

January, 2021

Espresso

Magazine

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Fervour and Flavours

Rising Star

Tete-a-Tete with
Aaditi Pohankar

Runway

Chic Chikmagalur

Fashion

Ode to the Royals
Rimple & Harpreet Narula

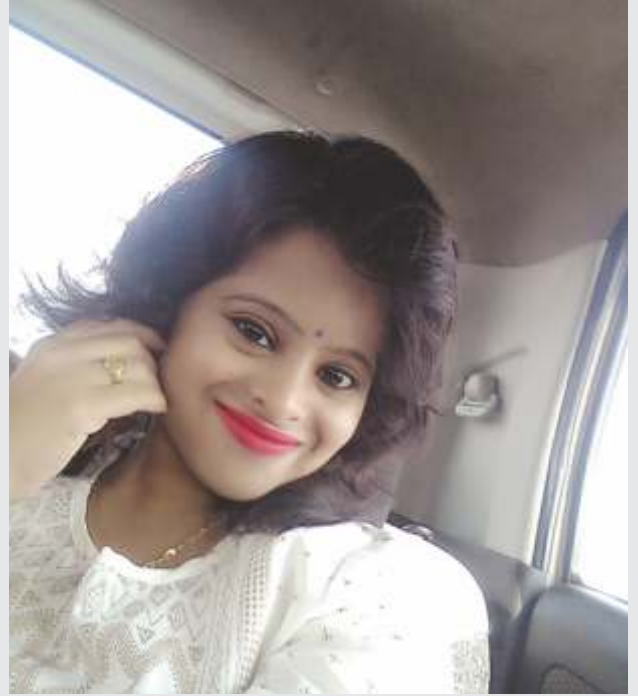
From Kitchen To
CELLULOID

Vikas
Khanna
Michelin Star



ARCHANA AGGARWAL
TIMELESS JEWELLERY

EDITOR'S LETTER



Welcome, 2021! As we step into another year along with new dreams, hopes, and aspirations, we are hoping that 2021 will bring new reasons to smile in everyone's life. Let's wipe the last year's black and white color and add some bright hue to it. Put behind all the dark gloomy memories of life, and revel in new joys and success. May this year turn to be a landmark in our lives. The pandemic has given us a lesson on how to lead our lives with less. With the new Beginnings, we featured Michelin star chef Vikas Khanna as our cover story, who recently donned the director's hat for his creation "The Last color". Vikas Khanna shares how critical this year is going to be for him. In an exclusive talk, he gets candid about "The Last Color", and his inspirations behind it. This month, we bring you also the latest trends of 2021 in fashion and beauty. Our grub hub section comprises unique special recipes, newly opened Lebanese & Middle Eastern Dining in Thane, giving you an authentic Middle Eastern experience and many more. On the other hand, our rising star Aaditi Pohankar opens up about her journey in this world of entertainment. Let your aspirations take flight in the new year! Cheers to health, happiness, positivity, and prosperity in 2021

Rituparna Sengupta Basu
Editor
www.expressomagazine.com

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Leading couturiers & fashion designer duo, **Rimple & Harpreet Narula** stepped into 2021 with a spectacular fashion show titled 'Ode to the Royals' at the iconic **Burj Khalifa** in Dubai. Inspired by the Indian Maharajas and the nobles of that era and their lifestyle, which was heavily influenced by their travels to the West, the collection was an ode to splendor and extravagance of their lives well lived.



Ode to the Royals



Rimple and Harpreet have delved into the vast archives that chronicle the Maharajas and their retinues, their early interactions with western luxury and the collection is reminiscent of the vast and extraordinary commissions that were conferred by these royals on western design houses.

The collection is a celebration of royal opulence tempered in hues of ivory & beige, burnished gold's, rose tints, and velveteen blacks that harks back to a time when the "Maharajas" and "Maharanees" were the toast of European high society- equally at ease in the royal ballrooms of Calcutta and Kapurthala as well as chic Parisian saloons. Scintillating handcrafted embroideries veritably breathe life onto the surfaces of each ensemble while the theatrical, larger-than-life silhouettes -- dramatic lehengas, sheer sarees, regal robes and achkans -- are evocative of a bygone majestic magnificence, making the collection a befitting tribute to an opulent era of high fashion, exotic indulgence and rich statements in regal clothing and accessories.



FASHION



Master Your Own Style

Reebok has officially unveiled its Reebok x Kung Fu Panda full-family footwear and apparel collection.

Each of the collection's key footwear models embodies unique themes from the Kung Fu Panda franchise, its loveable hero Po, and the styles and teachings of the supporting cast: *InstapumpFury Dragon Warrior*, *Club C "Master Your Style"*, *Club C "Calling All Zodiacs"*, *ZigKinetica "Master of Tai Chi"*.

Complementing the robust footwear lineup and enabling fans to fully master

their own style, the Reebok x Kung Fu Panda collection offers a full range of complementary apparel including hoodies, crew sweaters, short sleeve tees and sweatpants honoring Po's journey to become the Dragon Warrior.

Finally, in true Reebok fashion, fans will receive footwear in elevated Lunar New Year-inspired packaging. The collection is available beginning 8th January in Reebok stores and online at shop4reebok.com, Veg Nonveg and Superkicks India starting INR 2,599.



FASHION



Anantam Collection

To uplift the festive spirits, renowned Jewellery Designer **Archana Aggarwal** has recently launched the new '**Anantam Collection**', a celebration of endless possibilities. The handcrafted masterpieces are an amalgamation of meticulous craftsmanship and exquisite designs, a true epitome of timeless grace and grandeur. Each piece in this collection is distinctive, lively and exquisite, a perfect balance of regal and contemporary, fit for the modern muse. 'Anantam Collection' includes a comprehensive range of necklaces, pendants, earrings, bracelets and bangles appropriate for every mood and occasion.



FASHION

Fashion Is Something That Elevates The Real “you”

Hailing from Mumbai, the reputed footwear designer *Aprajita Toor's* 9 years journey has been all about finding her love for Kolhapuri Chappals. She was always inclined to the beautiful world of art and creativity since childhood days. Her undying and constant zeal for Kolhapuri Chappals, led her to the inception of the brand 'Aprajita Toor'. In 2012, Aprajita introduced her bold, edgy yet comfortable design of Kolhapuris' for the first time. In an exclusive talk with *Expresso*, *Aprajita* has shared a lot about her latest collection, her inspiration, and lots more.

Aprajita Toor

By Nabanita Dutta





Expresso: What inspired you to come up with “Aprajita Toor” label?

Aprajita Toor: There is an inherent & unique creative streak in all of us; we just need to find the right channels to funnel it, to create something

unique for the world around us. Having tried my hand at a corporate job, I always knew a desk job was not my calling. Colors and designing something unique was what set my heart buzzing. During this phase, I happened to encounter a situation where while shopping for a pair of sneakers, a salesperson suggested I look for shoes in the men's section. Being a tall person, sizing in shoes was always a concern for me as I have relatively longer feet. It made me wonder about other people who suffered from not being able to find perfectly fitting shoes for themselves. This is what drove me to start my own footwear label that caters to all shoe sizes, no matter how big or small. Indian craftsmanship was something I was always fascinated and inspired by and I knew I had to incorporate that within my designs, to take our rich & vibrant cultural heritage to the world.

Expresso: How did you step into the fashion industry?

Aprajita Toor: My inspiration was Indian craftsmanship & design coupled with the need to make perfect fitting and comfortable shoes; the fashion industry just happened to whole heartedly accept it. Our growth in the fashion & footwear industry was something that happened to us through word-of-mouth appreciation we received from our growing clientele. At the beginning of my journey, a designer who was presenting their collection at Lakme Fashion Week heard that we create custom footwear and reached out to us for their show and since then our footwear has become a wardrobe staple of many women around the country and the world.

Expresso: What were the challenges you faced so far and how did you overcome them?

Aprajita Toor: The biggest challenges always lie within our own minds and once we overcome those, the world around us cannot create an obstacle big enough to stop us. My biggest challenge was to never let commercial reasons dictate my creative thinking. And although the initial years were filled with doubts and questions about how I could sustain and grow keeping such a strong emphasis on making high quality footwear at an affordable price, I never compromised on the quality or design of my products. I had ascribed my name to the brand and that itself was an epitome of my belief in the shoes that we made. With the love and support of an ever-growing client base, I was able to overcome those initial fears and continue making designs that offered contemporary aesthetics, customization and comfort.

Expresso: What is your latest collection all about?

Aprajita Toor: Currently, we have two collections in the offing. The first one, which we had launched some time ago had comfortable loungers made with memory foam cushioning, which was heavily inspired by the work-from-home situation. The second collection which is yet to be launched is full of fun colors and embroidered elements, for elevating the mood and bring festive cheer to the feet.

Expresso: Did you always want to have a footwear brand of your own?

Aprajita Toor: Having my own footwear brand was not a part of my career goals or to-do list when I had completed my education. I had a creative streak, but knew very little



of what to do with it, besides helping friends pick a sparkling outfit or re-design their wardrobe. As I mentioned earlier, the idea to make shoes was born out of a necessity to make customized shoes. During the time I was starting out, there were very few customization options in shoes and if one could find customized shoes, the chances of them being eye catching and in vogue with trends was close to none.

