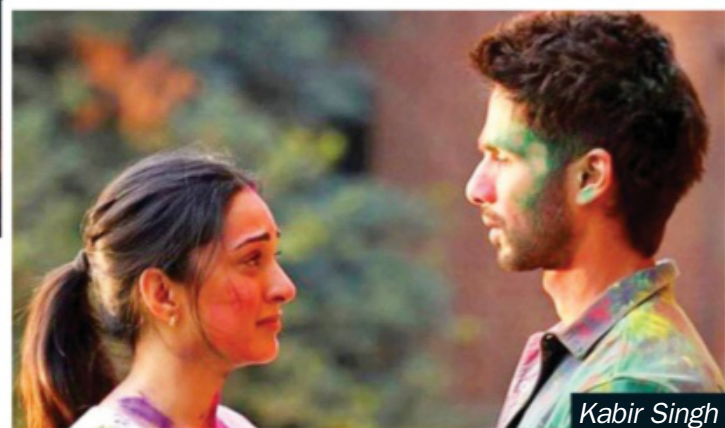




SLAPGATE

Eons ago, Anupam Kher enacted one of the most famous scenes of his career in the movie *Karma* (1986). He's slapped by Dilip Kumar's character, who plays top cop to Kher's infamous Dr Dang. Upon receiving the slap, he says, "Rana Vishwa Pratap Singh. Dr. Dang ko pehli baar kisi ne thappad maara hai... Ab is goonj ki goonj tumhe sunai degi, jab tak zinda rahoge tab tak sunai degi. Rana mujhe tumhaara thappad bhoolega nahi." That the dialogue still finds takers makes you beg the question. Why is Bollywood obsessed with the *thappad*?

It's okay to punch someone senseless, break their limbs, even knife them but hackles are raised where a *thappad* is concerned. The Gandhian concept of turning the other cheek lies forgotten as men, at the receiving end, boil with anger swearing eternal revenge on a slight

they directly correlate with their masculinity. It's mostly around guys clamouring for some alpha male supremacy that such scenes abound. Akshaye Khanna slapping Aamir Khan marked the end of their friendship in *Dil Chahta Hai* (2003). That's when shit got real. The boys become men all of a sudden. Men. Because boys happily play with their schoolmates the next day even after a nasty schoolyard fight. Men probably sulk for a decade before thawing out.

Curiously, men don't identify with a sense of outrage, a sense of injustice, of wrong... when women are slapped on screen. *Kabir Singh* showed the central character slapping his girlfriend. Did men care? Most didn't even register a surprise. Because that's something you do when you believe you possess someone and over whom you want to show your supremacy.

Raj Kapoor did it way back in the '50s in *Awara* with aplomb. The abundant success of *Kabir Singh* is a clear indication that nothing has changed.

That's why films like the Taapsee Pannu starrer *Thappad*, directed by Anubhav Sinha are important. We had films like *Daman* and *Khoon Bhari Maang* earlier where women, well, slapped back after being victims for a long period. But *Thappad* shows the heroine taking judicial recourse against a single slap. The most important lesson that the film conveys is that it shouldn't ever happen. That one should not fail to raise a hue and cry over a one-time incident. Never forgive, never forget is the film's message. It's time we had more positive narratives than just slapgates. More power to women.

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ALL NEW

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**SALMAN
STALLS
SHER KHAN**

Meet Kiara's
dream man

Sara Ali Khan
hikes her fee

VINTAGE MEMORIES
Waheeda Rehman

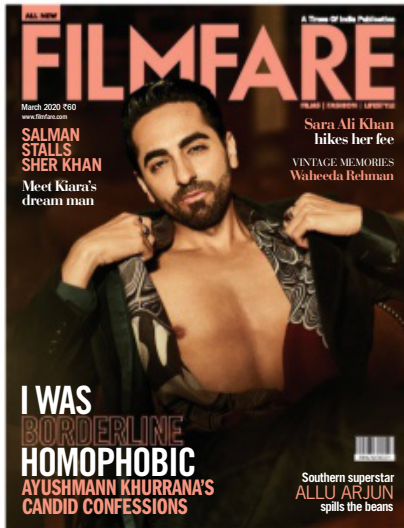
**I WAS
BORDERLINE
HOMOPHOBIC**
**AYUSHMANN KHURRANA'S
CANDID CONFESSIONS**



Southern superstar
ALLU ARJUN
spills the beans

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Volume 69 # March 2020 / ISSN NUMBER 0971-7277



PHOTOGRAPHS: ARJUN MARK
STYLIST: ISHA BHANSALI
HAIR: TEAM HAKIM AALIM
MAKE-UP: HINAL DATTANI
LOCATION: DRINKERY 51, BKC

Corduroy suit: Karrik D
Silk scarf: Hermes
Shoes: Christian Louboutin

Editor's Choice

04 Ayushmann Khurrana is the poster boy of content-driven films

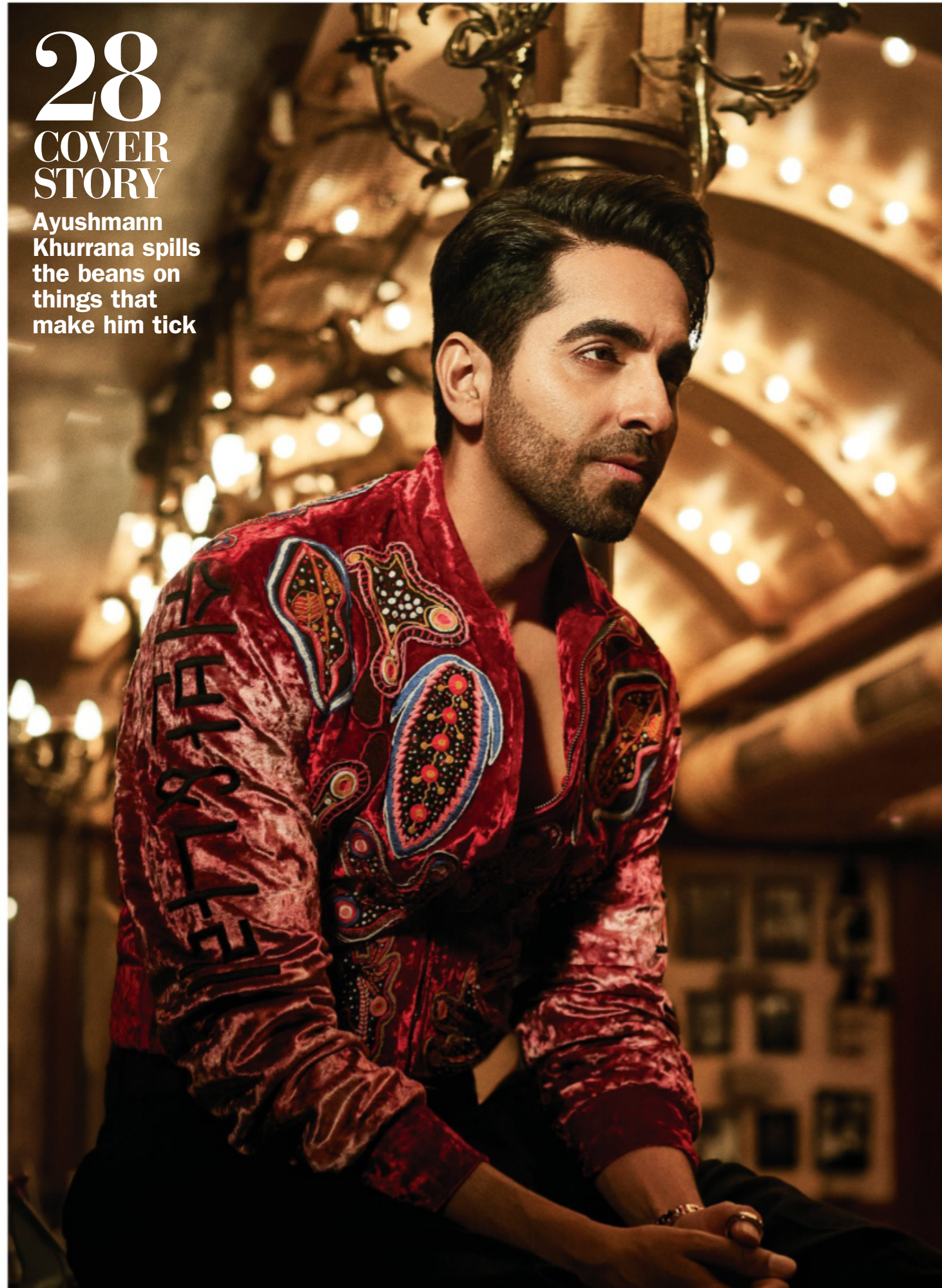
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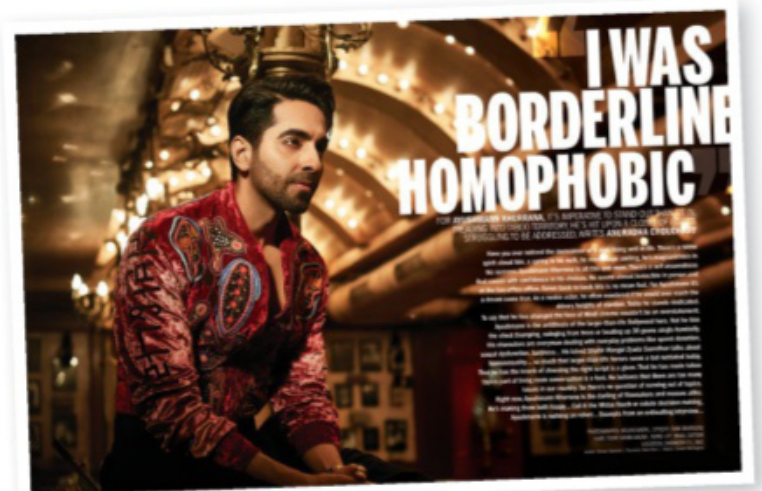
His own man

Ayushmann Khurrana is that savvy batsman, who quietly scores a century, even with singles. In the end, it's not the showmanship that counts but sheer application of the basics. Ayushmann has concentrated on honing his craft and choosing content over banners. He has surely and steadily emerged as the most unconventional superstar of them all.

He's humble, down-to-earth and doesn't believe in flooding social media with his antics, knowing that his work alone will win him a following. The quality that separates him from the crowd is that he doesn't refrain from taking risks. He proved that with his first film *Vicky Donor* itself, where he played a man, who sells his sperms to earn money. It was a never-seen-before scenario, which talked about how couples are pressured by society to have children. It could have easily turned into a cheap sex comedy but didn't.

Perhaps that's why Ayushmann makes sure that whatever he signs never crosses the limits of decency. Take his *Dream Girl* for instance. He played a guy, who could mimic a girl's voice and hence lands a job on a chat line. Here too, the jokes could have easily hit below the belt but the film pointed out how loneliness drives men and women to seek solace in the voice of a stranger. His *Bala* talked about the need to have a perfect image. Male pattern baldness is a fact but people go to ludicrous lengths to fight it. Likewise, miracle skin whitening creams sell like hot cakes because people equate fairness with beauty. It was a rare film, which didn't have a predictable ending. The hero doesn't get the girl. Ayushmann seemed to be fine with that and so was the audience.

In *Shubh Mangal Saavdhan*, he played a man dealing suffering from erectile dysfunction. Which star would do that? But he went ahead and did it. Now, in *Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan*, he's playing a homosexual, who's open about his feelings for another man. He wants society to accept them as they are. While talking candidly to *Filmfare*, he confessed he was a bit homophobic at one time. Again, no mainstream star would dare make such a confession. If there's a champion against toxic masculinity currently, it's Ayushmann Khurrana. Turn the pages to know more about our latest cover boy...



Jitesh Pillai

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F.R.I.E.N.D.S.

Latest besties, **Kartik Aaryan** and **Janhvi Kapoor**, greet each other warmly at an event while daddy **Boney Kapoor** looks on affectionately. *Salaamat rahe dostana...* is our wish for the two young co-stars in *Dostana 2*.

Salman Khan stalls
Sher Khan *pg 08*

Kiara-Tara share
cold vibes *pg 12*

PHOTOGRAPHS: YOGEN SHAH

Rumours & More



SALMAN PUTS *SHER KHAN* ON HOLD

Salman Khan is in the throes of filming *Radhe: Your Most Wanted Bhai*. Said to have a shorter runtime than his usual sagas, the crisp thriller has *Bhai* play a cop. The **Prabhu Deva** directorial will release on Eid 2020. After that Salman was supposed to do *Sher Khan*, a jungle adventure, to be directed by brother **Sohail Khan**. However, Salman felt the script could be enhanced further. That's why he announced *Kabhi Eid Kabhi Diwali* instead. Written by **Sajid Nadiadwala** and directed by **Farhad Samji**, it will hit the screens on Eid 2021. Along with Salman, it also stars his protégés **Sooraj Pancholi**, **Aayush Sharma** and **Zaheer Iqbal**.

MEANWHILE...

Reportedly, **Salman Khan's** production house is developing a three-part franchise inspired by **Harrison Ford's** *Indiana Jones* series. The popular action hero will only be used as a reference point. In *Indiana Jones*, Ford plays the role of a professor of archaeology and an adventure seeker. Salman's character and vocation will be altered in the film.



Harrison Ford

KARTIK TURNS DOWN EKTA'S OFFER

Kartik Aaryan is the flavour of Bollywood given the hits he's been giving and the popularity he enjoys. No wonder he was approached by Boss Lady **Ekta Kapoor** for a project. The young star refused it politely citing his over-committed diary. Apparently, it didn't go down well with Ekta, who was keen to work with the hit-machine. We hope, the two do come together for something interesting in the future.

RECENTLY, VETERAN SHABANA AZMI WAS INJURED IN AN ACCIDENT ON THE MUMBAI-PUNE EXPRESSWAY. THANKFULLY, FOR HER FAMILY, FRIENDS AND FANS, SHE'S RECOVERED AND IS BACK HOME



SONAM'S HEALTHY JAUNT

Post her marriage to London-based entrepreneur **Anand Ahuja**, the world is her oyster. Flying across continents, glam icon **Sonam Kapoor Ahuja**, continues to balance her professional and personal life. Recently, she visited the bay for a photoshoot and some events. After that, the beautiful actor is scheduled to fly off to her favourite health retreat in Austria for some quiet rejuvenation time. Lucky gal she surely is.



VARUN'S MR LELE STALLED?

Few weeks back, the quirky poster of **Varun Dhawan's** *Mr Lele*, created a buzz on social media. The comedy was to be directed by **Shashank Khaitan** for Dharma Productions and slated to release on January 1, 2021. However, sources now reveal that Varun is having second thoughts about the film. So for now, it has been put on the backburner. This is the second time that a Varun-Shashank project has been stalled. Earlier too, they had announced *Rannbhoomi*, which was shelved after the debacle of *Kalank*. While reasons for *Mr Lele* being stuck are unknown, sources say that Varun wishes to relook at his films after *Street Dancer 3D* received an average response at the box-office. Varun and Shashank have given us hits like *Badrinath Ki Dulhania* and *Humpty Sharma Ki Dulhania*. We're sure the talented two will do something exciting together soon.



POPCORN TIME: Their braveheart film *Chhapaak* may have invited controversy for many reasons. But **Meghna Gulzar** and **Deepika Padukone** remained unfazed by it all. Here, both seem to savour some fun and affection.



MEANWHILE...

Varun Dhawan, who has tasted more success than failure, apparently hasn't taken too well to the lukewarm response to his last release, *Street Dancer 3D*. Sources reveal that he now wants to leave nothing to chance with regards to his upcoming film, *Coolie No 1*. Though the film is directed by his father **David Dhawan**, Varun will supervise the editing of the film as he believes that department wasn't tackled well in *Street Dancer 3D*.

AKSHAY NOT TO DO HERA PHERI 3

Recently, there were reports suggesting that **Akshay Kumar**, **Suniel Shetty** and **Paresh Rawal** would be coming together for the third installment of *Hera Pheri*. The comedy, as we know, has a cult following. However, we now hear that Akshay isn't going to be part of it. At least not anytime soon. Earlier, the film was to be directed by **Neeraj Vora**, who passed away after a prolonged illness. Neeraj had written *Hera Pheri* and directed *Phir Hera Pheri*.



THE TALENTED ABHIMANYU DASSANI IS GOING PLACES. THE ACTOR, WHO MADE HIS DEBUT LAST YEAR WITH THE CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED MARD KO DARD NAHI HOTA, IS BUSY SHOOTING FOR SHABBIR KHAN'S NIKAMMA. HE'S ALSO SIGNED TWO OTHER PROJECTS.





KABHI CUTE KABHIE COY : They may have played the kill-for-thrill characters in *Malang*. But off-screen, **Disha Patani** and **Aditya Roy Kapur** are all things chill...as these cool snapshots reveal.

SID TURNS DOWN *EK VILLAIN 2*



Mohit Suri's sequel to his blockbuster *Ek Villain*, produced by **Balaji Telefilms**, stars **John Abraham** and **Aditya Roy Kapur**. Reportedly, they will play antagonists pitted against each other. The film will also feature two female leads and one of them will have a negative shade, reveal insiders. Apparently, the team had approached **Sidharth Malhotra**, who played the lead in the first part, to play a cameo in the sequel. However, Sidharth politely turned down the offer as there wasn't much for him to do. *Ek Villain 2* will hit the screens in January, 2021.



MEANWHILE...

It seems India's most successful captain, **Mahendra Singh Dhoni**, is planning to give acting a shot. Sources around him say that the ex-skipper has been attending acting workshops lately. Interesting.

GUESS WHO

This noted female director approached a top leading lady, who's done some path-breaking cinema, for her new film. After the narration, the actress didn't utter a word. She turned quiet. Then she got up and hugged and kissed the director. All she asked her was whether the director had actually written the film. The director is still trying to figure out what that meant. So are we.

SARA GETS 'PRICEY'

Early in her career, **Sara Ali Khan** impressed with *Kedarnath* and *Simmba*, proving she's a complete package. Recently, her romantic drama *Love Aaj Kal*, opposite **Kartik Aaryan**, won her praise too. She has **David Dhawan's Coolie No. 1** and **Aanand L Rai's Atrangi Re** in the pipeline. Right now, she's on the top of her game. Apparently, the hot-stepper has hiked her fee for events and endorsements. So much so that brands are finding it difficult to afford her. Well... success comes with a price.



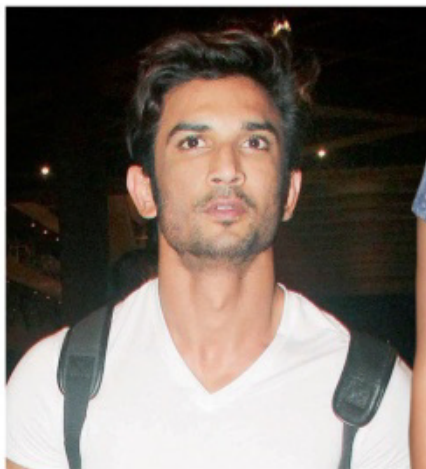


IT'S A BEAUTIFUL LIFE: Actor **Lara Dutta** was spotted with hubby and tennis ace **Mahesh Bhupathi** and their lovely daughter **Saira Bhupathi** after a lunch date together.

KIARA PLAYS CUPID

She may be the most desired girl on the block right now. But in this case, **Kiara Advani** has herself played Cupid and set a love story rolling. It seems the *Kabir Singh* actress was instrumental in bringing together young actors, **Gurfateh Pirzada** and **Akansha Ranjan**, on the set of the web show *Guilty*. Sparks flew and a young romance has blossomed thanks to Kiara. Produced by **Dharma Productions**, *Guilty* is directed by **Ruchi Narain**. It explores the different versions that emerge when a small-town girl accuses the college heartthrob of rape.

RHEA TO LAUNCH SPINNING STUDIO



Diversification is the name of the game. While actors like **Katrina Kaif** and **Kriti Sanon** have their own cosmetic and clothesline labels respectively, we hear that actress **Rhea Chakraborty** is going the fitness way. The *Jalebi* actor is reportedly planning to start a spinning studio in the suburbs of Mumbai for fitness enthusiasts. On the personal front, Rhea's rumoured to be in a relationship with **Sushant Singh Rajput**. Their cute banter on social media keeps netizens engaged.



Bhajji takes to the movies

Cricketer **Harbhajan Singh**, fondly called **Bhajji**, is all set to step into the Tamil film industry with *Friendship*. Sri Lankan television presenter, **Losliya Mariyanesan**, (of *Bigg Boss Tamil* fame) will pair opposite him. *Friendship* is directed by **John Paul Raj** and **Sham Sundar**. The fun-loving Harbhajan, aka **Turbanator**, has featured in reality shows, music videos and cameos over the years. Reportedly, **Irfan Pathan** is also making his debut in Tamil cinema in the tentatively titled *Vikram 58*, starring superstar **Vikram**.



GUESS WHO

A not-so-pleasant argument ensued between this young actor and his director after their recent flop. The actor felt that the director could have done a better job vis-a-vis so many aspects of the film. When he expressed his frank opinion to the director, it wasn't taken kindly. Well, when the stakes are high, such rancour is understandable and we hope temporary.



ENDURING BOND: Arjun Kapoor and Katrina Kaif have been BFFs since long, their social media banter inviting much traction. Their camaraderie is real and palpable as is evident in this frame.

WHY RISHI DIDN'T ATTEND ARMAAN'S SHAADI



Actor **Rishi Kapoor** was shooting for *Sharmaji Namkeen* in Delhi last month. He was also to attend the wedding of nephew **Armaan Jain**, son of sister **Rima** and **Manoj Jain**. But Rishi, wife **Neetu Kapoor** and son **Ranbir Kapoor** were missing from the *mehendi* function. Sadly, the actor caught infection because of the pollution in Delhi and was hospitalised. He returned to Mumbai in good health but was hospitalised again due to viral fever. We hear he's recovering well. Touchwood.

COLD VIBES BETWEEN KIARA AND TARA

Armaan Jain and **Anissa Malhotra's** wedding, as we know, was a star-studded affair with the who's who of Bollywood on the guest list. Present at the do also were **Kiara Advani**, who's close to Anissa and **Tara Sutaria**, who's apparently dating Armaan's brother **Aadar Jain**. According to onlookers, when Aadar invited Tara on the dance floor, Anissa too asked her bestie Kiara to join in. When the two actresses came face to face, they chose to ignore each other and the cold vibe was more than apparent, reveal insiders. Reason they say is **Sidharth Malhotra**. The handsome actor was reportedly dating Tara during *Marjaavaan*. After their break-up, the actor is now apparently dating **Kiara Advani**. A case of when the past met the present.



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preview

movies on the block, set-talk, talent-buzz, hotties to watch out for

SERIAL CHARMER

DEEPAK ARORA

X FACTOR: REFRESHING

SEX-APPEAL

Young Deepak Arora, a successful model and an aspiring actor, has his eyes set on the stars. After completing his Bachelors from New York Film Academy and learning acting at The Lee Strasberg Theatre and Film Institute, the young gun has touched home ground. Apart from talent, his father's support, he says, is the wind beneath his wings. Deepak is making his debut on the OTT platform alongside Jacqueline Fernandez and Manoj Bajpayee in Farah Khan's production *Mrs. Serial Killer*, directed by Shirish Kunder.

Apart from this big break, Vlogging, travelling and dishing up exotic meals, is also what keeps him charmed.

Man behind
Mardaani pg 14

What's the Good
Newwz? pg 16

MAN BEHIND MARDAANI

MARDAANI 2 DIRECTOR **GOPI PUTHRAN** BELIEVES THAT IT'S THE AGE OF THE 'ANGRY YOUNG WOMAN'. **RAGHUVENDRA SINGH** AGREES WITH HIM

Gopi Puthran started his career as a writer with *Lafangey Parindey* (2010), starring Neil Nitin Mukesh and Deepika Padukone. The film, directed by Pradeep Sarkar, didn't do well at the box-office but helped Puthran form an alliance with producers Yash Raj Films. He then wrote *Mardaani* (2014), directed again by Sarkar, and won plaudits for his screenplay.

Recently, he made his debut as a director with the hard-hitting *Mardaani 2*, which carried further the story of hard-boiled cop, SP Shivani Shivaji Roy, played by Rani Mukerji. Inspired by true rape and murder incidents, the story follows Shivani, who goes up against a 21-year-old rapist, Sunny Prasad Yadav, played by Vishal Jethwa.

It was Aditya Chopra, who asked him to direct the sequel since as a writer Puthran knew the



Mardaani 2

“WITH RANI MUKERJI, YOU HAVE TO COME 200 PER CENT PREPARED ON THE SET. WHAT YOU THEN GET IN RETURN IS A COMPLETE PARTNERSHIP. SHE MAKES YOU A BETTER PROFESSIONAL”



I MET A LOT OF CRIMINALS. I READ INVESTIGATIVE REPORTS... ALL THAT HELPED ME WRITE THE RAPIST'S CHARACTER PLAYED BY VISHAL JETHWA



Vishal Jethwa in *Mardaani 2*

universe of *Mardaani* and also because he was the assistant director on the film too. Aditya also believed that his rapport with Rani would make his debut comfortable. Pradeep Sarkar was directing *Helicopter Eela* at the time and readily gave his blessings to his protégé. “I’m eternally grateful to Pradeepda for getting me into the industry and for always having my back. I invited *Dada* for a special screening of the film. He turned emotional after watching it, saying that I’d nailed it. After seeing his response, I felt validated.”

Rani Mukerji taught him the merits of discipline and preparedness. Puthran says you can’t be laidback with her. He would get unnerved when she’d ask him questions on the set of *Mardaani*. So he was prepared for the volley of questions on the sets of *Mardaani 2*. “With Rani Mukerji, you have to come

200 per cent prepared on the set. What you then get in return is a complete partnership. She makes you a better professional.” He values the praise that veteran Rekha heaped on him as well. “Rekhaji said, you have this amazing blend of the old and new. Your style is refreshing. You speak about things, which are timeless but in a new way’. I found the compliment interesting,” he says.

Puthran was always drawn to the fine arts, his father, Satish Puthran, being an actor in Marathi and Hindi theatre. “Dad died at the age of 39. I was just 12 then. That tradition of reading and watching plays stayed strong in the family even after his passing away,” he reveals. Puthran started doing theatre while in college. Back then he used to act as well but began enjoying writing more. Even when he joined the client servicing department of a hi-profile ad agency, he continued to

write plays. The creative director there happened to see his play and urged him to write copies for ads. “I got into the creative department. Nitesh Tiwari was my boss for a while,” he recalls. Eventually, he got to know that Pradeep Sarkar, with whom he had made some ads, was looking for a writer for YRF’s *Lafangey Parindey*. “I was lucky to meet Aditya Chopra, who’s been my mentor since then,” he adds.

