



**EYEING LONDON**  
Manish Malhotra's first outing in Harrods, London, is tied to the sari and unfolds India's heritage crafts **P3**

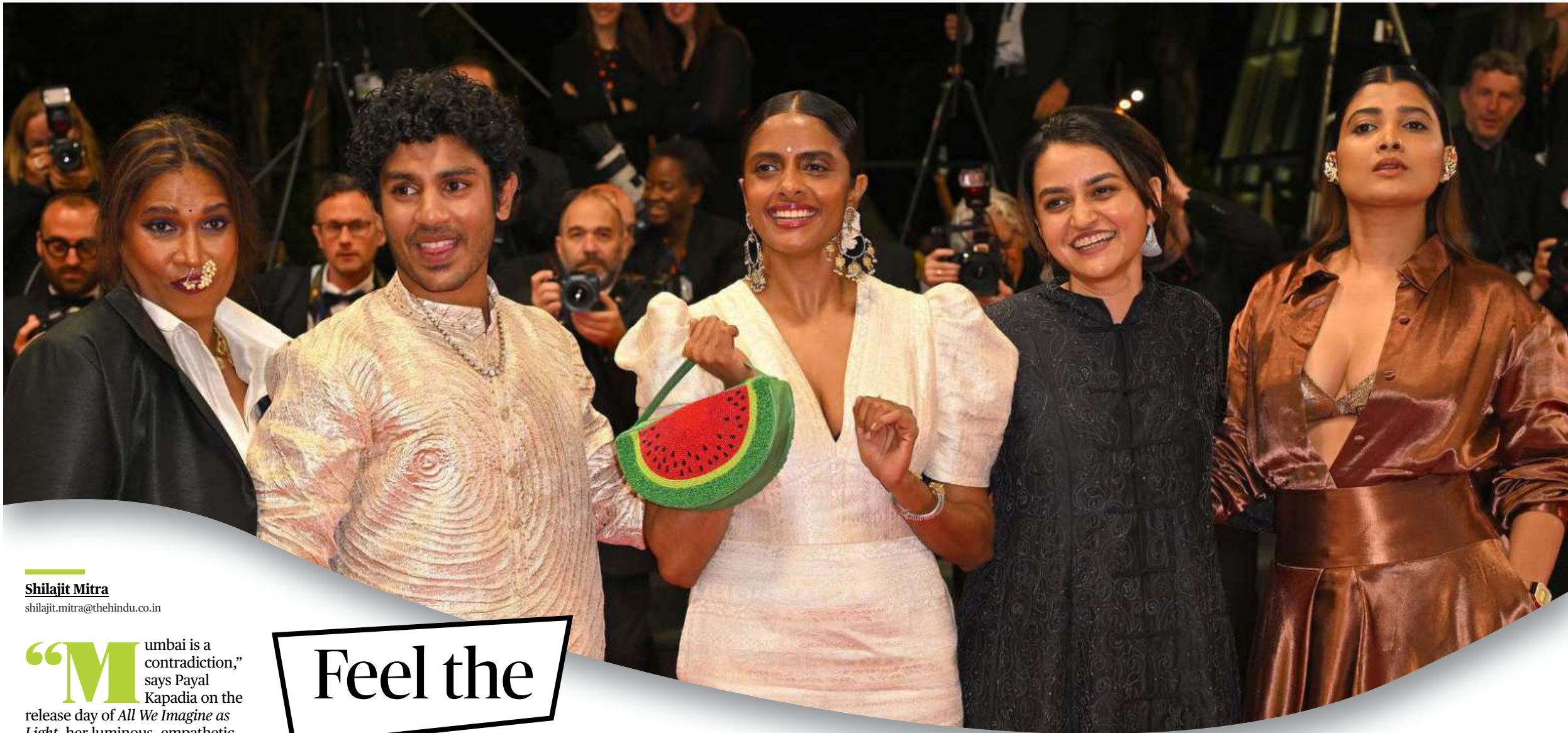
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“Mumbai is a contradiction,” says Payal Kapadia on the release day of *All We Imagine as Light*, her luminous, empathetic feature debut that scripted history by winning the Grand Prix at the Cannes Film Festival in May, and has finally released domestically. Almost as an illustration of her statement, the film has opened in a limited capacity not in Mumbai, where it is largely set, but in far-off Kochi (the Malayalam title is *Prabhayay Ninachathellam*). The film, among 28 others, was in contention to be India’s official entry to the Oscars but lost out to Kiran Rao’s *Laapataa Ladies*.

*All We Imagine*’s unusual, centre-wise release strategy has been formulated by Spirit Media, Telugu star Rana Daggubati’s banner that picked up the India distribution rights after the film triumphed at Cannes. It is also releasing in the US and France.

Fronted by Kani Kusruti and Divya Prabha, and evocatively shot by Ranabir Das, Kapadia’s film chronicles the friendship and longings of two Kerala nurses co-habiting in Mumbai. It was the first Indian film in 30 years to compete for the Palme d’Or, and the first-ever to win the Grand Prix, the second-highest honour at Cannes.

Even as Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII, Kapadia’s alma mater) tweeted their congratulations, the discourse back home was electric: many pointed out how, while the country is quick to claim cinematic glories at prestigious forums, the support and infrastructure for independent films remain dire. It was said, for instance, that the Government had yet to release the rebate promised to international co-productions like *All We Imagine*.

Asked about the status of the rebate, Kapadia tells *The Hindu*: “It was still in process when I was hearing about it but now I think it will be really soon.”

*Excerpts from an interview with Kapadia and Daggubati...*

**Question:** *There must have been other bidders from India after the Cannes win. How did the domestic distribution deal with Spirit Media work out?*

**Rana Daggubati:** A partner of mine at the company, Prateeksha Rao, was the first to get an understanding of what the film was and she got all of us to watch it. We were blown away by the fact that there was such a beautiful film that was made right here and we didn’t know about it.  
It’s so lovely and Indian in its

# Feel the light

Payal Kapadia and Rana Daggubati discuss the unusual release strategy of their Cannes-winning film, and the state of independent cinema in India



craft. It’s about Malayalis living in Bombay, Maharashtra, and it’s about the culture of Bombay. It’s everyone’s story yet no one’s... in some form. It needed a different approach from the regular cinema that we normally see in theatres.

At Spirit Media, the idea is to find unique voices and make sure they are heard. We’ve always done it in Telugu as a regional set, because it was a smaller auditorium. But this is now a fun exercise for us to expand to other territories.

**Payal Kapadia:** Right after Cannes, we met with Prateeksha. We wanted to work with Spirit Media because they had a clear vision for the film. It’s not easy what they are doing because there has not been much distribution of independent cinema in India, especially in the theatrical space.

I appreciate the collaboration between mainstream and indie because we are a collective industry.

When you get support from bigger filmmakers and artists, it’s a great structural method for us to



(From top) Left to right - Chhaya Kadam, Hridhu Haroon, Kani Kusruti, Payal Kapadia and Divya Prabha attend the 77th annual Cannes Film Festival; a still from *All We Imagine as Light*; Rana Daggubati; and the team at Cannes 2024. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

build a culture and ecosystem for independent titles.