Expresso: Being a designer what does fashion mean to you?

Aprajita Toor: Fashion for me is something that elevates the real “You”. It could be a really old pair of jeans, or six-inch heels or a trendy hoop, something that sets you free and makes you express the real you when you wear it.

Expresso: Hailing from India, which moment made you realize that you should go International?

Aprajita Toor: When I set out, there was no agenda about how far would I would want my designs to reach. The focus was on using traditional design skills and craftsmanship to make contemporary yet comfortable designs. As I mentioned earlier, it was a favorable word-of-mouth which helped us reach a diverse audience stretching beyond the borders of our nation. Even today our emphasis remains on highlighting Indian craftsmanship and designs and just as it was centuries ago, it remains greatly loved and appreciated by people all around the world.

Expresso: What aesthetics do you inculcate in your design?

Aprajita Toor: I have an affinity towards our indigenous arts and crafts and I always try to champion them through my designs. I try to infuse modern elements with traditional craftsmanship throughout the product range.

Expresso: Three effective habits that a designer must have to become successful?

Aprajita Toor: 1. Keep your eyes open because inspiration can come from anywhere.
2. It is not always necessary to design something that is trending, you should always let your creativity and the need of the customer take charge.
3. Plagiarism is not fair for anyone. Be original!

Expresso: Being a designer what is your style statement?

Aprajita Toor: A classic outfit like a pair of



jeans teamed with a white kurta and our classic style Avani in gold, silver or tan would be my go-to outfit.

Expresso: A memory embedded deep in you that has made you what you are today?

Aprajita Toor: There are many memories that come to mind but the ones that drive me forward are all when our clients have come back to us to say that they have stopped compromising on comfort because we have been able to provide them with the right size. This validation always motivates me to keep moving forward and improve on our designs.

Expresso: Would you please share your experience of working with celebrities?

Aprajita Toor: My experience with celebrities has been very inspiring. They have always given us a positive feedback with comments related to comfort and working with them has been a treat.

Expresso: What is your vision for your “label” now?

Aprajita Toor: I want to continue designing contemporary, luxurious, comfortable & perfect fitting shoes and become a lifelong sole-mate to “You”.



DIY Ginger Hair Mask To Shoo Away Your Hair Problems

Dr. Blossom Kochhar

We all are worried about hair fall during winter season, thinning of hair, dry & brittle hair have been giving us major stress. But we don't realize that the solution is sitting in our kitchens only and that magic ingredient is Ginger. We have been using ginger as an antioxidant or to add flavour to our foods but only few know that is excellent for your hair as well. So without a doubt you should include ginger in your haircare routine as well. Few benefits of doing so are:

It helps in hair growth

The vitamins, minerals and fatty acids in ginger promotes hair stimulation which leads to hair growth. Ginger has gingerol in it which improves blood circulation which also leads to hair growth.

Take 1 teaspoon of each coconut oil, argan oil, onion juice, half teaspoon castor oil, 2 drops of lavender essential oil, 1 drop of rosemary essential oil and 1 teaspoon of ginger juice. Mix these all together and finally add 1 teaspoon of your conditioner. Apply it thoroughly on your scalp and hair strands, keep it on for 30 minutes and then rinse it off with your shampoo. You can use a light conditioner after wards

if your hair is too dry.

This will not only make your hair grow faster but will also add luster to your hair.

Prevents dandruff

Since ginger has antioxidant and antiseptic properties which reduces scalp infections and dandruff. If you have flaky scalp then this tip will do wonders for you. Take half cup of sea salt, add 1- drops of lavender essential oil and 1 tablespoon of ginger juice. Give it a light massage in your scalp, you might feel some irritation but that's just the ginger working its magic. Leave it on for 15-20 minutes and then rinse it off.

Another remedy which you can try to fight dandruff is by mixing 2 table spoons of grated ginger with 3 table spoons of olive oil and squeeze of lemon. Apply it on your scalp and rinse it off after 30 mins.

Conditions your hair

The unique properties of ginger give natural conditioning to hair and make your hair look healthy and shining. Take a freshly grounded ginger root put it in a spray bottle add water to it. Spray this before washing your hair. You can also add juice of ginger to your conditioner, it will hydrate your hair and curb your split ends as well.



COVER STORY

Film Should Be A Mirror Of My Thoughts

Vikas
Khanna

Rituparna Sengupta Basu

Our proud celebrity **Vikas Khanna** walked miles and came far beyond just being a chef. Even after being an eminent person, his humbleness and compassionate behavior won the hearts of millions. At a very young age, he began his career as a chef.

Today, he is a renowned Michelin star chef, a filmmaker and producer, and a writer as well. His uncountable prominent achievements made him one of the greatest personalities. His bizarre cooking skills and charming personality made him a famed person throughout the world. But, his phenomenal film making skills is now making a stir as he comes up with stories having a social cause. When Team Expresso reached him, he spoke about his latest film 'The Last Color', and how it was celebrated throughout the world. He even opens up some of his personal favorite foods in a candid conversation with us.



Expresso: The Last Color has already received international recognition. Being a director, how are you feeling after its huge success?

VikasK hanna : Well, as a director, I feel quite overwhelmed and excited. I saw how the film showed a positive impact on everyone. This resulted in many organizations partnering with us. For example, the Global Widows Fund empowered, rehabilitated, and provided financial security to the widows in Africa and India. Additionally, the Vibha Foundation pledged to support the education of five million children that now sees my entire team collaborate with them. Hence, I feel that legacy is more significant than the numbers. The biggest highlight of the movie was that it received a standing ovation at the UN. Also, I cannot ignore the impact and performance that the film had during its opening in America and Europe. Among all these, I am happy that the film had such a huge cultural impact on everyone. Thus, I feel that I must come up with such unique and heart-warming stories.

Expresso: What inspired you to write this book?

Vikas Khanna : My inspiration came from a small incident in Varanasi. In 2011, I was shooting for a book Utsav and went to the Banke Bihari Temple in Vrindavan. Mainly I was shooting for the Holi sequence. What shook me was when I came out; I saw hundreds of widows looking at the people playing Holi. It was so heart-breaking to see that everything soaked in color, but not them. They were silently standing on the balconies and that inspired me to come up with such an amazing story. Then in 2012, the Supreme Court passed the law of 'Rehabilitation of Widows'. Post the decision, in 2013, widows played Holi for the first time in Vrindavan. These things were undoubtedly a cultural shift since the decision put an end to centuries-old taboo to begin a new tradition. I feel that on that day, color became the symbol of rebirth. It is necessary to reinvent new traditions since centuries-old systems when continued for long creates suppression. Thus, it is important to bring amendments for good and that's how the book came. Besides, the characters kept adding to the sequence and the screenplay was quite amazing. All these things made 'The Last Color' my favorite book.

Expresso: The film 'The Last Color' is based on your book of the same name. So why did you choose this kind of story for filmmaking?

Vikas Khanna : Honestly, I faced this question a lot of times because my film is not about food. You see, I do not like living life as a clone or take ideas from others' success stories. I have always lived a

public life where everyone has seen my rise and fall. What I feel is I should have chosen a topic close to my heart. 'The Last Color' was my close attempt, but I was unsure whether it would be successful. You see, movies should be a clear expression of how we see and feel, what change we want to see. For example, if I want to see change and wish to celebrate, the film should be a mirror of my thoughts. Moreover, I have noticed how white is considered unlucky on every auspicious occasion like Holi, childbirth, etc. I never supported this thought.

Expresso: Why did you choose Neena Gupta for 'The Last Color' ?

Vikas Khanna : Choosing Neena Gupta was not a question since I had visualized her when I saw widows playing Holi in 2013. I have always been the biggest fan of her since Mirza Ghalib's time. She is one of the finest actors in the industry and I'm lucky to have gotten the chance to meet her once during a flight. I have been in contact with her since then. When I met her, she was shooting for 'Badhaai Ho' and I got the opportunity to meet her for a few minutes. Neena Ji is a very straight forward person and believes in instincts. I flew directly from Varanasi to Delhi to talk about my film. I had the screenplay and dialogues ready. She instantly accepted my offer. I feel that no other actor could have done justice to the character. The way she absorbed the personality of Noor was fantastic.

Expresso: What kind of narratives you are looking for, or you like most after 'The Last Color'?

Vikas Khanna : Once again, I've been asked this question too many times. I feel that social issues are important to highlight and I will make films on subjects close to my heart. You see, I am not a sponsored person or have any production house to suggest the films I should make. It is my passion and love for making films on grave social issues. Besides, I feel that changing the rules of the game are important. Also, I love to keep things secret so that I can serve people with some surprising elements. Until we released 'The Last Color' at Palm Springs International Film Festival, there was absolute silence. I have more projects lined up for release, mostly two documentaries whose release was delayed due to COVID. I do not like to recycle things, be it for my book or films.

Expresso: How did you find Aqsa?

