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SUNDAY POST

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SAVE ME
FROM
LOUD NOISE

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After a decade-long career in television as an anchor, Prerna Pratikshya needs no introduction. Among the several shows she's hosted, 'Raja Sundari' and 'Mu B Namita Agrawal Hebi' stand out. She began her career as a classical dancer and has also starred in music videos such as 'Phaguna Re Phaguna' and 'Sindura'. The ace small screen presenter has a dream to go out on a world tour with her beau Aswin Tripathy some day



With a mountain dog

Vocal for local

I love to be at local destinations rather than going abroad to unwind. Though I have been to most of the popular places as part of my profession, there is still so much to discover.

Home is where the heart is

When I go out, I enjoy Chinese and south Indian cuisine. I'd also love to taste Korean dishes given their increasing popularity in India. But my go-to item is homemade Paratha and potato fries.

Swamped with work

With a busy schedule, I rarely have time to unwind. So, every day is a work day for me. When I get a day off, I like to spend it with my family and have fun.



With husband Aswin

Best friend forever

I get along with a lot of people in the industry. I'm also in touch with several of my school classmates. But none compare to Aswin (Tripathy), my best friend forever. When we're together, time just seems to fly by.

MADHUSMITA SAHU, OP

WhatsApp This Week

Only on Sunday POST!

Send in your most interesting WhatsApp messages and memes at: features.orissapost@gmail.com And we will publish the best ones

THE BEST MEMES OF THIS ISSUE

- Whenever I find the key to success, someone changes the lock.
What do bees do with their honey? They cell it.
Can February March? No, but April May!
Why was the broom late? It over swept!



LET COMMON SENSE PREVAIL

Sir, Last week's cover story 'Storm in Teacup' highlighted how, in the tumultuous landscape of Odia cinema, a cascade of challenges threatens its very structure. The decline in the number of theatres, a flawed distribution system, the invasion of 'copy-paste' culture, and the ascendancy of streaming platforms have posed a serious threat to an once-vibrant industry. Now, a divisive controversy ensues, sparked by a ban on Manoj Mishra, allegedly for his supporters obstructing the screening of Aarindam Roy's film due to a personal feud. Amidst the chaos, notable figures like Dilip Hali, Swastik Choudhury, and Sakti Jagdev call for a focus on larger issues, constructive dialogues, and a return to professionalism. At the moment, several celebrities have asked both parties to resolve the internal strife for the sake of Odia Cinema's revival. Let us hope that common sense prevail sooner.

JYOTIKA KUMARI, KORAPUT

LETTERS



A WORD FOR READERS

Sunday POST is serving a platter of delectable fare every week, or so we hope. We want readers to interact with us. Feel free to send in your opinions, queries, comments and contributions to

features.orissapost@gmail.com B-15, Industrial Estate, Rasulgarh, Bhubaneswar - 751010, Orissa. Phone (0674) 2549982, 2549948

Festival of lights – Diwali

Let's make it animal-friendly



MADHUSMITA SAHU, OP

Diwali is one of the widely celebrated and eagerly awaited festivals in India. This is that time of the year when families come together to exchange gifts, indulge in delicious sweets, and light up the night with beautiful lamps and fireworks. While Diwali brings joy to many, it also brings suffering to some of our most vulnerable co-inhabitants of the planet – animals.

Excessive noise pollution caused by fireworks during Diwali is one of the most significant issues faced by animals. The loud explosions can be terrifying for animals, particularly dogs, cats, birds, and wildlife. Their sensitive ears are far more attuned to sound than ours, and the deafening noise can cause severe stress, anxiety, and even physical harm. Birds can be disoriented and abandon their nests, and pets can run away in fear, often becoming lost or injured.

Stray animals are the most vulnerable during Diwali. With no shelter and no one to protect them, they are exposed to the dangers of firecrackers and fireworks. Dogs, in particular, can be severely injured by firecrackers, and the injuries caused can be life-threatening. They also face the added challenge of scavenging for food amidst the chaos and debris left behind by the celebrations.

One of the major issues contributing to the plight of animals

during Diwali is the lack of awareness and empathy. Many people are simply not aware of the distress that fireworks cause to animals.

In recent years, there has been a growing movement to celebrate a more animal-friendly Diwali. This includes opting for noiseless or eco-friendly fireworks, limiting their use, or even avoiding them altogether. Many individuals and communities have chosen to celebrate with light and diyas (lamps) instead of fireworks. Moreover, there are organisations and individuals that actively work to rescue and care for injured animals during the festival.

