



metro PLUS

THE HINDU

Walk through the reimagined archives of the French Institute of Pondicherry **P2**

Gopinath Rajendran
gopinath.raj@thehindu.co.in

Soori has hit a purple patch in his career. Not only did he turn *kadhayin naayagan* (the plot's hero) last year with Vetri Maaran's *Viduthalai Part 1*, but a slew of films he is part of also had a stellar run in festival circuits.

The *Viduthalai* films had a special premiere at the Rotterdam Film Festival where his *Yezhu Kadal Yezhu Malai*, helmed by Ram and co-starring Nivin Pauly and Anjali, also premiered. Another film starring Soori in the lead, *Kottukkaali* – produced by Sivakarthikeyan and directed by PS Vinothraj whose *Koozhangal* (*Pebbles*) was selected as the Indian entry for the Oscars in 2022 – premiered at the Berlin International Film Festival and is now heading to the Transilvania International Film Festival.

Soori is visibly delighted about attending the premieres and mingling with a different audience from what he is used to. "Watching a film with our people gives a sense of satisfaction; that's one experience. But to take our film across borders and oceans, and visit a theatre filled with hundreds of foreigners with me and the makers in the centre, is a different experience altogether. To see them dissect our films gave me so much joy," says Soori.

"At Rotterdam where the *Viduthalai* films and *Yezhu Kadal*... premiered, festival goers were surprised to see me in both. When some of them came to Berlinale and caught *Kottukkaali*, they were shocked to see me again. It's rare for Indian films to get selected for these festivals and to see that I'm a part of multiple such films makes me happy," he adds. "Their perspective and questions are different from what we are used to here. To retrace where I started from and see where this journey has taken me, feels like a dream."

Soori believes that commercial films are equally important in this stage of his career and pins his hopes on *Garudan*, releasing this Friday. "Viduthalai gave a different impression about me to the audience and the promotional material of my upcoming films might give a hunch on the sort of roles I'm getting. *Garudan* will be something between these films thanks to its commercial elements," he says.

"My character Sokkan is stuck

Soori on balancing commercial films like *Garudan*, releasing this Friday, with other projects like *Kottukkaali*, *Viduthalai* and *Yezhu Kadal Yezhu Malai*

Bird's eye view



between loyalty and justice. It's different from what I did in *Viduthalai* and apart from acting, the film also has a lot more action and emotion," says Soori, pointing out how the action sequences are different from *Viduthalai* yet still realistic. "This type of action is something I'm new to. I think people feel I'm doing back-to-back action films

because of *Viduthalai* and the raw feel *Kottukkaali*'s promotional material gave. But I wonder how that's possible given just one such film has been released (smiles).

Although Soori has worked in several Sasikumar-starrers like *Udanpirappé*, *Kennedy Club*, *Poraali* and *Sundarapandian*, *Garudan* might feel distinctly different for him. "It happens to be a part

Festival diary Actor Soori; (below) in a still from *Garudan*. THAMODHARAN B



I judge myself based on what the audience thinks about me. Currently, I'm being approached for lead roles but I am still up for a comedy film

SOORI

considering the comedian-turned-lead actor is headlining the film. However, Soori says the dynamics have not changed, at least from his perspective. "I'm very proud that *Sasi anna* is part of the film. At the shooting spot, it didn't feel like I was doing a lead role and *anna* was in my film; it felt like every other film with him in which I'm the comedian."

In tune

Interestingly, after having Ilaiyaraaja compose music for *Viduthalai*, Yuvan Shankar Raja is the music director for *Garudan*. "Raja appa is an *ulaganayagan* (an universal hero) and I got to work with him and now, I got to work with his son who has made a mark for himself over the last 25 years. For all these years, many of our phone ringtones have featured his tunes and I feel lucky to have worked with him," says Soori who also responds to how both those films and even *Kottukkaali* feature female leads for him. "It happens to be a part

of the story and it's not that I'm demanding for one (laughs). I like how the romance isn't over-the-top or over-saturated but very practical and simple."

When *Viduthalai* released, Soori mentioned how he would love to keep doing comedy films. "But now, I'm being approached for lead roles mostly. While I'm happy, I'm still up for a full-fledged comedy film but I have not gotten them. But that's fine and I'm sticking to the roles I'm getting," says Soori. "It all comes down to connecting with the audience. I believe if I do something drastically different from what I think I can do, it will not sit well with them either. I judge myself based on what the audience thinks about me."

It has been 25 years since Soori made his acting debut and even after turning lead, he prefers to not have a plan for the type of films he chooses. "I wanted to become an actor and that happened. I never expected to become a story's lead, but that has happened as well. Though what might happen after this is not in my hands, I know I want to be in a better position than what I am now and I have to work hard to get that."



To watch video interview, scan QR code



WHY KAJAL IS DOING A 'MASSY' FILM **P4**



A dynamic ensemble

Prepare to be mesmerised by the soulful rhythms of jazz as renowned saxophonist, pianist and composer Matt Littlewood unveils his latest project, *Beginnings*. Accompanying Littlewood on this musical journey are Sankarshan 'Shanks' Kini on vocals, Raul Mattia on drums, and Holger Jetter on bass.

@Hyatt Regency, Teynampet, May 31, 8pm onwards. For reservations, call 044 61001234.