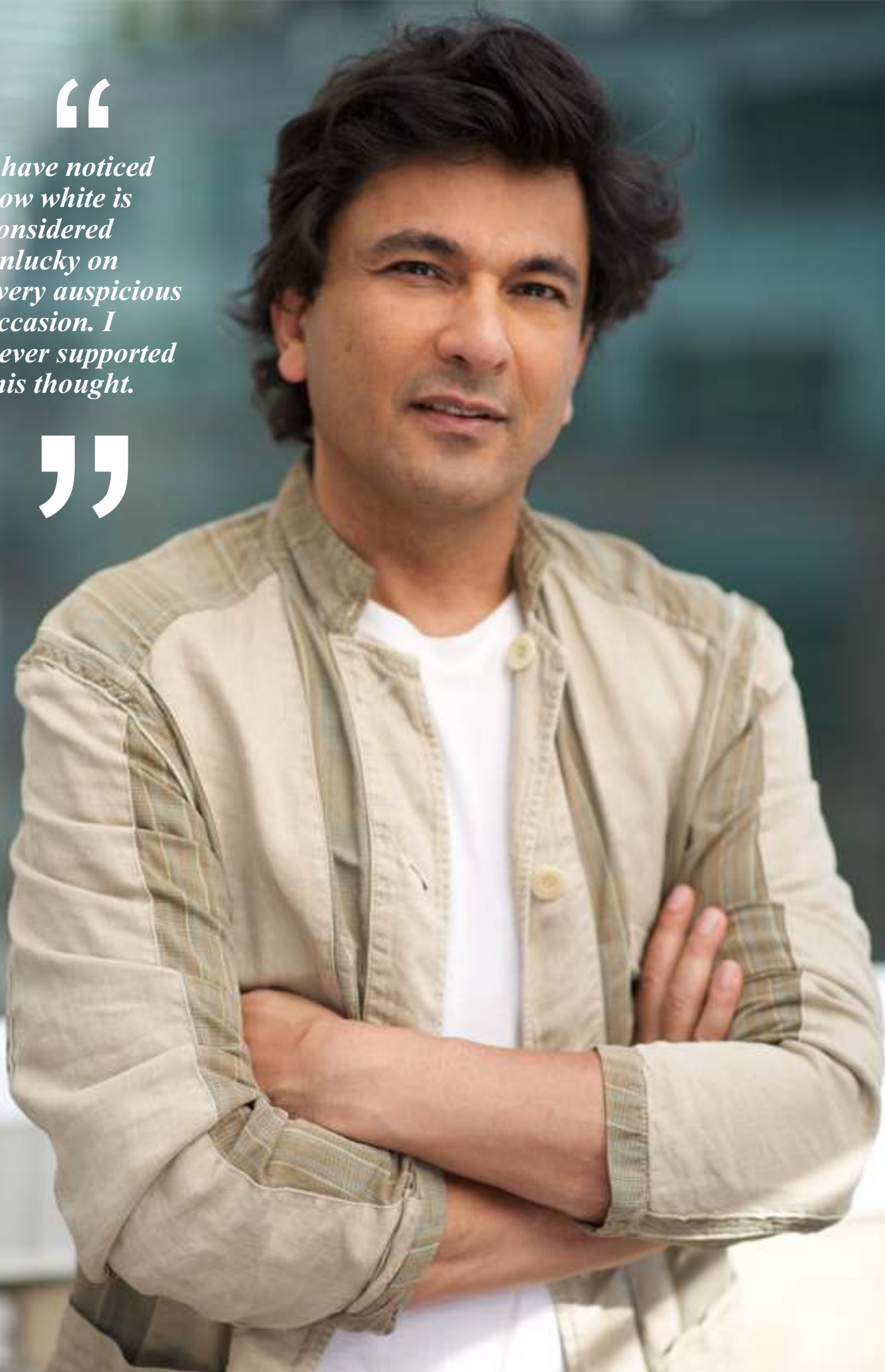
VikasK hanna : I wanted a perfect girl who will meet the shade of Aqsa Siddiqui and will look alike. I remember that I auditioned thousands of girls, which happened immediately after Kumbh Mela. I



“

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”



wanted the same girl who would be a tightrope walker, so we kept doing auditions in big cities like Mumbai, Delhi, and Kolkata. Then one of my friends suggested me to visit a school in Shahdara, Delhi named Zeenat Mahal. It was here where I met Aqsa, who was disinterested but was quite captivating and intelligent. Then I found her as the perfect fit for my character. We trained her for the role in the film. Overall, her character is quite tough since we had to train her for the tightrope walk.

Expresso: *We have seen you stitching a saree in the film. How relevant is it with the story?*

VikasK hanna : You can say that I am a one-man army and did everything starting from makeup to directing throughout the shoots. I was in charge of the rehearsals and casting as I do not know any other way to make things work. I am a chef and I have to stand near the fire and do everything on my own. Due to this reason, 'The Last Color' is my personal favorite. Moreover, while I was shooting for the film Neena Ji came to sets since she had the day off. We were shooting for a dance sequence. She asked me if I can shoot for her part as well. It was tough since all the sarees were being used. But then, I managed to stitch a saree out of table clothes and bedsheets. You see, I am not someone who loves making excuses. I remember she was looking gorgeous in that saree. So, the dance sequence will always be close to my heart.

Expresso: *You are a Michelin star chef, and filmmaking is a different genre. So what kind of challenges you faced while making a feature film.*

Vikas Khanna : I think that filmmaking and running a Michelin star kitchen require the same eligibility. Everything is based on how you are planning things. The way we plan a kitchen and the restaurant, the menus we serve and dividing a house, it's front and back, everything is quite similar to filmmaking. Then comes the testing moment when a guest orders something from the menu that we have to serve. It is something very important. Everything depends on managing people. Besides, I feel that filmmaking is an art and it has to be supreme.

Expresso: *Any scene or character of this book, which is close to your heart?*

Vikas Khanna : I feel Anarkali is my most favorite character. She is a transgender character and is important for my film and my book. She shows how transgenders have to face difficulties



Picture Courtesy - Dean Masoud, Dream Energy Productions





in society and how she has to live a suppressed life due to the locals. But, it did not break her. Anarkali takes good care of the kids and took good care of Choti as well. Rudrani Jayati played the character beautifully. Besides, I did not want to dress up a man for the transgender character, and it was tough to find out a transgender who will listen to the instructions. Overall, working with Rudrani will be a memorable experience of my life.

Expresso: You recently started Feed India Campaign. What inspired you to come up with such an initiative?

Vikas Khanna : I started 'Feed India' during the pandemic since I wanted to support India, where I was born, educated, and trained. I also started another food drive in some cities. However, it was not successful as I was based out of New York and the time zones are different. Besides, I had other events lined up as well. However, my mother said that I must not walk away from my duties since every citizen celebrated my success and cried when I was not doing great. The campaign had been running for more than eight months since I talked to her in April 2020. All the credit goes to her and I am grateful to her for rebooting my moral compass.

Expresso: How did becoming a Michelin Star change your life?

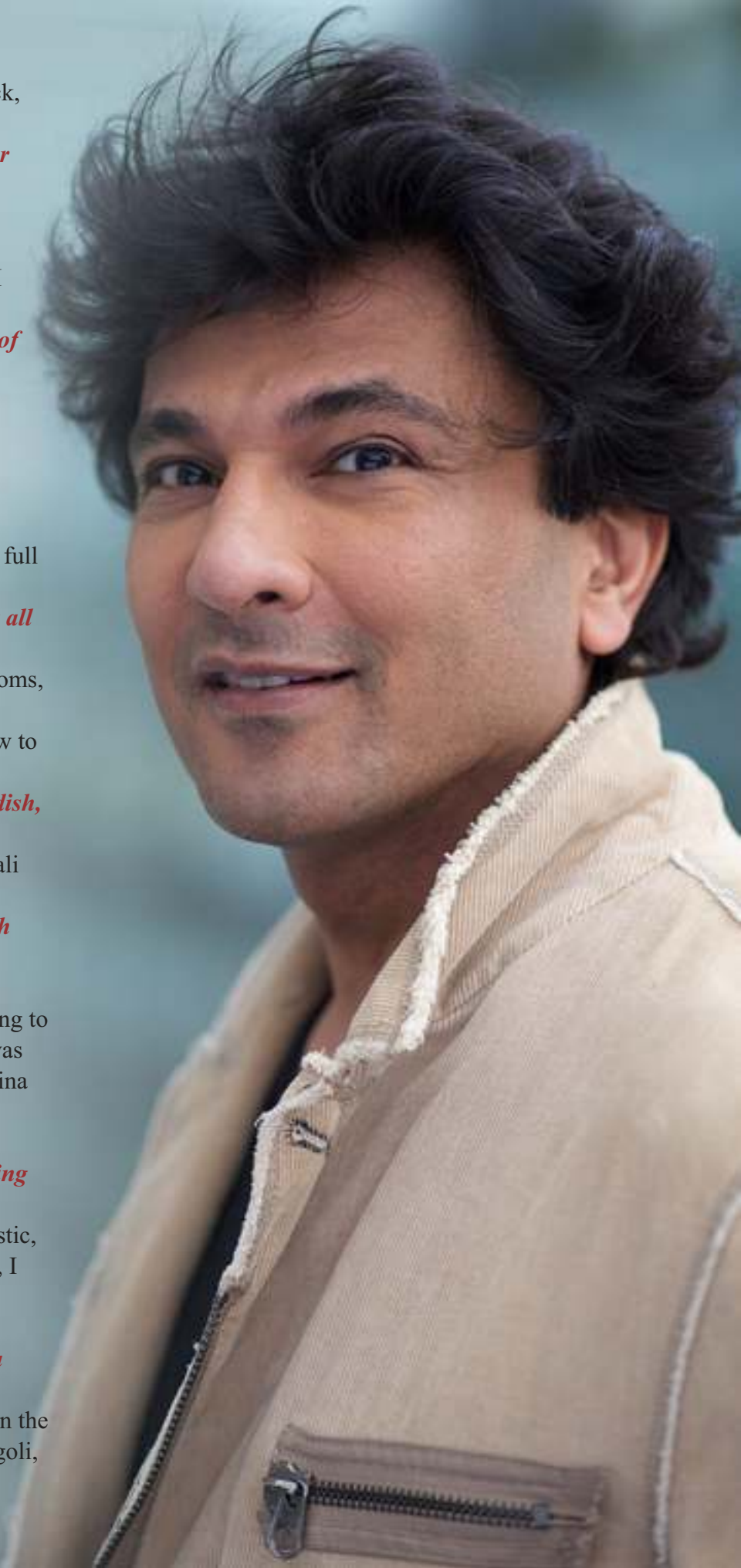
VikasK hanna : A very common phrase, which I have heard many times, "I don't care about Michelin Chef." You see once you get a good position you understand its value, which is true. Michelin Star is a global recognition and I was the first person to win the award. But, after that, I did not stop. I continued living the moment since Michelin Star is an important validation for my eligibility.

