Method

Put ice into a cocktail shaker, followed by the scotch, amaretto and cream. Shake well and strain into chilled martini or coupe glasses. Finish by sprinkling over a little nutmeg before serving.

*Curated by
Sanket Thakur, F&B Manager,
The Resort Mumbai*



New Year Feast

We are already in the month of December, and winters have always been the flag bearer of parties, merrymaking, good food, and drinks. The festivals of Christmas & New Year expedite the joyful, upbeat winter days further. The mood and the celebrations in the air, equates to lavish feasts with some scrumptious meals and desserts. This is the time to indulge in some soul-warming foods and keep up with the festive spirit around. Let's have a look at the places, which are gearing up to serve the best of winter cocktails and food for the city dwellers to have the best December in an otherwise miserable time.

Justbe Resto Café

Christmas holidays can be a lot of things: heartwarming, romantic and refreshing and Justbe Resto Café has mixed all these ingredients for you. It has designed a special 5-course menu that is delicious and healthy and made without usage of any refined ingredients, synthetic additives or oil.

Bringing festive flavours to life, the all-star scrumptious and healthy 5-course menu has Pumpkin and green apple soup; Beet, orange and mixed greens salad; Trio bruschetta; Grain-free lasagna and whole-grain Plum cake.

Adding a heap of surprise for all the pet parents, you don't anymore need to leave your little pooches at home alone this festive season. Justbe Resto Café is a pet friendly spot where you can dine at ease in with your fur babies and celebrate the festive cheers with them too.



Venue: Justbe Resto Café

Time: 11 AM to 10 PM (Mon-Thu) / 11 AM to 11 PM (Fri-Sun)

Price: INR 599 ++

Address: 383/31, Ground and First Floor, 13th Cross Rd, Sadashiva Nagar, Armane Nagar

JW MARRIOTT Bengaluru

It's time for some fun, joy, cheer and lots of laughter this Christmas Eve at the city's most luxurious property, JW Marriott Hotel Bengaluru. Christmas Eve dinner is incomplete without the delicious Roast Chicken and plenty other drool worthy dishes that are designed at the hotel's specialty restaurants –

Alba, the Nouvelle European restaurant; UNO, the Japanese bar and kitchen and Merak, the urban oasis at JW Marriott Hotel Bengaluru.

Indulge in some of the most loved dishes like Tuna Tartar, Sous Vide Turkey Breast, Gruyere and Pea Tortellini, Paupiette Sea bass, Porcini Rissoto from Alba; Miso Black Cod, Sofutosherukurabi (Soft Shell Crab) Tempura, Matcha Green Tea Mousse from UNO and tantalizing Christmas cocktails at Merak like Bangalore Bees, Hot Buttered Rum, North Pole, Classic Egg Nog and Classic Mulled Wine.



*JW Marriott hotel Bengaluru.
Vittal Mallya Rd, KG Halli, Shanthala Nagar,
Ashok Nagar, Bengaluru, Karnataka 560001*



Black Brick Café

Black Brick Café begins this new season with the launch of a joyful 'Festive Menu'.

The menu will have an array of options for every patron, which is sure to take you on a gastronomic journey. The highlights are, '**Minestrone Soup**' (A hearty soup made with vegetables and pasta in a fragrant tomato broth) '**Cheese Fondue**' (A Swiss specialty – sublime melted cheese sauce), '**Chicken A La Kiev** (Crumb fried chicken stuffed with loads of butter! This one will make the Russians proud!), '**Pollo Alla Parmigiana**' (Breaded chicken breast topped with Napolitano sauce and mozzarella) and '**Mongolian Rice or Noodles** (with a sauce of your choice - chilli soya, hot garlic, mild garlic) and the sinful '**Apple Pie**'.

