

DECEMBER 31 2023 - JANUARY 6 2024

SUNDAY POST

HERE . NOW



Zero Night Soirée

COVER STORY

P
3,4



A day to relax

While Sundays are typically considered a day off, I, like my other co-actors, don't get a break on these days. If a Sunday happens to be a 'no-work' day, I prefer to relax by going into sleep mode and binge-watching movies and web shows.

Having a blast

On holidays, I join my co-stars for meals, relishing the time spent together on set engaging in gossip, creating reels, and savouring various delectable dishes.

Heart at home

People often move to scenic destinations to make the most of their holidays. But I'm not among those. I rush to my birthplace whenever I get an opportunity instead of vacationing.

Smrutirekha Rana, an agriculture science student from Keonjhar, captivated millions of hearts playing her debut lead role in the Odia TV show 'Tu Khara Mu Chhaai'. The winner of the 'Raja Queen-2022' title enjoys spending time with stray animals

Unlocking innate creativity

I enjoy dancing and creating vibrant rangoli designs in the company of my mother. I also have discovered a hidden talent for wall art, which emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic.



With her co-stars and crew



With mother

MADHUSMITA SAHU, OP

WhatsApp This Week

Only on Sunday POST!

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

THE BEST MEMES OF THIS ISSUE

- Why is Peter Pan always flying? He neverlands.
- What's a crocodile's British favourite shoe? A Crocs.
- Time waits for no man, time is obviously a woman.
- Did you hear about the bonfire? I heard it was lit.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Sir, I'm delighted at the music release of *Dear Purusha*, one of the most sought-after Odia films to hit the big screens in 2024. It's heartening to learn that filmmakers are finally focusing on content instead of blindly copying big-budget movies from the South Indian film industry. While last year *Adieu Godard*, *Daman*, and *Pratikshya* marked the beginning of a new chapter in Odia cinema with their original plots, *Phalguna Chaitra*, *Puskara*, and *My Sweet Housewife* only took it forward. I'm sure *Dear Purusha*, with a star-studded cast that includes Choudhury Jayprakash Das, Mahashweta Ray, Sidhant Mohapatra, Nitu Singh, Samaresh Routray, Pinky Pradhan, Bobby Mishra, BM Baisali, Devasis Patra, Anuradha Panigrahi, and several other top actors, is going to strike a chord with the audience. I especially expect a lot from unusual pairs like Mahashweta-Jayprakash and Sidhant-Nitu. I also appreciate actress and producer Jhilik Bhattacharjee for jumping on the bandwagon of making content-driven movies.

SIBA SHANKAR SAHOO, BHUBANESWAR

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. Feel free to 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



Zero Night

Soirée

From Nikitha, one of India's top female DJs, to famed belly dancer Rupali Banerjee, who is being flown in specifically from Dubai, and from Rock band *Bandishen* to meloqueen Antarikshyaa's performance, a slew of events are lined up in the state to greet 2024 in style

MADHUSMITA SAHU, OP

When the clock strikes midnight, the world will collectively usher in a new day, a new year, and with it, a promise of fresh beginnings. Amidst the myriad ways to welcome the dawn of 2024, there exists a unique and opulent realm of celebration—the Zero Night Celebration. Far beyond the ordinary New Year's Eve festivities, this enchanting soirée unfolds against the backdrop of luxurious hospitality, transforming the transition from the old to the new into a truly unforgettable experience.

Intricately designed to encapsulate the essence of sophistication and indulgence, Zero Night Celebrations have emerged as a symbol of refined revelry and

exquisite taste. From the luxurious confines of high-end hotels to the vibrant ambiance of trendy bars, Temple City Bhubaneswar and Holy City Puri promise a celebration like no other, setting the stage for a memorable transition into the coming year.

Sunday POST delves into the glamorous tapestry of Zero Night Celebrations in these two cities, where every detail is meticulously curated to ensure a seamless fusion of luxury, entertainment, and the timeless allure of welcoming a new chapter in style.

