



Shahid Latif — The filmmaker who fell for Ismat
Writer, director and producer, Shahid Latif belonged to Bombay's exciting new world of cinema. He and Ismat eventually brought their literary partnership into films as well

The Woman Who Would Not Be Tamed

Ismat Chughtai and Shahid Latif – a love story of ink, rebellion and desire

Bombay was a city of smoke, cinema and impossible dreams. And somewhere in its restless heart, a young woman was writing stories that respectable society wished she would stop writing. Her name was Ismat Chughtai. Sharp-tongued, fiercely intelligent and gloriously rebellious, Ismat refused to accept the rules that told women what they could desire, what they could say and, most importantly, what they should keep hidden. Then came Shahid Latif. A writer, screenwriter and filmmaker, Shahid belonged to the same world of stories and ideas. He understood ambition and the strange hunger that keeps an artist restless. Perhaps that was what drew Ismat to him. He wasn't looking for a woman he could tame. And Ismat certainly wasn't looking for a man she could quietly obey. They married in 1942.

Their marriage was anything but conventional. It was a meeting of two formidable personalities, two artists who could argue fiercely and still return to each other. There was laughter, irritation, disagreement and, beneath it all, an unmistakable intimacy. Then came "Lihaaf". Ismat's story about female desire and same-sex intimacy caused an uproar. She was taken to court on charges of obscenity. She could have apologised. She didn't. That was Ismat. She would rather fight society than betray her own writing. And Shahid understood the woman he had married: a woman who could not—and would not—be made smaller for anyone. Their love soon found another stage: Bombay cinema. Shahid moved into filmmaking, while Ismat began writing screenplays and dialogue. Their professional worlds intertwined,

bringing literature, cinema and their private lives into the same orbit. Imagine them late at night: a manuscript open on the table, cigarette smoke hanging in the room, Bombay murmuring outside—and an argument beginning over a story. Perhaps Ismat would challenge him. Shahid would argue back. Neither would surrender. And somewhere between the quarrel and the laughter, they would return to their work. That was their romance. Not grand declarations.



Ismat Chughtai — The rebel with a pen
The woman who would turn the private lives of women into some of Urdu literature's boldest stories. Sharp, irreverent and unwilling to behave like the "respectable woman" society expected her to be

Words. Their marriage was not perfect. Two fiercely independent people were bound to collide. They had their disagreements, frustrations and emotional complexities. But neither completely disappeared into the other. They had two daughters, Seema and Saba, while their careers continued to grow. And Ismat never became merely Shahid Latif's wife. She remained Ismat—the woman who wrote about female desire, domestic frustrations, forbidden subjects and uncomfortable truths with a mischievous smile and a fearless pen. Shahid remained an artist in his own right. Perhaps that was the secret of their relationship. They did not need to become one person. They simply needed to recognise the fire in each other. In 1967, Shahid died. Ismat

continued writing for decades, carrying with her the irreverence, humour and rebelliousness that had defined her life. Yet behind the legendary writer was also the memory of a man who had shared her home, her arguments, her ambitions and her world. Their love story was never the conventional tale of two people becoming one. It was something more unruly. Two strong personalities, sometimes colliding, sometimes drifting apart, but continuing to move through life beside each other. He did not silence her fire. She did not extinguish his. They simply found a way to live close enough to feel its warmth. And perhaps that is what made Ismat Chughtai and Shahid Latif's love so extraordinary: They loved each other without asking each other to become ordinary.

Content Curated by Shubhangi Shifa, Designed by Khushboo Kumari

Where the Monsoon Comes to the Table

From earthen handis of Dalma and Potol Besara to the promise of rugda, bamboo shoots and even ghongha, Radisson Blu Ranchi's monsoon festival invites diners to rediscover Eastern India, one seasonal flavour at a time

Shubhangi Shifa
Ranchi

There are foods that fill the stomach, and then there are foods that take you somewhere. A spoonful of Dalma can transport you to an Odia kitchen. The aroma of posto can summon memories of Bengal. And the appearance of rugda on a monsoon table can feel like a seasonal homecoming for many in Jharkhand. This is the experience Radisson Blu Ranchi hopes to create with "The Farmer's Table - Monsoon Harvest Eastern India Food Festival", being held at The Waterfront from August 16 to 23. The first thing that catches the eye is the setting. Food is served in terracotta handis placed over rustic earthen chulhas, giving the buffet the warmth of a village kitchen. Against the glow of the clay pots, familiar regional dishes seem to acquire a new charm.



Lift one lid and there is Subz Ki Tehri, fragrant yellow rice speckled with vegetables and herbs. Beside it sits Potol Besara, carrying the unmistakable mustardy character of an Odia kitchen. Tori Posto offers the gentle flavour of ridge gourd paired with the nuttiness of poppy seeds. There is also Kakora Bhaja, its thin, golden slices bringing the pleasant bitterness and crispness of a traditional Bengali-style vegetable preparation. Even the presentation feels intimate. Each handi carries its own little nameplate — Dalma, Subz Ki Tehri, Potol Besara, Tori Posto — almost like an introduction to a guest arriving from another part of Eastern India. From the forest to the buffet The more exciting promise lies in the ingredients that rarely find space on hotel menus. The culinary team is exploring preparations

featuring rugda and other regional mushrooms, bamboo shoots, and other seasonal, indigenous produce associated with the region And if diners respond enthusiastically, the menu could become even more adventurous, with the hotel hoping to introduce fresh water local fishes, mud crabs and ghongha (snails). It is food that does not need to be reinvented to be interesting. It only needs to be rediscovered. The festival will feature three rotating tribal menus, allowing diners to encounter a wider range of indigenous preparations. The menus are built around the rhythm of the season — what the land offers during the rains, what farmers harvest and what traditional kitchens have learnt to do with it. A sweet ending The dessert



counter carries its own nostalgia. Gulgula, boondi, payesh, raj bhog and lemcha, among other sweets, bring together familiar flavours from across the region. **There is something wonderfully homely about the selection:** the simplicity of gulgula, the creamy comfort of payesh, the golden sweetness of boondi and the richness of raj bhog. Together, they make the meal feel less like a themed buffet and more like a journey through remembered kitchens. Perhaps that is the real charm of The Farmer's Table. It is not simply asking diners to try something

different. It is asking them to slow down, taste the season and discover how much of Eastern India's story can fit inside an earthen handi.

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Festival details

Dates: August 16-23
Venue: The Waterfront, Radisson Blu Ranchi
Dinner Timing: 7-11 pm
Price: ₹2,199 plus taxes
Sunday brunch: August 16 & 23
Timing: 1-4 pm
Price: ₹2,199 plus taxes
Children below 5 dine free; those below 11 receive 50% off.
Reservations: +91 9771470061 / +91 9771470063 / +91 9771470064.