Address: 60/1 Chowringhee Road, Alexandra Court, Kolkata – 700020

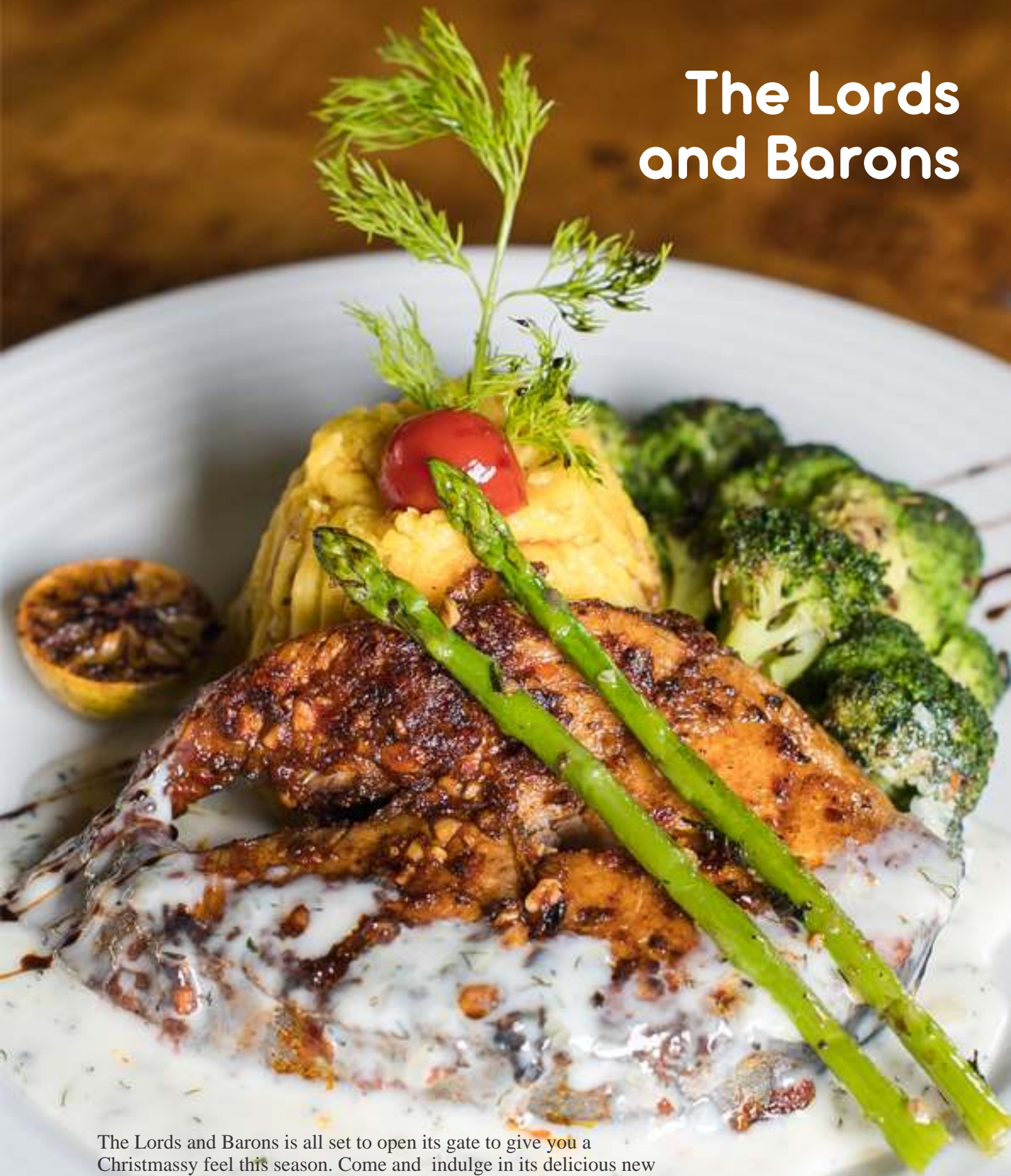
Operation Hours: 12 pm to 12 am

Cost for 2: Rs 800 + tax

For reservations: 7605033098



The Lords and Barons



The Lords and Barons is all set to open its gate to give you a Christmassy feel this season. Come and indulge in its delicious new assortment of winter special dishes. It starts with Sunday Chicken Roast, in which a half-roasted chicken with bone is served with mashed potatoes, exotic vegetables, & pepper sauce. Apart from this, it is also serving Smoky Bacon-Wrapped Chicken Sausages, which consists of melting cheese, Dijon mustard, apple, & cabbage slaw and Grilled King Fish, which is served with carrots, mashed potatoes, grilled asparagus, and sautéed exotic vegetables with Mornay sauce.