Inspired by the coast

An art fundraiser, *Spectrum of Possibilities*, is being organised to raise awareness on autism. The art show is curated by R Venkatesh and glass artist Radhika Krish. The show will present works by various artists, and the theme is influenced by Chennai's vast coastline. The proceeds from the show will go to ARAM Charitable Trust that supports abandoned girl children.

@CP Arts Gallery, Alwarpet. June 1, 10am to 8pm.

For details, call 9444073008.



Maker's market

Staple Centre and Adara present Sunday Market where local vendors and artisans display their products. The idea behind this initiative by Jupiter Events, is to support small businesses and build a sense of community. The stalls at the event will offer fresh produce, handmade crafts, textiles, decor, artisanal food, and much more.

@Abirami Chidambaram Community Hall, Kotturpuram. June 2, 10am to 8pm. Entry is free. For details, call 9841188334.

Maithreyi Venkatesan, Srreya Sridhar and Jeromi Claudine

An unsuspecting crowd at the mall watched in rapt attention as 13-year-old Sri Oviyasena gracefully twirled five hula hoops while deftly solving a randomly scrambled Rubik's cube, all within the span of a minute. Many stopped in their tracks to see the two-time Guinness World Record holder's unique showcase: her world records comprised a maximum of 288 gyrations in hula hoops and successfully solving a 3x3 cube, while simultaneously spinning five hoops in under one minute.

At the Indian Cube Challenge 2024 conducted by Speedcubing India, held recently at Phoenix MarketCity, over 180 participants from ages eight to 14 competed in different categories, apart from a special open category.

Cube challenges are a kind of competitive puzzle-solving where Rubik's cube enthusiasts like Oviya challenge themselves in terms of speed and skill. These challenges also encourage the creativity of cubers, while also fostering a sense of community. Speedcubing India has been

Chennai's recent speed cubing challenge saw over 180 cubers come together to showcase their dexterity with the puzzle



Need for speed: cube edition

in the next edition," Pavan adds.

The competition in Chennai had a 2x2, 3x3, and 4x4 cube solving as its main event. The special events comprised a pre-memorised solve, where the competitors were given a scramble a day before, to prepare and solve, on the day of the event. Around 100 participants were expected.

"We were pleasantly surprised by the turn out of over 180 people and we expect around 400 registrations

solve the cube. Anirudh, a 11-year-old student from Hosur who was a first-time competitor says, "Other kids in my block would learn about the cube and naturally I was curious too. My father then got me a cube and I learnt how to solve the 3x3 cube from him. I later went online and learned about various types of cubes and how to solve them."

Oviya's journey in cubing was

were special cubes with different axes of rotation called mirror cubes and pyramid-shaped puzzles called pyraminx.

Flag off
Ayush, a Class IX cuber said that his grandmother taught him how to



Colour theory (Top) Participants at the Indian Cube Challenge; (left) Sri Oviyasena. R RAVINDRA

sparked by a simple observation of her brother's online practice sessions. It wasn't until 2022 that Oviya, already deeply committed to honing her skills in both hula hoops and cubing, decided to challenge herself. "Each practice session has brought me one step closer to success," she says. Beyond her current feats, Oviya also aims for the 2032 Olympics in archery, and is currently receiving coaching for the same.

Vivek says that the organisation is planning to organise a challenge in Delhi in the coming months. The next edition in Chennai will be in September. Throwing light on the community, Pavan says, "The cubing community of India has grown since 2010." There are a few active cubing hubs in India, which include Bengaluru,

Hyderabad, Mumbai, Chennai, and Delhi. Bengaluru and Chennai have seen the largest competitions, and are actively growing their respective cubing communities through such events.



Gowri S
gowri.s@thehindu.co.in

The staircase leading up to the first floor of the French Institute of Pondicherry (IFP) today tells a story in the literal sense. On each step is a sentence that pushes one to pause and ruminative. This is only a precursor to what is to come once you enter the building with a yellow facade where mandatory vacation photos are taken.

Sleepwalker Archives, a multi-disciplinary exhibit that spreads across the first floor of the building, is a delightful marriage of mediums – here, text, archival images, film and even physical objects come together in an attempt to re-interpret the existing wealth of archival material that the institute is a proud home to.

The project initiated by the India Foundation for the Arts (IFA) based in Bengaluru, selected curators Karthik Subramanian, Devarati Chakrabarti and Sujeet George to engage with IFP's archives, 15 months ago.

The archives are three-fold; one with over 1,30,000 to 1,40,000 images of South India, largely Tamil Nadu, from the 1950s that include temple imagery and documentation of

Making sense of an archive

Transparent prints, an Excel scroll, and cabinets of photographs... spread across the first floor of the French Institute of Pondicherry is an artistic display of the institute's archival wealth

