

A Masterful Comedy of Deception: *Gorakhdhanda* Delights Audiences with Humor and Insight

On November 10, the Mask Players Art Group brought to life Jayvardhan's comedy play Gorakhdhanda at Gurugram's Rang Parivartan Auditorium, delighting audiences with laughter and charm under the skilled direction of Chandrashekhar Sharma.

The storyline of Gorakhdhanda is a clever, layered satire on deception and morality, following the antics of a crafty property dealer and his equally sly servant. The two exploit a unique business model—illegally renting out government houses. Enlisting the help of a resourceful actor friend, they devise numerous ways to extract extra money from unsuspecting tenants. They pose as fake police officers, manufacture absurd emergencies, and even cut off tenants' cable wires, all to manipulate and swindle money out of them.



However, their clever games reach a turning point when they encounter a new tenant, Geeta, a quick-witted woman who begins to see through their schemes. Unlike previous tenants, Geeta decides to fight back, taking matters into her own hands. Her pushback throws the scheming trio into a spiral of missteps, confusion, and unintended consequences. This leads to a brilliantly funny climax, where each character is forced to confront the absurdity of their deception, making for a deeply engaging and humorous plot twist.

Chandrashekhar Sharma's direction is seamless, reflecting both his understanding of the play's humor and his ability to highlight social commentary without losing the comedic essence. Sharma managed to balance the farcical elements of the story with a simplicity that made the scenes relatable and accessible. His careful pacing kept the audience engaged, and he ensured that every punchline landed. The transitions between scenes were smooth, and the intricate dynamics between

characters were allowed to unfold naturally, making for a cohesive performance that held the audience's attention from start to finish.

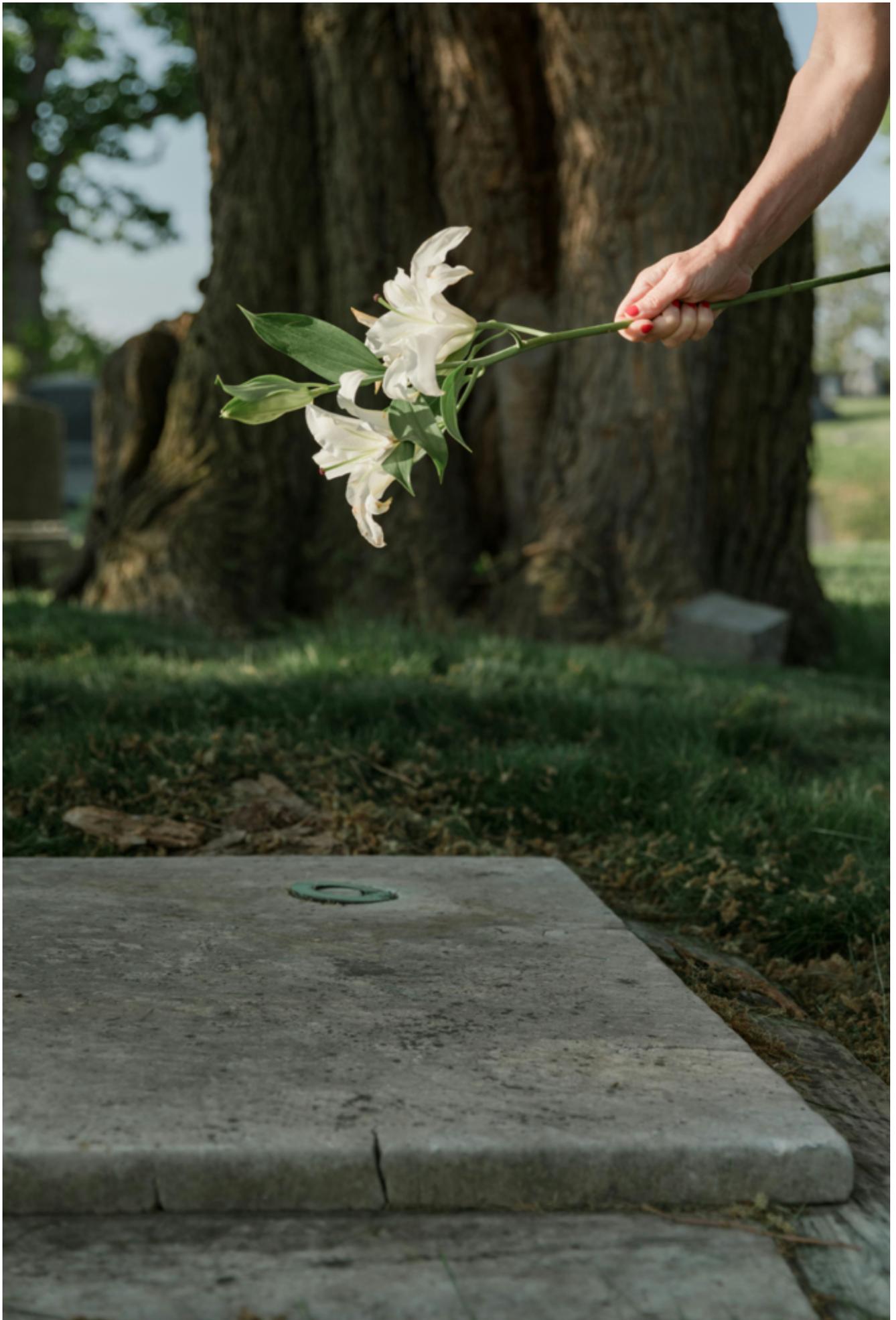
The cast of Gorakhdhanda shone on stage, each actor embracing their character with authenticity and energy. Ashish Sharma, Nikhil Jha, Eva Dandona, Pushkar Sagar, Ashutosh Srivastava, Jatin, and Mayank Sharma added rich layers to the play with their roles, enhancing the comedic timing and providing moments of slapstick that were both skillful and hilarious.