Expresso: What are your plans when it comes to directing films?

VikasK hanna : I have many plans like I want to make more documentaries and feature films; however, I like to keep things discreet until they get selected for featuring in film festivals. I am not bound by anyone and I am planning to continue with making films. It is my passion and I will continue coming up with such stories that have a social cause, meaning, and has deep relevance. This is why I want to make sure to come up with films on such stories, which will become more significant in the future.

Me and Myself

- **Espresso: What is your go-to recipe?**
Vikas Khanna : Khichdi since it is quick, delish, and soulful.
- **Espresso: The first dish you cooked for your mother.**
Vikas Khanna : Pili Daal and Chai.
- **Espresso: Your favoritedesi dish?**
Vikas Khanna : There are many but if I have to pick, then it would be Undhiyu.
- **Espresso: One dish that reminds you of your childhood?**
Vikas Khanna : Mithey Waale Chawal, which we used to cook on festivals, especially on Diwali.
- **Espresso: How would you describe Amritsar cuisine in three words?**
Vikas Khanna : Delicious, soulful, and full of heart.
- **Espresso: What is your next cookbook all about?**
Vikas Khanna : My next book is Blossoms, and it is about spices. Its revolution, pollination, how we store them, and how to cook dishes with them.
- **Espresso: If 'The Last Color' were a dish, what would it be?**
Vikas Khanna : It would be a Gujarati Thali having a mixed taste.
- **Espresso: Being a Michelin star, which country is emerging as the best food destination?**
Vikas Khanna : Many friends are waiting to visit Latin America post-pandemic. It was Mexico once, but now I see that Argentina and Brazil can emerge as the best food destination.
- **Espresso: What is your personal cooking style?**
Vikas Khanna : My cooking style is rustic, but I also do fine dining restaurants. So, I focus on including my style in making Michelin Star dishes.
- **Espresso: One Food that connects you with Benares?**
Vikas Khanna : It would be chai sold on the Ghats. The chai is made with Hajmola goli, lemon, and hot water.



Chic Chikmagalur

Chikmagalur or Chikkamagaluru, is a district in the state of Karnataka. Coffee was first cultivated in India in Chikmagalur. Translated as the 'Young Daughter's Town' as it was presented as dowry to the younger daughter of the Chief of Sakrepatna, Rukmangada, this serene city is also known as the 'Coffee Land of Karnataka' tranquilizing you from within with its aroma.

By Roopa Sengupta



Chikmagalur stands at an elevation of 3,400 feet, covered with eye-catching tea and coffee plantations, making it a major commercial hub of the state, and also bringing in tourists from all over the world to entice the unique experience of walking through the plantations.

The mountains in Chikmagalur, which are a part of the Western Ghats are the source of rivers like Tunga and Bhadra. Mullayanagiri, which is the highest peak in Karnataka is located in the district. It is also a tourist's paradise containing hill stations like Kemmanagundi and Kudremukh and waterfalls like Manikyadhara, Hebbe, Kallathigiri. Chikmagalur district has a rich history as is seen in the Hoysala temple at Amrithapura. Wildlife enthusiasts would be interested in the Kudremukh National Park and Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary present in this district.

Coffee was introduced into India through the Chikmagalur district when the first coffee crop was grown in the Baba BudanGiri range during 1670 AD. The saint, Baba Budan on his pilgrimage to Mecca travelled through the seaport of Mocha, Yemen where he discovered coffee. To introduce its taste to India, he wrapped seven coffee beans around his belly and got them out of Arabia. On his return home, he planted the beans in the hills of Chikmagalur.

This entrancing hill station is not just about temples and sightseeing but also adventure activities that would savor your inner thrill enthusiast. Do not miss out on the famous waterfalls, namely, Jhari Waterfalls, Hanuman Gundi Waterfalls, Shankar Falls, and Kadambi Falls as there are plenty of them that will surely leave you mesmerized by spellbinding scenic beauty. Cascade of water flowing over the rugged terrain, it is a view that you will remember all through your life.

If you wish to find an escape from the monotonous 9 to 5 life, this is just the right place for you to spend some time amidst the flora and fauna. Do not forget to carry your camera along to come back with pictures to flaunt on your social media.

Places to visit in Chikmagalur:

Ayyanakere Lake: This is one of the popular spots

in Chikmagalur from where you can see the majestic Shakungiri Range. This is an ideal spot to visit with your friends and engage in activities like camping and fishing. Spreading over 22 hectares, this is the largest lake in Chikmagalur.

Hebbe Falls: This picturesque waterfall is located 8 Km from the Kemmagundi hill station. It is the perfect place to relax and unwind with your friends. The trekking trail leading to the falls has its own charm as well.

Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary: The Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary is famous for its flora and fauna. Be prepared to get mesmerized by the royal Bengal tiger, several bird species, and reptiles like the pit viper and king cobra.

Mahatma Gandhi Park: If you wish to spend some time away from the noise of the city, the Mahatma Gandhi Park with its large trees and lawn is the perfect place for a picnic.

Mullayanagiri Peak: Mullayanagiri is the highest peak in Karnataka, India. Mullayyanagiri is located in the Chandra Dhrona Hill Ranges of the Western Ghats of ChikkamagaluruTaluk. With a height of 1,930 metres (6,330 ft), it is the highest peak in Karnataka. The summit of Mullayanagiri houses a police radio relay station.

You can reach Chikmagalur by road from Bangalore. The distance between Bangalore and Chikmagalur is 243 kms and the travel time is 4 hours 47 mins through the beautiful town of Hassan and the historic town of Belur. The roads are great and offer a fantastic ride.

Chikmagalur is a get away from the hustle and bustle of a busy city. However, there are places where you can shop for mementoes. You can buy some local handicrafts made out of coffee wood, aromatic sandalwood, berries, pepper and ambrosial perfumes.

The “Coffee Land of Karnataka” has lovely places to stay for all budget ranges. There are many homestays amidst estates and lush green hills. There are also resorts like the Eagle Eye Resort and the Serai Resort to name a few as well as hotels. Although Chikmagalur has a cool and pleasant climate throughout the year, the best time to visit Chikmagalur is from September to May.



'Unpaused' Is A Perfect Blend Of Entertainment

By Abir Majumder

Amazon Prime Video recently released the original anthology, "Unpaused", an amalgamation of 5 stories set amidst the lockdown period, narrating tales of new beginnings. The five tales are kneaded together to highlight new beginnings in these challenging times.

