

#MAHALAYA: THE STORY OF DURGA'

'MAHISHASUR MARDINI KI GATHA'

Bhutoria guides the listener through the mythological narrative, his telling of the story interwoven with the songs, alongside Shubha Mudgal



In the occasion of Mahalaya, cultural enthusiast, Sundeep Bhutoria has lent his voice to the narration of 'Mahishasura Mardini Ki Gatha', the saga of Goddess Durga's triumph over the demon Mahishasura, presented for the first time in Hindi. Released as 'Mahalaya: The Story of Durga', the production pairs Bhutoria's narration with songs by the eminent vocalist Shubha Mudgal and is now streaming on the Soudendro-Soumyojit YouTube channel who initiated the concept.

It is to be noted, Founder of Rajasthan Forum and Culturalist, Bhutoria has been an active promoter of cultural activities not only across the country but particularly in Jaipur and Rajasthan. In Jaipur, he has initiated several programmes that have given the city's art, literature and cultural identity greater recognition at the national level.

For generations of Bengalis, Mahishasura Mardini has been a cherished childhood memory, heard on the radio at four in the morning on Mahalaya. Bhutoria, born and raised in Bengal, has long championed the idea of carrying this treasured tradition beyond the Bengali-speaking world. This production turns that conviction into reality, opening the story of Maa Durga to listeners across India, to Indians living abroad, and to lovers of Indian art and culture worldwide.

As narrator, Bhutoria guides the listener through the mythological narrative, his telling of the story interwoven with the songs. Alongside Shubha Mudgal, who joins him in narration as well as song, he carries the listener from episode to episode, keeping the spiritual essence of the original intact while making it accessible to children and younger generations encountering the tale for the first time.

Rooted in the original works of Sri Bani Kumar,

Pankaj Kumar Mullick and Birendra Krishna Bhadra, the Hindi script has been recreated by eminent actor and director, Chandraprakash Dwivedi. The production brings Sanskrit and Hindi together through traditional recitation, contemporary music and accessible storytelling.

'Mahalaya' is not just a broadcast for Bengal; it is a memory that lives in every Bengali home. My hope is that a child in Delhi, a family in Dubai or a listener in London can now feel the same stirring we felt at dawn as children. Telling Maa Durga's story in Hindi is my small offering to keep that memory alive for generations to come," said Bhutoria.

Conceptualised and initiated by the music duo Soudendro-Soumyojit, the production blends traditional chants with symphonic arrangements and six original compositions by the duo, performed by Shubha Mudgal and Soumyojit. Acharya Tapash Chakraborty, a distinguished Sanskrit scholar, renders the Chandi Path, lending authenticity and spiritual depth, while music production is by Saikat Goblo Biswas. Shubha Mudgal's own connection to Bengal, through parents who listened to the iconic broadcast, adds a further emotional layer. For Bhutoria and for Soudendro-Soumyojit, all of whom grew up in Bengal, it is a passion project.

At a time when artistic work is increasingly driven by the visual medium, this audio-first initiative seeks to preserve an invaluable part of Bengal's cultural heritage and carry its message of peace, harmony and the triumph of good over evil to new audiences, across geographical and linguistic boundaries.

Sundeep Bhutoria is a Kolkata-based cultural enthusiast and a passionate advocate for India's literary and artistic heritage. Born and bred in Bengal, he has championed the vision of taking Mahalaya's Mahishasura Mardini to a national and global audience in Hindi.



Two cities share the name *Jaipur*. In one, the roads turn into rivers in the monsoon and into craters after it. In the other, the roads shine and the cars fly. Both cities have the same rules. Only one of them has a grandfather watching.

Potholes hunt in pairs

PART:3



#ATIKRAMAN UTSAV



all year in a gullak, and then, it leaves as suddenly as it came. For a few hours, every road in the colony becomes a river. Scooters turn into boats. Children float paper boats outside the gate. Someone's chappal floats past, also outside the gate.

A visitor from the desert who arrived on one of those afternoons would go back home and tell everyone that Jaipur is a water-surplus city. There are rivers everywhere! Then, the sun comes out. In a day or two, the rivers vanish.

And they take the road with them.

Engineers say water weakens a road from inside. In our colony, I suspect the road had no strength to begin with. It was just waiting for an excuse, like a student waiting for one drop of rain to declare a holiday.