Together, the ensemble cast displayed a natural chemistry, enhancing each other's performances and creating a lively atmosphere on stage. Their nuanced expressions, quick timing, and humorous dialogues conveyed not only the humor but also the subtle social critique embedded in the play.

Behind the scenes, a dedicated technical team brought the world of Gorakhdhanda to life with admirable precision. Sarita Rana, Manoj, Rakesh Sharma, Sangeeta Suyal, and Mamta Rani were instrumental in handling the set changes, props, and lighting that supported the narrative. Their efforts ensured that each scene flowed effortlessly, with no disruptions, adding polish to the production. The set design was simple but effective, allowing the audience to focus on the characters while still providing the necessary realism for the setting. Lighting and sound cues were timely, which helped to heighten the comedic moments and emphasized the shifts in tone as the story progressed.

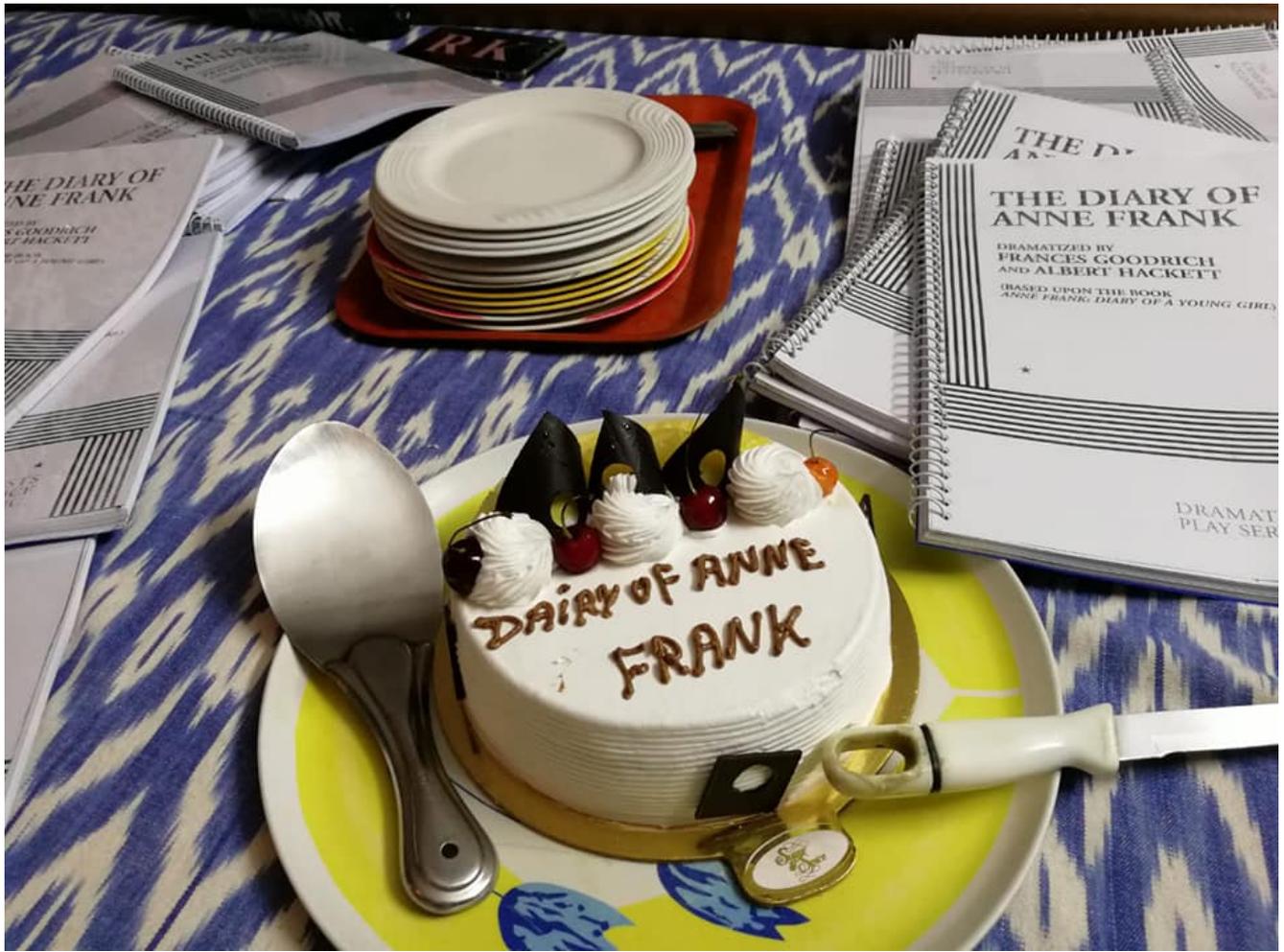
For those who missed the Gurugram performance, there's good news—the play will be staged again on November 16 at Blank Canvas Studio, Mandi House, New Delhi, promising another evening of laughter and insight.

We are forever anew



When its time to be heard, prepared to be silent
When its time to be considered, prepared to be hurt
When its time to say how many times more
Be prepared to be reminded your time might never come
In the solace that in your grave site
You will be marked forget or remembered
You will be seen as saint either a saint or a sinner
A fool or a fearless brave
With flowers at your feet or weeds
With no visiting tears or many who will place stones around
your bed
To this land we will all go one day
Become the dust where new flowers will grow
Can we be happy only to know
That on our passing by we will
Not be silenced, not be hurt, not be torn apart by inner tears
Its time my friends to see this too
Our saga will be told forever a new

Quit Being the Same, Think Out of the Box: Creating New Opportunities in Theatre



I have heard enough, same lines over and over again, there is no money in theatre, so I am doing films; I have kept enough savings and now I have retired peacefully into theatre; I make enough money in theatre to sponsor my teams travels to festivals. To all of them I really want to say, no this is not the way out its time to think out of the box. I am not claiming that I have all the answers but certainly I have gained fairly good insight on how to create new economic opportunities in theatre after almost 35 years being in active theatre production work.

I will be going through some methods I used in my case and in case anyone wants me further collaborate on more details do comment in the section below and I would be more than happy to share more details. However right from the start I want to also add that I have faced colossal monetary losses, to the extent my bank balance was to the bare minimal but that only gave me more interest and zeal to think out of the box. The

fact that the ideas failed did not stop me from looking at other methods and I shall also discuss them here. To make things easier to understand I will be looking at the 35 years of theatre I did chronologically, from ages 21 to 54.

