

**About the Artistes:**

Samir Madhusudan Kher is a traveller and a storyteller, with a passion for India and its people. His life's work is an extension of this passion. Over the last two decades, Samir has worked closely with local community-owned enterprises in the Uttarakhand-Himalayas, Avadh and Bundelkhand, to evolve sustainable and non-exploitative business models in the travel space. He is passionate about designing new approaches to immersive learning and experiential travel. In 2017, he co-founded Deep Dive India, an education-travel start-up which helps businesses create exploratory narratives around History and Geology. Samir now stays with his wife and daughter in Lucknow.

Askari Naqvi is a Lucknow-based lawyer turned performing artiste and entrepreneur. He is a trained vocalist under the tutelage of Pandit Amit Mukerjee. Apart from his repertoire of light classical compositions, Askari is perhaps the only artiste of his kind to introduce art forms of Muharram, specifically *Soz-Khwani* from its strictly religious settings to a secular and wider audience. He is also an accomplished *Dastango* and has performed at various national and international festivals and spaces. Askari also founded Sanatkada Heritage, a travel initiative where he curates immersive travel experiences in Awadh, Bundelkhand and Uttarakhand. He co-runs Sanatkada Weaves & Crafts, and the Mahindra Sanatkada Lucknow Festival in Lucknow with Madhavi Kuckreja. When not training, travelling or performing, he can be found at the Lakhnavi home-cooked food restaurant he started in Lucknow, called *Naimat Khana*.