What remains is a yawning crater, and the crater stays. Month after month. Sometimes, until the next monsoon comes and makes it deeper, like an annual increment. No bulldozer comes for it. No notice is pasted on it. No court hearing is fixed for it.

Why would anyone hurry? Unlike an encroachment, a pothole pays nobody a monthly side income.

Mustard does not file petitions

So, why can't Jaipur simply build good roads and be done with it?

In the nineties and 2000s, I watched Gurgaon being dug up. Dust, diversions, closed roads and a lot of cursing. And then, one fine day, the expressways and flyovers actually arrived. So, the foolish me assumed Jaipur would follow the same script.

What I did not know then was that Gurgaon's bulldozers were mostly clearing mustard fields. Mustard does not have papers from

1985. Mustard does not have an M.L.A. Mustard does not lose its Diwali sale. And mustard has never filed a petition in the Supreme Court.

New Sanganer Road has all four. And even if the road does become 160 feet wide, I am not very hopeful. In 2011, two economists, Gilles Duranton and Matthew Turner, studied American cities and found that traffic grew roughly as fast as the new road space. Build more lanes and more cars come to fill them, like relatives who find out that you have a spare room.

So, after all this dust and drama, we will have a 160-foot road with 160 feet of traffic.

The shimmering black dress

Now, let me tell you about the other Jaipur.

Whenever a VIP is about to pass, something magical happens to the road. First, it gets emptied. Not a car, not a scooter, not even a cow. And if you know our cows, you will know how much power that takes. Policemen appear at every corner as if they had sprouted there overnight after the rain.

And the road shines. It shines like a shimmering black dress at a wedding saangeet. Smooth, glossy, not a crack anywhere. Even the dividers get a fresh coat of paint, as if the road has gone for a facial

Lines. And there is *Aam Jaipur*, where I live, and where the potholes hunt in pairs.

I have started to believe potholes are very intelligent creatures. They can sense power. They never appear where a minister will pass. They breed only where the aam aadmi drives. Somebody should study them. They may be smarter than our town planners. That is not a high bar, but still.

The beacon went, the route stayed

In 2017, the government banned the famous *tal batti*, the red beacon on top of official cars. The Prime Minister tweeted that every Indian is special and every Indian is a VIP. It was a lovely tweet. The beacons came down. Many officers, I am told, felt naked for weeks.

But the shimmering black dress is still worn only on certain roads. The rest of the city is still in its old salwar kameez with a tear near the knee and a dal stain near the dupatta.

If every Indian is a VIP, I have a small request. Please send the VIP road repair team to my two VIP potholes. They have been waiting since the monsoon, and they are very lonely. They have started talking to each other.

Mummy versus Nana

My daughter does not listen to me at home. She does what she wants. I

can ask her ten times to put her plate in the kitchen, and the plate will stay exactly where it is, like a shrine on New Sanganer Road. Untouched. Unmovable. Slowly gathering devotees in the form of ants.

But the moment she is with my father, a retired army officer, she becomes the most obedient child in Rajasthan. Plate in the kitchen. Shoes in the rack. 'Yes, Nana.' 'Okay, Nana.' I have watched this transformation many times, and it still shocks me every single time. I gave birth to her. He just has to raise one eyebrow.

One day, while someone was telling me how Indians break every rule at home and follow every rule abroad, it struck me. It is the same story.

India is the mother. She says everything fifty times. 'Don't throw garbage.' 'Don't jump the signal.' 'Don't build on the road.' It is painted on her walls, printed on her hoardings and announced on her FM radio between two songs. Nobody listens. Why would they? She has said it fifty times before and nothing happened.

Aboard is the nana.

He says it once. Then, the camera clicks, the fine arrives and nobody not even a minister, gets an exception. So, the same Indian who drives on the wrong side at Gurjar Ki Thadi lands in Dubai and suddenly becomes a perfect grandchild. He stands in queues. He waits at crossings. He carries his chips packet around for an hour looking for a dustbin, as if it were a family heirloom.

People who study crime have found what my daughter taught me for free. The fear of being caught works far better than the fear of a harsh punishment. Nana never shouts. He just always notices.



VIP Roulette

So, how do we fix both Jaipur's? I have two humble ideas.

The first is VIP Roulette. Every Monday morning, a lottery will decide which colony the VIP convoys will pass through that week. Nobody will know in advance. Not the officers, not the contractors, not the traffic police. Not even the VIP.