Age 21 to 32 EARLY YEARS, PRODUCER:

The first decade of my theatre stint I realised that my shortcomings as an actor and that I would not be casted much in films, though I consider myself as an outstanding actor. My realisation was based on the tone of my skin, I am a deep brown coloured girl which I felt would be a prejudice against me. I also did not know perfect Hindi as I was a Tamil speaker. I however had the greatest skill sets in production. Name any difficult production licence, police permissions, props or sets I could procure them. As a production assistant my ranks rose to being a producer which would get me the money I needed which was enough. Besides that I also was given money for transportation and food. I started also composing music for children's plays and had a morning job both as a school teacher and a production controller in the afternoons. However age was not my side and by the time I had turned 32 the idea of going to police stations and talking to gruff constables was not comfortable and my mind was ready to embark into learning the creative part of theatre, direction. It was time to think out of the box.

Age 33-45 PROFESSIONAL CREATIVE FIELD:

I consider myself extremely lucky that the "actors bug" had not bitten me and I became totally interested in theatre direction. I also am lucky that films never seemed to attract my eyes and even today I watch few films (I am not trying to downplay the value of films, I am just trying to put the value of theatre high). I was fortunate to get a scholarship to study theatre in Miami university and I jumped at the first chance. I learnt all I could there and decided to come back to India as I felt this learning will surely help me in India. I returned back to India in 2006 and formed my own company

Platform fir Action in Creative Theatre. My company did exceedingly well as we also got into corporate theatre and annual day programs. and the purple umbrella theatre festival for children and we were billing at almost 5 to 8 lakhs per month. We rose from a team of two (me and my founder Neeraj) to a team of almost 5 with a dedicated office. However my health was always a set back and despite us trying to find another artistic director for the company it became impossible so we had to downsize our work. Yes, it was time to think out of the box.

Age 45-51 SCRIPTWRITING and ACADEMIC WORK

Miami University had taught me the value of always keeping the academic factor alive in me. Being in an academic space gave me the opportunity to network with scholars and organisations all over the world, Dubai, Serbia, Japan Georgia America. I wrote and published papers and also got the chance to write for Indira Gandhi Open University and establish myself as established Academic writer. I now was ready to write scripts and I started experimenting with writing. I also was still doing direction till the pandemic! Gosh! Its time yes to think out of the box!

Age 51-53: SCRIPTWRITING

The pandemic really gave me a huge opportunity as a script writer and I was the script writer for almost 90 short youtube video films. Finally I also directed a film " to know what it feels like!" and I can say "I fainted in just two days of work"! Is films for me that's for time to say but yes script writing was a lot of fun despite the pandemic I was making money and was also able to support a team. But as we all know good times never last long and after one year my contract ended abruptly as it happens in all corporate sectors. Now what, think out of the box ,girl! Go for it!!

Age 51-53 NEW VENUE FOR PERFORMANCE REINCARNATION AS A

DIRECTOR

I always felt that my plays should be performed in Delhi and perhaps I will be known only as a skilled director if I perform in Delhi. I went in with a vengeance and the intensity was almost two plays. I played hard, put up costly sets lights did the works, but did it give me money?! Hahahah...ZILTCH I was broke by the July of 2024. I poured it all in and I am not sorry I did so since I did some effective plays. But with a zero Bank Balance it was time to think ahead!

Age 54: FESTIVAL CURATION

The time to find a bigger box came! I was very fortunate to have got selected for the South Asian Festival Academy Cohort which has taught me the value of festival creation. Yes I know I will be donning a new hat now, the box is yet to be opened its big and tedious and I have no clue what lies ahead! I am however excited by this phase too.

I have been totally candid in my journey with all of you readers and I welcome you all to partake in your stories with me! Some might not agree with me while some may, all I want to say is think out of the box you never know what is inside...

**Natsamrat Delights Audiences
with a Blend of Comedy,
Drama, and Social Messages**



Delhi based Natsamrat once again brought comedy filled plays for the audience. Plays written by Anton Chekhov, Moliere and Satya Prakash were staged under the direction of Shyam Kumar. On 2nd and 5th October such plays were staged in LTG Auditorium (Blank Canvas), Mandi House, New Delhi in which the director also tried to give a message to the society through his plays and that message touched the hearts of the audience.