**Q:** *What is the plan to take the film wider?*

**Rana:** The idea, at present, is to make sure that in every large film-watching industry, the film has a limited run. In other countries, there is a festival circuit for people to understand and get a niche auditorium together at once. But in India, this is probably the first time we’re doing this exercise: moving State to State where organically this film is going to grow. Obviously, the film has got many international distributors. We want to sync up on a future date where it can have a bigger release and hopefully by then there is enough of fanfare for the film. In Kochi, on the opening day, September 21, the first two shows filled up in two minutes online. So that’s independent cinema and the Kerala audience for you.

**Q:** *What are the changes required to cultivate an indie-appreciating culture in India?*

**Rana:** The crazy or annoying thing for me is that we had to hear about this film once it travelled to international festivals like Cannes and Toronto. It’s funny that there is no ecosystem for us to talk to each other in India. In the Telugu industry, independent filmmakers have three or four preview theatres to show their work to distributors. It’s small but at least that space exists. But there’s nothing like that across the country.

This is the first step where we moved out of our comfort zone

from Telugu and said okay, let’s try to work cross country and create a plan. We have done it for commercial films, but this is the first time we’ve taken something indie. I’m sure this will bring in many, many more stories.

**Payal:** Earlier in India, we used to have funds that would support independent films. Now we don’t have that many. So access to funds that can be both Government and private, but where it’s a system, are needed. That system exists in the West and it’s a system I’ve benefited from. It’s also good to have labs and film markets to meet potential investors and distributors. Right now, the festivals happen in one corner while the distributors are on their own. So there should be an avenue where everything comes together.

**Rana:** Global festivals were first created for tourism. Cannes was created so people from across the world could come to one place. In America, all cinema happens in the State of California and they created the Oscars in the early days. We don’t have that ‘one thing’ happening in India except the National Awards. Just like how independent cinema needs grants, major awards need grants and those ecosystems need grants. It’s only recently, with the success of films like *Baahubali*, *RRR* and *KGF*, that we have started slowly to speak one language cinematically as a nation. The time for independent cinema will come around in due course.

**Q:** *All We Imagine has been lauded as a tonal achievement. It critiques the*

*brutality of the migrant existence of Mumbai while also capturing more nuanced shades...*

**Payal:** For me, the city is a contradiction. It has its plus points which is why so many of us move here. For women, especially, it’s a little bit easier to travel in Mumbai and it offers many possibilities. For instance, why do so many people come to work in the film industry? But Mumbai is also awful sometimes.

To survive every day, to travel by train on the Harbour Line... which will definitely get flooded in the monsoons. I wanted to present all these contradictions in the film. It’s a city I was born in, though I have always lived outside. You tend to notice a lot more in your own surroundings when you leave and come back.

**Rana:** I’ve been up and down Bombay for the last 10 years. It feels like home, but it’s not home in some crazy manner. I’ve shot here more than I’ve shot in Hyderabad. There’s something that never ‘settles’ because of the extremely high energy. It’s not the lazy Nizam’s life back home. Then again, Mumbai is the real land of opportunity, and the smartest people I’ve met in my life are from Bombay. The enthusiasm, the energy, the hardness to get something done – they have it.

**Q:** *Payal, what are favourite mainstream Indian films? And Rana, your favourite indie ones...*

**Payal:** I really liked Karan Johar’s recent film, *Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani*. I used to enjoy Amitabh Bachchan’s Angry Young Man films growing up, especially *Deewaar*. I used to watch all the Govinda No.1 films. Pa Ranjith’s *Sarpatta Parambarai* and Nagraj Manjule’s *Sairat*, from recent years, are also great mainstream films.

**Rana:** *Sairat* for sure was independent when I first saw it (laughs). There’s a Telugu film, *C/o Kancharapalem* (2018), which we had the opportunity to release. It’s set in a small town near Vizag and the director cast around 80 non-professional actors from there. Malayalam cinema makes delightful slice-of-movies and that’s the cinema that we’re quite used to. In Tamil, Vetrimaaran’s *Visaranai* (2015) is a hard-edged, solid film that I have seen. So yeah, I’m not that indie actually. I’m the bad guy from *Baahubali*, dude.







Instapick

**Game evolution:** Nintendo is set to open a museum on October 2 near Kyoto, showcasing its transformation from making playing cards in 1889 to becoming a global gaming leader. The museum features consoles like the Game Boy and Wii, alongside lesser-known products, interactive experiences, and a giant family computer controller.



Talkingpoint

**Sound check:** After 2021, Punjabi musician AP Dhillon is back in India with a three-city tour to promote his new EP *The Brownprint*. Catch him in Mumbai on December 7, Delhi on December 14 and Chandigarh on December 21. Tickets priced between ₹1,999 and ₹19,999 go on sale this Sunday at noon on Insider.in.



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This year, certain work commitments have scuppered my plans to be home for Durga Puja. As I moped and whined and looked up new Bengali restaurants in Mumbai, my thoughts drifted to *The Bear*, which swept the comedy Emmys. In the globally-acclaimed series, Carmy, a top-rated New York chef, returns to his hometown of Chicago after his brother's suicide. Over three anxiety-inducing seasons, we watch Carmy as he strains every nerve (his and everybody else's) to turn their chaotic, family-owned sandwich shop into a high-end restaurant.

Carmy is advised by his uncle to "be the guy", to keep his eyes on the ball, yet home – with its

SCREEN SHARE

Films that speak of homecoming

Homecoming is a messy, delicate affair. Here are films that get it right

unruly sauces and kitchen scars of grief – keeps butting in. Homecoming is a messy, delicate affair. Over a decade ago, we met a different Carmy, of a lower calibre.

The 2012 Hindi comedy *Luv*

*Shuv Tey Chicken Khurana* is a bittersweet take on family, food, and identity. Having stolen from his own grandfather and skeddaddled to the UK, Omi (Kunal Kapoor), years later, is forced to return. He takes over



(Clockwise from far left) Zach Braff and Natalie Portman in a still from *Garden State*; and stills from *Kapoor & Sons*. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

heart of an American dysfunctional family drama. There is a superlative scene – beautifully choreographed by director Shakun Batra – with the entire family yelling and blame-shifting as a broken water pipe gushes forth. It spills like home.

Not all homecoming films are comedies. There are countless thrillers – the 2022 Australian film *The Dry* comes to mind – where the central character returns to their childhood town and embeds itself in a mystery. Then there are the adoptees, in films like *Lion* (2016) and *Return to Seoul* (2022), tugged by origins and quests that transcend geographies. There are also films that point to the impossibility of return: though Sumit and Priyanka, the eloped couple in *Pokhar Ke Dunu Paar* (2023), are back in Darbhanga, hard-up during the lockdown, they cannot go home.

Imaginary places, indeed. As Gregory Alan Isakov sings in 'Big Black Car', "Through the carnival we watch them go round and round / all we knew of home was just a sunset and some clowns."

From The Hindu cinema team, a fortnightly column recommending films and shows tied to a mood, theme, or pop culture event.

