



## NANDITA DAS IN YET ANOTHER ROLE

A'bad to stage her play 'Between the Lines' in which she makes her debut as playwright and director



Kinjal Desai

Juggling the roles of working woman and a full-time mother did not deter actor Nandita Das from plunging into a new role - that of a playwright and theatre director. Adding another feather to her already full cap, Das forays into theatre after a gap of eight years.

The multi-faceted actor reveals how Ahmedabad defeated bigger metro cities to stage the play, what her play offers to her audience, and how its subject is close to her heart.

"When we had initially planned the schedule, it was Delhi, Bangalore and Ahmedabad. But later, for some reason, both Delhi and Bangalore got pushed behind and Ahmedabad led the show. After staging the play in Ahmedabad, we will go to Mumbai, Bangalore, New Delhi, Kolkata and then Dhaka," she said.

"The subject has a universal appeal be it for people from metro cities or smaller ones. So, I asked myself, 'Why not Ahmedabad?' After all I have acted in the past at Darpana Academy, where the play will be staged on September 30."

Interestingly, her businessman husband Subodh Maskaara will, for the first time, act and produce the play which is the first offering of the couple's production house, Chhoti Productions. The company was started two years ago and also has actor and



playwright Divya Jagdale with Das on the script.

For Das, like many other reel roles, the play came by default. "The graph of my work has never had a pattern. Different opportunities came my way and I went with the flow. Eight years ago, I thought plays required a huge chunk of time which I didn't have and, sometimes, the plays that came my way were not exciting enough. But now, ever since motherhood took over as my full-time profession, I want to be more creative and do something that is more man-

ageable from home. However, it has turned out to be bigger than I had anticipated."

The subject of the play is close to her heart. "It's about gender inequality, which women face at some point in their life. It's about how a woman balances her role in both traditional and modern ways. Her juggling act! The play reflects lives of few of my friends and me," said the acclaimed actor.

'Between the Lines' is a play set in contemporary urban India and explores the relationship between a married lawyer couple Shekhar (played by Subodh) and Maya (played by

Nandita). In their decade-old marriage and profession, for the first time the couple finds themselves on opposite sides in an attempt-to-murder case. The case helps them reach a midway point and find a new balance in their own lives.

Das said being a debutant frees one from the set grammar of an industry. "When I directed Firaq, I had not been to a directing school. And so when I am writing, acting and directing all at the same time, I find it to be more challenging. I like telling stories but, in my case, it's the content that drives the form. My aim is to get my audience involved in the play for one-and-a-half-hours and when it ends they should be able to dissect their own lives based on what they have seen," she said.

On how Subodh stumbled upon acting, Das said, "His uncle is a theatre veteran and so as a kid he always accompanied him backstage. It was probably an unfulfilled dream of his which has finally taken shape."

Although Das hopes to write a film script sometime next year, she is currently not sure and has not planned anything concrete. But along with being a full-time mother, work will continue in parallel as it is an intricate part of her and helps her have time for herself.

## AIR's Urdu service revived after 20 yrs

Device near Rajkot to facilitate transmission to India, Pak, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia and Iran

DNA Correspondent

Khush aamdeed. Akashvani ki Urdu seva mein aapka swagat hai.

Revived on September 10, 2012, AIR's 1071 khz transmitter in Dhrol, 40km from Rajkot, has started transmitting Urdu services of Akashvani in India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia and some parts of Iran.

Started on July 1, 1971, the services were shut down after nearly 20 years, said deputy director-general, Akashvani, CK Om Prakash. "The Rajkot AIR device was India's first and highest wavelength transmitter. It was made in Yugoslavia. Normally the transmitters have a life span of 15-20 years and so did our device. Hence we had to shut down."

This Urdu broadcast service falls under All India Radio's (AIR's) External Services Division (ESD). Initially, it was an analog transmitter and was installed in Rajkot as a strategic move by the Indian government to stop transmission of Radio Karachi in India.

The new transmitter is part of Digital Radio Mondiale (DRM) technology

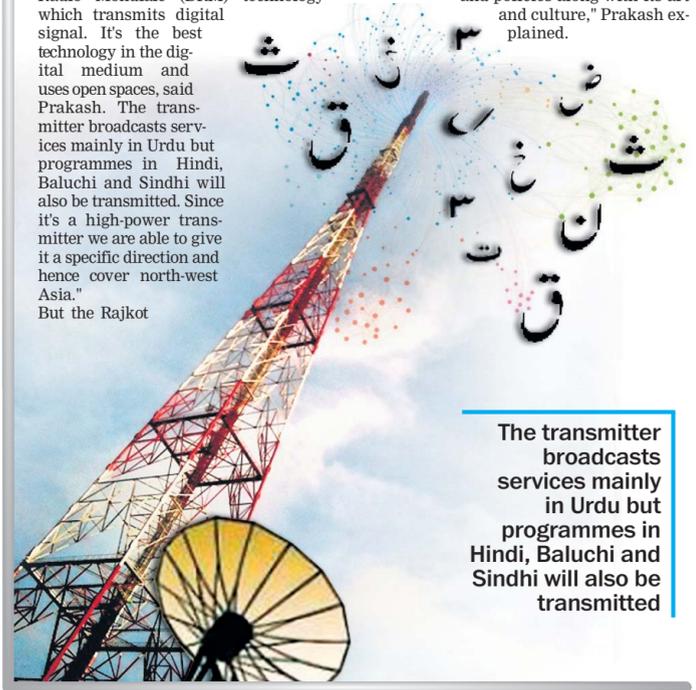
which transmits digital signal. It's the best technology in the digital medium and uses open spaces, said Prakash. The transmitter broadcasts services mainly in Urdu but programmes in Hindi, Baluchi and Sindhi will also be transmitted. Since it's a high-power transmitter we are able to give it a specific direction and hence cover north-west Asia." But the Rajkot