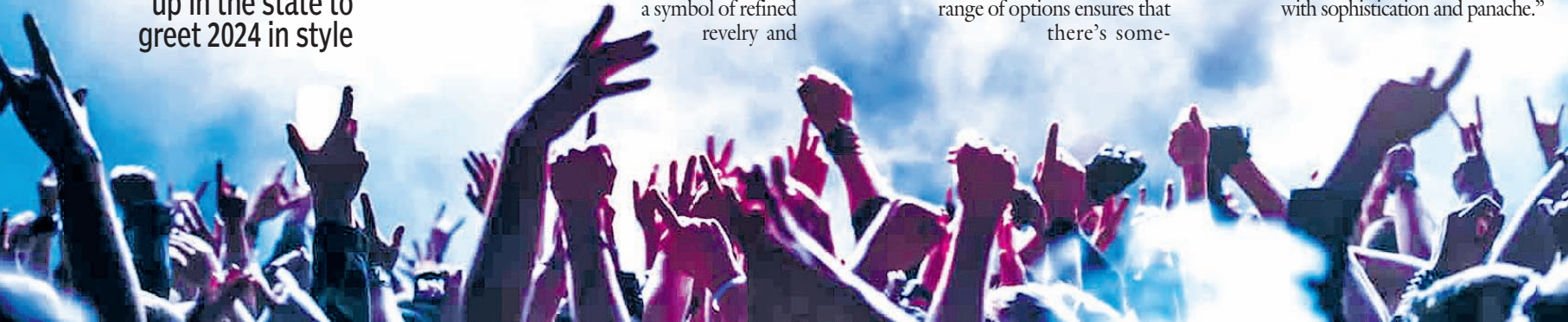
VOX Pop, Bhubaneswar

Revealing the secret behind a successful celebration, Vox Pop's manager **Abdul Tarikh** shares, "I find myself both exhilarated and challenged by the prospect of preparing for the Zero Night celebrations in our establishment. First and foremost, meticulous planning is the key to success. From curating a special menu that reflects the spirit of the occasion to coordinating with our talented kitchen and bar staff, every detail matters. We want our guests to savour exceptional dishes and delight in expertly crafted cocktails that complement the festive atmosphere. Offering a diverse range of options ensures that there's some-

thing for everyone, from the discerning foodie to those seeking signature drinks to toast the New Year."

Talking about their plans this year, he goes on to add, "This year, we're organising a DJ night and live performance for entertainment. Additionally, our rooftop sky lounge will host a live band performance accompanied by a live bonfire. Inside the club, the renowned DJ Nikitha, India's top female DJ, will be spinning tunes for the night. Our carefully crafted culinary experience, I'm sure, will surpass expectations, offering a diverse selection of delightful dishes and expertly crafted cocktails. From exquisite appetisers to luxurious main courses, each item mirrors our dedication to culinary excellence."

Offering a good ambience is what draws more footfalls to an event. Giving a nod of affirmation to his, Tarique ends, "Ensuring the perfect atmosphere is vital. We've made provisions for reservations, allowing guests to relish premium entertainment throughout the extended, late-night celebration. I'm eager to guide my team in providing an outstanding experience, ushering in the New Year with sophistication and panache."





Vivanta Hotels, Bhubaneswar

Detailing the arrangements made for the much-anticipated Zero Night celebration, event coordinator **Goura** at Vivanta Hotels said, "Our hotel is set to offer not one, but two distinct and vibrant celebrations for the festive Zero Night. The first unfolds beneath the open sky on our scenic rooftop, promising a mesmerising experience. Picture this: a captivating Russian performance, the pulsating beats of DJ Leo, and the high-energy tunes of the Rock band Bandishen, all hosted by the charismatic Emcee Munmun."

Simultaneously, the grand ballroom transforms into an enchanting haven, promising an equally enthralling experience. Elaborating more on this, he continues: "In our grand ballroom, guests will be treated to an immersive atmosphere with the dynamic sounds of DJs Partho and Stella. As the night unfolds, both venues will be complemented by a generous offering of unlimited beverages and delectable cuisine, ensuring an unforgettable celebration."

Disclosing more details about the thematic essence of the festivities, he states, "Our Zero Night celebrations boast a White Angel theme, creating an ethereal ambiance. We have meticulously designed these festivities to accommodate over 500 guests, catering to individuals with diverse budget preferences, all of whom seek nothing short of premium entertainment and an immersive experience."

Goura signs off with an exciting revelation: "The celebrations will extend their charm until the stroke of midnight, ensuring that our guests embark on the New Year with joyous memories. We eagerly anticipate reservations from those eager to partake in this extravagant affair, where luxury meets revelry and the spirit of celebration resonates through every moment."

