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TALKING WITH  
**TABU**

**AAMIR,  
SRK AND  
SALMAN**  
COME TOGETHER  
IN A FILM

**DEEPIKA  
PADUKONE**  
SPY GAMES

**HRITHIK  
ROSHAN**  
GOES TO  
HOLLYWOOD

*Gotcha!*

**BHUMI  
PEDNEKAR,**  
AS GOOD AS IT GETS

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PHOTOGRAPH: LAKSHETA MODGIL, NIMISHA TIWARI  
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 HAIR & MAKEUP: BHUMI PEDNEKAR  
 Outfit: Gauri & Nainika  
 Jewellery: Goenka India



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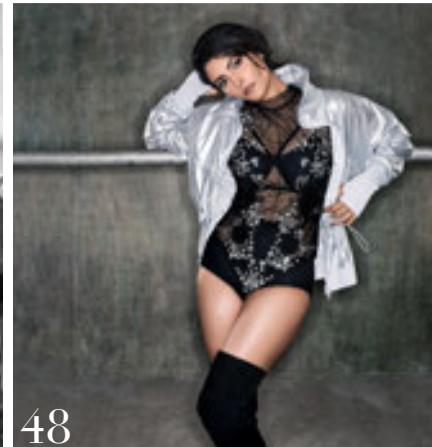
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# Letter from the Editor

## New age heroine

Bhumi Pednekar broke every stereotype associated with the Hindi film heroine when she burst on the screen with *Dum Laga Ke Haisha*. She was overweight, deglam and what's more, had a better character graph than the hero. We hadn't seen anything like that before or since. She was a pioneer, a mini-revolution in the works. Even she mustn't have realised the far-reaching consequences of the steps she had taken in her debut film itself. To everyone's surprise, the film, which brought to light the travails of a mismatched couple, proved to be a runaway hit. This clearly indicated that the audience was willing to invest in something edgy, something real. That they were willing to invest in a story and didn't necessarily care if washboard abs and exquisite good looks weren't part of the package, showed that the taste of the audience was evolving.

With each new outing, Bhumi ensured that *Dum laga Ke haisha* wasn't just a flash in the pan. That she was committed to being counted as a serious actor in the long run. For example, in her film, *Shubh Mangal Saavdhan*, she played a woman who willingly gets married to a man suffering from erectile dysfunction. She loves him and finds it enough to sustain a relationship. The ailment can be cured and with her support, it does get cured. It was such a progressive thought and her character handled every aspect of it with grace. In *Bala*, she played a dark-complexioned girl. Her whole character sketch was a one-woman crusade against fairness creams. Our heroines have time and again been the brand ambassadors of such products. These products exist because our nation is obsessed with white skin. She went against the grain and triumphed. In *Toilet: Ek Prem Katha*, she played a woman who refused to stay in a marriage when her husband wasn't able to provide her with a toilet inside his rural home. Her rebellion sparked a movement and set her husband on the path of being a public crusader against open defecation.

You don't have to mouth reams of dialogue to get the point across. She showed that in the underrated gem, *Sonchiriya*. The film had her playing a woman on the run from her tormentors. Circumstances make her seek help from dacoits. Her face is half-hidden in *ghunghat* but her eyes, her expressions, speak volumes. In *Saand Ki Aankh*, she played a grandmother who takes to pistol shooting and in her last release, *Dolly, Kitty Aur Woh Chamakte Sitare*, she played a woman who works in a sex chat centre. She was paired with Taapsee Pannu in the former and with Konkona Sen Sharma in the latter and formed a successful partnership with both, showing that girls needn't be rivals and can make a cracking film together. Bhumi is on our cover this month.

Turn the pages to know more about this firebrand...

*Jitesh Pillai*

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a bird's-eye view of show town's happenings

# masala fix



## NEW DAWN

Diwali was a quiet affair this year, thanks to the raging pandemic. Stars decided to tone down their celebrations but that doesn't mean they didn't mingle. Wonder boy **Siddhant Chaturvedi** invited his co-stars from his **Shakun Batra** project as well as *Phone Bhoot* home for Diwali. To his delight **Deepika Padukone**, **Ananya Panday** and **Ishaan Khatter** all turned up to make it a memorable evening.

