

VN offers a choice of Bengali cuisine



The classy interior of the Aha Bengali restaurant

Sayanta Sengupta

Viman Nagar has become a melting pot of cultures, thanks to the cosmopolitan population that resides here, predominantly contributed by the several Symbiosis colleges and IT firms in the area. Naturally, the biggest impact is on the variety of foods available in the restaurants here.

Interestingly, Bengali food seems to be among the topmost favourites, with more than half a dozen restaurants and takeaway joints serving Bengali cuisine. These joints are all doing decent business – not just because of nostalgic Bengalis who are a sizable lot in Viman Nagar, but also because Bengali food is popular with non-Bengalis too.

Among the better known Bengali food restaurants is Aha Bengali, which serves a range of authentic traditional starters including the famed ‘motor-shutir kochuri’ and staple main course fare like ‘kosha mangsho’ with ghee basmati rice, along with time-honoured Bengali desserts.

Another well known restaurant is Radhika. More of a takeaway joint than a diner, it is their sweets that they are famous for. Their USP is the iconic Bengali ‘roshogolla’, but the ‘rajbhog’, ‘kheer-khodom’, ‘chomchom’ and ‘kalojam’ are equally good.

Perhaps the best known Bengali food joint in VN is Peetuk. It is famous for its typical Kolkata style biriyani with ‘aloo and deem’ (potato and eggs). “The Bengali biriyani I had from Peetuk was unlike any other. The flavourful eggs mixed with the mouth-watering rice made for a brilliant meal that kept me satisfied for hours after,” said Atharva Thatte, a localite staying in Viman Nagar.

A smaller but cosy place is Boudi’s restaurant at Ganpati Chowk. The word ‘boudi’ means elder brother’s wife in Bengali. So, quite obviously, the restaurant serves quintessential Bengali home-style food. But that apart, their snacks are outstanding – like the ‘shingara’ (samosa), chops, cutlets, and fish fries.

A charity store that is saving the environment

Yukta Patwardhan

Metal straws, segregated waste, cloth bags - everyone has a different way of doing their part for protecting the environment on a personal level. Prashant Shah from Pune, however, decided to do something more - not on a large scale, but more at a community level. He started a charity store. Born out of an urgent need to take immediate efforts towards conserving the environment, the RCube charity store had a simple goal: to give a second life to anything that can be salvaged.

The store operates in an uncomplicated fashion: people come in and donate whatever they can - be it clothes, toys, books, gadgets, even furniture; and the store sells these items at heavily discounted prices to people who need them. Items that are not in good condition are sent to be recycled into other utility items. What prompted Shah to start this venture is the alarming rate has been leading to over-consumption.

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RCube Charity Store, Karve Nagar

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Prashant Shah, an architect by profession, founder of RCube

“The R in RCube stands for Reduce, Reuse and Recycle,” Shah explains. “We want people to realize just how many resources go into manufacturing a single product, any product, and how important it is to respect that. We want people to take efforts to reduce their consumption by purchasing only what is necessary.”

People buying from the store come from all sections of society - and the store welcome them all. As long as people choose to buy a second-hand product over something new altogether, the store has already done its part in helping the environment.

“It’s easy,” Shah says. “All you need to do is wait a month before you make a purchase, and if you still need it, then buy it. But if after a month you think you don’t need it now, you never needed it in the first place.” Owing to rent and management costs, the store has not been able to make a profit yet.

Madhyam brings life on campus back to normal

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The participants were grilled by him as they played the devil’s advocate by debating controversial topics like “should vegetarianism be made compulsory,” and “if horoscopes are legitimate.” The last of the competitive events, ‘Shipwreck’, had the participants act out controversial public figures like Kanye West, Sonam Kapoor, and Anu Malik and convince the judges to save them and let them on their ship. It tested the participants wit and knowledge of pop culture and led to hilarious performances that had the audience in splits.

Sakshi Singh, member of the organising committee (OC) and co-poetry club head, acknowledged that “organizing Maadhyam in two weeks was something I didn’t think we were ready for, but thanks to the support of the OC and the faculty, we were able to conduct such a big, successful event.”

Before the prize distribution ceremony, the OC put on a touching performance about college, the feeling of home, and the skies of Viman Nagar.

NH7 Weekender returns to Pune after two years

Yashvi Shah

Touted as the largest music and comedy festival in India, the BACARDÍ NH7 Weekender returned to Pune with its first on-ground event since the pandemic hiatus. The event was held at Mahalaxmi Lawns in Pune on March 26th and 27th. It featured a predominantly Indian line-up of music artists and comedians.

After cancelling earlier plans due to a spike in Coronavirus cases in January, the music festival made its comeback only in Pune. Over the weekend, festival organis-

ers ensured that pandemic-related safety measures like entry to only fully vaccinated ticket holders, on-ground rapid tests (antigen), and temperature checks were enforced.

This year, NH7 Weekender had 4 arenas and 5 stages, headlined by artists like Indian-American rapper Raja Kumari, singer-songwriter Prateek Kuhad, rap-duo Seedhe Maut, with many other supporting indie acts. The event also included a comedy stage in the Bazaar arena where

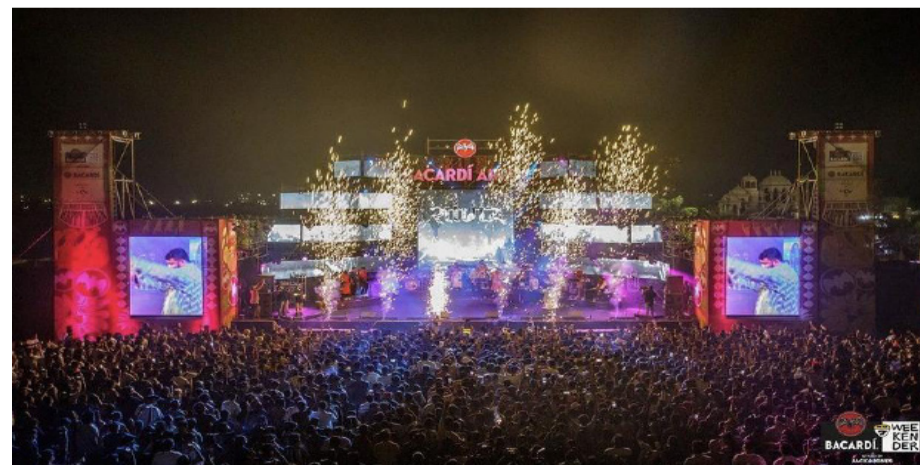


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Indian comedy acts like Varun Thakur, Urooj Afshaq, and many more regaled the audience with their sets. After acquiring the festival from OML (Only Much Louder), NODWIN Gaming introduced the Gaming Lounge where attendees played popular video games like Street Fighter and FIFA, as well as retro gaming machines like Just Dance.

Students from SCMC volunteered as members of the Weekender’s crew. Their responsibilities included coordinating backstage interviews with the artists and press, creating social media posts and managing the media counter, among various other things.

Maansi Anand, a volunteer from Batch 2023, said, “It was brilliant to learn so much from such experienced media professionals at the event. Loved witnessing such a grand event after two years, because it finally felt like normalcy was back.”

After two years of the lockdown on account of the pandemic, the return of BACARDÍ NH7 Weekender to Pune is a sign of returning post-pandemic normalisation in the city’s cultural experience and nightlife circles.