

'I look for good story, then comes role'

■ What is your role in Voot Select's The Raikar Case?

First things first. The series is a murder mystery. The story revolves around who has done it and also talks about interpersonal relationship between the family members of this big family. I play Yashwant Naik Raikar, the head of the family. He is like the epicentre of the

family and what has happened in the family. He is of patriarchal mindset.

■ What made you say yes to the role?

Whenever, I take up any project, I look for the story. I try and listen to the story as an audience and that's exactly what I did with this one too. This story is gripping, so much so that one just can't let go of it after watching one episode.

Today, people have a lot of choices, there are so many platforms with so many shows and if a series is making sit and watch the complete series despite of the so many distractions, this itself indicates how engaging the story is. I am happy that we are getting lots of messages from people that they loved the story. It makes me even more happier that what I am liking, the audience too is liking that.

■ You debuted with Bhoomi Geetha. How did you come on board for that?

I was doing a play in Delhi, when I was studying in National School of Drama (NSD) back then and we had a show in Bangalore. That's when, Kesari Haravu, director of the film saw me in the play and offered me the film. That's how

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I got the project.

■ You have done a lot of varied roles. What made you experiment?

Like I said, I go for the story and the storyteller (director). This is the main criteria for me and then comes the role of course. This is the order I follow before I take up any project.

■ How do you define acting and what is your approach towards it?

In simple words, you pretend. You are into the business of pretending things. It is all about conviction. One has to convince people that you are that character yourself and the story that you are telling is true.

■ Your fondest memory in the industry.

The day I entered the industry has been the most memorable moment for me till date. I love doing films and am glad that I have been a part of this industry.

■ Was there a moment when you have to go out of your comfort zone?

Not really. My training in NSD comes handy in this case. NSD teaches you in an extremely professional manner. Also, acting is about getting out of your comfort zone. You are never the character that you

are playing, you are a different person. Having said that, there is always something — a quality — of the character in yourself. It is a combination of both. For every character, you have to go out of your comfort zone, may be physically or mentally. As an actor, it is my duty to do that (go out of the comfort zone) and I am trained for it.

■ A lesson learnt in the industry.

One thing that I have always told myself is that my profession is not my life. This profession is overwhelming — suddenly people start recognising you. So one thing that you must learn is to never take yourself too seriously because of the name and fame that comes with this profession. It is a big no-no. The key is to stay grounded and not think too much about being into this profession.

■ What are your upcoming projects?

I am writing the script for *Laal Singh Chaddha*, Aamir Khan will be playing the role. I will be acting in a series — *City of Dreams*, Nagesh Kukunoor will be directing it. Then I am doing a show for Netflix, it is a *Bahubali* prequel. That's all for the time being.

Talktime
ATUL KULKARNI
He is seen in films like *Raees*, *The Ghazi Attack* and *Section 375*. He speaks with Musba Hashmi about his latest venture, *The Raikar Case*, what made him take up the role and fondest memory in the industry



Lockdown platter show

Active yeast has gone from the shelf. So has all purpose flour. Cooking, baking, food exotica have deluged social media photo galleries — welcome to the new syrup of the homebound — open ovens and hot selling platters all home grown and consumed. MUSBA HASHMI tells you more

actively been discussing what comes next with my Insta and Facebook friends. A lot of time has been consumed doing this chore that is a delight for a change," Urmila Singh, a highly placed and busy marketing executive, says.

Such has been the increased intake of food, that circumferences have grown and fat burning home remedies becoming a common feature. "Dear Tummy, *kya aapko pata nahin lockdown mein bahar nikalna mana hai?* App kaisey itna bahar nikal rahi hain?,"

Karan Dua, who runs a cooking channel *DilSeFoodie* on YouTube, Facebook and Instagram says his channel had never seen such a surge in views. "I have been actively running these channels and posting videos since 2013, but it was not before the lockdown phase that my channels saw

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— Karan Dua, *DilSeFoodie*

a surge of about 1500 followers daily and views counting in thousands, with demands pouring in every day for new recipes, to be precise easy ones," he says.