**Address: 20B, Park Street,
Kolkata-700016**

Time: 12:00 PM - 12:00 AM

RESTAURANT LAUNCH

Billions

A 'UBER HAUTE' LOUNGE TO DEFINE ASPIRATIONS



Calcutta's culinary landscape has been witnessing a wave of innovation with unique new spaces opening doors in recent times. The stellar ranks of the city of joy's exquisite bars and lounges have been adorned with a dazzling new jewel in the crown – BILLIONS.

Strategically located in the heart of the city, the newly launched establishment is housed on the 1st floor of Trinity Tower in Topsia. The magnificently designed 'uber house' appeals to Calcutta's elite and aspiring, offering grandiose in its ambience and the spread of global cuisine.



Embodying a never-explored-before concept, BILLIONS is a space that stands out in the milieu of lounges, bars and gastropubs that have now defined the city's nightlife. A place that celebrates opulence and class, it offers a menu that focuses on world cuisine featuring Modern Asian, Modern Indian, American, Italian, Japanese, Thai, Malaysian and beyond.

The vibrant yet classy décor and the warm, golden elements and accents of the outlet's design provokes thought and sparks conversation.

The Billions Magazine Cover is a crowd favourite and adds a touch of fun to the lounge. It is an 'instagrammable' background screen styled as a magazine cover that guests can use as a prop to capture their memories. The idea is to put one where they deserve to be – on the front page!

Executed by Head Chef, Ranjan Nayak, equipped with years of experience in the industry, the menu lends a peek into the exciting, evolving world of gastronomy and world cuisine.

Some of the signature dishes include “House Special Khow-Suey”, “Lamb Shank Rendang”, “Billions Fried Chicken”, “Green Humus”, “Thai Spring Roll”, “Turnip Cake”, “Billions Tandoori Chicken”, “Berry Pulao” and in the sweet tooth section, “Lotus Cheesecake”, “Chocolate Covered Strawberry and Green Apple”, to name a few. The menu also offers the option to personalise your own BILLIONS pizza.

Not to forget the signature currency-themed cocktails brewed up by the in-house mixologist, “The Billionaire”, “The Billions LIIT”, “Candy Crush”, among others, are crafted to cash in a billion rich, exotic flavours for your taste buds, leaving you craving for more. The lounge also offers a selection of 'craftails', which are lip-smacking cocktails from the tap!



BILLIONS aims to establish itself more as a lifestyle, a state of mind that the city's elite connect with and enthusiasts aspire to reach. A trailblazing space with a life of its own, it has something for everyone's taste. Bon vivants from every walk of life are invited into this world that rejoices in decadence and prosperity, with bites from around the world, heady concoctions to keep you sipping and an array of Shisha flavours served in curated Moroccan bases. The experience of being at BILLIONS is defined by every corner and aspect of the lounge, all designed to make one feel that they are worth billions.

While every night at the exquisite outlet is truly worth 'Billions', the brand offers specials and unmissable memories every Saturday night with the "Billions Tickets". The lounge also

makes for the perfect mid-week madness spot with the "The Midweek ROI".

So, come over to Kolkata's newest favourite destination for food that will blow you off your feet, 'unputdownable' signature drinks, electric music, plush ambience and everything else that will make you go cha-ching!



Address: 83, 1st Floor, Trinity Tower, Topsia, Kolkata – 700046
Operational Hours: 12:00 to 12 midnight (Sunday to Thursday)
12:00 to 2 am (Friday & Saturday)
Meal for two: Rs 1,400 plus taxes (without alcohol)
Rs 1,800 plus taxes (with alcohol)

RIISING STAR

Madhumita Sarcar, well known as a Pakhi and Imon now moved to television to films to explore this unfamiliar area of her interest. She always wish to do something different. Madhumita recently debuted in Love Aaj Kaal Porshu, which earned a lot of praise. Now, her second film “Cheeni”, directed by Mainak Bhaumik, has released on December 24. Right before the release Madhumita shares her character, working experience and all that.

