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CINEMATOGRAPHY ART

A Quarterly Magazine

X-TYPE TYPE

PANTHER PANTHER



PANTHER

Dolly



X-TYPE



X-TYPE

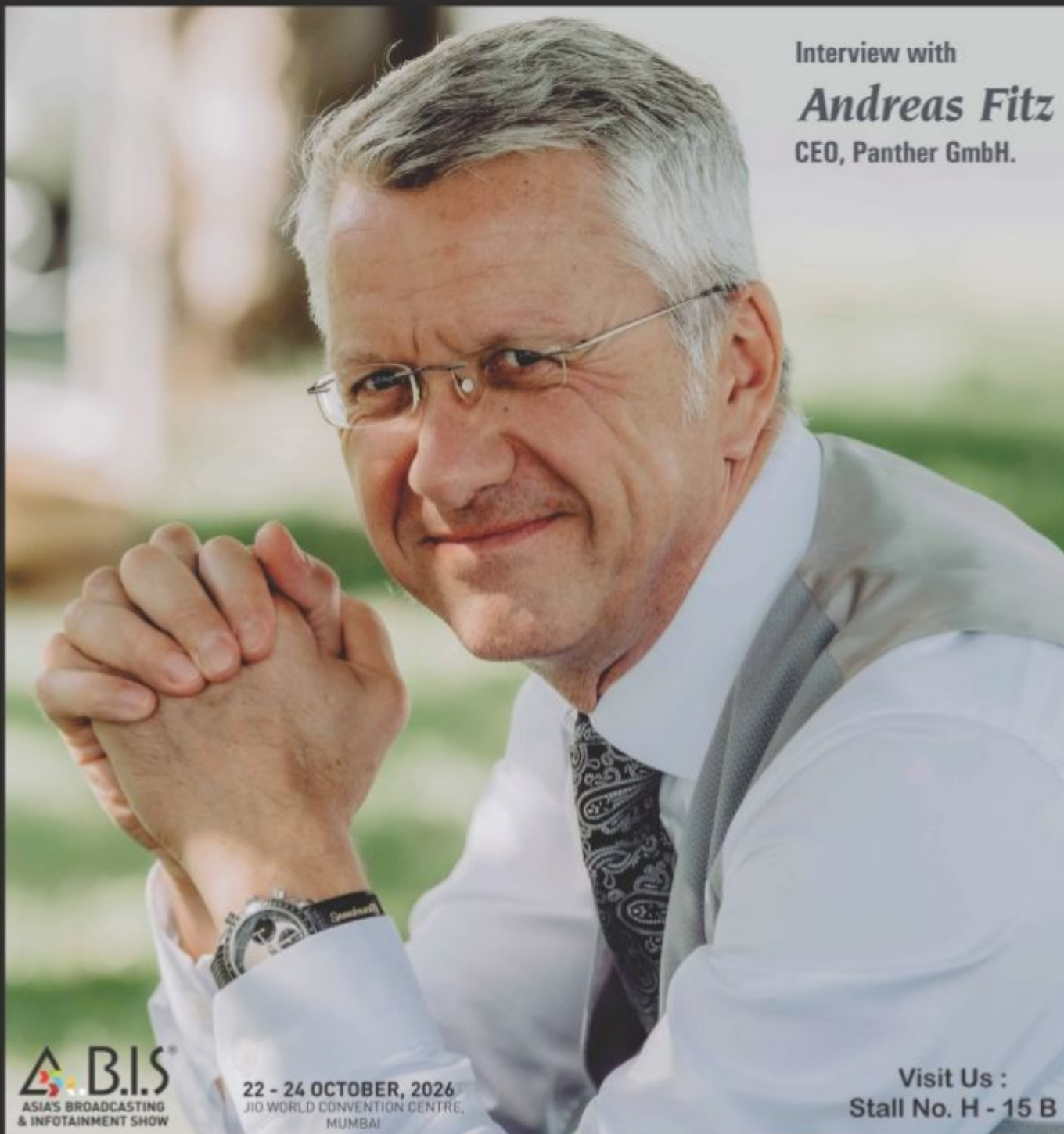


Dolly

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Interview with

Andreas Fitz

CEO, Panther GmbH.

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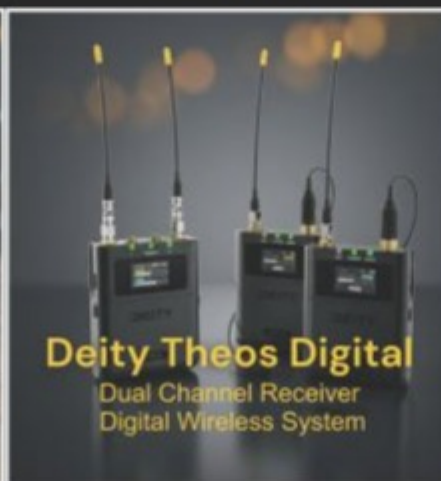


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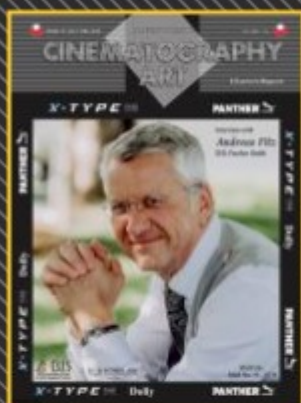
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INDEX



POOJA ELECTRONICS



10

Interview with ANDREAS FITZ CEO, Panther GmbH.



14

Interview With DOP Setu (ISC) On Shooting - "Safed Sagar"



18

On The Growing Importance Of Lens Rehousing



12

GHAMASAAN: FINDING THE SOUL OF THE RAVINES



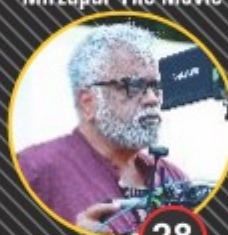
22

Interview with DOP Gairik Sarkar "The Revolutionaries"



25

Interview with DOP Sanjay Kapoor "Mirzapur-The Movie"



28

ZEISS Panoptes 65



31



AGITO BROADCAST EMPOWERING CINEMATOGRAPHERS WITH THE FUTURE OF CINEMA TECHNOLOGY



18

Interview with Mukul Kashyap Country Manager - India, Middle East & Africa Videndum PLC | Creative Solutions division



20

Interview With DOP Rubais On Shooting "Alpha"



24

ONE AESTHETIC, TWO FORMATS: COOKE AP3 & PANCHRO 65/I



15

ASIA'S BROADCASTING & INFOTAINMENT SHOW



22

Interview with DOP Manu Anand "The Vvaan"



27

Interview with DOP Chirantan Das "Inspector Avinash - Season-2"



30

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Editor's Desk



There is something fascinating about the way certain brand names become part of everyday language in India.

Ask for a "Thanda", and chances are you will be offered a Coca-Cola. Ask for mineral water, and "Bisleri" has almost become a generic expression. And in the film industry, ask for a "Dolly", and everyone knows you mean a Panther dolly.

When a brand becomes synonymous with an entire category, it represents something much larger than brand recognition. That is why Panther is our cover story in this issue.

This October edition of Cinematography Art reflects the rapidly changing landscape of Indian cinematography. Our editorial selection brings together films and web series including **Gamasaan, Mirzapur, Alpha, Vaan Devi, Safed Sagar and Inspector Avinash: Season 2**, along with conversations with cinematographers who are continuously pushing the visual language of Indian storytelling.

Technology is moving equally fast. The arrival of the **ARRI ALEXA 265** in India is a significant development, and we speak with **Deepak Nanche of AGITO Broadcast**, who has taken the bold step of investing in this next-generation camera system.

Our conversations with **Dev Agarwal, Gairik Sarkar, Sanjay Kapoor, Rubais, Manu Anand, Setu (ISC) and Chirantan Das**, along with our interview with **Andy Panther**, offer different perspectives on cinematography, equipment and the evolving demands of modern production.

The **Broadcast India Special** further expands this technology focus, bringing together cameras, lenses, lighting, monitoring, grip and workflow solutions from leading companies including **SIGMA, Aputure, Nanlite, Godox, DZOFilm, Cooke Optics, Teradek, Panther, RED, Canon, Zeiss, Arri, Red** and many others.

This issue is also special for Cinematography Art for another reason. **27 - Advertising brands have entrusted us with their presence in this edition—the highest number of advertisers in the history of the magazine.** Their confidence is particularly meaningful because this issue reaches the industry at a key gathering point: the Broadcast India Show, where cinematographers, rental houses, manufacturers, distributors and technology professionals come together.

For us, advertising is not merely about commercial space. It is also a record of the technology and companies that are shaping the working environment of today's cinematographers. Yet, however sophisticated the equipment becomes, technology remains only a means to an end. The real storyteller is still the cinematographer—the person who understands light, composition, movement, colour and emotion, and transforms technology into images. Perhaps that is the greatest achievement for any brand: when its name becomes part of the language of the industry it serves.

Happy reading!

Editor

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ATTAR SINGH SAINI

One of the most impressive technical features of DZO lenses is their minimal focus breathing. DZO cine lenses has Consistent T-stop exposure helps maintain the same exposure when changing focal lengths, while smooth, controlled focus rotation and a long focus throw allow for precise and repeatable focus pulls. The lenses are also engineered to minimise chromatic aberration, helping maintain clean edges and controlled colour fringing, particularly in challenging lighting conditions. Another important advantage is consistent colour rendition across the lens range, making it easier to cut between different focal lengths without any shifts in colour or contrast. At the same time, DZOFilm lenses offer distinctive cinematic bokeh and controlled flare, giving cinematographers the flexibility to introduce character and atmosphere into the image. Together, these features make the lenses well suited to narrative filmmaking, where consistency, precision and visual character are equally important.

Important Film of Attar Singh Saini as DOP



SHAILESH AWASTHI

I have used DZO lenses in art house Films because they offer an impressive image quality. Their outstanding sharpness captures fine detail with remarkable clarity. One of their most distinctive qualities is the beautiful, creamy bokeh. The smooth background separation isolates subjects naturally, while the spherical design produces soft, rounded highlights that add depth and emotional impact, particularly in close-ups and portraits. DZO lenses also deliver warm, natural skin tones and rich, balanced colours, creating a timeless cinematic look with minimal grading. Excellent flare control and consistent contrast ensure reliable performance in challenging lighting conditions. From a practical standpoint, they are robust, dependable, and versatile, with a comprehensive range of focal lengths. Whether shooting wide landscapes or intimate close-ups, DZO lenses consistently deliver images that are technically precise and distinctly cinematic.

Important Film of Shailesh Awasthi as DOP



ANIL CHANDEL

I have been using DZO lenses for several years. What I value most is their combination of exceptional sharpness, clarity, and distinctive character, giving every frame a timeless and emotionally engaging quality. The range, from 14mm to 135mm with a fast T1.5 aperture, delivers crisp image making them an excellent match for today's high-resolution digital cameras. Another standout feature is their beautiful bokeh. The lenses produce smooth, creamy out-of-focus areas with pleasing, rounded highlights that add depth and naturally draw the viewer's attention towards the subject. Flares are well controlled, while the rich, warm colour rendition maintains a consistent cinematic mood. Lightweight yet robust, DZO lenses are equally practical for studio and location work. I have used them extensively for advertising films, where visual impact is essential. They deliver a distinctive, filmic look that enhances both the image and the storytelling.

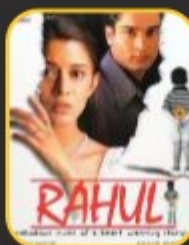
Important Film of Anil Chandel as DOP



ARVIND K.

What truly sets DZO lenses apart is their True Cinema Optics. Designed specifically for filmmaking, these lenses deliver excellent sharpness, cinematic contrast, and a pleasing, filmic colour rendition that feels organic and natural. The images have depth and character, giving every frame a refined, timeless cinematic quality. Equally impressive is the consistent colour and T-stop matching across the entire lens set. The lenses maintain uniform colour characteristics and accurate T-stop ratings, allowing seamless lens changes without noticeable shifts in colour or exposure. For a colourist, this is a major advantage, significantly reducing the time required for correction in post-production. This combination of optical character and technical precision allows me to spend less time correcting technical inconsistencies and more time shaping the emotional tone of the image. Whether shooting day exteriors, dramatic interiors, or night scenes, DZO lenses deliver reliable and consistent results.

Important Film of Arvind K. as DOP



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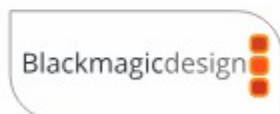
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Established in 1998, Pooja Electronics, under the leadership of Mr. Nehru Karia, CEO, has grown into a trusted name in professional Audio, Video, Broadcast, Photography, and Cinema equipment. With over two decades of industry experience, we have built our reputation on genuine products, technical expertise, professional service, and long-term customer relationships.

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For us, customer trust is our greatest achievement. We take pride in offering 100% genuine products from reputed brands, supported by our industry knowledge and commitment to service. Our journey has been shaped by the confidence and continued support of our customers, partners, and the professional community.

We sincerely thank everyone who has supported Pooja Electronics throughout our journey. Your trust motivates us to continuously improve, embrace new technologies, and deliver better solutions.

We look forward to continuing this journey together — serving better, growing together, and building lasting relationships for years to come.

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On The Growing Importance Of Lens Rehousing

Rehousing is not simply about putting an old lens into a new body. It is about preserving valuable optical character while giving the lens the mechanical precision, consistency and reliability required by modern cinema production. It's about giving the creatives the tools they need to create their vision.

There are several strong reasons camera rental companies and cinematographers choose to rehouse lenses or purchase vintage rehoused lenses, suitable for professional cinema production.

Why Rehousing Is Important

Converting still-photo lenses for cinema use—particularly medium-format lenses—is becoming increasingly popular within the camera rental market.

The rise of **large-format cinema cameras** has opened up a new role for lens rehousing—bringing high-quality medium-format photographic lenses into modern cinema, as well as a whole host of lenses that will cover S35 and FF cine camera systems.

Mamiya 645: A Strong Example:

Designed for 6 × 4.5 cm medium-format photography, Mamiya 645 lenses produce a much larger image circle—approximately 75mm—than conventional 35mm or Super 35 lenses. This makes many of them well suited to today's large-format cinema cameras.

Specialist companies such as True Lens Services (TLS) have developed dedicated cinema rehousings for these lenses, enabling them to be used with cameras including the **ARRI ALEXA 65, ALEXA 265, Blackmagic URSA Cine 17K and Fujifilm ETERNA**, as well as other large-format systems, including Sony's upcoming **Rialto 65**.