On this occasion, some animal lovers share their concerns with **Sunday POST** while suggesting a few ideas to curb the menace.

'It makes no sense to celebrate festivals causing harms to other living beings'
Purabi Patra, an animal rights activist and founder

street dogs frantically running about during fireworks displays, which can lead to accidents with vehicles and even fatalities. These animals may also lose their established territories and seek refuge in unfamiliar areas, where they can be vulnerable to attacks by other groups of dogs. "Not only strays, but domesticated pets can also suffer from severe anxiety and, in some cases, succumb to heart failure. Are we prepared to mark our festivals by causing harm to other living beings?" she asks.

She also mentions, "Each year, a significant number of birds, including thousands of chicks, lose their lives due to suffocation. This tragic occurrence is primarily attributed to the celebration of Diwali, which falls during the winter season, a critical nesting period for many bird species. The smoke from fire-



One of the biggest causes of animal suffering during Diwali is a lack of sensitivity and empathy among people. Many are simply unaware of the trauma fireworks cause to the mute species



Man with a campaign poster(R); Purabi with the volunteers(L)

of Animal Welfare Trust Ekamra, says, "The difficulties encountered by animals include the distressing impact of loud fireworks, which is consistently traumatic for both street animals and pets. It is common to witness

crackers takes a toll on these vulnerable chicks. We have been actively engaged in organising awareness campaigns, particularly in schools, to educate children about this issue, and we aim to disseminate a positive message. Additionally, we provide emergency rescue contact numbers for anyone who encounters such situations, encouraging them to reach out to us for assistance."



'Stricter animal protection laws should be in place'

Jiban Ballav Das, Secretary of People for Animals, said, "Every year before Diwali, our organisation creates awareness through different means—social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter—with messages and also in FM, newspapers, and TV channels on the impact of firework on animals. Since many years, we have had remarkable success due to our awareness campaign."



He adds, "Animals and birds are very sensitive to noise. So, during Diwali, due to the heavy noise of the fireworks, animals and birds become frightened."

Dogs are most affected as they are more sensitive to noise. They hide themselves and run helter-skelter due to heavy noise, often resulting in accidents. Some miscreants tie crackers to the tails of dogs, and in many cases, they die due to the injuries caused by the crackers. An incident that took place last year in the Bapuji Nagar area of Bhubaneswar is a case in point."

He also explained how he worked with local authorities to check for such incidents.

"There are many animal protection laws. So, we work with the police and other law-enforcing agencies like the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the Wildlife Department of the government to enforce the law if we find any cruelty to animals during the Diwali celebration. There are several instances where legal actions have been initiated against the culprits. We also seek stricter animal protection laws as the existing law is very old and weak."

Asked about his tips for the suffering animals during festivity, he suggests, "Administer first aid to affected animals immediately and shift them to



the hospital with the help of ambulance services offered by organisations like People for Animals or the animal helpline of the government."

On how such atrocities can be prevented, he urges people to contact the police or law-enforcing authorities if they spot such incidents in their vicinity.

"And for long-term solutions, we need to sensitise people about the issue. Both government and NGOs should come forward to create awareness," he concludes.

'There's a need to create mass awareness on animal cruelty'

Sailesh Mohanty, a 27-year-old social entrepreneur who volunteers at Speak For Animals Trust, has, over time, developed a keen understanding of how animals truly feel. He says, "The way people in general celebrate Diwali badly affects the



animals, particularly pets and those in the wild. The noise and brightness produced by the firecrackers put the animals under severe stress."

Sharing his experience, he adds, "I have two pet dogs, and they suffer from untold misery during these loud celebrations of Diwali. I prefer keeping them in a closed room and avoiding taking them on walks 2-3 days before and after the Diwali festival, as there is a huge risk of coming into contact with the remains of harmful chemicals released from fire

crackers on the streets."

Talking about the other measures, he shares, "I prefer keeping my pets in a room where the loud noise of fire crackers won't bother them. I also spend more time with them to make them feel comfortable and secure."

While Sailesh takes all precautions for his pets, he feels aggrieved for those on the streets.