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The three Khans will be seen together in *Laal Singh Chaddha* pg 08

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Deepika Padukone playing an agent in *Pathaan?* pg 10

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PHOTOGRAPH: YOGEN SHAH

## LAAL SINGH CHADDHA TO BRING THE THREE KHANS TOGETHER

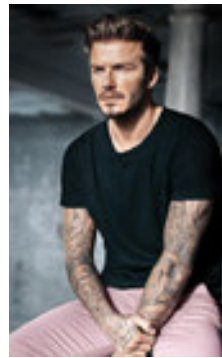
**Aamir Khan's** last release was *Thugs Of Hindostan* (2018). The audience didn't take kindly to it. Looks like Aamir doesn't want to disappoint his fans again. So he's leaving no stone unturned to make sure his next *Laal Singh Chaddha* is a hit. *Laal Singh Chaddha* is the official remake of the Hollywood drama *Forrest Gump*. While we've already heard that **Shah Rukh Khan** has shot for his cameo in the film, now we hear that even **Salman Khan** might be roped in. SRK will be seen in his 'Raj' avatar from his iconic film *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge*. A source close to the film confirmed the same, saying, "The screenplay weaves in iconic moments from each decade and since we love our matinee idols, Chaddha's journey would be incomplete without certain top stars. So, during this journey of self-discovery, Aamir lands on the sets to meet Shah Rukh around the release of *DDLJ* and sharing his personal experiences, engages with the wonder world." And while Shah Rukh Khan is seen as Raj, it is said that Salman Khan will portray his iconic 'Prem' roles. "His Prem wooed the audience in the '90s, from *Maine Pyar Kiya*, *Hum Aapke Hain Koun..!* to *Hum Saath Saath Hain* and Aamir is keen to get Salman back as Prem in his social dramedy. There's a track set in 1989 that depicts a change in audience taste, from action to romance, and the craze around Salman. They are expected to finalise the details soon." Three cheers for *Laal Singh Chaddha*, we say!



## HRITHIK ROSHAN SET TO MAKE HIS HOLLYWOOD DEBUT AS A SPY?

According to reports, **Hrithik Roshan** is all set to play a parallel lead in a Hollywood spy film. Hrithik had signed up with an American talent management company eight months ago. And that has culminated into a movie now. The actor reportedly shot his audition at his Juhu pad in Mumbai. The Hollywood auditions usually happen at the studios. But they were okay with a home-shot audition because of the pandemic. Speaking to a daily, a source said, "As is customary in Los Angeles, Hrithik's team was given details of his role in the movie and the scene he had to tape. He sent his audition to the studio two weeks ago. The discussion is still at a nascent stage. If all goes well, the actor will kick off the project after completing the shoot of *Krrish 4*." Looks like Hrithik Roshan is all set to change gears.

## David Beckham welcomes Priyanka Chopra to the British Fashion Council



**Priyanka Chopra Jonas** is always making news and topping the headlines with her work. Recently, we heard that the actress had been signed on as the ambassador for the British Fashion Council for positive change. The actress will team up with the organisation to create an awareness about various social causes. It's yet another great achievement for the actress. While congratulatory comments are pouring in, legendary footballer **David Beckham**, who has also been associated with the BFC for years, too posted a welcome message. Beckham commented saying, 'Welcome to the BFC family,' and even inserted a red-heart. Soon Priyanka replied to his comment saying, '@ davidbeckham Thank you so much!' The actress will be seen next in *The White Tiger*. The trailer has amazed everyone. We can hardly wait to see the film.

## RAKUL PREET SINGH PART OF MAYDAY STARRING AMITABH BACHCHAN AND AJAY DEVGN

After directing *U Me Aur Hum* (2008) and *Shivaay* (2016), **Ajay Devgn** is going back to direction with a project titled *Mayday*, which stars **Amitabh Bachchan**. The highly anticipated aviation drama has **Rakul Preet Singh** joining its stellar cast. Rakul will be seen essaying the role of Ajay's co-pilot in this thriller. This will be her second outing with Ajay Devgn after *De De Pyaar De* and she will be sharing the screen with Amitabh Bachchan for the very first time. Talking about joining the *Mayday* team, Rakul said, "I have worked with Ajay sir in the past and am extremely thrilled to be working with him yet again as his co-pilot in a film where he is not just my co-star but director too.) When I decided to be an actor like all the other aspiring actors I had a dream to work with Mr Bachchan and I am so glad that with this film my dream to share screen space with him will come true." Ajay Devgn returns to direction after 4 years. His last directorial *Shivaay* was an adventure drama, where he took to the mountains and here he aims to go even higher.