For cinematographers and rental houses, rehousing offers **the best of both worlds: the distinctive optical character of proven medium-format lenses combined with the mechanical precision and usability of modern cinema lenses.**

Improved focus and iris operation

Rehoused lenses can have long, smooth focus throws and properly positioned focus/iris gears, making them much easier for a 1st AC to operate. Furthermore, premium rehousings offer non-linear cam focus systems to improve

the 'spread' of the focus marks, making the lens much more useable on set. Native iris assemblies are often replaced with industry standard circular iris blades to create a more natural bokeh, adding to the organic character of these lenses.

Consistent lens set

A rental house may own lenses from different manufacturers or generations. Rehousing can make them physically consistent—same gear positions, front diameter, focus rotation, etc.—so they work as a matched set.

Protecting valuable optics

Rental lenses are used repeatedly on demanding productions. A robust cinema housing provides better mechanical protection for the optical elements. Designed for modern-day production, rehoused lenses can handle matt boxes and heavy duty focus motors without risking damage to the mechanical or optical components within. Premium rehousing also offers a mechanical design that is purpose made to be a serviceable unit. Therefore, longevity of the lens is built into the process.

Extending the life of older lenses

Older or discontinued lenses may still have a highly desirable optical character. Instead of replacing them with expensive new cinema lenses, rehousing can give them a new professional life.

Preserving a unique "look"

This is particularly important for cinematographers. Some older lenses have characteristics—flare, contrast, softness, rendering or bokeh—that modern lenses don't reproduce exactly. In some cases, it is impossible to replicate the look of vintage too. Due to materials such as lead and thorium that used to be part of the glass material, these can no longer be used due to legislation changes. Rehousing allows the cinematographer to retain that character while gaining modern cinema usability.

Making lenses rental-friendly

For a rental company, a rehoused lens is easier to integrate into professional camera packages and easier for ACs to handle on set.

PL / professional cinema compatibility

Depending on the rehousing project, lenses can be adapted to professional cinema mounts and configurations, making them extremely useful with modern cinema cameras.

Better accessories compatibility

Proper cinema housings can provide standardized front diameters and gear positions, making it easier to use matte boxes, follow-focus systems and other accessories.

Cost-effective alternative to buying new cinema lenses

This is perhaps the strongest business argument for rental houses. If a company already owns a collection of excellent lenses, rehousing can potentially transform them into a more professional rental package without the cost of purchasing an entirely new lens set. The return on investment happens quicker than when purchasing new glass as you're only paying for the new mechanical design and assembly. It also increases the resale value of lenses once they're in a professional housing.

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Interview with **Andreas Fitz** CEO, Panther GmbH.

What were the biggest challenges in building Panther as an international brand in an industry dominated by American products back in the 1980s? Are there any interesting facts or stories narrated by your late father, Mr. Erich Fitz, whom we know as the inventor of the first electromechanical column dolly?

Panther originated as a film equipment rental company. The column dolly was developed to offer our customers a product superior to those already available in the market. Our client and cinematographer Jost Vacano was planning shooting "The Never Ending Story" way back in 1982. He wanted a dolly that would allow him to adjust the camera height while moving with the shot, ensuring he could maintain control of the camera and keep the image in view at all times. While this is a standard practice today, back then, adjusting the dolly column was only possible while the camera operator attempted to pan the camera from a stooped, uncomfortable position. So my father Erich hurriedly began developing the Panther's prototype to make our customer, Jost, happy. After this prototype had been in use throughout the production of "The Never Ending Story" and had stood the test of time—we knew that the column guide design was a sound one. We simply wanted to make our customers happy; at the time, we hadn't even considered global distribution. However, word of the product's high functionality and quality spread quickly, making it necessary to build a second Panther dolly. Eventually, an initial production run was manufactured, which sold out in the domestic market. It was only after a few years that we realized this new product had a future. In the 1980s, Italian Elemack dollies (Cricket/Spyder) were more widely used in Germany and Europe rather than American dollies. Even the American scissor dollies did not make much of an impression, instead, the shift was from Elemack to Panther. Just a few years down the line, Elemack disappeared from the market altogether. It was 1986—three years after the first



Panther dolly—that the sales company known today as "Panther GmbH" was established. In other words, the product predated the company. Until then, the product was sold under the name of the film equipment rental company; very early dollies bear this name on their nameplates, which read "FGV Panther." "FGV" stands for "Film Gear Rental." When we began marketing outside Germany and Europe, meeting the demand was a major challenge. We couldn't acquire production machinery fast enough, and the same applied to

staffing. Then there was the matter of financing such rapid growth. These were all worries my father brought home with him. I was a teenager at the time, and I lived through—and experienced firsthand—every concern and triumph from the very beginning. After finishing my homework, I would even sit at the drafting board and try to solve technical problems. In a sense, I was the youngest employee, even though I was still in school.

Where does the name "Panther"



come from, and what is the story behind it?

So, the new product was finally ready. The question quickly arose: what should we call our new baby? It was important to my father that the product's characteristics be reflected in the name. And the name needed to be understood internationally—ideally, it should be the same everywhere. The first point was the color: black. Cameras are black so they don't reflect stray light; this is particularly important for a product that is large in relation to the camera, such as a dolly. So, black it was. From the very beginning, the column movement proved to be exceptionally powerful yet quiet and smooth. Then there was the flexibility—especially thanks to the swiveling four-wheel arms. After some brainstorming, one of my father's employees finally suggested the name "Panther." It was immediately clear that this was the name the "baby" should have. Panther—black, powerful, quiet. Finding the right logo took considerably longer. Artists and various advertising agencies sketched and designed numerous concepts based on the panther. But somehow, all the designs depicting a panther in a sitting or stalking pose were unappealing. In desperation, my father consulted a retired set designer from the Bavaria Film Studios in Munich. He had the right instinct and gave the panther a dynamic leaping pose. Since the product was technical in nature, the set designer also incorporated some "technical angles" into the animal's design. The logo was immediately registered internationally as a trademark. He also created a custom typeface/font for the Panthers. Here, too,

he incorporated technical, angular elements into every letter of the alphabet.

Looking back at your journey at Panther, which product or innovation do you consider the biggest turning point for the company?

The first major innovation was the column guidance system patent mentioned earlier. This made it possible for a dolly column to be stable enough to support not only the DOP but also the focus puller, allowing them both to ride along on it. Over the decades, however, we have introduced numerous innovations—most of them patented. At Panther headquarters, the staircase is lined from the basement to the top floor with framed patent documents, utility models, and trademark registrations, impressively illustrating the innovative spirit of the Panther brand. The development of the Pegasus crane in



1990 marked a significant turning point; Panther was recognized by the European Patent Office for this achievement. The innovation lay in the concept of extending both sides of the crane using just one additional arm section. This eliminated the need to have both a short and a long crane on set. However, this turning point also signified that Panther was no longer merely a dolly manufacturer, but had become a crane manufacturer—with all the associated rights and obligations. The next turning point and milestone was the development of the Evolution Dolly in 1998. Up to that time, the Panther Dolly—across its various iterations (Panther, Super Panther, Super Panther 2, Super Panther 3)—The Panther Evolution Dolly introduced a completely new electronics and drive platform. It also featured the patented "Crab & Steer" steering mechanism, which remains in use to this day. Until then, operators accustomed to American dollies did not consider the Panther Dolly a "real" dolly, as it could not switch from four-wheel (crab) steering to conventional two-wheel (steer/conventional) steering. In my view, the most important—and by far the most expensive—step in the company's history was the decision to add a scissor-arm dolly (S-Type Dolly) to the product portfolio. This development represented not just a new dolly, but a long-term plan to build all existing achievements onto a single, unified platform. The concept involves using one dolly platform to support two different dolly designs: Concept one: the scissor-arm dolly; concept two: the column dolly. Crucially, this approach utilizes as many shared components as possible. As a former film



equipment rental specialist, I appreciate the value of versatile components; this saves not only on investment costs but also on storage space, time, and a great deal of hassle. The same principle applies to the user on set. The decision to develop this platform was made in 2012. It took 11 years to bring the plan to fruition with the unveiling of the X-Type Dolly in 2023 at the company's 40th-anniversary celebration.

Your latest invention and launch is the X-TYPE. Tell us about some of its unique features and what makes the X-TYPE an ideal dolly.

The X-Type is the result of 40 years of dolly manufacturing. It is the most innovative, versatile, and best dolly in the world. In addition to numerous detailed features—which are highly important even if they only become apparent at second glance—there are three key characteristics: the detachable column, the steering capabilities provided by its transmission, and the range extender. But first things first. The column is equipped with a powerful motor that ensures the column's vertical movement is not only extremely quiet and fast but also exceptionally smooth. The batteries have been relocated to the base; this not only enhances stability by lowering the center of gravity but also provides the operator with more legroom and standing space. The column is 10 kg lighter than comparable models—an advantage that is truly appreciated when the column needs to be removed from the dolly chassis and carried. The "High-Low-Turnstile" rotating mount offers maximum flexibility regarding camera positioning, allowing the operator to

comfortably release the locking lever and rotate the camera a full 360 degrees from an ergonomic stance. The Bluetooth-connected hand controller features completely new operating software that offers advanced functions and intuitive handling, while multilingual support simplifies understanding and operation. The dolly base can also be used without a column—for example, as a crane base. To this end, each wheel arm features a 25mm mounting hole designed to accommodate accessories such as a Center Mount, push bar, or extended seating and platform options. No other column dolly offers this feature. The dolly supports four different steering modes. In its standard configuration, it offers crab steering as well as two-wheel steering (front or rear). The "Crab & Steer" steering gearbox adds a fourth steering mode. This highly precise steering geometry enables smooth

cornering without generating noise or vibration. This is made possible by the patented elliptical sprockets, which adjust each individual wheel to the precise steering radius. Arguably the most striking feature is the patented Range Extender. It is an accessory that can be attached to the X-Type Dolly in just a few simple steps. Essentially, the Range Extender is a second, highly compact dolly column linked to the main column via a steel cable.

The result is the best invention since the advent of column dollies. With the Range Extender, the camera achieves double the lift range and double the travel speed—something many cinematographers have long desired. All this comes in a compact package that does not increase the dolly's footprint. Furthermore, the camera executes a perfectly straight, linear move, completely free of the "banana effect". Previously, achieving greater reach or speed required the use of bulky jib arms—which came with the disadvantages of a larger footprint and the banana effect.

Where do you see the biggest opportunities for innovation in camera movement over the next five to ten years?

We have already established a solid foundation for camera movement for decades to come with the S-Type and X-Type dolly platforms—systems that are still relatively new. My current focus is on developing additional accessories for these platforms, enabling the camera to be positioned or moved exactly where the DP wants it—faster, more flexibly, and more conveniently. For one thing, I





believe these dollies offer years of satisfaction; for another, I do not want to burden our customers with a constant need for new dolly investments—something well-known camera manufacturers have done all too often in the past. The shift from celluloid to digital recording marked a pivotal turning point in the history of cameras. This transition made cameras smaller and lighter—an important factor regarding mechanical stability. Lenses, however, remain very large and heavy. If a similar shift occurs in that area, it will open up new possibilities for camera movement.

Do you see robotic camera systems replacing conventional dollies and grips, or do you see them working alongside traditional grip equipment?

In the area of camera support where Panther primarily operates, conventional dollies will remain the standard. As with many other innovations, robotics serves as an add-on that complements filming workflows. When camera drones first appeared, people claimed that cranes would no longer be needed. The reality is that there are more cranes in use than ever before. The same will hold true for other new product categories: a new category expands the way we work but does not replace what came before.

AI and virtual production are changing filmmaking workflows. Do you see these technologies influencing Panther's camera-support and camera-movement systems?

No. As just mentioned, a new product category is complementing

filmmaking; the traditional way of working is not being abandoned because of it. I view AI as a new—admittedly fascinating—technology and product category. It is particularly well-suited for instant gratification and staving off



boredom. But the AI party will be over sooner or later. Then, the focus will shift back to quality. And one thing I have learned for certain is that there is no substitute for quality. Especially when a director or cinematographer wants to tell a story. If they want the audience to watch and listen, there is simply no getting around quality. And that quality requires a good camera, good optics, good lighting, and a perfect dolly.

Panther has been present in India for many years. How important is the Indian market to Panther today, and is Panther unveiling any new product at the Broadcast India Show in Mumbai this year?

Panther's market share in India has grown steadily since the early 2000s. I feel proud when Indian customers tell me they wouldn't know what to do without the Panther dolly. I also view this as a personal responsibility. India is

extremely significant for Panther; it is one of our largest markets and most important. I am delighted to hear that Panther has become synonymous with camera dollies in India. Because the Indian market is so important to Panther, I have made overseeing it a top priority. Panther has been known for its innovative strength for decades. Naturally, we are also bringing a new product to this year's Broadcast India Show: Specter.

Finally, what role do you think professional rental houses and key grips play in introducing new technology to cinematographers?

You see, this brings things full circle. Just as we introduced the first Panther—and with it, a new technology—to the market through our rental business back then, our rental customers and key grips are just as important today.

There are rental companies that run the business half-heartedly and squeeze every last bit of use out of their equipment. Other rental companies—typically the successful ones—operate the way we did back in the day: providing cinematographers with top-notch support and service, as well as the best and latest equipment. I view Panther as a partner for rental companies that want to become successful or already are.

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Interview With DOP *Setu (ISC)* On Shooting - "Safed Sagar"



In the 1st episode, after Sqd Ldr Ajay Ahuja leaves home on a scooter, you see 2-3 shots of the MiG-21 flying, and in the next shot, you see the scooter at the bottom and the MiG-21 at the top, both going in the same direction. How is such a shot planned, where the exact timing is matched, and various kinds of landings and take-offs are shot?

The idea had emerged in the previz of the episode. We wanted to establish the world with a shot of him riding his scooter in the early morning, with a MiG taking off behind him. It is an apt

precursor before he reaches the squadron complex .

Our first schedule was dedicated primarily to MiG 21 take-offs and landings .We had a sense of the kind of landings and take offs we would need and how different lenses and angles would alter the drama. A tight profile pan , along with tracking, for instance, gives you a tremendous sense of speed and atmosphere for the aircraft take off which is happening very fast anyway .

We had five cameras for this schedule. The most challenging part was the night take-offs and landings. During the recce, the runway lights could not be switched on because of security restrictions, so we had no real sense of what the night exposure would be like. We therefore planned the shoot around a full moon.

The primary camera package was the ARRI ALEXA 35 with ARRI Cooke S4i Primes. For the night sequences, however, I chose two RED V-RAPTORS with the faster S8i lenses because I wanted the additional low-light sensitivity and exposure latitude.

Fortunately, on the day of the shoot, the moon finally came out, and it made an reasonable difference. We were shooting at 6400 ASA. The additional sensitivity allowed us to cut down the aperture and retain the depth and atmosphere I wanted.

During the flying sequences, we see a wide variety of shots—aircraft flying away, different formations, changes in direction and perspective, etc. Since most of these shots were created using computer graphics, how was the movement and variety of the aircraft planned?