Puthran believes research is an integral part of his writing. For *Mardaani 2*, he shifted base to UP and Rajasthan. “I met senior IPS officers there and spent time with them. They used to take me for their rounds. I met a lot of criminals. I read investigative reports, which they were kind enough to share. All that helped to write

Vishal Jethwa’s character, Sunny Yadav,” he shares. The actor played the serial offender and impressed with his quicksilver expressions and subtlety. Puthran went through a lot of audition tapes before choosing him. “Adi sir said cast someone, who’d be able to shock the audience. Vishal’s nuanced take left me intrigued,” the director reflects.

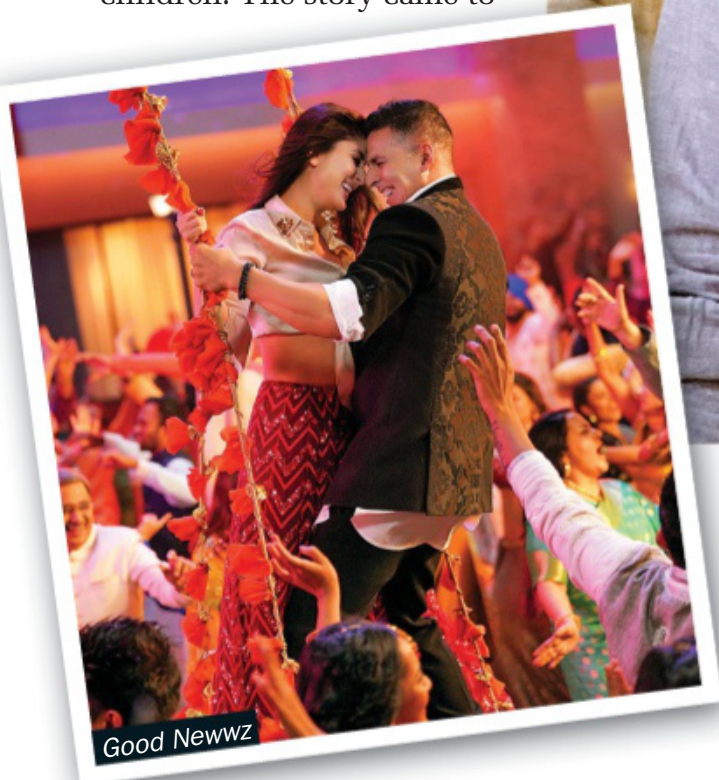
He definitely wants to do *Mardaani 3* in the future. “This franchise has got a lot of love from the audience. Amitabh Bachchan *saab* was the angry young man in the ’70s. It’s now time for the ‘angry young woman’ to show a mirror to society,” he says. But as of now, he wants to take a break from heavy-duty subjects. “My next would be a light-hearted film,” he declares with a smile.

BIRTHING SUCCESS

SUMAN SHARMA CHATS WITH NEWBIE DIRECTOR **RAJ MEHTA**, WHOSE *GOOD NEWWZ* HAS DONE ROARING BUSINESS

The last year ended with *Good Newwz*. The film starring Akshay Kumar, Kareena Kapoor Khan, Diljit Dosanjh and Kiara Advani, directed by debut director Raj Mehta, grossed more than 150 crores. Raj, understandably, is on cloud nine. He hasn't yet come to terms with the good news. It has to yet to sink in. Box-office numbers aside, he's happy that the film connected with the audience. "I never could have dreamt of such kind of response," he says.

Perhaps one reason why *Good Newwz* got so much love is that it deals with the sensitive issue of married couples being pressured by their families to have children. The story came to



GOOD NEWWZ HAS SPREAD A POSITIVE MESSAGE ABOUT IVF. THIS TECHNOLOGY HAS HELPED COUNTLESS COUPLES TO BECOME PARENTS. FOR THEM, IT'S A GOD-SEND. SO FAR, EIGHT MILLION BABIES HAVE BEEN BORN THROUGH IVF GLOBALLY



Diljit Dosanjh and Kiara Advani in *Good Newwz*

“AKSHAY KUMAR’S SO FOCUSED AND PASSIONATE ABOUT WHAT HE DOES. HE’S ALWAYS GAME TO TRY OUT NEW THINGS. I LEARNT FROM HIM THAT ONE SHOULD ALWAYS BE PASSIONATE AND NEVER SHY OF HARD WORK”

writer Jyoti Kapoor when she herself was trying to conceive a baby through IVF. She also heard that two couples abroad had to go through heartburn as sperm samples got mixed up. Raj, who’s still single, says he’d definitely resort to IVF if the need arose after marriage. He asserts, “*Good Newwz* has spread a positive message about IVF. This technology has helped countless couples to become parents. For them, it’s a God-send. So far, eight million babies have been born through IVF. I wish people knew about this,” he points out. He’s surprised that IVF is still considered taboo in our society. He agrees the team made a conscious effort to keep out vulgarity the subject being unconventional. He mentions that the sensitivity also came from Jyoti Kapoor, who has witnessed it at close quarters.

It took Raj a long time to make his directorial debut. Raj’s foray began with the short film *Ironic Odyssey* (2009), which he produced, wrote and directed. The first feature film he assisted on was Prakash Jha’s *Aarakshan* (2011). He was doing a film with Yash Raj Films (YRF), when Shashank



Kareena Kapoor Khan and Akshay Kumar in *Good Newwz*

Khaitan asked him if he wanted to work as an associate director with him on *Humpty Sharma Ki Dulhania* (2014). That set off his journey with Dharma Productions

Coming back to *Good Newwz*, he mentions that neither Karan Johar nor Akshay Kumar ever interfered with his vision. “Kareena, Akshay, Diljit and Kiara were cooperative too,” he says about his actors. They attended workshops to gain a better understanding of their characters and also help them sync well as couples. “They took time out of their busy schedules and attended the exercise,” shares Raj.

Akshay Kumar’s professionalism impressed

him the most. “He’s so focussed and passionate about what he does. He’s always game to try out new things. I learnt from him that one should always be passionate and never shy of hard work.” He adds that Akshay possesses a great sense of humour as well and made sure the atmosphere on the sets was light and breezy. He had seen Diljit’s sense of comedy in his Punjabi films. Hence he believed he was apt for the role, which required he stay away from caricature.

The film was originally titled *Good News* but was changed to *Good Newwz* because of Raj’s belief in numerology. Karan Johar was initially against the change but conceded as it was Raj’s debut film. The change, perhaps worked, as

the film went on to become a money-spinner. Raj insists he isn’t superstitious but just follows certain beliefs.

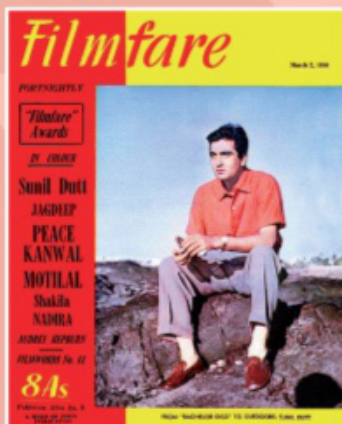
Raj hails from Delhi. He attended a film school in the US and was exposed to world cinema there. But it was Karan Johar’s *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* (K3G) that made Raj dream about making a career in Bollywood. Raj is in awe of his idol and can’t stop gushing about him. “Karan is someone I’ll always look up to. He’s one of the nicest people I know in the industry. He’s warm-hearted and that’s why he has so many friends.” As a professional too, he finds Karan always accessible. “I’ve seen him conversing with warmth even with strangers. I’ve learnt to be a better person and to give the other person due importance from him,” he states. Farhan Akhtar is another filmmaker he admires. “His *Dil Chahta Hai* changed my perspective towards life, love and filmmaking. I’m a big fan of Zoya Akhtar as well. I aspire to make their kind of cinema. I have miles to go before reaching there,” he says. He’d like to try his hands at every kind of genre except horror. He loves comedy the best because it gives him a chance to make people laugh and bring sunshine in their lives. He wishes to work with Alia Bhatt, Varun Dhawan and Ranbir Kapoor in the future. “I’ve two-three stories in my kitty but nothing is concrete as yet. It’s been a smooth sailing all this while. Hopefully, that should be the case in the future as well.” ■

Breaking News

**RAJESH KHANNA
TIES THE KNOT WITH
A 16-YEAR-OLD
NAMED DIMPLE.**

Get your recap of Bollywood with Filmfare issues from 1954 to 1999.

The Filmfare Vintage Collection. Only on magzter.com



FILMFARE

F&B

fashion and beauty

They are hot, they are cool.
Meet our trend makers and breakers

HIDE & SKIN

PRIYANKA CHOPRA JONAS IN RALPH AND RUSSO AND NICK JONAS IN ZEGNA

WHERE:
GRAMMYS 2020
THE X FACTOR:
SEXY GOT SEXIER

Priyanka Chopra Jonas' look for the 2020 Grammy Awards was an absolute jaw-dropper. An amalgamation of several trends, from an embroidered train, ombre fringes and a beaded plunging neckline, PeeCee's attire set the shutterbugs berserk. Complementing her silver avatar, hubby Nick Jonas opted for a bronze Zegna number that suited the dapper musician perfectly.



Power dressing *pg 21*

Bag the charm *pg 22*

COMPILED BY: ANALITA SETH
PHOTOGRAPHS: YOGEN SHAH

ODD ONE OUT

Here's to the major fashion misses that will haunt trendmongers for a while

← DEEPIKA PADUKONE

We always rave about what **Deepika Padukone** wears. But the shirt seems so uncalled for. Wish she had gone for just the corset, jeans.

DEEPIKA PADUKONE

← KIARA ADVANI

Kiara Advani's white dress is neither ruffled nor has a peplum. It just doesn't flatter the figure. Like this one looks out of proportion on the lady, who's so lovely otherwise.

KIARA ADVANI

ANUSHKA SHARMA

HUMA QURESHI

Huma Qureshi's oversized puffy sleeves are what sartorial nightmares are made of. And those earrings? No baby, no.

HUMA QURESHI

KRITI KHARBANDA

We can see the Kim K inspiration behind this look, **Kriti Kharbanda**. But maybe a better fit and a flatter material would have worked well.

KRITI KHARBANDA

MISS THE MARK

ADAH SHARMA

Adah Sharma's quirky and we love what she wears. But this patchy leather overcoat on a nightie like dress... gives us the shudders.

ADAH SHARMA

← KRITI SANON

Kriti Sanon's asymmetrical balloon dress with fringe sleeves is a disaster. Does nothing for the pretty gal.

KRITI SANON

↑ ANUSHKA SHARMA

As lovely as **Anushka Sharma** appears here, the look is too confusing.

SARA ALI KHAN

← SARA ALI KHAN

Sara Ali Khan seems proud of her well-toned legs and we love a short dress on her. But this maximalism mess is not what we want.

POWER DRESSING

Unisex trends are the future of fashion



Gucci

With flowing couture and feminine drapes taking the front seat in the fashion universe, the androgynous style was on the verge of extinction. Saving it from obscurity, our divas have donned this trend as a formal statement time and again. Sharp cuts, *bandhgala*s and even bowties, there's nothing that the power dressers haven't flaunted. Thanks to them, pantsuits, boyfriend jeans, oversized bomber jackets and even shiny brogues... all have become a wardrobe essential for women now.



KAREENA
KAPOOR
KHAN



Golden
Goose

GENDER
BENDER



Marni



SONAM
KAPOOR
AHUJA



Amiri

"Those who think my clothes are androgynous, believe that women should look like Barbie dolls... some deep-rooted assumptions about what is feminine."



ANUSHKA
SHARMA



Salvatore
Ferragamo



Dolce &
Gabbana



Laurence
Dacade



Pierre Louis
Mascia



Mehry Mu



Okhtein

CARRY
THE
WORLD



Vanina



Jacque mus



Rosantica



Chiara
Ferragni



Danse
Lente

BAG THE CHARM

*A quirky bag can transform
a simple look instantly.
Here's proof...*

If you're not a fan of bling jewellery or statement heels, - a chic bag is a convenient way to elevate your look. Throw around an embellished sling or a stylish tote with basic denim and overhaul your look in seconds. With snazzy bum bags and versatile totes, simple attire can turn sensational. Invest in bags... to carry away all the compliments.



LISA
HAYDON



NATASHA
POONAWALA



TAAPSEE
PANNU



SHILPA
SHETTY
KUNDR



JANHVI
KAPOOR

*"A woman's mind is as complex as the contents of her handbag;
even when you get to the bottom of it, there is ALWAYS something
to surprise you!"*



DEEPIKA
PADUKONE



MONOTONE

Monochromatic ensembles are a chic way to vamp your OOTD

Monochrome does not mean one single tone. Rather it implies shades of one colour put together in an outfit. Pantsuits, skirt co-ords or matching pullovers with trousers... choosing shades of one hue adds texture and depth to a look. Obsessing over this trend, style icon **Deepika Padukone's** wardrobe has done a turnover the past few months. Opting for matching accessories, footwear and bags, Deepika's look book for 2020 is a perfect guide to monochromatic dressing for all occasions.



ALIA
BHATT



Versace



Isabel
Marant



Ashley Williams



SHRADDHA
KAPOOR



ANANYA
PANDAY



KIARA
ADVANI



Dolce & Gabbana



BUN
BLAST



MRUNAL
THAKUR

BUN AND ALL

Here's to the hairdo that makes our lives easier

You don't have to be a pro to pull off this hairstyle. It's a saviour for not only bad hair days but for also the times you just can't seem to tidy up your unruly tresses. The runway bun is a hairdo for laidback girls but is now getting a trendy makeover for formal occasions. Accessorised, braided and even half-knotted, this top bun is a rage from the bedroom to the boardroom. You can carry this hairdo with ethnic wear or Western picks – so universal is its vibe.



Jennifer Behr



Ashley Williams

"Invest in your hair. It's the crown you'll never take off."



SONAKSHI
SINHA



NUSHRAT
BHARUCHA



BHUMI
PEDNEKAR



DEEPIKA
PADUKONE



ALIA
BHATT



SAIEE
MANJREKAR



KIARA
ADVANI

CANDY SHOP!

Candy floss colours are creating a riot everywhere

Designers seem to have developed a sweet tooth for candy colours this season. They're just about everywhere. Dominated by Barbie pink, pastels ranging from unicorn blue and purple to millennial green have been making recurring appearances in our divas' wardrobes. Summery and easy on the eyes, these shades were once restricted to casual wear but are now seen on the red carpet and even in Indian couture.



DEEPIKA
PADUKONE



KRITI
SANON



PASTEL
PARTY

TRAINS SPOTTED!

The trend of an attached train is a trailblazing one...



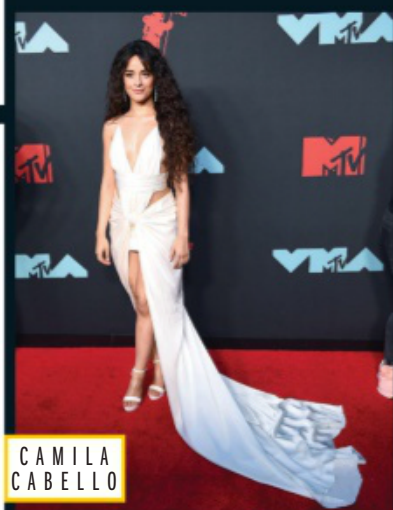
SARA ALI KHAN



ANANYA PANDAY



JANHVI KAPOOR



CAMILA CABELLO



GWEN STEFANI



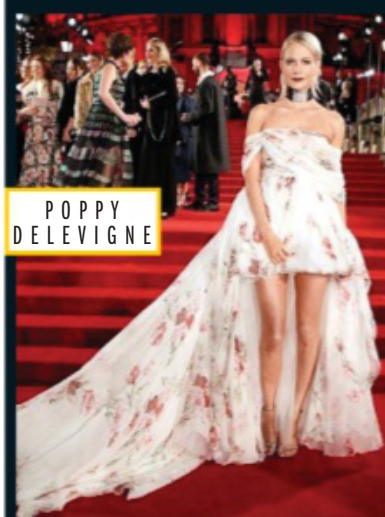
ALESSANDRA AMBROSIO

Everyone wants to own the red carpet – such is its allure. And if the outfit boasts of subtle sartorial engineering – it's a work of art to be applauded. The attached train is one such style that has won followers all over the world.

While some like to flaunt their toned legs in short dresses, the attached train lends grace instantly, turning the party outfit into red carpet attire. Both men and women, have been adding the long trail, lending poetry to power wear. 'Trailblazing' quite literally, this trend is sweeping the fashion runway.

LEAVE A TRAIL

"I see myself as a true modernist. Even when I do a traditional gown, I give it a modern twist... I break the rules."
-Vera Wang



POPPY DELEVIGNE



SARA HYLAND



WINNIE HARLOW



TAYLOR SWIFT

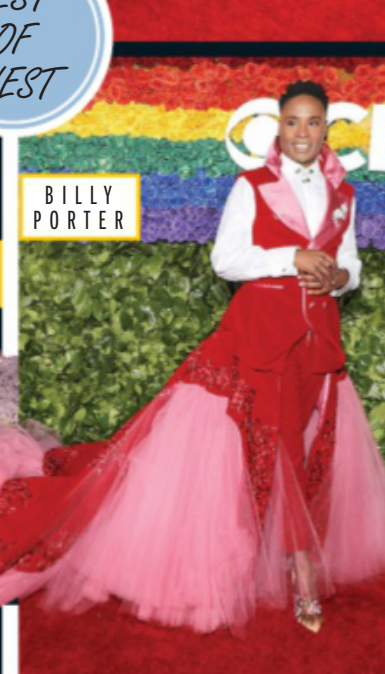


BILLY PORTER

BEST OF WEST



SOFIA CARSON



BILLY PORTER

exclusives

what's on their mind?

RISK VS RISQUE

Yes there's pressure to excel with every successful film. *Par mujhe mazaa aata hai*. This credibility has given me the courage to play unsafe. I don't know whether I was ready for *Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan* four years ago. But success gives you the balls to take more risks. Actually, I've built my entire career on risks. For me, not doing a risky subject is a risk. People want me to do conventional cinema. While that would be different for me, I want to give something that's different for the audience. Now I'd like to attempt an action thriller.

Ayushmann Khurrana's different because he dared. Read on...

PHOTOGRAPH: ARJUN MARK



44 I WAS BORDERLINE HOMOPHOBIC

FOR **AYUSHMANN KHURRANA**, IT'S IMPERATIVE TO STAND OUT THAN FIT IN. TREADING INTO TABOO TERRITORY, HE'S HIT UPON A CLOSET OF ISSUES STRUGGLING TO BE ADDRESSED, WRITES **ANURADHA CHOUDHARY**

Have you ever noticed the demeanour of a man doing well in life. There's a blithe spirit about him, a spring in his walk, he never stops smiling, he's magnanimous in his success. Ayushmann Khurrana is all this and more. There's a self-assuredness that comes with confidence in his choices. He seems almost invincible in person and at the box-office office. Seven back to back hits is no mean feat. For Ayushmann it's a dream come true. As a rookie actor, he often wondered if he would ever reach the shivery heights of stardom. Today he stands vindicated.

To say that he has changed the face of Hindi cinema wouldn't be an overstatement.

Ayushmann is the antithesis of the larger-than-life Bollywood hero. Not for him the chest thumping, swinging from trees or beating up 30 goons single-handedly. His characters are everyman dealing with everyday problems like sperm donation, sexual dysfunction, baldness... his latest *Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan* talks about homosexuality.... so much that larger-than-life heroes seem a tad outdated today. That he has the knack of choosing the right script is a given. That he has made taboo topics part of living room conversation is a fact. He believes that there are too many issues in our country. So there's no question of running out of topics.

Right now, Ayushmann Khurrana is the darling of filmmakers and masses alike. He's making them both happy... Call it the Midas Touch or astute decision making, Ayushmann is walking on velvet... Excerpts from an enthralling interview...

PHOTOGRAPHS: ARJUN MARK | STYLIST: ISHA BHANSALI

HAIR: TEAM HAKIM AALIM | MAKE-UP: HINAL DATTANI

LOCATION: DRINKERY 51, BKC

Jacket: Shivan Narresh | Trousers: Uket Dhir | Watch: Daniel Wellington

**SEVEN HITS BACK-TO-BACK.
WHAT WOULD YOU ATTRIBUTE
THIS CRAZY SUCCESS TO?**

I guess choosing scripts is my thing. It's again scary because content is changing every year. If you don't move or evolve with time, you'll be lagging behind. I don't want to get stuck in time. That's why I make it a point to interact with people on the sets and around it. Like when in Benaras, I'd talk to the *paanwala*, the cab driver, the *pandit*... I did that earlier too. But today it's agenda-driven. If I remain distant from the person, who's the consumer of my film or whose life I'm portraying on screen, how will I portray that correctly? I don't understand numbers. But I understand a good film and a bad film. When *Vicky Donor* released, producer Ram Mirchandani explained to me that Monday is bigger than Friday. After *Dum Laga Ke Haisha*, Adi sir (Aditya Chopra) told me that make a promise to the people that you'll do good films. Then you're home.

**YOUR LAST THREE RELEASES
HAVE ALL BEEN DIFFERENT
FROM EACH OTHER...**

Doing *Article 15* immediately after *AndhaDhun* and *Badhaai Ho* was a risk. It wasn't a commercial film. It was my first film in the dark zone. *AndhaDhun* was a dark comedy, not a dark film. I believed *Article 15* would make decent money. But I didn't expect it to make 65 crores. That was a defining moment. Multiplex audiences watch my films. But I feared *Dream Girl* was risky as it was slapstick. Fortunately,



“

CHOOSING SCRIPTS IS MY THING. IF YOU DON'T MOVE OR EVOLVE WITH THE TIMES, YOU'LL BE LAGGING BEHIND. THAT'S WHY I INTERACT WITH PEOPLE... LIKE WHEN IN BENARAS, I'D TALK TO THE *PAANWALA*, THE CAB DRIVER, THE *PANDIT*... I DID THAT EARLIER TOO. BUT TODAY IT'S AGENDA-DRIVEN. IF I REMAIN DISTANT FROM THE PERSON, WHO'S THE CONSUMER OF MY FILM OR WHOSE LIFE I'M PORTRAYING ON SCREEN, HOW WILL I PORTRAY THAT CORRECTLY?”

Dream Girl ushered me towards the single screens. *Bala* was middle-ground. It was safe. I'm glad to have done these three different films.

WEREN'T YOU NERVOUS ABOUT *ARTICLE 15*?

Article 15 was a surprise. I expected it to win critical acclaim. But it won commercial success as well. A top actor would have hesitated to do such a film. He'd look for a commercial angle, add songs... But I believed it was my responsibility to do such a film. I said we shouldn't dilute the message and do an unadulterated film on casteism, hinging on satire. But Anubhav sir (Sinha, director) said, 'No, we have to show this as a dark film because it's a dark film'. So far, no film has presented things so blatantly. I also applaud Gaurav Solanki, who's co-written the film with Anubhav sir.

WERE YOU ADVISED NOT TO DO SUCH A HARD-HITTING SUBJECT?

Initially, I'd look for suggestions while signing films. But now I follow my gut. If I like a script I go ahead and do it. During *AndhaDhun*, some people weren't happy with the remuneration I was getting.

I was like, 'Sir (Sriram Raghavan) *aap jo marzi de do*. I want to do this film and work with you'. I told myself I'd earn money by singing at gigs if needed. But I'll do movies for myself. I surprised myself with *Article 15*. I loved the scenes towards the climax, particularly those with the CBI officer. It was both subtle and respectful.

MANY BELIEVE THAT *BALA* IS A BETTER FILM THAN *ARTICLE 15*.

Bala was a wholesome experience. It gave me so much elbowroom to perform. In *Article 15*, it was all internal. To show internalised emotions is difficult. You need to show the internal struggle on camera with just your eyes, without saying a word. With *Bala*, I had the arsenal to perform. Amar Kaushik based the character around me. He wrote it with Niren Bhatt. He said, "*Tu bata kya karna hai?*" I suggested that we shouldn't make *Bala* into a gullible, back-footed character. I said I could mimic. So he made me a stand-up comedian. He said mimic Shah Rukh Khan, mimic whoever you want. *Bala* is my most satisfying performance.

***DREAM GIRL*... WHAT APPEALED TO YOU ABOUT IT?**

I was laughing throughout

the narration. The director, Raj Shandaliya, has written *Comedy Nights With Kapil*. People cautioned me saying that he'd not directed before. But the way he narrated the script, I wanted only him to direct it. Who would understand comedy better than him? Instinctively, I felt the film would be a blockbuster.

DID YOU HESITATE, EVEN FOR A SECOND, BEFORE SIGNING *SHUBH MANGAL ZYADA SAAVDHAN* BASED ON HOMOSEXUALITY?

No. Guys take their manliness too seriously. If I see two girls kissing each other, will I be repulsed by them? No. They're just in love. And it doesn't make them undesirable. It's a myth in a straight guy's conventional mind.

THERE ARE KISSES IN THE FILM...

Yeah. I met Hitesh Kewaliya (director) at an event last to last year. He mentioned, "*Kuchh tod fod likh raha hoon.*" I suspected it could be about homosexuality. Later, Aanand sir (Aanand L Rai, producer) told me about it. I asked if there was a kissing scene. He said yes. I was game. The gay story is not incidental to the film. It's the main story – the love story of two boys.

JUMPER & TROUSERS: UNIQLO
SHIRT: ETON AT THE COLLECTIVE
WATCH: DANIEL WELLINGTON

WERE YOU WORRIED ABOUT THE BACKLASH FROM THE DOGMATISTS?

No. *Ch****e hain woh sab. Unhi ko toh seedha karna hai.* I was a borderline homophobic in college. I was in an all-boys school. Then I went to an all-boys college. There was this underground gay club in college. Everyone knew about it but no one spoke about the club. They invited me for a party as their guest of honour saying, 'We find you cute. Can you sing for us?' I was scared and said no. After coming to Mumbai, I realised we've changed as a society. We've evolved as people. Earlier, I was a typical small-town conventional guy. *Mujhe lagta tha yeh galat hai.* Today if I've evolved, others can too. They should just be sensitised towards something. Till the subject is not made mainstream they won't accept it as normal.

HAVE YOUR FILMS IMPACTED PEOPLE'S LIVES?