Within a month, every road in Jaipur will be shining like a black saangeet dress, just in case. Within six months, the potholes will have nowhere left to breed. The engineers will become the fittest men in the city, running from colony to colony with buckets of tar. And for the first time in history, a minister may find himself driving down my road and meeting my two potholes personally. I will make the introductions.

The second idea is simpler. India needs a nana. Put cameras everywhere and let them chillan everybody. The scooter and the convoy. The shopkeeper's ramp and the shrine on the road. The aam aadmi at 60 and the VIP at 80. No exceptions. No phone calls. No 'Do you know who I am?' Nana does not care who you are. That is exactly why everyone listens to him.

A small invitation

Meanwhile, I have my own jugaad. I have a little house in Jaipur. If any minister, senior officer or VIP needs a quiet place to stay near New Sanganer Road, I will gladly host him. Home-cooked food, clean sheets, good chai and no charges at all.

I have only one condition. He must drive to it himself, every day, without a convoy, through my lane. I give the road a week.

Concluded.

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#NAZM

A Poetry In Hindi Cinema That Liberated

Nazm-inspired compositions offer something different from the regular. They prioritize emotional continuity and storytelling over structural repetition

In the world of film music, most songs follow a familiar and structured pattern. Typically, they begin with a Mukhda, the central refrain that anchors the melody, and continue with Antaras, verses that develop the idea before returning to the main line. This structure works much like a kite tied to its string: no matter how far the melody wanders, it always comes back to the starting point.

However, there is another poetic form that moves beyond these boundaries, the Nazm. Unlike conventional songs, a Nazm is free-flowing poetry guided by a continuous thought or emotion rather than a repeating refrain. Instead of circling back to a central line, it progresses naturally, unfolding like a story or a reflective monologue.

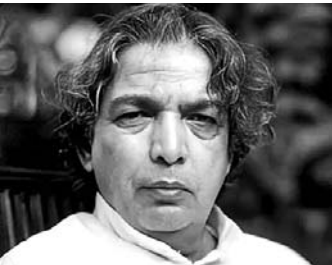
The Essence of a Nazm

A Nazm is rooted in the tradition of Urdu poetry. While a ghazal is made up of independent couplets linked by rhyme and refrain, a Nazm develops a single theme from beginning to end. The poem evolves logically and emotionally, allowing the poet to explore a complete narrative or idea without interruption.

Kaifi Azmi and a Powerful Cinematic Nazm

One of the most memorable Nazm-like compositions in Hindi cinema comes from the legendary poet Kaifi Azmi. He wrote the poignant piece 'Main Yeh Sochkar Uske Bar Se Utha Tha' for the war film *Haseenat*.

The poem reflects the inner turmoil of a soldier who quietly leaves behind someone he loves,



मैं यह सोचकर उसके दर से उठा था कि वह रोक लेगी मना लेगी मुझको।

हवाओं में लहराता आता था दामन कि दामन पकड़कर बिठा लेगी मुझको।

कुदम ऐसे अंदाज़ से उठ रहे थे कि आवाज़ देकर बुला लेगी मुझको।

कि उसने रोका न मुझको मनाया न दामन ही पकड़ा न मुझको बिठाया।

न आवाज़ ही थी न मुझको बुलाया मैं आहिस्ता-आहिस्ता बढ़ता ही आया।

यहाँ तक कि उसके जुवा हो गया मैं जुवा हो गया मैं, जुवा हो गया मैं।

uncertain whether he will ever return. Instead of repeating a



refrain, the lyrics move forward continuously, mirroring the soldier's wandering thoughts and emotional conflict. The structure itself becomes part of the storytelling, capturing the uncertainty, longing, and quiet resignation of someone walking away from home and love.

The Nazm's free-flowing form allows the emotions to unfold naturally, making the experience feel deeply personal and haunting.