**SANJANA SANGHI WILL JOIN ADITYA ROY KAPUR IN THE UPCOMING ACTION FLICK OM - THE BATTLE WITHIN. THE FILM WILL BE DIRECTED BY KAPIL VERMA AND IS BEING PRODUCED BY ZEE STUDIOS, AHMED KHAN AND SHAIRA KHAN. OM WILL GO ON FLOORS NEXT MONTH AND IS EXPECTED TO RELEASE BY THE END OF 2021.**





## ARE DEEPIKA PADUKONE AND KARTIK AARYAN COMING TOGETHER ON SCREEN?

**Kartik Aaryan** celebrated his 30th birthday recently and wishes poured in from his fans as well as industry friends. **Deepika Padukone's** birthday message for Kartik Aaryan resulted in a fun Instagram banter. It all started with Deepika Padukone posting a picture of Kartik Aaryan as her Instagram story on his birthday. Along with the pic, she wrote, "Happy Birthday. May we sign a fun film together this year," along with a tongue-out emoji. Replying to this, Kartik Aaryan shared Deepika's story on his Instagram and wrote, "Aap bas dates taiyaar rakho, fun aur film main laa raha hoon." Sharing Kartik's reply, Deepika Padukone then wrote, "Sir! Mere saare dates aapke," along with a heart sticker. Now this has got us excited.

## KATRINA KAIF TO PLAY A GHOST IN PHONE BHOOT

**Katrina Kaif** is all set to play the ghost in the horror-comedy *Phone Bhoot*. It's something we've never seen her do before. Given that this is new territory for Kat, it's going to be super exciting to see her spook everyone out. Katrina will start preparing for the film soon. Frankly though, we don't know how an actor prepares to be a ghost. Jokes aside, she'll go in for her look test soon. She apparently won't be romancing either **Siddhant Chaturvedi** or **Ishaan Khatter** in the film — too bad for both of them. The film is said to be a spoof on the horror genre. Looks like we're in for a lot of good, clean, spooky fun.

## Mrunal Thakur joins Ishaan Khatter in Pippa

**Ronnie Screwvala's** *RSVP* and **Siddharth Roy Kapur's** *Roy Kapur Films* have joined forces to bring a tale of India's valour onto the big screen with *Pippa*. A few weeks back, they'd announced that **Ishaan Khatter** would headline the project. Then Ishaan made a special announcement to reveal the other cast members. He shared a collage of pictures of himself, **Mrunal Thakur** and **Priyanshu Painyuli**.

He captioned the post saying, "We're coming with all guns blazing. Welcome to the #Pippa troop, fam :) @mrunalofficial2016 & @priyanshupainyuli." Now that's an interesting cast we must say. While **Priyanshu Painyuli** is known for his roles in *Extraction* and *Mirzapur Season 2*, **Mrunal Thakur** was seen in *Super 30* and in **Karan Johar's** story in the anthology *Ghost Stories*. Incidentally, **Mrunal's** next *Jersey* is with Ishaan's stepbrother **Shahid Kapoor**. *Pippa* is based on the book *The Burning Chaffees* by war veteran **Brigadier Balram Singh Mehta**. The film will be directed by *Airlift* director **Raja Krishna Menon**. Ishaan plays the role of **Brigadier Mehta**, a veteran of the 45th Cavalry Tank Squadron who fought on the Eastern front during the Indo-Pakistan war in 1971.



**VARUN DHAWAN AND KRITI SANON WERE SEEN TOGETHER IN 2015 IN ROHIT SHETTY'S DILWALE. ACCORDING TO REPORTS, THE TWO ACTORS WILL BE SEEN TOGETHER AGAIN IN AMAR KAUSHIK'S BHEDIYA. IT'S SAID TO BE A MONSTER FILM. BHEDIYA GOES ON FLOORS IN JANUARY 2021.**



## Sushmita Sen's daughter Renee makes her acting debut

**Sushmita Sen** celebrated her birthday recently and she was in for a pleasant surprise. Her daughter **Renee's** short film *Suttabaazi's* trailer released on that day itself. Renee is all set to make her acting debut on the web with the short film *Suttabaazi*. Sushmita took to Instagram to share the news. She wrote, "The bestest gift I could've ever received from a loving universe & my first love on my birthday!! Introducing with great pride...Renee Sen the Actor!! Presenting the Trailer of her first-ever short film #suttabaazi What a feeling to see my little Shona take brave steps towards her dreams... to have the courage to do so, all on her own!! Here's wishing @kabeerkhuranaofficial & the entire cast & crew of #suttabaazi EVERY SUCCESS!!! I LOVE YOU @reneesen47 What a NATURAL performer...keep growing, learning & enjoying...May you always earn respect first!!! #duggadugga #blessings #proudmaa #Alisah @sensubir @subhra51 @rohmanshaw WE BEGIN!!! P.S #smokingisinjurioustohealth". Great of Sush to plant a smoker's warning even amidst the congratulatory message, we must say.