The content comes from the script of course , where Abuja sir tells them to fly in close formation so that they are mistaken for a single transport jet on the radar . Subsequently in the bike sequence he decides the formation by tying the bikes together .

This was very much a classical storyboarding / previz process. All the take-offs and landings were drawn out beforehand and animated .This was followed by the VFX team creating a previz keeping the camera sensors and lenses in mind .Any edit changes were done after watching this . This was then the template for our studio chroma shoot and the background plates we shot on location .

We had extensive input from the Air Force throughout the process. They guided us on the different formations, separation between aircraft in the air, and the various operational details, which helped us keep the sequences authentic.

Also, there is a sequence where the MiG-21 flies through dark clouds,

with the cockpit visibly vibrating and flashes of light outside. How did you create the realism of that sequence?

For the shots in the air, we mounted a cockpit replica made by the department, on a motion base. All the movement was planned precisely according to the edit. Again we storyboarded the sequence, then created previsualisation to determine the aircraft's movement, the degree of turbulence and bouncing of the plane, the turns, and how the actors' bodies would react.

We had a full-scale replica of the MiG cockpit, down to the buttons, scratches, and other details. The actors rehearsed the movements so that their physical reactions matched the motion of the aircraft. We also had senior Air Force technical advisors on set to ensure that the movements and procedures were authentic.

The lighting was another major challenge. We had to determine how dark the clouds should be and how much visibility we wanted within the sequence. Once we established the visual reference, we worked with Merge XR to create a large lighting environment in the studio—a large number of Vortex panels arranged in a hemisphere with a diameter of 110 feet. It was like a semi-dome—a hemisphere of lights—with skimmers running in front at different degrees of softness and hardness.

The studio was LIDAR scanned, and the lights were mapped and individually controllable through Unreal. This allowed us to precisely control the colour, intensity, and direction of the sun in the sky. We could even take a colour reference from an HDRI or live-action plate and reproduce that colour across the lighting dome.

We also had a moving source representing the sun, mounted on the "Bolt." Every time the Bolt moved, the sky lights would respond according to its movement. As the aircraft moved, the sun source and the surrounding sky lighting could change accordingly—so the sky behind the sun would be brighter and white and the one in front was cooler. The entire lighting system essentially worked like an orchestra, with all the lights responding together. For the dark cloud sequence, we varied the darkness of the sky intermittently and simulated the lighting with LED lights.

Traditionally, programming and changing such a large lighting setup would have been extremely time-consuming. Working with Unreal and Merge XR gave us much greater flexibility and speed. I could make very specific decisions about where I wanted the light to be warmer, cooler, brighter, or darker, and immediately see the result on the actors and the cockpit. We shot the live action before coming into the studio and matched the sun's

altitude, relative intensity and colour temperature as closely as possible for the requirements of the story. We also mapped the sun's path, so we knew exactly where the sun needed to be at each cut.

The sun was mobile—either mounted on a Bolt or placed on a stand—so we could continuously adjust its position. This allowed us to match the sun's position from shot to shot and maintain continuity throughout the sequence.

That combination of the motion base, the detailed cockpit replica, and the programmable lighting environment was what allowed us to make the sequence feel physically convincing. With this setup, we were able to move much faster. I could be far more selective and precise about the light intensity & colour I wanted in each setup. Working with Merge XR was, for me, a big part of making this possible. There were no LED walls involved.

In Musharraf's background, as well as in the PM's, there is a framed glass surface that creates multiple strong, out-of-focus reflections of practical lights. What was the aesthetic consideration in using it in the background?

This is the part of the story where Indian PM is coming to Pakistan, and there is going to be a ceremony at a hotel. It is a big occasion, and we





needed to build up the sense of opulence leading up to it. This meeting happens just before the next time we see Musharraf, when he doesn't salute Vajpayeeji ; he simply shakes his hand. So, just before that, we felt we needed to make the occasion a little more spectacular—not necessarily in terms of scale, but by giving it a richer sense of warmth.

The location we were shooting allowed us to do it - that's pretty much how it worked out.

There is a beautiful Shot where Madhavi Reddy is looking at a framed photograph of a group of fighter pilots. The glass of the frame carries reflections, and the focus gradually shifts from the photograph to her reflection in the glass before cutting to her side profile. How was this transition conceived?

It comes through in the script. There is a distance growing between her and her fiancé because he feels that his life is torn between her and his love for the Air Force, and he is confused. She is also going through a period of turbulence in her mind. They are both introspective . This is intercut with him standing in front of a MiG-21, wondering whether he is in the right space, doing the right thing, or making the right choices.

We tried to translate her introspection through the shifting focus. You see him, then you see them in a photograph, and as the focus shifts, you see her. She is juxtaposed against him, while he is juxtaposed against the real

MiG-21 in the hangar. That is how the emotional arc of this section gradually builds up.

While Nawaz Sharif is discussing with Jaswant Singh, there is already sufficient natural daylight coming through the windows. Yet you have chosen to introduce several practical lights in the background, which create a very different visual atmosphere.

The lamps in the background, enhanced the frame and the mood gave the space a sense of solemnity.

I also like to keep a slight mix of colour temperatures. Generally, I think that is there in Safed Sagar. I don't like the idea of daylight flooding the entire space. There has to be a fall-off from the window, from the middle of the room towards the darker part of the room. That creates some story in the background.

But if I want to bring out that darker part for depth, I find placing practicals to be a very useful device.

Nawaz Sharif is speaking with his father, and the lighting becomes noticeably softer, with very natural-looking skin tones and a relatively neutral colour palette. What was the thought behind choosing this soft, natural treatment for the scene rather than introducing a stronger colour tint or a more stylised colour palette?

In the same location, we had another scene that followed this one, where the father tells the Prime Minister that politics is a game.

I always feel there should be an arc in how a space evolves vis-à-vis light through the day. If we see the same space in the morning, afternoon, & evening, the light should transform it beyond simply indicating the time of day.

So, in the second scene, the lamps and chandelier are on, completely

transforming the space. For me, that transformation is an important part of story telling—the role of light in shaping the space and the mood of a film.

In the night sequence, we see a wide exterior of the tent, followed later by a much larger open ground where the boys perform the bike and rope formation. How did you approach lighting such a vast outdoor space at night while maintaining visibility and preserving the natural feel of night?

The Pakistani Army camp in Skardu was a vast space surrounded by mountains, and we wanted the mountains to be part of the landscape—to establish that the army base was nestled within them. We lit the mountains only enough to provide information. The tents had their own practical lights, while tube lights marked the vehicle pathway, making it brighter than the rest of the camp. There were also lights placed across the mountains, which helped extend the scale of the base and integrate the surrounding landscape into the image. On the side, wherever there was a road or an entry point, we placed a series of lights to define the pathway. It wasn't seen as a very bright space keeping the mood of the scenes in mind, but I think it helped convey what it feels like to be in the middle of the mountains.

For the boys at the air base, we shot the sequence in a large ground. Being used at night, it would have lights around its borders, so there would be some ambient illumination without making it too bright. However, I wanted the main source of light to come from the bike headlights, because that was an essential part of the scene. We exposed the scene and NDed the headlights so that they were around a stop over, allowing them to light the faces of people farther away. The overall ambience was about 3 to 3 1/2 stops under.



When Tony and Ajay Ahuja return after the final air rehearsal, the hard sunset is directly visible in the frame as Ajay puts his hand on Baldy's shoulder. What was the creative reason for deliberately allowing the direct sun into the lens, despite the flare and loss of contrast it can create?

Their landing follows a victorious sortie. We positioned the sequence in a part of the hangar that received the evening sun and planned the entire progression around that light.

This begins a series of events where they land, Baldy meets Madhavi, they ride to the hangar, and he proposes to her. We wanted the whole sequence to play out over a single evening, so the light had to evolve naturally—from the warmer, slightly harder sunlight at the hangar, to softer light as they meet, ride, and eventually return to the hangar.

It was important to maintain that natural progression rather than simply shooting everything at the most beautiful light. The changing quality of the evening light gives the entire sequence a visual graph.

Which brand of practical light source did you use in the scene where Adil Hussain discusses the bombing mission and the trial with the fighter pilot and Tony?

We used a mix of Astra tubes and Rosco sources and Aputure bulbs, with different colour temperatures, to create depth and build a sense of the working environment.

While the night bombing scenes were being picturised on the mountain, particularly from the ground level, what was the collaboration in terms of exposure with the special effects team?

In the night bombing sequence, the jets take off at night (live footage), go into the night sky (complete CG mixed with live footage shot in the studio), bomb the peaks (live footage with extensions and complete CG sets) and the interaction of the Pak army on the peaks (live footage with additional peak creation). So all this had to be integrated visually for the world building. We went to the mountain peaks in 2024 - a year before we shot there (2025) because after the summer, the locations would be snowed in and inaccessible through the rest of the year. We studied the snow, marked the locations, roads, and bombing locations, and tested the ARRI 35 and the RED V Raptor with Cooke S8s



to determine how late into the evening we could shoot.

We found that the best time was after sunset or once the sun went behind the mountains. We then graded the test footage to establish a visual reference for the moonlit mountains, faces, aircraft, and studio cockpit scenes, ensuring everything remained cohesive and convincing. We shot all our explosions as late as possible so that we could get maximum interaction between the fire from the explosions and the ambient light. The explosions were later enhanced in VFX to increase their intensity and scale.

Kudos to the VFX department which did a great job through OSS!

I read on the Cooke Optics website that these lenses were sent to the UK for recalibration. While the understanding is that whenever anybody is shooting, the lenses in all conditions should be calibrated. Comment.

When we talk about lens calibration, we generally mean calibrating the lens with the camera and ensuring that the lens markings are accurate. Here, the recalibration was necessary because the VFX team needed information about the lenses beyond what the LDS data provided.

Since we were sometimes using a mix of anamorphic and spherical lenses, the VFX team needed additional lens-specific information to accurately recreate the optical characteristics in post-production.

It was not just one lens that we used; there was a mix of lenses, and each had its own optical characteristics. Modern lens manufacturers provide lens data, including focus distance, but we still shoot distortion charts to understand how a lens behaves from the centre to the edges at different T-stops and distances, because its characteristics can change over time.

For VFX to accurately simulate these characteristics in a CG shot, they needed precise lens data. That is why we felt the lenses had to be recalibrated. A lens that has been used by a rental house for ten or twenty years undergoes wear and tear, adjustments, and servicing, so its characteristics may change over time. We wanted to ensure that the data we provided was as accurate as possible—essentially bringing the lenses back to their original factory calibration, as close as possible to how they performed when they were brand new. That is why the lenses had to go back to the factory in the UK, and Cooke was extremely cooperative throughout the process.

You also used the SP3 lenses with the RED KOMODO. What was the primary reason for using them?

We used the SP3s with the RED KOMODO, primarily for time-lapse shots and situations where we needed an action-camera-type setup. Whenever we had to rig a camera in a tight or difficult location, the smaller body of the KOMODO was very useful. The primary reason for choosing the SP3s was their weight and compact size. Together with the KOMODO, they gave us an ultra-compact camera setup, which was ideal for those situations. The Air Force team was also extremely cooperative in helping us execute these setups.

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Directed by Tigmanshu Dhulia and starring Pratik Gandhi and Arshad Warsi, *Ghamasaan* unfolds in the ravines of the Indian heartland—a world where landscape, violence and mythology become inseparable. Cinematographer Dev Agarwal approached the film not as an exercise in recreating the Western, but as an exploration of how its visual language could emerge organically from the geography of Bundelkhand.

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GHAMASAAN: FINDING THE SOUL OF THE RAVINES

Dev Agarwal is an Indian cinematographer and FTII graduate whose work is rooted in a sensitivity to light, landscape and character. His feature credits include *CityLights*, *Bollywood Diaries* and *Ghamasaan*, with *Vaitarani* and *Bakra Kriket* among his upcoming projects. His visual approach seeks to balance atmosphere, performance and environment, creating images that feel organic, tactile and emotionally grounded.

When you first read *Ghamasaan*, what was the image of the film in your head?

Before I thought about cameras or lenses, I thought about the land. The story exists in a very particular geography—ravines, dry earth, forests, villages and enormous stretches of space. I felt that the landscape could not simply be a backdrop for the characters. The land had to have its own presence. The characters are moving through a world that is physically difficult to navigate and psychologically difficult to understand. So, I wanted the photography to preserve that feeling of distance, uncertainty and intimacy. That became the starting point for almost every technical decision that followed.

Did you and Tigmanshu establish any visual rules before you went into production?

Yes, although they were more principles than rigid rules. Very early in our conversations, director Tigmanshu Dhulia gave me a remarkably simple brief: “It should not look lit up.” I kept coming back to that sentence throughout the film. It sounds like a technical instruction, but it was really a philosophy of seeing—he wasn’t saying we shouldn’t use lights, but that the audience should never feel the presence of lighting as an artificial intervention. The world had to appear to have its own light, and the characters had to feel as though they belonged naturally within it. From there, we established a few guiding principles: we didn’t want the film to feel overly designed; the reality and texture of the locations had to remain intact; the landscape should stay present whenever it had dramatic value; and, above all, there had to be restraint. We didn’t want the camera or lighting to constantly tell the audience where to look.

Sometimes the environment could carry the scene, sometimes the actor, and sometimes the tension could come precisely from what we chose not to reveal. That became the visual grammar of Ghamasaan.

Your cinematography has been described as Western-like, particularly in the way you photograph the ravines. Was that a conscious influence?

I understand why people make that connection, but I wasn't trying to make an Indian film look like a Western. What I was responding to was the relationship between character and geography that you find in classical Westerns. When a landscape is enormous, the character's position inside it becomes meaningful. A person can look powerful in one frame and completely insignificant in another simply because of how much space surrounds them. That was very appropriate for Ghamasaan. The ravines are not just beautiful locations. They represent territory, concealment, danger and power. The Western quality emerged from that spatial relationship rather than from consciously reproducing a genre style.

The geography often feels like more than a backdrop—it becomes part of the characters' lives. How did that idea influence your compositions, camera distance and use of negative space?

I wanted the environment to remain present even when the scene was primarily about a character. Negative space was therefore not simply an aesthetic device; it was a way of

reminding the audience where these people existed. We often allowed the frame to breathe around the actors. The longer lenses were particularly useful when I wanted the geography to feel compressed and threatening, while wider compositions allowed the characters to be swallowed by the landscape. The important thing was not to make every frame "beautiful." The frame had to have a reason to contain that much space.

Arshad Warsi and Pratik Gandhi inhabit very different emotional spaces within the same landscape. How did you create distinct visual identities for their characters?

I wanted the distinction between them to emerge organically from the light rather than through an imposed visual code. Arshad's character carries a certain physicality and aggression, so his world is harder and more elemental. We allowed the light to be more directional and severe, with stronger transitions into shadow. There was a sense of the landscape pressing against him—of the environment leaving its mark on his face and body. Pratik's character required a quieter visual language. His world is more restrained and observational, so the light could breathe a little more gently around him. Beauty was never the objective; truth was.