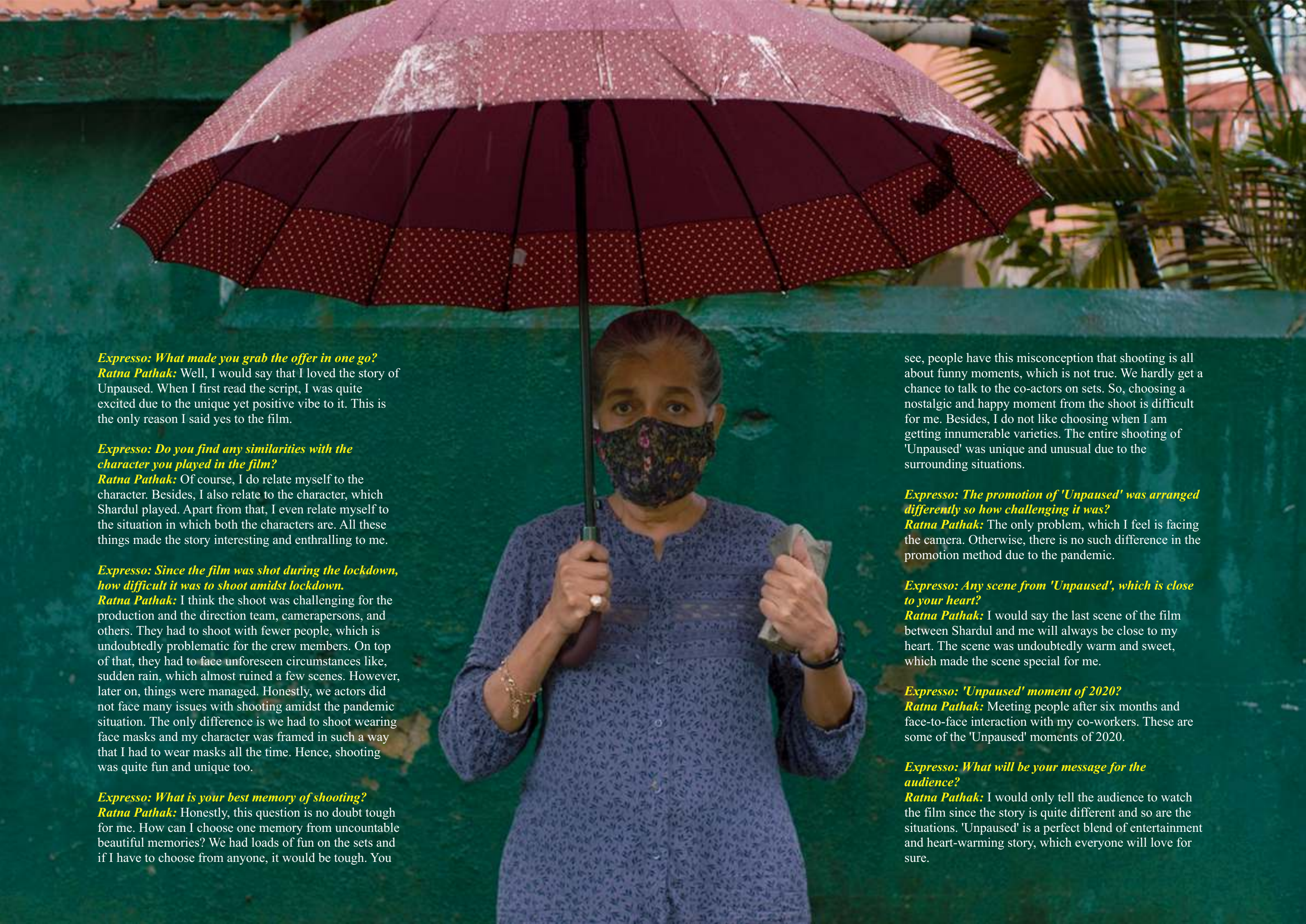
Director Nitya Mehra's 'Chaand Mubarak' highlights how slowly peeling of differences can help individuals survive together regardless of their social strata. An affluent middle-aged single woman is forced to seek the help of a young rickshaw driver to run some errands during Mumbai's lockdown.

The woman is stubborn & class conscious and resents the driver's orthodox views on women. As these two strangers from opposite sides of the track spend three days together, they slowly start peeling away their defenses. Finally, they form an unlikely friendship based on newfound respect and understanding, realizing they aren't so different after all – both lonely in the big city of dreams.

After its release, Expresso Magazine had a chit chat with the star cast, where **Ratna Pathak Shah** shared a lot of unknown facts about Chaand Mubarak.

Ratna Pathak
Shah





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

Ratna Pathak: Well, I would say that I loved the story of Unpaused. When I first read the script, I was quite excited due to the unique yet positive vibe to it. This is the only reason I said yes to the film.

Expresso: Do you find any similarities with the character you played in the film?

Ratna Pathak: Of course, I do relate myself to the character. Besides, I also relate to the character, which Shardul played. Apart from that, I even relate myself to the situation in which both the characters are. All these things made the story interesting and enthralling to me.

Expresso: Since the film was shot during the lockdown, how difficult it was to shoot amidst lockdown.

Ratna Pathak: I think the shoot was challenging for the production and the direction team, camerapersons, and others. They had to shoot with fewer people, which is undoubtedly problematic for the crew members. On top of that, they had to face unforeseen circumstances like, sudden rain, which almost ruined a few scenes. However, later on, things were managed. Honestly, we actors did not face many issues with shooting amidst the pandemic situation. The only difference is we had to shoot wearing face masks and my character was framed in such a way that I had to wear masks all the time. Hence, shooting was quite fun and unique too.

Expresso: What is your best memory of shooting?

Ratna Pathak: Honestly, this question is no doubt tough for me. How can I choose one memory from uncountable beautiful memories? We had loads of fun on the sets and if I have to choose from anyone, it would be tough. You

see, people have this misconception that shooting is all about funny moments, which is not true. We hardly get a chance to talk to the co-actors on sets. So, choosing a nostalgic and happy moment from the shoot is difficult for me. Besides, I do not like choosing when I am getting innumerable varieties. The entire shooting of 'Unpaused' was unique and unusual due to the surrounding situations.

Expresso: The promotion of 'Unpaused' was arranged differently so how challenging it was?

Ratna Pathak: The only problem, which I feel is facing the camera. Otherwise, there is no such difference in the promotion method due to the pandemic.

Expresso: Any scene from 'Unpaused', which is close to your heart?

Ratna Pathak: I would say the last scene of the film between Shardul and me will always be close to my heart. The scene was undoubtedly warm and sweet, which made the scene special for me.

Expresso: 'Unpaused' moment of 2020?

Ratna Pathak: Meeting people after six months and face-to-face interaction with my co-workers. These are some of the 'Unpaused' moments of 2020.

Expresso: What will be your message for the audience?

Ratna Pathak: I would only tell the audience to watch the film since the story is quite different and so are the situations. 'Unpaused' is a perfect blend of entertainment and heart-warming story, which everyone will love for sure.



A Fusion Of Old And New

With the rising chill in the air, people are looking for ideal comfort food that will warm them up on a cold winter day. So, let's have a quick look at the places, which are gearing up to serve the best of delicacies for the city dwellers. The latest addition to the city's foodscape, LaaMozarellla opened doors on *December, 2020* to welcome the culinary tribes of Kolkata for a whole new café and dine-in experience.

The 40 plus seater outlet is buzzing with bright lights that accentuate the neutral color palette of Ivory, Grey with a hint of Red. With the usage of rustic wooden furniture, LaaMozarellla is created as a bespoke space that blends the age-old allure with a touch of contemporary style that matches the inventive menu.

With a wide selection of nibbles and mains, the cuisine that is offered ranges from Italian to Continental, with a touch of Mexican. Their burgers, pizzas, pastas and platters are all served with a unique twist, boasting of textures and flavours that are sure to take your taste buds on an adventure. Some of their signature dishes include *Wood fire pizzas like Sicilia, Carnivora, Marinara; Parasuite Prawn; Cheesy Olivet; Apricot Chicken Wings; Bar B Q Drumsticks; Charmula Prawn & LaaMozarellla Roasted Chicken* to name a few.

The wide array of beverages consisting of an eclectic selection of coffees, shakes and mocktails like *'Kiwi Cooler, Mango Lady, Vestal Colada And Fruity Affair'* superbly compliment the brand's food delicacies. The *'Monte Carlo'* and the *'Baked Alaska'* deserve special mention when it comes to a sinful ending. re gearing up to serve the best of delicacies for the city dwellers.

LaaMozarellla

Address: New Town Business Club, Street No 90, Action Area 1, Block AE, New Town, West Bengal-700156

Café Operational Hours: 11 am – 11 pm

For Reservation, Call: +91 74396 60990

Meal for two: Rs. 999++ taxes

Fervour and Flavours

With the rising chill in the air, people are looking for ideal comfort food that will warm them up on a cold winter day. So, let's have a quick look at the places, which are gearing up to serve the best of delicacies for the city dwellers.

Fall In Love With Desserts

All you Bengalureans who have been craving to experience modern healthy desserts, here's the news to delight your taste buds! Cinnamon, your favourite Deli known for freshly baked bread and desserts at Renaissance Bengaluru Race Course Hotel has opened its doors again.

You can choose from an extensive dessert menu featuring gelato waff-wiches, freshly baked bread, designer cakes with equally alluring pastries and distinctive beverages. With an assortment of desserts and different beverages to choose from, Cinnamon is the perfect transition after your delicious meal.

For all those who want to indulge in some classic and signature desserts from the comfort of your homes, go ahead and place your orders through **Marriot on Wheels!**



What: Cinnamon is Back!

Where: Renaissance Bengaluru Race Course Hotel

When: Everyday

Time: 11 am to 10 pm

Traditional Delicacies

There's a dip in the temperature and the winter chill is knocking at the door. It's once again that wonderful season of the year when one can truly relish fine dining and looks forward to savouring traditional delicacies especially associated with the winter months.

In keeping with that, the culinary team of Moti Mahal Delux, Kolkata has thoughtfully handcrafted an exquisite '*Winter Special Menu*' with an array of aromatic dishes sure to warm your soul.