After *Badhaai Ho*, I got so many DMs on Twitter thanking me for doing the film. They said now that the film has normalised it (middle-age pregnancy), no one will make fun of it. I have a friend in Canada. His father is my grandfather's age. His eldest brother is my father's age. So such things do happen. Then a friend of mine told me that he wants to take his parents for *Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan* for them to come to terms with his homosexuality. The dialogue in the film is path-breaking. Without being preachy, we've explained everything to the



“ I HAD A ROOMMATE WHEN I WAS STAYING AT A GUEST HOUSE IN MUMBAI. THREE YEARS BACK HE CALLED ME AND SAID THAT HE'D COME OUT OF THE CLOSET AND THAT HE WAS GAY. I JOKED THAT WE HAD SHARED THE BED FOR SO LONG. KABHI SOTE SOTE FEELING TOH NAHI AAYEE NA? ”

JACKET: SHIVAN NARRESH | TROUSERS: UKET DHIR | WATCH: DANIEL WELLINGTON

common folk. But some things we've left blurred. Like who's the guy in the relationship. People believe being effeminate is part of being gay. But here, he's being himself.

MOST GAYS DO COME ACROSS AS STRAIGHT...

I had a roommate when I was staying in a guest house in Mumbai in my early days. Three years back he called me and said he'd come out of the closet and that he was gay. (Laughs) I joked that we had shared the bed for so long. *Kabhi sote sote feeling toh nahi aayi na?* His family didn't accept it initially. But now they've come to terms with it.

YOUR SON VIRAJVEER IS NOW AROUND EIGHT. HOW DOES HE REACT TO YOUR FILMS?

He loved *Dream Girl*. But the kind of realism I portray, the joke is always on me. As a son, you want your father to be a hero. When I appear vulnerable on screen, he doesn't like it. When he saw Sanjay Mishra beating me with a *chappal* in *Dum Laga Ke Haisha*, he was sad. He was just four then. He said, 'Papa, you're not strong'. I explained to him that it's just acting. He was happy watching *Dream Girl*. I was taking people's case there. I was making people laugh. In the first half of *Bala*, he walked out of the theatre. He couldn't watch it. My daughter Varushka, who's six, is cool. She loves films. She's *desi*. The older one is a bit anglicised. He listens to Beatles. Recently, we visited the Bahamas. We were staying at a luxury hotel. Paul McCartney, who was part of Beatles, was in the room next to us. Naturally, he got excited. Virajveer's learning to play the piano. His teacher's a Catholic. So he's imbibed those influences.

NOW, THEY'LL BE WATCHING SHUBH MANGAL ZYADA SAAVDHAN, WHICH DEALS WITH HOMOSEXUALITY. THEY'LL BE AWARE OF THINGS QUITE EARLY IN LIFE...

They should be. Of course they'll be asking a lot of questions. We're okay with the PDA of a couple kissing. So a guy kissing a guy and a girl kissing a girl should also be viewed as normal. When that happens, then we're home. Once we were shooting in a mall for *Dream Girl*. It was a night shift. Late

at night, we saw a gay couple kissing each other. After seeing us, they became slightly conscious. I thought this is it man. We're ready for the film.

HOW DID YOUR PARENTS REACT TO THE TRAILER OF SHUBH MANGAL ZYADA SAAVDHAN?

They were extremely happy and proud. I have noticed a shift in them too. They've become accepting. Times are changing and they get it.

WHAT WAS THE EXPERIENCE LIKE WORKING WITH AMITABH BACHCHAN IN GULABO SITABO?

He's a little reserved. But if you're able to break that wall, then he's like a friend. I realised that if you're reserved with him then even he remains so. You need to take that step. He comes on the sets prepared. He knows his lines, my lines... everything. If something is going wrong, he'll tell you *aise karke dekh*. Of course, you get nervous in front of him. I get star struck every time I see Amitji (Bachchan), Shah Rukh (Khan) sir. But I'm glad he wasn't looking like himself in the film. So it was less intimidating. He plays the landlord, while I'm the tenant. It's a light, slice-of-life film.

ARE YOU CONFIDENT ABOUT GULABO SITABO AS WELL?

Yaar, whatever Shoojit (Sircar) sir offers me, I'll do. He's my mentor. I'll even do a passing shot in his film. *Gulabo Sitabo* is a good film. Generally, the tonality of his films is subtle. This is in your face. I loved sir's *Piku*. It's spiritual. How can you make a film, based on digestion, which connects



with you spiritually?
Unbelievable! *Piku* is his best film. The film becomes even more beautiful when the narrative shifts to Kolkata.

KING OF CONTENT – DOES THE TITLE GIVEN TO YOU MAKE YOU FEEL PROUD?

Surprisingly, I'm being offered better content now and with established directors. I never got that in the past. Apart from established filmmakers like Sriram Raghavan and Shoojit Sircar, I've worked with Sharad Kataria (*Dum Laga Ke Haisha*), Ashwini Iyer Tiwari (*Bareilly Ki Barfi*) and Amit Sharma (*Badhaai Ho*). Our country is plagued by social stigmas and taboos. We just need to pick these subjects. People remark why my films are mostly set in middle-class North India? Middle-class means the *janta*. That section faces the maximum conflict. Humour too stems from there. Hindi cinema is mostly set in the North because it's the Hindi belt. The flavour is best captured there.

THE REGION DOES BECOME A CHARACTER IN YOUR FILMS.

It all depends on the subject. I love Zoya Akhtar's versatility. I always thought she was a Bandra girl. But she understands the marginalised segment (*Gully Boy*) as well as she knows the upper segment (*Dil Dhadakne Do*). I try to choose a film with a new setting each time. I've not done subjects set in Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Gujarat... *Hawaizaada* had a Maharashtrian backdrop but it didn't work. Also,



STRIPED JUMPER: SCOTCH & SODA
CHECKERED SUIT AND COAT: BY SAHIL ANEJA
BELT: DIOR | BROGUES: SALVATORE FERRAGAMO



“CH****E HAIN WOH SAB (DOGMATISTS). UNHI KO TOH SEEDHA KARNA HAI (THROUGH SHUBH MANGAL ZYADA SAAVDHAM). I WAS A BORDERLINE HOMOPHOBIC... THERE WAS THIS UNDERGROUND GAY CLUB IN COLLEGE... THEY INVITED ME FOR A PARTY AS THEIR GUEST OF HONOUR SAYING, ‘WE FIND YOU CUTE. CAN YOU SING FOR US?’ BUT I WAS SCARED AND SAID NO”

Meri Pyaari Bindu, set in Bengal, didn't work. So I can do those again. Having said that, the flavour of Uttar Pradesh can never go out of fashion. You relate to it because it has a pan-India vibe.

HOW DO YOU ACCLIMATISE YOURSELF WITH YOUR DIVERSE CHARACTERS?

I'm not someone, who reads the script a thousand times. I soak in the backdrop. I read literature on the subject and interact with people belonging to that background. I was always sensitised about the lower sections of

society. I support an NGO called Gulmeher. When I mentioned this to Anubhav sir, he was excited. He said no one thinks about caste and other issues in our fraternity. My upbringing has exposed me to various sections. Some members of my extended family live in the villages of Punjab. While some are rich, living in Canada, the US and Delhi. I've grown with a good mix of people around me. So, I can adapt easily. Also, while I've schooled in English, I've done theatre in Hindi. That gives me a balance. You incorporate

these experiences in your performances. *Maine Ramleela bhi ki hai*. As kids, we'd be part of the *vaanar sena* (monkey army).

WOULD YOU CALL YOURSELF A NATURAL, SPONTANEOUS OR METHOD ACTOR?

During my theatre days, I was a method actor. But over the years, radio and television have made me more natural. Also, your method changes with time. I believe method acting could be dangerous. You need to come out of the character. It's important to preserve your sanity. Of



CORDUROY SUIT: BY KARRTIK D
SILK SCARF: FROM HERMES
SHOES: CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN

“INITIALLY, I’D LOOK FOR SUGGESTIONS WHILE SIGNING FILMS. BUT NOW I FOLLOW MY GUT. DURING *ANDHADHUN*, SOME PEOPLE WEREN’T HAPPY WITH THE REMUNERATION I WAS GETTING. I WAS LIKE, ‘SIR (SRIRAM RAGHAVAN) AAPKI JO MARZI DE DO. I WANT TO WORK WITH YOU’. I TOLD MYSELF I’D EARN MONEY BY SINGING AT GIGS IF NEEDED. BUT I’LL DO MOVIES FOR MYSELF”

course, I imbibed a certain method for *AndhaDhun*. I met a lot of blind students. Method *chahiye hota hai* when the subject is alien for you.

WHEN YOU STARTED OFF, DID YOU EXPECT THIS KIND OF SUCCESS?

After *Vicky Donor*... yeah. I believed it would happen. But when three films after that flopped (*Hawaizaada*, *Bewakoofiyaan* and *Nautanki Saala*), it left me shaken. I’d often ask my wife (Tahira Kashyap) whether I’d ever become a

star. You do aspire for the stars. At the same time, I was realistic. I was like *theek hai yaar* nothing is permanent. Then *Bareilly Ki Barfi* and *Shubh Mangal Saavdhan* happened.

IS THIS KIND OF SUCCESS SCARY?

Of course it’s slightly scary. But it has also taught me detachment. Normally, I don’t do things, which leave me overwhelmed. I don’t watch my film with the audience. I watch it in the edit or with the cast and crew. I had to watch

Bala in Benaras because I hadn’t seen it. It was an overpowering experience. When you get used to the love and suddenly if you’re left devoid of it, you can go mad. Earlier I’d roam around without security. When I shot in smaller cities, I’d walk from the vanity van to the car. Now, there are people around. That’s the difference. I’m aware the industry is fickle. So, I stay close to my college friends and family. It keeps you stable. I know they’ll be there even if I’m no longer a star.

DOES THE PRESSURE INCREASE WITH EACH FILM?

Yes there’s pressure to excel with every successful film. *Par mujhe mazaa aata hai*. This credibility has given me courage to play unsafe. I don’t know whether I was ready for *Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan* four years ago. Success just gives you the balls to take more risks. Actually, I’ve built my entire career on risks. For me, not doing a risky subject is a risk. People want me to do conventional cinema.



VICKY KAUSHAL, RAJKUMMAR RAO... YOU'LL HAVE ESTABLISHED THE 'COMMON MAN' AS A HERO?

We just take ourselves too seriously. Larger-than-life heroes will never go out of fashion. Ranveer Singh *ne jaise Simmba kiya woh hit ho gayi*. *War* was also a huge hit.

BUT STAR POWER ALONE CANNOT MAKE A FILM WORK...

As long as it's entertaining it will work. You can be a common man or a larger-than-life hero. A film should be engaging and entertaining. It's all about the script.

ARE THE ACTORS OF THE '90S STILL STUCK IN THERE?

Yeah, maybe. Actually, I don't know. Akshay sir (Kumar) is trying to do good stuff. He's an expert. He has the sixth sense. He marries content and commerce.

CRITICAL ACCLAIM OR BOX-OFFICE SUCCESS?

A mix of both. Audience love is the most important to survive. Like *Filmfare* reviews a film like an audience, not a purist. I'm not a rocket scientist. I'm an artiste. Eventually, the film should make the audience happy. You should be able to entertain them for two hours. Just one-liners won't work.

DO YOU GET TIME TO CONCENTRATE ON YOUR MUSIC AND POETRY?

I've taken a break. I'll be shooting in April now. *Gulabo Sitabo* will release after two-three months. I have just two films this year. Also, I can write anywhere, anytime. I just need to get an idea. ■

“ARTICLE 15 WAS A SURPRISE. I EXPECTED IT TO WIN CRITICAL ACCLAIM. BUT IT WON COMMERCIAL SUCCESS AS WELL. A TOP ACTOR WOULD HAVE HESITATED TO DO SUCH A FILM. HE'D LOOK FOR A COMMERCIAL ANGLE, ADD SONGS... BUT I BELIEVED IT WAS MY RESPONSIBILITY TO DO SUCH A FILM. I BELIEVED WE SHOULDN'T DILUTE THE MESSAGE AND DO AN UNADULTERATED FILM ON CASTEISM”

They say do a film, which steers away from taboo, something not necessarily socially relevant. They want me to do what is being done by others. While that would be different for me, I want to give something that's different for the audience.

Now I'd like to attempt an action thriller. I haven't signed it yet but have zeroed in on it.

WILL YOU BE ABLE TO HANDLE A FLOP NOW?

I really don't know. But when you see adversities early in life, you're more

equipped to deal with them later on. I don't follow the big names or big banners. I go with the content, even if it's coming from the freshest of directors or scriptwriters. Big names don't overwhelm me anymore. *Usse farak hi nahi padta*.

VINTAGE CHARM

Drinkery 51, with its retro vibe, served as the perfect backdrop while shooting the *Filmfare* cover with superstar **Ayushmann Khurrana**



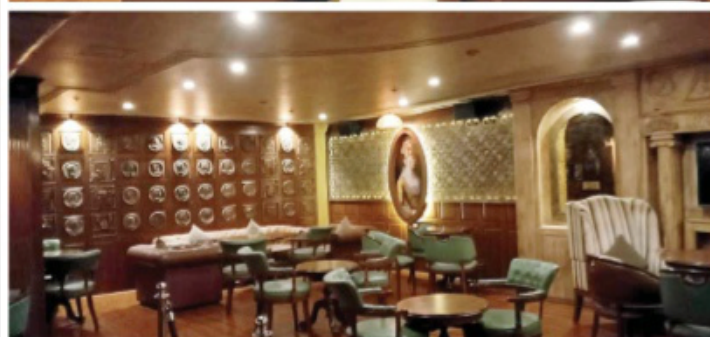
DRINKERY 51 is a quaint barroom featuring rustic wooden interiors along with a blend of modern and aesthetic design. Located in the heart of the Bandra-Kurla Complex, Drinkery 51 is the perfect spot to unwind after long hours at work with friends and associates. It welcomes the mood for complete relaxation. It also seemed the apt choice to shoot superstar Ayushmann

“LOCATED IN THE HEART OF THE BANDRA-KURLA COMPLEX, DRINKERY 51 IS THE PERFECT SPOT TO UNWIND AFTER LONG HOURS AT WORK WITH FRIENDS AND ASSOCIATES. IT WELCOMES THE MOOD FOR COMPLETE RELAXATION”



Ayushmann Khurrana

“THE BARROOM GIVES YOU THE FEEL OF AN EXOTIC TAVERN IN VINTAGE SCOTLAND... THE RETRO PAINTINGS, MOVIE STILLS AND POSTERS FROM CINEMA'S GOLDEN ERA... INTRICATE ARTWORK AND FUNKY DÉCOR ALL WORK BRILLIANTLY TOGETHER”



Khurana, who betrays an old-world charm and magnetism himself.

Wood is the most integral element in the barroom giving the place an antique vibe. The ambience gives you the feel of an exotic tavern in vintage Scotland. The barroom carries the classic theme forward with the décor consisting of several subtle and not-so-

subtle touches. The retro paintings, movie stills and posters from cinema's golden era, some intricate artwork and funky décor elements all work brilliantly together.

Chef Krishna Kettle pours his 20 years of experience in the gourmet industry to good use and offers a generous menu that has a healthy mix of standard bar food like pizzas, burgers, sandwiches along with his personal standout dishes. The bar menu also features exclusive cocktails and exotic flavours that are sure to get you in the right spirits.

We had a great time shooting at Drinkery 51, the mood and the magic of the place pouring into the photospread, the colours of celebration permeating every frame. We're sure that once you visit the place, you will cherish the flavours and the experience forever... and revisit it again and again.



“I LOVE BLOCKING TROLLS”

FROM *DABANGG* TO *DABANGG3*, IT'S BEEN A ROCKING DECADE FOR
SONAKSHI SINHA, WRITES **ASHWINI DESHMUKH**

It's not been a cakewalk for Sonakshi Sinha. She debuted with a bang with *Dabangg* in 2009. But since then, the star-daughter has relentlessly tried to validate herself. Courage has been her hallmark all through. Courage to dabble with every genre. Courage to take on disparagers, who body-shamed her. Courage to up her fashion game, without reducing herself to a clone. Courage to voice her opinion despite hostile trolling social media. Last year, she offered an ensemble of films. *Mission Mangal*, *Khandaani Shafakhana*, *Kalank* and *Dabangg 3*, the last making her 10-year-run come full circle. This year, she begins anew with *Bhuj: The Pride Of India*, a war drama. Strangely for Sona, it's never been about winning the battle. Rather it's been about staying on field...

From *Dabangg* to *Dabangg 3*, how has your rapport changed with Salman Khan over the years?

It hasn't changed, it's only got better. Our bond has grown stronger. I'm a lot more vocal with him than I was when I started out. Earlier I'd be extremely quiet when he was around. I couldn't open my mouth. But now I can talk to him normally, as a friend. I can

share my thoughts. It's great to have that kind of an equation with someone like him. It was Salman, who suggested that I become an actor. Which is why I did *Dabangg*.

Were you nervous when you began shooting?

I didn't want to act. So I was unprepared. Even though I come from a film family, I never enjoyed



Dabangg 3

“OUR BOND HAS GROWN STRONGER. I'M A LOT MORE VOCAL WITH SALMAN KHAN THAN I WAS WHEN I STARTED OUT. EARLIER I'D BE EXTREMELY QUIET WHEN HE WAS AROUND. I COULDN'T OPEN MY MOUTH. BUT NOW I CAN TALK TO HIM NORMALLY, AS A FRIEND. I CAN SHARE MY THOUGHTS WITH HIM”

going to a set. I didn't grow up watching movies. I was always into sports. So, facing the camera was a completely new feeling. I'd wonder, 'Oh my God! What am I doing here?' The newcomers today come so well-prepared. They attend workshops and acting classes. They're ready to face the camera.

Khandaani Shafakhana, dealt with a bold subject. What kind of response did it get you?

Babita in *Khandaani Shafakhana* is one of the characters closest to my heart. It was a beautiful and refreshing experience. I was working with a female director (Shilpi Dasgupta) for the first time. I specially called Ayushmann Khurrana for the screening saying I was stepping into his territory. He loved the film. It was disheartening that the film didn't do well. Though my solo lead films haven't done that well, I'll continue doing them. I won't stop until I get what I want.

Actresses like Deepika Padukone and Priyanka Chopra have produced films they believed in. Would you do that in the future?

Yes absolutely. Even the films that I've done as a solo lead, have been films that I believed in. Though I didn't produce them. But when I find a subject I love and feel the need to produce a film, I will.

Which has been the most relatable character you've played so far?

The most relatable character I've played so far would be that of a journalist in Sunhil

“THE CREDIT FOR REMAINING GROUNDED GOES TO MY PARENTS. MY PARENTS HAVE BEEN THROUGH DIFFERENT PHASES IN LIFE. I'VE SEEN PEOPLE COME AND GO. I DON'T WANT TO BE ONE OF THOSE”



Mission Mangal



Khandaani Shafakhana

Sippy's *Noor*. She's a modern-day working girl. The most challenging character I've played so far is AR Murugadoss' *Akira*. I'm not a martial artist. I had to learn the art. To get into the skin of the character, portray the body language right and fight convincingly was a challenge. Also, I guess Vikramaditya Motwane's *Lootera* was ahead of its time. Had it released now, it would have been well-received, given the kind of content we're churning out these days.

What do you aspire for as an actor?

When a director thinks of making a film like *Lootera*, he should have me in mind. When he wants to make a film like *Dabangg*, then too he should be able to picture me in the film. I want to be that kind of

an actor, who fits in every role. There's no genre I've not attempted. I played different characters in the four films I did last year – *Khandaani Shafakhana*, *Kalank*, *Mission Mangal* and *Dabangg 3*. That keeps me enthusiastic about my work. I'm loving it.

You seem to be going the Akshay Kumar way...

(Laughs) I do have some of his qualities. I'm punctual. I've four releases a year. I work round the clock. It also comes from having worked with him early in my career. You can't but learn from him. I guess, I've taken to his style of working.

Do you mull over the box-office numbers of your films?

Honestly, I don't understand numbers. I've been part of some of the biggest films. I've also been

“IT'S SO FUNNY, THE PERSON KEEPS WAITING FOR A REACTION AFTER POSTING SOMETHING NASTY ON MY TIMELINE. BUT WOH BECHARA BLOCK HO JAATA HAI. I LOVE IT”



part of films that have not done well at all. *Lootera*, which is such a beautiful film, didn't fare well at the box-office. There have been other films, which have been average at best. While some have done 100-crore plus business. What's important for me is to do good work.

After decade in the industry, what keeps you motivated?

I approach every film as though it's my first. That keeps me from turning complacent. I've never entered a set thinking I know it all. That's where an actor's downfall starts. My job is to act and give my best shot. I feel my first film released just yesterday. I don't know how the decade flew by.

What keeps you grounded?

It's all got to do with your upbringing. The credit goes to my parents (Shatrughan and Poonam Sinha). My parents have gone through different phases in life. I too have people come and go. I don't want to be one of those. It's not a pleasant thing to happen.

Your candour on social media invites trolls. How do you deal with them?

There's a lack of etiquette on social media. Faceless people with fake identities say anything and everything without respect. It's best to ignore them. My favourite button is the block button. It's so funny, the person keeps waiting for a reaction after posting something nasty on my timeline or instigating me. (*Laughs*) But *woh bechara block ho jaata hai*. I love it. ■



“I’M JUST AN ACTOR NOT A STAR”

WITH *CHHALAANG*, RAJKUMMAR RAO TAKES THE GREAT LEAP FORWARD, WRITES SUMAN SHARMA

From Mandi House in Delhi to the FTII in Pune and finally to Mumbai... Rajkummar Rao had a winding commute to filmdom. The year 2010, found him at the threshold of changing cinema. Rajkummar’s ordinariness gave him extraordinary leverage in playing the hero, who could be both grave and goofy, sinister and simple... The experimental *Love Sex Aur Dhokha* was juxtaposed with the drama *Kai Po Che!* The disturbing *Shahid* was followed by the gender-bender *Queen*. The angsty *CityLights* and the nerve-wracking *Trapped* were balanced by the light-hearted *Bareilly Ki Barfi* and the black comedy *Newton*. Finally, the horror comedy *Stree* slalomed him into the 100-crore club, with Rajkummar walking shoulder to shoulder with mainstream magnets. Coming up is an eclectic palette from him – Anurag Kashyap’s crime comedy *Ludo*, the *Chupke Chupke* remake, Dinesh Vijan’s horror comedy *Roohi Afzana* and *The White Tiger* adaptation with Priyanka Chopra. But what’s making the biggest noise right now is his upcoming release, Hansal Mehta’s social comedy *Chhalaang*. The film spotlighting the conflict between sports and studies, could be a wake-up call for a slumbering system...



CHHALAANG IS MY FIFTH FILM WITH HANSAL MEHTA. HE’S LIKE FAMILY. OURS IS MORE OF A PERSONAL BOND THAN A PROFESSIONAL ONE. WE’RE LIKE-MINDED. **WE WANT TO TELL CERTAIN STORIES TOGETHER. WE SHARE A SIMILAR PASSION FOR CINEMA**

What's your state of mind right now?

I'm happy. I'm passionate about what I'm doing. I never had a plan B. Acting is the only thing I wanted to do all my life.

Is this a 'dream phase' in your career then?

My dream began in 2010 when my first film, *Love Sex Aur Dhokha*, released. My only dream was to be a film actor. But I'm living my dream. Yes, I feel good that my films are working. Success means to be able to do what makes you happy and to do that every day.

How does stardom feel?

What stardom? (*Smiles*) I'm just an actor. I don't believe I'm a star. To create different characters, to have fun with them and be honest with your work... is how I see it all. I don't compartmentalise my identity believing I am this or that.

But life surely seems to have changed for you...

Nothing's changed as such. Just that I'm working more now. So, I get few free days. Life is busier than it was. I'm getting a chance to be part of some big films and work with some big filmmakers. I want to work with every good director in the country.

From intense characters in *Shahid* and *CityLights*, you seem to have moved to light-hearted comedies... the recent being *Chhalaang*...

It isn't a conscious decision. *Bareilly Ki Barfi* is the first time the audience saw me in a different avatar. After that *Stree*, a horror comedy, happened. I don't plan my career. I do

whatever I find interesting. After *Judgementall Hai Kya*, I did the social comedy *Made In China*. Ramin Bahrani's *The White Tiger* is a drama. I want to do all genres. *Chhalaang* with Hansal Mehta happens to be a comedy.

What makes your relationship with Hansal Mehta special?

It's been six years of *Shahid* (2013) and *Chhalaang* is our fifth film together (*CityLights*, *Aligarh* and *Omerta* being the other three). He's like family. We understand each other. Ours is more of a personal bond than a professional one. We're like-minded. We want to tell certain stories together. We share a similar passion for cinema.

Today content is supreme. So what has changed – cinema or the audience?

Both have changed – cinema and the audience. Cinema includes the makers, writers, actors... The larger-than-life *masala* films will always remain because there's an audience for that. But the good thing is that the audience is also accepting content-driven films. Cinema is getting rooted, our characters are turning real and relatable.

Do intense roles affect you?

You do begin living some characters as I did during *Shahid* and *Omerta*. Playing Omar Saeed Shaikh (British terrorist of Pakistani descent) in *Omerta* was disturbing. It was a character filled with anger and hatred. I lived in a dark mental space during those three months. But then I did some light-hearted films like *Bareilly Ki Barfi* and *Stree*...

How do you unwind?

In the case of *Omerta*, once the film was done, I shaved off my beard. I saw a different guy in the mirror. I didn't see Omar anymore. Generally, I travel, I listen to music. But the simplest thing is to be with your friends, go out, celebrate and party.

Which was the toughest phase of your struggle...

The two years, before I got *Love Sex Aur Dhokha*, were difficult financially and emotionally. I didn't have money for meals. I'd share meals with friends. It was tough to get films. So I'd do skits at home to stay in touch with my craft.

Do you believe you should have got success earlier?

No I don't. I don't have any complaints. I'm a positive guy. I came with no plan. I just wanted to be on a film set every day. That's been happening since 2010.

What's your long-term goal?

I don't think about the

PATRALEKA'S AN IMPORTANT PART OF MY LIFE. SHE'S A BIG SUPPORT. SHE'S ALWAYS BEEN THERE FOR ME. **SHE HAS SEEN ME COMING FROM NOWHERE TO REACHING WHERE I AM TODAY. SHE'S ONE OF MY HONEST CRITICS**



With Patralekha



**IN ART, THERE
CAN BE NO
COMPETITION.
EVERY ARTISTE HAS
HIS OWN IDENTITY.
TODAY THERE ARE
SO MANY AVENUES.
THE OTT PLATFORM,
TELEVISION,
FILMS... THERE'S
SPACE FOR EVERYONE.
WE ALL CAN SURVIVE
HAPPILY**

future. You don't know how it's all gonna end. Yes, money is important. But I never wanted to be an actor just to earn money. I fell in love with the craft. It gives me so much happiness to be someone else in front of camera. I want to grow as an actor and push my boundaries.