Pick of the week

Concerts, workshops, tours, and everything else you need to plan your social calendar. For events, contact us on weekend@thehindu.co.in .



Gifting redefined

Celebrate Deepavali with a touch of elegance as **Kama Ayurveda and Nicobar** unveil a limited-edition gift box with Kama's skincare essentials and Nicobar's home decor. Shop on kamaayurveda.in or nicobar.com for ₹3,500. For another gifting option, check out the collector's edition box from **Nutty Gritties** with dry fruits, tea and festive decor. Shop on nuttygritties.com starting ₹2,580.



Photo fables

Photography enthusiasts alert! **TEDxNapier Bridge Salon** hosts a photography-focussed event on September 29 at Kalki Theatre, Madras House. Explore over 30 rare cameras, from century-old models to modern pieces, alongside curated photography coffee table books. Speakers include photographer Jaisingh Nageswaran, camera collector AV Arun, and more. For details @tedxn timer on Instagram.



Artful verses

Join artist Sowmya Ramalingam in a **Thirukkural** artwork exhibition and a **miniature painting workshop** tomorrow from 3pm to 6pm at Backyard, Adyar. Explore the unique artworks inspired by different kuralms from Thiruvalluvar's classics, and paint a miniature artwork of your own. Register on @thebackyardclan on Instagram starting ₹1,000 inclusive of material.



Rural rhythms

Step into the heart of Tamil Nadu's village life at **Sempozhil — Chennaiyil Oru Gramathu Thiruvizha!** — India's largest urban village festival with 200+ stalls, traditional performances, and native livestock display. Explore organic food, sustainable farming, and the art of rural living. Celebrate, learn, and reconnect with Nature. ₹50 upwards; in.bookmyshow.com.



Starry screens

With the heat finally subsiding, enjoy a moonlit cinema at **Chetpet Eco Park** on October 5 from 8pm. Mani Ratnam's romantic masterpiece *O Kadhal Kanmani*. Tickets start at ₹600 on in.bookmyshow.com. If you are in the mood for a sitcom, watch a great episode of **Friends** at **Heritage Beach Lawn, VGP** on October 5 from 6.30pm. Tickets on in.bookmyshow.com at ₹999.



Indie night

Immerse in indie music at **Black Orchid** on October 4 with singer, rapper, and songwriter STEVIE from Chennai, and Los Angeles based indie-soul singer and songwriter Su Isaac. The gig kicks off at 7.30pm. Tickets on skillboxes.com starting ₹350. For an intimate concert, check out **Sofar Chennai's** secret gig on October 5 at 6.30pm. Tickets on sofarsounds.com at ₹650.



Curated chic

Festive shopping underway? Head to **Collage** today from 11am to 7pm for jewellery designer Sapna Singhania's collection of unique gemstones. For details, call 9551655051. For men's fashion, check out Mayank Modi's pop-up until September 29 at **Studio Samasta** from 6pm to 8pm. Explore his latest collection of shirts, jackets, kurtas and more. For details, call 9840342842.



These walls can talk

Celebrated for his public art interventions, visionary artist and mentor Hanif Kureshi passed away at 41

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In Chennai's Kannagi Nagar, a white three-storey building has a grey mural that only appears when the sun rises. The artwork is an intelligent shadow play on the crisis that the resettlement locality, some 20-odd kilometres from Chennai city, faces every year: water shortage. The wait for the

image, every morning, mirrors the neighbourhood's wait for water. For Daku aka Hanif Kureshi, time has always been a conduit for expression; a medium by his own admission. But one wonders if his favoured medium could have been kinder, as the country now mourns the artist's passing following a year-long battle with lung cancer. He was 41. "Daku. What a badass, right? To make such political, powerful and



(Clockwise from left) Daku's work at MUAF 2022-2023; a project by Hanif and artist Guido Van Helten on 142 years of Sassoon Dock; and Hanif Kureshi aka Daku. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



fearless public art interventions in India at a time when public art was not even a thing!" asks artist Shilo Suleiman. For Shilo, Hanif was a mentor and friend. "What he has done with the street art community, and how he brought us all together, and brought opportunities and infrastructure to the street art world, is a universe in itself."

Hanif's work, right from the early 2000s, is a tour-de-force in the contemporary Indian art ecosystem. From humble beginnings in Talaja, Gujarat, he pioneered multiple movements that brought the regional to the mainstream; and most importantly he took art to the streets. Loudly. "Yet, he had a way of wearing his art so gently," reminisces Riyaz Amlani, a longtime collaborator and friend. Hanif's HandpaintedType is a pathbreaker project that to

this day attempts to preserve the typographic practice of sign painters across India. With the idea of community at its centre, he co-founded the St+art India project with Guilia Ambrogi, Arjun Bahl, Akshat Nauriyal and Thanish Thomas in 2013. Guilia recalls, "The first few projects were done all by ourselves." As years went by and St+art India grew as an institution, Guilia says that their relationship became all about balancing ideas. "I have never heard Hanif complaining... Even after the diagnosis. He was the sun! So full of energy." Shilo recalls a chat she had with Hanif earlier in January. "Even through his deteriorating condition, we had conversations on how artists feel immortal. We work hard, barely sleep and as containers of creative vision, we often forget that we are human, and need a routine. It's my biggest takeaway following this loss."

Pop culture on your sleeve

A47.in X Tinkle Comics merchandise brings Suppandi and Shikari Shambu to life

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Mumbai-based weekly magazine *Tinkle* comics has teamed up with online clothing brand A47.in for a merchandise collection. The edit features three famous *Tinkle* characters: Suppandi, a village simpleton created by Ram Waerker in 1983; Shikari Shambu, the reluctant hero; and Tantri the Mantri, the notorious minister. "Our journey began with the idea to celebrate cultural pillars like the ISRO, the Armed Forces and the Constitution. Indians wear NASA, Disney and Marvel merchandise, so we started looking at comics or pop-culture symbols that resonate with us. That's where *Tinkle* came in," says Bhavik Vora, founder and CEO, A47.in, adding that the collaboration took two months to come together. The limited-edition collection of oversized

T-shirts, hoodies and sweatshirts was launched on September 17, on the birthday of Anant Pai, fondly known as Uncle Pai, founder and first editor of *Tinkle* comics. "Trans-media is how we connect with different people. Maybe there are those who have outgrown comics, but still want to feel connected to the characters they once loved. Everybody wants a piece of culture," says Preeti Vyas, president and CEO, Amar Chitra Katha, which publishes *Tinkle* comics. "Although we have a design team, we kept them away from this project. This is a different take on merchandise, so we respect their design sensibility," says Preeti, adding, the three characters were picked on the basis of their popularity.

Shop the collection on A47.in starting at ₹599.