## Karan Johar refuses to release *Brahmastra* directly on OTT

If recent media reports are to be believed, **Karan Johar** was offered a whopping amount to release his production *Brahmastra* directly on the OTT platform. But the filmmaker declined the lucrative offer. **Ranbir Kapoor** and **Alia Bhatt** are coming together for the first time in **Ayan Mukerji's** *Brahmastra*, which also stars **Amitabh Bachchan**, **Nagarjuna**, **Dimple Kapadia**, and **Mouni Roy**. This film was earlier titled *Dragon* and was slated to release on Christmas 2016. However, due to the massively-mounted scale, the makers needed more time to enhance it. It was then announced that the drama would be released on Independence Day 2019 and then December 4, 2020. But owing to the lockdown, it seems the release has to wait a little longer.



## AKSHAY KUMAR GIVES A NOD TO MUDASSAR AZIZ

**Akshay Kumar** is known for his back-to-back releases in a year. Right now, the actor has **Rohit Shetty's** *Sooryavanshi*, *Pooja* and *Emmay Entertainment's Bell Bottom*, *YRF's Prithviraj*, **Aanand L Rai's** *Atrangi Re* and *Raksha Bandhan*, **Sajid Nadiadwala's** *Bachchan Pandey* and **Ekta Kapoor's** next drama-comedy. He has now said yes to another comedy. According to reports, the actor has given his nod to **Mudassar Aziz's** next. The director who has helmed films like *Happy Bhaag Jayegi* and the remake of *Pati Patni Aur Woh* is all set to team up with Akshay Kumar. According to sources, the actor said yes instantly after hearing the script. Comedy has always worked for Akshay and we hope this one will too.



## DEEPIKA PADUKONE TO PLAY AN AGENT IN *PATHAAN*

We've learnt that **Deepika Padukone** will essay the role of an agent in *YRF's Pathaan*. She is juggling between this movie and **Shakun Batra's** next. She is set to join **SRK** in mid-December and the major chunk of action-packed sequences will be shot between January and June 2021. As far as Deepika's character is concerned, it is set in the world of agents and she will perform a lot of action. She's said to be an agent who joins *Pathaan* on a mission. Buzz is that her role is on the lines of **Katrina Kaif's** from the *Tiger* franchise. *Yash Raj Films* is apparently creating a universe of sorts with their agents' franchise. It is being reported that **Salman Khan** will make an appearance as *Tiger* in *Pathaan*, **SRK** will do a cameo as *Pathaan* in *Tiger 3* and both of them will reportedly appear in the *War* sequel to join **Hrithik Roshan's** *Kabir*.



LOOKS LIKE **KAJOL'S** DEBUT FILM ON THE DIGITAL PLATFORM, *TRIBHANGA* WILL RELEASE IN JANUARY.

**KAJOL DROPPED A HINT DURING AN INSTA LIVE. SHE SAID, "IT IS COMING OUT, HOPEFULLY, IN JANUARY." THE CAST OF RENUKA SHAHANE'S MULTI-GENERATIONAL SAGA INCLUDES MITHILA PALKAR AND TANVI AZMI. CONSIDERING IT IS BACKED BY HUBBY AJAY DEVGN, KADS WOULD CERTAINLY KNOW BETTER.**

## ALIA BHATT TURNS DOWN NEERAJ GHAYWAN'S NEXT

There were reports that **Alia Bhatt** is likely to feature in **Neeraj Ghaywan's** next, which is being produced by **Karan Johar**. Buzz was that being her mentor, Karan was keen to cast his protégé in the film. Things were moving in the right direction and the film was supposed to roll soon but now it seems that Neeraj will have to look for some other actress for the lead role. Alia apparently has too much on her plate and has passed on the opportunity to work with the director. It's a pity as we feel Alia and Neeraj would've definitely offered us something different.



# preview

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

## DIGITAL DIVA

### BARKHA SINGH

#### X FACTOR: INQUISITIVENESS

Born in a family that has served in the Indian armed forces over generations, Barkha Singh never thought of entering showbiz. The acting bug bit her when she went for an ad audition with a friend and ended up getting the part despite thirteen retakes. That was the start of her showbiz career. Barkha has worked in many digital shows since then, the latest of which is the second season of Dice Media's *Please Find Attachment*. She calls herself a 'gluttonous' actor as she's always hungry to explore new roles ranging from playing a powerful drug lord to being a vulnerable underdog. Her dream roles are Uma Thurman's character in *Kill Bill* and Hema Malini's double role in *Seeta Aur Geeta*. She loves to travel and is an avid social media user with a massive fan following.