On 2nd October two plays were staged. The first play "The Proposal" written by Anton Chekhov was staged. This is the story of a young man who proposes marriage to his neighbour's unmarried daughter. The story gets worse when the three of them start arguing about whose property it is and whose dog is better.

The play "Kallu Nai MBBS" written by Moliere was staged. The audience gathered in large numbers for the presentation of the play. The audience applauded every dialogue. All the characters played their roles well.

The gist of the play is that a barber is always drunk and beats his wife. The barber's wife promises herself that she

will teach her husband a lesson. Meanwhile, she meets a servant who is looking for a doctor to treat their master's daughter's dumbness. The barber's wife tells him that there is such a doctor here, but he does not consider himself a doctor until he is beaten up properly. The servant beat the barber and force him to become a doctor and take him to his master. Later on, the play takes a very good turn.

On 5 October, again "The Proposal" play was staged along with "Kambakht Ishq" written by Satya Prakash. In today's time, life has become so busy that children do not have time for their parents, due to which their parents start falling ill. Especially when someone's mother is alone and someone's father is alone. The story of the play Kambakht Ishq touched the hearts of the audience along with laughter because somewhere probably everyone was finding themselves in the same place which was being shown in the play.

Artists Vishwajeet, Munmun, Arvind Shandilya, Sudhir Khanna, Aman Kumar, Soumya Yadav, Shivangi and Raman Kumar played their roles very well. Stage Managers Sunil Rathore and Suraj Singh, Set Managers Naushad and Rohit Prasad, Make-up artist Payal and Rajrani, Costume assistants Chhobi Saha and Rekha Devi, Music Operated by Vansh Rathore and light design by Natsamrat's director Shyam Kumar.

Jaya Bacchan- The snob is inevitably ok

They may say as they please. Call u a snob, a stoic, a conventional but u are the best Jayaji. People's memories are so shallow and so shortlived. Little do they remember how



Sharma ji (Chirag) house where he lives with his wife (Shruti Aastha) Chawla. There is always a tussle between the two over small things. Meanwhile, their neighbor Dubey (Bilal Khan) enters, who tries to take advantage of the conflict between those husband and wife and put a string on Shruti. Meanwhile, Maya (Manisha Sharma) enters. Sharma ji is very impressed by seeing Maya and tries to increase friendship. This dilemma goes on for a long time and finally it is revealed that Dubey and Maya are husband and wife, and they came to Sharma ji's house to investigate them in search of the Best Couple Award in which both of them failed.

Amidst laughter, this play also gives a message to the audience that 'husband and wife should never leave each other in any situation and should maintain trust in each other'. Chirag played his character well in the role of Sharma, as well as his wife Shruti's character had many shades, which she succeeded in keeping in front of the audience. In the role of Dubey, Bilal Khan kept the entire drama tied with his acting and put many laughs in it, as well as the performance of Manisha Sharma in the role of Maya was also praise worthy.

Behind the stage were Goldie in the music, lighting was done by Manik Sharma, Kamal Negi was in the costumes and Ankit was in the stage material as well as Shamsher Khan and Avinash Tiwari in the set.



**The 5th Tafarîh Festival
Marks the Beginning of a
Unique Journey of Literature
and Art**



The unique event of **“Fifth Tafarih”** festival organized by Sili Sales Foundation provides us with a beautiful opportunity to connect with literature, art and cultural literacy. Under this festival, eminent persons from various fields have given us an opportunity to have an in-depth discussion on literary and artistic topics by sharing their experiences and perspectives.

The fifth edition began with the lighting a lamp by Senior Theatre Personalies K.K.Kohli, Diwan Singh Bajeli, Shyam Kumar, Pratap Sharma Somvanshi and Sili Sales Foundation’s director Priyanka Sharma. It began with a discussion on ‘Growing distance between novels and stage’, in which senior theatre persons, journalists, and writers shared their vision. It is a platform where an atmosphere of deep discussion on literary and artistic topics has been created. The guests were Diwan Singh Bajeli, Pratap Sharma Somvanshi, Aditi Maheshwari and Rama Yadav. In the discussion, Rama Yadav said, “Today the novel is getting distant from the stage, for which we have to take important steps. We have to inspire the youth to read books and novels. Maybe this will make today’s youth aware.”