A design from the A47.in X Tinkle Comics edit. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



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The Van Gogh Museum shop in Amsterdam is awash with colours synonymous with the painter's works. The shelves and nooks are brimming with collectibles, clothes, toys, ceramics and a plethora of artefacts primarily in teal and yellow. And if you look closer, you will find among them stoles with a name from India – Aeshaane by Neesha Amrith. The Chennai-based designer, who launched her label in 2008, recently created a line of Ahimsa silk stoles for the museum. “Two years back, the Van Gogh Museum wrote to me commissioning these stoles. They wanted me to take one of Van Gogh's paintings and make it my own, give it my touch,” she says. She chose Almond Blossoms. The painting depicts the flowering branches of an almond tree and it is known to signify hope and new life. “The leaves fall and it's a rebirth of sorts. It resonates with the story of artisans who have daily challenges and it's almost like they shed their leaves and get back on their feet,” she says. But the process of recreating the Almond Blossom was not easy.

**True blue**  
There was a lot of back and forth, and signing of documents. Then came creative challenges. It is labour-intensive, she says. Her artisan first drew the motif with chalk, then painted the flowers and stalks inside, followed by a bit of layering to add depth to motifs like in the original and then finally painted the blue around it. “The museum wanted every scarf to be identical. Every bark, every stroke had to be identical,” she says. With hand painting, it was impossible to get them to look identical. So, Neesha and her team had to create hand blocks to make the scarf. “People normally write down recipes for food. We have a recipe for the blue that we used. We stick to that formula as the colours have to match. It's a lot like cooking,” she laughs, adding, that it is



From the shores of Chennai to the canals of Amsterdam: Designer Neesha Amrith's handmade stoles are now at the Van Gogh museum store

## Stole the show



bucket-dyed and handmade. As a result, it took two years to create the prototype. “In the original work, the design is intricate and my design is more bold,” says Neesha of her signature style. There are big off-white and light ochre flowers and moss-green leaves on a background of teal blue. Now, it takes her team 15 days to make one stole which measures 27 inches by 80 inches. “For the first batch we sent 30 pieces. These are not mass produced,” she adds. While Neesha operates out of her studio in Neelankarai, working to the rhythm of the waves, her artisans are in Serampore (West Bengal)

(Above) Artisans creating the Ahimsa silk stoles inspired by Van Gogh's painting Almond Blossom; (left) Chennai-based designer Neesha Amrith. R RAVINDRAN AND SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

**Museum tour**  
This is not Aeshaane's first outing at a museum. Her stoles were showcased at the Victoria & Albert Museum (London) in 2013. They had a Fabric of India festival. Designers were handpicked to present traditional techniques but global, contemporary designs. Her work was also at the British Museum in London, and Royal Museums of Art and History, Brussels, among others. Recently, Neesha was selected for the Global Ambassadors Program by Vital Voices (Hillary Clinton is one of the founders) and Bank of America. “They selected 15 women entrepreneurs from around the world who work with handcraft and handloom,” she elaborates. Neesha then went to New York for their mentorship programme that covered topics like funding, leadership, and mental wellbeing. Even there, they liked my scarves so much that I got a corporate order from the Bank of America,” laughs Neesha.

where they work while the breeze from the Hooghly river caresses them. Earlier, they were in Perungudi. But when the pandemic hit, they wanted to go home. And then, one day they made a collective call to Neesha from Serampore suggesting that they move the workshop there. “The workshop is my life, my daughter was literally raised there,” says Neesha, adding that it was not an easy decision to make. “But that is home for them, and they are happy there and I did not want to take that away from them,” smiles Neesha, adding that she was able to get more women artisans to join as they could live with their families in their hometown and work from there. Neesha also travels to Serampore few times in a year to discuss ideas. The team is tech savvy and they video call each other. Things happen at an easy pace. “There's no rush to create, which I really like. Sometimes when I am walking with my daughter, we collect leaves and give them to the block maker. We don't follow seasons or trends. We create what genuinely inspires me. It's soul satiating and allows us time to work around our families,” she adds.

## Looking London, talking Indian

The first Indian designer to showcase at the UK's Harrods, Manish Malhotra, navigates the global fashion scene through his World Collection that modernises India's traditional textile crafts

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India's fashion industry has officially joined the 175th anniversary celebration of London's luxury departmental store Harrods, with a special showcase of a fashion edit by couturier Manish Malhotra. As the first Indian fashion designer to have teamed up with Harrods, Manish has crafted a line of limited-edition garments that fuse India's design grammar with the West's style vocabulary. Titled World Collection, the edit reinterprets India's textile crafts in contemporary context. “A little over a year ago, Harrods reached out to me with a vision to celebrate India and its craftsmanship, which immediately felt like a perfect fit. Their idea of showcasing India's rich cultural heritage through a global luxury platform resonated deeply with my own commitment to preserving and elevating our traditional artistry,” says Manish.

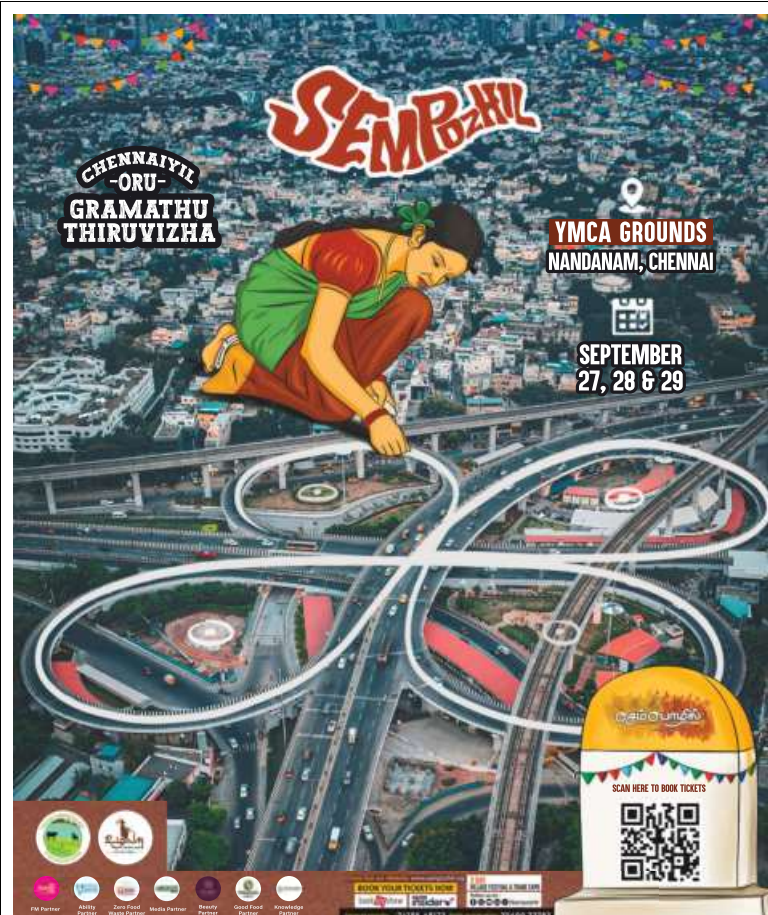
Displayed at Harrods's exclusive private shopping penthouse, a members-only club, the collection's silhouettes draw inspiration from the drapes of the traditional sari, with gowns, sari-gowns and brocade jackets brought to life by age-old textile crafts like zardosi, chikankari, and gota patti. “I've infused each piece with zardosi, chikankari, and our signature sequin embroidery, using sumptuous silks, velvets, and airy chiffons that evoke the opulence of India's past while



