

Right as rain

Simona Choudhury

Avibrant mood is the primary requirement during the monsoons and the best way is to dress up in pulsating colours. The heat of the summer demands clothes in cooling shades like pastels and whites. But, in the wet monsoons, these shades make clothes look dull and see through, which can be very embarrassing for a lady in public! This need not require a heavy budget, and can be achieved in a simplified manner. Simple and non gaudy attire is perfect for this season.

White being universally preferred, proper care must be taken while wearing it in any form during the monsoons as white clothes tend to look extremely messy after a few splashes of water and muck. White should be worn while indoors or when moving around in a private vehicle, where by there is little chance of the ensemble getting messed up. You can team a white skirt with a colourful top. Mini skirts worn with a sporty sleeveless, and shorts worn with a T back are in vogue during the monsoons. So are short dresses, knee length dresses/skirts. Folding your pants up is the comfort key during the rains. Capris in hues of dark brown and black work best with bright, solid colours to lighten one's spirits on a dull day. One can never go wrong with earthy shades, peacock blue, yellows, soft pinks, orange, purple and green this season. On the other hand, gentle shades of grey and black and earthy tones of beige, brown and khaki will also spell style. In fabrics, stick to cotton and linens as they are comfortable.

Say no to full length denims, long ethnic skirts, and leather this season. However, if you are a denim freak, opt for light weight denim fabrics. You can team up a white top/t-shirt with straight fit jeans or tapered jeans. Knee length cargos of synthetic fabrics are a must have in casuals. Denim or cotton capris in earthy tones look best when worn below trendy tunic kaftans.

As for the evening, short flare skirts, tight fitting skirts, denim short skirts and knee length halter neck dresses with a scarf of exotic design are must haves. Asymmetrical synthetic kaftans are super hot this season when teamed with a tight fitting mini skirt. Fitted synthetic jackets in white and lemon yellow work best on any sporty outfit.

Add a little zing to your attire by using a colourful umbrella; either a multi coloured, rainbow striped one, or a few mono-coloured ones matched with the outfit worn. Transparent raincoats and self shade windcheaters are very trendy too. How can we miss out on footwear? Accessorise your clothes with matching flip flops, crocs, rubber sandals with cute designs on it or some flowers on it, rubber pumps. It's the season of colour, but just play it wisely while choosing some bold and bright footwear suiting your skin tone.

When talking about fashion, how can we ignore men's style statement? They are equally fashionable and we appreciate men with good dressing sense. So here are a few key looks for men this monsoon -

- A pastel shirt with prints or plaids goes best with simple jeans. Comfy slip-ons spell both style and functionality.
- Chinos in linen and cargos in cotton look best with military inspired tees to complete that trendy safari look. Boots or covered sandals will go with this one.
- Lean fitted trousers should be worn with a trendy shirt with oversized pockets, tennis shoes complete the look.
- A single breasted, buttoned trench coat in black with contrasting big collared shirts - inspired by the 1970s - is the way to be at a night occasion.
- Three fourth cargos and a sporty vest matching those crocs is perfect for hitting the flood prone zones. So, step out and enjoy the monsoons in comfort and style!

The black night of darkness has repeatedly come to my doorsteps. The only weapon in its hand was the distorted fakeness of its pain.

Tagore, *The Black Night of Darkness*.

The sense of *deja vu* is unmistakable. Once again, exactly a year later, I am in the picture perfect environs of the Sarala Birla Gyan Jyoti, Amingaon. Once again, I witness a school play directed by Pranab Mukherjee, the maverick crusader of Alternative Theatre. Last year, he had talked to me of going off to Cambodia, his unflinching gaze fixed on the dark amphitheatre of human atrocity - newer methods to kill, newer methods of die. In this new play, *I haven't booked my face, yet*, the tragedy of East Timor is played out in its visceral intensity on the screen - terrified civilians caught between implacable ideologies, shot, maimed, silenced. The scene then shifts to Sri Lanka, and it is the same story of man's infinite capacity for bestiality. Strung with these images is the text crafted out of Tagore's poem *Africa* and excerpts from *Post Office*, a letter to Tagore by the mother of Wilfred Owen - Susan H Owen, poems of Vermer Elwin and some improvised material, with a part of it involving the young actors lobbing questions at the Prime Minister of India. Pranab is a relentless sleuth, exposing hidden agendas, questioning the system sowing the seeds of protest. No wonder his drama is more of chronicling and unmasking than a mere artistic and aesthetic exercise for its own sake.