The menu comprises a carefully thought-out selection of perennial north Indian vegetarian and non vegetarian winter favourites. The vegetarian fare includes '*Sarso Da Saag with Makki Roti*', '*Amritsari Chhole Kulche*', '*Lal Chaman Paneer*', '*Methi Paratha*', '*Tandoori Bhutte*' and '*Assorted Pakodas*', to name a few. The non-vegetarian choices include '*Amritsari Fish*' (fish marinated with aromatic spices and coated with the Moti Mahal special batter and deep fried, served with garlic flavored potato wedges) and '*Gustaba*', (a mutton preparation served with steamed saffron rice, radish raita, pickle and Kashmiri saffron kawah), amongst several other mouth-watering offerings. Finally, and very importantly for Kolkata, the desserts are sure to leave one spoilt for choice. On the menu are a variety of dessert favourites such as '*Gajar Ka Halwa*', '*Sakarkand Rabri*' and '*Panjiri*' for a sinful ending.

Moti Mahal Delux

Address: Celica Park, 6th Floor Park Center,
24 Park Street, Kolkata - 700016

Operational Hours: 12 noon to 11:00 pm

Cost for two: (approx.) Rs.1,000





On Sundays, We Brunch!

This Sunday, indulge in one of the best mid-morning meals as Lush, the all day dining multi-cuisine restaurant at Renaissance Bengaluru Race Course Hotel brings to you '**On Sundays, We Brunch**' you can never forget.

Presented by Executive Sous Chef Nitish and his culinary team, the menu will feature a smorgasbord of handcrafted delicacies ranging from various lip-smacking salads from the cold bar to a wide array of main course meals that will take you on an all-new gastronomical journey. For all those with a sweet tooth, relish in some mouth-watering International and Indian desserts as the buffet features an ensemble of delicious dishes.

The Sunday Brunch will be a perfect family destination for the people of Bengaluru that offers scrumptious food and a joyous ambiance. Delve on a grandiose fare of gastronomical delights, new age cocktails and delectable desserts crafted with finesse to entice your taste buds with sheer perfection.

Come, satiate your Sunday cravings and end your weekend by spending some quality time with your family at Renaissance Bengaluru Race Course Hotel!

Venue: Lush, Renaissance Bengaluru Race Course Hotel

Day: Every Sunday

Time: 12:30 PM to 4:00 PM

Price: INR 1250 plus taxes (without alcohol) | INR 2149 plus taxes (with alcohol – beer and wine)

Sardi ke Kambal

Amidst the lockdown all we boozy heads had no place but the thekas to get our dose of alcohol and with prices that affordable, we were low key loving it, isn't it?

To give you the same feels, **Ardor 2.1** is out with their UNBELIEVABLE (trust us) combo offer, wherein they are giving away their **SardiKeKambal** meals plus your favorite alcohol starting at JUST **Rs. 549** for two people.

Meaning, that you, along with bae, can devour their Soya Chaap, Paneer, Tandoori Phool, Veg Seekh etc. with your choice of alcohol (4 pegs) at Just **Rs. 549** per person, which is the most amazing offer we've heard this season.

You can also grab their non **Veg SardiKeKambal** which has choices of Chicken, Mutton and fish snacks, plus alcohol. If you wish to order Imported Drinks with your **SardiKeKambal**, you'll have to pay a little higher, but it is absolutely worth it.

Ardor 2.1 has taken a 100-day pledge to make their entire menu so affordable, that we Delhiites cannot find any more reasons to stay home now.

With Ardor 2.1, you won't even have to buy the entire bottle, unlike thekas.

Plus, you can also enjoy live music, DJs and a safe environment that meticulously promotes social distancing.



Where

**Ardor 2.1, N-55/56
& 88/89, Outer
Circle, Connaught
Place, New Delhi**

Bringing Shades Of Pink In Full Bloom

UNO, the new destination for Japanese cuisine in town is hosting its first-ever Cherry Blossom Festival in a unique way. While you may not catch the blooms in their days of brilliance in namma city, you can at least cheers to springtime with some crafted themed drinks and food. To all the cocktail enthusiasts of Bengaluru, raise a glass to start of spring and enjoy the 10-day festival at UNO. Their Gin and Vodka based cocktails are inspired by the colors, aroma, and flavors of the Japanese blossoms like the edible Calendula, Caisim, Chamomile, Dianthus, Hyacinth and Viola. The cocktails are accompanied with some lip-smacking **Sushi, Sashimi** and oh lot more like **Edamame, Wasabi Prawns, Miso Black Cod, Avacado Tartare, Soft Tuna Carpaccio, Matcha Green Tea Mousse, Red Ruby.**

'Tis is certainly one worth celebrating!

Reserve your seats at UNO and get served some fabulous fare!

Venue: UNO, Level 1, JW Marriott Hotel
Bengaluru

Time: 5:00 PM – 11:30 PM

Date: 22nd to 31st January

Price: A La Carte



Easy Recipes to Conquer Weeknight Dinners



Grilled Tuna Steak with Chimichurri Sauce



Seafood Salad



Bacon Wrapped Chicken

Here are a few simple recipes that you can try for yourselves this winter, whip-up these delicious dishes in thirty minutes or less so you have more time to do the things you love with the people you love.

Grilled Tuna Steak with Chimichurri Sauce

Ingredients :

- Tuna Steak: 200 gms
- Olive oil: 4 tea spoon
- Mustard paste: 2 table spoon

For Sauce :

- Garlic: 2 tea spoon (chopped)
- Vinegar: 1 table spoon
- Lemon juice – 2 tea spoon
- Salt: to taste
- Red pepper flakes: pinch
- Olive oil: 4 Tea spoon
- Parsley: 2 Table spoon (chopped)
- Fresh Chilli: 2 Tea spoon (chopped)
- Honey: 1 table spoon

Method :

- Marinate the fish in mustard and olive oil, and gently coat on all-purpose flour and grill it on medium flame on a preheated pan.
- For the sauce, mix all the ingredients and make a fine blend. Do not use grinder or mixer, whisk them instead!
- Plate the Grilled fish and top it off with the sauce! Can be served with flavored rice.

Seafood Salad

Ingredients :

(Quantity depends on the portion you want to make)
Carrot, Bell Peppers, Lettuce, Red Onions, Fresh, Papaya, Beetroot, Prawns, Tuna, Squid

For Dressing :

- Vinegar
- Honey
- Mustard paste

Method :

- Cut Chicken into small cubes (about 5 cms), roll the chicken with bacon strips, use toothpicks to make the bacon stay!
- On a heated pan, add oil, and then put the pieces of chicken-bacon balls, fry them until the bacon turns crisp! Can add sugar, if you want some more color to the dish! Add seasoning and take down the pan. Add some chopped Parsley as garnish!
- Cut the vegetables in Julienne, and mix them together, then let them rest on ice bath. This will add a crunchiness!!
- Take the fish, chop them into bite size pieces and grill them with basic seasoning.
- For the dressing, whisk all the ingredients!
- Finally, take out the veggies, soak out the water and mix the dressing with it, add the pre-cooked sea food and serve fresh!

RESTAURANT LAUNCH



Unparalleled Aromas Of The Middle East

Connecting the bustling streets of Egypt, Turkey, Lebanon, and Middle East to the coast of Mumbai, Sumac - a fine dining restaurant - serving the most invigorating cuisines opened its doors at Hiranandani Meadows, Thane West.

Reflecting its true meaning, the restaurant will take diners on an expedition across the region, while highlighting the diverse flavors of rich Mediterranean cuisine.

This uniquely conceptualised space, from its furniture and wall décor to lighting, is a work of art, which not only makes the space look vibrant but also adds the warmth and richness to it.

The dining room is distinctive in design, with their comforting seating, art adorning the walls, and the moroccan tiles at the bar add to the beauty.

On the other hand, the bar has been given utmost focus with its high seated chairs and wooden shelves. Sumac exudes class while keeping things casual and chic, transporting one to the majestic Mediterranean coast.

The restaurant impresses with its Mediterranean ambience. The delectable menu leaves one spoilt for choices right from their mouth watering appetisers like Kibbeh, Kandke Tikke, Zatar Roasted Eggplant, Shish Qarid Sumac Tzatziki, to their main course such as the Haleem, Paella Biryani, Paneer Quwarmah, Surmai Noorjehan. Also





featuring on the menu is DonerKebab ,Manakesh etc. Moving onto the desserts the restaurant serves Kunafeh, Baklava with Pistachio Ice-cream ,Ghevar with Rabdi etc..

Sumac also features unique cocktail recipes served with terrariums and premium straight drinks served with signature infused scented crystal ice to enhance its experience and taste .Any meal is complete without cocktail pairing, Sumac serves a wide range of delicious cocktails like Robroy, Boulevardier, La Flanca, Cuba Libre, Singapore Sling, Vespar Martini and many more.

Made from the dried and ground berries of the wild sumac flower, sumac is a tangy spice with a sour, acidic flavor reminiscent of lemon juice. This fragrant spice is used to brighten up dry rubs, spice blends like za'atar, and dressings. Sumac is also commonly used as a garnish, to add a pop of bold color or slight acidity to a dish before serving.

Sumac serves Lebanese, Middle Eastern & Indian cuisine with popular dishes giving opportunity to the guest to explore their taste buds by experiencing the unique dishes with our exquisite cocktails and mocktails.