Does competition bother you?

I don't believe in competition. Every actor is different. In art, there can be no competition. Every artiste is different. Each one has their own identity. Today there are so many avenues. There's space for everyone. We all can survive happily.

What was the most disturbing phase in life?

Losing your parents is the most difficult phase in anyone's life. That void remains. You can never get over the loss. Three years back, when I lost my mother, I was shooting for *Newton* (2017). Last September, I was shooting for *Roohi Afzana*, when my father (late Satyapal Yadav) passed away.

An advice they gave you...

Acting was the only thing they wanted me to do. They would say, "Follow your heart and work hard. There will be times when you might feel low. But look at the brighter side."

Tell us about Patralekha's role in your life...

She's an important part of my life. She's a big support. She's always been there always for me. She has seen me coming from nowhere to reaching where I am today. She's one of my honest critics. ■

“SOCIAL MEDIA HAS BECOME AN OBSESSION”

THE RAVISHING **RAVEENA TANDON** CASTS HER SPELL ON THE WEB.
RAGHUVENDRA SINGH MEETS THE ACTOR, WHO'S ENJOYING HER STINT
AS A WRITER AND PRODUCER OF THRILLERS

PHOTOGRAPHS: PAVITRR SAITH | STYLIST: SURINA KAKKAR | MAKE-UP: SHURA KHAN |
HAIR: BHAVIN CHUDASAMA |





Outfit: Limerick
Earrings: Misho Designs
Ring: Stac Jewellery

Raveena Tandon debuted with Salman Khan's *Patthar Ke Phool* in 1991 and walked away with the Filmfare Award for Lux New Face of the Year for her performance. Since then, the limelight has been her ally. The '90s saw her reign and impress with *Mohra*, *Dilwale*, *Laadla*, *Khiladiyon Ka Khiladi* and the cult comedy *Andaz Apna Apna* among others. Later, she wooed critics by treading on unconventional territory with *Shool*, *Satta*, *Dobara* and *Aks*, going on to win the National Award for *Daman: A Victim of Marital Violence*. Three decades into showbiz and the actor holds sway as was evident in the recent Marathi film *Maatr*, where she played an avenging mother. She will also be seen in *K.G.F: Chapter 2*, a Kannada period action film alongside Yash. What's also defied time are Raveena's item numbers that have been remixed and rebooted for millennials. And the *Mast Mast* girl seems to be enjoying the renaissance. Now, exploring a new facet, Raveena will be producing a web-series she has written for her banner AA Films. The show, based on multiple personality disorder, promises to be an edge-of-the-seat experience. After an exotic photo-session by photographer Pavitr Saith, Raveena Tandon unwinds and talks about her plans for the future...

You're all set to start a new journey as a writer-producer. Excited?

My father (Ravi Tandon) is a producer-director. So I've been familiar with production. I'm excited that there's good work happening on the OTT platform with unique scripts being written. It's exciting when a story you conceived comes alive. The web affords you greater freedom – to show what you want to and explore beyond the regular.

How did the idea of the story come to your mind?

Actually, two of my shows have been green-lit. One of them I had written in 2000. When I'd narrated it at that time to my friends, who're writers and directors, they said the Indian audience wasn't ready for it. It was ahead of its time. But with the advent of the web platform, you can now attempt so much. You're not restricted to just two hours as in a movie. You can experiment. I'm glad

that what I've written is now relevant.

Can you elaborate on the shows?

One is a psychological thriller, based on multiple personality disorder. The other is a crime thriller around teens. It's about problems that teenagers face like social media pressure, the extent of which they don't even realise.

Did you derive inspiration from your adolescent children, daughter Rasha and son Ranbir?

My kids are still too young to be on social media as such. So far, I've kept them away from it. But what I see around and read has helped me with the premise of the story.

Do you believe that life was simpler without social media?

Everything has its pros and cons. It can go both ways. Social media a blessing because you're out there and can reach out to people. You can avail of the information you want. Basically, I'm a private person. Most of the times, I'm urged by my team to post something. It becomes a must-do.

But yes, I do draw a line. I don't encourage my children to share things like, 'I'm eating this', 'I'm doing this'. Some people are social media savvy. They post things continuously. I wonder how they get the time to film themselves all the time and keep updating their accounts. Social media has become an obsession now. Their life is open for all. I prefer to keep mine private.

Earlier there was mystery around a star. Has social media taken that away?

I don't think so. The magic is still alive. Over exposure is definitely not good. But it's necessary to be visible.

Insta/Twitter/Snapchat... your favourite app?

I'm only on Insta and

Twitter. My Facebook page is handled by my digital team. Sadly, Twitter has become politicised. People are just waiting to pounce on you. You say anything and they twist it around to what they have assumed. Twitter has become politically divided.

WITH THE ADVENT OF THE WEB PLATFORM, YOU CAN NOW ATTEMPT SO MUCH... I'M GLAD THAT WHAT I'VE WRITTEN IS RELEVANT. ONE IS A PSYCHOLOGICAL THRILLER, BASED ON MULTIPLE PERSONALITY DISORDER. THE OTHER IS ABOUT PROBLEMS THAT TEENAGERS FACE LIKE SOCIAL MEDIA PRESSURE, THE EXTENT OF WHICH THEY'RE NOT EVEN AWARE OF



Sweater: Marks & Spencer
Joggers: Zara | Ring: Stac



Outfit: Bellicimo



Outfit: Mad Glam
Earrings and ring: Irasva jewellery
Shoes: Steve Madden

How do you handle trolls?

I don't take trolls seriously. Everyone has an opinion. Everyone sees things the way they want to see them. You cannot change everyone's viewpoint. You can only voice what you feel. Also, you can't please everyone. So one section is always going to disagree.

How much time do you take to write a caption

on Instagram?

(Laughs) Nowadays people write poetic captions. You can understand it's not original. It's taken from sites, which give you Insta captions. Most of the times, I write original stuff. I don't copy poetry, which everyone knows where it's coming from. I can't be pretentious. Living my life on social media is not me at all.

ANIL (THADANI, HUSBAND) WON'T HOLD HANDS WHEN PHOTOGRAPHERS ARE AROUND. THERE ARE MANY COUPLES, WHO ACT LOVEY DOVEY WHEN PICTURES ARE BEING TAKEN. BUT IN REALITY, YOU KNOW THE HUSBAND IS INVOLVED WITH SO MANY WOMEN. THE WIFE IS HIDING IT OR REFUSES TO ACKNOWLEDGE IT



Sweater and joggers: Zara
Chain: Stac jewellery

I DON'T TAKE TROLLS SERIOUSLY. EVERYONE HAS AN OPINION. EVERYONE SEES THINGS THE WAY THEY WANT TO SEE THEM. YOU CANNOT CHANGE THAT. YOU CAN ONLY VOICE WHAT YOU FEEL. ALSO, YOU CAN'T PLEASE EVERYONE

Do you take suggestions from your husband (Anil Thadani, distributor) before posting something on social media?

Anil doesn't know the ABC of social media. He's not interested in it. He says why do we have to showcase our life for others? I do agree with that. I find it funny when couples send messages to each other on social media. (Laughs) I wonder *subah ghar par mile nahi the kya?* Some emotions are private. To make a display of it is not Anil's swag. He does things beautifully, personally and privately rather than for public display. So that people can then comment, 'Oh how sweet!' It's something we've never done.

What's the most romantic thing he has done for you?

It's the things he does on an everyday basis. Chocolates, flowers and gifts are not what romance is only about. For instance, when I go for a blood test, he will accompany me putting aside all his work. That's more real than anything else. I suffered a shoulder injury when I was judging *Nach Baliye 9*. The physiotherapy session was painful. He'd insist on accompanying me no matter how much I discouraged him. The way he is with me, the way he is with our kids... it's so special. I don't know how to express it. To celebrate our 15th wedding anniversary, just he and I took off to the Maldives

without the kids. We had an amazing time. Everything about that trip was so romantic.

Who's more romantic?

I'm romantic in the *Mills & Boon* kind of way. He's romantic in a real way. He's the 'real romantic'. He won't hold hands when photographers are around just to show people what a great couple we make. There are many couples, who act lovey dovey when pictures are being taken. But in reality, you know what's actually happening. You know the husband is involved with so many women. The wife is hiding it or refuses to acknowledging it. Ours is not that kind of a relationship.



**I FIND IT FUNNY
WHEN COUPLES SEND
MESSAGES TO EACH
OTHER ON SOCIAL
MEDIA. I WONDER
SUBAH GHAR PAR
MILE NAHI THE KYA?
SOME EMOTIONS ARE
PRIVATE. ANIL DOES
THINGS BEAUTIFULLY,
PERSONALLY AND
PRIVATELY RATHER
THAN FOR
PUBLIC DISPLAY**

Outfit: Nadine | Earrings: Malkish jewels | Shoes: Tresmode

When are we going to see you back on the big screen?

Well, I've signed two films now. I'm shooting for Prashanth Neel's Kannada actioner, *K.G.F Chapter 2* now. It toplines Yash and Sanjay Dutt. I'll be starting another one in March.

Are you ready to face the competition again?

At the stage where I am in my career, there's no rat race, there's no competition, no politics. If the role is challenging enough – whether in a film or web show – I'll do it. If I wanted to see myself every Friday, I'd have signed every film that came my way. But I'm not in that space at all. Cinema is going through an interesting period with novel content. There are so many new directors doing great work. I'd love to work with Meghna Gulzar. She makes simple but significant stories.

Your popular tracks like *Tu cheez badi hai mast (Mohra)*, *Ankhiyon se goli maare (Dulhe Raje)* and *Shehar ki ladki (Rakshak)* are being recreated. Are you okay with it?

It's great. It gives a new life to the songs. These numbers from the '90s have become classics. They've passed the test of time. The new generation is enjoying them. When you revisit the track with a new tune, it adds a new life to it. I loved the new version of *Ankhiyon se goli maare* in *Simmba*. It's played at *shaadis* and *sangeets*. Ultimately, it's my song. I end up owning it. ■



SHARVARI:

Hair: Priyanka Borkar
Make-up: Savleen Manchanda
Dress: Reem Acra
Shoes: Public Desire
Rings: Diamantina & Gehna

SUNNY KAUSHAL:

Hair: Tushar Shinde
Make-up: Sajid Khan
Suit: NM Studio
Shirt: Rohit Gandhi & Rahul Khanna
Shoes: Alberto Torresi
Watch: Guess

GUNS AND ROSES

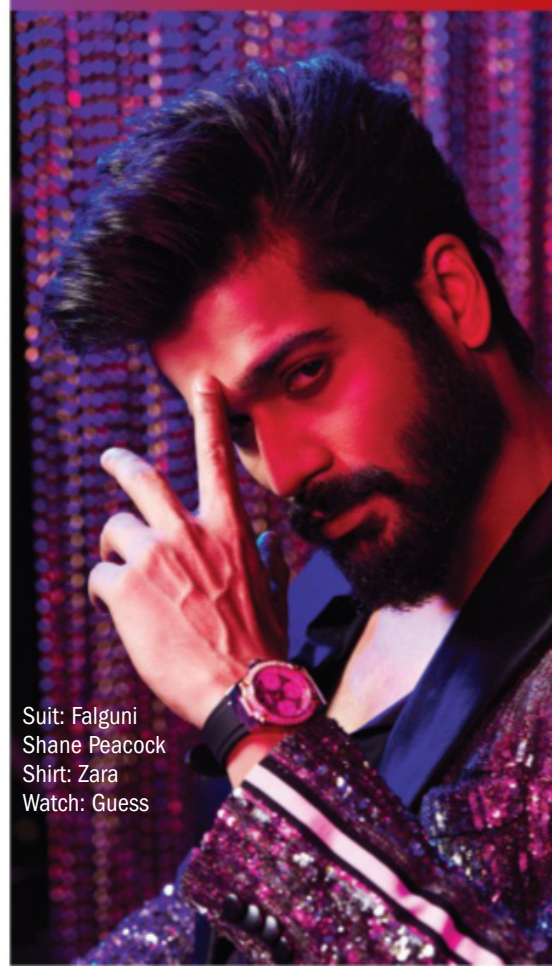
PLAYING SOLDIERS HIT BY LOVE AMIDST BULLETS, **SHARVARI** AND **SUNNY KAUSHAL** ARE PART OF KABIR KHAN'S WEB SERIES, *THE FORGOTTEN ARMY: AZAADI KE LIYE*. **ANALITA SETH** CHATS WITH THE PROMISING ACTORS

PHOTOGRAPHS: MEETESH TANEJA | STYLIST: MOHIT RAI | LOCATION COURTESY: THE PARK, MUMBAI

Taking off from a documentary he made 20 years ago, Kabir Khan's *The Forgotten Army: Azaadi Ke Liye* is a five-episode web-series streamed on Amazon Prime from January 2020. It's an ode to the 'forgotten' soldiers of the Netaji Subhash Chandra-led Indian National Army, who sought to overthrow the British government after World War II. The lesser known story of the Rani of Jhansi regiment, the first female infantry in the world, is another pillar of the narrative. While at its core, *The Forgotten Army* is the love story of Colonel Surinder Sodhi (Sunny Kaushal) and Maya Srinivasan (Sharvari) in times of war, it also raises questions about identity, independence and the idea of motherland... Shot across Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and also Mumbai... the series, say Sunny and Sharvari, is not about winning or losing. Rather it's about investing in what you believe in – be it love or war...



“MY CHARACTER MAYA, IN *THE FORGOTTEN ARMY*, IS A PHOTOGRAPHER. SHE HEARS NETAJI SUBHASH CHANDRA BOSE’S SPEECH AND JOINS THE AZAD HIND FAUJ. SHE’S PART OF THE RANI OF JHANSI REGIMENT, WHICH WAS ONE-OF-ITS-KIND MADE UP OF FEMALE SOLDIERS”
— **SHARVARI**



Suit: Falguni
Shane Peacock
Shirt: Zara
Watch: Guess

When did you decide to become an actor?

SHARVARI: There was no moment of epiphany as such. As a child, I always loved to be on stage and perform. In school, I'd attend drama classes. I always wanted to be an actor. But when I won the Fresh Face competition in 2014, it set the ball rolling.

SUNNY KAUSHAL: I was pursuing Chartered Accountancy. But I've always been inclined towards the performing arts. We used to take part in cultural festivals. Our dad (action director Sham Kaushal), being in a creative profession, had erratic hours of work. So a 9 to 5 job was never on my mind. When I was about to clear my graduation, I realised I didn't want to be a CA. I had a soul-searching moment. I realised I enjoyed entertaining people. I dropped plans of becoming a CA and decided to join the industry.

The definition of the Hindi film hero and heroine has changed. Is it tougher to make a mark today?

SHARVARI: Everyone is working hard and giving their 100 per cent. That's the only way to be successful. I guess this question would be answered better by someone, who was part of commercial cinema and is now moving into unconventional lanes. In fact, it's exciting to make a debut in such times.

SUNNY: I agree with Sharvari. Cinema has always been a medium to share good stories. What was once considered as art cinema is now part of the mainstream. It's the audience that has changed. The audience is accepting real stories and wants to see real people on screen. They want to relate to what they see on screen. It's progression and evolution of art.

How did *The Forgotten Army* come to both of you?

SHARVARI: I was auditioning with Mukesh Chhabra. There were a lot of people and we didn't know that we were called to audition for *The Forgotten Army*. We found out later about the project and that it was being directed by Kabir Khan. There



“NETAJI’S INA FOUGHT FOR FREEDOM. PEOPLE FROM EVERY GENERATION CAN RELATE TO THAT. NO COUNTRY IS EVER PERFECT. IT HAS TO EVOLVE AND WE HAVE TO WORK TOWARDS IT... IT’S NOT ABOUT WINNING OR LOSING. IT’S ABOUT INVESTING IN WHAT YOU BELIEVE IN” – **SUNNY**



Suit: Falguni
Shane Peacock
Polo: Zara
Pants: Amaare
Shoes: Christian
Louboutin
Pendant: Misho

was a shortlist round where Kabir sir had chosen two to three actors per character. Mukesh sir and he tested each actor. Luckily, Sunny, Rohit (Chaudhury) and I auditioned together. We bagged the parts of Lieutenant Sodhi, Arshad and Maya respectively.

SUNNY: I was shooting for *Gold* in Patiala when I got a call from Mukesh Chhabra. He told me about the web series and that it was being directed by Kabir Khan. During the fourth round of auditions, I had to say the lines, “*Hindustan hamari kurbani ko yaad rakhega, samajh nahi payega par yaad zaroor rakhega.*” We three were grouped together and luckily got selected.

Tell us something about your characters...

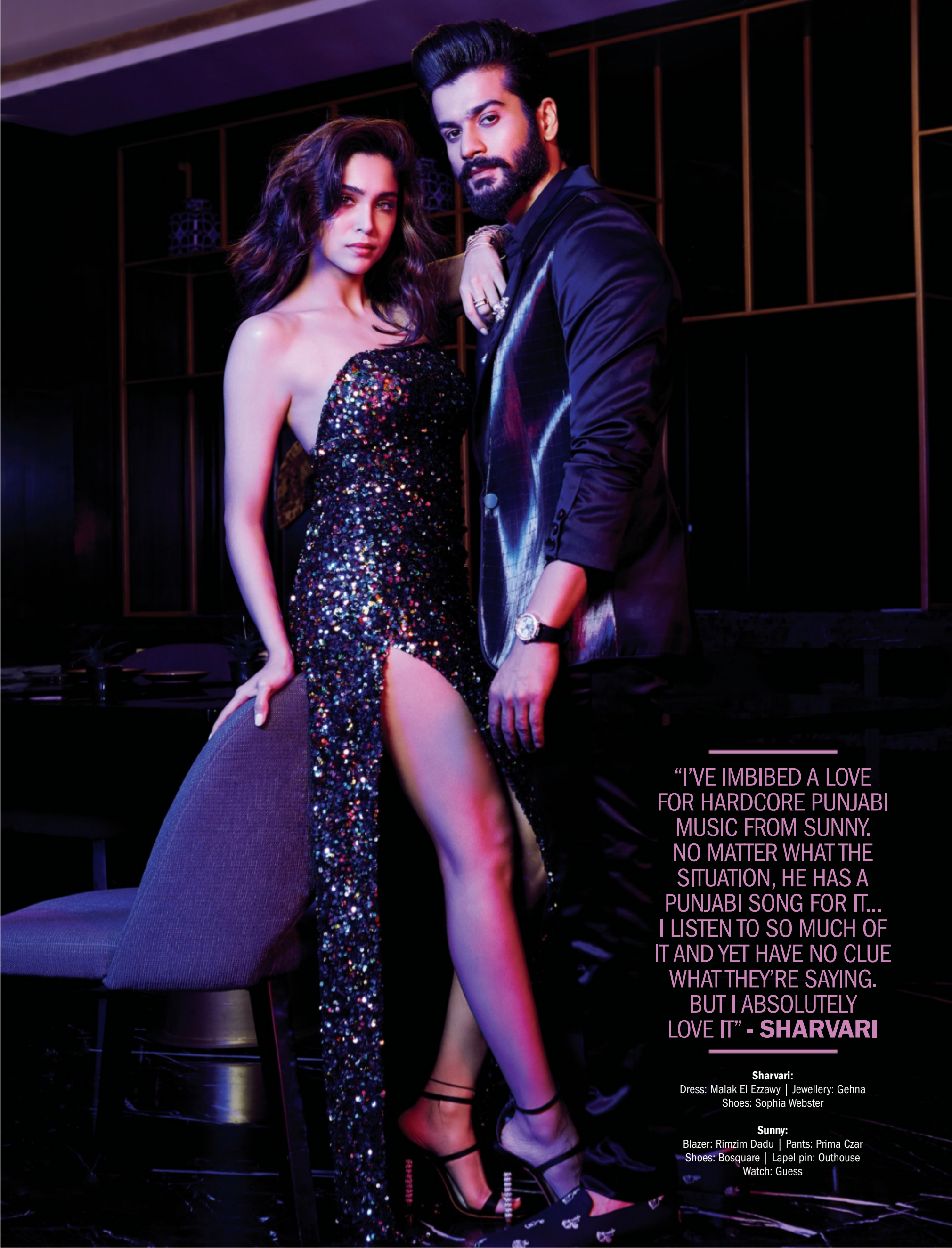
SHARVARI: My character Maya is a photographer. She hears Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's speech and makes up her mind to join the Azad Hind Fauj. She's part of the Rani of Jhansi regiment, which was a one-of-its-kind made up by female soldiers.

SUNNY: I play Lieutenant Surrender Sodhi in the British Indian Army. He believes his army is the British Indian Army and doesn't give the freedom struggle much thought. When the Japanese army takes over them, the prisoners of war are given two choices. To either remain in the camps or join the Azad Hind Fauj and fight to free your motherland. He joins the army only to survive. Later, he realises what it actually means. After Netaji's speech and with Maya's help, he realises that civilians from another country, who have never seen India, are so passionate about freeing the country.

Is the series relevant in the current political scenario of the country?

SHARVARI: The current political situation of the country is sensitive. It would be disrespectful to comment without having complete knowledge and knowing the complete picture.

SUNNY: The INA fought for freedom.



“I’VE IMBIBED A LOVE
FOR HARDCORE PUNJABI
MUSIC FROM SUNNY.
NO MATTER WHAT THE
SITUATION, HE HAS A
PUNJABI SONG FOR IT...
I LISTEN TO SO MUCH OF
IT AND YET HAVE NO CLUE
WHAT THEY’RE SAYING.
BUT I ABSOLUTELY
LOVE IT” - **SHARVARI**

Sharvari:

Dress: Malak El Ezzawy | Jewellery: Gehna
Shoes: Sophia Webster

Sunny:

Blazer: Rimzim Dadu | Pants: Prima Czar
Shoes: Bosquare | Lapel pin: Outhouse
Watch: Guess



Sharvari:

Dress: Rudraksh
Shoes: Sophia Webster

Sunny:

Suit: Falguni Shane Peacock
Polo: Zara | Pants: Amaare
Shoes: Christian Louboutin
Pendant: Misho

They fought for the rights of the country and for it to be free. People from every generation can relate to that and find it relevant. No country is ever perfect. It has to evolve and we have to work towards it. Even if the country is not amidst political unrest, there will always be something to fight for. That's the story. It's not about winning or losing. It's about investing in what you believe in.

What did you learn from each other during *The Forgotten Army*?

SHARVARI: I've imbibed a love for hardcore Punjabi music from Sunny. No matter what the situation, he will have a Punjabi song for it. Now, I'm hooked to it. I listen to so much of it and yet have no clue what they're saying. But I absolutely love it.

SUNNY: I saw her on the first day and I was blown away. She's so relentless with what she wants to do. It was so inspiring to watch that. She's also not afraid of telling people what she feels. She doesn't turn rude or throw a tantrum. But she does get assertive.

How has Amazon Prime changed the viewing experience?

SHARVARI: For viewers, it's a blessing. Whether you're at home or travelling, you can watch something interesting on Amazon Prime. It's a time saver. It also lets one explore genres and actors. It's not always mainstream. It's totally content-driven. For actors, it means more work. For viewers it offers more content to watch. There's something for everyone at home and on one platform.

SUNNY: Amazon Prime has completely changed the game. Many believe that the OTT format will take over cinema, which I don't. Because 70mm is 70mm. There are things that you can only enjoy on the big screen. But yes many people, including me, wait for some movies to drop on these platforms. It's all about convenience. It provides so much more for the audience to consume. It widens your



"I SAW SHARVARI ON THE FIRST DAY AND I WAS BLOWN AWAY. SHE'S SO RELENTLESS WITH WHAT SHE WANTS TO DO. IT WAS SO INSPIRING TO SEE THAT. SHE'S ALSO NOT AFRAID OF TELLING PEOPLE WHAT SHE FEELS. SHE DOESN'T TURN RUDE OR THROW A TANTRUM. BUT SHE GETS ASSERTIVE" - SUNNY



perspective. That's why cinema is also changing so rapidly. It has encouraged a change in content.

Sharvari, how does it feel to be part of *Bunty Aur Babli 2*...

As a young girl, I thought of it as a cult film. I'm a huge fan of Rani (Mukerji) ma'am. To be part of the franchise, is extremely exciting. It's been great fun to shoot it too. It's relevant in today's day and age as well.

Sunny, your recent film, *Bhangra Paa Le*, won you praise. How has the mainstream space been for you?

It's fortunate that I'm playing varied characters. My other two films, Dinesh Vijan's love story *Shiddat* and the socio-political *Hurdang*, directed by Nikhil Bhatt are different too. It's an exciting time to be an actor.

Sunny, how do you feel about being compared to brother Vicky Kaushal?

I do not fear being compared to Vicky (Kaushal). Even the reviews of *The Forgotten Army* aren't comparing his act in *Uri: The Surgical Strike* with mine. Most of them are just happy that both of us are doing good stories and films. In terms of him making a mark, I'm proud of him. I have seen the hard work he puts in. I don't feel a sense of competition at all. Ultimately, it's your own journey and the trajectory is yours to make.

If you were to pick a character you'd wish to play...

SHARVARI: I'd love to portray Alia Bhatt's character in *Raazi*.

I completely fell in love with Sehmat and what Alia did with her. I wish I'd auditioned for the role.

SUNNY: I'd want to play Aamir Khan's character DJ from *Rang De Basanti*. There was something so endearing about him. At one point he is this casual guy and the next moment, he wants to change the world. A man, who suddenly discovers himself and is ready to give his life for the cause... it was so beautiful to see that.

The Walt at
THE Park Mumbai

JAZZ BY THE BAY

Filmfare shot the stunning duo, **Sharvari** and **Sunny Kaushal**, at THE Park Mumbai, an ultra luxury hotel in Juhu

THE PARK Hotels celebrated its 50th anniversary last year across six cities. Pioneers of luxury boutique hotels in India, THE Park Hotels brings its legendary service to the city of dreams, Mumbai, with the launch of its newest property. Strategically located at Juhu Tara Road, THE Park Mumbai is set to bring contemporary design, rejuvenating spaces, innovative dining and mesmerising entertainment into this upscale and coveted area of the city.

