



TOO MUCH DRAMA

WATCH OUT



LIFE AND TIMES OF POPE JOHN PAUL II

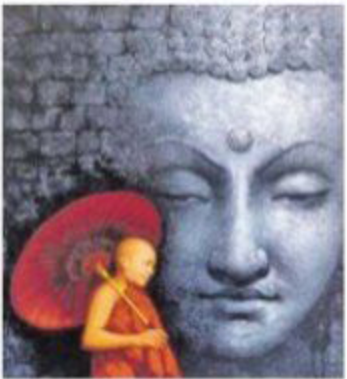
The Polish Institute New Delhi opens its exhibition titled, **The Pope of Freedom**, comprising pictures of Pope John Paul II in the most noteworthy moments of his long pontificate, along with fragments of his speeches. There will be a lecture and screenings of two documentary films on the pope. At St Stephen's College, University of Delhi, till May 3, from 10 am to 6 pm. Photo IDs required.

SYMBOLISMS OF WHAT LIES BEYOND



Life Must Have its Mysteries is an assemblage of works on canvas and boards. It speaks a semi-abstract language with sprouts of aboriginal figures and objects that create a mysterious narrative. At Arts4All Baithak, the Create Studio, W-114, Greater Kailash II, On till April 30, from 10.30 pm to 6 pm.

DIASPORA OF INDIAN HERITAGE



Songs of India is an exhibition displaying the cultural heritage of India, using the strength of different lines, colours and techniques. Participating artists include Seema Kohli, Shyamal Mukherjee, P Gnana, Bhaskar Rao, Sanjay Soni, DVS Krishna and K Ravi. On view till May 13, at Art Spice Gallery, The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa, Bangla Sahib Road, 10 am to 7 pm.

WAYS TO JAZZ UP THE EVENING



International Jazz Day is on April 30 and Ghetto Children, a band of five musicians, will be performing to celebrate the day. Playing rock, blues, rock n roll, country and pop music, artists Gautam Lahiri, Sudatto Sen, Ranjan Dewan, Manita Thapa and Arko Ganguly will be hosted by the Monkey Bar in Vasant Kunj. April 30, from 9 pm. Entry is free.

TALES OF A MISER TOLD ON STAGE



Comedy titled, **Kanjoos Miyan Deewane**, is a Hindustani adaptation of Jean-Baptiste Poquelin aka Moliere's famous play *The Miser*. It revolves around the life of the protagonist, Mirza Sakhawat, who is obsessed with the wealth he has amassed. April 30, LTG Auditorium, Mandi House, 7 pm onwards.

By AYESHA SINGH

The clock says it's five minutes before five. In another fifteen minutes, theatre artiste and dancer Shiburam Mohanta can leave his mahogany brown make-up chair to stretch his legs. He had been wanting to do that for over five hours now. Any moment, he will be hailed to present himself near the rehearsal stage, before he can go on to play the character of Durga in the eponymous play. It's the toughest role he has attempted. And, if we may add, he has done so as beautifully as a woman would have done.

Durga comes as part of the *Summer Ballet Festival 2017*. Here you watch a man bring out the best of his artistic fervour in sketching the Goddess' story, away from gender stereotyping.