What camera and lenses did you choose for Ghamasaan, and what did they bring to the visual language?

We shot on the ARRI ALEXA Mini LF with Cooke Anamorphic/i Full Frame lenses. The choice was driven by the

demands of the landscape and the characters rather than by a predetermined "look." The Mini LF gave us the large-format capture and latitude we needed, while the Cooke offered scale and intimacy with an organic optical character. I was particularly drawn to the way they rendered detail, contrast, skin and defocus without becoming clinical. That balance was important for Ghamasaan—the landscape needed to feel tangible, while the characters remained human within it.

The night sequences have a distinctive relationship between the actors and their environment. How did you approach exposure and lighting to preserve that sense of darkness?

The fundamental principle was to light the environment rather than the faces. I wanted the night to feel like a real extension of the landscape, with the trees, ravines, roads and practical sources establishing the exposure, and the actors existing within that light rather than being separately illuminated.

I mostly photographed the film around T2.8, which gave us enough exposure and depth control while retaining the character of the Cooke Anamorphic/i FF lenses. Rather than lifting faces to a conventional key level, we allowed them to fall naturally within the environmental exposure—sometimes as much as three stops under. The ALEXA Mini LF gave us the latitude to make those decisions confidently, but the intention was never to recover the shadows later.





Technically, it was about controlling the relationship between the environment, the face and the black level. I wanted the darkness to retain density and for the faces to emerge from it rather than sit on top of it. The result was a night world in which the characters felt physically embedded in the landscape.

The idea was not to make the night darker; it was to make the darkness believable.

Did you approach the day exteriors with the same philosophy of allowing the environment to determine the quality and direction of the light? How did your exposure strategy differ from the night work?

Yes. The underlying philosophy was the same: shape the natural light rather than replace it. For the day exteriors, I wanted the locations to retain their inherent contrast, texture and sense of place, so we worked primarily with the direction and quality of available sunlight and used negative fill, diffusion and selective augmentation only when necessary.

I mostly photographed the day interiors and exteriors around T4 to T5.6, which gave us greater depth of field and allowed the landscape to remain an active part of the composition. That was particularly important on the ravines and wide exterior spaces, where I wanted the characters and their environment to hold together spatially.

Rather than creating a uniform lighting scheme, we scheduled and

blocked scenes around the natural direction of the sun. The objective was to maintain continuity of direction and contrast while preserving the character of the locations. In that sense, the day and night photography followed the same principle: the light should feel as though it belongs to the world, not as though it has been placed on top of it.

After living with this film through its locations, performances and photographic challenges, what did Ghamasaan teach you about cinematography that you didn't know when you began?

It reminded me that cinematography is often as much about letting go as it is about control. We spend so much time preparing—testing lenses, designing lighting, deciding exposure and planning compositions—but once you are in the landscape with the actors, the location often gives you something you couldn't have anticipated.

There were moments when the light changed, the atmosphere shifted, or a performance suggested a different

distance from the camera. Those moments taught me to remain responsive rather than protect the plan.

Technically, the film pushed me to trust the latitude of the ALEXA Mini LF and the character of the anamorphic lenses, but more importantly, it reinforced something I have always believed: the best photographic decisions are not necessarily the most visible ones.

Sometimes the most important decision is knowing when to stop doing something—to leave the light alone, hold the frame a little longer, stay further away, or allow an image to remain imperfect.

That, perhaps, was my biggest discovery on Ghamasaan: cinematography is not about controlling everything in front of the camera; it is about recognizing what is already there and knowing what deserves to be preserved.

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Interview with DOP Gairik Sarkar On Shooting "The Revolutionaries"

Throughout the series, we see a variety of eclectic lamps, lanterns, and practical fixtures. How did you decide what type of practical light was appropriate?

The decision was based partly on historical accuracy and partly on visual design. The Revolutionaries is set around 1912 when the capital of India had just shifted from Calcutta to Delhi. So we decided to light Delhi with an abundance of warm incandescent bulbs. Calcutta was lit with bulbs too but I tuned them towards a cooler, greener tone to denote decay and dilapidation. The other two major locations in the show are Benaras and Punjab both of which are lit with lanterns, mashaals and other fire sources. This and other production design decisions gave each location a distinct look and feel as we cut between them.

As the story flows and we cut from say a Delhi Police Headquarters to a Benaras Haveli interior the quality of light changes from incandescent bulbs to fire light so I don't have to do much during colour grading to get two distinct looks for each location. Only for Calcutta we wanted an overall gloomy look so we tuned the lighting towards a cooler tonal

style and enhanced it a bit in colour grading.

We also decided that the wide shots in every scene should be a little expressionistic, not only establishing the location but also depicting a certain dramatic mood. You will notice that the interior wide shots during daytime almost always have dramatic shafts of light especially in the police station. We also made sure there were deep shadows and dark areas in every location to give them a feeling of exaggerated realism.

In the courtroom sequence, and later when Bagha Jatin kills with a pistol hidden in a newspaper while walking through the corridor, the image has a subtle blue tint. Since the series largely follows a warm palette, what was the aesthetic reason for introducing this cooler tone in these sequences?

The visual approach for shooting daylight interior scenes set in Calcutta was to have heavily diffused light coming in through the windows. The overall mood of the city is supposed to be overcast, gloomy, wet and always about to rain. Even for exterior scenes we skimmed the natural sunlight with heavy cotton diffusion. I shot all the Calcutta



scenes with the camera rated at 3800K. This particular courtroom scene is actually a flashback so instead of choosing to desaturate the look we decided to enhance the bluishness in the grade to make the mood more somber and depressing.

In the nightmare sequence where Pratibha Lahiri appears on the bed in his imagination, there are shots of General Dyer hanging, while both she and General Dyer are kept deliberately out of focus in certain shots. What was the creative consideration behind this treatment?

There are both nightmare and dream sequences in the show and I wanted to make them look distinctly different. The nightmare sequences have a heavy vignette, blurriness and grain texture all added in post. The dream sequences, on the other hand, are brighter and softly lit with blurry edges.

In two or three sequences, there appears to be a special filtration effect where the central portion of the frame remains relatively sharp while the



surrounding areas gradually become soft or blurred. What was the idea behind using this particular filtration?

This “dream sequence” look is used when the characters are planning something that might or might not happen in the future. We placed a Tiffen Glimmerglass filter (1/2 strength) in front of the lens and applied a layer of Vaseline around the edges to create the edge blur effect in-camera. The way the light interacts with the Vaseline layer gives a more organic effect than recreating the same in post.

We use this treatment in the sequence where Rash Behari Bose imagines killing the Viceroy in the ballroom. This is what he has planned in his head, rather than a dream. He cannot execute this plan because Dyer intervenes and the scene shifts back to reality. We used a dolly-zoom (Vertigo) shot for this transition to reality. The Vaseline treatment is used again in the scene where they are planning the Christmas massacre. It became a visual language for their imagined or planned actions.

We also see several fire sources around . Were these historically appropriate to Benaras of that period, or a creative choice?

There were Mashals at the time,

but perhaps not such large cauldrons of fire. We used the larger Mashals as an expressionistic element to enhance the night scenes.

For fire-lit scenes, it was important to maintain the feeling of a small, natural source, since firelight is essentially a small source. We used multiple small, hidden MC Pro kits rather than large lights to simulate the fire effect.

Light & Light Company also made special LED lanterns with a flicker effect for us. We used about ten of them around the locations, while the art department provided the gas mashals, adding to the overall effect.

Smoke is a recurring visual element in the series. How did you create and maintain consistent smoke density across long and medium shots?

During that period, there were a lot of “Chullahs” around, so cooking naturally created a lot of smoke. We wanted to recreate that atmosphere and have smoke present throughout the environment.

For interiors and sets, we used the haze machines we normally use. They were easier to control because we could visually monitor the density through the eyepiece and use the machines' slow-output mode to maintain a consistent

level of haze

For exteriors, we used what is called a diesel gun, which produces white smoke by burning diesel. The SFX team had three to four people positioned discreetly in hidden areas. They would release the smoke, move away, allow it to settle, and then we would take the shot.

We didn't want an overall haze in the exteriors; we wanted the smoke to appear as if it was coming from specific sources, such as a Chullah. This meant we didn't have to maintain a consistent haze across the entire exterior—we could actually see the smoke drifting naturally through the frame. So that was the approach we committed to, so we wouldn't have to wait for the smoke to settle, particularly during exterior shots.

In some of the action sequences involving the Sikh community protests, the sky appears deliberately burnt out rather than retaining visible clouds or a blue sky. What was the visual reasoning behind choosing this approach?

I feel that a properly exposed sky draws the eye too much and takes away from the realism of the scene. Since this was Calcutta Docks, we wanted an overall sense of gloominess, but I didn't want the sky to dominate the frame.

I didn't want clearly defined clouds or a blue sky because that would distract from what was happening at ground level. So, the sky wasn't overexposed or clipping; it was simply kept very high in the exposure range.

Across many of the interiors, there is a very distinctive visual style: strong streaks of sunlight cutting through the windows and becoming particularly visible because of the smoke or haze. What led you to establish this as such a recurring visual motif?

In interiors, fully diffused daylight can make the space look flat. Since most



October - December 2026



26



constructed in an open ground at Madh Island in Mumbai. All the Delhi, Calcutta and Benaras interiors and exteriors were built on this two-acre ground, with sets continuously redressed while we moved between locations. The remaining 20–25 days were spent on exteriors in Punjab, including Govindgarh Fort and some other locations in Madhya Pradesh.

Nikkhil Advani

and I worked with Amazon to get approval for the show to shoot in 2.35:1 CinemaScope format which is very uncommon for an OTT series. Our decision was heavily influenced by classic adventure films of the past like Lawrence of Arabia, Guns of Navarone and Where Eagles Dare. As a result we decided to shoot the show with 2X anamorphic lenses which are inherently expressionistic and painterly. I chose the Alexa 35 with Cooke 2x anamorphic lenses being the primary package. I also used the 44-440mm and the 30-72mm Angenieux Optimo Anamorphic zoom lenses.

For lighting we chose a combination of fixtures rather than one particular brand. We primarily used Godox LED panels with balloon diffusion for soft facial light. Creamsource Vortex panels were used for ambient location lighting for night exteriors. ARRIMAX 18Ks for used for hard shafts of daylight. We also used MC Pro kits extensively for practical and fire sources.

Michele Ricossa was the colourist whose core philosophy is invisible grading. So we tried to keep the colour and contrast choices as natural as possible without compromising on visual drama.

Was there any sequence in the

series that was particularly challenging to shoot?

The climax at Govindgarh Fort was particularly challenging. It was a huge real location, and the night sequence required extensive lighting. Since we were working with firelight, we couldn't use a single large source; we had to hide numerous tubes, Astera tubes and MC Pro kits around the fort. The gaffer Sajid Shaikh and my associate cinematographer Hiru Mondal spent two days pre-lighting the location.

Given the scale of the series and our 78-day schedule, pre-lighting was crucial. We had lighting setups ready in advance and could control them remotely, often simply switching sources on or off from an iPad. This allowed us to move quickly between shots without losing time to relighting. We also had a parallel unit shooting along with the main unit. 2nd unit DoPs Rusha Bose and Abijit Vivek shot almost 30 percent of the show. Lighting for two parallel units shooting in a different part of the same set without light spillage was also a daily challenge. So was managing crew and equipment split between the units to avoid wastage.

How did you use camera movement to capture the energy of the young revolutionaries?

The revolutionaries were mostly under 20, so we wanted the camera language to reflect their energy. We initially considered shooting the entire series handheld, but eventually adopted a roughly 50–50 mix of handheld and dolly work. The camera movement was always intended to add drama, with push-ins and dynamic movements creating an energetic visual rhythm.

Feedback:

Gairik Sarkar:

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houses of that period had skylights and windows without glass, we deliberately used hard light through them. The hard quality of the light not only reinforced the architecture but also helped transport the viewer back to that era.

There is an interesting scene in Episode 4 where Rash Behari is sitting with Sachindranath Sanyal discussing the revolution. During the conversation, you gradually introduce sunlight onto him. How did this idea originate?

It was written into the script to signify a new dawn. The characters had given up hope and fled to Chandan Nagar, but now the sun rises, giving them renewed hope and the determination to fight again.

The scene begins almost in darkness, reflecting their emotional state. As they discuss the British suppression and their plans, the light gradually changes. I used a Nanlux Evoke LED outside to bring in a strong beam of sunlight, rather than tungsten, because I didn't want the warmth of the light to suggest an artificial source.

When the Evoke comes on, the light hits his face very strongly, intentionally pushing it beyond normal exposure. It was a stylised choice to make the arrival of the new light—and the new hope—visually striking.

Give us some details about number of shooting dates, camera, lenses colour grading etc.

We shot the entire series in 78 days, including 45–50 days on sets



October - December 2026



Interview with DOP *Sanjay Kapoor* On Shooting "Mirzapur-The Movie"



In the opening, Pankaj Tripathi is initially out of focus and gradually comes into focus. What was the aesthetic reasoning behind this choice?

From the start of the film, we wanted to establish the powerful aura, the quietly menacing authority of Kaleen bhaiya. And what better representation of power than fire? It seemed a perfect visual motive for his character, while also backing the scripted annual pooja day for the Tripathi family.

It established his larger than life presence and the duality of his life – purification and cleansing on one end and death and destruction on another.

When Bhairav Singh Karnwat is introduced in the desert, we first see him from behind, beginning with his feet before gradually revealing his full body. How was this striking introduction conceived?

Bhairav Singh and Babban are the 2 new characters being introduced in the film.

We wanted to depict Bhairav as mysterious, the traditional overlord of the land, of Rajasthan. Thus, you see first his beautiful anklets, his footprint so to speak, then as you pull back, a man in a dhoti.

It sets Bhairav apart from the Mirzapur group, or Babban and Birju, who are all outsiders.

It was meant to be a striking image. We wanted him to appear alone in this vast expanse, with that one road leading out into nowhere.

It was scripted and pre-visualized from the very first recce, with my director's DA standing in for Bhairav Singh. We had photographs taken of the poses and composition on the recce

and that's how the scene played out in the movie

In the same encounter sequence, one of the characters is initially seen through dust, which fills the frame as we move closer before gradually revealing him. How did the idea of using dust as a visual device—essentially opening from the dust—emerge?

We wanted to establish the desert, which is both the beauty of the dunes and the impenetrability of a dust storm. I think this one is a full circle moment. We start the sequence with a rather beautiful shot of the dunes with a line of cars driving through the desert. Suddenly there's a gun shot, a man dead in the car, and the lead car comes to a screeching halt – dust cloud. From a far vantage point we see a line of cars, stopped, almost lost, and a big foot with an anklet enters the frame. As an audience you know immediately this is the person that rules the desert-- and this is not going to be a person to be trifled with. You see the back of Bhairav Singh Karnavat against this landscape of



sand with one long road leading nowhere, as far as the eye can see, and Babban and his gang are almost captive. The only escape is to lose oneself in the sandstorm. Dust unto Dust.