Close to Juhu Beach

and overlooking the mesmerising Arabian Sea, the hotel is an uber-cool retreat. A striking charcoal grey facade is punctuated by burnt orange and fuchsia windows that perfectly reflect the spectacular sunsets. The 60-room design hotel has six categories of rooms. Each affords a spectacular view either of the Arabian Sea, the city or the historic Juhu airfield. The rooms and studio suites have been designed with a monochromatic colour palette with world-class amenities.

Meishi, an elegant

The Park Mumbai - Meishi





Sharvari and Sunny Kaushal at Meishi



The Lobby



Rooms and suites

space, off the lobby is an all-day dining fusion restaurant – serving Japanese, Thai, Chinese, and a hint of Indian cuisine; using fresh and organic ingredients to pamper your tastebuds. The Saffron Room, a 2500 sq. ft. banqueting space on the first floor, is a perfect place for social events and corporate meetings. The hall has two different

types of lighting to enhance and make events even more spectacular.

The Walt, our dramatic whisky bar with a cosy alfresco patio, has an array of blends and signature cocktails. This space has been inspired by Walter, seafarer, musician and lover of things, who travelled the world collecting memories and tastes. The Walt is his special place reflecting his favourite flavours, drinks and music. *Filmfare* shot Sharvari and Sunny Kaushal, who pair in *The Forgotten Army – Azaadi Ke Liye* series, at the Meishi. The photoshoot reflected the sensibilities and sophistication of the maestro. With aesthetic interiors and an extremely efficient staff, the hotel provided the perfect background for a glamorous shoot.

Situated in prime locations across India including, Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai, Navi Mumbai, New Delhi and Visakhapatnam, THE Park Hotels, boast of some of India's most inventive restaurants, liveliest nightclubs, award-winning spas and health clubs.



Rooms and suites

“ CLOSE TO JUHU BEACH AND OVERLOOKING THE ARABIAN SEA, THE PARK MUMBAI IS AN UBER-COOL RETREAT... SHARVARI AND SUNNY KAUSHAL SHOT AT THE WALT, THE DRAMATIC WHISKY BAR WITH AN ARRAY OF BLENDS AND SIGNATURE COCKTAILS ”

“I love men”

FEMINIST SHE IS. BUT **BHUMI PEDNEKAR** CAN'T IMAGINE A WORLD WITHOUT MEN, SAYS **SUMAN SHARMA**

Bhumi Pednekar personifies the new age heroine. Unconventional. Unapologetic. Unencumbered. An actor, who celebrates the perfection in the imperfections. Right from her debut *Dum Laga Ke Haisha*, she has dodged the typical and embraced the taboo, *Toilet: Ek Prem Katha* and *Shubh Mangal Saavdhan* reaffirming that she was not about chance but choice. No wonder her small-town characters have established a pan-India connect. Last year, her eclectic choices – *Sonchiriya*, *Saand Ki Aankh* and *Bala* garnered rave reviews, while *Pati Patni Aur Woh* explored her massy mojo. The year 2020 holds a lot more. Alankrita Shrivastava's *Dolly Kitty Aur Woh Chamakte Sitaare*, a satire, pairs her with Konkona Sen Sharma. While Akshay Kumar's *Durgavati*, directed by G. Ashok, has her venture into the world of horror. Even her cameos in *Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan* and *Bhoot: The Haunted Ship* promise to be engaging. “My mood for the next decade #HappyGirl...,” wrote Bhumi on Instagram welcoming the life ahead. Prophetic that...

Last year was a bumper one for you...

I'm truly overwhelmed. All my films, *Sonchiriya*, *Saand Ki Aankh*, *Bala* and *Pati Patni Aur Woh* made an impact and gave me something in return. I've been so busy that I haven't got the chance to sit back and let it all sink in. I thank the audiences for giving me so much love. Finally, I've cemented my position. People now have faith in me. With every film, I've grown humbler and less selfish. I value what life's given me.

Hindi cinema is offering great opportunities for female actors. Agree?

Yes of course. I've always been part of movies where the female lead contributed substantially to the film. Great content is being written for actors. Cinema is breaking every stereotype. Or else I wouldn't have been able to come this far. My colleagues Alia Bhatt, Taapsee Pannu... are doing gender empowering films, where women are celebrated. I'm lucky to be around in such times.



Pati Patni Aur Woh

“I'm living my dream. I love my job. I don't ever want to be jobless. That's why I work so hard. I want to be better than my last film. I don't look at the length of my role. I see the character. I want the audience to remember the name of every character I play”



How do you reinvent yourself with each character?

I'm a Bombay girl. I've had a sheltered upbringing. Playing small-town characters is surely difficult for me. It requires work. I'm proud that I can transform myself into these people. While my characters belong to a certain socio-economic background, they're all different. Also, I look for characters, not projects. For instance, I played a 70-year-old in *Saand Ki Aankh*. In *Sonchiriya*, I played a 28-year-old with a 15-year-old child. I played a dark-complexioned girl in *Bala*. In *Dolly Kitty Aur Woh Chamakte Sitare*, I'm playing a 20-year-old. You see a different shade of me in every film. That's been a conscious choice. I don't want to be repetitive. Filmmakers have understood that I don't mind experimenting. *Dum Laga Ke Haisha* was the biggest experiment I've done so far. People can relate to the characters Ayushmann (Khurrana) and I play. That's why these films work.

Did you enjoy your sexy avatar in *Pati Patni Aur Woh* (PPAW)?

I want to maintain a balance. That's why I did *PPAW*. It came as a breather after the intense *Sonchiriya*. I came closer to the quintessential heroine. Today the definition of a Hindi film heroine has changed. You don't have to wear a skimpy saree amidst the mountains of Switzerland. A heroine is someone people can look up to and be inspired. Having said that, I've grown up watching these beautiful women, Raveena Tandon, Karisma Kapoor,

Kareena Kapoor Khan, Priyanka Chopra... I want to do their kind of cinema. That's why I did *Ankhiyon se goli maare* in *PPAW*. *Mujhe dance karne ka chaska lag gaya hai*.

Has success increased the pressure to score each time?

The pressure is exactly what it was since day one. I'm living my dream. I love my job. I enjoy it. I don't ever want to be jobless. That's why I work so hard. Whether a film works or not is not in my hands. I just want to be better than my last film. I don't look at the length of my role.

I consider the character and how much opportunity I have to shine playing it. I want the audience to remember the name of every character I play.

What do you owe your confidence to?

It has a lot to do with my upbringing. My parents instilled a confidence in me. Whatever shape or size I may be, in my mind I'm the best. I'm not being overconfident but I believe every girl should feel like that. You need to value yourself, be yourself and respect yourself.

Are you a feminist?

Of course. Every girl should consider herself a feminist. Being a feminist, it doesn't mean I dislike or hate men. Both the sexes need to co-exist. I love men. But I believe in equal rights and opportunities for both the genders.

What does success actually mean to you?

Success means getting better opportunities – be it in your career or choices.



Saand Ki Aankh

Otherwise, I'm still the same person. Success has not changed my core. I still fight with my sister. I still do the things I did earlier. I enjoy roadside *pani puri* and *vada pav*. I travel by autorickshaw. I visit my college to meet the faculties. But I hope I've grown as a human being. That I've become more mature, empathetic, compassionate. I hope I've become a better version of myself.

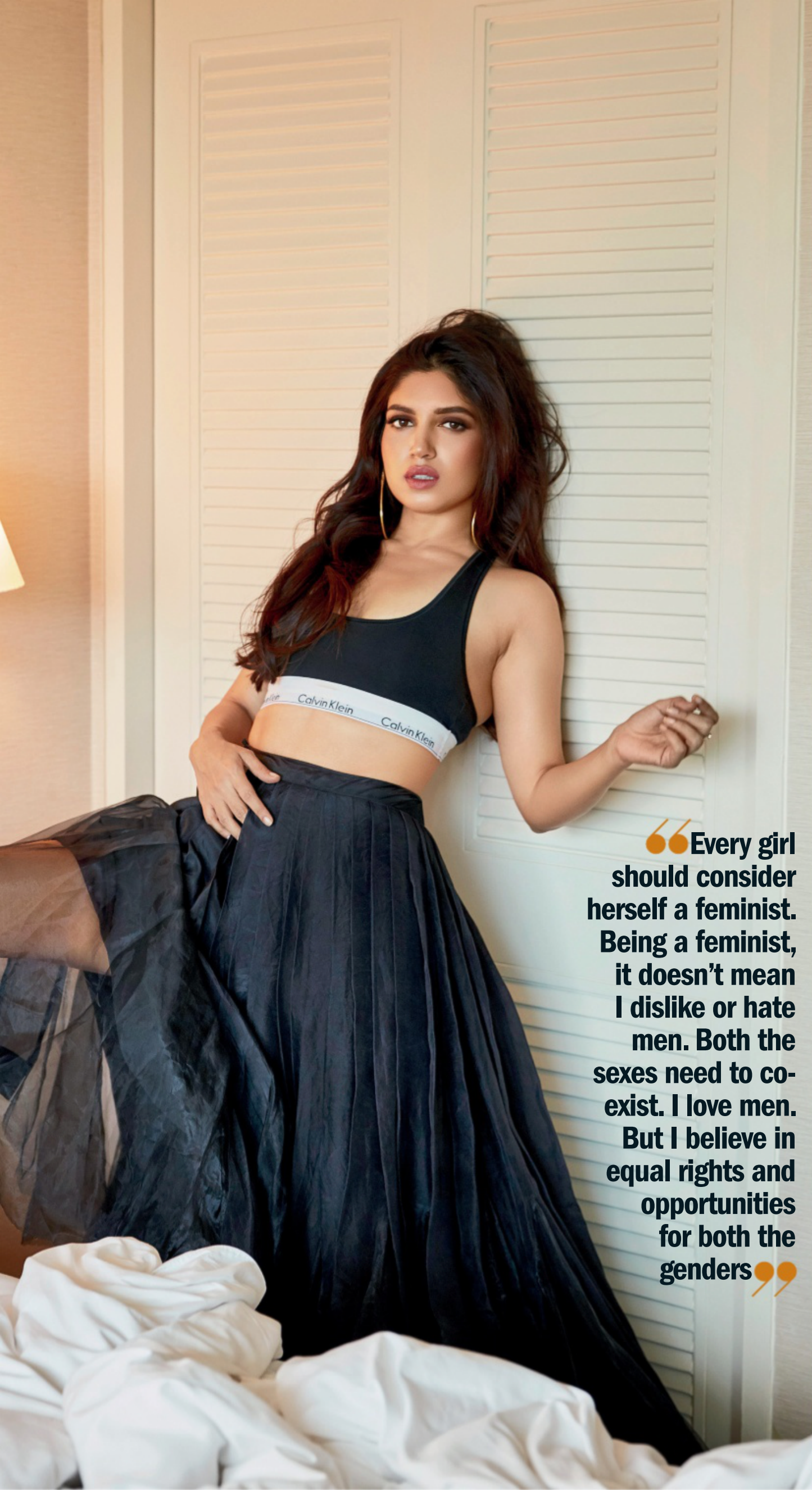
Success comes with responsibility. Right?

Absolutely. I've achieved name, fame and success. But with this comes a responsibility. You've got to give back to society. That's why I chose to associate with the pan India campaign Climate Warrior (raises awareness on environment conservation and global warming). If the Universe has given me so much, I must give back. True success is only when you can impact lives.

What's the best part of being an actress?

The love you get from people. I want my fans to love me more and more. No matter what I receive, it seems less. Then I feel, 'Oh my God! I should work harder for them.'





“Every girl should consider herself a feminist. Being a feminist, it doesn’t mean I dislike or hate men. Both the sexes need to co-exist. I love men. But I believe in equal rights and opportunities for both the genders”

What’s the scary part?

The greatest fear is that one day I could just turn mediocre. The biggest challenge is to keep improving. I’m insecure as an actor. Every time I watch a film, I am like ‘Bhumi, you could have done better’. Being self-critical is essential for self-improvement.

How is the real Bhumi?

Mostly, I’ve played humble characters. Off screen I believe in pleasures. I like dressing up. I like investing time in self-love. That’s why I’m a confident person. But the reason I’ve stayed balanced is due to the people around me. Be it my manager, my hair and make-up team, everyone has the permission to give me a reality check. We share that kind of relationship. The day I have only yes men around me, the day I believe I’m superior and everyone else is a fool, it will be the end of this beautiful journey. It’s just not my journey, it’s also that of my family. Everyone has invested so much in me. I don’t want to disappoint them. There are bad days and there are good days. You should learn from the bad days and not get overconfident with the good ones.

Lastly, what would be an ideal relationship for you?

In my fantasy world, an ideal relationship would be, where there’s a lot of love and respect. Where there’s friendship, a feeling of completeness. When I’m with my partner, I shouldn’t feel the need for anyone else. But it doesn’t always happen like that. ■

“MY WIFE IS EXTREMELY STRICT...”

TELUGU SUPERSTAR **ALLU ARJUN** REVEALS HE'S A FAMILY MAN IN AN EXCLUSIVE CHAT WITH **RAGHUVENDRA SINGH**

His recent screen outing after two years, Trivkram Srinivas' *Ala Vaikunthapurramuloo*, had fans thronging to the theatres. Garnering around 200 crores, it's said to be Allu Arjun's biggest hit so far. Unencumbered by the hysteria, the 'Stylish Star' is busy working on Sukumar's tentatively titled *Seshachalam* based on the sandalwood mafia in Chittoor and Venu Sriram's *Icon*, a romantic entertainer. Icon he truly is. Born in a film family, Arjun's interface with the camera began as a baby in Chiranjeevi's *Vijetha*. Meandering briefly towards animation as a youngster, he eventually returned home... to films, debuting with K. Raghavendra Rao's *Gangotri* (2003). Since then the Bunny's been unstoppable. Thanks to satellite and social media, his films and fame have reached the remotest corners of the world including the sandy ridges of the Middle East. His swagger and sex-appeal having a universal idiom. Grandson of actor Allu Rama Lingaiah, son of filmmaker Allu Aravind, nephew to Chiranjeevi and actor/filmmaker Pawan Kalyan, cousin of Ram Charan and older brother of Allu Sirish... Allu Arjun may belong to a film clan, but his charisma is his own.



With wife
Sneha Reddy

Given the success ratio of your films, you seem to have cracked the secret of a blockbuster...

No one in the world knows the secret to a blockbuster. You just have to follow your gut feeling. Sometimes you're wrong, sometimes you're right. Generally, when you follow your heart, you end up being right.

Does it entail pressure to do better each time?

Absolutely. I make efforts to make every film, every performance better than the previous one. I push myself

to the maximum limit.

What is viewed as pressure is also a kind of pleasure. At the end of the day it's only about enhancing yourself as an actor.

Coming from a film family, did you always want to be an actor?

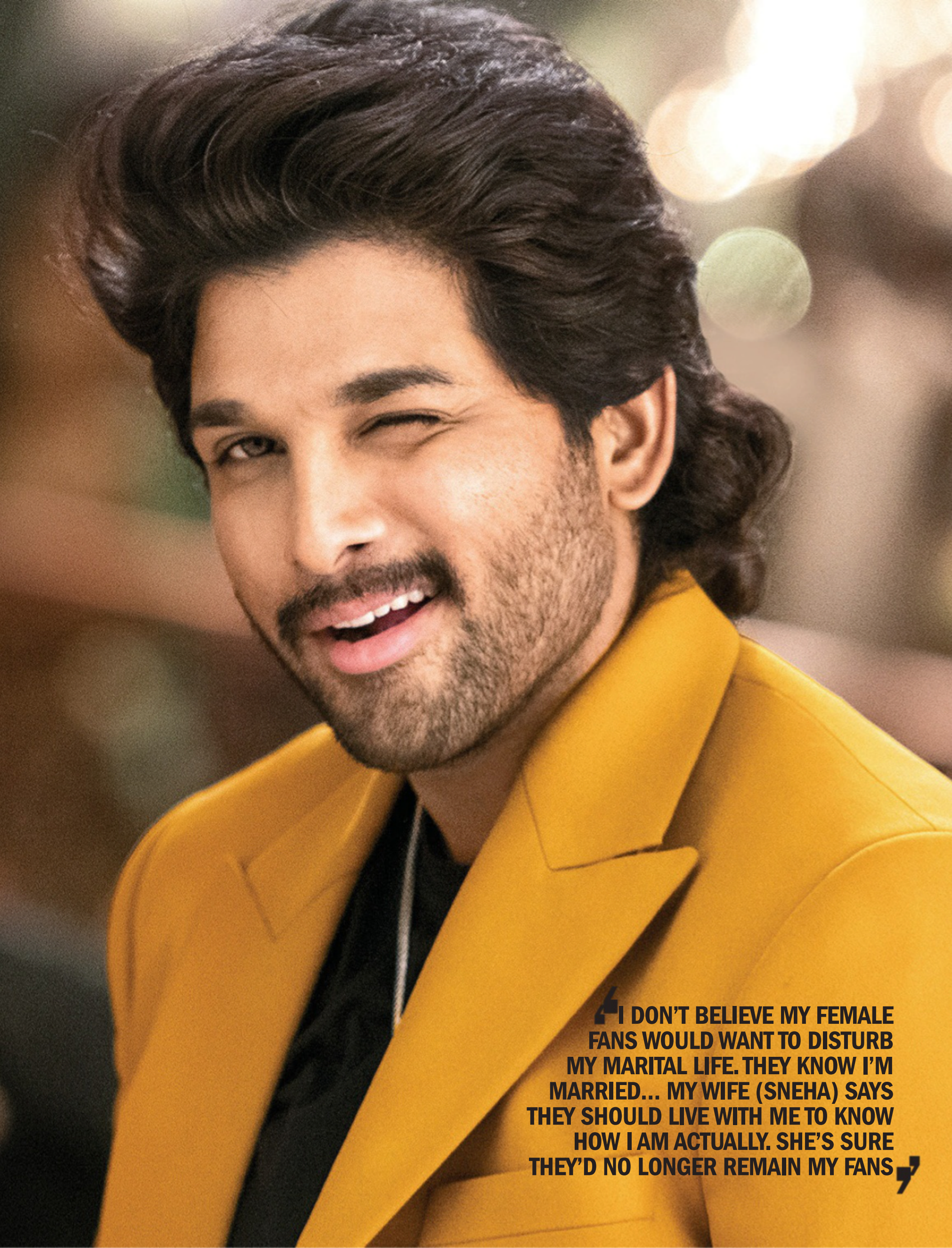
Initially, I wanted to be an animator. But soon my interest fizzled out.. When you're born in a film family, you're influenced by the environment. Wherever you go, you're bound to return to films. This place has some kind of gravity.

Do you have a sense of competition vis-à-vis your star relatives?

Not at all. It's your own journey regardless of the competition. From the outside it seems, everyone is part of the race, running together. But from the inside, you're running with your own self, in keeping with your capacity.

You've a fan following in the Hindi heartland. Any plans to debut in Hindi films?

Hindi films are on my wish-list for sure. Especially, when you have so much appreciation



**“I DON'T BELIEVE MY FEMALE
FANS WOULD WANT TO DISTURB
MY MARITAL LIFE. THEY KNOW I'M
MARRIED... MY WIFE (SNEHA) SAYS
THEY SHOULD LIVE WITH ME TO KNOW
HOW I AM ACTUALLY. SHE'S SURE
THEY'D NO LONGER REMAIN MY FANS.”**

coming your way. Cinema is a universal language even though culture differs from region to region. Eventually, the content has to touch the heart. Also, Hindi satellite is a huge source of revenue for us. But to step into Hindi films, I need the right filmmaker and the right script. Some offers did come along but nothing exceptional as such. Maybe, it's time for me to move things and work around it.

How has Telugu cinema evolved down the years?

Every industry has two strands - commercial and parallel. These streams are interdependent and draw from each other in terms of actors and technicians. In the last decade, parallel cinema in Telugu films has grown. The best example would be *Mahanati* (based on legendary actress Savithri). It's not a typical commercial film. But it won three National awards. *Baahubali*, a commercial film, had great content. These two films are classic examples of the blend.

Your fans go berserk to catch a glimpse of you. How does it feel?

I've been around for 15 years and have experienced this madness often. It's something we actors work day and night for. All the sacrifices we make is to witness this madness. So when it happens, we embrace it and live every moment of it. For you it may appear as 'madness'. But for me it's pure love.

A crazy fan moment...

Recently, my crew informed me that some



“WE ACTORS MAKE SACRIFICES TO WITNESS THIS ‘MADNESS’ FROM OUR FANS. SO WHEN IT HAPPENS, WE EMBRACE IT AND LIVE EVERY MOMENT OF IT. FOR YOU IT MAY APPEAR AS ‘MADNESS’. BUT FOR ME IT’S PURE LOVE”

fans from the Middle East had come to Hyderabad just to see me. They had been waiting for almost two days in the hope of catching a glimpse of me. I invited them in and offered them tea. They shared that they had a collection of my pictures and videos back home. They watched my films even though they didn't understand

the language. It was a humbling experience.

Do you maintain a connect with your fans?

Yes. In the South, we remain closely connected with our fans. We feel a sense of responsibility towards them. Even if they misbehave, we feel responsible. I even apologise on their behalf.

I ask them to exercise restraint. But I always stand up for them. I'm grateful to my fans for making me who I am.

How do you handle all the female attention around you?

(Laughs) My wife (Sneha Reddy) is extremely strict. Also, I don't believe my female fans would want to disturb my marital life.

WHAT IS AVAXHOME?

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They know I'm married and have kids (son Ayaan and daughter Arha). My wife says they should live with me to know how I am actually. She's sure they'd no longer remain my fans.

Are you a romantic?

Yes, I am. My wife will vouch for that. For instance, recently, we had planned a holiday. But I was caught up with work. My wife and kids had to carry on without me. But somehow, my work got

to that and deal with it with humility. Having said that, I don't videograph and share every moment of my life. I like sharing some moments on social media. It's better the kids get used to this. So that they don't lose their balance later. They won't be taken in by the euphoria.

Do you keep your children in mind when you sign a film?

I feel responsible not only towards my kids but towards society at large.

IT'S YOUR OWN JOURNEY REGARDLESS OF THE COMPETITION. FROM THE OUTSIDE IT SEEMS EVERYONE IS PART OF THE RACE, RUNNING TOGETHER. BUT FROM THE INSIDE, YOU'RE RUNNING WITH YOUR OWN SELF



Ala Vaikunthapurramuloo

postponed. I surprised them with an unplanned visit. They were so glad.

Your daughter Arha's video doing the dosa step in the Ramuloo ramulaa song (Ala Vaikunthapurramuloo) became a rage. Are you okay with children coming under the media glare?

Whether they share a video or not, my children will come under the media glare. They're children in a special situation. Media glare does have an impact on them. They have to adapt

What I do has a huge impact not just on my kids but on youngsters. What I do on screen may appear fun. But it isn't when I do it. Generally, I do share the day's happenings with my children. I tell them about the film, the location, the song... anything that could be of interest to them.

You're a superstar on social media as well. What are your views about social media?

It all depends on how you use the platform. It's a fantastic opportunity for good things. If used

wrongly it can have an undesirable effect. I'm a positive person. I don't step into any controversy. Of late, I'm drawn to Instagram and Pinterest. I'm not much of a Tiktok person. I like pictures. I'm an Instagram addict.

You have won five Filmfare Awards. How much do awards mean to you?

Honestly, the first time I won a Filmfare Award for *Parugu*, I was pleasantly surprised. Later, I got it for *Vedam*. *Race Gurram* was one film for which I truly wanted the Black Lady. I appreciate awards. I feel happier when it's given to the right person. I was so happy when

Vijay Deverakonda won the award for *Arjun Reddy*. I'd also liked Jr NTR's performance in *Jai Lava Kusa*. (Smiles) I'm extremely glad when I'm honoured with a Filmfare because I know I'm the most deserving. That's as honest as I can be.

You've worked with Hindi actresses like Rakul Preet Singh and Pooja Hegde. What makes them special?

Everyone has their strengths. South Indian girls can pull off rustic characters well. B-town girls ace glamorous roles. They have a 'cosmo' vibe. They've been born and brought up in that kind of ethos. They reflect that on screen.

What tips do you give to your younger brother, actor Allu Sirish?

Oh, I keep giving tips all the time. Like how to speak, how to avoid certain things, the easiest way to do something... He advises me too. We're always bouncing off ideas to each other. It was his idea that I reach out to the nationwide media to promote *Ala Vaikunthapurramuloo*. He pushed me to do it.

An actor whom you consider your role model...

Stardom is difficult to achieve. It's an individual journey. I draw inspiration from Mr Amitabh Bachchan. At 70-plus, I'd like to be like him. It would be great to wake up each morning and have work to look forward to. It would be fun to work with young people even at that age. It's a rare privilege for any actor.

ALLU ARJUN'S FILMFARE AWARDS



Best Actor
PARUGU
(2008)



Best Actor
VEDAM
(2010)



Best Actor
RACE GURRAM
(2014)



Best Supporting Actor
RUDHRA-MADEVI
(2015)



Critics' Award for Best Actor
SARRAINODU
(2016)



Follow *your* dreams

NUSHRAT BHARUCHA ON THE MEN AND MOVIES THAT MATTER IN HER CAREER. RAGHUVENDRA SINGH TAKES NOTES

Nushrat Bharucha is the star of her own trek. One person she competes with is herself. She's battled it all – rejection and ridicule – to emerge as a name intrinsic to saleable films. From a quiet debut with the mythological *Jai Santoshi Maa* over a decade ago, she won notice with Dibakar Banerjee's erotic anthology *Love Sex Aur Dhokha* in 2010. Luv Ranjan's hit comedy *Pyaar Ka Punchnama* (PKP) was her turnaround moment. The small film garnered big bucks. Going offbeat with Luv Ranjan's dark romance *Akaash Vani*, Nushrat found herself at the crossroads when the critically-acclaimed film failed to garner substantial footfalls. But *Pyaar Ka Punchnama 2* (PKP2) redeemed her once again followed by the blockbuster romcom *Sonu Ke Titu Ki Sweeti* (SKTKS) last year. That the outsider is no fluke has been reiterated by her track record. Her last outing *Dream Girl* has underlined the value she lends to a film. Now, she's looking forward to Hansal Mehta's *Chhalaang* and Nikhil Nagesh Bhatt's *Hurdang*, the girl known for her earthy vibe spills her trade secret. "I love being seen in a hot and sexy avatar..." In her own words...

BEING PASSIONATE

This seems to be the best phase in my life. Earlier, I was used to playing one character in a year. Now suddenly, I'm moving in and out of characters. I wonder what keeps me going. A while ago, I pulled a 40-hour shift. I shot till 4 am for *Hurdang* in Allahabad. Then I took a 6.30 am flight to reach a set in Mumbai. I shot a song from 1 pm to 11 pm. I then took a 6 am charter back to the set of *Hurdang* and shot with them till 8pm. I'm only surviving on passion, not black coffee.