It is not only baking or cooking that everyone is running after, the latest trend that people are falling head over heels for is Dalgona coffee. "I came to know about this trend through social media where everyone was busy mixing coffee, sugar and water into a thick foamy texture. I too decided to follow the trend and made a video on the same. I got immense appreciation for the same," Dua tells you.

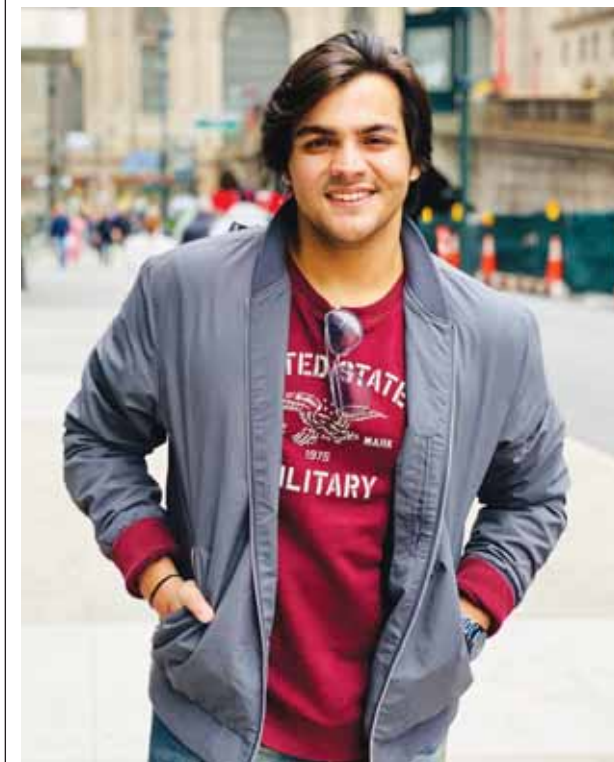
Dalgona coffee is nothing but what Indians are making since eternity. Take coffee powder, add some sugar and one spoon water and whisk it for five to seven minutes or until it turns into a light-coloured creamy foam. Take hot or cold milk in a cup or glass and

layer the foam onto it. A thick layer is just as fine. The milk will remain in the bottom half of the cup while the light coloured foam will float on it. Your Dalgona coffee is ready to serve.

Not to mention all the memes that have been doing rounds on Dalgona coffee. Someone is posting a picture of a half-peeled potato and captioning it 'Dalgona Aaloo' while another one presents 'Dalgona Kabootar' and the most hilarious of all is the 'Dalgona Peg' by a Punjabi man.

One of the most watched videos of Dua is the one in which he is teaching people an easy way to boil water. "Humour is welcomed by everyone. That is why I decided to make this tricky video which has garnered more than 90,000 views. I engage my viewers with recipes and sometimes with fun," he says.

'I get roasted by teens many a times'



Comedian and YouTuber ASHISH CHANGLANI recently released his debut horror film *Aakhri Safar* that has garnered 10 million views. He speaks with SHALINI SAKSENA about why he chose horror as a genre for his film among other things

◆ What is your film about?

This is my directorial debut horror film for YouTube. I usually do comedy sketches for the channel. But I wanted to do something different. Horror as a genre on YouTube has not exactly been explored much. There have been horror-comedies but not pure horror. I wanted to experiment and therefore the always say that 26-minute short film.

◆ How tough was it to work in the genre?

I used to always say that it was easy to deal with this genre. But when I started exploring it, I realised that it was not as easy. What one thinks is going to be scary need not necessarily be scary when you get it down on the screen. I understood it was not as easy as it looks and one had to go that extra mile to make things scary. But as I explored more, it became easier. I definitely learnt a lot with this movie.

◆ India doesn't make as good horror films. Where is the gap?

I would say that we have had our fair share of good horror films. There was *Bhoot* by Ram Gopal Varma. Then there is a film by Pawan Kripalani — *Phobia* — starring Radhika Apte. There are a few directors who have done some good work. Some of our horror films have sex and romance and we deviate and loose track of the story. When we concentrate of the story, we do a better job.

◆ How did your comedy journey begin?

