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**EXCLUSIVE**

## **KOLLYWOOD CALLING!**

**RIKZUNG DORJEE AND GAURAV PRADHAN TO STAR IN NEPALI FILM**

**SPECIAL FEATURE**

**PAGE 2**

### **SUSHMA PRODUCTIONS ON A ROLL**

WITH MR HIMALAYAN MANHUNT AND INDO-NEPAL MOVIE, THE PRODUCTION HOUSE IS JUST GETTING STARTED



**INTRODUCING PAGE 2**

### **ABHIBYANJANA THATAL MAKING MUSIC MOVES**



# SUSHMA PRODUCTIONS ON A ROLL

With Mr Himalayan Manhunt and Indo-Nepal movie, the production house is just getting started!

**"I have always believed that the Sikkimese youth if given the opportunity and platform can do wonders."**

Sushma Production is gearing up for the main event of the year. The first edition of Mr Himalayan Manhunt kicked off with the release of its official promo featuring models from different Himalayan parts of the country on 04th April. Organized by Sushma Production in collaboration with Sikkim Chronicle and ETC Chronicle, the competition promises to highlight the best that the Himalayan region has to offer.

"We are ecstatic about the event. It is going to be so fun to see all the contestants bring their best foot forward for the competition. Most importantly we wanted to showcase the hidden faces and talents in the Himalayan region of the country," says Mrs Gurung.

The creative team behind the shoot of the promo has been teasing the entirety of the State with sneak peeks and clips from the shoot since many weeks.

Mrs Gurung through her production house has also been quite busy with helping projects and organizing contests to crop out talents and faces from different



with Sikkim Film Board Chairperson, Pooja Sharma



with Yougan Tamang, Co-Founder SC & ETC

parts of the State.

Most recently, the production house announced its plans to launch many Sikkimese actors in an upcoming Indo-Nepal film with stars from Nepali Film industry.

The Nepali film will be directed by Director Surendra Poduyal of Anmol KC starrer KRI fame. The production house has already finalized Dichenla Thugon, Padam Tamang and Dilip Gurung in its star cast.

Mrs Gurung has confirmed that many other actors from Sikkim will also be a part of the film for which auditions were held prior to the lockdown

Mrs Gurung is also heavily involved in promoting arts and culture in the State. She encourages local talents from singers to dancers to aspiring actors by meeting with them personally and motivating them to do better in life. She also organizes and attends various talent shows to show her support to the growing number of talents in the State.

"I have always believed that Sikkimese youths if given opportunity and platform can do wonders. I want to contribute to that and founding our own production house, one that is based in Sikkim is an opportunity I don't

want to pass. We want to find and nurture the talents in the State so they can bring glory and pride for themselves and the State."

Last year, the production house conducted an online singing competition "Khoj" which was met with positive response from the audience. The competition aimed at bringing singing talents together, was conducted virtually due to the pandemic. The production house also features musicians and artists on its YouTube channel for better exposure and encouragement.

The production house also collaborated with Mountain Stories Entertainment in a musical short

movie featuring talents, Sahil Lama, Saruk Tamrakar, Pramila Chettri and Riya Bhujel. The video currently has more than 200K views on YouTube.

Additionally, Mrs Gurung is also the president of Sushma Foundation based in Arithang. The foundation through its countless events and charity have helped the needy and underprivileged sections of the society not only during the pandemic but natural disasters and medical emergencies too.

Her numerous applause worthy selfless works include providing safety kits to the taxi drivers during the pandemic in 2020, providing necessary supplies including rice, flour, oil, salt, vegetables to more than 1000 households in and around Arithang, visiting sick patients in hospitals and homes and providing them with financial support and countless more acts of kindness.

Talking about balancing various ventures and traveling and organizing charity events, Mrs Gurung says, "I never do things that I cannot handle. Balancing has never been a problem to me. Yes, it gets busy but I am sort out about what I want to do so I always stay clear about my vision."