With Hansal Mehta and
Rajkummar Rao on the set
of *Chhalaang*



Despite success,
my head will never
be in the clouds.
I'll remain realistic
and grounded.
Earlier I was too
ambitious. I only
wanted to play lead
roles. Today, I've
reached a place
where I have my
own standing. I'm
not part of any race

BEING POSITIVE

When Raaj Shaandilya came to me with *Dream Girl*, I was like wow. From being a bitch in *PKP* and *Sweetie* in *SKTKS*, I was to be a dream girl. But he corrected me saying, "You're not the dream girl, it's Ayushmann." Thankfully, I didn't play a bitch in *Dream Girl*. My character, Mahi, was positive. She's from Faridabad, a homely girl, who believes running a home is a job by itself. This is the first time I played someone good, not someone who turns out to be a villain after the interval. I'm glad I was seen in a hot and sexy avatar in the song *Gat gat*.

BEING EARTHY

I'm playing Nilu in Hansal Mehta's *Chhalaang*. It's a social drama based in Uttar Pradesh. It has a small-town flavour. I love Hansal sir's cinema and I'm

enjoying playing this earthy character. The upcoming film deals with a serious issue - the conflict between sports and studies that students face - in an entertaining way. It has Luv Ranjan's touch because he's the co-producer. If *Pyaar Ka Punchanma 3* is ever made, I'd love to do it. That's my space as well.

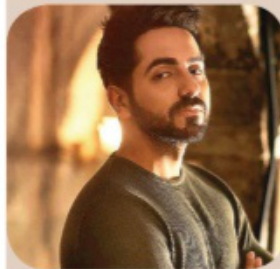
BEING CRAZY

Nikhil Nagesh Bhatt's *Hurdang* is a love story set in the Allahabad of the 1990s. I play Jhullan, a student. The movie, based on the Mandal commission, is about students taking to the streets and a beautiful love story blossoming in the middle of it. Jhullan's the shocker of the film, unabashed, raw and crazy. She abides by the law at home and becomes another person outside. Especially, *jab woh Daddu* (Sunny Kaushal) *ke saath hoti hai*. When I choose a film, I see two things. First, the director and his conviction in the script. Second, whether it's going to be presented with the sort of backing it needs.

BEING HOPEFUL

Having come so far, I must say failure is not easy to handle. When *Akaash Vani* didn't work it was heart-breaking. When you have done just one or two films, when there's so much competition around, when you've invested two years of your life, your blood and sweat

NUSHRAT BHARUCHA ON HER CO-STARS



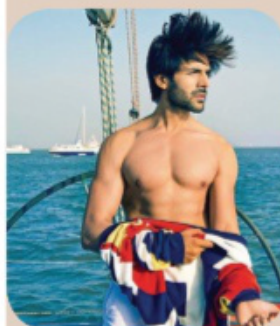
Ayushmann Khurrana

I reached the *Dream Girl* set from the *Turram Khan* set after driving all night from Haryana to Faridabad. When I reached there, everyone was partying because they had a break the next day. I joined them and we partied till sunrise. This was my introduction to the team. I had the notion that Ayushmann would be someone quiet, an introvert. But his sense of humour and comic timing is something else. *Woh dikhta kuch hai but hai kuch aur*. We had a lot of fun on the set. As a person, he's an absolute gentleman. He's amazing as an actor too.



Rajkummar Rao

While we were shooting *Chhalaang*, I'd wonder whether Raj was in Haryana or not. Because as soon as pack-up would be announced, he'd fly back to Mumbai for work. He'd be back at 8 am the next day for the shoot. He's so hardworking it seems unreal. He works like a machine. Raj is a bit moody too. Sometime he talks a lot and sometimes turns quiet. He's got his in and out moments.



Kartik Aaryan

I'm ecstatic for my *Pyaar Ka PUNCHNAMA* co-star. He has a great line-up of films. We've had a long journey from *PKP*, *Akaash Vani* to *SKTKS*. When we started out, we were kids. I still remember the conversations we had about actors and *kaun kya kar raha hai...* To realise where we are today, seems surreal.



Sunny Kaushal

I share a great friendship with Sunny, my *Hurdang* co-star. I saw him for the first time at a party. When he left, I asked about him. When I got to know he's Vicky Kaushal's brother, I was like, 'Oh I didn't know Vicky has a brother.' Later I told Sunny about it. We have shot for 35 days. We workshoped for two months before that. To have that faith in him, where I can tell him anything, is special. Otherwise, I don't give my opinions easily. We love to sing and dance to the '90s numbers.



●● Once someone referred to me as a junior artiste. I was like, 'F**k you, *bhaad mein jao, main ja rahi hoon*. I don't want to be in your film' ●●





Failure's not easy to handle. When *Akaash Vani* didn't work it was heartbreaking. When you have invested two years of your life, your blood and sweat in the hope that the film will be a gamechanger and it flops... I was left wondering *ab kya?*

in the hope that the film will be a gamechanger and it flops badly... I was left wondering *ab kya?*

Luv sir, Kartik (Aaryan), Abhishek (Pathak, producer), the entire team... couldn't get out of it for a whole year. We had assumed that after receiving so much love for *PKP*, we'd be appreciated once again. But we realised that it's the film that matters. That phase was difficult. If *PKP 2* hadn't done good business, I wouldn't have got another chance. I had no plan B. I had just jumped into the well blindfolded.

BEING REALISTIC

I've come across rude comments in my early days. Someone once remarked, "How could you ever think of becoming a heroine. You're only fit to play a friend's or sister's role." Then someone referred to me as a junior artiste. I was like, 'F**k you, *bhaad mein jao, main ja rahi hoon*. I don't want to be in your film.' That's why I'll never refuse to work with new directors. They also want actors to trust them. They want producers to trust them to make a film. Everyone comes here with a creative mind and if the vibe is correct, I'll surely work with them. Despite success, my head will never be in the clouds. I've always been realistic and grounded. Earlier I was too ambitious. I only wanted to play lead roles. Today, I've reached a place where I have my own standing. I'm not part of any race. ■



GiRL IN THE CITY

THE HOT **KIARA ADVANI** REVEALS HOTTER SECRETS ABOUT HERSELF IN A RAPID FIRE WITH **SUMAN SHARMA**

Her character Preeti from the blockbuster *Kabir Singh* has become everyone's dream date of sorts currently. Or at least the internet would like you to believe so. This truckload of love can be heady. She received further praise for her act in *Good Newwz*. But Kiara Advani knows fame is a fickle lover. The actress, who can turn from being Sati Savitri to sultry siren with just a change of expression, is raring to move on to the next big thing. Going all candid, the actor shares her pet likes and peeves with *Filmfare*...



Kabir Singh

The turning point of your career...

Some say , it's *Lust Stories*. Some say it's *Kabir Singh*. After *Lust Stories* a lot of filmmakers believed that this girl can act. *Lust Stories* won me appreciation. *Kabir Singh* got me the audience's love.

An actor you're dying to work with...

Ranveer Singh. He's such an interesting actor. Just watching him is so stimulating.

Actresses you admire...

Alia Bhatt and Deepika Padukone.

A valuable advice you received...

Salman Khan once told me it's only hard work that matters. Let your work

speak for itself. That's what I believe in as well.

A dream project for you would be...

I'd love to work with Sanjay Leela Bhansali and Ranveer Singh.

A film you've watched more than five times...

Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham.

As an actor do you battle insecurity?

Yes of course. I guess every actor is insecure. It's good because it's a fragile world out here. I believe insecurity in a way makes you come out stronger and better. It makes you give your best.

A secret dream...

I love watching American shows. I'd love to feature in them.

IF SOMEONE I ADMIRE SAYS GOOD THINGS TO ME OR CALLS OR MESSAGES ME, I'M THRILLED. IT DOUBLES UP MY ENERGY. I GO FOR A RUN. I GO TO THE GYM. I'M LIKE LET'S DO THIS AGAIN

One thing that you can't bring yourself to do...

Socialising to get films. I can't do that. I'm bad at it.

How many times do you check yourself in the mirror before leaving home?

I have a mirror in my car as well. So I keep checking myself till I step out.

What motivates you on a regular day?

If someone I admire says good things to me or calls or messages me, I'm thrilled. It doubles up my energy. I go for a run. I go to the gym. I'm like let's do this again.

How do you take criticism?

With a pinch of salt. I don't take it seriously. I haven't received much criticism though.

What makes you emotional?

My family. My aim is to make my parents proud and happy. My emotional quotient is high. I get sentimental about them.

What's the most used app on your phone?

Instagram.

Who's on your speed dial?

My driver.

Describe your personality in two words...

Loyal and fun loving.

What do you enjoy apart from acting?

I like anything to do with the ocean and the sea. I also love painting. I'm crazy about travelling. I work so that I can travel.



Lust Stories



Good Newwz

IT'S CLICHÉD TO SAY I'D DON A BIKINI IF THE SCRIPT DEMANDS IT. BUT HOW CAN YOU EXPECT SOMEONE TO WEAR A SUIT ON A BEACH? IT'S THE 21ST CENTURY. C'MON GUYS GROW UP!



Machine

If you could travel right away, where would you go?

I'd leave for the Maldives and go scuba-diving.

Your favourite travel destination...

New York.

Beach or mountains...

Beach.

Would you be comfortable wearing a bikini in a film?

I won't give you a clichéd answer saying I'd don a bikini if the script demands it. But tell me, how can you expect someone to wear a suit on a beach. It's the 21st century. Come on guys, grow up!

The one thing you want to change about yourself...

I want to be less of a 'ditcher'. I always ditch

the plans my friends make at the last moment. My manager complains 'you never go when you're called for something'. I'm a homebird.

An annoying nickname...

What annoys me is when someone calls me Kaayra instead of Kiara.

Your first celebrity crush...

Hrithik Roshan. Since the time I saw him in *Kaho Naa... Pyaar Hai*, I'm his ardent fan.

Your idea of a perfect man...

Someone who's loyal, someone who makes me laugh and laughs at my jokes as well. Someone who's self-made. Someone who's kind.

Qualities you admire in a man...

Someone who's respectful towards all. The way you treat others reveals a lot about your personality. Also, someone who's honest and straightforward.

A trait in a man that puts you off...

I don't like guys, who try too hard or those who have a chauvinistic mindset. I cancel them out from my life. I like people who get along with everyone, someone who's the life of the party.

Describe your first date...

I was in school and it was Valentine's Day. A group of girls and boys, including some couples,



went out together at Hard Rock Caffe. We ate burgers and cheese fries. It was a lame date.

The craziest thing you've done in love...

When in school, I wasn't allowed to travel alone. So I pulled my elder cousin along and travelled in a train to the suburbs just to surprise and meet my

boyfriend. Those days it seemed a big deal.

Your first heartbreak...

It was with my first boyfriend. My boards were going on. My parents wanted me to focus on my studies and didn't allow us to meet. We had to call it off. It wasn't going anywhere. Nevertheless, it was heart-breaking.

Would you kiss on your first date?

Had you asked me this question two years ago, I'd have said no. But today it would be yes... but not on the first date. (Smiles) Let him wait a bit.

Your take on open-relationships...

I'm not open to them. To each his own.

I ADMIRE A GUY, WHO'S RESPECTFUL TOWARDS ALL. THE WAY YOU TREAT OTHERS REVEALS A LOT ABOUT YOUR PERSONALITY... I DON'T LIKE GUYS, WHO TRY TOO HARD OR THOSE WHO POSSESS A CHAUVINISTIC MINDSET. I CANCEL THEM OUT FROM MY LIFE

Men find you sexy because...

I can hold a conversation.

Your relationship status...

Single.

Your take on astrology...

I believe in hard work and destiny. I've never got into astrology. I believe in God. I pray that He has my back and watches over me.

What excites you about the future?

My films *Guilty*, *Laxmmi Bomb*, *Indu Ki Jawani*, *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2* and *Shershaah* will release in 2020. This is where I wanted to see myself. I guess I'm taking the right decisions. The hard work is paying off now after much waiting. I'm happy.

A longtime wish you want fulfilled ...

Give me a Rajkumar Hirani film. I want to do to that slice-of-life genre, which entertains and educates.



A beautiful mind

RAGHUVENDRA SINGH
PINS DOWN THE BOLD
AND BEAUTIFUL **MOUNI ROY**
FOR A QUICK CHAT

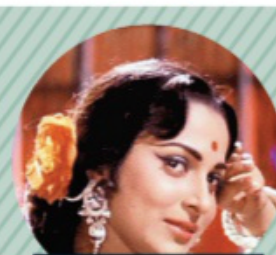
Playing the bewitching snake in Ekta Kapoor's *Naagin*, won her superstardom. Television audiences just couldn't shake off her mesmeric spell. Mouni Roy's entrancing eyes only enhanced her portrayal. That she shared the surname 'Roy' with the legendary screen *nagin* Reena Roy, was perhaps just a happy coincidence. With enough experience behind her – *Kasturi* and *Devon Ke Dev... Mahadev* being her other popular shows, it was time to move on to bigger things. In 2018, she struck gold on the big screen with *Gold* opposite Akshay Kumar, her Bengali intonation finding full expression. Last year she had an eventful run with *RAW - Romeo Akbar Walter* opposite John Abraham and *Made in China* alongside Rajkummar Rao. The latter not exactly a winner, won her praise all the same. Now, she has Ayan Mukerji's superhero trilogy *Brahmastra*, co-starring Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt, in the pipeline. From Cooch Behar in Bengal to Bollywood, hers is a trek of rare determination. Yet amidst the shimmer, Mouni remains a sentimental girl – someone who cherishes the memories of her late father, Anil Roy, whom she lost in 2013. She has turned around the irreparable loss into life lessons. Read on to know what they are...

YOUR FIRST THOUGHT IN THE MORNING...
Om Namah Shivay.

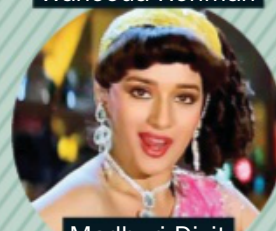
THE MOST INFLUENTIAL PERSON IN YOUR LIFE...
I am who I am because of my father (the late Anil Roy).

THE HAPPIEST MEMORY OF YOUR LIFE...
It has to be the time spent with my father during childhood. We'd wake up before daybreak and he'd take me for a morning walk. On the way back, I'd be tired. So he'd piggyback me home.

IF YOU COULD TRAVEL BACK IN TIME, YOU'D VISIT...
The time when my father was alive and I spent enjoyable moments with him.



Waheeda Rehman



Madhuri Dixit



Aishwarya Rai

A CHARACTER YOU WOULD HAVE LOVED TO PLAY...
I love characters, who dance beautifully. So, it would be Waheeda Rehmanji's character from *Guide*, Madhuri Dixitji's character from *Tezaab* and Aishwarya Rai Bachchan's character from *Taal*.

YOUR FAVOURITE ACTORS WHILE GROWING UP...
Waheeda Rehmanji, Salman (Khan) sir, Amitabh Bachchan sir and Madhuri (Dixit) ma'am.

A REMAKE YOU'D LIKE TO BE PART OF...
The Phantom of The Opera and *Taal*.

IF YOU WEREN'T AN ACTRESS, YOU'D HAVE BEEN...
Probably an IAS officer or a writer.

THREE QUALITIES YOU'RE PROUD OF...
Hard work, patience and gratitude.

BEST ADVICE YOU'VE RECEIVED...
Again, it was from my father. He once told me that the biggest power that you have as a human being is the right to say no. You



**I VALUE HONEST
RELATIONSHIPS,
HONEST
CONVERSATIONS,
HONEST
CRITICISM... GOD
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THINGS WHEN
IT COMES TO
RELATIONSHIPS.
THE LITTLE JOYS, THE
LITTLE MOMENTS
ARE SPECIAL**

F RAPID FIRE

need to know when to say no. I didn't understand it then. But when I went to Delhi to study, and later made inroads into the industry, I understood the meaning.

THE ONE THING YOU'D LIKE TO CHANGE ABOUT YOURSELF...

I'm impulsive. I'd like to change that.

A WEIRD HABIT YOU HAVE...

If you keep a glass bottle or any other container near me for a long time, I'll end up scratching off the paint or the label on it. It's a habit I can't get rid of.



Made In China

DO YOU SING IN THE SHOWER?

I love singing but not in the shower.

THREE WORDS THAT DESCRIBE YOU...

The ugly duckling.

YOU LOVE INDIA BECAUSE...

I love its people.

YOUR TOP HOLIDAY DESTINATION...

London. I love beaches and mountains.

WHEN YOU LIKE SOMEONE, YOU JUST LIKE THEM WITHOUT ANALYSING. BUT OBVIOUSLY, HE HAS TO BE A GOOD PERSON... ALSO, I DON'T LIKE PICK-UP LINES. I FIND THEM CHEESY. I JUST LAUGH IT OFF



A WEIRD FAN EXPERIENCE...

I had been to a small-town for an appearance during *Nagin 2*. From the auditorium to the hotel, we had to pass through small lanes. There I was manhandled both by men and women. I asked my manager to stay in my room that night because I was so disturbed. Then at midnight, someone tried opening the door of our room. Both of us screamed. We called up the lobby of the five-star hotel. It was scary. Since then, I avoid visiting small towns.

when it comes to relationships. The little joys, the little moments are special.

THREE QUALITIES YOU WANT IN YOUR PARTNER...

When you like someone, you just like them without analysing. But obviously, he has to be a good person.

THE BEST PICK-UP LINE SOMEONE HAS USED ON YOU...

I don't like pick-up lines. I find them cheesy. I just laugh it off.

ADVICE TO A WOMAN WHO'S SUFFERED HEARTBREAK...

Hang in there and this too shall pass. You will look back with a smile one day.

A THEME SONG FOR YOUR LIFE...

La Vie en rose (to see life with rose-tinted glasses), the signature song of French singer Édith Piaf. It is inspirational.

A SONG THAT MAKES YOU NOSTALGIC...

The Bengali song

YOU DE-STRESS BY...

Reading a good book and listening to soothing Rabindra *sangeet*.

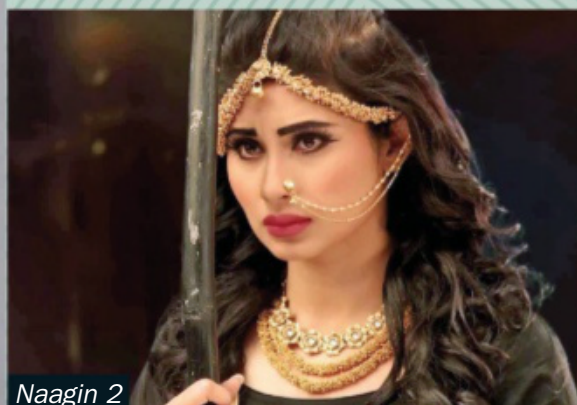
INSTAGRAM OR TWITTER...

Instagram.

HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU TAKE TO WRITE CAPTION?

Not much. I'm good with captions. My friends ask me to write out their captions. They send across their pictures and I send them back with the apt description.

MY LATE FATHER ONCE TOLD ME THAT THE BIGGEST POWER THAT YOU HAVE AS A HUMAN BEING IS THE RIGHT TO SAY NO. YOU NEED TO KNOW WHEN TO SAY NO



Naagin 2



With *Brahmastra* director Ayan Mukerji



Gold

A PRODUCT YOU WILL NEVER PROMOTE...

Fairness creams.

THINGS THAT YOU VALUE THE MOST...

Honest relationships, honest conversations, honest criticism.

LOVE FOR YOU MEANS...

Respect and patience. God is in the small things

MEN FIND YOU SEXY BECAUSE...

Ask them.

AN ACTOR YOU FIND SEXY...

Hrithik (Roshan) sir. He's so good-looking.

A MISTAKE YOU'D NEVER REPEAT IN A RELATIONSHIP...

There's a list of things I'd like to stay away from. But I just don't seem to learn from my mistakes.

Naa jeo naa... rajani ekhono baki (don't leave yet, the night is still on), set to the tune of Salil Chowdhury's song *O sajana barkha bahar aayee* from *Parakh* (1960).

WHAT A WOMAN MUST STRIVE FOR...

Being independent, monetarily and emotionally is a must for a woman. The rest follows.

THE LATEST APP YOU HAVE DOWNLOADED...

AroundMe.

YOUR MOST OVERUSED WORD...

Ummm...

AN IDEA THAT CHANGED YOUR LIFE...

There is no shortcut to hard work. Also, you need to know when to say no. That's a gamechanger. ■



Manoj Pahwa with Ayushmann Khurrana in Article 15

IN CHARACTER

Suman Sharma interviews Manoj Pahwa, who has reinvented himself with Mulk and Article 15



Manoj Pahwa

Manoj Pahwa. Just thinking of him brings a smile to your face. He has a Chris Farley-like quality to him. That makes him an asset for any project he's associated with. Like Farley, he's known for his loud, over-the-top characters. I have been trying to meet him for a few months now. The opportunity finally arrives

He owns a sprawling apartment, which is actually a combination of two flats. It's drizzling outside and he offers me ginger tea and some homemade cookies, which are just right for the weather. He laughs readily and is a great storyteller. We soon find ourselves swapping gossip like old buddies. His wife Seema Pahwa, herself an actor of renown, joins in the gossip session but soon leaves us, admonishing him to finish the interview first and then fuff. He grins at that and nods. It was theatre, which brought them together. Manoj joined Delhi's *Sambhav Theatre Group* in 1983 right after college. Seema too was connected with the group and in between debating Shakespeare and sharing numerous cups of

Suleimani *chai*, the duo drew close. He tells me that Deepa Sahi, Rajendra Gupta, Tigmanshu Dhulia were his compatriots. He guffaws that those were the days when young aspirants like Manoj Bajpayee and Ashish Vidyarthi used to come to see their plays.

Seema got famous before him, thanks to playing Badki in the iconic serial *Hum Log* (1984-85). He got a chance to play Tony in the same serial thanks to her recommendation. The actor's eyes light up when he remembers being paid ₹500 daily for his role, which was a princely sum in those days. "It took care of daily needs easily and there was plenty left over for *daaru* as well. Life was fun," he declares. Seema took a break from her career because of marriage and kids. Manoj salutes her for it. "She sacrificed her own career for us," he reflects. "But now that the kids (daughter Manukriti and son Mayank), have grown up, she has started acting again. She has even directed a film called *Ram Prasad Ki Tehrvi*, which was much appreciated at MAMI," he informs proudly.

After the success of *Hum Log*, the Pahwas

When Anubhav Sinha gave me the script of *Mulk* to read, even he had doubts as to whether I'd be able to do the role. He feared the audiences would burst out laughing the moment they saw me on screen. I have the image of a happy-go-lucky guy while this was an intense role

shifted to Mumbai. It took time for them to adjust from the eat-drink-be merry culture of Delhi to Mumbai's cutthroat ways. But holding each other's hands, they endured the muggy monsoons, the packed local trains and the uncertainty of starting from scratch in an alien landscape.

Fortune smiled on him when he got a break in serials like *Just Mohabbat*, *Sea Hawks* and *Office Office*. They helped him build an identity. Later, daily soaps started dominating the TV landscape and Manoj didn't enjoy the factory-like atmosphere on the sets. He shifted focus to films. He won praise for his performances in films like *Darna Zaroori Hai* (2006), *Dhamaal* (2007), *Singh Is Kinng* (2008), *Main Tera Hero* (2014), *Dil Dhadakne Do* (2015), *Total Dhamaal* (2019), *Student of The Year 2* (2019) to name a few.

He has always been known for his split-second comic timing so it was something of a surprise when director Anubhav Sinha cast him in a dramatic role in not one but two films back-to-back, *Mulk* and *Article 15*. And boy, did he deliver. He played Rishi Kapoor's younger brother in *Mulk*. His character is a simpleton at heart, who gets brutalised by the police. In this year's *Article 15*, he played a corrupt cop, the *de facto* villain of the piece. "When Anubhav gave me the script of *Mulk* to read, even he had doubts as to whether I'd be able to do the serious role. He feared

the audiences would burst out laughing the moment they saw me on screen. I have the image of a happy-go-lucky guy while this was an intense role. So it was challenging for me. Thankfully, I came through. This proved to be a new beginning for me," he beams sipping on his *masala chai*.

Seema always believed that he could do more than comedy and felt he was being lazy in restricting himself to something he can do in his sleep. "Now, perhaps she sees me in a different light. Even my children, who are slowly finding their feet in showbiz, said I was lazy. Now I have to set a good example for them," he says with a twinkle in his eyes. Incidentally, daughter Manukriti played Varun Dhawan's sister-in-law in *Sui Dhaaga: Made In India*. His son, Mayank, is currently learning filmmaking in London. Both are drama graduates.

Raising two kids on a single income in Mumbai wasn't easy and ad films became Manoj's cushion against bad times. He says it was ad filmmaker Prahlad Kakkar, now a friend, who once bluntly advised him to be practical. It so happened that actor Mona Ambegaonkar took him to meet Prahlad for an ad. There he saw Prahlad yelling at someone at the top of his voice. Mona wanted to whisk Manoj away but Prahlad asked him to stay on and get used

to the shouting. Manoj ended up doing around 300 ads with Prahlad. "I was paid ₹1000 per day for my serials. When I was to shoot an ad with Prahlad for an ice-cream brand, I agreed to a fee of Rs 20,000 for a one-day shoot. But Prahlad insisted I charge 75,000 for the same given that I was a well-known name. He told me that I should never undersell myself," he grins.

Money was never a big thing for both Seema and him. Maybe that's one reason he didn't push hard enough. "We are basically middle-class people," he reflects. "We do not live luxuriously. We do not eat out on a regular basis. Whenever we wish to celebrate, we call three-four friends over for dinner - that's how we



With wife Seema Pahwa

Seema (Pahwa) and I are middle-class people. We do not live luxuriously. We do not eat out on a regular basis... I was happy with my Maruti 800 non-air-conditioned car for six years... The closeness we share as a family is more important to us than wealth



Rishiji's a Kapoor. So tantrums were bound to be there. *Woh khud kehte hain ki, 'I am a Kapoor. Then around 18-19, I became a superstar. I was a spoilt brat'. Nevertheless, he was always jolly on the sets of *Mulk** 🍷

party. I was happy with my Maruti 800 non-air-conditioned car for six years. Our vacations are a once-a-year affair at some hill station with the kids. They're grown-up now but they still accompany us. The closeness we share as a family is more important to us than wealth."

