

NOVEMBER 28-DECEMBER 4, 2021

SUNDAY

POST

HERE . NOW



WORLD AIDS DAY – DECEMBER 1

BEACONS OF HOPE

P
3,4 **COVER STORY**



Actor Ameli Panda Hota, who was last seen in the Odia movie 'Ea Bi Gote Love Story' and set to win hearts of her fans in upcoming film 'Papa Vs Mama', loves to spend time with her daughter Kabyanjali

Crazy Shopper

I go on a shopping spree with my hubby and daughter when I get a break from shooting and other responsibilities. Even the lockdown couldn't stop me as I ordered my favourite stuff online.



With daughter

Fish Chef

My husband cannot resist the temptation of lip-smacking *Bhapa Ilish*. He hardly misses any chance to gorge on this delectable dish when it is cooked by me.



With husband

Daughter Dearest

Spending quality time with my daughter is my favourite pastime on non-working Sundays. I tell new stories, teach dance steps and play with her to make her feel special.

Movie buff

We used to watch new releases in theatres before imposition of restrictions. Though cinema halls have been re-opened, we are a little scared and we prefer to watch the latest shows on streaming platforms.

Evening Socialising

I am a hardcore party animal who loves hanging out with friends in the evening. We party at my place or at some of my friend's place when we are free.



RASHMI REKHA DAS, OP



WhatsApp This Week

Only on **Sunday POST!**

Send in your most interesting WhatsApp messages and memes received to: features.orissapost@gmail.com And we will publish the best ones

THE BEST MEMES OF THIS ISSUE

- I hate people who steal my ideas before I think of them.
- The worst time to have a heart attack is during a game of charades.
- Everybody wishes they could go to heaven, but no one wants to die.
- My biggest concern in life is actually how my online friends can be informed of my death.



A DELIGHTFUL READ

Dear Sir, The short story *Friend* by Jayshree Misra Tripathi brought a whiff of fresh air, as one recalled the salad days of youth, when everything looked good and rosy. The author's excellent recapitulation of events and the inner turmoil of a lovelorn soul in the coffee house, injected a true sense of realism in the saga of unfulfilled love. It also succinctly drove home the point that our aspirations may go awry due to societal pressures and the turn of circumstances. The author's absorbing narrative technique, laced with the right emotions, choice of the right words and phrases had me totally transfixed. 'Reality sucks', which the author uses at one place, could have been a better heading for this fictional piece. Sunday POST deserves compliments for according space to fiction, especially at a time, when many dailies have pulled the shutters on their Sunday pullouts.