Sumac wants to blend different styles of modern presentation by adding surprise elements to the plates.It's ambiance is simple yet elegant giving warmth, comfort and welcoming experience to the guest, a beautiful blend of a Indian and Lebanese interiors featured with a beautiful hand made painting made by Swapna Patel.

So, one can soak themselves in the flavours and unparalleled aromas of the Middle East, as Sumac is all set to make its mark in Thane.



10 Ways To Keep You Healthy In 2021

When it comes to New Year resolutions, 'eating healthy' and 'staying fit' are some of the most popular ones. Each year, there is a desire in each one of us to do better than we did the previous year, especially when it comes to taking care of our bodies and, thereby, our health. With the added emphasis on health that 2020 brought about, it's more important than ever to make those healthy eating resolutions and stick to them.

So, if you've decided that the coming year is dedicated to changing your habits and start living a healthier life, more power to you! We, as always, are happy to help. Whether it is setting more realistic and achievable goals or making small dietary changes, we're giving you 10 tips by **Nmami Agarwal, Founder and CEO Nmami Life** to help you stick to your healthy eating goals this new year.

- ***Don't skip breakfast***

Breakfast is the first meal of the day, so skipping it is an absolute no-no. Your body needs to fuel up and prepare for the day ahead, so instead of skipping breakfast, it must be one of the most nutritious meals you consume in the day. Besides, eating a good breakfast keeps you away from the urge to nibble on unhealthy snacks for the rest of the day.

- ***Eat more nuts***

Start including nuts such as California walnuts in your daily diet. A handful of walnuts can keep you away from hunger pangs and provide you with as much as 4g of protein, 2g of fiber, and 2.5g of plant-based omega-3 ALA. An excellent way to start making everyday healthy, don't you think?

- ***Cut down on sugar***

Everything is good in moderation, and the same goes for sugar. If you consume too much sugar in your tea, coffee, or any other drink in the day, start cutting down little by little. You can also cut back on artificially sweetened drinks and other such beverages.

- ***Keep a journal***

Always, always track your progress! No matter what healthy eating goal you've set for yourself, keep track of it by maintaining a diary or journal. Note down what you eat and drink throughout the day, so that you can keep checking in and seeing how far you've come or where you've fallen behind.

- ***Drink more water***

Remember to stay hydrated at all times. Drinking enough water can not only boost your metabolism and flush out those toxins, but also keep you feeling full. You can also eat fruits or vegetables that have high water content.

- ***Befriend people with similar goals***

Having someone by your side to cheer you on and keep you motivated is very important. Find someone who shares the same healthy eating goals as you and keep each other updated. You can always push each other on and have somebody to talk to on the days when you slip up.

- ***Eat more home-cooked meals***

Eating restaurant cooked meals sometimes is okay. But, if you want to eat better and stay healthy, focus on eating home-cooked meals. They do not contain artificial flavours or colours, and every ingredient that goes into a home-cooked meal is washed well, so you always know that you're eating something that is both safer and healthier than a meal that comes from the outside.

- ***Eat more vegetables***

Make sure that your plate contains a sufficient amount of veggies. Rich in fiber, vitamins, and other nutrients, vegetables form an integral part of a healthy diet. Besides, most veggies are low in fat and calories, so they'll help you stay on track and eat healthy.

- ***Focus on mindful eating***

Practice mindful eating. This could mean pausing before each bite to stay in tune with how hungry you are or taking the time to chew and swallow every bite. This way, you will be able to savour your food and fully understand how much your body needs.

- ***Exercise regularly***

Needless to say, exercising is essential to healthy living. Merely focusing on what you eat is not enough. What's also important is to balance it out with a good workout regime. Whether it is a 30-minute walk around the neighbourhood or a quick cardio session at home, get in some form of exercise each day in order to be active and healthy.

Keep these 10 tips in mind as you embark on this journey to a newer, healthier you. Don't worry about the roadblocks. Just take things one step at a time, and things will slowly fall into place. Good luck!

RISING STAR

Pammi Became A Symbol Of Empowerment

By Rituparna Sengupta Basu

Her phone has not stopped buzzing, as congratulatory messages are pouring in from the people across the world. A timid, faint-hearted, shy cop “Bhumika” or a strong-headed wrestler “Pammi”, Aaditi has been ruling hearts since the release of 'She' and 'Ashram'. Being an athlete Aaditi never ever imagined that she would step in this world of entertainment. She explores the eye-catching traits by being 'Bhumika' and 'Pammi'. She always believes that content is the king and the script was giving her the power to resonate with the audience. In a conversation with us, Aaditi opens up about her journey in this world of entertainment; the preparations she took to execute the portrayal with excellence.

Aaditi Dohankar

Expresso :*The second part of 'Ashram' is already live so how excited you are.*

Aaditi : I am really very excited. Well, this is the second part of Ashram. The new season will arrive after the second part ends. When I was shooting for the series, I did not think that the series would be divided into two parts. But, later on, both MX Player and Prakash sir decided to divide it into two parts. I am fortunate enough to work with such an amazing director.

Expresso :*For Ashram you have received many compliments. Which one is the best according to you?*

Aaditi : I got the best compliment from a sixteen years old girl from Ayodhya. There is a scene where Pammi comments on how girls have to deal with caste and gender discrimination, even in wrestling. So, the girl said that I inspired her to fight against odds. You see wrestling is such a game where men only excel. Due to this reason, women have to face many odds.

I felt that Pammi became an ideal for many girls and a symbol of empowerment. Similarly, in 'She', Bhumika was such a strong character who became confident after completing her operation. But, the way that girl complimented me on fighting back against the odds is something that made me extremely happy.

Expresso :*Do both of your characters from 'Ashram' and 'She' make you stronger in life?*

Aaditi : Of course, from both my characters I learned to be anchored. Honestly, at times, I too feel weak but as of now, I haven't felt any pressure where I have to choose between two paths. Both Pammi and Bhumika gave strength to Aaditi, for sure.

Expresso :*Did you face any challenges while learning the Haryanvi language and wrestling skills?*

Aaditi : The first challenge was to put on weight, which was quite challenging. I do not gain weight naturally. I had two months to



prepare and gain weight. The second challenge was to learn the Haryanvi language which did not seem quite challenging to me. I love to do accents and although it was tough for me since I am from Mumbai; my teacher Sunita Ji helped me a lot. When I went to Ayodhya, I lived with the girls who practice wrestling there. They said that wrestling has a huge connection with people from Haryana and Haryanvi automatically became their accent. Besides, if you watch Ashram, you will understand that my accent was mixed Punjabi-Haryanvi so that people can understand. You see, my character in 'She' was different as I was a Marathi girl, and people quite loved my accent over there as well.

Expresso :How was your experience working with Bobby Deol?

Aaditi : I don't think that I have to emphasize more on it since he is a senior in the industry and has been here for more than 25 years. However, when he was on the set, he used to behave like; he is new to everything. I remember how I used to feel awkward to ask for scene rehearsals. But, then Bobby sir used to be very friendly and helped me a lot with my scenes. We used to practice our scenes together. Overall, all I can say is I was quite lucky to work with such a talented actor.

Expresso :You have worked with Prakash Jha as well as Imtiaz Ali so did you find any difference in them?

Aaditi : I am not sure of the difference but I have noticed that their working styles are quite similar. Imtiaz Ali sir never tried to interrupt or tried to teach me. Instead, he used to give me enough freedom regarding my acting. However, if he felt that some changes are necessary he guided me with that. The same goes for Prakash sir too. Since Ashram had many intense scenes, he asked me to do what is necessary and the camera will follow. If any scenes needed changes, he used to guide me accordingly. Thankfully, none of the directors had to face many issues regarding my acting or performance. Besides, working with an experienced director comes with a lot of positive points. I had faith in both of them, be it for my character choice or my performance.

Expresso :Any scenes from 'Ashram', which is close to your heart?

Aaditi : Well, there is a scene of my first visit to Ashram and I was quite happy. I felt that finally, after all the struggles; I made it to the Ashram and felt that all my problems would end. As Pammi, I had the same feeling. You see, if you have

someone in your life who can solve all your problems you feel relaxed. So, this scene is my most favorite.

Expresso :Your journey started in 2014 so how would you explain it. Was acting always your first choice?

Aaditi : Honestly, I was not sure whether I wanted to be an actor. Actually, I was an athlete, and soon after that, I was working in theatre with Makrand Sir. Then I was selected for Laibhari. From there, I began my journey as an actor. You see, it takes almost twenty years to be an actor and I have not even completed half of it. So, as of now, I am just riding the boat and I do not know where my fate will take me. However, I am working hard and trying to stay true to my art as much as possible.

Expresso :How did you get the opportunity for 'She'.

Aaditi : Actually, I met Imtiaz Ali sir way back before 'She's' shooting begun. I asked him to watch my reel since I was eager to work with him. After watching my reel, he asked me to meet him. He said that Bhumika's character is quite different from mine. He wanted me to focus on characters that will suit my age and personality. Still, he asked me to appear for the audition. After auditioning with Mukesh Chabra, sir asked me to give another audition in more like a theatre style. After that, he selected me for the character Bhumika.