Success hasn't totally turned away the insecurities of showbiz. But Manoj can't imagine being in a routine 9-5 job. The commercialism of films can be grating. Theatre therefore remains the couple's failsafe against

the madness of cinema. They have a theatre group called *Kapol* and through it conduct workshops and organise plays. "Actors need to connect to their art. We start making too many compromises to stave off insecurity. A better way to battle it is to remain connected with our passion - theatre," he muses.

He gives the example of Naseeruddin Shah, who has been a friend and a mentor all these years and has successfully married art with mart. When they were working together for *Dedh Ishqiya*, Manoj wanted to round off a hard day's work with a peg

or two. He came to seek Naseer's company. But the latter insisted on rehearsing for the play, *Shatranj Ke Khiladi*, which they both were doing. Manoj, who had no intention of rehearsing after a hard day of filming, lied that he had forgotten to bring the script with him, "Naseer Bhai said he would instead rehearse *Toba Tek Singh* (by Manto) and proceeded to read the story aloud. In his 70s, he's still so disciplined, still so keen to learn and explore and grow. We can all learn from him," says he with awe.

Working with Rishi Kapoor in *Mulk* made him realise what old-

school stardom was like. Manoj says the senior actor had his own style of working. At one time, director Anubhav Sinha announced that the shoot would begin at 8 am the next day. Everyone agreed. But Rishi Kapoor cheekily remarked he'd be there at 11 am sharp. "He's a Kapoor. So tantrums were bound to be there. *Woh khud kehte hain ki, 'I am a Kapoor. Then around 18-19, I became a superstar. I was a spoilt brat'. Nevertheless, Rishiji was always jolly on the sets,*" he says with fondness for the veteran.

Manoj's happy that roles are now being written for him. His hunger for excellence, for exploration, has increased. "I have always seen myself as a student. I want to learn more, grow more and hone my craft each day. I'm glad more avenues have opened up. What more can one ask for," he reflects, contentment writ large on his face. Yes life is coming up daffodils for the actor. ■



With the Filmfare
Award for Best
Supporting Actor
for *Badhaai Ho*

“I WANT TO WALK AGAIN”

**SUREKHA SIKRI BELIEVES HER BEST IS YET TO COME.
FARHANA FAROOK IS INSPIRED BY THE BRAVEHEART**

The afternoon is still. And so is Surekha Sikri's suburban home. I'm asked to wait in the drawing room as she's readying herself inside. A soft conversation from the room inside breaks the silence. “*Khichdi khaa lijiye na,*” a young voice urges her gently. “*Pure ghee daala ke nahin?*” asks a voice firm and familiar. “*Main khud khaaongi,*” she further insists. Soon I'm ushered inside. I walk in with trepidation – part of it from being in awe of her talent, part of it from not wanting to burden someone convalescing after a stroke early last year.

She's seated on a chair, with a table attached on which is placed a warm bowl of the *dal*-rice concoction. Her grey tresses drop in curls, still moist after the wash. What's arresting are her *kajal*-rimmed eyes, reflecting the fire of an ongoing battle. She gives a shy smile, her dark eyes betraying the excitement. They're the prisms of her soul. Hope, despair, regret, gratitude... they reflect every emotion through the conversation. There's a

strong ‘spiritual’ presence in the room. A designated corner has images of deities with a huge photograph of Sai Baba enjoying top-billing...

AWARDS & REWARDS

The past year can best be dubbed as bitter-sweet for Surekha. Audiences loved her acerbic act in *Badhaai Ho* and warmed up to the 74-year-old actor, who spoke matter-of-factly about sex in her conservative household. She was honoured with the Best Supporting Actress award at the recently concluded 66th National Film Awards. The actor accepted the honour on a wheel chair and received a standing ovation for both her talent and spirit. Last year, she had won the Filmfare Award Best Supporting Actress for the same film. But she chose not to attend the function then. “I regret not attending the Filmfare Awards.

I feared I'd spoil the moment by coming in a wheel chair. I didn't have the confidence to do that. One should walk up to the stage proudly to receive the award,” she muses. “*Mere saath hamesha aisa kyun*



Receiving the National Award for *Badhaai Ho*

“MY ILLNESS HAS TAUGHT ME TO APPRECIATE MYSELF AND MY WORK... NOW, I TRY TO REMAIN OPTIMISTIC. I CHECK MYSELF WHEN I BEGIN TO THINK NEGATIVELY. WHATEVER YOU VISUALISE ABOUT YOURSELF, A BLUEPRINT OF THAT IS FORMED IN THE ASTRAL WORLD. IT COMES BACK TO YOU”

hota hai? Whenever there's a special occasion, a hurdle crops up,” she thinks aloud. “But now I try to remain optimistic. I check myself when I begin to think negatively. Whatever you visualise about yourself, a blueprint of that is formed in the astral world. It comes back to you,” she says.

She has been honoured with the National Award for Best Supporting Actress twice before too — for Govind Nihalani's *Tamas* (1988) and Shyam Benegal's *Mammo* (1994).

Surekha, who doesn't believe in blowing her own trumpet, admits that winning an award at this juncture has been special. *Badhaai Ho*, featuring Ayushmann Khurrana, Neena Gupta, Gajraj Rao along with Surekha, dealt with middle-age pregnancy and the societal damnation it incurs. “Playing Durga was a dream role. It had an arc, a graph,” she says of her role of the sparring mother-in-law. “The *saas-bahu* equation undergoes a turn when Durga takes up for her pregnant daughter-

in-law Priyamvada (Neena Gupta). Her monologue where she sides with her daughter-in-law saying, “*Uski marzi woh ‘sexy’ karein!*” was a joke that shook the taboo off sex in everyday conversation. “My son Rahul is unmarried or else I’d have been a great mother-in-law,” she chuckles. “My nieces, Heeba (Shah, actor) and Bushra, are like my daughters though. My elder sister, Parveen Murad (ex-wife of actor Naseeruddin Shah), was hugely talented. She was an ophthalmologist. She studied law. She could sculpt, paint... My younger sister Phoolmani stays in my building. Interesting name isn’t it?” she says her affection for her sisters palpable. She goes on to talk about her late husband Hemant Rege, who passed away in 2009. “I loved my husband dearly. I miss him. He was in ad production. We had a good marriage. He was a sweet and affectionate gentleman,” she says softly. Her first marriage had ended in a divorce. “Rahul is my son from the first marriage. He’s an artist,” she shares.

ALL THE WORLD’S A STAGE

Surekha spent her childhood in Almora (U.P). Later, she attended the Aligarh Muslim University. While in AMU, Al Kazi (ex-director National School of Drama) staged the play, *King Lear*, there. She filled up the NSD form that was being distributed and got into the drama academy in Delhi in 1968. “Al Kazi taught us how to raise our performance. He paid attention to detail. He’d

do the lighting and music himself,” she reminisces. She worked with the NSD Repertory Company for over a decade. Her first play was the Greek tragedy, *The Trojan Women* in which she played Helen of Troy. *Look Back In Anger* and *Cherry Orchard* were her other popular plays. Prolific in theatre, she was given the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1989.

SMALL AND BIG

Surprisingly, Surekha, an avid theatre artiste, found it difficult to get theatre assignments in Mumbai. “I approached some groups but couldn’t break through,” she sighs. Her debut film was Amrit

Nahata’s political drama *Kissa Kursi Ka* (1978). Since then she’s done notable roles in Govind Nihalani’s telefilm *Tamas*, Saeed Mirza’s *Salim Langde Pe Pat Ro*, Shyam Benegal’s *Mammo*, *Sardari Begum*, *Zubeidaa* and *Hari Bhari*, the Aamir Khan starrer *Sarfarosh* and Rituparna Ghosh’s *Raincoat*. “I didn’t do well in *Tamas*,” she reverts instinctively to her self-deprecating tone. “When I watched it later, I found myself lacking in emotion. I underplayed it too much.” Reading my thoughts, she quickly checks herself, “I can’t help being self-critical. I’m always looking for mistakes in my body

language and voice inflexion.”

She had a great run on television. *Banegi Apni Baat* (1994) and *Just Mohabbat* (1996). Both running for four years, had the audience thawing to her. But she found television a bit erratic. “The character would suddenly change to play to the gallery, the storylines kept altering. I’d wonder what’s going on... But I’m thankful for every bit of work I got.” Years later, it was her character, *Dadisa*, in *Balika Vadhu* (2008-16), which made her the nation’s most-loved matriarch. “*Dadisa* is closest to me as a person. She’s like me – emotional yet balanced.”

PHOTOGRAPH: YOGEN SHAH





Badhaai Ho

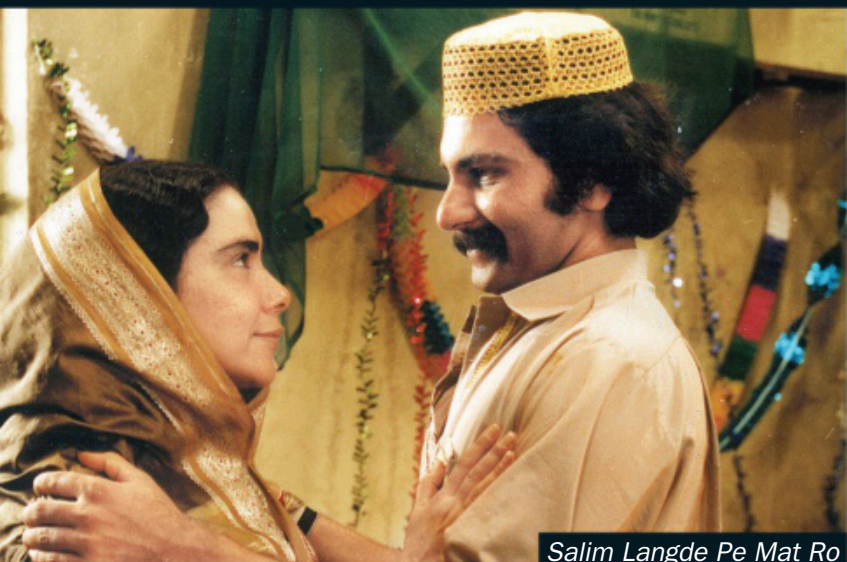


Mammo

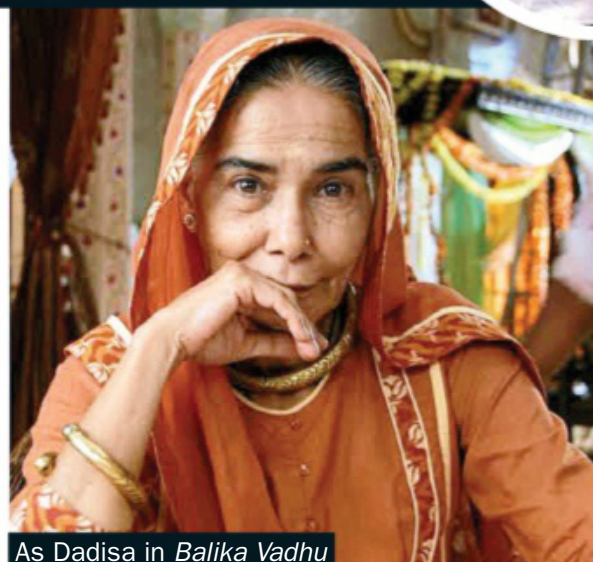
“I WAS ROUGH AND BLUNT AT TIMES THERE WERE TIMES WHEN I DIDN'T BEHAVE PROPERLY. FARZ NAHIN NIBHAYA RISHTON KA... I ASK FORGIVENESS FROM ALL THE SOULS I MAY HAVE TROUBLED IN THIS LIFETIME AND THE PAST ONES. PLEASE FORGIVE ME”



Zubeidaa



Salim Langde Pe Mat Ro



As Dadisa in Balika Vadhu

MINDING HER STEP

Post her recent illness, she had to drop out of Faraz Arif Ansari's upcoming LGBT romance, *Sheer Qorma*, starring Shabana Azmi, Divya Dutta and Swara Bhaskar. “Faraz returned my dates. I felt so bad. I wanted to work with him. He's such a sensitive guy. I guess I couldn't fulfil his expectations. *Meri chaal dhal badal chuki hai* because of the disability,” she says matter-of-factly.

She remembers the moment vividly when life took a turn for her. “I got a stroke while I was in Mahableshwar for a shoot. There was a clot in my brain. I was getting ready to eat in my room when my

foot slipped as though I had stepped on soap,” she says with a wry laugh. “I fell on my head hit and hit the furniture. I was found lying on the floor by my director.” Since then it's been one day at a time for Surekha, who's determined to get back on her feet.

The tough phase has unearthed several lessons. “It taught me to appreciate myself and my work.” She's also learnt a thing or two about relationships. “That one must be kind and gentle. I was rough and blunt at times. I have to be guarded in my speech and not hurt people even unintentionally. There were times when I didn't behave properly. *Farz*

nahin nibhaya rishton ka... I ask forgiveness from all the souls I may have troubled in this lifetime and the past ones. Please forgive me...” she says breaking down. The nurse rushes forward to offer her water. Then getting a hold on herself and her humour she says, “Thank God the interview is not on video!” She looks with affection towards the young nurse and says, “Sister Pinky looks after me well. I'm ever so grateful to have her.”

ONE DAY AT A TIME

Surekha's committed to her daily schedule, which involves physiotherapy among other things. She

enjoys listening to Punjabi Sufi music. “I find it healing,” she says. She points to Sai Baba's picture kept in the spiritual corner in the room. “It seems He's looking straight in your eyes. Such *saadgi* (simplicity)! I tell Him *aaya kijiye mere khwabon mein.*”

Food is another thing she's particular about. “I like a tasty *nashta...* usually *upma* or *samosa*,” she smiles. What also keeps her engaged is watching news. Not many of her colleagues have the time to visit her. “I don't have complaints. I understand they are busy working round the clock,” she says.

Her recent role in Zoya Akhtar's *Ghost Stories* has won her praise yet again. “It's a pleasure to work with passionate people. I play Mrs Malik, an old bedridden lady. She's searching for her son,” she reveals. Surekha believes her best is yet to come but there's an immediate dream she wants to fulfil. “I want to walk again.” To that I say, “Yes, of course you will.” The smile on her face widens. “When people tell me positive things, I believe God is speaking to me through them.”

On a parting note, how would she describe Surekha the person? “I am still trying to find myself. I'm getting there *dheere dheere...*,” she grins.

It's been more than an hour and the nurse reminds her that her *khichdi* lies unfinished. She resumes eating *dheere dheere...*



Portrait *of a* Lady

WAHEEDA REHMAN HAS MUCH TO LOOK BACK TO. BUT THE VETERAN PREFERS TO LOOK AHEAD, FINDS **FARHANA FAROOK**

The moon never imagined that its celestial luminescence would have an earthly equivalent. The epithet Chaudvin ka chaand given to her by Shakeel Badayuni is Waheeda Rehman's for eternity. Her soft feminine beauty not only enthused directors but also set poets afire. Kaifi Azmi's Waqt ne kiya kya haseen situm, a timeless lament about time-bound love, owes much to its eloquence as it does to her fluent eyes, betraying the ravages of life. Shailendra's Kaanton se kheench ke yeh aanchal, hailed as a dirge of liberation, was brought alive in Waheeda's Rosie, who casts aside bondage to bond with her dreams. In an era of coquettish hard-sell, Waheeda relied on her demure dignity. Always conversant with truths, she never allowed the elegies to haze her reality. In doing so, inadvertently she brought 'going silver' in vogue, heartening women to revel in the autumnal years. What's more at 80-plus she's given expression to a longstanding hobby – photography. Once the cynosure of the camera, she's now gone behind it to turn wildlife photographer and recently held an exhibition of her pictures. Aaj phir jeene ki tamanna hai... is her soul cry for sure...

“**SUCCESS AND FAME IS TEMPORARY. THERE TODAY, GONE TOMORROW. I'VE BEEN THROUGH A LOT OF EMOTIONAL AND FINANCIAL UPS AND DOWNS. BUT I LIKE TO ENLARGE THE POSITIVE THINGS... I BELIEVE I'VE NO SORROWS. I DON'T MIND BEING BORN AS WAHEEDA REHMAN AGAIN. BUT I'D DEFINITELY DO IT BETTER**”



Waheeda Rehman's new avatar as wildlife photographer

“I'VE NEVER FEARED THE FUTURE”

Courage is something I learnt from my father (district collector Mohammed Abdur Rehman). As a child, when I was learning Bharat Natyam, my relatives asked him, “Kya Musalman ladki ko nachaao?” His answer was, “Art is never bad. It's the human being, who errs. How you conduct yourself is important.” I lost my father when I was 13. At 17, I came

from Visakhapatnam to Mumbai with my mother (Mumtaz Begum) to do Guru Duttji's *CID* (1956), directed by Raj Khosla. I laid down my conditions before signing the agreement. That I'd not change my name (the makers wanted a commercially viable name). That I'd only wear costumes, which I approved of. I told my mother that if they didn't agree, we'd go back. Raj Khoslaji was taken aback that a young girl



“GURU DUTT// SPOKE LITTLE. HE'D JUST OBSERVE. BUT HE WAS EXTREMELY SENSITIVE. IF I HAD DIFFICULTY IN SAYING THE LINES, HE'D ASK WRITER ABRAR ALVI TO CHANGE IT. HE BELIEVED NO MATTER HOW BEAUTIFUL THE LINES, THE ACTOR SHOULD BE ABLE TO SAY IT”

was so unbending. I told him I was ready to work for 24 hours if need be. But certain things would be in accordance to me. It's not slavery. We respect you; you should respect us.

“GURU DUTT// WAS EXTREMELY SENSITIVE”

I'm proud to be part of Guru Duttji's films. Even 50 years later, they're talked about. They're classics. I've made no contribution towards them... I just happened to be part of his great films – *Pyaasa*, *Kagaz Ke Phool* (1959), *Chaudhvin Ka Chand* (1960) and *Sahib Bibi Aur Ghulam* (1962). Guru Duttji spoke little. He'd just observe. But he was extremely sensitive. If I had difficulty in saying the lines, he'd ask writer Abrar Alvi to change it. He believed no matter how beautiful the lines, the actor should be able to say it.

In *Pyaasa*, I had to let out a scream on reading the news of Vijay's death. I couldn't bring myself to do that. Guru Duttji joked saying, “Girls scream for anything. Strangely, you're finding it hard.” Then he said, “Okay, just crush the newspaper and



Kagaz Ke Phool

we'll slide down the camera.” The subtlety worked. He encouraged me to read.

Just after the silver jubilee of *Pyaasa*, my mother suddenly passed away of a heart attack. It was the darkest phase of my life. For one year, I dreamt that she was alive and we'd buried her in haste. I was plagued by these thoughts. I was doing *Solva Saal* (1958), with Dev (Anand) then. I told him I wanted to go back. I didn't want to work anymore. He said, “I know it's shocking. But you can't walk off like that. Complete the film and think in the meantime.”

Once, Baby Naaz and I were rehearsing a



WAHEEDA'S CLASSIC SONGS

① *Waqt ne kiya kya haseen situm*
- *Kagaz Ke Phool*

② *Kahin deep jale kahin dil*
- *Bees Saal Baad*

③ *Bujha diye hai khud apne haathon*
- *Shagoon*

④ *Mose chhal kiye jaaye*
- *Guide*

⑤ *Phir teri kahani yaad aayi*
- *Dil Diya Dard Liya*

⑥ *Raat bhi hai kuch bheegi*
- *Mujhe Jeene Do*

scene for *Kagaz Ke Phool* (1959). She had to accuse me of taking her parents away from her. I had to say, “*Maine kuchh nahin kiya. Main khud akeli hoon.*” But before I could complete the dialogue, I burst into tears. I related the lines to the loss of my mother. Guru Duttji announced pack-up saying, “Go out with your sisters, watch a film. There's no need to come at 9 am tomorrow. Come only after you feel rested.” That was thoughtful of him. Eventually, I got hold of myself. The traumatic experience helped me evolve as an actress. Also, the survival instinct kicked in. Another high point

remains the song *Waqt ne kiya kya haseen situm*. The photography (V.K. Murthy) with the play of light and shade stood out. There's no lip movement. That intensified the emotions.

“I CARRIED MEENA KUMARI'S PAAN BASKET”

I did many films with Sunil Dutt including *Mujhe Jeene Do* (1963), *Meri Bhabhi* (1969) and *Reshma Aur Shera* (1971). He was a friendly and progressive man. I grew close to Nargisji while working with Sunil. Once all of us went to Moscow for a film festival. Sunil took along Meenaji (Kumari) for treatment

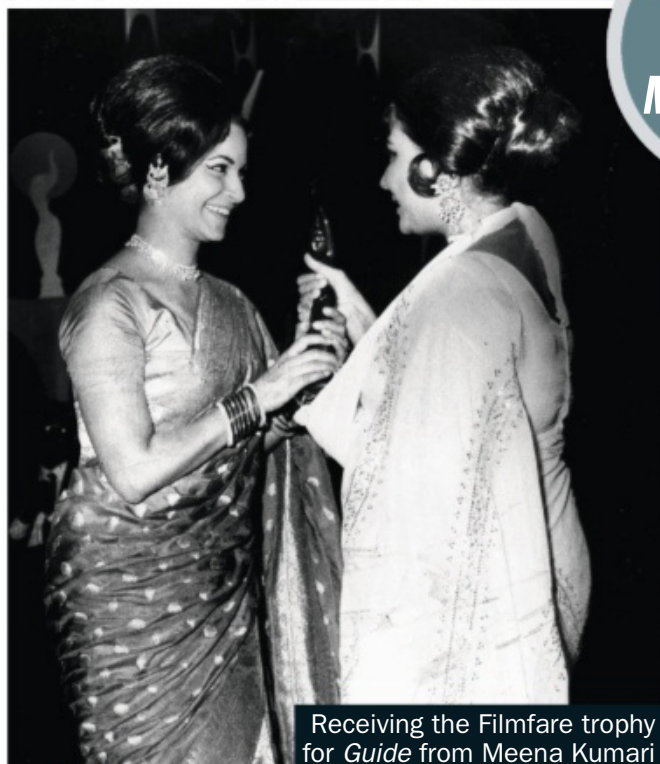


Abhijan



Mujhe Jeene Do

MOVIES AND MEMORIES



Receiving the Filmfare trophy for *Guide* from Meena Kumari



Dil Diya Dard Liya

“ROSIE IN *GUIDE* DOESN'T LEAVE HER HUSBAND CRYING. SHE SLAPS HIM BEFORE WALKING OUT. TO HELL WITH THE HUSBAND AND THE WORLD... THERE CAN BE ROSIE IN EVERY WOMAN, IN EVERY COUNTRY, IN ANY ERA”

as she was suffering from a liver ailment. Meenaji enjoyed having *paan*. Her niece, who accompanied her, carried around her huge basket of *paan*. Sometimes, I'd carry it too. Later, all of us travelled to London. Nargisji and I'd rush to shop at Selfridges at 8 am. Nargisji was down-to-earth. There was no fuss about her. Just a lipstick and an eye pencil and she'd be ready. Meenaji, on the other hand, was always well-groomed and poised. She had excellent skin.

“ROSIE IS IN EVERY WOMAN”

The credit for *Guide* (1965) goes to Goldie (director Vijay Anand). I was advised not to do *Guide*. But I believed in the character. There can be Rosie in every woman, in every country, in any era. Sometime back, when Asha (Parekh) and I'd visited Kutch – a guide there told me that Rosie is our first feminist and *Aaj phir jeene ki tamannah...* the first feminist song. Rosie doesn't leave her husband (Kishore Sahu) crying. She slaps him

before walking out. To hell with the husband and the world. Goldie presented the characters with dignity. Rosie and Raju (Dev Anand) live-in but there was no cheapness in that. *Tere mere sapne...* was shot in three takes by Fali Mistry. Two shots before sunrise and one at sunset. We'd reach the location at 4 am for rehearsals. There was no time for retakes. Many actresses wanted to play Rosie. In fact, Padmini and Leela Naidu wrote to me separately saying, 'If you don't want to do

Guide, please let us know.' Initially, Chetan Anand was to direct *Guide*. He wasn't keen to take me. Even Tad Danielewski didn't want me for the English version. He thought my English wasn't good. Also, I'd refused to do the kissing scene in the English version. But Dev insisted that he wanted me. He felt comfortable with me.

“DILIP SAAB PLAYED SAFE ALWAYS”

Dilip Kumar's a great, great actor. He was a cooperative co-star. I enjoyed doing *Dil Diya Dard Liya* (1966), *Ram Aur Shyam* (1967) and *Aadmi* (1968) with him. But I guess he wasn't courageous enough. He played safe all the time. He'd only work with top heroines, known music directors... Even subject wise, he played safe. When I was doing Satyajit Ray's *Abhijan* (1962), he said, “Waheeda, do me a favour. Please put in a word on my behalf to Dilip Kumar. I want to work with him.” I conveyed that to Dilip *saab*. But sadly, he didn't seem interested. What a combination Ray and he'd have made!

“MY HUSBAND WAS A HANDSOME MAN”

I met my would-be husband (Shashi Reiki aka actor Kamaljit), an extremely handsome man, during *Shagoon* (1964). He liked me then. But he had



With husband Shashi Reiki



Young Waheeda at a dance recital



Chaudvin Ka Chaand

“JUST AFTER THE SILVER JUBILEE OF *PYAASA*, MY MOTHER SUDDENLY PASSED AWAY OF A HEART ATTACK. IT WAS THE DARKEST PHASE OF MY LIFE. FOR ONE YEAR, I DREAMT THAT SHE WAS ALIVE AND WE’D BURIED HER IN HASTE”

placed his hopes on the film, which flopped. His film, *Son Of India* (1962) with Mehboob Khan *saab* hadn’t worked either. Heartbroken, he left India. He set up a boutique in Canada. Years later, when he was in India, Yash Joharji, his friend, told him, ‘You used to like Waheeda. Why don’t you propose to her? I guess she’s ready to marry.’ He proposed to me and we got married. In 1997, my husband suffered a stroke. Simultaneously, my mother-in-law was hospitalised. Everything was going wrong in our lives. It was a tough period. After my husband’s demise in 2000, I shifted from Bangalore to Mumbai. I began getting offers for

films (*Om Jai Jagadish*, *Rang De Basanti*, *Delhi 6*). It was God sent.

“I NEVER THOUGHT I WAS BEAUTIFUL”

My hair had started greying rather early. Every 10 days, I had to touch it up. I found it tiring. During the time when my husband was unwell, it escaped my mind to dye my hair. When I came to Mumbai everyone was shocked to see me. Helen, Sadhna, Nanda... all said, “*Khuda yeh kya kiya tumne!*” But I just let it be. When you accept reality, you’re relaxed. Once I’d attended a function, when Sunil said in jest, “*Waheedaji’s* unfair. Being

younger than us, she’s stopped dyeing her hair. Now our secret is out!”