Malva Restaurant, Bhubaneswar

Saroj, who oversees both Malva restaurant and Mellony Lounge, divulged the intricacies



of the restaurant's Zero Night celebration. He shares, "In keeping with our annual tradition, we have meticulously arranged the 'Man Marzee' New Year celebration for this year. Our venue will resonate with the captivating beats of DJ Kidbeast, a renowned entertainer, and will be graced by the presence of singer Disha Agnihotri, meloqueen Antarikshya, and anchor Aarya."

Highlighting the evening's offerings, he elaborates, "We've crafted an unending tapestry of entertainment and delight, featuring an expansive gala buffet dinner and a profusion of beverages for our guests. To ensure a seamless and delightful party experience, we've facilitated reservations, allowing guests to immerse themselves in the festivities without any hassle."

Expressing his philosophy on celebrations, Saroj comments, "I believe our revelries should be savoured until the very last guest departs with a smile. While we don't have a formally structured after-party, our doors remain open for those who wish to extend the jubilation."

"Our diverse ambiance, complemented by

a well-stocked bar, ensures a seamless transition from the grand celebration to an intimate after-hours experience. After all, our expertise lies in creating enduring memories, and we invite our patrons to relish every remaining moment of joy well into the night. Wishing you all a joyous New Year."

Wonder World Water Park and Resort, Puri

Rajceb Lochan Bhoi, handling the digital marketing for the water park, says, "The park is set to host a spectacular New Year's Eve celebration named 'Euphoria,' ensuring an extraordinary experience for all attendees." He goes on to mention, "In this lavish event, we anticipate the convergence of Ollywood and Bollywood luminaries, promising a gala event. 'Euphoria' will witness the presence of esteemed figures from both film industries, including the sensational Priya, the charismatic Kuldeep, and the soulful melodies of Neeraj of Indian Idol fame. Their dynamic stage performances are poised to create an atmosphere of pure euphoria resonating through the night's festivities."

Bhoi continues: "The celebration will showcase captivating dance performances, featuring the graceful artistry of Atashi, known for her unparalleled moves. Adding an international flair is the enchanting belly dancer, Rupali Banerjee, flying in directly from Dubai. Her acts seamlessly blend culture and creativity, promising a memorable and visually stunning experience for the audience."

He ends, "Amidst the diverse cultural and entertainment offerings, a plethora of culinary delights await, featuring an unlimited spread of food and mocktails. In a novel addition to this year's festivities, 'Euphoria' presents 'Party to Win,' offering attendees a chance to win fantastic prizes such as the latest iPhone 14, TVS Raider, or even a plasma TV. 'Euphoria' goes beyond being a mere event; it transforms into an exciting opportunity to leave with remarkable prizes."



WE ALL WISH TO GREET 2024 IN UNIQUE WAYS AS THE YEAR AHEAD BRINGS WITH IT FRESH ASPIRATIONS AND DREAMS. THERE IS NO NEED TO BE CONFUSED ABOUT THE DINNER PLATTER, IF YOU ARE PLAYING HOST TO A NEW YEAR'S EVE BASH AT HOME. SUNDAY POST DISHES OUT ONE OF THE LUSCIOUS COMBOS TO RING IN 2024

SCRUMPTIOUS COMBO

FOR DUM COOKING

In a large saucepan add all the prawn gravy as the first layer. Spread half of the cooked rice and sprinkle with a few drops of milk + rose water + color mixture. Sprinkle a handful of coriander leaves and fried onion along with a pinch of garam masala and 1 tsp shahi jeera. Repeat step 2 with the rest of the rice. Make some deep dents in the rice so that the steam can easily circulate. Pour some ghee or butter over the rice and seal the vessel with a foil and a tight lid. (to avoid the steam from escaping) Cook on medium-high heat for 10 minutes. You will see the foil has puffed up due to the steam. Switch off the gas and let the Biryani stay covered for another 15 minutes. Serve hot.

PRAWN BIRYANI

Delicious and delightful, a dish that will make you ask for more and more. It is super simple, easy and fragrant rice with a shrimp dish that your entire family will thoroughly enjoy. Let me tell you that making shrimp Biryani is much easier than making chicken Biryani or mutton Biryani. It really does not occupy you in the kitchen for hours and hours.

PROCEDURE

FOR RICE PREPARATION

Wash the rice thoroughly and soak for 30 minutes in water. Heat a large vessel filled with enough water. Bring to a boil and add 2 bay leaves, cinnamon stick, cardamom, vinegar, salt, and oil. Add the soaked rice and cook until 90 per cent done. When you check the rice, it should be firm and not mushy. Drain the rice in a colander and set aside.