In the outing sequence, all three girls are beautifully framed simultaneously through mirrors. Was this mirror composition conceived beforehand and incorporated into the production design?

It wasn't specifically designed as part of the Production design. On the Tech Recce when we saw the jewelry stall and all the mirrors on the wall, Gurmmeet our director said, "what if we include them? One character to a mirror each?" and I agreed. It would make a lovely image and we'd frame so we saw both couples arrive into their reflections, as well as the sister character who is single – everyone naturally falling into their place in the world/frame.

Was this mirror composition conceived beforehand and incorporated into the production design?

The first time we see a mirror and reflections in the film is when Munna brings cake to his father. We see Kalleen Bhaiya and his reflection in the almirah mirror over Munna. Kalleen Bhaiya is multitudes as a character, and he's comfortable with all of them. In this scene he's emphasizing the need to leave the past behind to his son. It was my intent to use the reflections to show his existence as many faceted and his comfort with all of them. Of course, the mirror motif comes full circle, in the post credit sequence when Birju is flung into

this same mirror shattering it and we see many reflections of Kalleen bhaiya in the broken fragments of that mirror, betrayal writ large on each fragment of his reflections.

It's always one's attempt to establish and carry forward such visual motifs, to nudge the audience one way or another. The word does its thing – the image must always add to it.

In the manufacturing-unit sequence, welding sparks become an important visual element around Munna. Was this lighting approach pre-visualised, or did the environment of the location inspire the idea during the shoot?

For the interval sequence we had decided to have one shot each of all the characters leading up to the interval. Munna had just been reprimanded by his father and as a punishment was asked to go learn on the factory floor.

We've always used fire in the show as an image for penance, cleansing, and destruction. Munna in his dark glasses welding with sparks flying all around him is an appropriate image of his anger and the imminent fires that he is soon going to set off.

How did you approach lighting the large-scale night desert sequence to maintain scale, continuity and visual control?

It was quite the challenge. We were in the middle of the desert, in a cove amongst the dunes because the campsite needed to be hidden from the world. It was going to be a long climax sequence, which included a song, so we needed to have scale, depth and be visually striking. And of course it ended up being 37 minutes long.

As always, my go to people were our Production Designers, Sonam Singh and Abhijeet Gaonkar. I asked them to give us as many practical lights as they could, and as many fire pits as they could incorporate in their design. We would use fire as our key for lighting and we would use some sort of cold moonlight shading for the desert scape and the dunes and the far depths. Fire would also offer us enough smoke to play with in our visuals. They did an amazing job of incorporating fire and practicals in their set design. Of course, my team still had to bring in enough lights to shape and define our spaces. The big challenge was to bring in cranes that we needed to hang our lights from, We had three 250 foot cranes brought in and placed at pre designated spots and just bringing them to their designated spots took a herculean effort from our





the other.

If you remember Season 1, my highlights were all flary and almost burnt out, the image was pretty high key in the exteriors and interiors were all kept dark and high contrast, soft but high contrast. This was a choice made after testing the Alexa LF and the Red Weapon against each other, and for the purpose I needed served, the Red worked better.

Between Season 3 and the movie, I worked on another show, Pan Parda Zarda, which needed an old world, soft, more elegant imagery. The Alexa 35 became a choice for that show after testing. The movie as you know is shot on a combination of Alexa 35 and Alexa Xtreme, with Cooke S4i lenses.

DI plays an important role in shaping the final look of a film. Could you comment on the colour grading process?

All 3 Seasons and the movie have been color corrected on the Baselight at FutureWorks by Rahul Purav. The visual template for the movie was pretty much set by the previous 3 seasons.

The excitement this time was the new locations and the larger scale. Our main effort was not to change the basic visual skeleton of the show, but to flesh it out and push it a little further. The contrast levels remained the same, and the lighting palette and ratios were also largely consistent with the web series. The image changed compositionally to accommodate the 2.40:1 aspect ratio but the color and contrast were kept largely consistent with the show.

Feedback

Sanjay Kapoor

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production team. Once placed, they could not be physically moved again, so we had to plan it all in advance. We could lower and raise them, swing them left and right on the arm a little bit, but once placed we were committed to their placement. All the lights on and off the crane were on a dimmer board and my Gaffer Shahid Khan from LightnLight could control everything remotely and more importantly, very quickly.

I think it took our production team about seven days just to bring the cranes to their spots – they were using some sort of tank type tracks that the army uses to move heavy equipment in the desert. Can never thank them enough.

It took us 14 nights working in severe winter desert conditions in December to shoot the climax, but it was all worth it. Everyone, each team member, was just so committed. And there is nothing more rewarding than the warmth of working with a team that gets along, looks after each other. Think it even helped us beat the freezing cold!

What camera and lens combination did you choose for the film?

The Camera Package for the film combined the Arri Alexa 35 and the Arri Alexa 35 Xtreme, framed for a 2.40:1 theatrical aspect ratio, with Cooke S4i lenses. Before settling on to this package we tested the Cooke Anamorphics also but eventually decided to go Spherical because the Anamorphics were proving to be bulky, would need higher light

levels to keep depth of field and focus in acceptable levels. Since we had a lot of night time shooting with practical lights and fire, and we had a lot of Steadicam and Remote crane work, we chose to go Spherical over Anamorphics.

Alexa and Sony - Venice are often the first choices for many DOPs, with RED usually considered a third option. What specific qualities of the RED made you choose it for Mirzapur Seasons 1, 2 and 3?

I think of these 3 cameras as 3 different film stocks – each with their own characteristics. They all allow you to shape and create images in the way you might imagine them, albeit differently. You choose one for the harsh highlights, another for soft overall image and latitude, yet another for the amount of image manipulation you can do on the set itself. They are all tools and you use them to serve your purpose hopefully, not the other way around. I am sceptical of calling one better than





ZEISS Panoptes 65



ZEISS Panoptes 65 lenses bring a rich history of optical expertise in cinema to the 65mm format. Geared towards a diverse range of productions, these lenses combine the characteristics cinematographers have long trusted from ZEISS with a carefully balanced aesthetic for the 65mm format: natural colors, forgiving skin textures, gentle focus fall-off and a silky bokeh.

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ZEISS has a long history in larger-format photography, with lenses developed for systems including Pentacon Six, Hasselblad 500 series and Contax 645. This experience in optical design, lens coatings and precision manufacturing has contributed to the development of the Panoptes 65.

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- Gentle focus fall-off
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Ergonomics

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- 114 mm: 25 and 180 mm

This standardization is intended to reduce on-set adjustments and improve production efficiency.

Lens Data

The Panoptes 65 lenses feature ZEISS eXtended Data, providing frame-by-frame information on lens vignetting and distortion, in addition to standard metadata through the Cooke /i protocol. They are also integrated into the ZEISS CinCraft ecosystem for VFX, camera tracking and virtual production workflows. 

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Embrace the Soul of Your Cinematography

ZEISS Aatma lenses are inspired by characteristics of some of the most beloved classic ZEISS lenses of the 20th century. Their legacy look evokes emotion with softly painted skin texture, rich bokeh with a subtle soap-bubble effect, and smooth and vibrant focus transitions. Combined with the conveniences of modern cine lenses, Aatma lenses allow cinematographers to put their signature in every frame.

The Essence of Aatma

The name Aatma is derived from the Sanskrit word meaning “innermost essence,” “self,” or “soul.” ZEISS says the lenses combine the timeless qualities of its classic lenses with modern engineering, providing the aesthetic character of vintage optics alongside the technical precision required for contemporary filmmaking.

Softly Painted Skin Texture

Aatma lenses are designed to render skin texture with lower contrast and versatile softness, giving faces a

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Rich Bokeh with Subtle Soap-Bubble Effect

The lenses produce a richer bokeh with subtle soap bubbles and cat’s-eye characteristics towards the edges. ZEISS describes this as allowing the background to remain part of the visual narrative rather than being completely blurred away.

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The Aatma range uses a consistent housing design with standardized iris and focus positions. Front diameters are 95 mm for the 25, 35, 40, 50, 65, 85 and 100 mm lenses, and 114 mm for the 18 and 135 mm lenses.

Lens Data & CinCraft

Aatma lenses incorporate ZEISS eXtended Data, providing frame-by-frame information about lens vignetting and distortion, in addition to standard metadata through the Cooke /i protocol. They are also integrated with the ZEISS CinCraft ecosystem for VFX, camera tracking and virtual production workflows.

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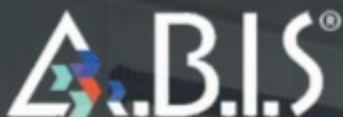
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ONE AESTHETIC, TWO FORMATS: COOKE AP3 & PANCHRO 65/I

From compact full-frame anamorphic primes to large-format 65mm cinema optics, Cooke is extending its distinctive approach to image-making across two very different production formats...

The Cooke Look, Reframed

The Cooke AP3 and Panchro 65/I may occupy opposite ends of the production spectrum, but both are built around the same philosophy: giving cinematographers control over an image with character.

Cooke AP3 brings 1.5x anamorphic imaging to full-frame mirrorless cameras in a compact, production-friendly form.

Cooke Panchro 65/I takes the visual character of Cooke's Panchro lineage into the expansive world of 65mm digital capture. The result is two distinctly different optical approaches, united by an emphasis on natural rendering, dimensionality and expressive images.

AP3: Anamorphic Character in a Compact Form

Anamorphic has never been simply about making the frame wider. It is about what happens to the image along the way. Light stretches across the frame, highlights begin to breathe, backgrounds take on a distinctive shape and familiar spaces can suddenly feel more cinematic. These optical characteristics have become part of the language of filmmaking itself—recognisable, expressive and deeply tied to the emotion of the image.

With AP3, Cooke brings that language into the world of full-frame mirrorless cameras. The 1.5x anamorphic series comprises 35mm, 50mm & 85mm primes, created to give cinematographers the freedom to explore widescreen imagery without requiring a large or cumbersome camera package.

The appeal lies in the balance. AP3 does not attempt to turn every

anamorphic characteristic into a visual statement. Instead, centre clarity sits alongside gently blooming highlights, smooth focus transitions, oval bokeh and classically rendered flares. The optical character is present but remains responsive to the scene rather than overpowering it.

That makes the lenses particularly interesting for filmmakers working in agile production environments. Full-frame mirrorless cameras have made compact cinema rigs increasingly capable, and AP3 extends that flexibility into anamorphic territory. With E mount as standard and user-changeable RF, L, Z and M mounts, the lenses can adapt to different camera systems and production requirements.

At its heart, AP3 is about preserving the reason filmmakers continue to be drawn to anamorphic: not simply the shape of the frame, but the way the optics can make light, space and movement feel different within it.

PANCHRO 65/I: PANCHRO CHARACTER ON A 65MM CANVAS

Large-format cinematography has always carried a particular fascination for cinematographers: the ability to create a greater sense of scale, depth and presence while giving subjects and environments room to breathe within the frame. Panchro 65/I brings that passion for large-format image-making into Cooke's established Panchro aesthetic, combining the expansive possibilities of 65mm capture with the warmth and character of the Panchro family.

The six-lens range comprises 30mm, 40mm, 55mm, 75mm, 100mm and

152mm focal lengths, covering the image circle specified for the large format sensors. Rather than pursuing a purely clinical large-format image, the lenses are designed to retain a sense of character through gentle aberrations, natural skin tones and controlled focus fall-off. The result is an image with scale and resolution, but also warmth, dimensionality and personality.

For cinematographers drawn to the possibilities of large-format capture, Panchro 65/I is about more than a larger canvas. It is about how that canvas can transform the relationship between the subject, the environment and the viewer. The increased sense of space and perspective can give images a remarkable feeling of presence, while the Panchro rendering keeps that scale grounded in a familiar, human quality.

Panchro 65/I ultimately brings together two things that continue to inspire cinematographers: the creative possibilities of large-format cinematography and the enduring character of a Cooke lens.

For the cinematographer, these lenses offer two distinct ways to paint with light. AP3 stretches the frame into a widescreen dream—highlights bloom, flares sweep across the image, and focus falls away with a soft, sculpted grace.

Panchro 65/I opens the world in another direction: faces hold warmth and presence, space feels deeper, and the 65mm canvas carries a quiet sense of scale. One brings intimacy to anamorphic spectacle; the other gives grandeur a human texture. Neither simply records what is placed before the camera—they shape how the image is felt. □□□





COOKE OPTICS INDIA | SERVICE CENTER A NEW ERA OF PRECISION SERVICE ARRIVES IN INDIA

Cooke brings manufacturer-led lens servicing to Hyderabad, strengthening its presence in one of the world's active film production markets.

For more than a century, Cooke lenses have been part of the visual language of cinema. Their reputation has been built on optical character, precision, engineering & longevity. With its dedicated service capability in Hyderabad, Cooke is bringing specialist lens servicing, advanced calibration equipment and manufacturer-level expertise into India's production ecosystem.

India is a filmmaking landscape, spanning feature films, streaming productions, television, advertising, music videos & independent cinema. The breadth of production activity creates a growing need for sophisticated imaging equipment and dependable technical support.

FROM EXPERIENCE TO SERVICE

On August 9, 2024, Cooke Optics inaugurated its Experience Centre in Hyderabad, creating a space for cinematographers, & students to explore Cooke lenses, understand their optical character & experience the legacy behind the brand. The centre brought Cooke's products & expertise closer to filmmakers. As Cooke's relationships grew, so did the need for dedicated technical support closer to filmmakers & rental partners.

On October 2, 2026, Cooke inaugurated its dedicated Service Centre in Hyderabad, with cinematographer Ravi K. Chandran ISC joining the occasion.

Speaking about manufacturer-backed service support in India, Ravi K. Chandran highlighted the relationship filmmakers have with their equipment, particularly in a country where cinema equipment is treated with tradition & respect before a production begins.

"In a country like India, equipment is an important part of filmmaking. Before a shoot, there is a sense of respect & ritual around the equipment because we know how important it is to



the process of creating an image. Having a dedicated service centre from the manufacturer here in India is a great thing for the filmmaking community."

Ravi K Chandran ISC | Director of Photography

The inauguration places Cooke's servicing capability closer to filmmakers & productions across the country.

WHEN PRECISION COMES CLOSER

A cinema lens can travel from one production to another, from one city to another, & from one generation of cinematographers to the next. Its performance, however, must remain constant. That is where specialist servicing becomes essential.

Cooke's Hyderabad facility has been developed around precision cinema optics, with equipment designed for detailed inspection, adjustment & optical assessment.

