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Infosys Co-Founder Nandan Nilekani, Wife Rohini Donate 50 Per Cent Of Their Wealth

Nov 21, 2017, 06:48 IST | Malavika Sangghvi

"Wealth comes with huge responsibility and is best deployed for the larger public interest," said Infosys co-founder Nandan Nilekani quoting a line from the Giving Pledge letter, which had announced that he and his wife, the author and philanthropist Rohini, would be donating 50 per cent of their wealth under the movement initiated by Microsoft founder Bill Gates and wife Melinda.



Bill Gates with Rohini and Nandan Nilekani

Given that the couple's wealth is estimated to be to around \$ 1.7 billion, the news had attracted widespread notice and commendation from across India.

The Nilekanis are not the only Indians who have been so visionary and altruistic. Other Indian billionaires, Wipro Chairman Azim Premji and Biocon Chairman Kiran Mazumdar Shaw (sociologists might want to study what the connection between Bangalore and altruism is), have also pledged half their wealth.

"You have done not only your country proud but also our generation," we had texted the Nilekanis yesterday, when we commended them on their sterling decision. Having known both individuals for almost four decades (we had attended their wedding, a simple affair at the Dadar Catering college in the mid-eighties), we have known how deeply committed they are to the causes of justice, equality and the greater good.

"We thank Bill and Melinda for creating this unique opportunity for so many people to realize a moral aspiration inspired by the Bhagwad Gita," said Nilekani about the pledge.

The mulgi in Mumbai

"I am indeed here," exulted the vivacious Nikki Bedi, the erstwhile Mumbaikar, who now lives in London, and works as a high-flying presenter at BBC's World Service. "Landed this afternoon and am here for my 'Arts Hour On Tour Mumbai' radio show which travels to a new city each month.



Nikki Bedi with Hugh Grant and a friend

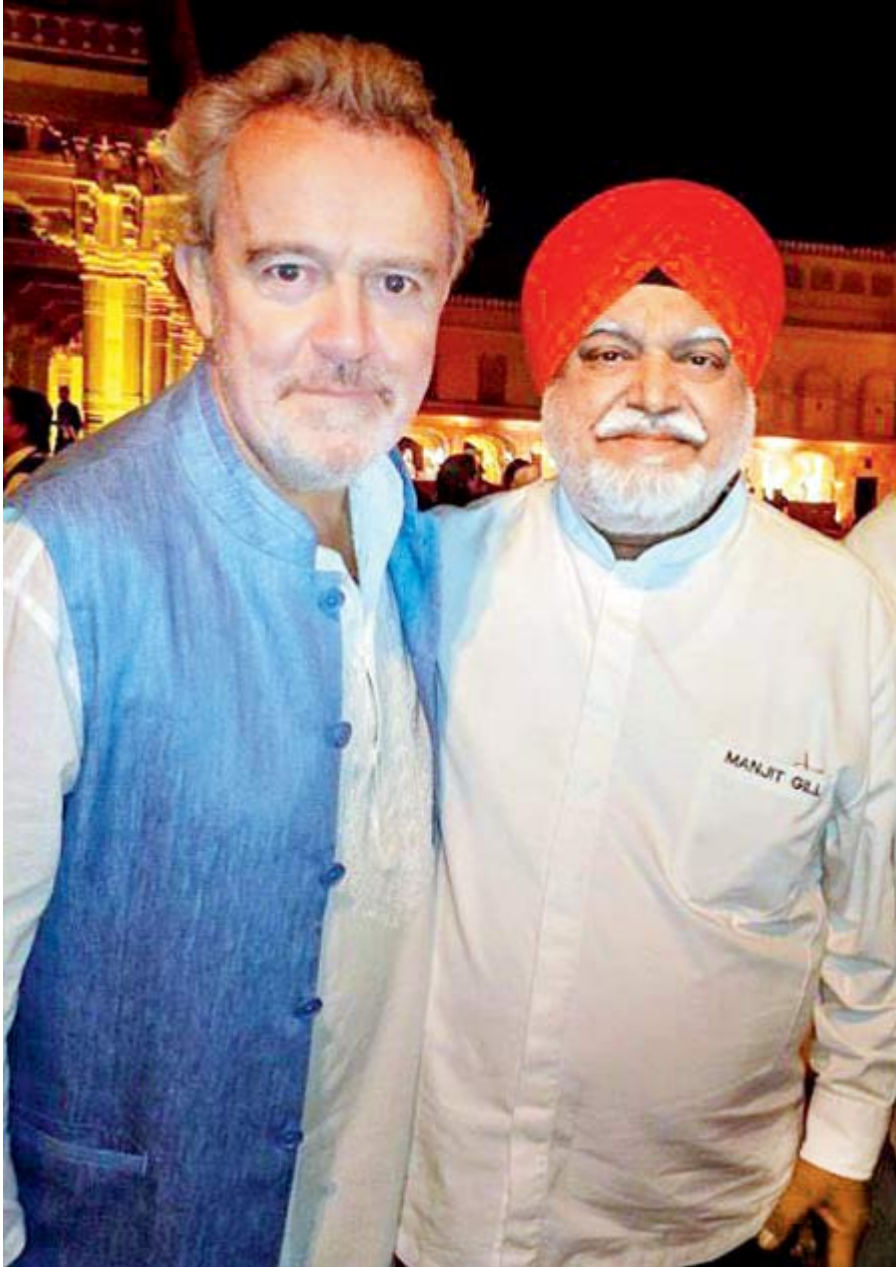
Tomorrow we record at the Royal Opera House, and are talking about the rise of indie movies with social messages," said the scion of an old and venerable Mumbai clan, who was once married to actor Kabir Bedi (they had met when she played Desdemona to his Othello in an Alyque Padamsee directed production).