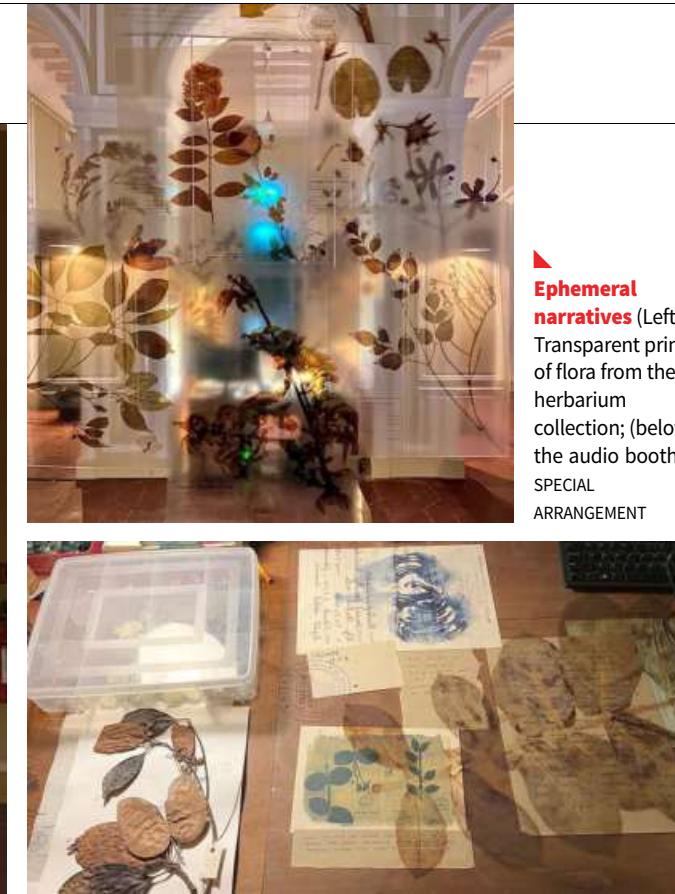
Puducherry. The second, is the Stars Collection, a digitised documentation of images and materials from photo studios across the State while the third, points to the research institute's herbarium collection with information on 25,000 plant specimens. The curators say that it took them a month to put together the set up.

"It was interesting that each of us were looking at the same material with completely different perspectives and starting points. We kept talking about our engagements and at one point thought it would be nice to put our individual outputs together. It then grew bigger," says Karthik. Devarati



adds, "We were simply trying to make sense of the sheer volume of information we had to interact with."

The idea of creating a fictional space then came to be. The narrative is carried by



Ephemeral narratives (Left)
Transparent prints of flora from the herbarium collection; (below) the audio booth.
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

documentation and archiving," says Karthik.

Clues and surprises jump at one in every corner. Even objects like the many wooden cabinets in the institute are part of the display.

Another installation is a 10-metre-long Excel scroll that hangs like a curtain with a meticulous list of the flora specimens from the archive. What makes it interesting is a rather unexpected comparison with Sangam poetry. Karthik explains, "There is a Sangam poem called *Kurinjiyattu*, which has a sudden moment of deviation, where 99 flowers are listed. It is kind of a geographical archive." The central, fictional character attempts to spot the names in the list. The idea is to enable a seamless conversation between the ancient poem and contemporary scientific database.

"What I enjoyed the most was the ways in which it made me a more curious reader of spaces," says Devarati. "There is constant search for an absence. That's the feeling this space has. Everything is filled with clues that help create this character in one's mind," says Karthik.

Sleepwalker Archives is on view till May 31 at the French Institute of Pondicherry, White Town, Puducherry.

THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13587

1	2	3	4	5	6	
					8	
7						
9		10				
11						
12					13	
14	15		16		17	
			18			
19		20				
	21					

© GUARDIAN NEWS AND MEDIA LTD., 2016

- Across**
- 1 Resemblance (10)
 - 7 Politically, an unsafe seat (8)
 - 8 Kind of golf club (4)
 - 9 Sex Pistols genre (4)
 - 10 Below (7)
 - 12 Best-selling product of its type (5,6)
 - 14 Continue moving forward (5,2)
 - 16 Advantage (4)
 - 19 Smoke outlet (4)
 - 20 Complete and undamaged — triangle (anag) (8)
 - 21 Forbidding (10)
- Down**
- 1 Overwhelm completely (5)
 - 2 Reddish purple (7)
 - 3 Given temporarily (4)

Solution will appear in MetroPlus dated June 6, 2024.

Solution No. 13586

N	A	M	A	D	I	B	E
E	A		M	E	I	E	
A	I	R	B	A	S	E	B
R	I	V	Z	P	S	S	
M	O	N	T	E	N	E	G
O	N	T	E	N	E	R	O
S	H	R	I	M	D	W	N
S	S	I	H	T	O	N	E
O	C	T	A	H	E	D	R
M	S	E	T	D	E	A	
I	M	P	L	I	T	M	R
D	R	E	O	N	E	R	C
D	E	R	R	E	T	H	
R	E	R	E	R	E	T	

To play The Guardian Quick Crossword, The Hindu Cryptic crossword, Sudoku & other puzzles online, scan the QR code.



Paint a picture

Have your brushes at the ready. Whether you are an art enthusiast or a curious beginner, you can participate in this session of Sip, Paint, Repeat, a painting workshop conducted and guided by an artist. Suitable for ages 18 to 30, you can paint your imagination while you enjoy a cup of coffee. @Backyard, Adyar, June 2, 5pm to 8pm. Fee is ₹500. For details, call 7358458117.