This is not about repairing a lens when something goes wrong.

It is about maintaining what makes a Cooke lens a Cooke lens: the accuracy of its mechanics, the consistency of its optical performance & the calibration that allows a cinematographer to trust the instrument on set. By bringing this capability into India, Cooke is shortening the distance between the manufacturer, the lens & the production community.

THE KNOWLEDGE BEHIND THE MACHINE

Equipment alone cannot create precision. It requires knowledge & experience.

That expertise is now being transferred directly from Cooke's UK operation to Hyderabad. Jack Cherrington, Cooke's Service Technician from the UK, travelled to India to provide



specialist training to Amar, Cooke India's service technician.

Amar brings approximately 25 years of lens servicing experience. Cooke training complements that practical knowledge with deeper understanding of lens construction, calibration & servicing.

This combination brings years of hands-on technical experience together with manufacturer knowledge.

"Service is an important part of the Cooke experience. It is not simply about addressing a technical issue, but about maintaining the precision, consistency & image character that define a Cooke lens. Having dedicated service support in India allows us to bring that expertise closer to the filmmakers who rely on these lenses every day."

Jack Cherrington | Service Technician

A MANUFACTURER'S PRESENCE, ON THE GROUND

For a global lens manufacturer to establish dedicated technical capability within a market is more than an operational decision. It creates a direct connection between the manufacturer & professionals using its equipment.

Cooke's Hyderabad facility provides a dedicated environment where Cooke lenses can receive specialist attention without immediately leaving the Indian production ecosystem for manufacturer-level support. For rental houses, cinematographers & production companies, that proximity can mean a direct route to technical expertise, inspection, calibration & repair. For Cooke, it means being present not only when a lens is selected for a production, but throughout its working life.

Cookeoptics.com/product-servicing



Cooke

COOKE /i TECHNOLOGY THE DATA BEHIND THE IMAGE /i Technology



A DIGITAL RECORD

/i Technology is Cooke's open metadata protocol for bringing the lens into the digital production workflow. Rather than relying on handwritten notes or reconstructing lens settings later, compatible cameras and equipment can capture key lens information continuously, frame by frame. This includes focal length, focus distance, T-stop, zoom position, depth of field, hyperfocal distance, horizontal field of view and entrance pupil position. The information can be recorded in metric or imperial units and carried forward through the production and post-production process.

AT THE POINT OF CAPTURE

Every frame carries more than the image itself. With /i Technology, the state of the lens at the moment of capture can become part of that frame's technical record. For cinematographers and camera departments, this creates a continuous digital reference for lens settings, reducing the dependence on manual recording and making critical lens information immediately available within a compatible workflow.

FROM METADATA TO MOTION

The evolution of /i Technology takes this concept further.

/i² expands the original lens metadata with inertial tracking, positional and orientation information, adding another layer of information about how the lens and camera are moving through space. These additional data sets can be particularly valuable in visual-effects workflows, where understanding movement, position and the behavior of the image can be critical.

/i³ takes the progression another step by adding lens distortion and shading data to the capabilities of /i². The result is a richer digital description of the lens, extending beyond basic lens settings to information that can help represent the optical characteristics of the lens within the post-production environment.

Together, /i, /i² and /i³ represent an evolving approach to lens metadata: from recording what the lens was doing, to capturing how it was moving and positioned, and ultimately providing additional information about how the lens itself shapes the image.

AN EVOLVING STANDARD

/i Technology was conceived as an open standard, allowing compatible equipment across the production chain to communicate through a common metadata framework. Its purpose is not simply to record information, but to allow that information to remain useful as the image moves from acquisition into increasingly sophisticated post-production workflows.

WHEN THE IMAGE MOVES FORWARD

The value of lens metadata becomes especially clear when a shot moves beyond the camera and into post-

production. A lens can contribute information that would otherwise have to be reconstructed from notes, measurements or reference material. When that information travels with the image, post-production teams have a more direct technical reference for understanding the conditions under which the shot was captured.

For visual-effects artists, this can help connect the physical lens used on set with the digital work required later. Lens data can support tracking, compositing and other processes where an accurate understanding of the camera and lens relationship is important. As /i Technology Metadata develops through /i² and /i³, the metadata ecosystem can provide increasingly detailed information about movement, orientation, distortion and shading.

This creates a more connected workflow between acquisition and post-production. Instead of treating lens information as something that belongs only to the camera department, the data can remain relevant throughout the creative and technical stages that follow. The result is a clearer record of the image-making process, giving production and post-production teams a shared technical reference while reducing the need to recreate information after the fact, helping teams work with greater consistency across the production.

PRECISION BEGINS AT THE SOURCE

The sophistication of the metadata begins with the accuracy of the physical lens. /i data is designed to provide precise, continuous information when the lens is properly maintained, and its encoders are correctly calibrated to the focus and iris scales.

That relationship between optical precision and digital intelligence is at the heart of the /i ecosystem. The lens does not simply create the image; it can also carry a detailed technical record of how that image was created.

<https://cookeoptics.com/cooke-india/> 

“

“/i Technology is an evolving industry standard that carries lens metadata seamlessly from acquisition through post-production. Maintaining accurate and compatible information throughout this workflow brings greater technical precision and efficiency to the process, helping achieve a better-looking final output in less time.”

**Dr. Sen Selvagumar |
Head of Prototypes**

”

AGITO BROADCAST PVT. LTD.

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ARRI ALEXA 265 – FEATURES AND TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

For cinematographers, camera enthusiasts and film technicians curious to explore this revolutionary camera, here is a quick overview of its key features.

Revolutionary Medium-Format Sensor

State-of-the-art ALEV 3x medium-format sensor.

Larger sensor area provides a wider field of view and comparatively shallower depth of field, depending on the lens and shooting parameters.

- Sensor resolution: 6560 x 3100 pixels.
- Sensor dimensions: 54.12 x 25.58 mm.
- Sensor diagonal: 59.86 mm.

Compact Size and Reduced Weight

The ALEXA 265 is approximately one-third the size and weight of the ALEXA 65.

- ALEXA 65 weight: 10.5 kg.
- ALEXA 265 weight: 3.3 kg.
- ALEXA 65 dimensions: 163 mm (H) x 206 mm (W) x 388 mm (L).
- ALEXA 265 dimensions: 147 mm (H) x 163 mm (W) x 191 mm (L).

This substantial reduction in size and weight offers greater flexibility in camera configurations and shooting environments.

Improved Image Quality

Compared with the ALEXA 65, the ALEXA 265 offers improvements in:

- Dynamic range.

AGITO Broadcast Pvt. Ltd., Mumbai, becomes the second rental house in India to acquire the ARRI ALEXA 265, bringing one of the world's most advanced medium-format digital cinema cameras to Indian cinematographers.

With over 30 years of experience in the professional film-camera rental business, Managing Director Deepak Nanche has consistently believed in bringing the latest cinema technology to India—often before it becomes an industry standard.

The acquisition of the ALEXA 265

reflects AGITO Broadcast's commitment to innovation and to providing cinematographers with tools that expand creative possibilities.

For Deepak Nanche, the philosophy is simple: don't wait for new technology to become the norm—bring it to filmmakers when it can make a creative difference.

With the ALEXA 265, AGITO Broadcast continues its commitment to supporting India's cinematographers with cutting-edge technology backed by three decades of experience.

- Sensitivity.
- Black reproduction.
- Colour accuracy.

ARRI REVEAL Color Science

The ALEXA 265 incorporates ARRI's REVEAL Color Science and LogC4 workflow.

New LUTs will be required, similar to the ALEXA 35 workflow. Existing ALEXA 35 LUTs can also be used with the ALEXA 265.

Feature Set and Accessories

The ALEXA 265 shares most of the feature set of the ALEXA 35, with certain exceptions, including ES modes and the preset selection of ARRI Textures.

It also features a revolutionary and flexible in-camera filter mechanism.

Most ALEXA 35 accessories and support equipment are compatible with the ALEXA 265, with the exception of one modified side bracket.

Monitoring Output

The camera supports UHD and HD monitoring outputs, with SDR and HDR monitoring options.

Recording Formats

The ALEXA 265 records in ARRIRAW format in three sensor modes:

- 6.5K
- 5.1K
- 4.5K LF OG

Codex HDE – High Density Encoding

The camera supports Codex HDE, allowing users to significantly reduce data storage requirements while maintaining the original image quality.

Simplified Workflow

The ALEXA 265 workflow is similar to other current ARRI cameras and does not require external image processing.

Simply record your footage, remove the Codex Compact Drive and connect it to a standard drive reader or dock.

Anamorphic De-Squeeze

The camera supports multiple anamorphic de-squeeze ratios, along with customised frame lines, providing flexibility for anamorphic cinematography.

Frame Rates

Supported frame rates range from 0.75 fps to 60 fps.

Unique In-Camera Filter Cartridge System

One of the distinctive innovations of the ALEXA 265 is its flexible in-camera filter cartridge system, offering new creative possibilities for cinematographers.

COMPATIBLE MEDIUM-FORMAT LENS OPTIONS

The following lens systems are compatible with the ALEXA 265:

- Leitz Thalia – PL Mount.
- Tribe7 Blackwing7 – Prime lenses from 27mm upwards.
- TLS Rehoused Mamiya 645 – Medium-format prime lenses.
- Whitepoint Optics (WPO) – TS70 Prime lenses.
- ARRI Rental – Prime DNA, Prime 65, Prime 65 S and Vintage 765.
- Cooke Optics – Panchro 65.
- Gecko-Cam – Ayana 65 (Germany).
- ZEISS – Panoptes 65 lenses.






NEW ARRIVAL

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Interview with ·

Mukul Kashyap

Country Manager - India, Middle East & Africa
Videndum PLC | Creative Solutions division

How has Teradek's wireless video transmission technology evolved over the years? What have been the major technological milestones?

Teradek has long been at the forefront of wireless video technology. In 2012, the Teradek Bolt Pro launched with proprietary BB2 architecture, delivering uncompressed 1080p video with less than 1ms of latency over unlicensed 5.8 GHz frequencies, replacing cumbersome cables with reliable, zero-delay wireless transmission. Between 2014 and 2018, successive Bolt generations expanded range to 3048 meters, introduced universal receivers, integrated SmallHD monitors, and added 3D LUT support. In 2019, the Bolt 4K generation, powered by BB3 architecture, introduced 4K HDR workflows with 10-bit 4:2:2 video, AES-256 encryption, mobile app management, and unlimited receiver capabilities. With the introduction of Bolt 6 in 2022, Teradek doubled the available operating channels by adding 6 GHz, delivering a significant leap forward in reducing wireless congestion. With Bolt 7, launching next month, Teradek will extend the platform beyond video to support wireless data for the first time. Through an integrated Ethernet and USB bridge, Bolt 7 enables users to wirelessly transmit both video and data, opening the door to new and more connected workflows. Teradek will continue to push the boundaries of wireless connectivity.

How important is the Indian market for Teradek globally? How has the demand for wireless video transmission changed in India over the last 3–5 years?

India has rapidly evolved into one of the most critical growth markets globally for Teradek. Positioned as the world's second-largest telecommunications arena with an exploding media and entertainment landscape, India represents a massive frontier for high-end cinema and broadcast gear. For Teradek, which specializes in zero-delay wireless video

ecosystems (such as the Bolt 6 and now introduction of Bolt 7 and Ace Micro), the Indian market is indispensable.

Indian film sets can be extremely demanding, with large crews, multiple cameras and significant RF activity. How does Teradek deal with signal interference and maintain a reliable and stable signal in such environments?

Teradek is the only wireless video company to bring 6GHz spectrum technology to zero-delay 4K HDR wireless video transmission on set. Powered by the frame-based BB3 chipset, the system delivers visually lossless, sub-1ms video. The link's strong stability is backed by proprietary dual-modulation technology, Dynamic Frequency Selection (DFS), and flexible bandwidth options like switching from 40 MHz to 20 MHz to avoid spectrum congestion. Additionally, a built-in spectrum analyzer allows users to easily evaluate their RF environment and select the best operating frequency. Unlike competitors, Teradek provides complete tools to keep high-end productions connected and with reference HDR quality video.

Is the Indian market moving towards higher-end wireless video transmission systems, or is price still the primary consideration for most camera rental houses?

The Indian market is experiencing a distinct dual-track evolution, where high-end wireless video transmission systems are rapidly penetrating top-tier cinema and OTT productions, while price optimization remains the absolute baseline strategy for the vast majority of local camera rental houses.

How do you see the competitive landscape in India? Brands such as Hollyland and other manufacturers have become increasingly visible. What differentiates Teradek from these competing systems?

The absolute defining barrier between Teradek and few competition

brands is their core transmission technology. Teradek uses uncompressed, zero-latency RF technology, ensuring the image on the monitor reacts exactly as the camera lens does in real time.

How important is local technical support and after-sales service in India? What kind of support does Teradek provide to in-house camera rental technicians and standalone camera rental houses that may not have the resources to maintain or repair equipment in-house?

Teradek together with SmallHD and Wooden Camera offer a combination of remote diagnostics, physical repair pipelines, and premium support programs.

What developments do you see coming next in wireless video transmission? How do you see the technology evolving over the next three to five years?

Bolt 7 takes the next step with an all-new 900MHz RF pipeline that works in tandem with your zero-delay video signal and acts as a wireless Ethernet or USB cable replacement, enabling wireless camera control, color management, telemetry, and more without a Wi-Fi network.

Do you see wireless video transmission eventually becoming an integral, built-in feature of professional cinema cameras rather than an additional accessory or add-on system? If so, how far away do you think we are from that becoming a reality, and what would need to change for this to happen?

Teradek already works with many camera manufacturers to build custom integrations and ensure metadata is accurately passed over the wireless link.

Feedback:

Mukul Kashyap
mukul.kashyap@videndum.com

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Asia's Broadcasting & Infotainment Show (A.B.I.S.) 2026, formerly Broadcast India Show, returns to Mumbai from **22 to 24 October 2026** at the **Jio World Convention Centre**. Organised by NürnbergMesse India, A.B.I.S. brings together the **content, technology and infrastructure** shaping media and entertainment.

When cinematographers are faced with **200+ exhibitors and countless products**, the purpose of this piece is to highlight **what is a must-check out for DOPs who are visiting the show for just a few hours on any one day.**

On the Exhibition Floor



The exhibition floor brings the latest additions to the cinematographer's toolkit are follows.

Panther will showcase their X-type dolly along with amazing "**Specter**". It is Panther's modular rigging system for professional film and media productions. Built around precision-engineered aluminium beams and a versatile range of connectors and accessories, it enables strong, reliable structures without the limitations of conventional welded truss systems. From compact camera mounts to large-scale platforms, cranes and custom production rigs, Specter can be configured, extended and rebuilt



whenever requirements change.