I have done Civil Engineering. Like any other person in Mumbai, I wanted to be an actor as well. My father would tell me that I needed to wise up and realise that there are millions of people who wanted to be one and I should give up my dream. I used to watch vines and thought that India had so many topics why not make something on those topics that were fun. From vines I switched to Insta to Facebook to finally YouTube and became a career.

◆ Is it possible to make a career in comedy today?

I think it is tough because the genre is getting saturated. One has to do something out-of-the-box to stand out make good money from it and go places.

◆ Have Indians learnt to laugh at themselves?

Indians get offended easily. Todd Philips director of *Joker* and *Hangover* series stopped making comedies because he felt that people get offended easily. People need to understand that there are people who love to joke around. Just because one made a joke about a serious issue, it doesn't mean that we are making of the issue at hand. It is meant to be taken as a joke. I have been roasted many times for my jokes. You are a bad comedian if you can't take a joke on yourself. Sometimes people cross the line which should be avoided.

◆ Can you share a few instances where you were roasted?

I have been roasted by 18-19 year olds. I think they are just being teenagers. Once they are past this phase, they will understand things better.

◆ What is keeping you busy?

For now, it is comedy. It is my comfort zone. But I am looking to explore murder-mystery as a genre. It will take time to put it out on paper but hopefully it will be a short film as well. One day I hope I can make a full-length movie as well.

◆ Where do you get inspiration from?

It is all around me. Have you ever tried to make a video of people on Holi day with faces covered with colour? I make content from what is around me. I made a video on the face of people with colour on their faces and it went viral. One just has to sit with paper and pen and one will get content. Sometime, it gets exhausting since I am looking for content. But I really down get down to making it till I am convinced that it is good to go.

◆ What was your parents' reaction when you quit?

They have always been supportive of what I am doing. They were worried for me because they felt what I was doing was not going to go anywhere. But they settled down once my popularity rose.

Give your home a new look

With the lockdown extending till May 3, people have started angsting more. SUNDAY PIONEER brings DIYs to tide you over

FOR COMFORTABLE EVENINGS

COVID-19 is wreaking havoc across. Factories, offices and shopping malls remain shut, social distancing is the norm and our daily lives have come to a halt. Perhaps for the first time in their lives, people are now forced to spend their time at home. And while it may seem relaxing at the beginning, it will also be quite agitating to be confined to the four walls of your home. With outdoors no longer an option, this provides an opportunity to give ones balcony a plush makeover during lockdown.

To make a balcony comfy, one must consider the space that he/she has to work with. It is also important to consider any existing structures such as doors, walls, flower beds and others as they will play a part in how your space will look. It is also essential to avoid cluttering your balcony with too many objects. Instead one should look to build around a focal point, only adding in necessary accessories where needed. Creating a cosy nook in the balcony isn't difficult and can be done by adding a simple pendant light or casu-



Courtesy: Rakhee Bedi Kumar, Founding Principal, RSDA

MINIMALISM IS NEW NORMAL

Books that are lying in the drawers — bring them out for the stack. Cushion covers lying packed — bring them out for a fresh n e s s . Expensive art pieces only meant for parties — time to display them for yourself. Move that furniture around for your evening zoom hangouts. Opening up the picture frame gifts and start planning a gallery wall. Create a space for family because everyone is in it together. De-clutter the spaces because minimalism will be the new normal. These small changes can help make your space look bigger, fresher and more personalised. These spaces should reflect the person inhabiting them to infuse positivity and creativity



Courtesy: Rahul Bansal and Amit Aurora, Partners, DCA group

STYLE IT UP

With our surroundings remaining static due to the lockdown, each day seems monotonous with a mundane setup at home; this not only dissolves one's productivity but also impacts their psychological stability. To break this monotony, a refreshing home styling curriculum is quintessential. The rearrangement of furniture in order to alter the perception of a space is ideal to start with; enhancing the circulation pattern, augmenting the corners with art, rearrangement of existing art can help in rejuvenating the space while birthing a new hobby during these tough times. Creating layers through fabric and soft furnishing such as throw cushions helps in adding drama in the visual scape. Bold display of souvenirs and sculptures helps in tying the spaces together. To



Courtesy: Pooja Ashley and Arbaysis Ashley, Co-founders, Ashleys