Sprout and about

Turn your phone into a farmer's market with this app-controlled hydroponic farming setup, growing greens in your home



Smart greens Croppico's Homie lets one grow leafy vegetables in any climatic condition.
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Sangita Rajan
sangitarajan.pb@thehindu.co.in

A wall of green leafy vegetables and delicate herbs like basil, oregano, rosemary, and thyme is not something you would expect to see when you enter a home in Chennai. Being met with this sight is a welcome surprise for salad enthusiasts.

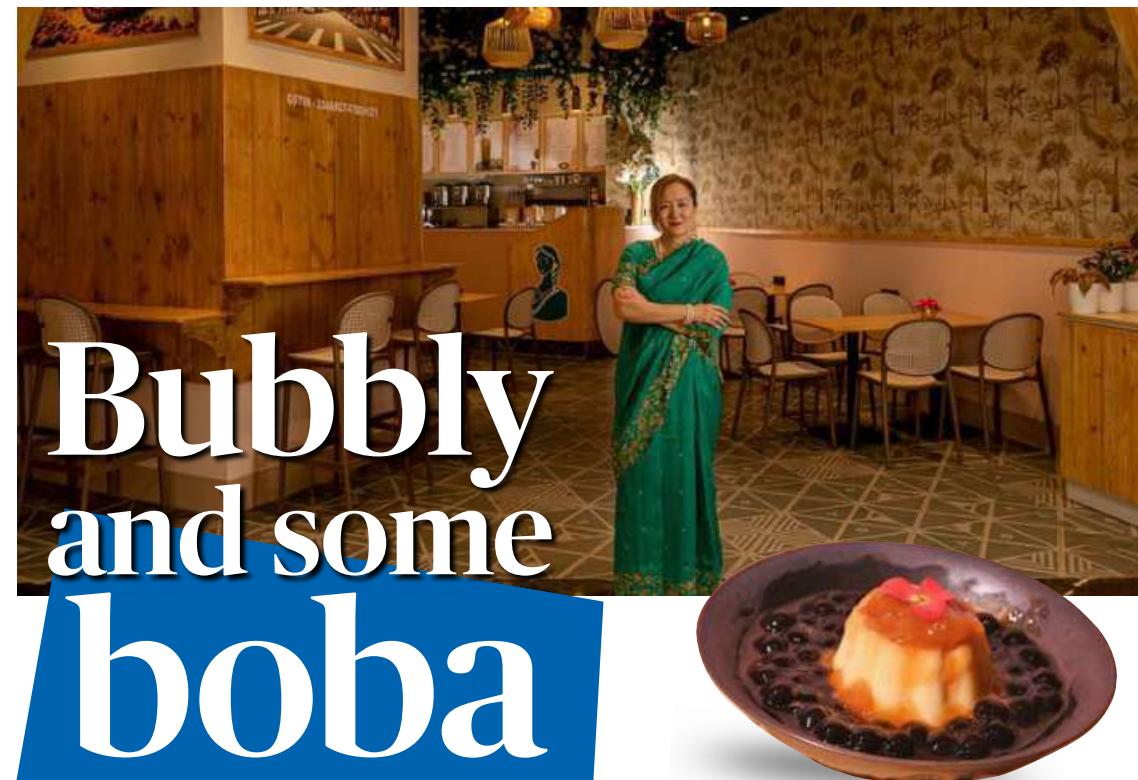
It was largely observed that one of the top hobbies people started over the pandemic was gardening. However, once the pandemic ended and people went back to their regular lives, a lack of time and knowledge left terrace gardens barren.

"Gardening is a conscious, continuous activity. You have to manage your plants, water and monitor them regularly," says Shamil Bicha, founder of Croppico, and an engineer-turned-farmer, who has designed a hydroponic farming setup which allows people to grow leafy vegetables and herbs in any climatic condition.

The hydroponic farming setup designed by Shamil and his team is an improvement on designs that already exist, optimised for home use. It can grow leafy vegetables like spinach, kale, celery, rocket, and herbs like mint, parsley, basil, rosemary, thyme, oregano and more. The setup performs to its optimal ability in air-conditioned environments. However, Shamil says, "Our systems have been performing in Chennai without air conditioning too. The chiller takes care of the water temperature, but ambient temperatures can be challenging in summer months."

Croppico's Homie is available in Chennai and Bengaluru. To get it installed, reach out to connect@croppico.com. The first 1,000 customers can have the system installed at ₹1.25 lakh

CM YK



From a classic latte to a dessert-inspired bubble tea, Taiwan Maami at Palladium Mall brings the boba tea experience to Chennai

S Poorvaja
poorvaja.sundar@thehindu.co.in

"I am the mami and my husband, who is from Chennai is the mama," says Theresa Hu, a Taiwanese national who is now settled in the UK, laughing, when I ask her about her cheekily named bubble tea cafe, Taiwan Maami.

The farming system also comes with a smartphone application that lets users manage their crops even while they are away for long periods. It also has a dashboard which tracks the crops you are growing and suggests recipes. The database of recipes will keep growing as users add their own creations for others to see and try, making it a community experience.

Croppico's Homie is available in Chennai and Bengaluru. To get it installed, reach out to connect@croppico.com. The first 1,000 customers can have the system installed at ₹1.25 lakh

actually was a much later addition, and bubble tea got its name from the bubbles on top which were a result of using a cocktail shaker to mix the tea and syrups or sugar," she says.