Tinnu International is growing by leaps and bounds and has emerged as one of India's leading cinema equipment distributors. It has recently added two very important brands to its portfolio-**Angenieux & Godox**

- a.) **Angenieux** will showcase the EZ 2 65 and EZ 3 65, the newest additions to the EZ family for large format sensors. The EZ 2 65 covers 27 to 72mm at T3.6, while the EZ 3 65 covers 82 to 300mm from T4.2 to T5.4, with a 60mm image circle, LPL mount and a compact form suited to handheld, gimbal and Steadicam work.





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- b.) **MYT Works** will also feature its patented 3 in 1 slider, skater and dolly systems, including Opti Glide for precision positioning.
- c.) The range extends into camera support, lighting and specialist optics, with **Shape Creator** Camera Cage solutions for the Sony FX5,
- d.) **Godox KNOWLED** professional cinema LEDs, and
- e.) **Laowa** ultra-wide cine and probe lenses.
- f.) **DZOFILM** will present its Arles Zooms in India for the first time, with 25 to 75mm and 65 to 180mm constant T2.6 zooms covering 25 to 180mm continuously.
- g.) **Kinefinity VISTA** adds a 6K full frame camera with 14 stops of dynamic range, dual native ISO, built in SSD and a 610g CNC body.

At the Production Village Stall :

- a.) **True Lens Services Limited** brings classic Nikon AI and AI S optics into dedicated cinema housings.
- b.) **Cmotion** will present compact

PRO:

Canon will showcase the **CINE SERVO CN30x40 IAS J/R1 and J/P1** in RF and PL versions. Covering 40 to 1200mm with a built in 1.5x extender taking the range to 60 to 1800mm.

Cooke Optics will bring the **AP3** and **Panchro 65/i** ranges. AP3 includes 35mm, 50mm and 85mm lenses with interchangeable E, RF, L and M mounts and 1.5x anamorphic capability, combining a compact form with Cooke rendering and smooth defocus. Panchro 65/i spans 30 to 152mm in LPL mount at T2.5 to T2.9, bringing Panchro rendering, skin tones and depth to large digital sensors.

Colo Group :

- **Flanders Scientific Monitors:** DM Series: XMP Series
- **DU LENS** for Cinema
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- **Teradek BOLT 7** : Smallhd cine7 : Smallhd cine24
- **YC ONION PINETA PRO** .
- **Sony FX5 Hype**.

➤ Eirmai- Dry Cabinets

CINEOM will showcase **ARRI Ensō Prime** lenses and **ARRI Omnibar**.

APUTURE : will be showcasing: **STORM CS32**: **XT52** : **NOVA II** - 2X1, 1X1

Sun Broadcast (Both No-A-04).
Teradek CTRL.5 : - 3-Axis Wireless Lens Controller

The CRAFT in Conversation: The cinematography conversation at A.B.I.S. 2026 highlights are :

Canon will conduct **technical seminars with dedicated product presentations on its products and technologies**, giving cinematographers an opportunity to explore the capabilities of its systems in greater detail and understand how they translate into real production environments.

The **ISC Open House**, scheduled for **23 October 2026**, from **14:45 to 15:30 hrs**, will feature **Ravi K. Chandran ; Swapnil Sonawane ; Vijay Kartik Kannan ; R. Rathnavelu ; and Shreya Dev Dube**.

Register now.







GL COLO

October - December 2026



Interview with DOP *Rubais* On Shooting "Alpha"



The opening sequence has a pronounced brown tint, which gives the image an intentionally stylised and somewhat unnatural appearance. What was the creative thought behind using this brown colour palette? Also a little bit about the Oil rig sequence.

The idea was to make the opening scene of the film stylised, but at the same time, grounded in reality. This was referencing to past incident post war so tarmac and barren surroundings naturally rendered to a brown grade.

In the Bombay oil rig sequence I used dynamic lighting by recreating fire simulation from the exhaust of the oil rig. Since the entire space is made up largely of metal structures rather than solid surfaces, we imagined the firelight spilling into the space and creating constantly shifting patterns of light and shadow—brightness followed by darkness, and then brightness again. That was the visual idea.

In the high-profile meeting scene, what was the reasoning behind introducing the warmer yellow light at the table, rather than relying solely on the cooler overhead tube lights?

The scene needed mixed lighting to reflect the underlying theme of truth and lies. We used the cooler bluish overhead light against the warmer table light to create this contrast. At first, the scene appears truthful, but when revisited, we realise that what we saw was actually a lie. Bobby is not what he initially appears to be, and the contrasting colour temperatures subtly reinforce that idea. There is also this classic treatment of a villain having low light on his face, with the light coming from below. The choreography was designed in a way that Bobby never sits in this meeting. So, I wanted to do something where the light would come from below. The obvious choice was to have these guys lit from a eye level, whereas Bobby needed to be lit from below. I think the table was the right choice. My art director understands these kinds of requirements, and he incorporate them into the design.

The first fight sequence unfolds within a striking circular set with a distinctly modern architectural design. What was the visual idea behind this circular space?

I love Brutalist architecture, and having studied at NID, design has always been an important part of my creative journey. I'm particularly drawn to Brutalist architecture of George chakhava, Igor vasilevsky, and Tadao Ando.

In our first meeting with the art director, we discussed these references because the setting was an abandoned factory. We were drawn to the idea of using cylindrical spaces. A cylinder gives you a very different spatial experience from a cuboid or any square room. When you are inside a cylinder, it can feel quite overwhelming and immersive.

During the facility sequence, as she runs and fires while the action unfolds around her, the heavy use of smoke creates a sense of confusion about who is shooting or killing whom. What was the intent behind using so much smoke in the scene?



The logic was that she had planted a grenade, which exploded inside a closed room. So, realistically, either the building would be severely affected by the blast or filled with smoke, making it difficult to see or operate.

Visually, the smoke also supported the idea of her appearing and disappearing—she would hide, vanish and suddenly reappear. It gave the sequence a certain rhythm, almost like a dance. We deliberately did not choreograph every camera movement. We filled the space with smoke, gave the actors a specific movement pattern, and allowed the camera to capture the action organically.

My Trinity operator, Robin, and I were on headsets, guiding the camera movement—moving right, left, circling, and so on. The smoke created a natural sense of mystery: when the characters came closer, they emerged from it; when they moved farther away, they disappeared into it.

There are also practical lights hidden within the set to selectively illuminate certain areas of the background. Which brand and type of tube lights were used?

I used Astra-brand tube lights, and bulbs.

In the wide shots of the large circular facility, how did you conceive the large vertical tube lights that define the walls and contribute to the ambient

lighting—were they part of the set design or added as part of the lighting plan?

In architecture, the sense of stoutness is reduced when there are vertical lines. So, that was the idea—using vertical lines as practical lights that do not emit too much light or affect the characters.

They are just there because, in such a huge facility, you can't light everything with tube light on the walls. I used these practicals as a design element. If you look at those shots, you feel that the space is stretched.

In the ice-water tub scene, an undefined patch of light falls on Alia's back while another light moves across the glass frame, appearing, disappearing and returning. The same effect recurs in the following scenes in the den-like space. What was the visual idea behind this recurring lighting effect?

When I used to stay in my old house during religious processions, they would often use those disco lights on the streets below, and the light would come through my window. When I was lying down, I could see the light moving in and out.

So, when this scene came up, I thought of using the same idea—as if something was happening on the street below in Pushkar, with those lights moving through the window. It also has

a searchlight-like quality.

I have always found that movement of light very interesting, so I used a similar effect in a couple of places.

There is a very distinctive visual style of strong streaks of sunlight in several sequences.

The idea was to recreate how our eyes perceive light when moving between indoors and outdoors. Inside a darker house, the outside naturally feels much brighter, whereas outdoors—especially surrounded by greenery—even strong sunlight feels softer because our eyes automatically adjust.

I drew a lot from my childhood and growing-up years. In this case, the idea came from observing how sunlight enters an interior space. Since the factory is in a hot, sunny environment, we wanted to show strong streaks of sunlight coming through the windows, with the exterior appearing almost blown out.

In the hotel sequence where she enters the party and kills the arms dealer, pink is used prominently. What was the aesthetic reasoning behind choosing pink, a colour that is not commonly used in film lighting?

We referred to the sequence as “The First Kill.” I wanted to symbolically represent her transition through colour, particularly using hot pink.

In colour theory, hot pink is associated with bold energy, excitement and a modern, rebellious character. There was also another thought behind it: historically, pink was associated with masculinity before the cultural shift in the mid-20th century that made it predominantly associated with femininity.

For me, this was an appropriate moment to use pink because Alia's character was undergoing a major transition—from an innocent girl who did not understand what was happening around her to an adult who was becoming more mature and powerful. The colour therefore became a visual representation of that transformation.

Occasionally, you use hard light on the faces during otherwise intimate conversations—for example, in the



discussion between Debyendu and the arms dealer, and when Alia is talking to Debyendu in the graveyard. What was the visual reasoning behind using such hard, directional light for these conversations?

For the graveyard scene, while we were jamming on the visual design, Tadao Ando, the Japanese architect, became a key reference. He designed a famous church where the main architectural element is a narrow slit of light in the shape of a cross. If you look at the wide shot of our broken church, you can see that we recreated this idea through a similar slit-like opening.

The scene itself involves hidden faces, revelations, shadows and secrets. I wanted the lighting to reflect that sense of mystery and secrecy. Throughout the film, we used patterns of light and shadow—light coming through windows, narrow openings or distant slits—to create a feeling that something is being concealed or gradually revealed. The graveyard sequence was another extension of that visual language.

In the scene where the father speaks to the kidnapped Sharvari, there is a subtle flickering effect moving across her face, while a larger tube light with a greenish tint mixed with warmth illuminates her. What was the source of this subtle flicker?

The production design has a strong water element because the location is an underground pump house. I thought that if it were a real pump house, there would naturally be water leakage and water on the floor.

We used hard light hitting the water to create moving reflections on the characters, almost like waves. Even the wall-mounted bracket lights were

designed as if water had seeped into their casings, creating a constantly shifting effect. Some tubes were placed randomly, while much of the movement came from water reflections. We created a simple contraption above the set, bounced light onto it, and had one of my light men continuously move the reflective surface to create the changing patterns of light.

Throughout the film, I avoided conventional face lighting. Instead, I lit the space so that every camera angle naturally had key, fill and backlight where appropriate. The only exception was occasionally using a small piece of thermocol to add a little light to the eyes when an actor came close to camera. This approach kept the lighting moody, spatial and natural while allowing us to shoot freely from any angle.

In the final fight sequence, when Alia and Anil Kapoor are trapped in the rain, the mood suddenly shifts to bright sunlight and rain when Sharvari enters

with the Indian Army. What was the visual reasoning behind this change?

Those were the most demanding 15 days of my life. We had heavy rain, heavy equipment, hundreds of Indian and international crew members, and crowds, all dealing with mud, water, and slippery conditions. The camera was never static—it was constantly moving, whether handheld or on a rig. When Sharvari enters, the narrative needed to change. Alia and Anil Kapoor are trapped, Bobby's people are closing in, and suddenly Sharvari becomes a ray of hope. Instead of two people fighting the enemy, there are now three.

I wanted to reflect that shift through sunlight breaking through the rain. In Kerala, we have a folklore around sunlight appearing during rain—often described as the “fox’s wedding.” I’ve found that many cultures have their own folklore around it, which gives the phenomenon a slightly mythical quality. That felt appropriate for Sharvari’s arrival—a visual suggestion of hope emerging in the middle of darkness.

PS- All these wouldn't have been possible without the hardwork of my team - would like to thank them here - 1st AC - Amin Ansari, 2nd ac - Ashwin Nambiar, Trinity operator - Robin Mathew, Grips - Javed Ahmed ,Gaffer - vishnu Thapa and Sajid , 2nd unit camera - Roby raj , Riyas Arun , Manish Upasekar. Intern asst. - Joshin Jose. Colourist - Damien McDowell, Chiara Coperchini.

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Interview with DOP

Manu Anand

On shooting

"The Vvaan : Force of the Forrest (2026)"



Tell us about this major set where the climactic fight and much of the drama unfold in front of Vaan Devi. What was your brief to the production designer?

So, it was a collaborative effort between Amit Da, the production designer, and me. We created this clearing in the forest, surrounded by a rock face. This space is initially presented as the source of the supernatural forces within the forest, before the Devi's presence is established there. The idea was to create this rocky clearing in the middle of the trees. Since the film is about Shakti, Durga and Van devi, there are constant references to the feminine.

One of our inspirations was the Kamakhya Temple, which is why you see the red bangles and the splashes of red. These elements were inspired by the Kamakhya Temple and the Shakti Peeths.

The set was too large to fit into a closed space, so we built it at Film City Maidan, including the rock formations.

When this location is introduced, there are numerous diyas and fire sources, along with moonlight. What were the major challenges in lighting this set for the different day and night sequences?

Since the clearing was supposed to be surrounded by trees, the idea was to create a soft, overcast quality of light, so that it felt as though the space was naturally shaded by the giant trees around it.

To maintain lighting continuity across all the day scenes, we skimmed the entire space for the day sequences. This allowed us to maintain a consistent

quality and direction of light throughout the sequences.

The night scenes were more challenging because I was not only lighting for 24 fps; we had sequences that went up to 240 fps and even 480 fps. So, the biggest challenge was to create enough light for the high-frame-rate action while still balancing the moonlight, the warm light, and the ambient light within the set.

For the high-speed sequences, we built a large moon box that could generate enough light for the frame rates required during the action sequences in the climax.

There was one sequence where we went up to 1,000 fps. This was the sequence where the character falls into the water and then emerges from it. At that frame rate, the overhead moon box was too far away, so we had to introduce additional light from the ground.

We also had hidden spotlights



placed around the set to accentuate the diyas and the small fire taslas. These were enhanced with little pin spots positioned around the set, giving the practical sources a stronger presence within the frame.

There is a sequence where the characters are chased by a bull. Could you talk a little about how that sequence was shot?

The sequence was shot almost entirely practically. There are a couple of close-ups that were shot on chroma, but everything else was done practically.

The bull that you see running is also mostly a live bull. People might assume it is a CG bull, but it was actually a real bull sourced from rural Maharashtra. Since the bull was running through a live forest, the sequence presented several lighting challenges.

In a forest sequence, it is important, wherever possible, to backlight the leaves to create visibility and depth. At the same time, you have to maintain enough ambient light for the actors and action to remain visible.

We had four or five cherry pickers spread out across the live forest, with multiple units shooting simultaneously. The bike was also being ridden live by the actors on location. On top of all this, we used mist to create the desired mood and atmosphere.

Where exactly was the forest located where you shot the major portions of the film?

Shooting extensively in protected forest areas in India, particularly at night and with large lighting and action units,

comes with considerable access and permission constraints. So we found a large privately owned forested patch in Madh Island, Mumbai, spread across several acres. We shot a substantial portion of the forest sequences there and then later did some forest enhancement in VFX.