"The dogs, cats, and other animals on the streets are the worst hit. I have been working with Speak for Animals Trust, a non-profit organisation that provides aid to street animals in need, and during this festival, we often receive rescue calls where animals suffer from burnt skin, chemical reactions, food poisoning from eating contaminated leftover food thrown on the streets, and many more. It's also disturbing to watch video clips of animals with firecrackers tied to their tails. People should stay away from such inhuman acts."

There's a need to create massive awareness on this issue, he says.

"Though animal rights activists, groups, and concerned communities have been trying their best to raise awareness about the distressful impact of bursting crackers, it has never been enough. We still receive rescue calls every year, and sometimes the conditions of such animals are beyond description. To intensify the awareness campaign, we need to keep conducting educational programmes and events that showcase the traumatic impact these irresponsible celebrations have on innocent animals. This should then be a topic of discussion in the general public, at their homes, with their children, and with other family members. And this will gradually build a considerate and compassionate society where such traumatic experiences can be minimised for the animals."

Sailesh mentions. He urged people to opt for noise-free and eco-friendly fireworks, which will not only help animals feel better but also go a long way towards safeguarding the environment.

"Please keep the animals indoors, avoid using firecrackers altogether, support animal welfare organisations, and promote a cruelty-free Diwali," he said.

"We must remember that small actions can have a big impact. By adopting animal-friendly practices and promoting awareness, individuals and communities can enjoy the festive spirit of Diwali while minimising harm to animals," quipped the animal lover.



Diwali campaign of People for Animals



Spreading lights beyond borders

Amsterdam-based Indian Fusion Chef Bhairabi Prasad Sahu says Diwali allows him to popularise Indian traditions in his neighbourhood in the Netherlands



MADHUSMITA SAHU, OP

Festival of lights Diwali holds a special place in the hearts of millions of Indians around the world. Traditionally celebrated in India and other South Asian countries, this vibrant and joyous festival has transcended geographical boundaries.

So, it's no longer just an Indian festival; Diwali has been embraced worldwide. In some countries, it has even become an official holiday. Several cities in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia host public Diwali celebrations, where people of various backgrounds join in the festivities. The White House in the United States has been lighting the diya for the past few years to mark the occasion.

Moreover, multinational corporations often acknowledge and celebrate Diwali to show their respect for the diverse cultures of their employees and customers. These gestures of recognition help bridge cultural gaps and promote inclusivity.

The significance of the festival varies across different regions and faiths, but in essence, it symbolises the victory of light over darkness and good over evil. The festival marks the return of Lord Rama from his 14-year exile and his victory over the demon king Ravana, as well as the worship of the goddess Lakshmi for prosperity and wealth. On this occasion, a couple of families from Canada and the Netherlands

share with **Sunday POST** about the scale of celebration on foreign soils.

'An opportunity to introduce Indian culture to people of Amsterdam'

Bhairabi Prasad

Sahu, a professional Indian Fusion Chef, is currently based in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Sharing his thoughts, Sahu says, "As a chef residing abroad, Diwali holds a special place in my heart. It is among India's most cherished celebrations. Although I am far from my homeland, I make an effort to keep the Diwali spirit alive in Amsterdam. Living here for two years, despite my busy schedule, I am the one in my family who encourages active participation in Indian festivals. In the Netherlands, Diwali, a significant Indian festival, is celebrated with great enthusiasm, thanks to the thriving Indian community. We plan ahead and book a venue each year to celebrate Diwali with our fellow Indians."



Suresh with neighbours during a Diwali celebration

On the main attractions, he adds, "One of the most enchanting aspects of Diwali is the creation of delectable, authentic Indian cuisine. I derive immense joy from crafting cherished dishes like samosas, pakoras, biryanis, as well as an array of sweets like jalebi, gulab jamun, and barfi. Sharing these treats with friends and the local Amsterdam community is my way of introducing them to the exquisite flavours of Indian food. Before Diwali, our tradition includes buying clothes and firecrackers for our home and the gathering hall. On Diwali, the dish I particularly savour is chaula kheeri, a significant part of my Odia family's celebrations. In our household, it has always been the women who oversee the preparation of these dishes during every festival. I fondly recall watching my mother orchestrate the culinary preparations, with chaula kheeri being one of these cherished, traditional dishes."