Actors Aahana Kumra and Pratik Gandhi acquaint us with their dreams and desires *pg 12*



# Lipstick Under My Burkha changed my life...

... SAYS AAHANA KUMRA. VEDANSHI PATHAK IS ALL ATTENTION

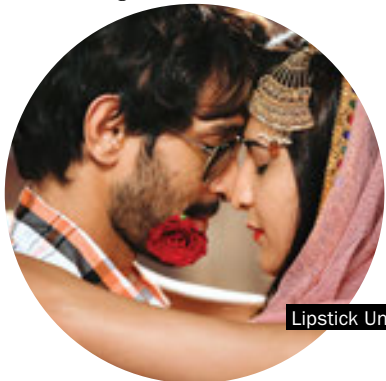
They say luck counts a lot in showbiz. While some people slog all their lives to make the cut in the industry, others zoom along on a route paved by destiny. One such person who got her first project when she wasn't looking for it is Aahana Kumra. She made her debut with Amitabh Bachchan on the small screen in the 20-episode series called *Yudh* in 2014. Six years from then she has done some quality work in the digital space as well as in films like *Lipstick Under My Burkha*, which changed her life both as an actor and as a person. Talking about how she landed such a prestigious project with Amitabh Bachchan she reveals, "Anurag Kashyap watched me in a play at Prithvi Theatre and cast me as Bachchan *saab's* daughter in *Yudh*. And till date, he remains my most favourite co-actor. And *Yudh* remains the project closest to my heart," she gushes.

There's a bounce in her voice as she recalls her first meeting with the megastar. "He had an hour-long chat with me about our characters and the history of our relationship. We shot our first scene together after that. He asked me if I had any problems with too many rehearsals. Till date, he's the first person to message me on my birthday, even before my parents and always reverts immediately whenever I text him. I follow his rules of punctuality and discipline. He doesn't take any single day on set for granted and enjoys being in front of the camera," she rattles off. One can make out she's been markedly influenced by Big B.

Aahana has done several plays, web shows, films as well as advertisements. She studied acting in Whistling Woods International and later started working as a casting assistant to Shanoo Sharma in Dharma Films. She assisted Shanoo on *My Name Is Khan* and realised how auditions were conducted and what was expected of an artiste once he/she walked into a casting room. She simultaneously worked



**“MOTHER ENROLLED ME IN A FILM SCHOOL DESPITE OPPOSITION FROM MY FATHER. HE DIDN'T THINK THIS WAS AN IDEAL CAREER FOR A YOUNG GIRL WHO COULD BECOME A MARKETING HEAD, A CIVIL SERVANT OR A DENTIST”**



Lipstick Under My Burkha



Khuda Haafiz



Yudh

“TILL DATE, BACHCHAN SAAB’S THE FIRST PERSON TO MESSAGE ME ON MY BIRTHDAY, EVEN BEFORE MY PARENTS AND ALWAYS REVERTS IMMEDIATELY WHENEVER I TEXT HIM. I FOLLOW HIS RULES OF PUNCTUALITY AND DISCIPLINE”

in theatre with Motley productions, Ansh Theatre group and Akvarious Productions and immersed herself into theatre completely for a few years to hone her acting skills.

Incidentally, the actress grew up away from the world of showbiz in Lucknow. Her mother is a former CBI officer and her father runs a pharmaceuticals business. She too was expected to become an IAS officer. However, things changed when she shifted to Mumbai at the age of 12. She started performing on stage in school and enrolled herself in theatre workshops while she was in college. After college, her mother had a serious conversation with her regarding her career choices. Her mom suggested she should formally learn acting if that was her intention. “Mother enrolled me in a film school despite opposition

from my father. He didn’t think this was an ideal career for a young girl who could become a marketing head, a civil servant or a dentist. Dad took a long time to come to terms with my career choice but now both my parents are proud of who I am and what I have achieved,” she states.