PRITISHA DAS

CARROT HALWA

Bringing you a slice of India's best, most vibrant and sweetest, Carrot Halwa or Gajar ka Halwa is the perfect winter dessert and the must make of the season. Rich, perfectly balanced, fudge-y and so inviting! This dessert celebrates the plethora of good carrots we get this season. Don't miss out on this gorgeous recipe. Gajar Ka Halwa is made using a combination of milk, carrots, ghee, nuts and cardamom powder.

PROCEDURE

Heat 1 tablespoon ghee, add 1 tablespoon chopped nuts in a pan. You can add more nuts if you prefer. Fry until golden. Remove to a bowl and set aside. Wash carrots well, trim the edges and peel off the skin. Grate it using a grater, measure 2 cups and add it. Saute for at least 3-5 minutes or until it shrinks a bit and the colour changes. Add 1 and 1/2 cups full fat milk(boiled). Keep the flame in low medium for the milk to reduce. It will nicely bubble and start reducing slowly, stir on and off. Cook for 10 minutes or until milk reduces to 3/4th. Keep stirring in between to avoid sticking at the bottom. Keep scraping the sides for the milk solids, add it into the boiling mixture. Keep cooking on medium flame. Now, milk is reduced to 3/4th. Add 1/3 cup of sugar. Just keep cooking and stirring. It'll start to thicken. Halwa becomes thick but still moist. The mixture comes together with a sticky texture that's the right consistency. Now, add 1 tablespoon ghee and 1/4th teaspoon cardamom powder. Give a quick stir. Add fried nuts for garnishing. Give a quick stir and switch off. Delicious Carrot Halwa is ready.

Cherishing a bowl of the delicacy accompanied by a cup of Masala Chai can only be the start of a great year!



The author is a popular food blogger of Odisha

Was star-struck by SRK: Tapsee

Actress Tapsee Pannu recently shared screen space with Shah Rukh Khan in their latest film, *Dunki*, and in a recent interview, she shared that she was star-struck by SRK when she first started working with him. She also spoke about SRK's working style and mentioned that he would rehearse every scene to the point that it became a part of his muscle memory. Tapsee also spoke about getting star-struck by SRK. "I remember the first day, when I had to look at him and perform, I would just zone out mid-take. Because what I am seeing in

front of my eyes is the same visual that I have seen on the big screen for years," she shared. She said that there were moments when she had to "mentally shake myself up and bring myself back" because she realised that she could not waste the opportunity she had with *Dunki*. She was also fearful that if her performance wasn't good, she would be severely criticised after the film's release. "I don't know if sir realised it or not. Or even if he did, I am glad that he did not bring it up to make me feel even more awkward, but I got through that phase pretty soon because I realised that how much of a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity this can be for someone like me," she shared. AGENCIES



Ananya likes to see best in people

Actress Ananya Panday, who has been getting a lot of applause, especially for her performance in *Kho Gaye Hum Kahani*, reveals that she finds it difficult to make friends after all the name and fame she's achieved in the industry. She said, "It's difficult because you even unknowingly look at things through the lens of whether they are actually my friends because of who I am or what they see in me. But I like to see the best in people, and if I have a connection with someone, I have a connection with them. And I don't like to put mirch masala in it for no reason. At least in my intention, it's as pure as possible." On the work front, Ananya will be seen next in *Control* and *Call Me Bae*. AGENCIES