Speaking about the celebrations at home, he says, "I create joyful experiences for my little cousins and share my childhood memories with them. Our traditions persist through the years, with our entire house adorned with flowers and candles as we follow traditional rituals. My cousins eagerly participate, and in the evening, we come together at a function hall for an annual dance competition that they thoroughly enjoy. We then celebrate Diwali with the broader community, where a committee organises a feast featuring a wide selection of delicious vegan Indian dishes, including our favourite, medu vada, which we savour during the festivities."

Signing off, he says, "In Amsterdam, we actively engage in local Diwali festivities and encourage neighbours to join in. For me, it holds special meaning as it allows me to connect with my cultural heritage and introduce the traditions of my homeland to the people of Amsterdam. Preserving our customs and passing them on to younger generations remains a priority, even in a world influenced by Western culture."

'Want to pass the traditions on to the next generation'

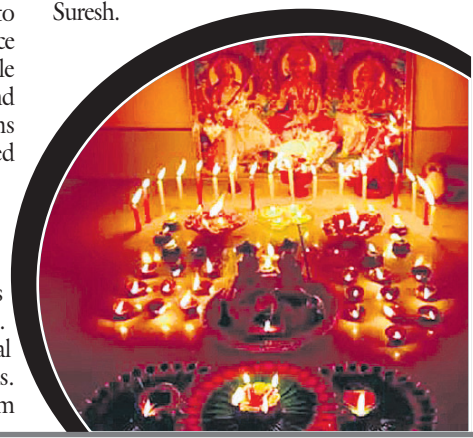
Suresh Sahu, IT Program Manger, has been living in Canada for more than a decade. Sharing his experience, he says, "It's a special occasion for all Indians, we're no exceptions. Following the Hindu calendar, we perform

Lakshmi Puja, light up diyas at home and, of course, share sweets and convey our wishes to our friends."

Talking about how the festival kicks off in Canada, he continues: "It begins with cleaning, shopping, and then we start decorating the home with lights and flowers at the front, patio, and indoors. On Diwali night, we wear traditional clothes, light up diyas, and light candles. To get the feel of our homeland, we exchange wishes with friends and family staying far away through phones and video calls. We also have many Indian friends who live nearby or work with us. We meet and greet them with sweets and exchange Diwali greetings."

Narrating the scale of celebration, Suresh says, "There are 10 Indian families living in our street. We enjoy the fireworks together, while our children enjoy them more than us. This year, members of nearly 50 Odia families assemble in a nearby hall for celebrations. Festive activities like competitions for paper rangoli painting and diya painting are also held. Besides, group pujas, foods, kid's fun activities, and cultural programmes are conducted there."

By celebrating a festival like Diwali on foreign soil, he wants to pass on the culture and tradition to his next generation, adds Suresh.



Samantha on her triple whammy



Actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu, who is on a break from films, has spoken about suffering from myositis in various interviews and social media posts. In a new interview the actress opened up about the challenges she faced, personally and professionally, in the past couple of years – all at the same time.

The *Yashoda* actress said, “When I hit an all-time low of, well, a failed marriage, and my health and work were getting affected, it was like a triple whammy; boom, boom, boom. You know, people go down for far less than what I endured for the last two years or so. During that time, I read about actors who have gone through health issues and made a comeback, or suffered trolling or anxiety. And reading their stories helped me. It gave me strength to know that if they did it, I can, too.”

She added, “It’s important to recognise that being a loved star in this nation is an incredible gift; so be responsible for it, be honest and real, and tell your story. And it’s not always about how many super hits and blockbusters one has, how many awards have been won, the perfect body, or the most beautiful outfits. It’s the pain, the hardships, the lows.”

AGENCIES

‘Breakup isn’t always easy’



Actress Sara Ali Khan, who is known for films like *Zara Hatke Zara Bachke*, *Atrangi Re*, *Kedarnath* and *Simmba*, spoke about her relationship with ex-boyfriend Kartik Aaryan.

Sara along with Ananya Panday graced the latest episode of the 8th season of the popular chat show *Koffee With Karan* hosted by Karan Johar.

Sara said: “I don’t want to put it like that, ‘Yeah it’s easy’ because then it comes across more frivolous than it is. It isn’t always easy. When you are involved with anybody, whether it’s friends, professionally, romantically, especially if I am, I get involved and invested. It is not like, ‘Oh yeah, it doesn’t really matter, whatever it’s today, whatever it’s tomorrow’. It’s not like that.”