This time, meeting him again, I confer on him the title of 'soldier of peace' and it enthralls him immediately. It is a role he takes with utmost sincerity, moving restlessly from Chechnya to Vietnam, because he says that in the heart of human conflict and horror, he finds stories of hope. And yet, one parent raises a point that perhaps next year, the students of Sarala Birla would stage something more positive. All of us who have raised children are guilty of wanting to present life for our children in a tetra pack - sterile, packaged, spill-free, convenient. We shield our young from hunger, poverty, disease, death, darkness. We believe they must spend their young and impressionable years in a make-believe world of sweetness and light, where their mothers will wash their clothes the purest white and produce endless plates of noodles, where fathers will piggyback them with tireless energy. But the television beams its images of bodies lying on streets, train coaches bombed into charred frames, desperate, outstretched hands in refugee camps. What will this shielded child make of this real world? Will he pretend it does not exist? Will he decide that he must live his own life, and to hell with the others? Pranab is trying to make this connect from the safe world and the real one, between the sanitised space and the lethal minefield. But, in order to understand the convictions of this crusader, one needs to go back to his childhood, where it all began.

The Karate Kid

Cast: Jaden Smith, Jackie Chan, Taraji P. Henson. Director: Harald Zwart.

In Columbia Pictures' *The Karate Kid*, 12-year-old Dre Parker (Jaden Smith) could've been the most popular kid in Detroit, but his mother's (Taraji P. Henson) latest career move has landed him in China. Dre immediately falls for his classmate Mei Ying - and the feeling is mutual - but cultural differences make such a friendship impossible. Even worse, Dre's feelings make an enemy of the class bully, Cheng. In the land of kung fu, Dre knows only a little karate, and Cheng puts "the karate kid" on the floor with ease. With no friends in a strange land, Dre has nowhere to turn to but maintenance man Mr. Han (Jackie Chan), who is secretly a master of kung fu. As Han teaches Dre that kung fu is not about punches and parries, but maturity and calm, Dre realizes that facing down the bullies will be the fight of his life.



Dreamin' in the dark

3rd eye

Indrani Raimedhi

Indian company, leading to the arrest of two CEOs. When he was not covering custody deaths, he was sipping wine all night with 92-year-old iconoclast legend Nirad C. Chaudhuri who called Subhas Bose more romantic than revolutionary, and prophesied the fall of the CPM in Bengal. Pranab covered Wimbledon, the World Cup in France, quizzed people as far apart as Sheikh Hasina and Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan.

His North East connection began with a story on the Naga Mothers' Association in 1997-98. Soon he was hooked to the land, its mystic detachment from the outside world, the gripping drama of its unrest and alienation. Today, he is an old North East hand, analysing, questioning Dhemaji and Kakoppathar, North Cachar and Manipur, using these stories as subtexts for his revealing plays. He finds the local in the universal and vice versa. A series of independent fellowships have enabled him to carry his work forward. Today, the Kolkata Campus Theatre he founded is eight-years old and he has a theatre collective which has transcended great Indian literature texts into English, including Sri Aurobindo's *Conversation of The Dead*, Tagore poem

They *Also Work* and Mahasweta Devi's *Breastgiver*. One of his most daring and original experiments was the staging of *Troilus and Cressida* on board the toy train from Ghoom to Darjeeling, with passengers as much the cast of the play as the actors. He was the solo actor in the adaptation of Kalidas' *Kumarsambhava*, which he staged in Ghatshila, on the banks of the Subamarekha, close to where Bibhuti Bhushan had penned *Pather Pachali*. The poor, rural viewers were thus given access to a timeless classic and this was his way of blurring boundaries and turning ideas on their head. In the discrimination against Shylock in the Venetian days of yore, he also finds the prejudices, overt and covert, against a Bodo, a Dimasa, a Rabha or one from the tea tribe.