Having grown up drinking bubble tea back in Taiwan, Theresa says she slowly saw the love for it grow across the world during her time in the UK. Soon enough, she knew she had to bring her favourite beverage to Chennai.

Green Tea, Oolong Tea, and



Black Tea, all organically grown in the Nilgiris, and tapioca pearls from Taiwan are the base on which Taiwan Maami's menu has been conceived – one that has been designed keeping with bubble tea variants that are currently trending and popular among tea drinkers in Taiwan, and other parts of the world.

"The dairy products are fresh, and we do not use any artificial colours," Theresa says.

The creme caramel oolong milk tea we start off with, comes with a generous layer of cream at the bottom. The black and oolong teas on the menu are all milk based and come in a range of flavours, which include the classic Taiwan milk teas which Theresa

An interesting mix Theresa Hu (left) has put together a menu featuring bubble tea variants that are currently trending. **SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT**

says are immensely popular among her regular Taiwanese customers. There is also an English cream tea latte, tiramisu latte, basundi milk oolong, and a moringa chocolate oolong latte on the menu – all the flavours conceived by them, with the syrups and other ingredients made in-house.

We decide to be adventurous, and try the Black Forest black tea latte. Cherry sauce, cake sauce, shaved chocolate, tea, and boba come together in this dessert inspired tea, where the sharp cherry sauce taste does not quite blend in with the drink. Our next drink however, is an immensely refreshing virgin mojito green tea. Green tea might be an acquired taste for many, but for fans of the beverage, this cold twist on the drink with boba is a sure palate pleaser. Taiwan Maami also has an extensive ice slush menu, a great pick for the weather in Chennai and we try the pink guava one, with boba added of course, which perfectly complements the fruity flavours and crushed ice.

From their dessert menu, we dive into a green tea crystal jelly, which is served on a platter of boba. The boba used in drinks and the desserts are glazed in jaggery, after being boiled and braised – something the baristas do every morning. The sweet, chewy boba here and the mildly flavoured jelly make for an interesting mix of taste and textures.

Boba teas might be growing in popularity and the choices might be aplenty, but Taiwan Maami's authenticity which reflects in its flavours, and the effort to go beyond chocolate and biscoff is reason enough for celebration – with bubbles of a different kind.

Taiwan Maami is at Palladium Mall, Velachery. A meal for two costs ₹700

CM YK



Ballroom of memories

Taj Coromandel, the hotel that hosted Queen Elizabeth and where superstar Rajinikanth got married, celebrates its golden jubilee

Ananya Desikan
ananyaa.d@thehindu.co.in

The iconic Taj Coromandel in Nungambakkam has been the venue for several celebrations, meetings, and has even played host to the Queen of England, Elizabeth II and former US President Bill Clinton. This year, the hotel is celebrating its own milestone – the golden jubilee.

Taj Coromandel opened in 1974 and became a symbol of luxurious hospitality in the city. The Golden Dragon, the hotel's popular Chinese restaurant too took its first strides into the city then, becoming a pioneer in serving flavours from the Sichuan province.

To celebrate the anniversary, the hotel is recreating old menus from its popular restaurants,

starting with Golden Dragon. "Written documentation and hard copies of the menu helped recreate the classics for the special anniversary menus, and it was challenging to revive them. Chefs who have retired came in and participated in the trials and taste tests," says Sujan Mukherjee, executive chef.

At The Golden Dragon, we delve into a bowl of zima lamb, which has juicy pieces of lamb coated in copious amounts of a sesame oil and a Shaoxing wine (a fermented cooking rice wine)-based sauce. It is studded with slices of garlic and spring onion. Then comes a plate of lotus stem, stir-fried with crushed garlic and red chilli.

We set out on a restaurant-hopping adventure, starting with Anise, the all-day diner. "Back when it used to be called The Pavilion, there used to be a raw mango and chicken



tikka pizza. When I came across this, I was instantly curious and called the former executive chef. Raw Mango is an ingredient you don't expect on pizza. But the pairing was unbelievable," says chef Sujan. We try this tangy pizza fresh out of a wood-fired oven with fresh mozzarella cheese, soft and mildly-sour pieces of raw mango, and small chunks of juicy chicken tikka on a bed of marinara sauce.

Over the years, while much has remained the same at the Taj Coromandel, it has also evolved to keep up with a changing clientele. "I have seen three ballrooms change, the lobby has changed twice and the restaurants have been renamed.

Taj Coromandel opened in 1974 and became a symbol of luxurious hospitality in the city

Decades in flavour (Clockwise from left) Southern Spice; zima lamb and The Golden Dragon. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

too," says Ahmed Moh Ideen, the oldest working employee at Taj Coromandel, who is set to retire next year. He adds, "I started as a general attender 42 years ago. Today, I am the stores officer. I didn't come with any training, but grew along with the hotel."

Southern Spice has been serving dishes from the South Indian states for the last decade just like it did in its previous avatar as Mysore. We try kayaru katti yerachi kola urundai, a classic mutton dish

from the Chettinad region, which is tender with the warm flavour of caramelised onion melting in the mouth. Then comes a plate of steaming Kerala matta rice with creamy Alleppey fish curry, and a tangy manathakkali vathal kuzhambu.