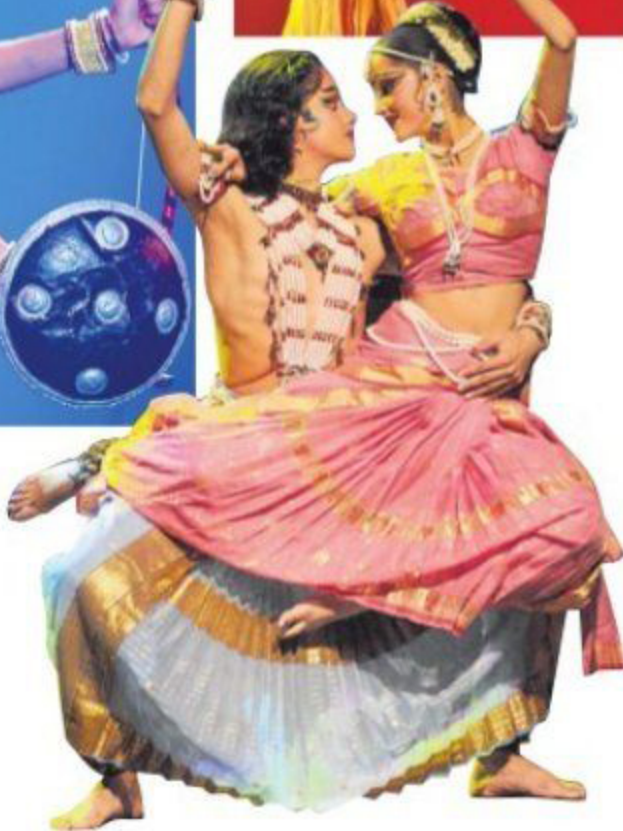
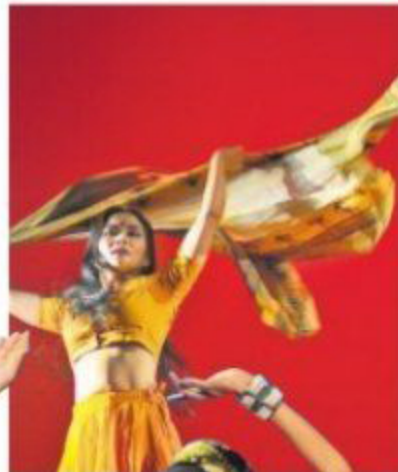
Before signing up for the play, Mohanta knew Durga as most of us do—the feisty Goddess of war. She had seemed like distant mythological idea to him, completely detached from the times we live in. "Now I know so much more about her. I've realised that she's a reality that lives in every woman who has to fight the atrocities heaped on her. She's an everyday concept," he says.

The other three dance-dramas that are part of the festival are *Meera*, *Karna* and *Khajuraho*. Lined up by Shriram Bharatiya Kala Kendra, its presenter, these have been re-scripted to sink into the mould of what's relevant today. All mirror the changing times we live in, resonating

In Her Feet He Finds Strength



Clockwise from above: Durga, Meera, Khajuraho, Karna



with the turbulence we experience as we go along. "These characters are so pertinent today. Their stories need to be told over and over again to evoke an understanding of the important lessons history has guarded for us so carefully," he says, for whom Durga remains favourite story of strife.

Of the many facets of Durga, her fury was the most challenging to accomplish for the artiste. He begins to enact an irate Durga whose anger is being unleashed at Mahishasur, the buf-

Her sense of justice, ability to meet every challenge and the strength to overcome all forces of destruction live in me as an inspiration.

Shiburam Mohanta

falo demon, tormenting Gods and humans, intoxicated by the boon that he is invincible to all opponents, but a woman. She leads an army of female combatants against his all-male force to destroy his ego. By the end of the scene, Mohanta was having a out-of-body experience. "Her sense of justice, her ability to meet every challenge and the strength to overcome all forces of destruction live in me as an inspiration," he says.

With that having been said, he takes the stage as powerfully as the Goddess herself would have.

Good to know: *Meera*, *Durga*, *Karna* and *Khajuraho*: May 5, 6, 11 and 12 respectively, 7 pm onwards. Entry is free.

Bringing You the Big Regional Buffet

We'll start with some *pyaar* and *mohabbat*, before moving on to other things. An Old Delhi favourite, this shariat is one of the most exciting things at *Masalas of India*, a regional food festival. It's not only good in taste but also in thought. A pink concoction made with summer coolers such as Rooh Afza, milk, watermelon and ice sounds just like the thing we'd make a dash for in this terrible heat.

The point of the festival is a clear one, its co-founder Shantanu Singh says. "The all-consuming point of view that only Western food is to be considered high-brow and upper-crust, while regional food gets shoved to the sidelines, is not true at all," he says. That's why he is enthusiastically bringing the rapid flavours of regional cuisines such as Goanise, Parsi, Kashmiri, Awadhi, Bengali, Mangalorean and Naga to name a few.