No wonder then that Anubha Goyal, Principal of Sarala Birla Gyan Jyoti school, has invited him to come every year to do a play with the children. She feels his knowledge, his experiences gleaned from his travels, and his commitment to issues that affect all humanity will continue to benefit the children. This year's play involved forty two children from classes IX, X and XI.

Over the years, this indefatigable soldier of peace, when not walking the wild side in some of the most dangerous hotspots of the world, is fashioning plays which are cerebrally exciting, visually stark and performances which throb with the pulse beat of a larger humanity. His scripts are a collection of image texts, presenting a theatre of collages, sliced memories. His cast wears unisex clothing - black shirts and trousers, figures of protest. Cardboard boxes, stepladders, ropes, table edges, yellow post-its are used with stunning effect. What comes through is the rigorous physical demands made on the cast. The mind and body connect is invigorating for the children and they enact complex ideas with consummate ease. And Pranab's piercing gaze uses other modes of expression too - his graphic novel on legendary Naxalite Kanu Sanjal comes out next month.

So, it is time for Pranab to leave, this time for Vietnam. His is a lonely trajectory, following the footprints of the wounded, the displaced. The little boy who sat transfixed by the Russian revolution in the books at Gorky Sadan finds himself in the ceaseless ebb and flow of contemporary history. He tries to make sense of it all and find a pattern where there is none, hope where there is none. The future is just like his plays, open-ended, inconclusive. The search continues... email: indrani.raimedhi@gmail.com website: www.iraimedhi.com

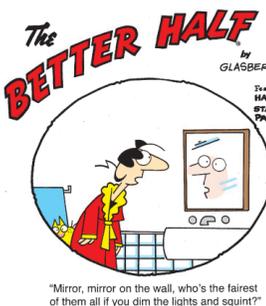
Splice

Cast: Adrien Brody, Sarah Polley, Delphine Chanéac. Director: Vincenzo Natali.

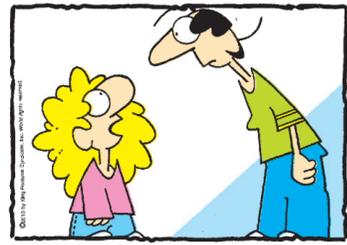


- MOVIE WATCH**
Vikram Barkataki
- TOP 10 Hollywood**
- Shrek Forever After
 - Get Him to the Greek
 - Killers
 - Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time
 - Sex and the City 2
 - Marmaduke
 - Iron Man 2
 - Splice
 - Robin Hood
 - Letters to Juliet

Superstar genetic engineers Clive (Adrien Brody) and Elsa (Sarah Polley) specialise in splicing together DNA from different animals to create incredible new hybrids. Now they want to use human DNA in a hybrid that could revolutionise science and medicine. But when the pharmaceutical company that funds their research forbids it, Clive and Elsa secretly conduct their own experiments. The result is Dren, an amazing, strangely beautiful creature that exhibits uncommon intelligence and an array of unexpected physical developments. And though, at first, Dren exceeds their wildest dreams, she begins to grow and learn at an accelerated rate - and threatens to become their worst nightmare.



"Mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the fairest of them all if you dim the lights and squint?"



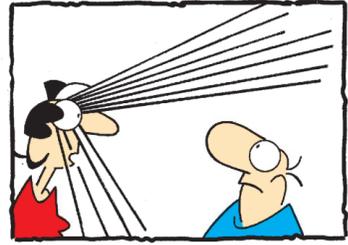
"Actually, I'm 55 years old. It takes a lot of work to look this young!"



"Moisturizer isn't enough to keep me looking young, so I bought some press-on pimples."



"Don't worry about wrinkles. Basset hounds have wrinkles and people think they're adorable!"



"The commercial says that men love longer, thicker lashes!"

FORECAST

JUNE 21 - 27, 2010

ARIES (MAR 21-APR 19)
At the beginning of the week, you're like a plant just barely breaking the surface of the ground. By Wednesday, you'll be sprouting huge leaves and growing in unforeseen directions. A new friend comes into your life on Thursday. On Friday, when a ray of light lands directly on you, make sure you're looking your best. It's an exciting weekend for you, but try to stay grounded on Saturday. Then, on Sunday, go wild!