Curious to retrace the nightlife of Chennai back in the day, we enter Chipstead on our way out. The bar used to be called Fort St George, where along with popular cocktails, spice-coated peanuts too were a crowd favourite. We take a sip of their iconic Singapore Sling, recreated from the Raffles hotel in Singapore.

We end the evening at La Patisserie, where there are sweet mango swans made with soft choux pastry and sinful chocolate pyramids made with old-school chocolate cake and rich ganache.

Dishes from the old menu are at 50% off till May 31 at Anise, and from June 1 to 16 at Southern Spice. At La Patisserie, the discounts are on from July 1 to August 3. At Chipstead, the offer is from July 14 to August 3. For reservations and more details, contact 044 66002827/ 78248 62311.



India says,
"Ye Mera Cheese Hai!"

There's something about cheese that gives us a nostalgic significance and Amul Processed Cheese holds a widespread appeal for generations. It has been a constant presence in our kitchens, cherished for its versatility, convenience, and rich and creamy texture that enhances any dish's flavours. From the iconic block cheese to the convenient chiplet and slice formats, it has become a delicious part of our daily lives.

Made from 100% real milk, Amul cheese embodies the essence of tradition and quality. Hence, it is pure cheese that does not contain any vegetable oil in it. Its rich and decadent texture is also a testament to the

meticulous preparation that goes into its production. Whether enjoyed in sandwiches or burgers, melted over hot nachos, or spread on pizza bread, each bite takes you to an indulgence of celebration to your taste buds.

Beyond its irresistible taste, it is also a nutritional powerhouse as it offers a convenient solution to build your strength. Its range of products caters to diverse preferences, ensuring there's something for everyone to enjoy.

One of the most endearing qualities of Amul cheese is that its taste appeals to all age groups. Loved by children and adults, it has become a cherished addition to school lunch boxes,

breakfast tables, and on-the-go snacks. Whether in slice or cube form, it offers a convenient and satisfying option for busy lifestyles. Even those with lactose intolerance can indulge in its goodness, thanks to its low lactose content and high nutritional value.

As we continue to embrace the rich flavours that define Indian cuisine, as it carries goodness in every bite, it also takes forward the essence of tradition, the warmth of nostalgia, and the promise of delicious taste. So, the next time you reach for that familiar block or slice of Amul Cheese, take a moment to savor the taste of tradition and say with pride, "Ye Mera Cheese Hai."

"CONSUMER CONNECT INITIATIVE"



When silence speaks

The students of Sai University are staging their theatre production titled, *The Bones of The Earth*. The play is an adaptation of the story with the same title by Ursula K Le Guin. It narrates the story of a profound relationship between an apprentice, Silence, and a wizard teacher, Dunce. It is a captivating story of love, care, and affection, for one another, set across generations. @MS Subbulakshmi auditorium, Asian College of Journalism, Taramani, June 1, 5pm. Entry starts from ₹150.



Name your toy

Ever considered making your own toys? At this workshop conducted by Reshma, learn to make a baby owl from scratch. Participants can gain the skill to create any fabric toy of your choice in the future. All required material will be provided and this is open for ages eight and above. @Backyard, Adyar, June 1, 4pm to 6pm. Fee is ₹2,000 per person. To register, call 9962230448



Cinematic bliss

Get ready to immerse yourself in the world of cinema this weekend. The Multiplex Association of India (MAI) and cinemas all over India are coming together to celebrate Cinema Lovers Day (CLD) by offering movie tickets for ₹99 per person. CLD will have over 4,000 participating screens pan-India and box office hits from previous and this year will be screened at PVR-INOX and Cinepolis. @All participating cinemas. May 31 only. Movie tickets priced @ Rs.99.

Dr. KAMAKSHI MEMORIAL HOSPITALS PRESENTS

CONNECT • COMPETE • CELEBRATE

OMR 360

50 EVENTS | 150 SOCIETIES | JUNE TO OCT | 1 BIG GALA

ARTFEST | BADMINTON | CARROM | BASKETBALL | CHESS | CRICKET | DANCE | FASHION | FOOTBALL | GYMNASTICS | KABADDI | MUSIC | PHOTOGRAPHY | QUADRATHLON | SILAMBAM | SKATING | SOLVE-IT | TABLE TENNIS | TENNIS | THEATRE | THROWBALL | TREASURE HUNT | VOLLEYBALL | SHORT FILM | SHORT STORY |

Launch on 01 June, 5 pm, @ Jains Pebble Brook, Thoraipakkam

CITY CELEBRATION PARTNER: Made Of Chennai | THE HINDU | WASTE MGMT. PARTNER: WasteWinn Foundation | VENUE PARTNER: The Station Hotel | COMMUNITY PARTNER: FOMRRA | NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNER: kÿn | SPORTS POWERED BY: DECATHLON | EVENT MANAGED BY: Generation360 Media Solutions

SCAN TO REGISTER

For more details: WWW.OMR360.IN | 7305 777 360 | @omr360event

QR CODE

INDIA'S PIONEERS IN PAIN MANAGEMENT

EPIONE Center for Pain Relief & Beyond

REDISCOVER EASE OF MOBILITY AND FEEL EMPOWERED WITH PRP

EPIONE'S PLASMA THERAPY

Quick Relief in Just 15-30 Minutes | Pain-Free Procedure for Your Comfort | Walk in, Walk Out : Embrace Same Day Recovery | State-of-the-Art Equipment for Precision Care