From the north you have Punjabi thali and flavoured kulfi, among other things. From the west, options include Maharashtrian vada pav and Parsi chicken dhan-shaak with caramel rice and kebabs. From the south, you have coastal cuisine comprising podi idli, Hyderabad chicken



Shantanu Singh

dum biryani, Chettinad chicken dosa and more. Finally, from the east you have Bengali fish paturi, Bihar litti chokha, momos from Sikkim and more. "Since I've always been crazy about biryani (who isn't really?), I'd happily hand over a pound of flesh for a plateful of Biryani and Co's Mutton Dum Biryani," says the organiser.

To top it all up, the festival is being held in the outdoors at Ansal Plaza, opening itself to a conglomerate of attendees. You can walk around, take your time in choosing what you'd like to try, experience food from different restaurants, and enjoy the bout of breeze that the rains might bring that day (so says the weather forecast).

Maggi lovers get to try four new regional flavours of the noodle that it's introducing, not to forget unlimited complimentary Maggi to try.

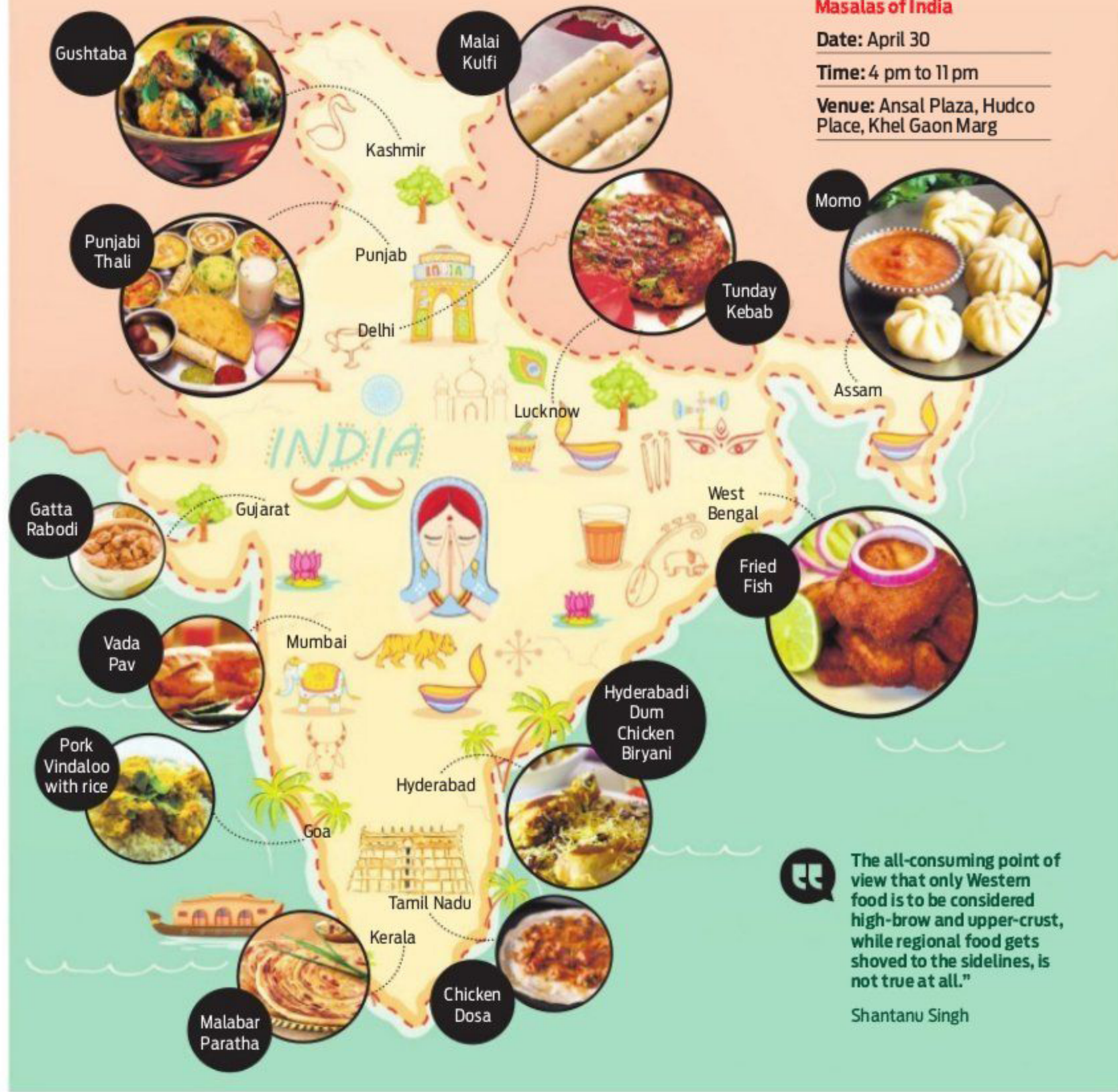
The entertainment for the day is covered too. Homegrown and regional artists and bands will stir things up musically. You have Dhruv Angrish with his English pop music, Natasha Sehgal with English, and Tarkash with their Hindi music. It's for you to stay tuned. **AS**