embracing contemporary design,” he informs. Manish asserts that the collaboration bridges tradition and contemporary design, East and West, marking the beginning of a new era in global fashion, where heritage and innovation blend seamlessly, and the legacy of Indian art is celebrated on a global platform. “One of the standout ensembles was created specifically to celebrate Harrods' 175th anniversary, featuring their

iconic greens. This limited-edition collection includes several exclusive pieces, each celebrating the grandeur of Indian heritage and the incredible craftsmanship of our artisans. The collection was curated at the Manish Malhotra atelier in Mumbai,” he adds. While Manish endorses the quintessential idea of Indo-western design representing a harmonious blend of Indian craftsmanship and contemporary aesthetics, he is all too particular about achieving this balance through a thoughtful selection of traditional elements, which can be reinterpreted through modern silhouettes. “I focus on creating pieces that resonate with a wider audience, allowing for personal expression while still honouring cultural heritage. Ultimately, the goal is to create a fusion that feels both familiar and fresh, appealing to diverse sensibilities while preserving the essence of both traditions,” he signs off.

The World Collection will be on display at Harrods London's exclusive private shopping penthouse till September 29.



## Weaves that make waves

The 13th edition of the Nayaab edit highlights dyeing, printing and weaving techniques like shibori, jamdani and kalamkari



(Left) The collection by Divya Sethi; and (below) a dress by Ka-Sha. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

**Amarjot Kaur**  
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paean to the heritage textile crafts of India, the 13th edition of Nayaab – a retrospective that will make its way to Chennai on October 3 – puts the spotlight on dyeing, printing and weaving techniques like shibori, bandhini, jamdani and kalamkari. The two-day exhibit brings 23 brands to the Welcomhotel By ITC, Cathedral Road. “We have always kept the exhibit small and intimate while focussing on natural fabrics; that remains our priority this year too. However, there are new additions, like an installation, at the exhibition,” says textile revivalist Rupa Sood, who is also the founder of Nayaab.

The exhibition will feature brands that Nayaab has shared a long association with, alongside new brands, which, Rupa says, show contemporary designs interpreted with indigenous textiles and revived with techniques that are fading away. “We also like to rope in brands who are working with communities of craftspeople. We have been working with Urvashi Kaur, EKA, Taika, Kora, Sartorial, Weavers Studio and Divya Sheth from our early days. Ka-Sha, Kalam Shastra, Ode to Odd, Aikeyah, Urbania Jaipur, Moksh, Soham

Dave and Naari Shakti are new additions,” says Rupa.

On the first day, the exhibition will host a talk on the topic, Transforming: Cosmopolitan Textiles, by Ritu Sethi – founder-trustee of the Craft Revival Trust and editor of Global InCH, the online international journal of intangible cultural heritage – at 10.30am.

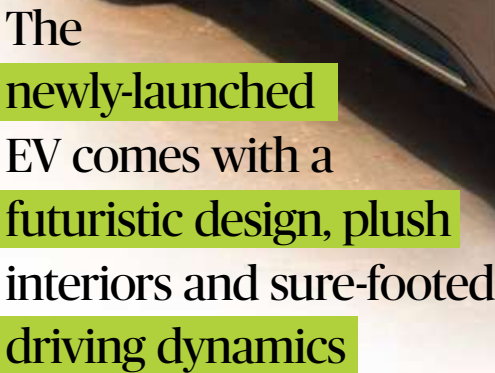
Though the retrospective showcases garments and textile wall art, it will also display an installation for the first time. “Kalam Shastra is the revival of the age-old technique kalamkari by Tilak Reddy and he is constructing a special installation using kalamkari textile,” informs Rupa. Talking about other brands at the exhibit, she points towards Naari Shakti. “This brand has been supporting a women's collective in Okhla basti and they make bracelets with jute and steel,” she adds. Some of her top picks from the retrospective include Ka-Sha for upcycling indigenous textiles; Studio Medium and Urbania Jaipur for shibori dyeing and Divya Sheth for ajrak, kalamkari and chintz. “It took us nearly six months to curate the edit,” says Ketaki Sood, co-curator of Nayaab, who is facilitating the exhibition in Chennai.



The products at Nayaab, which are on display till October 4, start at ₹8,000.

Poster for the RRR event featuring Mani & Band. The poster includes logos for sponsors like rela Hospital, AAB, and others. It lists the performers: Sreekanth Hariharan, Nivas, Sireesha, and Srinidhi Sriprakash. The event is titled "RRR" and is presented by Mani & Band. The venue is Music Academy, Alwarpet, and the date is 05.10.2024, Saturday, at 6.30 PM. Tickets are available at 90944 40117.

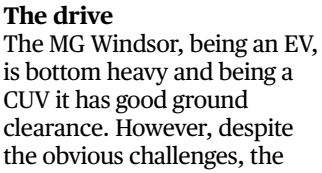
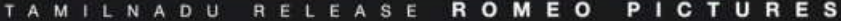
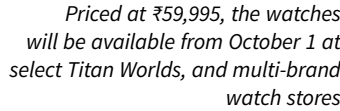




The MG Windsor, the company claims, comes with the comfort of a sedan while offering the practicality of an SUV. The vehicle also boasts a host of features, some of which are a segment first, while others look to sweeten the deal of owning an electric vehicle (EV). But more on that later.

uplifting the overall look and feel. On the sides, drivers will notice the door handles which sit flush with the doors. These pop out when the car is unlocked. The most noticeable part of the side profile is the blacked-out C-pillars, which give it a floating roof effect. The vehicle sits on 18-inch alloys, which fill up the wheel arches enhancing the overall

First, the looks. A head-turner for sure, the MG Windsor comes with an LED insert that runs the width of the front bumper. This divides the front segment in two distinctive parts, with the front headlamps tucked neatly in the lower half. There is tasteful use of chrome in the design,



SATHYAM | ESCAPE | INOX EVI | SANGAM | CASINO | ALBERT | WOODLANDS | EGA | PVR - AMPA | PALAZZO  
KAMALA | TNAGAR AGS | UDHAYAM | S2 PERAMUR | SANDI RAJ | BHARATH | IDREAM | MAHALAXMI | KRISHNAVENI  
KKNAGAR KASI | KASI VALIGES | IMOX LUX | PVR GRAND - VELACHERY | PVR GALADA - PALAVARAM | PVR ICON VR MALL  
REDHILLS PVR | ECR - PVR | INOX NATIONAL | INOX MARNAI S2 THIYAGARAJA | MAYAJAAL | MIAMANDUR - C3  
CINEPOLISH | EVP CINEMAS | AMBATHUR - RAKI | MURUGAN | VELLAVAKAM - AGS | OMIR AGS | MADURAVANAL - AGS  
KOYAMBEDU - ROHINI | PORUR - GK | THAMIRAM - VIDHYA & MR & NATIONAL | CHORMPET - VETRI | KOLATHUR - GANGA  
PADI - SIVA SAKTHI & LAXMI BALA RADHA | GREEN | REDHILLS - RADHA MOVIE PARK | THIRUVALLUR - RAKI & ROJA & THULASI  
ST THOMAS - JOTHY | PONNAMALLE - SUNDHAR VIGNESWARA & BHAGAVATHY | CHENGALPET - SRK & LATHA  
PALLAVARAM - JANATHA | THIRUNINRAVUR - VELACINEMAS | MINJUR - MANI & KK CINEMAS | MEDAVAKKAM - KUMARAN  
KANCHIPURAM - BADI & ARUNA & KARTHIKEYAN & BALAJI | INDOORAM - SHANMUGA & PANDIAN | THIRUVOTRIYUR - MEM & OCEAN MANI  
ANAKAPUTHUR - GANESH & VELCOI | MADU - MEEANKSHI & REMI | UTHUKOTTAL - KUMARI | GUDUVANCHERRY - YENKATESWARA  
SRI BRINDHA | THIRUTHANI - DURGA & GK GOODEN | AMMAKURUPPAM - BASU | PALLAVARAM - JANATHA | ADAYAR - GANAPATHYRAI