Javed Akhtar and the Echo of a Tradition

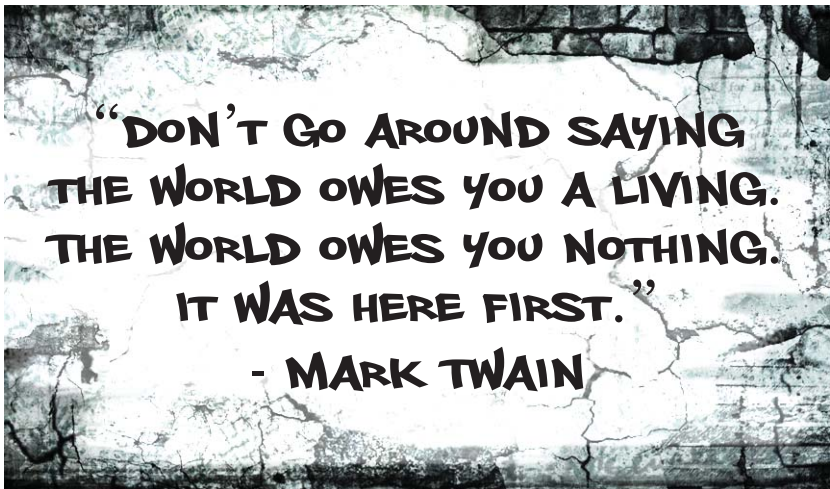
Decades later, a similar poetic moment appeared in the patriotic song 'Sandese Aate Hain' from the film *Border*. The lyrics were written by renowned poet and screenwriter Javed Akhtar.

Interestingly, Javed Akhtar is the son-in-law of Kaifi Azmi, and in this song, he briefly echoes the Nazm tradition. Towards the end of 'Sandese Aate Hain', the song momentarily breaks away from its structured format and shifts into a more narrative, flowing expression of a soldier's emotions. In that moment, the song transforms into a Nazm-like passage, expressing longing for home, family, and normal life.

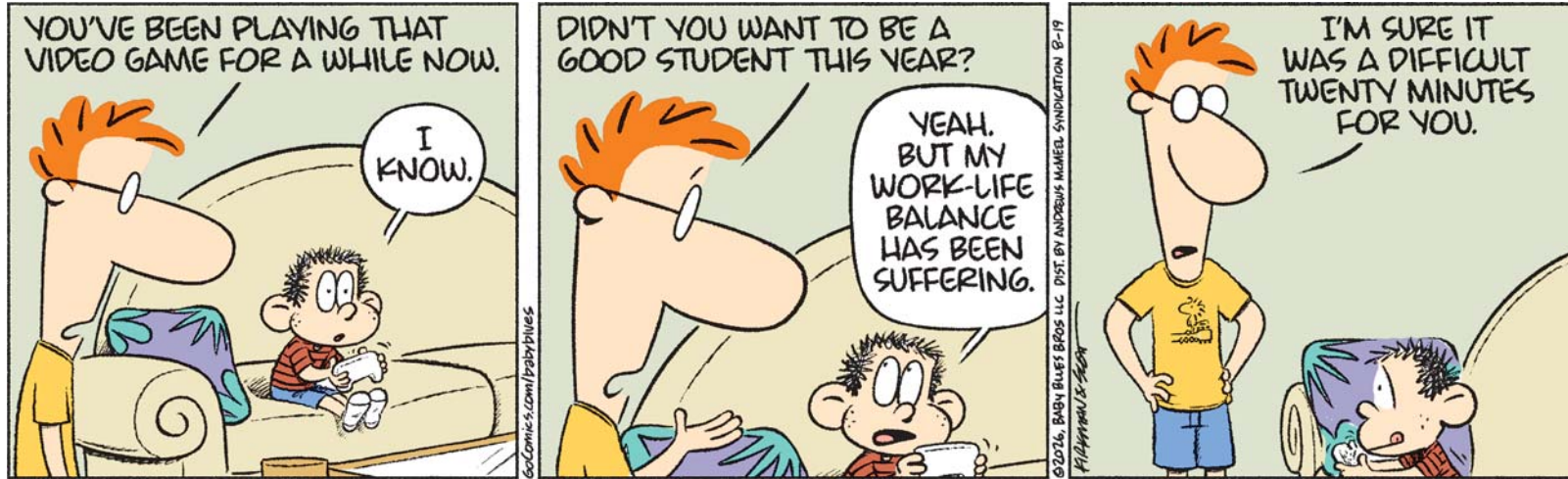
This subtle shift demonstrates how poetic traditions can evolve within film music while still honoring their roots.

Nazm in Film Music

Although most film songs rely on repeating refrains to create musical memorability, Nazm-inspired compositions offer something different. They prioritize emotional continuity and storytelling over structural repetition. Such pieces often feel more reflective and literary, drawing listeners into the internal world of the character rather than simply presenting a melody.



BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman