



**Cryptocurrency**

UNDER 25 SUMMIT presents Sharan Nayar from UnoCoin, India's most popular bitcoin wallet  
ON FEBRUARY 13, 6-8 PM  
@ BHive Workspace, HSR Layout



**Baking with kids**

Baking classes for children by pastry Chef Paul Besra.  
ON 17TH FEBRUARY, 4 PM ONWARDS  
@ Bengaluru Baking Company, Lobby Level, JW Marriott



**Chinese New Year**

Usher in the Year of the Dog by sampling some Chinese food  
ON TILL 18TH FEBRUARY  
@ Shang Palace at Shangri-La Hotel, Bengaluru



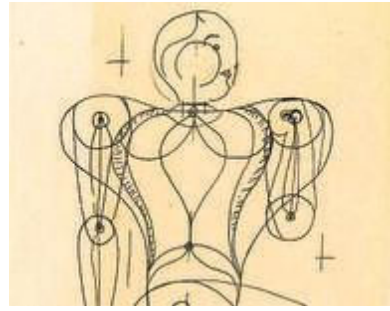
**Film screening**

Turup by the Ektara Collective followed by a discussion  
ON FEBRUARY 14, 6:30 PM  
@ IHS, The Indian Institute for Human Settlements, Sadashiv Nagar



**Spring-summer collection**

Rohit Gandhi + Rahul Khanna present a collection of skilled silhouettes and fluid drapes  
ON TILL FEBRUARY 23  
@ Evoluzione, Vittal Mallya Road



**Workshop**

An introductory-level workshop to Gurdjieff Movements.  
Fee ₹2,700.  
FEBRUARY 14-16, 6 TO 9 PM  
@ Shoonya, Lal Bagh main road

SPACES

# A bite of heaven IN AN AKHARA

Head to the Shivajinagar Gardi Ustad Kale Pehlwan biriyani for a delicious meal

by NIKHIL VARMA

On Friday afternoons, a small by-lane in the bustling Shivajinagar sees a huge rush of hungry souls making their way to sample the famous Shivajinagar Gardi Ustad Kale Pehlwan biriyani with an accompaniment of mutton chops and fried fish.

They line up outside a small door with a narrow passageway that leads you to the akhara itself. The small wrestling pit that doubles up as an eatery is rather cramped. You have to share the seating place with fellow patrons on old rickety benches. The kitchen is a maze of activity, with a group barking out the orders, loading them on to the plates and serving customers.

Apart from the meaty and Decan-style mutton biriyani, the superlative mutton chops (garnished with spices garlic) and the tangy fish fry are the crowd favourites.

Near the kitchen is a huge wrestling pit with some equipment kept aside. A small line gathers near the kitchen, eager for takeaways and a burly man yells out the orders into the kitchen.

City Chronicler Mansoor Ali swears by the fish fry and gives a low down on the history of this unassuming eatery. "I believe it



was started 80 years ago as a wrestling pit. It continues to function as one till date. If you come in the mornings, you can see wrestlers practising their moves in the pit. It began as an eatery 20 years ago, when wrestlers could not find any nutritious eating places nearby. Initially, it was meant only for them, but soon, people from all walks of life were welcomed."

He adds, "Though they are open for lunch every day, except Sundays, they serve biriyani only on Fridays. I discovered this place by chance when I was conducting a heritage walk in Shivaji-



nagar a few years ago. It has become popular now. They serve excellent mutton biriyani. I also enjoy the mutton phal as well. It is rich and full of flavour."

College student, Javed Khan, makes it a point to come to the eatery at least once a month. "It is served fresh, and the biriyani has a slight gingery flavour that makes it unique. It is also reasonably priced."

Businessman Nadir Aslam is

not a big fan of the biriyani, but enjoys the shami, chana dal and minced mutton kebab served here.

Mansoor concludes, "The ambience sets it apart from other places serving similar dishes. I think they will lose their USP if they try to expand and create a proper dining area."

(Where we discover hidden and not-so-hidden nooks and crannies of the city)

**A HEALTH FIT**  
For wrestlers, exercises that employ the wrestler's bodyweight include the surya namaskara, shirshasana, and the danda, which are also found in hatha yoga, as well as the bethak. Sawari, the practice of using another person's bodyweight to add resistance to such exercises.