## ABHIBYANJANA THATAL MAKING MUSIC MOVES

**"I find music irresistible. It's therapeutic to me"**

Singer-songwriter Abhibyanjana Thatal (23) is one quiet yet very loud wunderkind and I say that because she lets her music do the talking. You probably have never heard about her and you would be correct if you say, 'maybe she is underrated' because she is. **MAJORLY UNDERRATED.**

She has been playing music since she was a small kid and her music is proof that you don't need numbers to define someone's success. Her greatest achievement you say? How about a singing credit in Priyanka Chopra Jonas's produced film "Pahuna: The Little Visitors"? She has also released two original songs titled 'Groovy Girl' and 'Breezing Through'.

As she preps to release her new song 'Winter Love', Thatal is finally making major music moves. Read our in-depth conversation about music, music in Sikkim, music in our life, music everywhere.

**Your first single was released in 2018. Then you went on to release one song, almost a year ago. Why the long hiatus?**

Trying to score a balance between my music and education



was a difficult task. It still is. I'm just a girl trying to venture into an unknown path and you can say I am being practical with my approach. I was trying to strike a balance and learn to do both mainstream education as well as music. While I did write songs during that time, the process of production is one that requires time, effort and dedication.

**Apart from writing and playing gigs across different cities, what keeps you connected to music?**

I find music irresistible. It's almost like it works to evoke a

certain feeling in you and that's exactly what it does for me. It's therapeutic to me. Every musical piece presents itself as a new thing for me, sometimes it's like a help that you need, sometimes it's an inspiration. So I stay connected to music even if I don't have any gigs or am not writing by jamming along with other friends, sharing music and maybe because we all have a certain affinity to music.

**As an independent artist from Sikkim, what do you hope for the future generations of musicians, songwriters and performers in the State?**

Sikkim is going through a rapid stage of transformation socially, economically, politically and culturally. The scenario here 10 years ago was not as conducive to artists as it is today and we're only slowly warming up to supporting local artists here. Today, I think we in Gangtok, at least, are slowly transitioning to becoming more and more hospitable to local musicians. We have reached a certain stage of urbanism and that is reflecting in the pub and cafe cultures of Gangtok. That makes us feel excited because we can play our music.

I hope people in Sikkim support the local artists more and more, we

need this support that people like yourselves are giving us. This also means that there is scope for better production houses in Sikkim that are inclusive to all artists.

**You have a singing credit in the feature film "Pahuna", how did that happen?**

I think it was possible through the power of social media, simply put. A lot of people in the crew were from Sikkim and one of them who had heard my song covers and some music on Instagram recommended me to their music director. The music director of the film then heard my songs on Instagram and decided he wanted to work with me. If I attribute this event to my 'luck' I would be discrediting my work as a musician, I believe the circumstances at that time were just right and I ended up singing a track for the film.

**Any Sikkimese artists that has your attention in terms of bringing the much needed spotlight in the State?**

It's great to see a lot of new musicians in Sikkim. I cannot answer this without mentioning Tribal Rain whose music inspired me and so many of us. Girish and the Chronicles of course brought Sikkim to notice from the national media in terms of music. Conflicts

has my attention currently, Peeyush Nepal, Zeron, Aabishkaar Thatal, Anoushka Maskey and Dechen Phinasa. These are the young artists who I see as my contemporaries as well as inspirations and I'm looking forward to seeing more and more of them.

**What are you looking forward to the most in 2021, in terms of new projects, gigs?**

I have been working on a few projects lately and my songs are finally going to see the light of the day. I'll be releasing my song "Winter Love" in the coming month. Aside from my solo projects, I am collaborating with musicians from Assam and Mumbai to bring to you another side of this exploration in the form of an E.P.

**"I'll be releasing my song Winter Love in the coming month"**

I'll soon be sharing more details regarding this single and the solo project following that, as well as more information about the E.P. very soon. I'm looking forward to growing and exploring more as a musician.



# KOLLYWOOD CALLING!

## Rikzung Dorjee and Gaurav Pradhan to star in Nepali film

BY PALZOR MACHUNGPA

In so many ways Sikkim's Rikzung Dorjee Bhutia (24) and Darjeeling's Gaurav Malla Pradhan (26) are like all of us (well, most of us). They both are dreamers and they put in the work to get what they want.