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PARABHU DEVIA

**PETTA RAP**

THE BIGGEST MUSIC REVEAL - 12.12.20

DIRECTED BY S/S SINU  
PRODUCED BY JOBI P SAM  
A D IMMAN MUSICAL

WRITTEN BY DINE P K AND JITHUDAMODHAN CASTING BY AN MOHAN PRODUCTION EXECUTIVE ANAND S PRODUCTION CONTROLLER SASI KUMAR S EXECUTIVE PRODUCER RITA S  
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER ARUN MANDHAR CASTING ARUN VINAY MUSIC BY ARJUN NIGAMAN EDITOR PRASAD SANKAR DANCE CHOREO DINESH RAJ, VICKY MASTER  
COSTUME DESIGNER ROOPRETHY RAO, ROBERT JOHN VINCE, MADHAN KARAN HAIR SHANMUGA AND THIRUPAAL MAKEUP STUDIO RUS & GENE XTORIA  
MUSIC DESIGNER DREESANKAR PRODUCTION PRATHESH SEKHAR AUDIO PRODUCTION SNAKEPLANT LLP VISUALS YELLOWTOOTH

UAE



Hindi

Siddhant Chaturvedi's ragged actioner



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After the revolting *Animal* and the arresting *Kill*, this week we have a crossbreed that pretends to be a beast but lacks the hunger and the bite. As the title suggests, the protagonist is born to be a warrior. Surviving violence in the womb, Yudhra (Siddhant Chaturvedi) grows up without parents fighting anger issues and forging bonds with reptiles. It promises an appointment with an unhinged creature, but we soon realise that it is our same old hero meant to keep the galleries agape with a new set of stunts.

His father's colleagues Kartik (Gajraj Rao) and Rahman (Ram Kapoor) try to channelise Yudhra's anger in the right direction by turning him into a soldier to finish the mission that his father started. Meanwhile, Rahman's daughter Nikhat (Malavika Mohanan) keeps Yudhra jiving on the dance floor. As Yudhra infiltrates the den of the drug cartel led by a pragmatic butcher Firoz (Raj Arjun) and his coke-head son (Raghav Juyal), blood starts dripping and masks start to come off.

Siddhant shows the nerve to carry a heavy-footed narrative on his chiseled shoulders. Malavika provides him charming company with those expressive eyes. The psychological upheaval gets cosmetic and the romance feels plastic as the actioner generates only a little more emotional connection than a video game does. The action set-pieces are performed with conviction but their setting is too predictable to invite awe.

Raghav brings his training in dance to his villainy, making him a reptilian figure. However, the actor needs to work on his delivery otherwise he is going to sound repetitive very soon. Rao, Raj, and Kapoor lend gravitas to the proceedings but the effort gets paled in the anaemic storytelling. It is an old, at times ragged, engine that powers this shiny vehicle. It does rev up a lot but seldom startles you with its ambition or suspense.

Those who frequently drive on the Bollywood lanes would respond to its rhyme and rhythm from a distance. It behaves like a Mahesh Bhatt flick of the 1990s that copied the style of B-grade Hollywood actioners sans a genuine lilt to back the bouts of testosterone.

Director Ravi Udyawar who delivered the emotionally charged *Mom* (2017) knows more than a thing or two about mounting tales of revenge on the big screen and writer Sridhar Raghavan is expected to enrich action with context and subtext. But here they deliver a deep cut in their otherwise rich repertoire. Even Farhan Akhtar's dialogues sound dated as *Yudhra* repeats the same old tale of Abhimanyu and talk of light after a dark night.

Take this ride only if someone else is paying for it.

Yudhra is currently running in theatres



A wholesome entertainer

With the meticulously-written characters accentuating this well-rounded sports drama, Harish Kalyan and Attakathi Dinesh's *Lubber Pandhu* is as entertaining as a CSK match

Tamil

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In a country like India where cricket is an emotion, there's no dearth of films on the beloved sport. From biopics on some of the best players the game has seen, to using cricket as a backdrop for a heart-warming underdog drama, several iterations of the game have been explored. Now with *Lubber Pandhu*, director Tamizharasan Pachamuthu sheds light on the rubber ball cricket tournament culture prevalent in the deep pockets of Tamil Nadu, and intricately weaves an intriguing narrative around it.

Some films blow your mind with a distinct story set in a completely new backdrop while others narrate a simple, straightforward story but work thanks to the way its elements come together; *Lubber Pandhu* is a textbook example of the latter. In the film, Anbu (Harish Kalyan) is a small-town guy and a gifted bowler who crosses paths with Poomalai a.k.a. Gethu (Attakathi Dinesh), an older, much-revered batsman. A series of unfortunate incidents trigger their egos and their on-field rivalry spills into their personal lives... only for it to hit a crescendo when they learn that Anbu is in a relationship with Gethu's daughter Durga (Sanjana Krishnamoorthy).

Films on ego and interpersonal relationships seem to be working well for Harish. He ended last year with a bang thanks to *Parking*, where his character faced off against a fellow tenant, played by the veteran MS Bhaskar. In this film, his rivalry is with Attakathi Dinesh who is fresh off the success of the underrated *J Baby* which was also, incidentally, about family and interpersonal relationships. While the premise might sound similar to *Blue Star* which came out earlier this year, *Lubber Pandhu* dwells deep into the intricacies of relationships and how egos can effect them. The fact that both films

Lubber Pandhu

Director: Tamizharasan Pachamuthu

Cast: Harish Kalyan, Attakathi Dinesh, Swasika, Sanjana Krishnamoorthy, Kaali Venkat, Bala Saravanan, Jenson Dhivakar

Storyline: A young rubber-ball cricket bowler locks horns with an experienced batsman only to find out that his arch-nemesis is his girlfriend's father



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also hold a mirror to how deep-rooted caste-based discrimination is in our society in a subtle manner, is the cherry atop the cake.

Both the lead characters are not particularly challenging roles, though Harish and Dinesh pull them off quite well; the reason boils down to how their characters have been sketched. Anbu and Gethu are two men belonging to two different generations but that's about all the distinctions they have. Both would do anything for their one true love, value friendship, are players with egos as massive as their talents, and, of course, love cricket more than anything else.