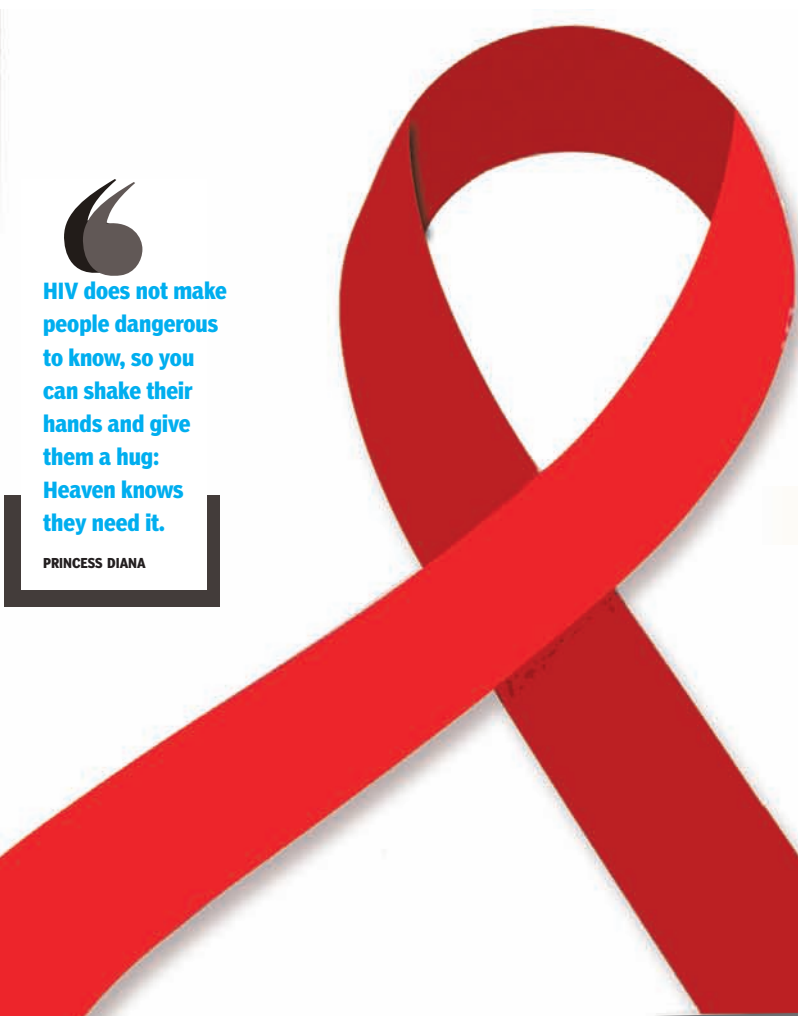
AMIT BANERJEE, NEW DELHI

LETTERS



A WORD FOR READERS

Sunday POST is serving a platter of delectable fare every week, or so we hope. We want readers to interact with us. Please send in your opinions, queries, comments and contributions to features.orissapost@gmail.com B-15, Industrial Estate, Rasulgarh, Bhubaneswar - 751010, Orissa. Phone (0674) 2549982, 2549948



“HIV does not make people dangerous to know, so you can shake their hands and give them a hug: Heaven knows they need it.”
PRINCESS DIANA

WORLD AIDS DAY - DECEMBER 1

Beacons of hope

Campaign on AIDS awareness has almost come of age. Earlier it was perceived that if a person contracts HIV, death is inevitable. But now, studies suggest that people living with HIV can lead a normal life like others if they stick to a disciplined lifestyle

RASHMI REKHA DAS, OP

When AIDS was declared as an epidemic about 30 years ago, the life span of people diagnosed with HIV virus was not good. But thanks to a massive awareness campaign launched by various government and non-government agencies, the life expectancy rate of the victims has now improved significantly and the rate of infection has also drastically come down. Several studies suggest that people living with HIV now can lead a normal life like others if they continue to maintain discipline. However, it is not just the awareness campaigns that have made the turn around. There are many survivors who with their disciplined lifestyles made others believe that AIDS is not a disease but a condition which can be overcome. Ahead of World AIDS Day December 1, a day observed to show solidarity with the millions of people living with HIV worldwide, **Sunday POST** brings the tales of some survivors who have managed to beat HIV virus with their determination.

'My daughter and I were abandoned by in-laws'

Most people with HIV infection prefer to hide their identities in fear of discrimination and lack of acceptance. But Prabhasini Pradhan is an aberration. She has never tried to hide herself from the day she was diagnosed HIV +ve. Moreover, the infection has given her a purpose in life, says Prabhasini. It helps build her inner strength which she uses to help many like others. Needless to say Prabhasini, after contracting the virus from her husband, has now turned a beacon of hope for other victims. Now widowed, she doesn't hesitate to share her success story to inspire others.

She recounts "We were a happily married couple. But my husband, who was working at a factory in Mumbai, tested HIV positive in 2003 leaving us in shock, fear and gloom. We got married in 2000 and were blessed with a daughter the next year. We had a lot of dreams for the future and never thought that they would be shattered so soon. However, the worst was yet to come. I too was tested HIV +ve in a precautionary in-

vestigation. My husband died 15 days after being diagnosed with HIV. Following my husband's death rituals, his family abandoned me and my daughter."

Prabhasini had to face a problem about which she was completely ignorant. At that time, there was a perception that people who are unfaithful to their partners suffer from AIDS and once contracted death is inevitable.

But Prabhasini decided not to give in. She went back to her parents and started tailoring and giving tuitions to students to make ends meet and ensure a decent childhood for her daughter.

"Most of those early days of my infection were spent in regular blood tests. It was really tough for me. In the meanwhile, I met a counselor at an Integrated Counseling and Testing Centre (ICTC) and she helped me deal with the trauma I was going through. She changed my notion towards AIDS. I realised that there are hundreds of people living with this virus. I took part in a meeting organised by Orissa State AIDS Control Society (OSACS) where I met Amarendra Behera and Ajay Samal, who inspired me to lead a graceful life like many other people living with HIV virus."