Madhumita

I Have Become Quite Calm And Patient

- By Abir Majumder

Expresso: After Love 'Ajj Kaal Porshu', 'Cheeni' is your second project. So how are you feeling?

Madhumita : Well, I would say that I am nervous for sure since this is my second project. The story of 'Love Ajj Kaal Porshu' was different and for 'Cheeni', good acting and hard work were extremely important according to the plot. I have given my best and I am hoping that people will love it.

Expresso: The story is quite different from the others so how was your experience of working in this movie?

Madhumita : Honestly, the entire team of 'Cheeni' was outstanding. From Apa di, Sourav, Mainak Bhowmik, Pinky Di to Olivia, everyone is brilliant. I would say that everyone was apt for his or her respective role, which is necessary to make a movie successful. Also, the best thing about the team of Cheeni, everyone was so energetic throughout the shooting, which helped me to focus on my work too. Mainak Da is lenient as he allowed me to mold my character according to me. You see, every character teaches an actor something different and Cheeni was no exception since the story seemed quite relatable to me.

Expresso: How was the on-set chemistry between you and Apa di?

Madhumita : Oh! She is a wonderful actor, a mother, and a great human being too. Throughout the sets, I have received her motherly love and care, which I will cherish forever. Like, whenever I did some mistake in any scene, she used to correct me. Just like a mother corrects her daughter in every step, she used to do that for me and I loved it.

Expresso: Do you relate yourself with this character?

Madhumita : Of course, I do relate myself with the Cheeni; moreover, any girl of my age will relate herself to this character since she represents girls of this generation. The way she handles her life, understanding towards it, her upbringing, and her day-to-day activities, I can relate everything.

Expresso: Well, now everyone is seeing a new avatar of Madhumita after Pakhi and Imon. What changes could you feel in your life after this?

Madhumita : Honestly, I feel that I have become quite calm and patient. You see, I

have to walk miles, as I have not reached my destination yet. All I can say is I am quite happy and thankful since people loved all my characters, Pakhi, Imon, and now Cheeni. I have received many positive reviews regarding Cheeni as of now. I am hoping that the film will come out with flying colours and people love Cheeni as well.

Expresso: This is your first film with Mainak Bhowmik so how was your experience working with him.

Madhumita : Honestly, Mainak Da is one of the most chilled out directors I have ever met. I remember, when we were discussing the story of Cheeni he clearly mentioned that the traits that he found in me fit perfectly with my character. He also

asked me to relate myself to the situations as mentioned in the script so that it becomes easy for me to act accordingly. Therefore, I had the freedom of presenting the character, the way I felt was appropriate for the film. The way he helped everyone to stay energetic during the shoot and everything, made my experience working with Mainak Da quite exciting.

Expresso: Any scene of this movie close to your heart?

Madhumita : Well, I cannot choose any one scene close to my heart. I remember one, where Cheeni's mother explains that women have to tolerate a hell lot of things, mothers have to as well, and why she does not want me to go through that pain she faced; or, why should I live my life without any regrets or sacrifices. I was crying throughout the scene, and later on, Apa

Di had to console me. You see, Cheeni is one of my most favorite films, and every scene will remain close to my heart.

Expresso: Cheeni is all about a sweet and sour relationship between mother and daughter. Do you have any such memories with your mother?

Madhumita : I think every mother-daughter relationship is bittersweet, and it should be; otherwise, it would have been boring. When it comes to me, I always feel that my mother never understands me; however, when I get into any serious trouble no other person can help me as she does. The plot, which Cheeni covers, is quite realistic, and if you see it, you will understand that it contains various casual incidents, which we all overlook in daily life. I feel that everyone will learn different things from the film. Also, as I was the main character of the film, so it was a major understanding for me as well. To play a character, you have to creep underneath its skin, and during this process; I have learned many things, which I am sure will help me in the future.