**L**ipstick Under My Burkha directed by Alankrita Shrivastava has been the high point in her career so far. The actress played a beautician from Bhopal in it. She terms it as a life-changing experience not only as an actor but as a woman too. “The film changed my life. It opened my eyes to a world I seldom acknowledged and acquainted me with the stigmas attached to being a woman,” she reveals. The film travelled to numerous film festivals globally, winning accolades

everywhere. Ekta Kapoor later got associated with it and helped release the films in theatres in 2017. She has fond memories of interacting with her fellow actresses like Ratna Pathak, Konkona Sen Sharma and Plabita Borthakur while making the film and has kept in touch with them ever since. “It wasn’t just a film for us, it became a movement,” she asserts.

The actress was last seen in *Khuda Haafiz* (2020) playing a police officer. She performed some close contact action scenes in the actioner. The film made her shed her inhibitions when it comes to action and now she wants to do more action films. “I spoke Arabic in the film and did action for the first time for which I was training with action director Andy Long. We shot the film in Uzbekistan and shot the action sequences in very low temperatures which was challenging but it also boosted my confidence

that I am capable of doing more such action roles.”

She insists that women are more than capable of holding their own doing action and more such roles should be written for them. She’s a feminist at heart and feels more and more women should enter showbiz not only as actresses but also into different fields of filmmaking. Only then things will improve and become better for women. Says the actress, “My current set of *Call My Agent*, which is a remake of the French hit series directed by Shaad Ali, has a female DOP, Sunita and a female production designer, Anita, and we have a fairly large number of women ADs and costume stylists on set. I’d love to have more and more female writers and directors that I can work with. I’d love to see a film with 10 actresses, like an ‘83. Trust me, it’s because there are fewer opportunities that women are always fighting with each other as opposed to men who get a hundred films on a platter. Women artistes would cut an arm and leg to get good roles and it’s time we wrote those powerful stories for them.”

Well said. ■



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# HUSTLING THROUGH LIFE

Raghuvendra Singh talks to Scam 1992 fame actor **Pratik Gandhi**, who is winning accolades for his stunning portrayal of Harshad Mehta

He was in class 6 when Pratik Gandhi first faced the camera for one of the shows on Doordarshan. It actually didn't register with him that what he was doing was being captured on camera. Cut to 2006 then, and he first faced the camera

for a crossover film called *Yours Emotionally*, directed by Sridhar Rangayan. It was a LGBTQ film aimed at festivals and didn't release in theatres. He didn't have a clue about the gay culture and the film proved to be an eyeopener indeed. He was always good in studies. After doing a diploma in engineering, he realised that it wasn't enough and studied for a degree as well. His job took him to Mumbai. At that point of time, he didn't have the courage to go into acting full time and hence kept his passion alive

by doing Gujarati theatre. He became an expert at juggling deadlines in office on the one hand and theatre practice on the other. It was a hectic existence but Pratik says he enjoyed it. He got a chance to play an important character in the play *Aa Paar Ke Pele Paar*, working with celebrated Gujarati actors like Firoz Bhagat, Aparna Mehta and Vipra Rawal. The venture proved to be commercially successful. His other important plays include *Mere Piya Gaye Rangoon*, *Hu Chandrakant Bakshi*, *Ame Badha Sathe To*



**SHABANAJI TOLD ME THAT SHE HASN'T SEEN A PERFORMANCE LIKE THIS IN THE LAST 30 YEARS. THAT WAS A BIG, BIG COMPLIMENT COMING FROM A STALWART LIKE HER**



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*Duniya Laiye Mathe*, in which he played multiple roles. He was included in the Limca Book of Records for his play *Mohan's Masala*; a monologue about Mahatma Gandhi's early years performed in three languages, English, Hindi and Gujarati on the same day.

**H**e met his future wife television and theatre actress Bhamini Oza during one of his plays. She liked his performance, came backstage to meet him and soon they started seeing each other. They got married in 2009 and a daughter, Miraya, was born to them in 2014. He dotes on his wife and daughter and considers them his lifeline.

He landed his first Gujarati film *Bey Yaar* (2014). He took leave for 22 days from office to complete it. And things changed for the Gujarati film industry after that. "It became a runaway success and in a way, a cult film in Gujarat and changed things around for the Gujarati film industry. Two years later, I landed another movie called *Wrong Side Raju*. The movie went on to win the National Award for Best Gujarati film." At office, he was up

**I'M A STAGE ACTOR AND I UNDERSTAND WHEN THE AUDIENCE CLAPS AFTER A SHOW THEY'RE APPRECIATING A CHARACTER. SO ONE SHOULDN'T LET THE ADULATION GET INTO ONE'S HEAD**



for promotion and that meant longer working hours. That's when he decided to let go of a secure monthly paycheck and concentrate purely on acting. "From 2016 I became a full time actor and since then I have done around ten Gujarati film and two Hindi films. In 2018 I got into talks with Hansal Mehta for *Scam 1992*, which finally came out this year," he explains.