Members of Vande Mataram, a Bhubaneswar-based NGO, enact a street play to sensitise people on HIV/AIDS



Triranga Priyadarshan, a child artiste of Vande Mataram creates awareness on HIV/AIDS

Anonymous to get rid of my drinking habit. Fortunately, I found support with KNP+. After taking ART medicines regularly, my CD4 count has now increased to 800. I would like to thank Prabhasini Madam for counseling me properly and helping me return to normal life.”

Jivan currently works as an outreach worker at KNP+ and lends helping hand to people living with AIDS.

‘Doctors, nurses refused to attend to me’

Meet Nimapara-based transgender Sonia who was diagnosed with HIV AIDS seven years back. After being diagnosed with HIV, a transwoman like her faced double discrimination - first because of her gender identity and then for her HIV status. She faced discrimination while undergoing treatment for HIV at a government hospital. But she is lucky to have supportive parents and siblings who had never asked her to leave the house when they got to know that he is a transgender. It also made no difference to them when she became HIV positive.

Recalling those days, Sonia says, “After having my Class X board examinations, I was down with fever for many days. My parents took me to SCB Medical College and Hospital where I was diagnosed with last stage Tuberculosis. Doctors made it clear that I had a few days left with me. However, I was not devastated when I learnt about the reality. To make matters worse, I tested HIV +ve after a few months. My parents broke down after learning about



An initiative by Odisha State AIDS Control Society to reduce morbidity and mortality of AIDS in the state

It was then I joined a forum Kalinga Network for People Living with HIV/AIDS (KNP+) founded by Ajay Patra in 2006,” recalls Prabhasini.

Soon, she became a prominent community activist—working to increase access to government’s social benefits for people living with HIV and for most-at-risk populations, including transgender people, in Odisha. Now, the forum is being run and led by Prabhasini, its president.

“HIV people lead shameful and stressful lives and do not raise their voice for their rights. Here comes the role of KNP+ to boost their confidence and counsel them for a better tomorrow. Thanks to KNP+, people living with HIV have found the strength

not only to rebuild their own future, but also to help those around them. Since 2006, the network has been helping people living with HIV in getting their day-to-day needs. KNP+ was formed to make people afflicted with HIV AIDS aware about the anti-retroviral therapy centers,” says Prabhasini.

As many as 18,000 people living with HIV have been benefited by the forum. KNP+ reached out to people who complained of non-cooperation of doctors, nurses and health workers while dealing with positive patients.

Her forum, with centers across Odisha, is leaving no stone unturned to make a difference to the lives of HIV positive people and their families.

‘My family wanted me to die as soon as possible’

Jiban Krushna Mohanty, 56, a resident of Nayapalli of Bhubaneswar is yet another survivor who challenged HIV virus and is now leading a normal life. After testing positive, he did not lose hope and joined KNP+ where he got the motivation to fight the virus. Today, he is a well-known activist and social worker who takes lead in implementing HIV response programmes in Khurda district.

Jiban was diagnosed with HIV in 2007. “I was an alcoholic in my prime and subsequently fell prey to drugs.

In no time I developed several health disorders due to repeated injection drugs. However, I realised my mistake before it was too late and withdrew myself. But I experienced hallucinations after suddenly stopping taking them. I had a fever for many days. As the temperature did not come down, I had undergone many tests including HIV test as per the doctor’s advice. “It was heartbreaking to learn that I was tested positive for both TB and HIV. The latter entered my body through syringes which were used by many people. My life had turned upside down before I could realise. My parents and siblings started misbehaving with me. Apart from keeping distance from me, all they wanted me to die as soon as possible. They asked me to live alone in a room with my belongings. However, I was determined to fight back.”