Television actress Reena Agarwal and cinematographer Naresh Sharma shared their views on the impact and challenges of social media. The stage was moderated by Priyanka Sharma, Director, Silly Sales Foundation. Natsamrat director Shyam Kumar and senior theatre personality Himanshu B Joshi also shared their experiences.



The play "Stree Subodhini" brought the festival to life in an entertaining and cultural form. The solo presentation 'Stree Subodhini' written by Mannu Bhandari and was directed by late Tripurari Sharma. Munmun Singh was the winner of sangeet natak akademi award captivated the hearts of all the audience with his acting.



The last highlight of the first day of the festival was 'Mehfile Sukhand', which tied a different parallel and was directed by Shamir Khan. The fifth Tafarikh Festival is being held from 2:00 pm to 9:30 pm on November 18th at 29/1 Civil Lines, Delhi, where there will be a confluence of art and culture.

In the same way, an atmosphere of partnership has been created in the world of experience, art, and literature associated with various aspects of the festival. This is a time when together we can fill our cultural heritage with richness by connecting with literature and art.



Casting Call for Female Lead

Production of an international play 'Melbourne Talam'



MELBOURNE TALAM

Written and Directed by - Rashma N. Kalsie

Location : Alliance Française de Delhi

72, KK Birla Ln, Lodhi Gardens, Lodhi Estate, New Delhi, Delhi 110003

03. 12. 22

Saturday

4:30 & 7:15 pm

Tickets on  

T20 TEAM INDIA MIGHT GET A SEPARATE DIRECTOR – Any Guesses?

By Sunil Sarpal

According to a report in The Telegraph, BCCI feels that the load to manage multiple formats is too overwhelming for a single Coach like Rahul Dravid. There is a speculation that BCCI might split the coaching roles three ways and the issue could come up for discussion during the apex council meeting later this month. Biggest curiosity is ofcourse about the T20 FORMAT coach

Rumours are strong about one possibility. Guess who? Perhaps every child in India knows his name – MS Dhoni. Such is his charisma in Indian Cricket. He is tagged as the coolest captain to ever grace Team India.



Captain Cool

For this prestigious assignment to captain Team India, the script was written by none other than Sachin Tendulkar when he recommended Dhoni's name to the then BCCI President Sharad Pawar for captain material.

His attributes include his unique ability to read the game-situation, pitch-behaviour and team combinations which always bring laurels to the nation.

His timely guidance behind the stumps to bowlers was a treat to watch, so was his uncanny ability to go for DRS. These are some of the talents developed by him to turn him into an iconic figure. His timely bowling changes and field placements made him a street-smart thinker of the game. Dhoni was such a talent that he could enter Team India single-handedly on the basis of being a wicket keeper, or a batsman or just as a captain.

Dhoni was so agile and fitness personified that he used to run between the wickets as fast as anybody. Dhoni's body was so strong that he could hit a six at will. He was recognised for his 'helicopter shot'. Dhoni often lifted the morale of the team when the game-situation was slipping away from its grasp. Dhoni was so cool and calculating, that he could change the nature of the game with his determination and could 'weather the storm'. He was truly a game-changer, and takes the game away from the jaws of defeat.

After suddenly retiring from the game and handing over the reign to Kohli, he was just cooling his heels and playing only IPL, representing CSK.

In the just concluded ICC T-20 World Cup at Australia where India's ignominious defeat in semis, BCCI new President Roger Binny is reported to have decided that Dhoni should be made Team India Director. Along with the Coach Rahul Dravid, India needs to re-build the team with young legs.

Dhoni's possible appointment as Director, Team India T20,

could lift the morale of the team. Dhoni will build a team on the lines – horses for courses. His uncanny ability to yield the best from a player will take Team India shining once again on the world stage.