Delicious 'n' easy on the pocket The biriyani at the akhara is truly a treat  
\*SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

## Middle-path through history

Sudipto Das says he has tried to bring in a balanced perspective to Indian history through his contemporary thriller *The Aryabhata Clan*

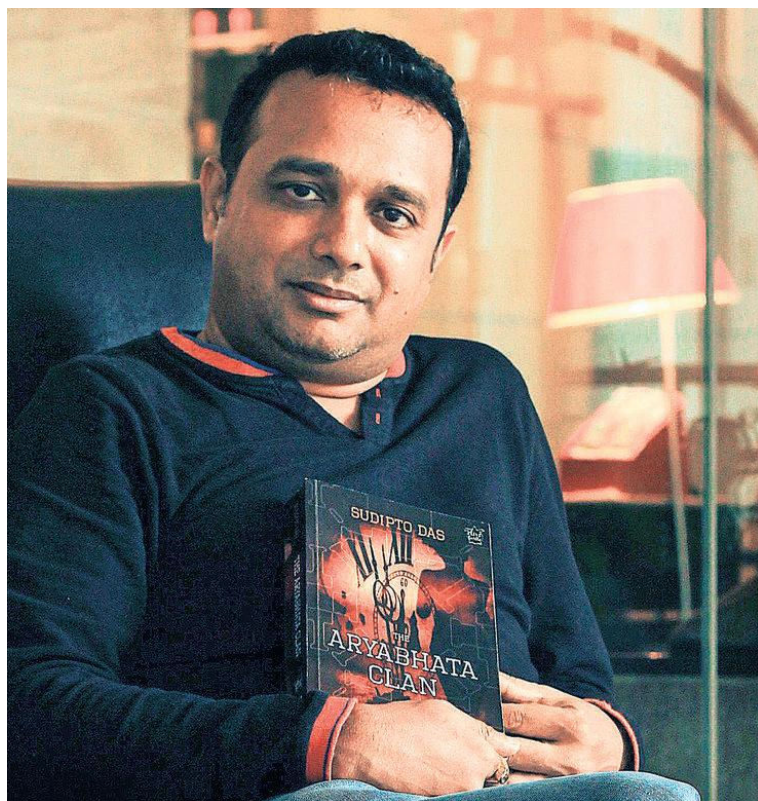
by HARSHINI VAKKALANKA

Imagine a woman Indiana Jones or a Bond, working through a *Da Vinci Code*-like theme with history deeply woven into a contemporary thriller... it is that kind of a story that Sudipto Das has sought to create in his recent novel *The Aryabhata Clan*, following his debut work *The Ekkos Clan*.

Though both works delve into ancient Indian history, the present work combines a diversity of themes - from ancient Indian scriptures to linguistics, the lesser known histories of the Indian subcontinents, hidden histories in Persian carpets, contemporary ideological clashes in India and the spread of terrorism, pinned around his 20-year-old woman protagonist Kubha (named after the Sanskrit term for the river Kabul).

"One of the main inspirations behind the book," says Sudipto, "was the Indiana Jones series, which presents Western history in an interesting format. If Western history can be presented that way, then I feel Indian history has a larger scope."

This concept first evolved into *The Ekkos Clan*, which is set around Kubha's mother Afsar Fareedi, a linguistic palaeontologist. "When it was time to write the second book, I knew I wanted to write about Aryabhata because I was intrigued by him. I realized he was one of the most underrated ancient Indian scientists. Modern science owes its existence to his work in mathematics and the place value system," he explains.



"I also read an article about the meanings behind the motifs on Persian carpets, that most of these designs are from ancient temples. This allied with my line of thought of looking out for hidden histories."

Much of Sudipto's research on Indian history is conducted on Google Books, whose vision of scanning every book ever published, he greatly admires, as well as through an online

American archive. "The problem is that Indians, over the ages, have been bad keepers of history. Then the British came and recorded our history in such a horrific manner, making us out to be baboons who needed to be civilized. After independence, our history was hijacked by those who were left-leaning in ideology, who maintained the British notions," he argues.