As HIV treatment was not available in Bhubaneswar at that time, Jiban used to travel to Berhampur for his treatment. Soon, an antiretroviral ther-

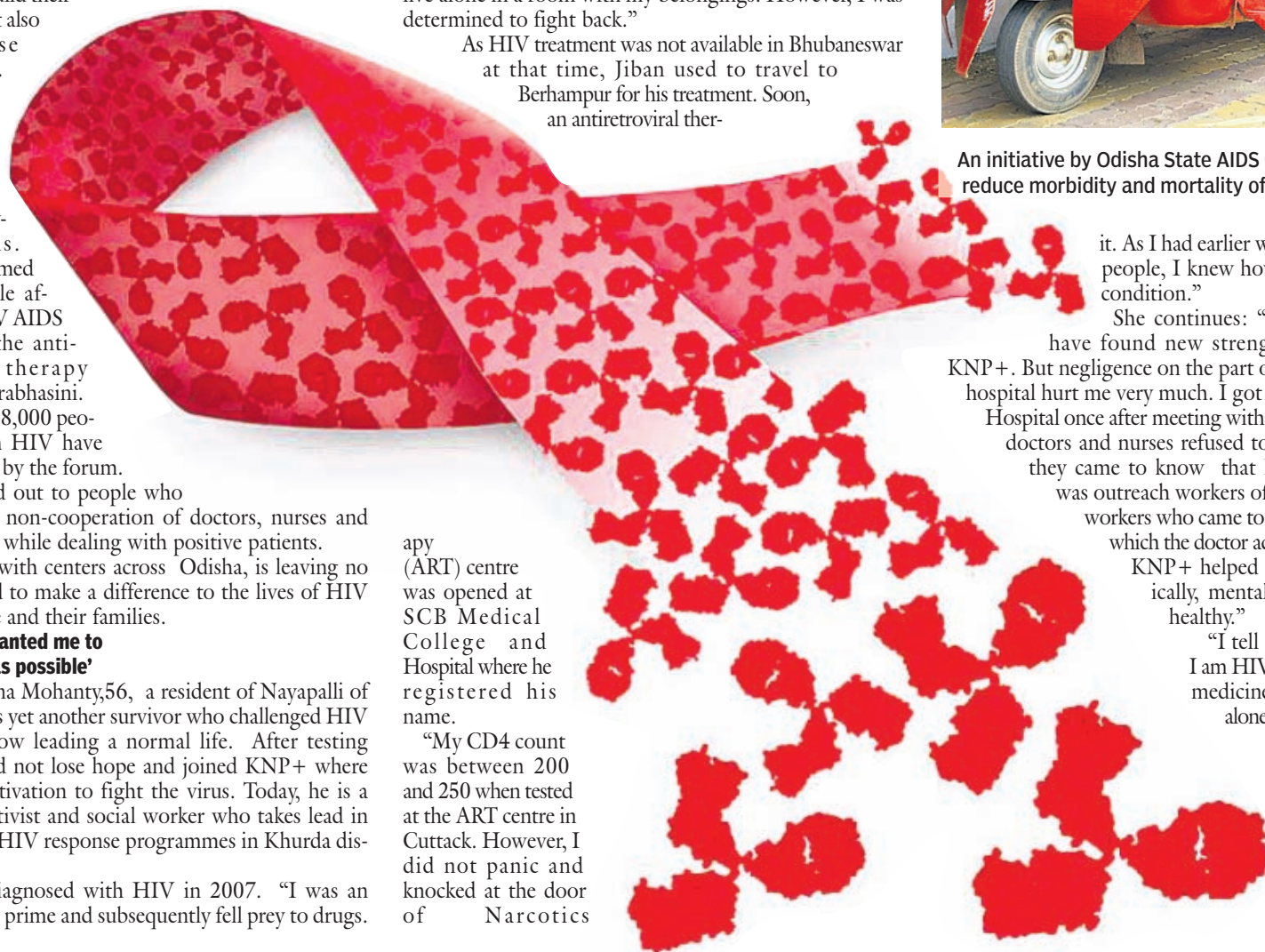
apy (ART) centre was opened at SCB Medical College and Hospital where he registered his name.

“My CD4 count was between 200 and 250 when tested at the ART centre in Cuttack. However, I did not panic and knocked at the door of Narcotics

it. As I had earlier worked HIV afflicted people, I knew how to deal with such condition.”

She continues: “In the meantime I have found new strength in the form of KNP+. But negligence on the part of doctors at Capital hospital hurt me very much. I got admitted to Capital Hospital once after meeting with a mishap. However, doctors and nurses refused to attend to me after they came to know that I was HIV +ve. It was outreach workers of KNP+ and ASHA workers who came to my rescue following which the doctor administered injection. KNP+ helped me to remain physically, mentally and emotionally healthy.”

“I tell them I am like you. I am HIV+ve and I am taking medicines too. You are not alone,” says Sonia to those who take extreme steps of killing themselves after knowing that they are HIV positive.