TAURUS (APR 20-May 20)
Anything that happens on Monday or Tuesday can be safely written off -- moodiness and sensitivity levels are off the charts. Wednesday and Thursday are more even-keeled days, but money issues figure prominently. You won't really feel like yourself until Friday or Saturday. The weekend holds good things for you, although Sunday feels a little off-kilter.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUN 21)
A healthy emotional state is inextricably linked to a healthy body as the week begins, so get that self-confidence up and get that lovely glow. Extremes in romantic energy are coming your way around Wednesday and Thursday, and you're liable to find these extremes rather exciting. If you've got a hidden agenda loveless this weekend, you might just end up revealing it.

CANCER (JUN 22-JUL 22)
If someone asks you what your favourite kind of pie is on Monday or Tuesday, you won't be able to answer. You like the texture of apple, but the flavour of pumpkin, or whatever. Midweek has you feeling torn about bigger issues than pie preference. Come Friday, you may feel more like hanging out around the house with a remote control (or a book) in your hand than anything else. You are in a thoughtful mood this weekend. Stay home: You're happy with a minimum of fanfare.

LEO (JUL 23-AUG 22)
On Monday and Tuesday, you're in detective mode. And on Wednesday, buoyed by all your research, you charge into the world with fresh insights and confidence; no minding words for you. Thursday is a big day romance-wise, and on Friday, your ego is front and centre. Try as you might to deflect attention on Saturday, all eyes are on you. On Sunday, be optimistic and forgiving.

VIRGO (AUG 23-SEPT 22)
You are nothing if not curious at the start of the week, and your analytical powers have never been stronger. On Wednesday and Thursday, you'd like to be climbing mountains or testing theorems, but your family has other things in mind. Don't rest, because you'll have plenty of personal time on Friday and Saturday. Sunday is a day of resolutions and new beginnings.

LIBRA (SEPT 23-OCT 22)
All you can think about is money this week. The middle of the week relieves you from this line of thinking by way of a purely fun excursion with a couple of your friends. In the days leading up to Sunday, chances are good that your mind will go to thoughts of the past. But Sunday, once again, your mind's on the future.

SCORPIO (OCT 23-NOV 21)
On Monday, you're feeling like a new you. You go into the week stronger (and more respected) than you've felt in a while. Your mind is open to anything, but it might be too open on Wednesday and Thursday, when you may find yourself caught up in a crowd mentality, being persuaded to do things you wouldn't normally do. Friday returns you to a high sense of order and self-control. Don't forget to party Saturday night.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV 22-DEC 21)
Your life is a movie at the outset of the week, but you can't quite follow the dialogue, and the car chases make no sense. By Wednesday and Thursday, your social calendar's too packed for TV time, and on Friday and Saturday, music and art figure strongly. On Sunday, someone might share a goal of their own that is so brilliant, that you'll consider adding it to your list.

CAPRICORN (DEC 22-JAN 19)
Monday and Tuesday are great days for decision-making. Wednesday and Thursday, when your plans go into effect, you may feel hesitant or awkward or pessimistic, but by Friday, you'll already be reaping the rewards of a path well chosen. People will be complimenting you right and left this weekend. The more modest you are, the more impressive you will be.

AQUARIUS (JAN 20-FEB 18)
Slowness is a virtue at the start of the week -- it encourages thoughtfulness. Wednesday and Thursday will be relatively social days. Friday is a big day at work and on Saturday, you have chores to do around the house. But Sunday, with its relaxing vibe, will be the best day you've had in ages.

PISCES (FEB 19-MARCH 20)
There are things you're willing to live with and things you just aren't. On Monday, you may have to draw a line in the sand. Tuesday, you may feel pangs of regret (they'll pass) -- but Wednesday is a lucky day for you, as is Thursday. Friday and Saturday, you're happiest sharing your good luck with others. This leads to a realisation this weekend: You want to do something with your life that helps lots of people.