The actress admitted: “It does affect you, these things. You have to rise beyond that. There actually are no permanent predicaments in this business. In my personal experience, there is no point making permanent best friendships, pinky promises, saying I’ll never talk to you again. All these ‘nevers’ and ‘always’ nahi hota (doesn’t happen)”. *Koffee with Karan Season 8* streams on Disney+ Hotstar. IANS

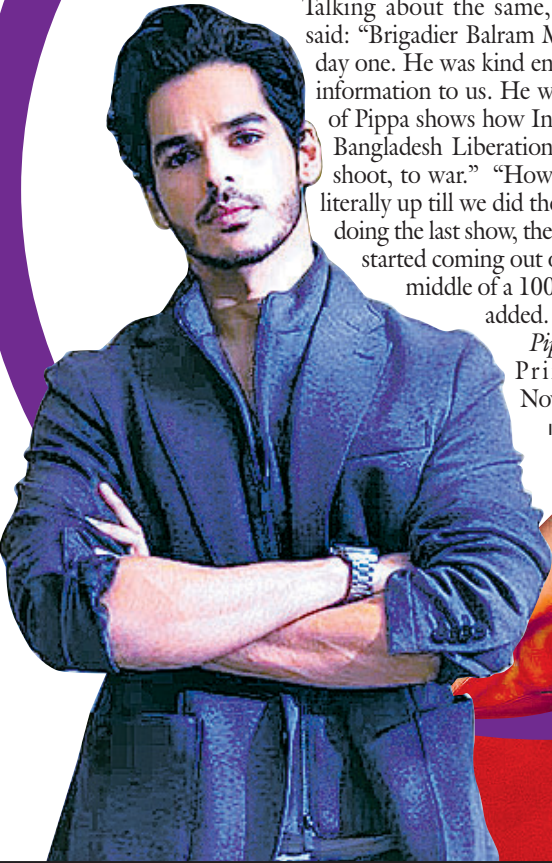
Pippa Ishaan spills beans on his guiding force

Actor Ishaan Khatter, who is all set to woo the audience with his uniform look in the upcoming war film *Pippa*, shared in order to ensure authenticity in his performance, he sought the guidance and mentorship of Brigadier Balram Singh Mehta.

Talking about the same, Ishaan said: “Brigadier Balram Mehta was our guiding force from day one. He was kind enough to lend his time and all the information to us. He was omnipresent in the making of *Pippa* shows how India played a crucial role in the Bangladesh Liberation the film -- from prep to the shoot, to war.” “How we resurrected it, its life was literally up till we did the last shot with it. As we were doing the last show, the hull blew up and black smoke started coming out of the tank. Now, I was in the middle of a 100-ft deep lake on the tank,” he added.

Pippa was release on Prime Video November 10.

IANS



Netizens furious over video on Deepika’s ‘casual dating’



A video allegedly from Benaras Hindu University (BHU) in Varanasi, which talks about the dating history of Deepika Padukone, has gone viral and is being called out by the online community.

The video shows a female student, portraying Deepika’s character ‘Mastani’ as she stands at the centre of the stage. She is surrounded by male students. In the video, each male student has dressed up as individuals rumoured to be her past boyfriends or connections.

The performance looks like a satire on the actress’s idea of ‘casual dating’ which she spoke about during one of the recent episodes of the popular chat show *Koffee With Karan* hosted by Karan Johar. Netizens have strongly reacted against the video, calling the performance the ‘character assassination’ of the actress.

One Internet user wrote, “Memes are ok but this is the character assassination of Deepika Padukone! It’s a shameful act.” A second user wrote, “Character assassination of Deepika wasn’t enough on social media that a renowned university actually allowed it live!! just so low of them.” A third user demanded a legal action, as they wrote, “This situation unquestionably warrants a defamation lawsuit.” IANS

The Pearl Button: A synthesis of poetry and historiography

The film opens with a cosmic frame, giant telescopes that observe the universe from a Chilean desert, are presented alongside shots of glaciers, rivers and seas, as Guzmán explores water's role as a flowing intermediary force between the stars and human life, more so, in Chile, with its 2,600-mile coastline.

There are shots, too, of comets and stars, thrillingly captured from below – flashes of colour in the night sky. Also at ground level, the camera constantly observes water flowing; the sound of water – running, dripping, falling – a soothing soundtrack to the action.