Pratik read books and articles about Harshad and watched his interviews. He

wanted to get into the mindset of the character. He also put on 18 kgs as Hansal asked him to gain weight. He let loose the foodie inside him and ate everything with relish. The lockdown period proved to be a blessing for him as the shooting had gotten over, and he could use the time for working out to get back into his lean frame again. One thing Pratik wanted to avoid was to mimic Harshad. The actor says Harshad came from nowhere with nothing but dreams of making

it big. His aim was to humanise the stockbroker, who used unfair means to achieve success. "Harshad, in a way, became the embodiment of middle-class aspirations. He achieved what others only dream about all their lives." The actor reflects that it was tough not to be judgemental about Harshad Mehta. "But when the camera came on, my theatre training kicked in. We're taught in the theatre to lose ourselves in our characters on stage. That's what I did.

I give credit to my present success to my theatre days," he confesses. Pratik isn't overwhelmed by the accolades coming his way after *Scam 1992*. "I'm a stage actor and I understand when the audience claps after a show they're appreciating the character. So one shouldn't let the adulation get into one's head, as an actor can have off days as well and the claps can easily turn to boos," he reflects. His day was made when Shabana Azmi called him up and complimented him. "Shabanaji told me that she hasn't seen a performance like this in the last 30 years. That was a big, big compliment coming from a stalwart like her," he gushes.

He's been flooded with offers but isn't being hasty in signing on the dotted line. The most important criteria is that the role should satisfy the actor in him. "Bollywood isn't the only option for me. I'm looking at offers from across languages. Thankfully, other avenues have opened up for actors besides films. Hansal sir told me that people are going to remember my portrayal of Hansal Mehta for years. Hence, my aim is to make a home in people's memory through memorable characters." ■

# F&B

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Kiara Advani



Manish Malhotra



Deepika Padukone



Karisma Kapoor and Samara

**"I THINK MY FASCINATION WAS INBORN. I AM REALLY INTO CLOTHES, COLOURS, PAINTINGS, SKETCHING, MOVIES, MUSIC..."**

**Manish Malhotra** goes down memory lane and shares anecdotes about his illustrious career



Katrina Kaif



# THE WONDER YEARS

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**MANISH MALHOTRA LOOKS BACK AT HIS 30 WONDERFUL YEARS IN SHOW BUSINESS. AKASH NIHALANI TAKES NOTES**

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Manish Malhotra is a name that is synonymous with Bollywood fashion. The designer started his journey at the movies back in 1989 with *Swarg*. Thirty years down the line and Manish is the ultimate poster boy for showbiz fashion. He's created some iconic outfits over the years. And has made friends with half of Bollywood — the half that matters, that is... As Manish completes a milestone in his career, we chat with the designer and learn a little more about his memorable journey down the years. Excerpts...



Your journey as a designer in Bollywood began in 1989 with Juhi Chawla in *Swarg*. Tell us something about how that came about.

I was modelling at that time and had also started working in boutiques. I really enjoyed my time there as I was amongst clothes, I was sketching, I was dressing up the mannequin and all of that. *Island* magazine had just started their design fraternity, NIFT had just opened and they had done a thing about young designers. I was on the cover of the *Island* magazine. Then, I kind of ended up keeping two tailors at home. My cousin Laali, who is married to David Dhawan, was going to Hong Kong and she needed a few clothes for an exhibition. I showed her my sketches and she really liked them. I ended up making those clothes for her. Laali told David about me. They had to rush to shoot a schedule which was for the last song of *Swarg* in 1989. That's how I ended up doing three costumes for the film. I remember going helter-skelter at the time. I was constantly running around.

I picked up two costumes, changed them around, made one costume. And then, David ji gave me another film which was supposed to be Divya Bharti's launch film with Govinda but it got shelved later. Then I went on to do *Lootere* and all those films.

**From *Lootere* (1990) to *Student Of The Year 2* (2019), Bollywood fashion has come a long way. What do you think has influenced the industry through these years?**

In my opinion, cinema is always changing. There are younger and younger actors, directors, writers coming in. They've changed the whole medium of storytelling and with that change, the look of a film has changed as well. Actually, I've really enjoyed my journey of 30 years. I don't even know when these years passed by. There has been so much work, travel, friendships, relationships, success, celebrations, stress, handwork... all of it. It is something that I'm emotional about as it is a major chunk of my life.