Masalas of India

Date: April 30

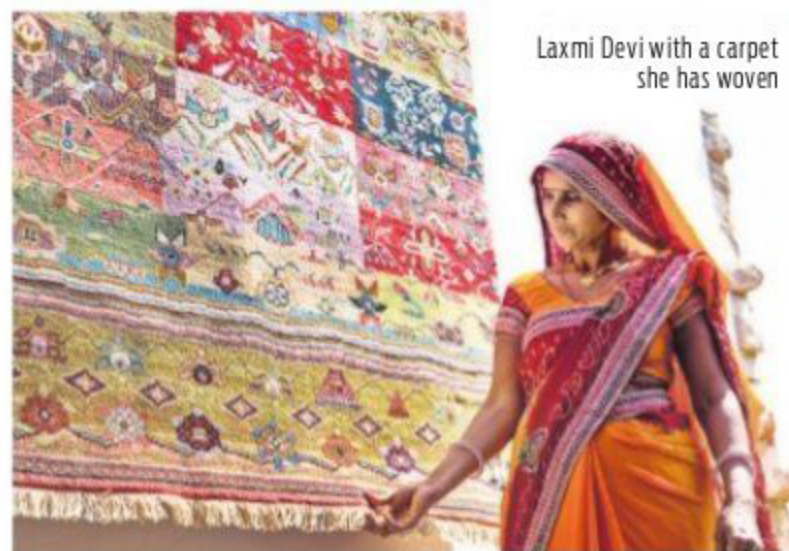
Time: 4 pm to 11 pm

Venue: Ansal Plaza, Hudco Place, Khel Gaon Marg



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Shantanu Singh



Laxmi Devi with a carpet she has woven

Strife and Struggle Woven into Stories of Survival

The stitches and knots are loosening their grip. Once treasured for its innate intricacy, the practice of making rugs by hand has helplessly bowed down to the might of machine-made processes. But women like 40-year-old Laxmi Devi, a carpet weaver, has still a lot to be thankful for. She has traversed the dark alleys of taboo to follow the trail of light, leading to financial independence and personal empowerment, all because of the setting up of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015. The company she is employed with, Jaipur Rugs, is one such enterprise that is following the UN's mandate, making Devi a hero of sorts in her village of Manpura near Jaipur.

From being almost destitute to being satisfactorily employed, she earns between ₹3,000 and ₹5,000 a month now. She works from 9 am to 5 pm, taking a short one-hour break to cook for her family. "After I joined the company, I started getting timely salaries, which wasn't the case earlier. The fact that the company had started an Alternative

Education Programme to provide functional literacy to artisans and community members, helped a lot. We then educated our children," she says.

Sitting comfortably on a backless bench with her back pulled up straight, Devi listens carefully to the 30 thought leaders from across the world, who were visiting the Jaipur Rugs showroom on April 26. Even though the discussion was in a language she couldn't comprehend, she made sure a translator helped her understand what was going on. She was eager to learn about the SDGs and how it demanded the end for discrimination, violence, trafficking, early marriages, genital mutilation and other harmful practices against women and girls. Out of everything she heard, we saw her eyes lit up on one particular point, and that was the aspect about ensuring women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership and in decision making. "Only if more women are given opportunities, will the world see their strength. It will also save the art of hand-weaving rugs from dying, and end poverty by creating employability."

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Laxmi Devi



Thought leaders at Jaipur Rugs showroom in Delhi