Rikzung, born and raised in Gangtok says he always knew things were eventually going to work out for him and that he focused on the bigger picture rather than dwelling in his past.

"I've always been a creative artist. I knew the day would come where all my patience and hard work would pay off and this opportunity just proves that."

Gaurav on the other hand was juggling between his passions for creative arts and pursuing his PhD in Machine Learning at Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology in Majitar, East Sikkim. From singing to modeling to sports and now all set to feature in a major Nepali production, Gaurav says, "We have one life, gotta live it right."

Honing their crafts and not rushing things, both of them were already carving a niche for themselves when they finally got that 'call' that would change their lives forever.

A major production house looking for fresh faces to bring their story to life offered them starring roles in a movie which is rapidly gaining more and more attention as it continues to add to its impressive lineup of star studded cast.

Starring alongside the duo are actors, Buddhi Tamang and Rishma Gurung along with Darjeeling based singer Yankee Yolmo in prominent roles.

The film is being made under the banner of Arvind Raj Productions in association with Annjig Productions, UK and is scheduled to start filming from the first week of April. It is confirmed that the shooting will be done in Darjeeling, Sikkim and Kolkata.

Between attending workshops and preparing for their respective roles, the duo let us into their current mindset and talked with us about their struggles, expectations and their film which is now under production.

**You are all set to make a big splash in the celluloid with this movie. How are you processing everything that is going around you??**

RD: This is a huge opportunity for me and honestly I am just so excited to learn and give it my best. For now, I am in that headspace where I feel like all those years of hard work and waiting is finally paying off.

**"I feel like all those years of hard work is finally paying off"**

GP: It is so surreal. Sometimes I have to remind myself that this is happening. I've worked so hard for this and finally to be able to do this film, I just am so grateful for the opportunity.

**Does it help to have an accomplice beside you as you prep for your respective roles?**

RD: Definitely. It helps to have someone who is on the same boat and who is just as excited and eager about this like me. I feel much more at ease as we help and learn from each other. Plus the fact



that we both come from different backgrounds is a big factor as I am learning something from him and vice-versa. It is a fun equation we have right now.

GP: I was a little relieved when I came to know that Rikzung was cast along with me. We both are newcomers and as soon as we met, we instantly had this common ground to build our relationship on. We are nervous, excited, and at times afraid together. He is such a humble soul and he has been really helpful in calming my nerves and improving my dialogue delivery, timing and techniques. It is great to have him on board.

**Could you share some details about your role in the movie? And out of curiosity what is the movie about?**

RD: This is an exciting question. Honestly, I would love to spoil the plot but then again I think people are going to love how the story unfolds before their eyes. However, I can tell you this about my role in the movie; I play a Sikkimese guy in the film. Suffice to say, it is an absolute honour to represent my State.

GP: All I can say is that this movie is about a typical Darjeeling boy and his journey to achieve success. The story is great and I really hope it connects to the audience, especially the youths. **Tell us about your reaction when you learned that you had been cast in the movie.**

RD: Words cannot describe how thrilled I got when I first learned that I had been cast in a movie of this calibre. I was feeling a whole plethora of emotions. It was my friend's birthday and I was livestreaming on Instagram and then Yougain da (from Sikkim Chronicle) joined the livestream

and popped the question. He was like, "Bhai, do you want to do a Nepali movie?" At first I was like there's no way this is happening and I kind of played along thinking it was a joke but then he DM'ed me and then it all started working out. He is one of the, if not the only one who really wants to build an industry around local talents so I have mad respect for him and everything he does. I am just grateful that he thought of me for the movie.

GP: My first reaction was like -No, was that call really for me. Did I hear it right? Am I really going to be an actor?

I was happy as well as confused at the same time. It took some time before I calmed down.

I remember it was 09 am in the morning when I received a call from the production house saying that they wanted me for film. It was such an overwhelming experience. I was speechless.

**"It was such an overwhelming experience. I was speechless"**

**What are you looking forward to the most during the production of this film?**

RD: Learning from all the talents involved in making this movie is a crash course in acting I won't receive in the best drama schools. I am so looking forward to filming the movie.