Expresso: You worked for television as well as the OTT platform and now you are working in movies as well. So according to you which genre is the most challenging for you.

Madhumita : Well, I feel that the different characters which we actors get to play bring out the challenge than the platforms. Therefore, I feel that the biggest challenge is playing such roles, which needs a lot of homework or has many shades. When it comes to films, I get the advantage of portraying different traits since the schedule continues for two to three weeks. However, the serials do not offer this advantage, as I have to maintain a single character throughout the show for a longer period.

Expresso: By any means, does Cheeni makes Madhumita stronger in all the aspects of life?

Madhumita : As I said, I have now become quite patient, which is crucial. All I can say is I am happy that people appreciate the work I have done so far. Cheeni is definitely one of those unique characters that I have played until now. The reviews, which I am getting from the songs and the trailer of Cheeni, I am hoping that everyone will love it as well.

RISING STAR

After the immense success of Criminal Justice season 1, Disney+hotstar released the next installment title Criminal Justice: Behind Closed Doors. Finally, one of the most acceptable characters Madhav Mishra returned to the pavilion with the toughest case of his career. In this series Anupriya Goenka as Nikhat Hussain, who is assisting Madhav Mishra in Anu Chandra's case. In a recent interview with Expresso Magazine, Anupriya shared her working experience with Pankaj Tripathy, her best scene and all that.

Anupriya Goenka

Entire Theme of Criminal Justice Is Women Centric

By Rituparna Sengupta Basu

Expresso: Criminal Justice is all set to release this Christmas so how excited you are.

Anupriya : I am quite excited about the second season since the entire team of Criminal Justice has put a lot of effort into making the new season. Besides, the audience loved the first season immensely and I am hoping that they will love the second season too.

Also, the second season is quite important for me since the entire theme of the series is based on a women-centric story. Kirti has done a great job in the series and Pankaj Tripathi sir has no doubt done a splendid job too.

The other casts have done an amazing job as well. The story that has been focused here is quite important and the entire team is hoping that people will take some positive lessons from it.

Expresso: What new things have been included in the second season?

Anupriya : The second season has a new case altogether and even if you have not watched the first season, it will not create issues. Both new and old characters have been added; however, Pankaj sir and I had to carry forward our roles in the second season too. The story is interesting and is socially relevant. Besides, you will come to know about Pankaj sir and my characters' personal life. Above all, you will come across many women characters in the second season, who are strong and vulnerable. By the end of the series, you will understand that irrespective of anything, women have similar aims, aspirations, and demands from their lives.

Expresso: How was the onset and offset chemistry with Pankaj Tripathi?

Anupriya : My journey with him has always been amazing and in this season too, I had a great time working with him. This time, both Madhav and Nikhat (Pankaj sir and me) are fighting the case shoulder to shoulder, both are confused since our client Anu (Kirti) does not speak much. However, my character's importance is quite high in this case since she is a woman and can understand instincts, and Madhav always guides Nikhat. Talking about offset chemistry, it is quite interesting too since between takes we used to talk about various topics, from politics, arts, to life. Overall, my work experience with Pankaj sir was great.

Expresso: You acted as a lawyer in the series so did you face any challenges.

Anupriya : Well, I guess it depends completely on the script. However, in the first season, my character was a new lawyer. Nikhat was interning with a well-established lawyer. Therefore, it was important to have newness in her body language, and at the same time, she must look



smart.

In the second season, things are different since she has already become accustomed to law and order, and has solved a huge case. She has learned that when it comes to the legal system, it is important to be righteous, functional, and idealistic. Hence, my biggest challenge was not to look weak even after being an empathetic woman and keep things balanced between a lawyer and a woman.

Expresso: *Any scene of Criminal Justice, which is close to your heart.*

Anupriya : There are a few scenes in the courtroom since they were not only tough but the takes were quite lengthy. Besides, there is a scene where we all collaborated, and it turned out to be perfect. Apart from that, every scene of mine with Pankaj sir will be close to my heart. I remember a scene, which was shot in Pankaj sir's house. It was again quite memorable and favorite too.

