

Mahima Shani Dev Ki

Graces Television Screen for First Time

On NDTV

One more 'first' from the Sagar Parivar. For the first time a full-fledged **daily soap** on **Shani Dev**, will be on air to enlighten and entertain viewers with a special touch of awe without which Shani, the most powerful of the Nine Planets, is incomplete.

The television serial **Mahima Shani Dev Ki** begins its run on NDTV Imagine from **July 26 at 8 pm** with a **one hour bumper introductory episode** followed by **½ hour daily** every **Friday, Saturday and Sunday** from **2nd August 8 pm to 8:30 pm**

This new Sagar production marks the debut of **Shiv Sagar Chopra**, son of Prem Sagar, the group's marketing director and celebrated cinematographer director. **Shiv is creative producer of the soap** while his dad Prem Sagar is the Director.

From M.B.A. to Film Making

Shiv Sagar Chopra has been managing the Sagar hotels in Manali and Haridwar since his graduation with a Gold Medal from the world famous school of Hotel Management Les Roches in Switzerland. After his post graduation in Management from the Indian School of Business (ISB), Hyderabad, where he won a prize of Rs.1 lakh for his presentation of a theme restaurant concept in ISB's business plan competition, Shiv has been leading the Sagar Group's expansion into the area of Spiritual Amusement Parks based on the mythological software repertoire the Sagar Group owns.

Shiv Sagar Chopra has been tirelessly working on the designing and execution of a **Theme Park, Sagar World**, including two hotels of 110 rooms, in the outskirts of Mumbai at Karjat Phata on the Mumbai-Pune highway.

Shiv Sagar Chopra is also spear-heading the Sagar Group's on-line presence with a vertical portal that will serve the ever increasing community of spiritual knowledge seekers with information and wisdom gleaned from scriptures and sacred texts.

Interview with SHIV SAGAR

In a candid chat Shiv Sagar Chopra reveals why he chose to produce a soap on Shani Dev in the midst of other responsibilities he shoulders in the Parivar.

Q.: What made you feel that Shani could be the subject of an entertaining soap?

A.: I have been taking an interest in astrology ever since I returned to Mumbai after my graduation. When I turned eighteen I was told that my seven and a half years tryst with Shani had begun. I didn't think much of it at that time but gradually I began to feel the impact as strongly as any one who experiences the malefic influence of Shani feels. I didn't take long to realise that Shani neither discriminates nor spares any one. Be it the Gods, Rishis or mortals he makes no differentiation.

The entire experience chastened me and, at the end of it all, I could really count on my fingers the intangible but valuable benefits I was bestowed with.

I developed a regard for and a deep interest in the subject of astrology and, as you know, you can't study Indian astrology without giving due importance to Shani. I thought it wouldn't be a bad idea at all to impart the understanding I gained of the true significance of Shani to those who want to know about him through an entertaining television serial.

Q.: Don't all nine planets play their parts in influencing mortal lives?

A.: Of course, they do. But Shani is the only planet with whom every one has a personal connection. You talk of Mangal or Buddh or Brihaspati – you won't get a spontaneous, enthusiastic response. But the minute you mention Shani there is instant response. It is not only Hindus who have reacted to the mention of Shani; I have listened to accounts of Shani's impact on their lives from Muslims and Christians, too.

Q.: That's fine. But how have you made it appealing and entertaining?

A: By story-telling. The story of Vikramaditya takes centre stage in the serial because it is well known as a popular legend. The king was told by his astrologer that Shani had entered his twelfth house and the 7 ½ years of Shani had begun for him. He was told about all the ways of propitiating and pleasing Shani. The king listened and told the astrologer: What good can one expect from Shani who troubled his parent and guru as well?

The Shani phase begins and we narrate the story of the impact and influence of Shani in the unvanquishable King's life.

Q.: Does the serial have a message?

A.: The viewer will draw his own conclusions and inferences, matching the on-screen experiences with his own experiences if he ever had Shani's impact in his life. But the objective is to subtly educate the viewer about the misunderstandings of Shani and answer the questions in his mind about Shani, the most dreaded and respected of the nine planets. Practically every Indian is aware that Shani brings upon every one a period of bad luck. Only a few know that Shani has been given the portfolio of Justice just as Sun has been given the portfolio of Fame and Jupiter of Health and Venus of Love and Luxury.

Most people have certain egos, complexes, and superiority feeling in them, which Shani does not like and so he crushes that entirely and makes the person much more humble and malleable. Of course most people don't like that and resist it and so they think that Shani is a horrible and evil planet with a negative influence but Shani only brings their own doings in front of them. Therefore Shani is also a very spiritual planet because it makes people more honest and sincere and removes their vices whatever they might be.

Shani worshippers are able to develop an immense feeling of love and devotion towards him. They are able to overcome great obstacles in their lives by praying to Shani. They are able to develop mystical powers and "Siddhis" which Shani is able to bestow and hence acquire a heightened sense of intuition. Shani is a shadow planet or "Chaya Graha" - he is that part of you that is there but is normally not seen. He is the step-brother of Yam Raj, the God of Death. Sometimes if Shani is displeased then he can even give you a near-death experience because of the extreme suffering that he might inflict on you but he will keep you alive. If you can make friends with Shani and get him to be pleased then nothing can hold you back because in a way you have made friends with the darkness and shadows, you have made friends with any obstacle that could have come in your way, and then there is only light and happiness. That means you are ready to face up to the darkest side of your life and are not afraid of anything.