GP: Just the idea of making a film and being involved in the creation of this story is an opportunity that I want to take full advantage of. The amount of talents involved in making this film is insane and I just want to make the best of it.

**What are the preparations that**

**you are undergoing to fit into the part you're playing?**

RD: Preparation wise, I have actually a lot to work on. I've been working on my portrayal of the character and give him the justice that he deserves.

GP: Right now we are focusing on the script, dialogues, gait, dialogue delivery, postures and many other things important in the film making process.

**Have you had the chance to run your lines with Buddhi Tamang or Rishma Gurung? If yes, how was it and if no, are you nervous or excited about it.**

RD: We are in the initial stage of production and so far we haven't been able to run lines together, but I am eager to share the stage with them. It is going to be fun, I think.

GP: Unfortunately we haven't got the chance to run lines yet. I am hoping it will be a great time when we finally do.

**Your message to the people who will read this interview.**

RD: I just want to thank everybody who are reading this and supporting local talents like me in our quest to achieve something and hopefully elevate the name of the State. I want to urge people, especially youngsters to never give up on dreams and work towards making it a reality.

GP: I feel it is imperative that people open their minds and let people decide for themselves what they want to do with their lives. Learn to break away from the rules set by the society and do the thing that you are really good at. As one of my dearly departed friends always said to me, "If you're really good at something, don't think too much. Put in the work and see how you achieve the impossible."





# TRIUMPHANT DEBUT

Nineteen weaves magic with 'Chitra Ani Nasha'

BY PALZOR MACHUNGPA

I can hear the excitement in his voice when we talk about his music. The car horns and noise in the background doesn't diminish the excitement in his voice as he lets out occasional playful laughs midsentence. Fresh from the launch of his debut album 'Chitra Ani Nasha', Darjeeling based singer-songwriter, Nineteen (Raman Lama) is basking on the acclaim he is receiving.

The album, released on 28 March is a blend of genres ranging from soul, pop, R&B and funk. Produced under Alter Ego Productions and by Aadon Lepcha, 'Chitra Ani Nasha' features a total of eight songs along with a minute long 'intro' in the beginning. What's more impressive is that the entirety of the album is written by Nineteen himself.

"I am a songwriter first. I've put my heart into the songs I've written for this album. I feel I am a better songwriter than a singer," he says.

Drawing inspiration from things happening around him and his life Nineteen sings about identity crisis, life experiences, dreams, hope and love throughout the album.

"The best part of being a songwriter is freedom. Freedom to write about love, frustration, angst, pain and life in general," he says.

"Timro Saath is my favorite song off of the album. I wrote the song inspired by a very special friend of mine," he shares.

Nineteen says his friend asked him to write a song about his relationship.

"Usually I write songs about



being in somebody else's shoes, but this time he asked me to write a song about his relationship and that's how Timro Saath happened. It's my favorite song from the album."

Clearing the air Nineteen says Timro Saath is his favorite, but it doesn't mean that the other songs on the album don't matter to him.

"There's a difference between being a favorite and being the best. All the songs are dope but Timro Saath is my favorite," he reiterates.

Talking about the album the singer-songwriter shares that the album consists of songs that he wrote years before the album was made. He also says that many songs that he had written since the start of his career failed to make the final cut.

"There were tons of songs that unfortunately didn't make it to the album. However, I am hopeful that it will be released later in another album or as singles. We'll see about that."

The 27-year old has done his fair share of hustle. From performing in pubs and being in a heavy metal band in college the singer-songwriter feels it's important to know the difference between passion and working.

"If I am pursuing my passion I will never feel drained or exhausted from doing what I love. If writing wasn't my passion I

would probably feel exhausted to write down my songs but I really don't. I love to write," he says.

We then talk about his stage name 'Nineteen', he giggles.

"The reason I chose Nineteen as my stage name is because 2019 was the year when I started working on my music, writing songs and putting it out in the world."