Guzmán's cutting links these striking shots of glaciers and other natural formations to the stones carved by the indigenous peoples who populated Chile's coastal areas until the arrival of European colonisers in the 19th century. Black-and-white photographs and grainy footage point to a now eradicated way of life, in which the Kawésqar, Selk'nam, Aoniken, Hausch and Yámana navigated the country's coasts and waterways. The dots and stripes painted on the bodies of the Selk'nam people are captured in frozen images that speak of comets and stars. They believed in life after death: humans transformed into stars in a cosmology binding the skies and the seas.

The Pearl Button is crucially a film about memory. Cristina, Gabriela and Martín, prompted to recall a few Kawésqar words, reveal that 'police' and 'God' don't exist in that language. These maritime tribes were largely eradicated within 50 years of the arrival of European settlers. Photographs show them being pursued as prey – body parts securing financial gain for the hunters.

In the early 1970s, Salvador Allende's social revolution generated a move to return land to these native populations, but Pinochet's coup d'état obliterated any progressive initiatives. The Pearl Button follows this cinematic journey, inscribing the tales of the disappeared

into its very fabric. The tale of Jemmy Button is illustrative. Exchanged in 1830 for a "mother-of-pearl" button – hence the name – the indigenous teen was one of four Fuegians taken to England by Captain Robert FitzRoy to be 'civilised'.

Guzmán reframes this as a tale of barbarism, with the returning Button made

with the support of the US backed coup of Allende.

Following the US-backed 1973 military coup (its fifty years in 2023) that overthrew socialist president Salvador Allende, thousands of the new rightist regime's opponents "disappeared".

In recent years, it has become known

the reflections on nature and astronomy. It's a singular approach, attempting to join observation of scientific phenomena with human history, a work of immense scope and ambition, a film that is equal parts poetry and vital historiography.

The film won the Silver Bear for Best Script at 2015 Berlinale. If,

the process of returning the dead is about allowing the living to grieve, *The Pearl Button* is ultimately about cinema's unique way of retelling the past, about a visual language that links Pinochet's victims to the Yámana peoples through the image of a button. Water is ultimately the conduit that Guzmán uses to bind the different memories into a bold, poetic narrative that asks profound questions of humanity and indeed of cinema's responsibilities to the wider world.

At the beginning of my career, I was not very political; I only thought about filming. What made me enter [politics] was to find the Allende government, and it was such an extraordinary explosion that I just found myself immersed. But I never was a Marxist expert or anything; I haven't read the classical texts; I've never been an activist in any political party. But sometimes,

suddenly, you see things clearly: where your country is and what is happening. So my naive aspects and my reality combined: and of course I've been playing with that balance ever since. But I've never felt I had a huge vision to communicate in a militant manner or that what I was doing was vital. On the contrary, I like a little bit of humour. The poetic aspects do dominate, for me. Luckily! -
Patricio Guzman



Director: Patricio Guzman
Producer: Renate Sachse
Cast: Patricio Guzman (Narrator), Raul Zurita(himself)

into an exile in his own land. At the film's end, another pearl button appears, this one found on the remains of a body dumped at sea during the Pinochet era, linking Jemmy and others like him to the disappeared. The seas are shown to be cemeteries of the dead.

The film helps us understand Chile's history: the colonial (genocide of indigenous people) and modern (political dissidents' "disappearance"), both emerging from a particular way of looking at the world based on domination, hegemony and subjugation. It enables us to remember, the origins of how the neoliberal ideology was implemented by the Pinochet regime,

that many were flown out to sea and dumped, alive or dead, into the ocean. Conceived of as a trilogy to understand his nation's history and psyche, viewers would connect with Guzmán's masterful previous feature, 2010's *Nostalgia for the Light*, when an astronomer describes the function of a powerful telescope used to examine the stars. Due to their distance from the earth, the light from each star takes millions of light years to reach us; each image recorded is one of a distant past, an embalment of a moment in time. This central metaphor of the after-image of the past brought back to the present is key to Guzmán's recent historical inquests into Chile's history. *Nostalgia* was set in the north, the Atacama desert, *Pearl Button* is set in the South, the concluding part of the trilogy is set in the Andes, a work in progress.

What makes *The Pearl Button* such an interesting and unique film is the way that it frames this political polemic with



SUBRAT BEURA

Sweetly



PHOTO: KAMAL PHOTOGRAPHY