THE WORKS OF AWARD WINNING DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKER PRANAB KUMAR AICH MOSTLY HIGHLIGHT ISSUES SUCH AS CLIMATE CHANGE, PLIGHT OF SLUM CHILDREN AND THE PRESENT STATE OF EDUCATION IN THE SOCIETY

RASHMI REKHA DAS, OP

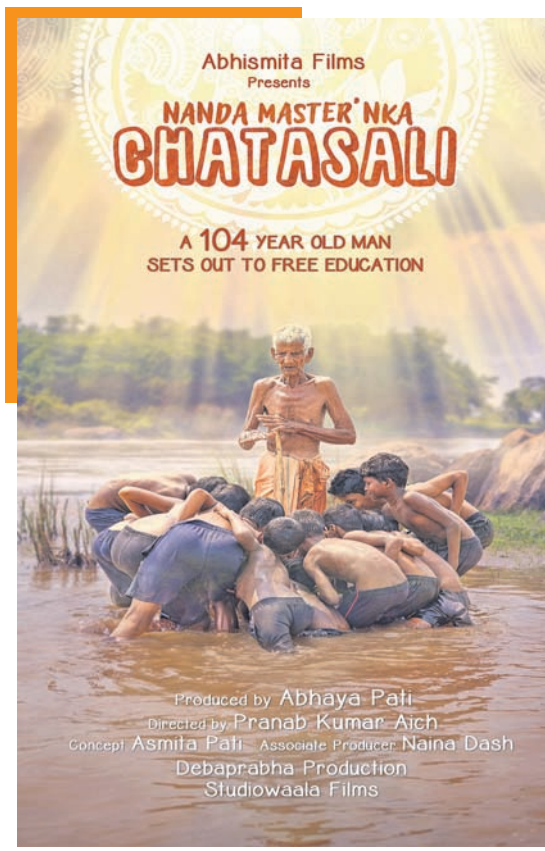
Honoured with about 30 national and international awards for his documentary films, Pranab Kumar Aich is a known face of Indian cinema, especially in festival circuit. Aich, an alumnus of Jamia Millia Islamia University, was shot to fame after winning the coveted Sony World Photography Award for his work on environmental changes. He has so far directed 60 documentaries and as many photo stories. His short films *City's Step Child* and *The Dump Hill Dreams* have been screened at many national and international festivals and appreciated. A documentary on children working in the landfills of India is a milestone in his career, says the filmmaker. His other films like *City's Step Child* and *I Have a Coloured Dream* have fetched him quite a few international awards. Most photo stories and documentaries he has made so far, highlight issues like climate change, plight of slum children and marginalised women and the present state of education. Pranab was recently in the news for launching a film on 104-year-old Nanda Kishore Prusty aka Nanda Mastre, who was recently given a Padma Shri for running a Chatasali (a non formal primary school) for the last 75 years. The prolific filmmaker, the first Indian to bag an award at Cannes Film Festival for photography, took some time off from his schedule and spoke to **Sunday POST** on the most important project of his career and other issues.

You have recently finished shooting for the documentary film on Padma Shri nominee Chatasali teacher Nanda Sir. Please elaborate a little more on this project?
Centenarian Nanda sir, the oldest teacher of Odisha, had created a free learning space for local kids in 1946 and hasn't stopped since. It was his unwavering enthusiasm for educating the poor that inspired me to record his works. It's not just a film but a precious document concerning an education icon. The film portrays him as an ambassador of change and a saviour of our age old culture. The film will be sent to international film festivals and released on a major streaming platform. I am happy that popular TV and film actress Naina

'I seek to unravel the layers of reality'

Dash has come on board as an associate producer for the film.

- **What are the other highlights of the film and what is your expectation from it?**
- The film addresses quite a few issues — education, children and culture— of which I am passionate about. When producer Abhay Pati approached me to make a film on Nanda Sir, I didn't even have a second thought before giving a nod. I felt the story of such a simple, committed and average man should be told to the entire world and the global audience must know about Odisha through this film. I have collaborated with many international projects in the past but this biopic is closest to my heart. In today's world, it is difficult to find an old man who lives in just a pair of



Poster of *Nanda Mastranka Chatasali*

clothes but has been providing free education to the poor for more than 70 years. I hope that this movie will strike a chord with film lovers. Nanda sir's journey to Rashtrapati Bhawan to receive Padma Shri is also part of the film for which we took permission from the Home Ministry.

- **How did you get attracted towards filmmaking?**
- It's a long story. As kids, my cousins and I were not happy with the conventional sto-

rytelling of Odia cinemas. So, I wanted to change the narratives. As a child, I organised video shows at my village on a black and white TV. Gradually, I started loving films based on social issues. This led me to work in NGOs like Goonj where I got the opportunity to work on development issues alongside the inspirational Anshu Gupta. He asked me to make documentaries and my first documentary *Pratibimba* was made in 2008. Incidentally, it was sponsored by Goonj. To my surprise, it was liked by all who mattered. From 2008, I started making documentaries and photo stories for national and international organisations like the UN Women, Bernard Van Leer Foundation, Humara Bachpan campaign, Public Health Foundation of India, Sahitya Kala Parishad, Adobe Youth Voices and the American India Foundation. As a documentary filmmaker and photographer, I always seek to unravel the multiple layers of reality rather than creating fictional landscapes and characters. And I think documentaries suit my artistic sensibility best.

- **How tough was it to make a documentary film at the beginning?**
- I didn't study filmmaking but photography, never assisted anyone, so learnt through experience. I had no one to collaborate with, so I learned every aspect of filmmaking to give justice to a project. This turned out to be a blessing in disguise.
- **How does a documentary film make an impact on society?**
- Documentaries are real stories, made on the lives of real heroes or a real issue. They help the future generations to learn in detail about a certain era. I wanted to make social contributions and therefore decided to highlight social maladies through documentaries and photo stories.
- **You could have sent the message to society through mainstream movies. Why did you choose documentary films?**
- It is a common perception among average filmgoers that the actors are the heroes

which is not true at all. So, I want to tell real stories with real heroes who can inspire generations to come.

- **Whom do you attribute your success to?**
- I would like to owe my success to Hollywood filmmaker Sharat Raju apart from cinematographer Andre Lascarl. I had an interaction with the two in 2008 which helped me shape my career.

- **What is the future of Indian cinema, specifically in the context of documentary filmmaking?**
- It looks promising. It's growing rapidly due to the presence of streaming platforms.



Disha to perform her own action scenes

Disha Patani has been extensively shooting for *Ek Villian Returns* with Arjun Kapoor, John Abraham and Tara Sutaria. The suspense thriller will feature Disha in a bold avatar.

Revealing details about

Disha's role in *Ek Villian Returns*, a source closed to the actress revealed, "Disha Patani plays an extremely bold and fearless character in *Ek Villian Returns* where she even takes on a few challenging action sequences." The source also adds, "Since the plot of *Ek Villian Returns* is seasoned with twists and turns, Disha is really pushing the envelope in terms of her performance and action stunts as this time around the action, drama and suspense has really heightened in this part. She specifically asked to perform her action sequences by herself as much as possible and has trained a lot for this one."

Apart from Mohit Suri's *Ek Villain Returns*, Disha Patani will also be seen essaying the lead in Ekta Kapoor's *KTina*. AGENCIES



Tara comfortable shooting steamy scenes with Ahan

Actress Tara Sutaria has revealed about all her steamy scenes with debutant and *Tadap* co-star Ahan Shetty. The film that is slated for a December release, will see the two pucker up for more than a handful of intimate scenes.

In an interview, Tara revealed what it was really like to shoot those kissing scenes. "I think it is important to be comfortable on any set, in which you have stuff like this. It is very important to feel comfortable with the director and your co-actor. And it was very comfortable between me and Ahan. There was no discomfort," she assured.

Calling the shoot an 'easy and fun' experience, she added that it was easy for them to get along on the sets as they had done a lot of work-shopping and preparation for the film. The actress credited these extracurricular activities for helping her get to know her co-star better before they could begin shooting.

Directed by Milan Luthria, *Tadap* is a Hindi remake of the hit Telugu film, *RX 100*. It will also see Saurabh Shukla and Kumud Mishra in lead roles. After waiting out the pandemic, the film will finally hit theatres December 3.

AGENCIES



Shahid considers Jersey his best work

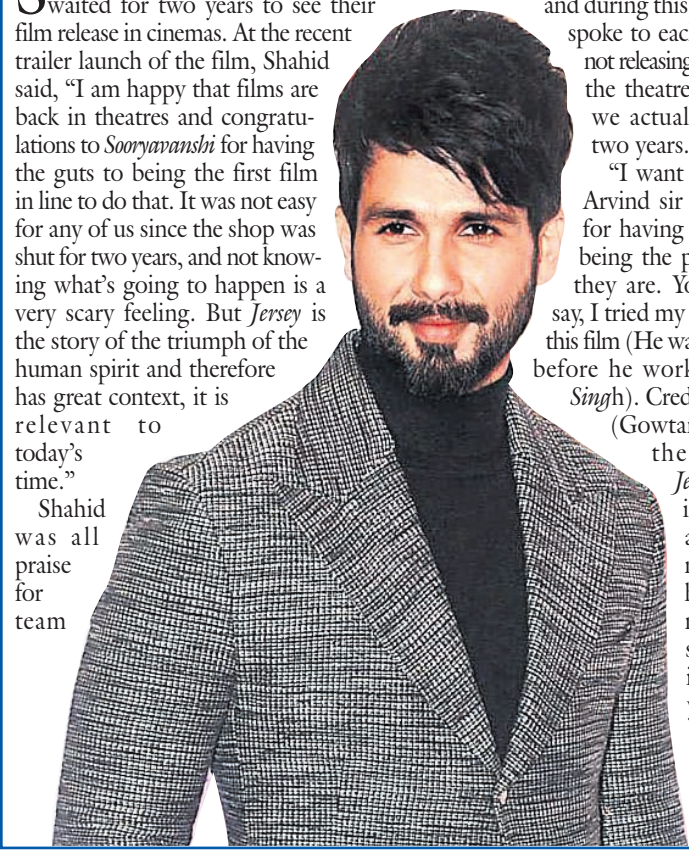
Shahid Kapoor and team *Jersey* have waited for two years to see their film release in cinemas. At the recent trailer launch of the film, Shahid said, "I am happy that films are back in theatres and congratulations to *Sooryavanshi* for having the guts to being the first film in line to do that. It was not easy for any of us since the shop was shut for two years, and not knowing what's going to happen is a very scary feeling. But *Jersey* is the story of the triumph of the human spirit and therefore has great context, it is relevant to today's time."

Shahid was all praise for team

Jersey. He said, "We are finally here and during this time we often spoke to each other about not releasing the film unless the theatres opened and we actually waited for two years."

"I want to thank Allu Arvind sir and Dil Raju for having the heart and being the producers that they are. You could also say, I tried my best not to do this film (He was offered *Jersey* before he worked on *Kabir Singh*). Credit to Gowtam (Gowtam Tinnanuri, the director of *Jersey*) for working with me and waiting for me. I'm so happy I did this movie. I can safely say this is my best film yet," Shahid added.

AGENCIES



Rani defends her K2H2 character

Rani Mukerji's popular character 'Tina' in Karan Johar's *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* has often received flak from the audience. The actress recently defended the character by stating that it had a lot of depth in it.

Talking about it to a news portal, Rani said that Tina was very hard to get for Rahul which resulted in him having the curiosity to go more after her. According to her, the fact that she sang *Om Jai Jagdish Hare* on the college campus while he thought that she's born and brought up in London, showed that she is so deeply rooted to her culture and that she's so grounded.

Elaborating further, she added that there was a lot of depth to Tina's character for someone like Rahul to have fallen for her because, at the end of it all, it was Tina who understood the love that Rahul and Anjali had for each other. The actress also went on to point out at the fact that she also makes her daughter reunite the two of them.

Meanwhile, on the work front, Rani was recently seen in *Bunty Aur Babli 2* co-starring Saif Ali Khan, Siddhant Chaturvedi and Sharvari Wagh. The movie received mixed reviews from the audience and the critics alike.

Next, she will be seen in *Mrs Chatterjee vs Norway*. AGENCIES

Politics of 'neutral' translation

In her essay titled *The Politics of Translation*, the feminist scholar and literary theorist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak proffers a study on Mahasweta Devi's *Stanadayini* that was translated both as *Breast Giver* and as *Wet Nurse* in two different versions. Pointing out the conscious choice of one translator to 'not shock' the readers, Spivak regrets that the breast as 'an organ of labour-power-as-commodity' is 'neutralised' through a metonym.

A similar caution or at least lack of radical reading marks the English translation of Jnanpith and National Sahitya Academy Award winner Gopinath Mohanty's celebrated Odia novel *Harijan*. While the translation into English by academic Bikram Das is a labour of love, it could have been more mindful of the distance literature itself has travelled since the novel was published in Odia roughly 70 years ago.

In choosing Harijans to be the protagonists in a novel published in the 1940s, Gopinath Mohanty recognised their suffering when it was mostly invisible to the rest of society. Mohanty narrates the story of Jema, an elderly mehenterani or a female latrine-cleaner in a small town in Odisha. Mehentars were despised because they were born into a life of manually removing human waste. Jema wishes her daughter Puni could escape the life of a scavenger. She guards her daughter fiercely from the affections of Sania, a young mehenter in the same slum. Sania oscillates between his tender emotions for Puni and the influence of an old mehenter, who teaches young men to steal from rich and high caste households. The slum is adjacent to a palatial mansion, whose residents live in complete indifference to the squalor near them. However, the mansion owner, Avinash Babu, plots to evict the slum dwellers as his son begins making surreptitious advances to Puni.

Throughout *Harijan*, Mohanty's own identity as an upper caste man and as a bureaucrat perhaps prevented him from characterising the protagonists as more than exploited animals. Even a beast that is routinely exploited will largely accept its lot with occasional signs of unimaginative defiance- stealing, snarling, and even biting. Mohanty has not been able to produce a more complex narrative, serving the myriad emotions of humanity that flourish even in the most exploitative and miserable conditions. In *Harijan*, a binary account of systemic exploitation and resentment misses out on other forms of human agency- creative resistance, manipulation, cooperation, accommodation, and transactions- found in, say, *Bheda*-another iconic Odia novel on exploited castes.

Das, who has translated three other novels by Mohanty, has produced a systematic and precise translation of *Harijan*. But is translation a social science? Translation of literature perhaps needs to move beyond deterministic precision into a state of possibilities. Transferring the essence of a text into a different language and at a different time calls for creative license. This creativity is not a betrayal of the text, but in fact high tribute wherein the translator transfers its meaning into the times and the culture in which it will now be read once more.

As translator, Das could not have altered the plot. His

opportunity perhaps lay in an imaginative translation of the aesthetics in the novel. In the *Life of Pi*, Yann Martel relied on aesthetics to mediate the truth. A story of unimaginable horrors faced by members of a shipwrecked crew, who turn on each other to survive, is retold with most characters as animals. In *Harijan*, the sight and smell of human excrement, the landscape of a slum, bodies and odours of the most abhorred people in society- everyday experience of cruel caste politics- could have been conveyed with an intensity that does not necessarily become vulgar or sensational.

Das could have tried to interpret rather than translate dialogues between various characters. When Jema tells Puni to "cry softly", adding the commonly used Odia pronoun *lo- proximate* to the word "darling" in the English language- could have perhaps both softened and authenticated speech. The

the neutralisation of Breast Giver to Wet Nurse is significant. The use of metonym for breast is a political act revealing to us that the translator, probably a social conservative, chose to situate her work in a literary tradition that treated human anatomy and its social functions with an uneasy caution.

The translation of *Harijan* may have benefited from the conscious development of a distinct tone, keeping in mind the identities of the subjects, writer, and potential readers. *Harijan* is the story of the most oppressed in India, the once colonised country, written in English, once largely the language of the imperialist. Even today, the community faces the same degree of exploitation

while English has become the language of the native imperialist. The task of translating such a text- where the subject is twice removed from the reader in the power hierarchy- is brimming with possibilities. Were these possibilities explored to their fullest extent?

Translated by Bikram Das
Aleph Book Company
Rupa Publications India
Price -₹599

translation could have played on the three pronouns in Odia language - *tu*, *tamey*, *apana*- the usage of which is many times political. When addressing strangers '*tu*' is used for lower classes and castes, while most people are conditioned to use '*apana*' for people they consider to be placed high on the socio-economic hierarchy.

Das forgoes some opportunities in his staid reading of Mohanty's novel. But his literary abstinence is also perhaps a political choice. In *Stanadayini*,



Sampad Patnaik

Vaishali



PHOTO: KAMAL