"Bhumi Pednekar and Anupama Chopra will be on stage with me amongst other acts," she added. As for her returning to Mumbai albeit briefly, Bedi's joy is palpable from her posting pictures of buildings on Marine Drive, to using Mumbai's distinct patios. She shows every sign of being a born again Mumbai chi mulgi. "You are so welcome to come should you wish to! Aao nah?" she ends with.

It's raining chefs

As is known, Chef Massimo Buttura will be in town for a day this week (news

we broke on these pages over a month ago). But he's not the only world-renowned gastronomical maestro currently dazzling India.



Chef Alain Passard and chef Manjit Gill at Jaipur

Another three-star Michelin rated chef, Alain Passard, a French culinary legend, was in Jaipur for a private event over the weekend. Passard famously turned vegetarian and is an avid promoter of vegetarianism (he had taken red meat off his menu almost a decade ago, a move that had caused considerable stirring of the gastronomical pot).

This week he was spotted deep in conversation with the corporate chef of the ITC Hotel group, Manjit Gill, credited for popularising the tandoori style of preparation of meats. Wonder if they had any beef over that one.

Hostess with the mostest

Graceful society hostess, and woman of substance Perna Malhotra, opened the

doors to her well-appointed duplex in a SoBo high-rise for a sit-down champagne and sushi Sunday brunch for a select group of friends. The afternoon featured a visiting Japanese chef from a luxury resort in the Maldives, who had been prepping for the meal in her kitchen from earlier that morning.



Chef Nikki, Prerna Malhotra, Roohi Jaikishan, Ashiesh Shah, Kanika Kapoor

Guests included celebrity architect Ashiesh Shah, singer Kanika Kapoor, fashionista Roohi with husband businessman Chetan Jaikishan, and fashion designer Nimish Shah. The menu included a selection of the chef's signature sushi and sashimi specialties, which we are told included the rare blue fin tuna, the fattiest (also most expensive) variant of tuna available in Japan, which had been flown in for the occasion.

Other dishes included prawn and vegetable tempura, glazed salmon followed by a green tea and tempura ice cream. The talk ranged from Bollywood music to modern day moralities, to travel and of course, food. And with Malhotra's stunning table decor and playlist of deep house tunes from her iPad, we are told the occasion made for a long, leisurely and sparkling afternoon.

An 'Iffy' situation

With the film industry seething and hurt over the Padmavati issue, and the government's shocking absence of affording it the support it requires at this crucial juncture, the promoters of IFFI 2017 must have been alarmed that it would be a no show of key stars or even a total boycott, given how strong feelings are running at the moment.



Muzaffar Ali, Sridevi, Shah Rukh Khan, Goa CM Manohar Parrikar, Smriti Irani, Shahid Kapoor, AR Rahman at the IFFI launch

No sir. Industry badshah Shah Rukh Khan addressed the foreign delegates in his official speech saying, "Films are about loving, about an idea transformed into reality by hundreds of people working together."

He was not the only star to put aside his hesitations and endorse the I&B's initiative. Shahid Kapur had graced the occasion. "I think today, we've reached a point where there is lot more gravitas to the cinema that we make," Kapur had said which might or might not have been an allusion to the Padmavati controversy.

Which brings us to this point: given that relations betwixt Bollywood and the GOI are at their lowest, the fact that a festival whose unfortunate acronym

spells 'iffy' could actually get off the ground - is a miracle in itself.

Dharavi rocks and how

"The band has just returned from the UK where it attended a workshop with the Roundhouse Foundation, and performed last week with none other than world music star Angelique Kidjo!" says an exuberant Suneeta Rao about Dharavi Rocks, the brainchild of human rights and labour laws advocate Vinod Shetty, launched in 2008.



Suneeta Rao

The project gets talented underprivileged children musically activated. They use recycled material like plastic barrels, cans, coffee shakers, etc, turning them into percussion instruments to create a powerful orchestra. "The kids write their own material and rap in Tamil, Hindi, Marathi, Malayalam and English, and are especially fond of dancing and beat boxing," she says.

Rao, who spoke about her association with the band at a recent TEDX Delhi Salon, has performed with DR on several occasions including the World Environment Day and the Earth Day concerts. "Vinod has also started a music curriculum in a Dharavi school where he is imparting musical knowledge to around 3,000 kids in a fun and accessible way," she says.

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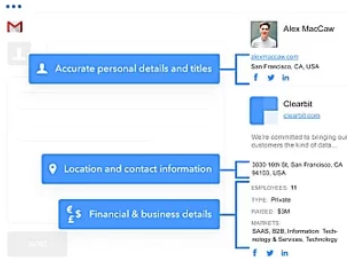
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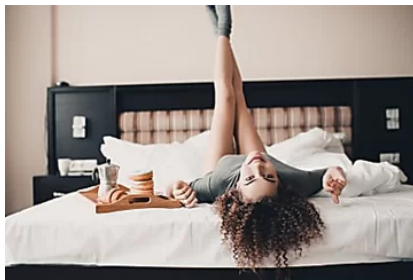
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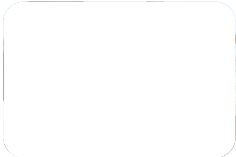
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