Director Tamizharasan does a splendid job of characterising and, as the film progresses, humanising Anbu and Gethu's tryst with a myriad of emotions. Anbu, as his name suggests, is the first to wave the white flag while Gethu, as you might have guessed, is the harder nut to crack. Speaking of names, Yashoda (played by an impressive Swasika) has to turn into a mother figure for her husband Gethu who prioritises his game over the betterment of his family. For a film on a sport between testosterone-powered men, *Lubber Pandhu* pleasantly surprises you with how well the women characters are written.

While the romantic portions between Anbu and his girlfriend Durga (Sanjana Krishnamoorthy) are written with enough care to not slacken the flow of the film, it's the matured romance between Yashoda and Gethu that is most memorable. This works predominantly because of the love-hate relationship they share, along with an additional layer brought in by the fact that they belong to two different castes. *Lubber Pandhu* also showcases the men to be impetuous creatures while the women – who face the brunt of their male counterparts' actions – are more level-headed and keep things from falling apart. But arguably the best part of the film is how it never villainises any of its characters or romanticises their flaws; it shows them to be a product of their circumstances, and how all it takes is one right call to get into the good books of

their family members.

Tamizharasan introduces us to the world of rubber ball cricket, and its impact on the lives of its players, complete with their quirks; there's even a scene where a bride signs an agreement at her wedding reception that she would let her husband play cricket with his friends! Be it the introduction songs they play every time a star player walks into the pavilion – it's Vijayakanth hits for Gethu, and Vijay for Anbu – or how Gethu uses his handkerchief as a bat handle grip, the attention to detailing turns us from theatrical watchers to stadium spectators. A personal favourite is how the film defines two particular timelines with how much a rubber ball costs in that specific year.

And boy, the cricket match portions are a treat to watch! The director spins a googly with these sequences as he goes against the grains of usual cricket film tropes. Tamizharasan subverts expectations at crucial moments and these nuggets of little wins lets us ignore the film's snags such as a forced female empowerment trope surrounding a player, that feels unnecessary. As with every Tamil film on cricket, there's ample scope for humour thanks to the colloquial game commentary, but *Lubber Pandhu* takes it up a notch with the characters played by Bala Saravanan and Jenson Dhivakar. The film also does a wonderful job when it comes to managing its secondary characters and the one played by Kaali Venkat could very well become a fan-favourite.

With several arcs weaved together seamlessly – including the caste oppression angle to which Tamizharasan gives a profound resolution – the filmmaker makes his mark as a talent to watch out for. *Lubber Pandhu* is a breath of fresh air and a refreshing addition to the ever-growing list of films on cricket; so much so that we can call it a whole new ballgame.

Lubber Pandhu is currently running in theatres

An uninspiring romantic tale lacking any emotional connect

Malayalam

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An elaborate act of deception forms the core of *Kadha Innuvare*, Vishnu Mohan's sophomore film. Some of the best screenplays employ such methods intelligently and organically to throw a genuine surprise at the audience. In this film's case, it is neither. The surprise that is conjured up at that final moment does not leave one feeling exhilarated, but somewhat deflated and disappointed.

Going by the happenings in the film till that point, it appears to be contrived to save a film in which the four disparate love stories do not have much of a standing on their own. Though *Kadha Innuvare* is a remake of the Telugu film *C/o Kancharapalem*, that fact is not explicitly mentioned anywhere and the director (who earlier directed



*Meppadiyan*) is also credited for the screenplay.

It all begins with the film taking us from one love story to another, shifting back and forth, as in a typical hyperlink format. In the present, the film deals with the budding romance between two middle-aged people, Ramchandran (Biju Menon) a peon at a government office who is still unmarried, and Lekshmi (Methil Devika), a senior official and a single mother. Parallely, the screenplay shifts to three other stories: the innocent love of two school children; the romance between a liquor shop employee (Hakim Shajahan) and prostitute Nazeema (Anusree); and that between college student Uma (Nikhila Vimal) and Joseph (Anu Mohan), a party worker.

But the weak writing and characterisation is evident across all the four love stories. The romance of the middle-aged couple, which develops slowly and out of a practical need appears to be the better-written out of the four, but even this track is disappointing due

to the lack of agency of the woman, who literally pleads with her brother to let her marry again and puts up with his violent outbursts despite having the economic independence to stand up for herself. Similarly, though the liquor shop employee's love is all thanks to the eyes of the woman – who always appears in front of him with her face covered – he perplexingly fails to recognise these eyes when he sees her entire face on one occasion.

Kadha Innuvare

Director: Vishnu Mohan

Cast: Biju Menon, Methil Devika, Nikhila Vimal, Anusree, Hakim Shajahan, Anu Mohan, Renji Panicker, Siddique

Storyline: An anthology of four unusual stories where each couple fights to be with the ones they love against all odds

As for the school romance, it is mostly a rehash of childhood love seen in many other films. The most problematic one is the love story of Joseph and Uma, which appears to be placed to raise the bogey of religious conversions. Uma, an otherwise rebellious character, caves in without a word following a predictable, guilt-tripping speech from her father about the sacrifices he had made, including not getting married after her mother's death. But then, one has to understand that each of these stories were being shaped not by factors within the story, but for the convenience of that contrived climax. The desperate attempts to inject a dose of religiosity to many events in the film is also glaring.

The manufactured twist in the tale fails to save *Kadha Innuvare*, with none of the four love stories managing to create an emotional connect.

Kadha Innuvare is currently running in theatres



The Penguin

**Creator:** Lauren LeFranc

**Cast:** Colin Farrell, Cristin Milioti, Michael Zegen, Mark Strong

**Episodes:** 1 of 8

**Storyline:** The transformation of Oswald Cobblepot from a disfigured nobody to a noted Gotham gangster.



An explosive ride

Streaming

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What a virtuoso performance by Colin Farrell in *The Penguin*! As Oswald Oz Cobb, Farrell devours every frame he is in, switching effortlessly from placid to explosive in the blink of an eye. Apart from the marvellous make-up and prosthetics, it is his voice, gait and demeanour that have you investing in this quicksilver version of Fredo Corleone. Set a week after the events of *The Batman* (2022), which saw the assassination of mob boss Carmine