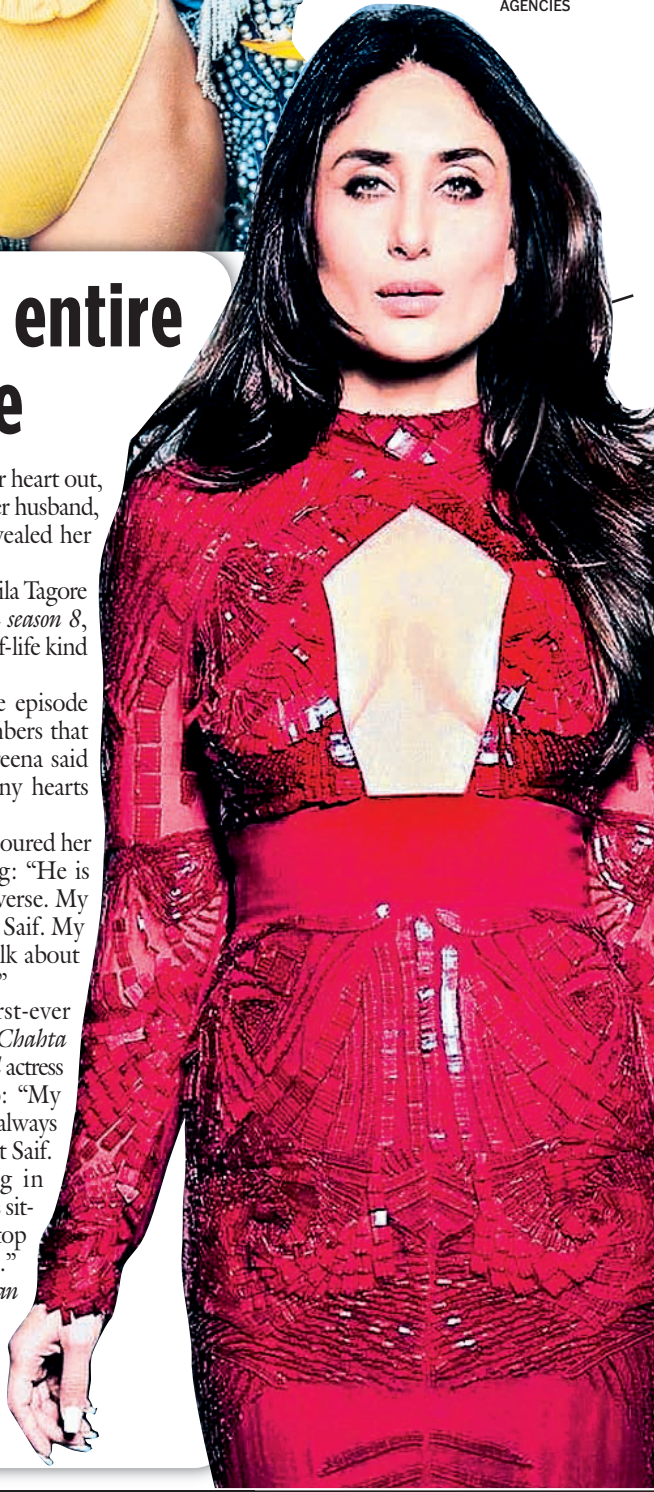


Bebo: Saif is my entire being & universe

Actress Kareena Kapoor Khan has poured her heart out, and shared how her whole life revolves around her husband, actor Saif Ali Khan. The *Asoka* actress also revealed her favourite memory with her better half. Saif appeared with his mother Sharmila Tagore on the chat show *Koffee With Karan* season 8, when viewers got to witness a slice-of-life kind of conversation. But one big highlight from the episode was the video of the family members that was played. Especially, what Kareena said about her husband Saif left many hearts melting. While talking about Saif, she poured her heart out and teared up, saying: "He is my entire being, my entire universe. My whole life revolves around my Saif. My eyes well up every time I talk about him because he is my life." Talking about her first-ever meeting with the *Dil Chahta Hai* actor, the *Bodyguard* actress revealed in the video: "My favorite memory will always be the first time I met Saif. We were shooting in Ladakh, and he was sitting shirtless on top of the vanity van." *Koffee with Karan* 8 is streaming on Disney+ Hotstar. IANS

Sharmila for Alia or Sara to play her in biopic

Veteran actress Sharmila Tagore revealed in the upcoming episode of *Koffee with Karan* Season 8 that she wants Alia Bhatt and Sara Ali Khan to play her role in her biopic. In the rapid-fire round, Karan asked Sharmila about whom she would pick from B-town to play her role in the biopic. He asked her to name the actress who would do justice to her character. While answering the question, Sharmila acted specific, saying that if it is going to start now, it will be Alia Bhatt, and if it is going to happen later, then it will be Sara Ali Khan, who is Sharmila's granddaughter. The upcoming episode features Sharmila Tagore with her son, actor Saif Ali Khan, on the *Koffee* couch. AGENCIES



