



Watch Manoj Joshi in the period drama *Chanakya* at Kashinath Ghanekar Natyagraha, Thane, 9 pm. Call 9820725551

## THE LONG WEEKEND GUIDE

Do you have a plan for the four days off? We help you make the most of them

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### Adventure in Lonavla

**E**ssel World may be nostalgia, but Della Adventure Park is new. Located just off the Mumbai-Pune Expressway, cool off with Aqua Zorbing (bobbing on water inside a giant plastic ball). Work off your aggression by taking bumper cars to the water — behold Bumper Boating! If you're not such a water baby, head to the mini golf course or go milk the New Jersey cows, walk some doggies or hang with the emus.

CALL: 96644 55000  
WEBSITE: www.dellaadventure.com

PRICE  
1,500

### 2 Go fish

**B**lue Bulb is organising a day-long fishing event. Base camp is a riverside farmhouse, from where you head to a short training session on the bank and jump right in. A guide shows you how to lay traps in chest-deep water to capture eels and then it's off to the kitchen to fry them local-style.

You can go for a swim in the evening, before heading back home.

WEBSITE  
http://bluebulb.in

PRICE  
599

### 3 Jump aboard

**F**our days is just enough time to get a handle on sailing. The Gateway Sailing Club organises sailing sessions at the Gateway of India, where you can learn the basics. If you don't care for the hard work and want to only enjoy the breeze, sail out to Mandwa for an overnight stay and spend the day there kayaking, camping or manning the barbecue.

WEBSITE  
www.gatewayclub.com

PRICE  
3,000

### 4 Be a happy camper

**K**hopoli, at the foothills of Lonavla is close enough from the city to drive to, but quaint enough to be rural. Big Red Tent is pitching an overnight camp there, and you can be a good Scout or Guide too. Take your children along to build some character by learning how to erect a tent, build a bonfire, spot birds and protect yourself from the elements.

WEBSITE  
www.bigredtent.in

PRICE  
900

### 5 Within the city

If you don't want to part with the dusty charms of Mumbai, here's how to entertain yourself in the city

**MAKE A MARK:** Take an archery lesson. It lasts two hours and you are coached by the same guys who help national-level archers achieve big targets. You don't need to buy the equipment, they have it ready for you.

**LEAVE A TRAIL:** Forgo the safaris and toy train at the Sanjay Gadhvi National Park. Take your kids to the nature trail conducted by Sanctuary Asia magazine. Naturalists will unravel the secrets of nature, point out birds, insects and animals and teach, without preaching, the importance of respecting the environment.

**FACE THE MUSIC:** Head to NCPA to soak in the third edition of *Saz-e-Bahar* — a two-day festival of Indian instrumental music. Drown into the sounds of the sarangi, sitar, bansuri and tabla.

**TIME TRAVEL:** Go through the spots of 'old' Bombay, those that date back 350 years. Gyan Exchange has organised a walk along the periphery of the 'front' bay. This is the area that saw the first signs of inhabitation and gave birth to Mumbai.

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To feature an event on this page, send the details and photographs to [diti.shah@indiatimes.com](mailto:diti.shah@indiatimes.com)

## SHANTA GOKHALE



SEPARATING THE BEST FROM THE BANAL ON MUMBAI'S CULTURESCAPE

Liked/hated her column? Write to Shanta Gokhale at [mirrorfeedback@indiatimes.com](mailto:mirrorfeedback@indiatimes.com)

# Tagore relocated

**A** propos Rabindranath Tagore's 150th birth anniversary celebrations, Amit Chaudhuri wrote in the *Guardian* that he felt a surge of sympathy for those who couldn't read Tagore in Bengali and had to endure his English translations instead, taking on trust that there was "something out there worth celebrating".

Europe discovered Tagore with *Gitanjali*. Ezra Pound wrote to W B Yeats in 1912 that Tagore was "greater than any of us." A year later, *Gitanjali* won him the Nobel Prize. And then, within a couple of decades, Europe had tired of him.