Expresso :You have played a bold character in 'She' so what was the most challenging part of it.

Aaditi : The most challenging part of playing any bold character is that you have to reach the state of mind of the character. My role was to control my character Bhumika, her mind, and the reason behind her motives and actions. If you have watched 'She', you will understand that Bhumika did not have any uncomfortable scenes in the series. So, you see, it is necessary to crawl under the skin of your character and analyze it properly. While working with Imtiaz Ali, he said that while doing any bold scenes, men are the ones who feel uncomfortable. Even I felt that while shooting for 'She'.

Expresso :Do you believe that content is the king?

Aaditi : Yes, I believe that content is the king. During the lockdown, many movies and shows came up where the content was given the biggest priority. People have become quite patient regarding watching good content. They have



opened their minds regarding choosing a good story. I feel that many series and shows like PaatalLok, The Queen's Gambit, She, and even Ashram are doing great on the OTT platforms solely due to the good content. Besides, in the upcoming days, people will get to see new actors coming up with unique content, which is in demand these days.

Expresso :*How do you handle stress related to your work?*

Aaditi : Well, as of now I have not felt such stress due to my work or my career. However, to control my stress levels, I practice a few habits like, I try to avoid my phone for a couple of hours throughout the day, try to stay busy with some work. You see, if you follow your life and observe it, automatically you will be able to live in your present. I would say that everyone should follow the mantra of living in the present, which is no doubt useful to avoid stress.

Expresso :*Tell us a bit about your New Year's resolution and what about your upcoming projects?*

Aaditi : My New Year's resolution includes working more in series or films and to become productive, and I am currently focusing on that. I am even facing date clashes, which is quite disheartening for me since I want to do every project. Well, talking about upcoming projects, there are quite a few. As of now, I cannot talk about them. But, yes, from the middle of February, my schedule will be packed for the year.



REVIEW

A Twisted And Tormented Legal Tale That Perfectly Highlights Patriarchy

By Nabanita Dutta

Rating - 8.5/10

Casting - Kirti Kulhari, Pankaj Tripathi, Jisshu Sengupta, Anupriya Goyenka

Review - Don't we all agree that Indian justice is filled with loopholes? Lawyers, judges, and even common people know that. Criminal Justice-Behind Closed Doors will take viewers to the dark and filthy world of Indian Law. Through a new lens, viewers will be able to see it. Although the first season was the remake of The Night Of, the second season continues with a new story. However, we will see Pankaj Tripathi leading the second season and making headlines.



Criminal Justice season 2 clearly supports the statement innocent until someone is proven guilty. Well, Pankaj Tripathi exactly says this to his wife in an episode when she was explaining to her boss that a person could not be termed criminal until proven. Although it is a small scene, it has huge relevance. Changing the thinking of at least one person can make a huge difference.

The enthusiastic trailer almost revealed half of the story. Surprisingly, the fears were misplaced. In the second season, we meet Chandra's family, a happy, picture-perfect family. Bikram Chandra played by Jisshu Sengupta is a die-heart lawyer who is renowned for making some outstanding speeches in the courtroom for the oppressed. With a beautiful family, 12-years old daughter, and an affluent job, he enjoys the best time of his life. But, such picture-perfect families hide many dark and ruthless secrets. Even though Anu was a perfect wife and Bikram was a fantastic lawyer, she was a victim of marital rape behind closed doors.

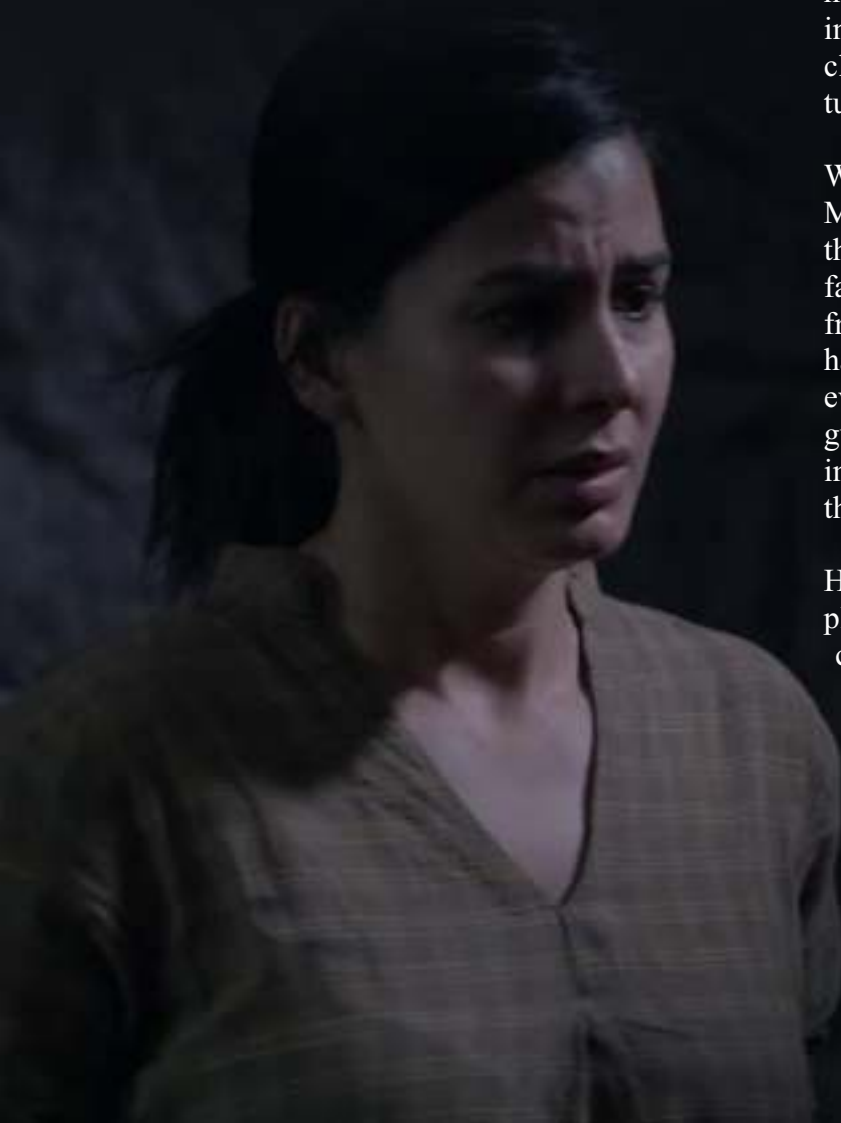
Surprising right; however it is true since many women still face marital rape. Due to this reason, by the end of the first episode, we see Anu, his wife, played by Kirti Kulhari, roaming on the city streets



with a knife and a bloodstained robe. It shows how mishaps can disintegrate a family. Here is where interest gets provoked. From here, viewers will clearly sit on the edge and wait for various twists and turns.

While other lawyers refused to take Anu's case, Madhav Mishra willingly accepts it. We all agree that people always fret them who have name and fame. But, Madhav, a quirky and most-loved lawyer from the first season, accepts it whole-heartedly. We have known him since the first season as he does everything to defend his clients irrespective of how guilty they are. Although he stays low on enough information and high on wit, he successfully wins the cases.

He once again shakes hand with Nikhat Hussain, played by Anupriya Goyenka. Anupriya makes a comeback in the second season and resumes her role. The only difference is she is now an experienced lawyer searching for work. Viewers might mistake Criminal Justice-Behind Closed Doors as a spine-chilling legal thriller, but it is not true. Clearly, it is a super slow series where they have to put together small puzzle pieces steadily. Overall, the second season moves slowly, but every episode unfolds spectacularly.



The biggest USP of the series is; it focuses on the reason behind the murder and not the criminal. Criminal Justice's second season wins due to the importance of gender for unfolding the story. Along with that, this season also shows how women are treated when it comes to the criminal justice system of India. The story takes a turn from the prison as Anu faces multiple viewpoints as well as baseless and harsh judgments from her inmates.

Her life changes when she moves to the dark confinements of prison from her cozy apartment. The inevitable situations like overflowing toilets and the daily fight for food bring unanticipated changes and challenges for her. Kirti Kulhari's wonderful performance is noteworthy. Her biggest achievement is although she speaks less throughout the show due to the shock, she did justice to her character. People might misjudge the show as a woman's story in prison; whereas, it is a story of struggles, which women have to face in society.

From relatable things, her actions, to gender inequality, the series focuses on the merciless side of the society that women deal, every day. Precisely, the show will reveal that men can get away with every offense, even a murder, whereas women are born to suffer. If a woman is raped before marriage, it's a crime. But, if she is raped after marriage, then she has to accept it for her husband. Patriarchy is the biggest down point, which women suffer throughout the world.

On the other hand, it is impossible to ignore the comic side of Tripathi and Ratna, his wife, played by Khushboo Atre. Viewers will be delighted to watch the optimistic side of Tripathi as he handles the case and court hearings of Anu with mehndi on his hands. How can we forget the marvelous ensemble cast, Deepti Naval, Shilpa Shukla, Mita Vashisht, and others? From a hard-hitting story to an outstanding cast; everything makes Criminal Justice a perfect series to kick-start the year with a thrill.





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