Delving deep Sudipto Das  
\*SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

"Their accounts were full of battles and wars that collectively took place over two centuries. At the same time, there is also an article written by Rabindranath Tagore, in which he observes that through these 200 years of battle, there have been millennia of peace and prosperity. Why don't we know about that? Tagore is also my favourite Indian author."

Sudipto says he has chosen to highlight these long periods of discoveries of wisdom and knowledge in ancient India in his contemporary thriller.

"We also hear condemnation of all Muslims being terrorists. But why does nobody talk about a positive interpretation of the text, which people like Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan (Frontier Gandhi) did. He advocated non-violence a few years before Mahatma Gandhi (the duo were not in touch). But who remembers him? Pakistan and Afghanistan have such rich histories that nobody talks about, it has been subverted by other agendas."

He also believes that the present communal tensions in India, especially in the interactions between the right and left-leaning ideologies, have become aggressive because until recently it was only the left ideology that thrived. *The Aryabhata Clan*, published by Niyogi Books (Olive Turtle), is available for Rs 595 at leading bookstores.

## It's a matter of hearts

Valentine's Day, as usual, is bursting at the seams with so much on offer from fashion brands and restaurants in the city

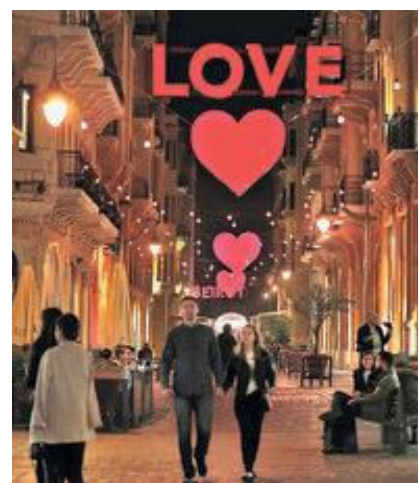
Just one day to go for Valentine's Day and everyone is making a beeline to woo the potential customers. The clothing brands and restaurants are ready with a barrage of events for February 14, spoiling people for choice.

Starting with music, Cafe Mangii in Orion Mall, is coming up with a musical Valentine's night. Artist Aloud's Kaushik Shukla, singer/songwriter trained in different styles of music, will belt out some riveting numbers. From 8 pm -11.30 pm. The entry charges are ₹2,799 which include a four-course meal for two and a complimentary glass of wine.

Bflat presents Love Me Tender, a musical night with Sheridan Brass featuring Priya Mendens, Joshua Selvaraj, Edward Rasquinha, Samson Phillip, Mark Escottee and Ashish Paul, 8 pm onwards. Entry charges are ₹ 590/- (500 Plus 18% GST). Tickets are also available on www.bookmyshow.com.  
☎080 25278361/ 41739250.

For those who want to take the food route, there are plenty of options. Courtyard by Marriott and Fairfield by Marriott Bengaluru, on Outer Ring Road, are doing cupid cocktails and live music at BG's Poolside Bar & Grill and MoMo Café. While the five-course dinner with special cocktails are priced at ₹2750 plus taxes per person at BG's Poolside Bar & Grill, the dinner buffet with special cocktails at MoMo Cafe are priced at ₹1750 per person, plus taxes.

Shopping doesn't need a special day, but if it comes with discounts then it is a double delight. Fashion brand Neerus' Presents I Love Sale - a flat 50% off from February 14, onwards. Take your pick



from saris, lehengas, gowns, ready-to-wear, un-stitched suits, mix and match fusion wear. At all Neerus' stores on Commercial Street, Jayanagar and Mantri square.

Three dots & a Dash! has come up with a unique combination of a tarot reading session and food. On February 14, between 8 pm and 10 pm, the restaurant offers a quite evening with tarot card reader -- Sonyaa Singh, who will analyse and predict not just your past but also your future. Follow it up with a specially curated four-course meal that ranges from soups like butter-nut apple thyme orange with golden nuggets, Grill 'n' Thrill lemon flavoured stuffed chicken breast, salads like watermelon feta salad to heart-shaped pizzas like pollo-e-fungi and whole wheat classic. The meal for two is priced at ₹1,399 (inclusive of tax) and is available only on February 14.