DR. SUDHEER DARA
Founder & Director

DR. CHETANA CHETAN
Clinical Head of Epione, Chief Consultant Pain Physician

Epione Pain Care - Center for Pain Relief & Beyond
Experience Non Surgical Treatment for Knee Joint Pain

CHENNAI: 9978-171-819 / 9962-413-413
No 28 OLD NO 126 Marshalls Road, Rukmani Lakshmi Salai, Egmore, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600008
HYDERABAD: 875-875-875-1, BANGALORE: 6361-229-911

Scan QR Code

The action begins

Kajal Aggarwal, headlining Telugu film *Satyabhama*, on training for action sequences post her maternity break

Sangeetha Devi Dundoo

sangeethadevi.k@thehindu.co.in

Kajal Aggarwal has been in the thick of interviews and promotions for her new Telugu film, *Satyabhama*, over the last few weeks. At an apartment in the vicinity of HITEC City, Hyderabad, which doubles up as her workspace, the actor who has just completed a photoshoot takes off her chunky earrings and puts her feet up to sit comfortably on the sofa as we begin to speak.

Satyabhama, directed by Suman Chikkala with screenplay by writer-director Sashi Kiran Tikka (of *Goodachari* fame), is Kajal's 60th film, scheduled to

release on June 7. Since she headlines the film, the promotions are worked around #Kajal60 and she is termed 'Queen of the masses'. "The tag came from my fans and the makers incorporated it; it was not like my team made a sales pitch for such a tag. I am grateful and consider myself lucky for the loyalty, support and encouragement I have been receiving for 17 years," says Kajal, adding that *Satyabhama* is a 'massy' film. "My character – ACP Satyabhama – is in a commercial space, yet off the beaten track."

Emotional connect
Playing a cop in an action drama has been on her wishlist but Kajal asserts that *Satyabhama* is not akin to a

female version of *Singham*. She features in full-fledged action sequences but the narrative, she explains, shows the emotional vulnerability of a female cop. "Satyabhama is feisty and can use law and order to help the oppressed, but we also see how she gets affected by everything that happens around her. It was emotionally and physically a tough film to do."

The task was tougher since Kajal swung into action mode after a maternity break; she has been juggling between being a new mother and fulfilling her work commitments, including director Shankar's *Indian 2* headlined by Kamal Haasan.

Before discussing the action sequences, Kajal recalls being emotionally invested in the

cop drama when she heard the narration of *Satyabhama*. She had discussions with the writers (Suman Chikkala, Sashi Kiran Tikka and Prashanth Reddy) on the backstory of her character. "The makers had several hypothetical situations that made me understand how my character would behave in different situations. The screenplay does not explain

I have learnt that the fate of one film does not affect your career in the long term. So I do not get too attached to the results.

KAJAL AGGARWAL

Off the beaten track
Kajal Aggarwal in *Satyabhama*.
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

much and trusts the intelligence of the audience. We had workshops and I made notes on my copy of the script."

Action mode
The action sequences required Kajal to deliver some solid punches. Like most actors, she has been fitness oriented for years. In 2018, she began learning Kalaripayattu for *Indian 2*, Krav Maga for a Telugu film that she let go following pregnancy, and mixed martial arts.

Getting back to her fitness routine after delivery was not a cakewalk, she says, "I began doing yoga two weeks after my son was born. Earlier I would do 108 Surya namaskars with ease and here I was struggling to do five. I could squat while lifting several kilos earlier and post delivery it was tough to squat with just my body weight. I spent the first few weeks at my mother's place; my mom thought I had lost my mind to begin exercising that soon. I wanted to work for the dopamine effect. At that point, it was not about any film. My husband, my trainer and friends asked me to take it slow. I learnt to not expect quick results and take it one day at a time. My muscle memory kicked in and I slowly regained my stamina."

Next up is *Indian 2* and she has new films lined up, which are yet to be announced. Having ticked off the wish of doing an action film, Kajal hopes she will get to feature in a mythological drama. "One of my new films will see me doing something in a small capacity, but I would love to be part of a full-fledged mythology. I am a greedy actor."

Kajol, Prabhu Deva back again

Kajol and Prabhu Deva, the duo who danced its way into Indian pop culture with cult classic songs like 'Vennilave' and 'Manai Madurai' in 1997 Tamil film *Minsara Kanavu*, are collaborating once again after 27 years. The duo is reuniting for director Charantej Uppalapati's upcoming film *Maharagni*. *Maharagni* also stars Naseeruddin Shah, Samyuktha, Jishu Sen Gupta, Adithya Seal, Chaya Kadamb and Pramod Pathak. Said to be "an explosive cocktail of intense drama, raw emotions, and mind-blowing action sequences", the film is produced by Harman Baweja and Venkata Anish Dorigilli under the banners Baweja Studios and E7 Entertainments, respectively. GK Vishnu has been roped in as the cinematographer while Harshavardhan Rameshwari is in charge of music. The first schedule of *Maharagni* is reportedly completed and the makers are expected to announce the film's release date soon. The film will be released in Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam.