The Rajkot AIR device was India's first and highest wavelength transmitter. It was made in Yugoslavia.

— CK Om Prakash, deputy director-general, Akashvani

division will not be involved in the programmes that will be aired. Prakash stated that all programmes will be transmitted from New Delhi station only and the DRM in Gujarat will boost its signal. The area being covered spans almost 1200 km in radius.

"Owing to DRM technology we will be able to provide foreign language services on medium wave and Vivid Bharti on the digital wave. In addition, we will also be able to broadcast services such as for traffic, emergencies and the like on the same wavelength. The aim of ESD is to promote to the world India's viewpoint, progress and policies along with its art and culture," Prakash explained.



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## NO PREMIERE?

While there was buzz about Madhur Bhandarkar's *Heroine* starring Kareena Kapoor having a grand premiere on Thursday with the who's who of the industry in attendance, an insider has revealed that the event may be called off. The insider reveals that instead of the red carpet pre-

miere, the production house is planning to have two special screenings, one of it being for Kareena and her friends from the industry. Talking about the cancellation, an insider reveals that while Ganesh Chaturthi is being cited as the reason (the one-and-a-half-day Ganpati idols will be taken for *visarjan* on Thursday), the real reason could be the

fact that the film is actually taking digs at many of the industry people, which might not be taken in the right spirit by some. "Madhur's films are known to show the real picture, so it might rub many the wrong way, though Madhur has maintained that the film or any incident is not based on any one particular person," says the insider. — Aakanksha Naval-Shetye



## 'Varanasi is absolutely staggering'

...gushes Hollywood actor Brad Pitt as he talks about his fascination with India

Shreya Badola

While he's been in the news more for the speculation surrounding his marriage to partner, actor Angelina Jolie, Hollywood heartthrob Brad Pitt will be seen in the upcoming film *Killing Them Softly* — an adaptation of George V Higgins' novel *Cogan's Trade*, with the action moved from the 1970s to the 2008 financial crisis. The actor, who's no stranger to India, however took time out to recount experiences he's had here. The excerpts:

**HOW DO YOU LOOK BACK AT YOUR VISIT TO INDIA?**

On my last visit, I got to see a lot of India. There is no place like it. And it's so diverse — both the South and the North, that one cannot get to see all of it in a couple of weeks. But I found Varanasi absolutely staggering. I have never seen anything like it before. The city just spills into the river Ganges. It's a holy place

where people go to die. It's really, really extraordinary!

**WOULD YOU EVER WORK IN A FILM FROM BOLLYWOOD?**

I'm not too familiar with Indian music or Bollywood. I got an opportunity to explore a bit of India when Angie (Jolie) and I came down for the shooting of her film *A Mighty Heart*. That's when we got close to Bollywood actor Irrfan Khan, who was also in the film. I'm open to working in India if a good script comes along, why not?

**YOU PLAY JACKIE COGAN IN YOUR NEXT FILM. TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT IT...**

It was fun getting that dominant element in terms of my body language. There is a scene where I tell Frankie (Scott McNairy) how victims "get touchy-feely. Emotional, not fun, lot of fuss. They cry, they plead, they beg, they piss themselves, they call for their mothers. It's embarrassing. I like to kill them softly, from a distance, not close enough for feelings — don't like feelings, don't want to think about 'em." That, I think, sums up Cogan.

**IS IT TRUE THAT IN YOUR PERSONAL LIFE, YOU DON'T FEEL 'SAFE WITHOUT THE GUN'?**

America is a country founded on guns. It's in our DNA. It's very strange, but I feel better having a gun. I really do. I'm very protective about my family and that is what motivated me to keep the gun. I have learnt to use the gun in a better way after working on *Killing Them Softly*.

**NOW THAT VIVIENNE IS MAKING HER MOVIE DEBUT IN ANGELINA'S MOVIE, WOULD YOU WANT YOUR OTHER KIDS TO FOLLOW SUIT?**

Yes it's true, Vivienne will play the child version of Princess Aurora opposite her mother in *Maleficent*. She has a small role in the project which is a re-telling of *Sleeping Beauty* from the point of view of her horned, evil opponent. I think it would be a fun experience for Angie and Viv to share screen space, and Viv is a natural (*laughs*). The other kids are now nagging Angie and me to land them roles. If they so desire, then who's to stop them, not me for sure.

b\_shreya@dnaindia.net

BUZZ!!!



BHARAT DARSHAN: Brad Pitt

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