Falcone (Mark Strong takes over from John Turturro) and the blowing up of the seawall, *The Penguin* finds Oz Cobb plotting to fill the power vacuum. We learn more of Cobb's motivations as he deals with the Falcone siblings – the drug-addled Al (Michael Zegen) and Sofia (Cristin Milioti), a psychotic serial killer newly released from Arkham Asylum. Farrell has said the spin-off would explore the character's villainy and strength as well as the "heart-broken man underneath." And we get to see all of that in the fiery first episode of the mini-series, 'After Hours'. "I am an acquired taste," says Cobb and we believe it, rushing to acquire it, "plum, not purple" car and all. There is a new drug on the market, which Al and Sofia are planning to use to take the business to the next level, while cautious Johnny Vitti (Michael Kelly) the Falcone family underboss, wishes to lie low till the heat cools. Anyone who underestimates Cobb, does it at their peril; though a middle lieutenant for the Falcone family, Cobb has dreams and ideas and the steel in his spine to realise them. In a fearful symmetry, Cobb gains an understudy in Vic (Rhenzy Feliz), a teenager, who Cobb runs into as Vic with other juvenile delinquents is

trying to rob the rims off Cobb's tires. Vic proves himself a worthy second-in-command, by showing initiative and also crucially knowing when to keep his counsel and acknowledge his fear. And he has nice manners too, when Cobb goes to visit his mother, Francis (Deirdre O'Connell), who for all her early onset dementia, is just the medicine Cobb needs to put his plans in motion. The other crime family, headed by Salvatore Maroni (Clancy Brown) is also in play as it is thanks to Carmine that Maroni is in jail. Like all noir, Gotham city is as much a character the mob bosses and molls, with its constant rain, the tiredly bright neon signboards and slick roads. The tension is kept up as we zip along with Cobb swerving at the last minute to avoid all those head-on collisions and red lights, including escaping the tender mercies of a piano-wire by a palpitating hairsbreadth. As Sofia comments over a scary, ravenous lunch with Cobb, "Daddy is dead, and we are untamed."

The Penguin is currently streaming on JioCinema with weekly episodes till November 10

Snippets



Margot Robbie and Jacob Elordi to star in Wuthering Heights

Margot Robbie and Jacob Elordi are set to star in Emerald Fennell's upcoming adaptation of *Wuthering Heights*, produced by MRC and LuckyChap. Robbie will take on the role of Catherine Earnshaw, while Elordi will portray Heathcliff in this reimagining of Emily Brontë's classic novel. The film is in pre-production, with plans to begin shooting in the UK in 2025. Fennell, who won an Oscar for her original screenplay *Promising Young Woman*, will write, direct, and produce the adaptation, marking her third collaboration with Robbie's production company, LuckyChap. Plot details for the film are being kept under wraps, but fans are eager to see how Fennell will approach the iconic story.



Laapataa Ladies is India's official submission to Oscars 2025

Kiran Rao's piquant *Laapataa Ladies* has been selected as India's official submission to Oscars 2025. The announcement was made by the jury of the Film Federation of India (FFI), the apex body that annually selects the Indian official entry for the Academy Award for Best International Feature Film, on September 23. Released in theatres in March, *Laapataa Ladies* is Rao's sophomore directorial after the acclaimed *Dhobi Ghat* (2011). The satirical drama tells the story of a young man whose bride gets accidentally swapped with someone else's. The film stars Sparsh Shrivastava along with Nitanshi Goel, Pratibha Ranta, Chhaya Kadam and Ravi Kishan.



Dhanush's fourth directorial titled Idli Kadai

Title of actor Dhanush's fourth directorial is out. To be produced by Aakash Baskaran of Dawn Pictures and Dhanush from his banner Wunderbar Films, the film is called *Idli Kadai*. Dhanush took to social media to announce the film's title with a poster. The project marks the maiden production of Dawn Pictures. *Idli Kadai* is Dhanush's 52nd project. Dhanush is currently filming his third directorial, *Nilavukku En Mel Ennadi Kobam*. The film stars Anikha Surendran, Priya Prakash Varrier, Matthew Thomas, Venkatesh Menon, and Rabiya Khatoun in key roles.



Burdened by Marvel's waning spell

Marvel's latest spinoff to a spinoff feels just like what it is: a tired brand extension that fails to conjure any lasting magic

Streaming

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Following the breakout success of Kathryn Hahn's deliciously sinister Agatha Harkness in Marvel's *WandaVision*, *Agatha All Along* was destined to ride the Emmy-winning coattails of its coven mother's success. Alas, its fumbling two-episode premiere quickly loses steam, delivering a tacky misfiring of witch tropes that is egregiously underwhelming. There's a frustrating sense that the series is aware of its limitations, but chooses to lean into them rather than transcend them. It starts with a self-referential homage to *Mare of Easttown*, with Hahn's Agatha playing a grizzled small-town detective – a spitting image of Kate Winslet's eponymous character – throwing herself into a *True Detective*-like quest for the truth that feels amusing to witness play out in the MCU. The choice is certainly ambitious, perhaps even clever in how it plays with expectations, but instead of sinking its teeth into that idea, the series abandons it almost as quickly as it appears, when the pilot abruptly shifts gears. The show then picks up where

Agatha All Along

**Creator:** Jac Schaeffer

**Cast:** Kathryn Hahn, Joe Locke, Debra Jo Rupp, Aubrey Plaza, Sasheer Zamata

**Episodes:** 1 of 9

**Storyline:** Set after the events of 'WandaVision', Agatha Harkness recruits some unlikely allies on her quest to regain her former powers

*WandaVision* left off, with Agatha still trapped in her suburban persona, living as the nosy neighbor Agnes in the sleepy town of Westview. Unfortunately, *Agatha All Along* doesn't seem to know what to do with itself once the curtains rise. There's potential here, but it's soon buried beneath a heap of corny one-liners and clichés that seem less self-aware and more lazily overdone. One could argue that the show's intent was always to embrace its own absurdity, but where *WandaVision* cleverly wove in mystery, pathos and some semblance of stakes, *Agatha All Along* falls flat in every attempt to be more than just a series of visual gags. It's not that the series lacks charm. Hahn, as expected, is a menacing delight. Her titular turn is simultaneously sharp-tongued and world-weary, and a screen-saving presence. But even her sardonic proclamation that "babies are delicious," can't compensate for the shortcomings in the writing. Much like the constrained reality her character finds herself trapped in, the show itself feels stuck – hemmed in by the demands of the franchise it is part of, and the need to stay marketable to a younger, wider audience. Without prior knowledge of *WandaVision*'s conclusion, Agatha's motivations and backstory that suddenly involves walking the fabled Witches' Road is... murky at best, inscrutable at worst. There's no emotional weight behind her desire to reclaim her powers, nor is there

a compelling antagonist (yet) to drive the conflict forward. Conversely, Marvel has somehow simultaneously also made the stakes of Agatha's journey feel disconnected from the larger MCU, almost as if this were a footnote that never needed telling in the first place. The series also feels stuck in a visual limbo, unsure whether it wants to be a nostalgic homage to the '90s campy, *Goosebumps*-style vibe or something altogether new, inevitably resulting in a bland, generic aesthetic that never quite matches the zaniness of its central character. A refreshing takeaway however is Christoph Beck and Michael Paraskevas' teasing original score. The supporting cast includes *Heartstopper*'s Joe Locke as an endearing fanboy sidekick, whose purpose in the story is still a bit hazy; Aubrey Plaza's brief appearance as the sultry Rio Vidal is another colourful addition that soon gets lost in the shuffle of what's yet to come. Occasionally enjoyable but mostly forgettable, *Agatha All Along* is yet another product on an assembly line that's finally starting to creak. Marvel's once-thrilling brand of storytelling is teetering on the edge of a dull, soulless demise, and *Agatha* might just be the final proof that the magic is all but spent.

The first two episodes of Agatha All Along are currently streaming on Disney+ Hotstar with new episodes every Friday