Already thinking ahead of the album, Nineteen says he plans to release music videos to some of his songs from the album along with new songs and singles in the near future. He is also looking forward to play shows and tour in support of his brand new album all over the country.

Just an album old, yet fresh take on things, Nineteen is on his way to build a legacy for himself and 'Chitra Ani Nasha' only furthers his talent as a singer-songwriter.

Five or six years into the future, if he is as refreshing and driven as he sounds in his debut album, sky is the limit for this talented storyteller.

"What I want for people to take away from this album is not to take life so seriously all the time. The album explores themes ranging from depression to anxiety and stress but it also talks about hope and living life. I hope people find strength in the songs," he says.

## SIKKIM GURLZ IN YOUR AREA!!

Blackpink reference right there.



Sikkim Gurlz, a dance trio consisting of Shene, Trinkle and Ming recently made waves with their dance cover of the hit song "How You Like That" by popular K-Pop quartet Blackpink.

With a common passion for dancing, the group came together in 2020. They were selected through an online audition held by Maark Pictures and are now being managed by their team.

"Coming together as a group was easy and the three of us are now very close like sisters. The

past few months, we practised a lot on our expressions, timing and body language and of course the dance," the girls said while talking to ETC..

Among the girls, Ming has represented the State and the country in Taekwondo and is currently preparing for her board exams, whereas Trinkle and Shene are in their first year of college.

"We plan to do a lot more not just in Korean but in mainstream Hindi and Nepali as well," the group said.

## NIKITA CINTURY'S 'AAJABHOLI' OUT ON YOUTUBE

Nikita hails from the picturesque Temi Tarku in South Sikkim. After the successful release of her two singles 'Mouna' and 'Badal Mathi', Nikita released her third single 'AajaBholi'. The music video features GayatraNiroula, Bina Basnet and Nikita Cintury.



## SIKKIM WINS AWARD FOR THE "MOST FILM FRIENDLY STATE IN THE 67TH NATIONAL FILM AWARDS"

Sikkim wins award for the "Most Film Friendly State in the 67th National Film Awards announced on March 22. Speaking to ETC, Sikkim Film Board, Chairperson Pooja Sharma has expressed her happiness towards the national recognition. She added that the most film friendly state award is because of the visionary film policy in the state.

## ACTORS SAUGATMALLA AND GEETANJALI THAPA IN SIKKIM FOR 'JAAR'



Upcoming Nepali film 'Jaar' starring National Award winner Geetanjali Thapa and Nepali superstar SaugatMalla is being shot in the beautiful landscapes of West Sikkim. The film based on the short story of writer Indra Bahadur Rai is directed by Phurba Tshering Lama. The film is being produced by Ferry Tale Pictures and co-Produced by Ayoub Qanir, Pragya Paramaeta and others.

The team of 'Jaar' recently had a press meet at Gangtok and also met the Chairpersons Pooja Sharma (Film Board)

LukendraRasaily (STDC), Advisor TenzingNorbuLamta (IT Department) and Tshering Wangchuk Lepcha, Additional Political Secretary to Chief Minister of Sikkim.

Among the girls, Ming has represented the State and the country in Taekwondo and is currently preparing for her board exams, whereas Trinkle and Shene are in their first year of college.

"We plan to do a lot more not just in Korean but in mainstream Hindi and Nepali as well," the group said.

## WANGDEN FROM WANGDEN'S SAGA TO RELEASE NEW EP



Wangden aka Dann, best known for being the frontman of popular band Adam's Apple, winner of 2014 edition of Hornbill Rock Contest has revealed that he is working on a brand new Extended Play (EP) to be released globally very soon.

Wangden currently leads WANGDEN'S SAGA, a quartet

of musicians based in Darjeeling consists of Anmol on guitars, Ushang on the drums, Gaurav on bass guitar and Wangden as the lead vocalist.

Presently, Wangden is employed as the rockband vocalist for Carnival Cruise lines entertainment, USA.

He released his debut single



music video titled "Am I falling in love again" in December 2020.

He followed up with his second single along with a lyric video titled "Serene Souls".

Wangden is currently on his EP/single promo performance tour all around Darjeeling and its adjoining areas