Comment on the lighting of the song featuring Tamannaah Bhatia and Sidharth Malhotra in the village setup.

It would have been very easy for me to simply use a spotlight as their key light. But because it was a village sequence, we wanted the lighting to feel authentic to the environment and reflect the character of the village.

I am a huge fan of PAR Can lights, so we used them extensively to light the actors, particularly in the song. Of course, whenever there was a close-up or a shot that required a little more beauty, we brought in a softer source.

In the first song, there are a few sequences involving sunset and other stylised environments. Were these created through

virtual production, green screen/chroma, or a combination of techniques?

The mirror lake and the reflection were shot entirely on chroma and subsequently enhanced in VFX. We did not use virtual production for this sequence, as I felt it would not work as effectively for this particular requirement. The entire setup was a 360-degree chroma environment, with the background enhanced later in VFX.

There are two or three shots where a radial-blur-like effect is noticeable. What was the creative intention behind introducing this effect?

One of them had a certain amount of chromatic aberration, along with radial blur and distortion, while the second one was without chromatic aberration.

I used the second type of radial blur to represent the creature's point of view, whether it was the tiger or the bull. Whenever we were seeing the world from their perspective, we used this treatment to suggest that this was their unique vision.

The first type of radial blur was used whenever the Devi's eyes appeared in the environment. The idea was to enhance the presence of the Devi's eyes, as though they had the ability to warp space, light and colour around them.

So, whenever the Devi appeared, we introduced radial blur with a certain





amount of distortion and chromatic aberration, creating the feeling that the Devi's presence could literally warp the space around her.

In the shots of Vaan Devi, the eyes have been treated with a distinctive red colour, with the intensity appearing to build or glow towards the edges. How did you arrive at this visual idea?

The primary idea was to give the eyes some sense of life. If they did not glow or pulse with any energy, they would feel static and lifeless. My initial thought was to motion-capture the performance of an actor and then have the eyes respond to that performance.

However, due to certain circumstances, we were unable to motion-capture an actor performing the Devi.

So, the second approach was to give the eyes a sense of dynamism, energy and life, rather than allowing them to feel static. At the very least, we wanted the viewer to feel that there was a pulsating energy within the eyes. That is what the glow was designed to achieve—it pulses and, at times, synchronises with the dialogue spoken by the Devi.

In the Chhath Puja sequence, how did you approach the day and night-time lighting to maintain exposure, depth and separation while preserving the authenticity of the environment?

For the day scenes, I primarily relied on available light, using fill, cutting and

bouncing wherever possible. Since the location was near the water and there was no practical way to bring in large butterfly frames or skimmers supported by cranes, we planned the shoot around the sun path.

We carefully chose the shooting axis and planned the shots so that we could maintain lighting continuity throughout the day, starting in the morning and continuing through to the evening.

There was one sequence around sunset, after he rescues her, where I wanted to enhance the quality of the golden light even after the sun had set. For this, I used a bank of Dinos mounted on a rostrum, positioned to backlight the actors as well as the background performers, allowing us to extend the feeling of the sunset.

For the night sequence, we had one soft moon source suspended overhead. However, for most of the wide shots, we primarily relied on the available practical light, which was predominantly warm.

We were shooting at fairly open apertures, so the light from the diyas was often sufficient. For some of the close-ups, we enhanced the exposure slightly with a simple, soft frontal source. But for the wider shots, we relied largely on the soft moon source and the warm light bouncing in from the sides.

The lighting of the space was also designed into the production design. We incorporated 1K halogen lamps into the environment so that the space appeared to be naturally lit by its practical sources. The intention was to make the lighting feel organic and motivated by the environment, rather than appearing artificially lit.

The underwater shots of him searching for her inside the pond have a deliberately murky, dirty and naturalistic quality. How did you achieve this texture and realism?

We shot that sequence in a swimming pool in Bombay itself. As we did not want the water to look crystal clear, we wanted it to have the kind of suspended particulate matter, silt and organic debris typically found in natural water bodies.

Shooting in a swimming pool gave us a controlled environment, but we later enhanced the floating particulate matter in VFX. This helped make the sequence more believable, as though it had actually been shot in a lake and the

rescue was taking place in a natural water body.

It was a full-fledged underwater setup, with the ALEXA 35 inside an underwater housing. The director and I were outside monitoring the frames, while Priya Seth, our underwater DoP operated the camera underwater. We primarily shot at 48 fps.

Although I shot the film on Signature Primes, for the underwater sequence we used ARRI Ensō Primes. The camera movement was fluid. Siddharth is also a very accomplished underwater performer and was extremely comfortable in the water. His ability to perform underwater was a major reason why the sequence came together so well.

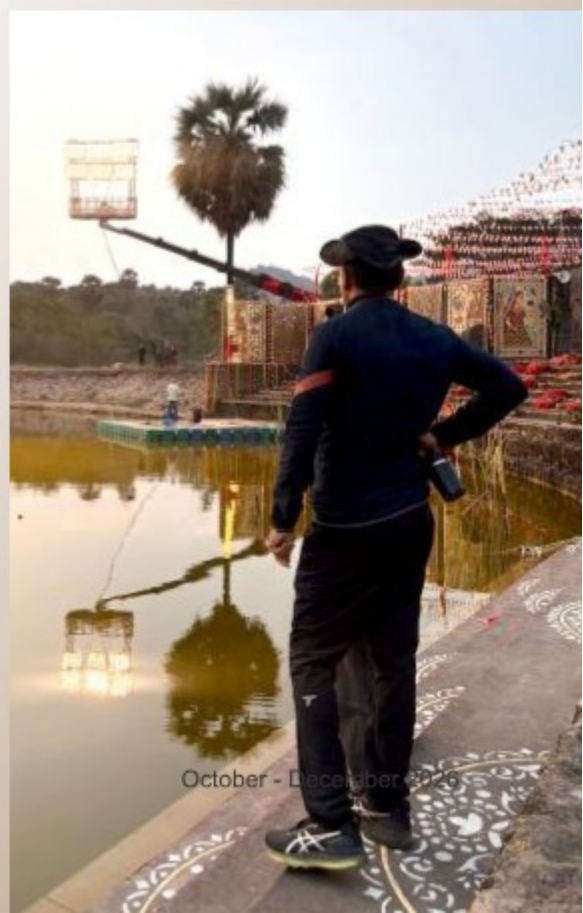
Which camera and lens package did you use for the film?

Primarily, I shot on the ARRI ALEXA Mini LF with Signature Primes. Wherever we needed high-speed photography, I used the ALEXA 35 and ALEXA 35 Xtreme.

For the Chhathi Maiya song, I also brought in the Phantom camera for the water-splash shots. I wanted to enhance those moments, and we shot approximately 2,000 fps on the Phantom for that sequence.

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October - December 2026



Interview with DOP *Chirantan Das* On shooting "Inspector Avinash - Season-2"



When Season 2 begins, there are some interesting drone shots, particularly of the curving road. How did you find such a location, where the road looks so visually interesting when seen from above?

Actually, we had shot a sequence in Rishikesh for Season 1. We travelled by road to Rishikesh, and while travelling, we also shot a lot of stock footage. We had a drone with us, so we captured several different roads and landscapes around Rishikesh.

We later used some of those road shots in Season 2 for this sequence, where the characters are travelling.

In the night scene where Inspector Avinash's wife is sitting outside and a goon approaches and misbehaves with her, how did you approach the lighting for this night sequence? What was the primary source of light, and how did you maintain a realistic yet dramatic look?

It was quite a disturbing scene, and it was supposed to be set relatively late at night—not extremely late, because he has just come out of the house at around 10 p.m. The park lights were still on, so we retained the ambient light coming from the existing lamps in the park. For the distance and background, I also introduced some moonlighting to create a subtle moonlit ambience. However, on the faces, we tried to simulate the quality and direction of the existing park lights. The primary source motivation was the lamps in the park, with some light also coming through the trees. I wanted to create a slightly dappled, broken-light effect on the faces, as if the light was filtering naturally through the trees. We therefore used additional lights to recreate that effect and give the scene a more textured and atmospheric quality.

In the Kothewali song and later when Inspector Avinash visits the same prostitute, there is a strong use of red—from the lamps and bedsheet to her blouse. What was the reason for using red so prominently in this sequence?

For me, red was a kind of danger sign. That place is not very safe, and Avinash is moving away from his personal life and into a kind of danger zone, both literally and emotionally. He is going to meet people from the underworld who also frequent the place, like Daikait and his group, so the red lamps in the Dancing song serve that purpose. At the same time, the location has a certain beauty and sensuality. So, for me, red served both purposes—it brought sensuality on her face and the space, while also suggesting danger & something slightly ominous. I liked the fact that a single colour could work on both levels.

When Avinash, we see red again in the bedsheet, blouse, saree and pillow covers. It is the same kotha, just another room. The red in her costume was primarily intended to reinforcing that sensual quality.

There are many low-angle shots throughout the series. How do you decide when a scene calls for a low-angle perspective? What kind of feeling, power dynamic, or emotion are you trying to convey through this choice?

We used low angles whenever we wanted the scene to feel slightly larger than life, more dramatic, or to underline a particular quality of the character. For example, when Avinash is heading into an action or has made a determined



decision, we would take the camera slightly lower to give him a more towering presence. It suggests that he is in command and in control of the situation.

We also combined the low angle with some camera movement to make those moments feel more dynamic and visually powerful.

In the Beehad of Chambal, night tenting of the decoit and his group, the major sources of light at night are the Petromax gas lamps and mashaals, rather than conventional moonlight. Please comment.

The initial thought was to use moonlight, and you can see it in the background on the distant tents. But there were several characters in the foreground, and I felt that a purely moonlit look would make the faces slightly flat. The warm tungsten light from the mashaals, bonfires and Petromax lamps gave a much better rendition on the faces.

So, we created a mix—cool moonlight in the background and warm, fire-motivated light on the actors. Most of the mashaals and bonfires seen in the frame were real. For close-ups, we also used gas mashaals just off camera, which allowed us to control the intensity. But overall, the scene was primarily lit by the real fire.

There is also a very interesting night sequence at the poolside party with the Chief Minister, ministers and others. How did you approach lighting such a large area?

It was a huge area, and we used the

poolside lamps visible in the frame as our primary source. I also liked the striking blue of the swimming pool, which created a strong contrast with the warm tungsten light on the faces. So the visual idea was essentially the combination of the blue pool, the warm faces and the practical poolside lamps within the large space.

There is a striking sequence in the white desert where three jeeps arrive with their headlights on, as the Maharani goes to meet the smuggler. How did you approach the visual design of this sequence.

Yes, the location is a huge expanse of white marble dust near Sambhar in Rajasthan. During the day, it becomes almost completely blown out because of its intense whiteness, so we decided to shoot the entire sequence during the magic hour. This allowed us to retain detail in the white landscape.

We also wanted to use the jeep headlights, which would register much better during the magic hour than in daylight. The shooting window was therefore very short, which made it quite challenging. We also used the existing marble dust in the area and large fans to create the dust storm, although we enhanced it in a few places during post-production. For the close-ups,

we used additional lights on the faces, with a slight backlight to separate the actors and help the dust register more prominently.

In the sequence where Avinash and his team search for the mad doctor, the location has a distinctive visual treatment with translucent hanging sheets and predominantly green and red lighting. What was the visual idea behind this stylised production design and colour palette?

For me, the sequence had to feel eerie and ominous, reflecting the character's childhood trauma, jealousy and desire for revenge. We used green and red, along with translucent hanging sheets, to create that unsettling atmosphere.

We also kept normal white lights out of focus in the background. This gave the green and red a stronger visual impact and created a contrast between the eerie, dangerous foreground and the relatively normal surroundings.





Towards the end, the drawing room has a clean, naturalistic look with practical lamps, but when the injured Ghulam Sheikh is dragged through the corridor, the lighting shifts to strong green. What was the aesthetic reason for introducing the green at this moment?

The corridor had green light from the beginning, but the entire hall was lit normal light with practical lamp shades on the wall. We had used a single green lamp in the corridor, and when the character is about to kill him and drag his body through that space, I wanted to add a little extra edge. Normally, I might have used red for such a moment, but I felt that would be too obvious. I liked the green tone in that location—it gave the space a slightly scary, eerie and mysterious quality. So, I decided to carry that green into the sequence.

There is a sequence in which the kinner character is killed, where the blood remains red while the rest of the frame appears almost black and white. Comment

It was shot normally, but with a very high-contrast look. In post-production, we decided to retain the blood in red and convert the rest of the sequence to black and white, making the blood more prominent and slightly more gory. The character has been betrayed and is taking revenge, so the red blood added a sense of danger and brutality. Converting the sequence to black and white was a bold creative decision, but I think it worked well for the scene.

when they are planning to kidnap this dacoit, you see a train passing. Was it just a coincidence, or did you wait and time the shot for this?

It was completely planned. We knew the train's timing and coordinated the scene to have it pass at the right

moment. Since the track was quite far away, we lit it from both sides of the river so the train would register properly. We had two or three cameras ready and captured the sequence as the train passed.

When the husband discovers his wife has cheated on him and attempts to sexually assault her, the scene is shot through a window at the end, with prominent glass reflections. What was the visual thought behind shooting the end part through the glass?

The husband is extremely angry and is trying to force himself on her, and we deliberately did not want to be inside the room during the scene. Instead, we stayed outside and observed the confrontation through the window. When he brings her face close to the glass and bangs it against the window, the reflections became part of the visual language. We lit the characters from inside the room, and we see them through the glass while also maintaining a certain visual distance from what was happening inside. That was the primary idea behind shooting the scene this way.

What camera and lenses did you use for the film?

We used the RED camera with Sigma lenses. I had access to a set of 10 Sigma lenses, whereas normally we would get six or seven. We tested them for flare and other characteristics, and I liked the results. I also knew we would be doing a lot of handheld work, even though we had a Steadicam, so the lightweight Sigma lenses were particularly useful for that.

And what was the primary choice of using the red camera because many a time people prefer Sony or Alexa but you opted for red.

The RED was an aesthetic as well as a technical choice for this series. I had used RED before, but here we chose it primarily because we knew we would be shooting a lot of high-speed footage and wanted to avoid using a Phantom.

RED allowed us to shoot high speed while retaining 4K resolution. I have liked the look of RED for a gritty film like ours. It nicely renders the gritty look. Since it's a biopic the look has to be absolutely real. It cannot look fictional or fascinatingly different, as a normal fiction film.

So, I wanted the look to feel as real, gritty, hot and earthy as possible. Since the story is set in the early to mid-'90s, I also wanted to capture the heat, intensity and rawness of the UP region and bring that atmosphere alive on screen. So that was the colour palette of the whole series, in a way, and the RED camera would reproduce that better than others.

Feedback:

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