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It's been almost six months since Rambo Circus has stayed put in Airoli, Navi Mumbai. This has been the longest the troupe, or "vagabonds" as circus owner Sujit Dilip fondly calls them, has stuck to being in one place. With no go-ahead to resume shows just yet, the decades-old circus – which was formed by combining three other circuses in 1991 – is looking at daily costs of ₹25,000 to sustain their crew of 50 artistes and supporting personnel, 17 dogs and one pony. With the world of art going the virtual way to sustain themselves, it was only a matter of time before Rambo Circus did that as well. Come Sept. 25, 26 and 27, a digital show called 'Life Is A Circus' will be livestreamed on BookMyShow Online and is supported by BookASmile, the charity initiative of the platform, along with Swaradhara, an NGO dedicated towards the wellbeing of the artist community. All funds raised will go towards the circus' artistes and their families. Though not the first fundraising initiative held since the pandemic, this one is different. "Here we are still performing to collect money. There's pride in earning through a show," says Dilip.

The hour-long show, held in association with Laqshya Live Experiences and Production Crew Entertainment, presents a narrativised performance of Rambo Circus' history and the backstory of some of their artistes and performances, and took three months to plan and



After 29 years of performing in the arena, Rambo Circus is going online for the first time this month to raise funds for its troupe of artistes and animals



Sujit Dilip

Juggling act

script. Shooting for the pre-recorded show, where the circus tent doubled as a studio, was done a month ago. People will get to see their popular acts as well, featuring jugglers, clowns and trapeze artistes. It took two days of shooting (not including one day for technical rehearsals) and six cameras to bring the show to life again. Explaining the behind-the-scenes action, Saurabh Khurana, senior vice president, Laqshya Live Experiences, says some of the acts had to be stylised to make them TV-friendly. "We had to figure out entry and exit points and the correct positioning so that the cameras could capture everything. Each act was done more than once so that the cam-

eras could capture different perspectives," he adds.

"The grand finale has all of these coming together for a combined act, which is dedicated to all our Covid warriors," says Dilip, whose phone has been ringing non-stop for a while now. "People are confused about how the show will be. We were initially planning this on a smaller scale but now, we have a Broadway-style online show that's similar to our in-person performances. The only thing missing is popcorn and candyfloss," says Dilip, whose pre-pandemic plans in-



The online circus show will feature jugglers, clowns, trapeze artistes and other performers

cluded upgrading the circus with special effects and technology from Germany and Japan, while also revamping the lighting and seating in the tent,

and housing conditions of the artistes. "We haven't given up on this yet," he says. "As soon as the situation regains normalcy, we will pick up this plan again."

The show will be livestreamed on Sept. 25, 26 and 27. Tickets (₹199 onwards) available on BookMyShow.com