I believe beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder. Honestly, I never believed I was beautiful. I just photographed well. I thank the cameramen for that. Also, I believed in keeping it real. (*Smiles*) Amitabh Bachchan once mentioned that he’d heard stories about me carrying my own make-up box and even sitting under a tree and applying it myself in the absence of an assistant. At the peak of my career, I went to Crawford Market to shop with my sisters. I believed without make-

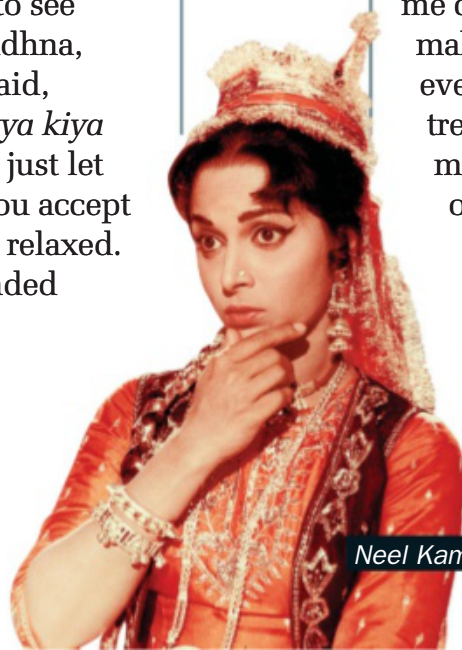
up no one would recognise me. But someone did and we fled from there.

“I FEEL CLOSER TO GOD AMIDST NATURE”

I’ve always been interested in photography. I’d carry a Rolleiflex camera when we shot outdoors. I’ve shot sunsets, landscapes and my co-stars including Nanda, Raj Kapoor and even Satyajit Ray. Dilip *saab* would joke, “*Jab dekho ladkon ki tarah camera lekar ghoomti rehti ho!*” Recently, my son Sohail urged me to go on a safari to Kenya with professional photographers. I enjoy shooting wild life. I feel close to God amidst nature. There’s no pretension, no hypocrisy. You’re just yourself. You don’t have to impress anyone.

“I’M NOT STUCK IN THE PAST”

I don’t watch my films as I get critical about my performances. Success and fame... all is temporary. There today, gone tomorrow. Everyone goes through upheavals. I’ve been through a lot of emotional and financial ups and downs. But I like to enlarge the positive things. I avoid negative people. You can aim for the sky. But when in trouble, look at the millions below you. I believe I’ve no sorrows in life. I don’t mind being born as Waheeda Rehman again. But I’d definitely do it better. ■



Neel Kamal

your say

reader's reviews, box-office, celebrity column & more

INSTA LIKE

Warm glimpses

Check out what your favourites are upto on Instagram...



@priyankachopra So proud of this fam. Congratulations @jonasbrothers you guys crushed it today. #grammys
Priyanka Chopra may enjoy all the fame and fortune in the world. But family is her treasure. And the Jonas' daughter-in-law more than often shows it.



@katrinakaif on set 📷 shenanigans....
What's on my cards? Katrina Kaif and team indulge in some games between shots.



@deepikapadukone Happy Happy Birthday my partner in french fry! 🍟 Actually...YOU are a french fry! Okay Bye!!! 🙄🙄🙄
@anishapadukone *Sisters that share 'fries' together, stay together. Deepika Padukone sums up her bond with b'day girl Anisha.*

@aliaabhatt Mark your calendars 🌟 for #Brahmastra Releasing 04.12.2020
Boy band, Ayan Mukerji, Ranbir Kapoor and Amitabh Bachchan, along with Alia Bhatt... announce the date of their most-awaited venture.



Too much of love, too much of affection and too much to do... Sara Ali Khan is on a roll.

@saraalikh95 I can't believe my luck 🌟🌟🌟🌟 My next film : ATRANGI RE... with @aanandirai sir... so thankful to have @akshaykumar sir join hands with... @dhanushk Raja and myself...



Readers send in their feedback pg 96

Shatrughan Sinha's racy rejoinders pg 102



IN THE MAIL

READERS WRITE AND BITE BACK... WITH LOVE AND AFFECTION



Salman Khan

1st Prize
₹1500

REINVENT SALMAN

Salman Khan's fans are disappointed at the under-performing of *Dabangg3*. We, his fans, in all goodwill, offer some advice. He should stop doing films with family. He should stay away from sequels, unless it's

a *Tiger* franchise. He should desist doing meaningless Korean remakes and rather look at stories from Indian literature. He should also avoid overexposure on television. *Bigg Boss*, we believe, has diminished his mystique. And why does he always don t-shirts with the Being Human logo? Salman looks terrific in a plain white-shirt. We also

wish he does films with directors like Farhan Akhtar, Rohit Shetty, even Anurag Kashyap. We'd love to see him with Deepika Padukone and Kangana Ranaut and even Manushi Chhillar. We his fans will never let go of him. Like someone said, "Had there been no Salman Khan, he would have to be invented!"

Anand and Neeta
Mohan, Delhi

2nd Prize
₹1000

DADASAHEB FOR KAKAJI

I agree with the views expressed by Sri R. Sekhar (Letters, January, 2020)

that Rajesh Khanna should be should be decorated with the Dada Saheb Phalke Award as a star like Rajesh Khanna comes once in a lifetime. His superstardom (1969-72) may have been short-lived but the hysteria he generated

remains unparalleled. The younger generation should know that *Kakaji* delivered hits even during the heydays of Amitabh Bachchan. *Amar Deep* (1979), *Thodi Si Bewafai* (1980) *Dard* (1981) and *Avatar, Souten, Agar Tum Na Hote* (all in 1983), and his last hit *Swarg* (1990). Unfortunately, with all his talent, he could not transform himself into a powerful character actor like the Big B. The only powerful character he played was in *Aa Ab Laut Chalen* (1999). His biggest asset was his voice modulation and dialogue delivery.

P. Nag Shankar Rao,
Andhra Pradesh



Babita

MORE THAN A STAR MOM

Babita is a supermom, who steered the careers of her daughters, Karisma Kapoor and Kareena Kapoor Khan, to soaring heights. But in her brief acting career too, she delivered box-office bonanzas. Babita worked with all the top stars of her time, including Rajendra Kumar, Manoj Kumar, Rajesh Khanna and Jeetendra until she quit after marrying Randhir

Kapoor. Her fashion sense was unique - bouffants, tight *kurtas* and glasses. She was a star and glam icon in her own right.

Meena Pant, Dehradun

KAL AAJ AUR KAL

Babita and Jeetendra made a hit pair in the '60s. They introduced a new style of 'aerobic' dancing in *Farz*. Babita quit it all to marry Randhir Kapoor. Though their marriage underwent upheavals, today they enjoy a congenial relationship. The success of their daughters, Karisma Kapoor and Kareena Kapoor Khan, is a common joy they choose to cherish.

Arvinder Kaur, Punjab



Rajesh Khanna



Kangana Ranaut

KANGANA IS BRAVE

If there is one actress, who makes it look effortless every time, it is Kangana Ranaut. Her portrayal of the brave warrior queen in *Manikarnika: The Queen Of Jhansi* was outstanding. Her recent outing, *Panga*, was a commendable effort. Rarely would a glamorous actor opt for a no make-up look. The teaser of *Thalaivi*, based on the life of Jayalalithaa, the late politician and superstar seems promising.

Shoba Kaicker, Canada

FACT OR FAKE?

In *Ujda Chaman*, the 30-year Chaman Kohli (Sunny Singh) is an assistant professor in Delhi. He's 'permanent' with a salary of 70,000 rupees. But we all know that PhD cannot be completed in 30 years. Also, hordes of assistant professors had recently protested in Delhi as they didn't get 'permanent' status.

Rahul Vaish, Moradabad



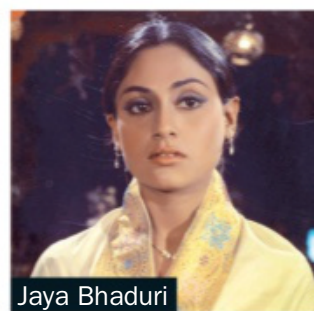
Taapsee Pannu

TERRIFIC TAAPSEE

The talented Taapsee Pannu has an enviable portfolio – *Mulk*, *Badla*, *Game Over*, *Mission Mangal* and *Saand Ki Aankh* have been

her recent outings. Currently, she's busy shooting for *Rashmi Rocket*, the story of an athlete. But before that, she's gearing up for the release of *Thappad* with director Anubhav Sinha. She's one actress, who speaks her mind unapologetically off-screen too, unmindful of the trolling she invites. She's truly a 'slap' on the face of patriarchy. Kudos Taapsee.

Shoba Kaicker, Canada



Jaya Bhaduri

JAYA BHADURI – NATURAL BEAUTY

Jaya Bhaduri charmed audiences with her simple charm in the '70s. The camera captured her features wonderfully - large eyes, full lips, a sharp nose and of course those long tresses. She brought cotton sarees in vogue. In fact, the late photographer Gautam Rajadhyaksha had once compared her perfect bone structure to that of the late Nutan. He said shoot them from any angle and the result is beautiful.

Hema Pathak, Pune

Just one Point



Chhapaak

Chhapaak is a success no matter the box-office statistics. It's a triumph of intent.

Rakhsa Shah, Baroda

Theatres should start the trend of morning shows. That way we can catch lost films of a bygone era.

Parveen Muqadam, Bangalore

MAKING HISTORY

Your Last Word 'Past Perfect' (January 2020) mentioned the recent surge in historicals in Hindi cinema. It's time to introduce the younger generation to legendary figures like Pehswa Bajirao, Tanhaji Malasare, Akbar, Rani of Jhansi Laxmibai and others. For the e-generation, hooked to Whatsapp, Facebook and Instagram, this is an easy way to brush up their history.

Kabir, New Delhi

IT'S HISTORY

In the Last Word, the editor pointed out that historical films have made a comeback as a genre. It's also observed that historical films trigger unnecessary controversies with regards to their authenticity in the case of *Padmaavat*. Have filmmakers exhausted their imagination that they have now become inclined towards historicals?

Prem. K. Menon, Mumbai

Kabir, New Delhi



Mrunal Thakur

MRUNAL HAS MAGIC

Mrunal Thakur's portrayal in *Kumkum Bhagya* is unforgettable. She made waves on the big screen with *Super 30* and *Batla House*. She received rave reviews due to her realistic portrayals. Her adventure in films started with the hard-hitting *Love Sonia*, directed by Tabrez Noorani. It took a look at the sordid world of sex-trafficking. Mrunal holds much promise.

S. Kaicker, Canada

Shah Rukh Khan should do a film with the sensitive and sensuous Vidya Balan. The two can give romance a mature idiom.

Mini Pinto, Mumbai

The Saira Banu-Dilip Kumar fairy-tale is still going strong at 54 plus years. Credit to the beautiful Saira, who's sacrificed so much to be around her 'real' hero.

Mohammed Salim, Kolkata

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Panga



Chhapaak



Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior

MARATHA SUPREMACY

Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior continued to rule the box-office in January, while the critically acclaimed, *Chhapaak* and *Panga*, extolled woman power

PANGA

Jaya Nigam (Kangana Ranaut) is a world-class *kabaddi* player, who loses her identity being a wife and a mother. She yearns to make a comeback to the game at the age of 32. Aided by supportive husband Prashant Shrivastava (Jassi Gill), son Adi (Yagya Bhasin) and coach Meenu (Richa Chadha), she restarts her journey. How she survives the physical travails and societal pressures makes for an inspiring narrative. Director Ashwiny Iyer Tiwari gets the details right. Be it the tiny cubicle where Jaya works as a ticket seller or the grimy railway quarter where she lives. Jaya and Prashant are everyday people, having everyday concerns. Their conversations revolve around their child's homework and his health. Even when she starts to train, her mind is constantly focussed on the trivia that consumes a homemaker. The story, the screenplay and the dialogue stand out. Child actor Yagya is a sassy kid. His natural delivery keeps you in splits. Kangana Ranaut lives and breathes Jaya. She makes you realise the pain of a faded athlete. You relate to her joy when life gives her a second chance. She flaunts a no-make-up look throughout and her physical transformation is laudable. *Panga* is a film made by a woman, with women at its centre, making a case for women, who need to retain their identities.

Balraj Singh, Gwalior

CHHAPAAK

Laxmi Agarwal was brutally attacked by a man, when she turned down his proposal. From an acid-victim, she turned into a gritty survivor and later became a crusader for acid-attack victims. Deepika Padukone's character Malti is reportedly based on Laxmi's life. Deepika Padukone's beauty is legendary.

TWIVIEWS

Fans and readers tweet their mini reviews to @filmfare

@supriya_pathak1
#Panga should be declared tax free. It depicts the struggle of a woman without any drama and *rona dhona*. Even when the actors aren't crying they bring tears to our eyes. Hats off to @KanganaTeam @Ashwinyiyer

@TheKanchanGupta
Panga is an ode to motherhood and chasing one's dreams. A must-watch film #PangaRulingHearts

@MomoSfngirl The intention of *Panga* is to maintain gender balance in the world. It showed that mothers can achieve their dreams.

@prittu09 Malti, truly a warrior. She fell, picked herself, she fought, she won. Her bond with Amol is so beautiful... Love is beyond external beauty #Chhapaak.

@DeepikaPFC
#Chhapaak is not a losing venture. It has been seen by those it was made for. They have responded to the film." - Girish Johar, trade analyst

It's a bold move for her to begin her innings as a producer with a film where her face is blemished almost through the entire length. This isn't a film for the faint-hearted. It shows that regeneration surgery is both time and money-consuming. The film bats for stricter punishment for the culprits. It also points out that acid shouldn't be readily available over the counter. It urges that such cases should be fast-tracked, with minimum harassment meted to the aggrieved party by the judiciary and the police. It also points out that the aggrieved should not give up on life. Malti finds it hard to land a job. The film urges us to be humane as a society and help towards the rehabilitation of the victims. With another cause-based film, Meghna Gulzar has shown that it's possible to blend art and mart.

TANHAJI: THE UNSUNG WARRIOR

Tanhaji Malasare was a trusted lieutenant of Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, who won the much coveted Kondhana Fort from the clutches of Aurangzeb by using his pet *ghorpad* (monitor lizard) to scale the impregnable fort. He sacrificed his life to conquer it. The film highlights Maratha valour. The line, "*Gad aala pan sinha gela* (we won the fort but lost the lion)," paid the ultimate tribute to Tanhaji. Director Om Raut shows a flair for historicals after debuting with the Marathi film *Lokmanya: Ek Yug Purush* (2015). The VFX and 3D are top class and make the viewing an out-of-the-world experience. The battle scenes are brilliantly executed. The Ajay Devgn-Saif Ali Khan (as Udaybhan Singh Rathore) *jodi* works wonders yet again. Kajol as Tanhaji's wife Savitribai nails it easy. Sharad Kelkar is convincing as Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

Sumeet Nadkarni, Mumbai



Street Dancer 3D



Darbar



Good Newwz



Shimla Mirchi

STREET DANCER 3D

Inayat (Shraddha Kapoor) and Sahej (Varun Dhawan) are both passionate dancers and captains of their respective teams Rule Breakers and Street Dancers. Sahej and his crew are NRI Indians living in the UK while Inayat and her friends are of Pakistani origin. The film displays India-Pakistan rivalry but thankfully it isn't jingoistic. Along the way, Sahej and Inayat realise that there's more to life than competition. They then utilise their craft for a bigger cause. Director Remo D'Souza has used every kind of dance genre - Locking and Popping, Contemporary, Slo Mo, Jazz, et al. His team comprising Dharmesh Yelande, Punit Pathak, Salman Yusuff Khan and Raghav Juyal, has done a great job. Nora Fatehi's character of Mia raises the oomph factor. Prabhudheva's rejig of the classic *Muqabala* song takes you on a nostalgia trip. The plight of illegal immigrants is also addressed in the film. Aparshakti Khurana's character lends the film a serious undertone. Remo has tried to mix great dance choreography with real world concerns. While the film's heart is in the right place the two themes seem discordant.

Rameshwari Pai, Chennai

DARBAR

Darbar (Tamil) is a star vehicle where director, A.R. Murugadoss, takes a backseat, letting superstar Rajinikanth spin his charisma. With his trademark mannerisms, swag and punchlines, Rajini treats his fans. The film holds your interest with the comic interludes and emotional moments. The action scenes, background score and even the dialogue are done keeping in mind the star. Nivetha Thomas as his daughter and Yogi Babu as his confidante cum assistant leave a mark. Nayanthara as the leading lady charms with her grace. The film's weak point is its nemesis Suniel Shetty, who could have been more energised. Aniruddh Ravichander's ear-shattering background score compensates for the weak musical score. This is a Thalaivar spectacle no doubt.

Dr. K. Karthik Rao, Coimbatore

TWIVIEWS

Fans and readers tweet their mini reviews to @filmfare

@varrulicious

Street Dancer 3D has magnificent performances. It delivers an important message that humanity is bigger than nationality. It deserves all the love. #RepublicDay rightly celebrated with *StreetDancer*

@VarshaVaria I have watched *Street Dancer 3D* and seriously can't get over it till now. Especially @Varun_dvn's moves just before *Bezubaan* for rule breakers. The *Nachi Nachi* song is mind-blowing. #WeLoveStreetDancer @ShraddhaKapoor @Norafatehi @TSeries

@diadeshmukh May I know the reason why AR Murugadoss is still directing films? If it's only for making money and to survive, please continue. I just watched #Darbar and was disappointed.

@buduggadu #Darbar is a pure mass masala action entertainer from the one and only #Thalaivar @rajinikanth It's a one-man show for sure.. The superstar is the ultimate.

@Itx_Ravi From *Saugandh To Good Newwz*, he's ruling the hearts of millions around the world. 29 years of Akkiwood. Akshay Kumar is unstoppable - a star for all seasons.

GOOD NEWWZ

Two couples, played by Kareena Kapoor Khan-Akshay Kumar and Diljit Dosanjh-Kiara Advani, who share the same surname and are pursuing parenthood through IVF, get embroiled in a goofy sperm-mix up. The writing embeds a plethora of adult jokes and doesn't shy away from exploiting the biological context around pregnancy - so you get to hear eggs (read ovules), swimmers (read sperms) in abundance. Much of the credit goes to Kumar, who's terrific with his comic timing and sparkling one-liners. In the second half, the narrative casts a stereotypical eye on '*apna khoon*' and abortion. However, the buoyant performances make up for the minor quibbles. Dosanjh is great as the loud and low-on-wits Honey flummoxed at the 'spam' mix-up. Kareena and Kiara don't disappoint.

Ahwaan Padhee, Hyderabad

SHIMLA MIRCHI

Sholay director Ramesh Sippy's film, *Shimla Mirchi*, finally released after around five years. The film seems to belong to a bygone era. Rukmini (Hema Malini) has been separated from Tilak (Kanwaljit Singh) but doesn't want to let go. She's hesitant to sign the divorce papers, much to the disgust of her daughter Naina (Rakul Preet Singh). Avinash (Rajkummar Rao) comes to Shimla and falls in love with Naina. He joins her cafe as an employee. To make her realise his feelings for her, he writes her a letter but signs it off as a secret admirer. Naina copies the content of the letter and passes it to her mother, thinking it might buoy her spirits. This leads to a complication, as Rukmini is flattered that a much younger man is in love with her. There should have been more scenes between Hema Malini and Rajkummar Rao to spell out the odd situation. Rakul Preet essays her role with sincerity. Rajkummar channels his inner Shah Rukh Khan with his shy, good-natured lover act. But Hema Malini is stymied by a poorly defined role. Watch the film to catch a whiff of a bygone era in picturesque locales even though the formula is past its sell-by date.

Rukmini Gupta, Chandigarh

TRIPLE TREAT

Three different films were released towards the end of January with different results. The much-hyped dance film *Street Dancer 3D* made decent numbers but couldn't find a place in the 100-crore club. *Panga* was praised by critics but somehow couldn't affect a mass appeal, doing average business. The comedy with a twist, *Jawaani Jaaneman*, had an interesting premise. But it too wasn't able to attract audiences. The shadow of *Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior* hung over all the three releases and influenced their box-office outcome.



STREET DANCER 3D

FIRST WEEK COLLECTION ₹56.77cr

DIRECTOR: Remo D'Souza

CAST: Varun Dhawan, Shraddha Kapoor, Nora Fatehi, Prabhudheva, Dharmesh Yelande, Salman Yusuff Khan, Raghav Juyal, Punit Pathak, Aparshakti Khurana

RELEASE DATE: January 24, 2020

RAPID REVIEW: *Street Dancer 3D* showcases the rivalry between two bands of talented dancers.

VIEWER'S VERDICT: "The dance choreography was extraordinary indeed."

-Sachin Pradhan, 44, head -security process and systems



PANGA

FIRST WEEK COLLECTION ₹21.36cr

DIRECTOR: Ashwiny Iyer Tiwari

CAST: Kangana Ranaut, Jassi Gill, Richa Chadha, Neena Gupta

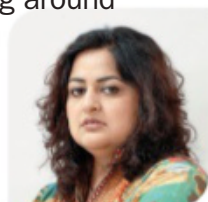
RELEASE DATE: January 24, 2019

RAPID REVIEW: *Panga* is a sports drama revolving around second chances.

VIEWER'S VERDICT:

"The bond between the mother and the child depicted in the film was real indeed."

-Kriti P, 39, head internal communications



JAWAANI JAANEMAN

FIRST WEEK COLLECTION ₹20.21cr

DIRECTOR: Nitin Kakkar

CAST: Saif Ali Khan, Tabu, Alaya Furniturewala

RELEASE DATE: January 31, 2019

RAPID REVIEW: *Jawaani Jaaneman* is a comedy about a playboy, who finally grows up.

VIEWER'S VERDICT: "It's a lightweight breezy comedy that makes you laugh."

-Swati Karkera, 28, banker



Just
In

SHARMILA TAGORE
STOPPED FROM WEARING
A BIKINI FOR
“AN EVENING IN PARIS.”



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FILMFARE



Shatrughan Sinha's Rapid fire

Does Arnab Goswami deserve the Padma Shri, the Padma Bhushan, the Padma Vibhushan or the Bharat Ratna?

CV Aravind, Bengaluru

Once the nation's favourite, the most learned Arnab Goswami would deserve much more than what you've suggested. Only if he could change his track once again and become pro-people instead of being pro-government always. The most admired, an intellectual par excellence, anchor-journalist Mr Ravish Kumar was recently honoured with the Magsaysay Award – the most revered award for being a people's representative. By the way, Ravish Kumar is

also a close friend of the dashing Arnab Goswami.

Do bachelors make better Prime Ministers than family men?

Santosh Mohan Joshi, Miraj

Please don't judge by a single example or the current example. It varies from person to person, situation to situation.

Do you support the recent humongous hike in traffic fines brought in by the government?

Gaurav Pant, New Delhi

Since people take the country and its laws for granted. It's high time some punishment or fines are imposed. How much how and how-to is a matter of wider discussion.

Do you believe the current slowdown in the economy is the result of unexpected decisions taken by our policymakers?

Meena Pant, Dehradun

I certainly agree with you. But at this juncture, I don't want to blame our Honourable Finance



ISRO inspired: Mission Mangal

Minister or the PMO. I shall rather wait and watch for some more time.

Corruption continues to be our number one speed-breaker. Comment.

Lalitkumar Kumpalath

I agree with you. But the question we need to ask is who promotes it. How come there's no whistle-blower procedure in this country?

How successful will the Kashmir card (removal of Article 370) played by PM Modi – Amit Shah prove to be?

Miraya Kapoor, Haryana

It could be successful if we respected and treated each other with love, trust and understanding. However, the right answer would come from China or America.

What is 'good simplicity' and 'bad simplicity'?

Naveen Bhardwaj, Mohali

Simplicity, in general, is good. But when your

PHOTOGRAPH: MEETESH TANEJA

We spend a lifetime wondering what women want. But does our government ever wonder what the citizens want?

Lalitkumar Kumpalath, Mumbai

What the citizens want besides *roti, kapda, makan* and of course health, education, peace, prosperity and development... they can take a cue from our friend Arvind Kejriwal. He certainly seems to be leading the path and turning himself into a role model.



simplicity is not so simple or is misunderstood, it may prove harmful.

Your suggestion to boost the economy would be...

Amit Loiwal, Baroda

Raise income, remove income tax, lower corporate tax and end the tax regime.

Will the newly amended Motor Vehicles Act coerce Indians to drive well?

Anushri Verma, Noida

Absolutely. If the cops do their jobs well. No one

likes to dish out money and fines.

What is common between elections and marriage?

Karan Nangia, Gurgaon

According to some both are like a pack of cards – only destiny knows what cards will be dealt to you. According to many both are a hoax. Recently, I was told both ruin lives.

What do have to say about ISRO's achievements?

Karan Nangia, Gurgaon

Brilliant, outstanding,

phenomenal. Our respect and salute to the scientists, technicians, engineers, especially the ladies, who controlled the situation. Also, a salutation to the determination, courage and hard work of everyone involved. Long live ISRO.

Why do doctors wear green clothes during an operation?

Syed Nisar Mehdi, Hyderabad

Green is symbolic of peace, healing, calm and stability. So it's seen in hospitals. Green rooms are also provided to sportsmen and performers, where they relax and rejuvenate themselves.

What's the exact meaning of the phrase 'close shave'? Did you experience 'a close shave' in your married life?

Rajesh Ranga, New Delhi

Generally, it means a disaster averted in the nick of time, a narrow escape from what could have happened. Yes, of course, I've experienced several 'close shaves' in my married life. With whose wife... let's not talk about that at the moment.

1st Prize

Single-use plastic has been banned. There's also a need to cleanse polluted minds. How can that be done?

Ms Jaspreet Kaur, Mohali

More than the hollow statements by the government, the mindset of the people has to be changed. But not by force. It requires maturity, an understanding of the situation, awareness and workshops.

2nd Prize

According to Hindu philosophy, if God is one, then why do we worship multiple gods and goddesses?

Anju Agarwal, via email

True, God is one, the Supreme power. But he's visualised, described and idolised differently by different people. To each his own.

(Feature co-ordinated by **DEVESH SHARMA**)

Please note: The column doesn't reflect Shatrughan Sinha's political or personal views. His answers are given in jest and humour.

Win!
CASH PRIZES

1st prize

₹3000

2nd prize

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