Where contemporary takes over antiquity

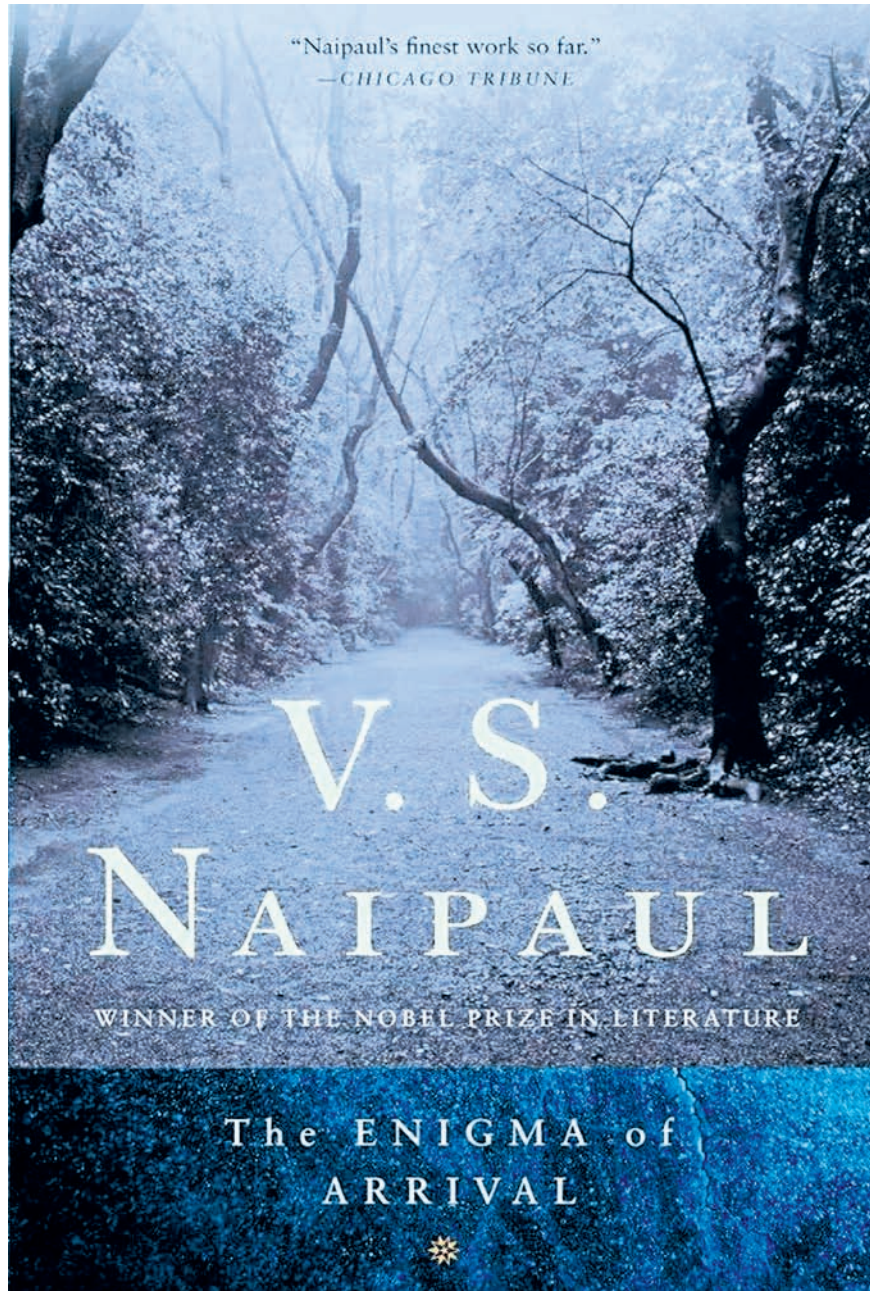
“A wonderful book in the original sense of the adjective— a magical book” says The Independent of V.S. Naipaul’s *The Enigma of Arrival*, a meditation on migration and displacement, a soulful journey from the British colony of Trinidad to the ancient countryside of England.

A rich, complex, and layered novel that talks of change and decay, where the contemporary slowly takes over antiquity. The title is from a painting by Georgio de Chirico depicting an antique vessel, a lonely wharf, a deserted street, and two muffled figures, one perhaps who has just arrived and one a native. In Naipaul’s words, “The scene is of desolation and mystery; it speaks of the mystery of arrival.” It is symbolic of the cluelessness of an individual who journeys to distant shores in search of his destiny to become a writer.