**JOCKEY
FACTORY
SECONDS
UPTO
50%
OFF***

*T & C Apply

- 10 am to 8 pm • Open All Days • Master / Visa Card Accepted

ONLY LEISUREWEAR, ACTIVEWEAR, KIDSWEAR, THERMALS & SOCKS

Venue In Chennai
Cathedral Road | Dass Community Hall
No.55, Opp. Maris Hotel - 600 086

Org by Surya Agency Pvt Ltd

PVR INOX

***** NOW SHOWING *****



MR & MRS MAHI DRAMA 139 MINS U/A TAMIL

GARUDAN ACTION 134 MINS

PVR INOX PRESENTS SUMMER FILM FESTIVAL TILL 2ND JUNE, 2024

THIS SUMMER, ENJOY THE GREATEST LINE-UP OF MOST LOVED ANIMATED MOVIES

MOVIES RUNNING THIS WEEK

KIDS MEAL BOX VEG & NON VEG ₹199* ₹349* ADD ₹29 FOR NON-VEG

WEEKEND SPECIALS FUN ACTIVITIES SPECIAL MERCH GIVEAWAYS SURPRISE MASCOT VISIT

FOR MOVIE DETAILS & BOOKINGS VISIT OUR APP / WEBSITE

***** RUNNING SUCCESSFULLY *****

ARANMANI 4 COMEDY/DRAMA/THRILLER 148 MINS **PT SIR** DRAMA 130 MINS

மாண்புகளை 4 DRAMA 130 MINS

WATCH 4 MOVIES EVERY MONTH FOR JUST ₹349

MONDAY TO THURSDAY, ALL SHOWS

PVR INOX PASSPORT MONTHLY WEEKDAY MOVIE PASS

GET FREE FOOD VOUCHERS WORTH ₹350* WITH 3 MONTHS SUBSCRIPTION

SCAN THIS QR TO
BOOK TICKETS | WATCH TRAILERS | SUBSCRIBE TO PASSPORT



S SHIVA RAJ

Journey of a coolie

Amijath Meenan is gearing up for his debut Tamil project *Metro Coolie*, one that will have several sub-plots and thus, will be divided into two parts. "The first part revolves around a search for the brother, in the backdrop of illegal labourers. The second part is about who the coolie is and his conflict with a billionaire," said Amijath, on the sidelines of the launch of his company, Meenan Theatres.

In this film, Amijath – apart from helming story, dialogues and script – will also play a vital character called Solamalaai.

Metro Coolie will adopt a unique distribution strategy, he adds. "When we finish both parts, we will have almost seven hours of footage with us. After releasing the film in theatres, we plan to convert the content into original series for OTTs and stream it as 14 episodes, with two seasons." *Metro Coolie*, which is targeting release by end 2024, will be edited by Yoga Bhaskar, have cinematography by Santonio Terzio, art direction by TN Kabilan and music by Guruprasad Subramanian.

Srinivasa Ramanujam

Amijath Meenan

WHO'S THE HERO?

***Garudan* is like a relay race with Soori, Sasikumar and Unni Mukundan, says its director RS Durai Senthilkumar**

Bhuvanesh Chandar

bhuvanesh.chandar@thehindu.co.in

For director RS Durai Senthilkumar, a hero is an ordinary man with the grit, resilience, and capabilities "to tackle the most extraordinary of circumstances, for a larger cause or his own benefit". His upcoming action film *Garudan* shows a God's eye view of three such heroes, who make the film a relay race of sorts, "as each of them takes up the baton and spearheads this story one after the other".

A multi-hero subject such as this is right up Durai's alley as such an effort to give ample space to secondary leads and supporting characters is visible in almost all his films. Durai credits this quality to the experience of working with his mentors, Balu Mahendra and Vetri

Maaran. "These are things I must have picked from the interactions I had with them. But even aside from that, a story told for over two hours cannot be one-sided; that will only result in a templated product," he says, adding that strong supporting characters help in adding drama and strengthening the conflict in the story.

These are discussions quite refreshing to indulge in as heroes in Tamil cinema, for long, have been reluctant about projects that might have them share the limelight with others. "But now, even in bigger films, having multiple artistes has become a necessity. Heroes are more aware of that as well." This is why, Durai says, actor Soori – who

has famously started a second innings as a serious actor since Vetri Maaran's *Viduthalai* – has chosen a multi-hero subject like *Garudan* for his sophomore attempt as a hero. "He knows that despite the presence of others, he could shine in a story like this, and it becomes a challenge to overcome."

Garudan features Sasikumar and Malayalam actor Unni Mukundan as best friends, and Soori as the watchful protector of Unni's character. Casting is the centrepiece of all the hype around *Garudan*. Sasikumar's casting in this role is a no-brainer; the actor has for long become the go-to choice for such a rural action film.

"We wanted an interesting choice for the character opposite Sasikumar, and that's when the Malayalam film *Malikappuram* was released in Tamil. That's what led us to Unni Mukundan."

Durai is aware that Soori's makeover, and the success of Soori's yet-to-be-released *Kottukalai* in the festival circuit, has added to the expectations from *Garudan*. "However, though this is being projected as Soori's film – and it is ultimately his film – I am hoping that it reaches the audiences as a good story with all these characters bringing their own to the front," says Durai.



DURAI



Amijath Meenan