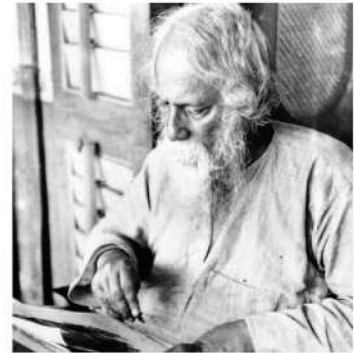
I read *Gitanjali* (Tagore's translation) in my teens and couldn't get beyond the first few stanzas. I would have been forced to take on trust that there was "something out there worth celebrating", had I not read other translations which did him a little more justice than he had done to himself. Listening to the two beautifully recited stanzas from *Gitanjali* in Anita Ratnam's *Avani* — a handful of dust at the NCPA on Saturday, I wondered whether, simply dropping Tagore's 'thous' and 'thees', was half the translation battle won.

Structured around five poems interpreted as handfuls of dust, words, flowers, leaves and gold, this piece of dance-theatre did what many other interpretations in this season of Tagore have failed to do — abstract the sense of the poet's words to relocate them in our times.

The set underlined *Avani's* contemporary spirit. Conceived as a backyard with clothes drying on lines (albeit smarter clothes than you generally see in backyards), it was a way of bringing Tagore home to us. The simple, elegant costuming of the dancer and the actors, Avree Chaurey and Akhila Ramnarayan, further cut the distance between the poet and us. And the dance, which Ratnam calls Neo Bharatam, was as wide-ranging in its vocabulary as Tagore's spirit. It combined the basic kinetics of Bharata Natyam with other dance forms like Kathakali, and martial art forms like Kalaripayattu, without becoming a mish-mash. The fluidity it achieved had much to do with the wholeness of the dancer's purpose and vision.

*Avani* means earth, that is land and water both. In Ratnam's interpretation, earth also included the human race. The five poems she'd chosen to explore, were therefore expressions of natural manifestations and human connections. While the dancer moved to the literal and extended meanings of the poems, the actors made interesting connections for us.

One was the story of how Tagore came to compose his ode to spring — "Enchanting Mohini, your eternal beauty mesmerises the world". On a visit to Madras, he happened



to hear Muthuswami Dikshitar's composition in praise of goddess Meenakshi, "Regal Meenakshi, you are the sole refuge of all humanity". So taken up was he by the song that, on his return to Santiniketan, he composed his spring song to fit into the same melody. The soundtrack cleverly intertwined the compositions into a two-ply skein, while the dancer illuminated the idea of spring with what was arguably her most enchanting choreography. Seated on a low seat, with marigold flowers strewn around, she propelled herself around with her feet, using only eyes and delicate hand gestures to express the joy of the season.

Another connection, even more moving, came with the last poem, *Prithvi*, beautifully translated by Tarak Sen. Ratnam's interpretation expressed every aspect of the earth, benign, life-giving and destructive. While the earth destroyed through natural disasters, Man, supposedly Nature's finest creation, destroyed through greed, killing the environment and millions of humans in war.

Counterpointing Ratnam's dance of destruction, Akhila Ramnarayan recited Yeats's poem on war. "Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;/ Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,/The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere/ The ceremony of innocence is drowned".

When you imbue dance with personal meanings expressed through improvisations, you sometimes lose the spectator. This did happen a couple of times in *Avani* in the last poem. But they were momentary losses. The big one happened in the first poem about longing and separation, when Ratnam walked off the stage and climbed the steps at the back of the auditorium to dance on the small platform at the top, turning the poignancy of her dance into a crick in the neck for many of us.

Those nits picked, *Avani* held us with its freshness, so different from the mush that Tagore is often reduced to. Its interwoven texts, rich-voiced singing, unobtrusive but effective back projection, and unambiguously modern sensibility, combined to challenge and charm, and, most importantly, to make Tagore sharply relevant.