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'India offers a different vibe'

AGE CORRESPONDENT

When 26-year-old film director Gauri Chadha showcased her documentary *Gawah* at the recently concluded Dada Saheb Phalke Film Festival 2013, she left many impressed. "It is an anti-terrorism documentary which is quite relevant after 26/11 carnage and the Mumbai serial blasts. It talks about what happens to individuals after such attacks, the trauma they face and it explores the wider questions like why and how these attacks happen," says Gauri, who received the Special Festival Mention award at the fest.

"This film took about three years of research and was a challenging project as it involved speaking with real life victims," says Gauri, who is now working on a feature film set in five different countries.

"I believe in making films that are part of world cinema. I am not a big fan of Bollywood. I prefer parallel cinema to Bollywood," she says.

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Gauri adds that the last Bollywood films she enjoyed watching included *Bandit Queen*, *Kahaani* and *Shaitan*. "I am very selective about the films I watch and have a personal choice being a writer and director."

Residing in the buzzing city of Mumbai and shuffling between Bollywood and Hollywood projects such as *Mission: Impossible: Ghost Protocol* and *Gandhi of the Month*, Gauri now has a collection of six short films, a short feature and a documentary to her credit. "What I like about working in India is the unpredictable nature of the work here. People work together towards a common goal and have a different energy. What I don't like is the lack of discipline in people here," she ends.

Creative campaigns against new course

Street plays, spoofs, song and dance performances and stand-up acts are the new age tools for DU students and teachers protesting against the new DU course

REENU BAHU

THE ASIAN AGE

Though they have their exams just a couple of days away, the students of Delhi University have something else on mind. They have taken to streets to protest against the new four-year baccalaureate programme that is being introduced in Delhi University this year. They claim that they are fighting for a bigger cause.

Talking about the protest, Amartya Ghosh, 20, History Hons 1st year student of Ramjas College says, "I am not going to suffer this four-year academic programme. However, the next batch will be affected as they will have to spend one extra year to do the same graduation at an extra cost when it is already becoming difficult to sustain three years of college. Also, when I saw how arbitrarily and undemocratically the whole programme was imposed, I became a part of the protest."

Ragini Jha, a 11th year Philosophy Honours student at St. Stephen's College says they are adopting different mediums to protest. "We have made our protest innovative and interactive. Students and teachers have formed groups like Joint Action Board (JAB) and are doing a lot of activities under it. We have organised



Student protesters have organised lots of activities to express their dissent over the new four-year programme

marches at different Metro stations and Dilli Haat, written open letters, signed number of petitions and sent them to the PM and the President. Then we are doing street plays, band and song performances. Recently, one of the students, Ashley Tellis did a stand up comedy act on the subject, GHU.

Chandra wrote couple of songs that Nandita Narain sang. There were a number of acts by the teachers and students ridiculing the four-year programme besides



distributing leaflets and placards. We have also made *Bakwas-laureate*, a spoof on the baccalaureate degrees," shares Ragini.

Abha Dev Habib, Physics professor at Miranda House and an active face of Democratic Teachers Front is seen mobilising the students at different colleges. "Being a professor and EC member, it was not easy for me to be part of the protest. The fear of suspension hangs on my head

and I have often got shouted at during the council meetings, but I could not let go," says Abha who is also a member of the team that started Save DU campaign.

"We are organising debates, marches and regular student teachers interaction to highlight the drawbacks of this four-year programme. We are preparing for something bigger for May 7," she adds.

"We want people to understand the problems we will face if we enroll ourselves in this programme. It is not just the extra cost; it is about wasting a year of your life. IITs and IIMs are not going to turn their courses to accommodate a year of our lives," says Tanish Gupta, an engineering student.

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ABHA DEV HABIB