Expresso: *What is the biggest thrill audience will find in this series?*

Anupriya : Well, the most common court case scenes, which every film or show focuses on is the criminal who is behind the crime. However, when it comes to 'Criminal Justice,' the reason behind the crime is most important. More than that, it is an important social story, and very few people are aware of it, and with relevance to it, I guess it is quite an important story.

Expresso: *What would be your message for the audience?*

Anupriya : I would ask the audience to show love to the second season of 'Criminal Justice: Behind Closed Doors' just like the first season. Also, let us know about the aspects which you all loved the most about, in the new season. Besides, 2020 is almost over, and with the New Year 2021 approaching, make sure to have new and fresh beginnings and stay safe. Please help others as much as you can.



REVIEW

Naxalbari: A fascinating portrayal of India's Naxal period that shook the country severely

By Nabanita Dutta



Zee5's hard-hitting and horrifying crime thriller Naxalbari is the trending show on the OTT platform as of now. It will take the viewers back to the frightening and merciless world of the Naxalite.

A perfect blend of crime, thrill, and suspense, Naxalbari is undoubtedly a tormenting show to enjoy this Christmas by sitting back at home.

A perfect combination of thrill, love-relationships, and action, Naxalbari is the perfect dose of entertainment for 2020's end. This enthralling new web series on Zee5 is packed with all the stellar episodes.

It will take you straight back to the dark and unruly world of the red uprising in India. You might be aware of how thousands of life destroyed due to this Maoist group. A few decades back, the destruction by Naxalite was almost everywhere, leading to life loss.

This hyped series on Zee5 will give you an insight into the Naxal world, and offer a new perspective through the eyes of an STF agent.

This grasping series contains nine episodes, and the first episode opens with a massive blast amidst the

dense forests of Gadchiroli located in eastern Maharashtra.

As a result, the MLA dies arranged by the Naxalist leader Binu Atram. Raghav Joshi (Rajeev Khandelwal) played the role of a cop, and his father is the Commissioner of Mumbai Police.

After the huge blast, Raghav along with his team begins with the investigations and soon embroils on the wretched world of the Naxals. There he finds out that their target is no longer limited to the jungles but is planning to spread their branches in the bigger cities.

Every episode unfolds heart-wrenching scenes as well as on-point dialogues. The choice of colloquial words, along with the swarm of languages, reflects the kosher picture.

The web series is set amidst the dense forest of Maharashtra, and the name Naxalbari has been derived from a small village in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal. The biggest Naxalite movement began here in 1960.

A group of police open-fired poor farmers since they were demanding rights for getting the piece of land where they cultivated crops was the reason



behind the rise of this violent group. Rajeev Khandelwal delivers a stellar performance in the role of agent Raghav, a carefree big brat who soon changes after connecting to this phenomenal case. He turns tables and follows the trail to catch the Naxals for solving the case

Other actors who shared the screen are Tina Dutta (played Ketki), Sreejita Dey (one of the female Naxals), Aamir Ali (played Keswani), and others.

It is impossible to ignore the outstanding performance of Aamir Ali for blending into the traits of Keswani's character seamlessly.