There is no plot, story line, or overwhelming characters in the novel, but an idyllic landscape that holds centre space, full of the writer’s lonely, melancholic ruminations of a disappearing, bucolic countryside into modern development. In his long walks around the manor, he takes in, with his immaculate powers of observation, things people and events often ignored or forgotten, the simple annals of the insignificant merging with his reminiscences. “The idea of ruin and dereliction, of out-of-placeness I felt about myself, attached to myself; a man from another hemisphere, another background, coming to rest in middle life in the cottage of a half neglected estate, an estate full of reminders of an Edwardian past with few connections with the present.”

Naipaul finds peace and fulfilment at the manor and the landscape of Wiltshire, where he feels life has offered him a second chance for healing, renewal, and pursuit of his writing aspirations. In the physical peace of the place, he was to be cleansed in heart and mind, and for ten years, he was to turn this landscape of down and barrow into the setting for his novel. There were reflections of his own position in his adopted country and the impact of change—a harrowing novel about the fragility of life and the inevitability of change that spares no one. In the words of Naipaul, “But that idea of an unchanging world was wrong. Change was constant. People died; people grew old; people changed houses; houses came up for sale... Everyone was ageing; everything was being renewed or discarded.” The landscape teaches him to come to terms with change and flux, ‘to learn not to grieve for it.’

His tone is detached and clear, his observation in place when he looks at those around him: Jack, his neighbour who created a beautiful garden with passion, amidst disintegrating surroundings, full of colour and celebration of seasons, and just before his death, enjoying a drink with his friends at the local tavern; a gardener who kills his beautiful but unfaithful wife; the car hire man who finds solace in



religion; and a vagrant woman, the landlord coming from a position of privilege, in a state of acedia, rarely glimpsed sending pages of poetry to the writer. There are also the failed writer Alan, who comes to the manor for emotional refuge; Pitton, the last of the legendary sixteen gardeners who worked on the estate and wanted to pass off as a country gentleman but finally had to leave because he was considered incompetent; and the caretakers, Mr and Mrs Phillips who were doing a responsible job at the manor with no thought of the future but living life for each day. Mr Philips passes away, and Mrs Philips, unable to take on the burden of the manor, moves on. And yet each one of these characters had an inherent dignity of his or her own, drawn from the reclusive dignity of the manor. Naipaul seeks no companionship with any of them, keeps a distant vision, but has a wide sympathy for all of

them, receiving their confidence and recording his observations with precision.

The novel, considered autobiographical, draws also from his childhood experiences, his colonial education, and his nostalgic references to Wordsworth, Tennyson, Dickens, and Shakespeare, as well as emanations of literature in the landscape he inhabits. Slowly, the idyll breaks down with the emerging reality of industrialised farming, motorways, poverty, and economic decline. He also realises that the wealth of the manor is derived from the

depredations of the Empire. The English manor grounds are set against Trinidad’s sugar plantation, where his grandparents worked as indentured labour and his father struggled to find a life with his family.

His novel occupies a space between imagination, travel writing, and autobiography, fascinating in its lyrical grace and movement, looking at time, change, and death as inevitable in a fast-moving world. The book ends with his visit to Trinidad, the death of his sister, and the ceremony of farewell with its rites. He who was haunted by death all his life faced a real death that showed him ‘life and man as the mystery, the true religion of men, the grief and the glory.’ Every generation re-makes the world.

The book invited criticism by his fellow writers for neglecting the realities of post-colonial experience in favour of an English rural, romantic outlook.

Salman Rushdie wrote that “unlike most of his fellow migrants, Naipaul has chosen to exhibit pastoral England, an England of manor and stream.” Derek Walcott wrote that the book expresses a sense of England “as not so much about setting out to see the world as of turning ones back on it, of privacy, not adventure.”

Colin McPherson says in his obituary for the BBC, “Naipaul is the writer of the English sentence, a master stylist and storyteller with a cold, clear eye for the ironies, tragedies, and suffering of mankind.” The Nobel Prize Academy compared him to Conrad and extolled his ability to ‘transform rage into precision.’

He rarely wrote to be politically correct or please anyone and was his own authentic voice, as he said in his Nobel lecture, “I am the sum of my books.” Naipaul’s literary journey was a long one, from the sugar plantations of Trinidad and its poverty and deprivation to being a successful writer—a journey from darkness to light.

“To be a writer, to die in mid-sentence was to triumph over darkness.”



Sudha Devi Nayak

Muskan



PHOTO: KUMAR SHARAT, OP