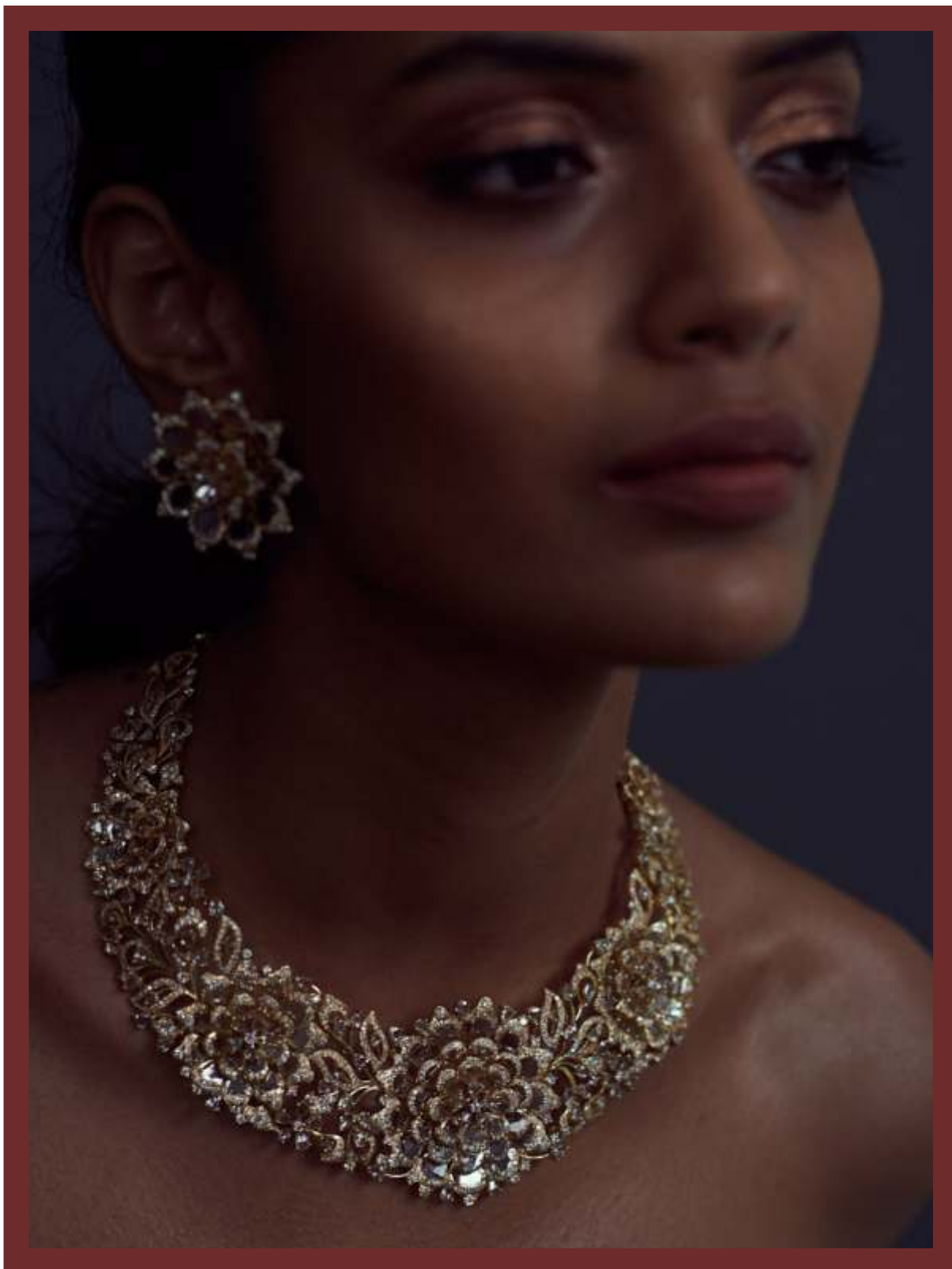
His unexpected change in the last episode leaves everyone surprised and even increases the suspense among the viewers. The smartly written and well-planned plots will let the viewers glued to their seats as every episode promises stunning moments.

Besides, the twists and turns in the plot are quite intriguing and will fill your heart with absolute enthusiasm. Amidst all these thrills and hefty incidents, you will also get an insight into the toxic love-relationships through the eyes of Raghav. He embarks on the gruesome journey to unfold the dark mysteries of the rebels, where he finds out about his past as well.

By the end of the series, the viewers will be left with a skulking feeling. The ruthless world of the Naxals not only killed hundreds of common people and armed forces but their men too. On top of that, the ground situation remains unchanged. Overall, the viewers will conclude that the first season no doubt leaves them on a cliffhanger.

Hence, if you want some non-fictional and historical stories to enjoy a thrilled yet perfect Christmas, then Naxalbari can be the best choice. It is one of the first series on the OTT platform that reveals a never-before war against the Naxals on-screen.





ARCHANA AGGARWAL
TIMELESS JEWELLERY



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