**At what point did your interest in fashion begin?**

As far as I can remember, it was at the age of six... I was always interested in fashion, music, films, dance, costumes, heroines... My mother had hired a tuition teacher for me at the age of five, because she wanted me to be a good student, which of course I never was. She tells me I'd tell the teacher that her outfit wasn't good or her sandals were not matching her outfit.

**What does Bollywood fashion mean to you?**

I've always seen myself as a student of Bollywood fashion. It is something that I've always been interested in. I'm not just talking about the time when I started working in 1990. I'm talking about 1949 *Andaaz*, I'm speaking about 1950 *Barsaat*. I'm speaking about the art decor, the interior, the persona of the actors, the costumes... The influences of the work of V Shantaram, Raj Kapoor, Guru Dutt, Bimal Roy... how each of them costumed their films so aptly with the narrative of their



Vanity Fair

## HOW THE WEST WAS WON

Manish Malhotra worked in Mira Nair's *Vanity Fair* in 2003. He designed Reese Witherspoon's Victorian outfits for the period film. Based on William Makepeace Thackeray's 1848 novel of the same name, the film's costumes received a lot of appreciation and was his first Hollywood project that put him on the world map as an ace designer.

*I've really enjoyed my journey of 30 years. I don't even know when these years passed by. There has been so much work, travel, friendships, relationships, success, celebrations, stress, handwork... all of it*



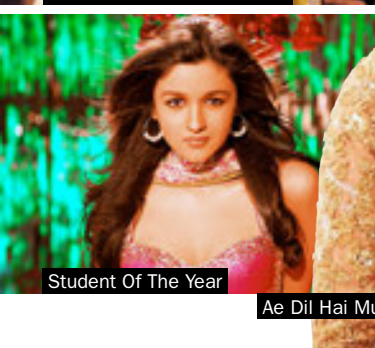
Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham



Om Shanti Om



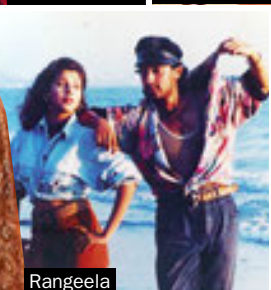
Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge



Student Of The Year



Ae Dil Hai Mushkil



Rangeela



Chennai Express

Ra.One



## RUNWAY SUCCESS

Manish Malhotra is known for his star studded runway shows. The grandeur, aesthetics and star power is only second to his flawless collections and fashion mongers and celebrities can't get enough of it. He is also known to get unusual and stunning duos together on the ramp. Deepika Padukone and Fawad Khan, Alia Bhatt and Ranveer Singh and many such couples made their first time appearances in his shows as showstoppers.



With Alia Bhatt and Ranveer Singh

stories. From the style, richness and grandeur one saw in Raj Kapoor's films, the complete artistic viewpoint of Guru Dutt to Yash Chopra's dreamy, rich world, everything has been such a strong influence. Even the iconic actors in the '70s who popularised simple things. Like Rajesh Khanna's *kurta* with a belt over it. I mean it's such a basic thing which became a phenomenon.

### Who was your inspiration in the fashion industry?

I think my fascination was inborn. I am



Deepika Padukone

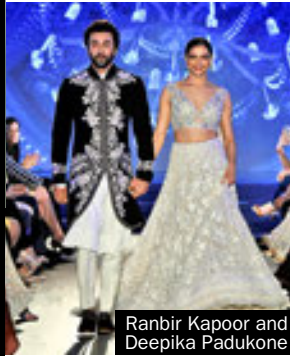
really into clothes, colours, paintings, sketching, movies, music... I think I was attracted to all these mediums, especially cinema. So cinema as a whole, is an experience that I've been inspired by.

### You've dressed up the biggest names in Bollywood, what is the kind of bond you've shared with them?

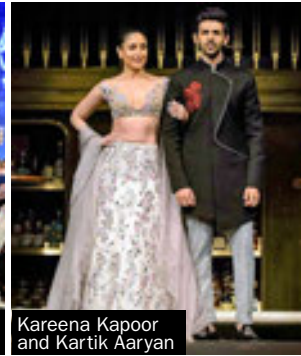
I was so much in love with movies, actresses, clothes... I came with so much love for films that I'd always end up

Ram Gopal Verma was one director whom I felt had a great vision. Then there were Dharmesh Darshan and Aditya Chopra. But Karan Johar and me have a synergy and we work together to date. So many years of friendship and working together is not an easy task. But I feel we think alike. I actually got closer to him after working with him for so long. I feel like his films are my films. And that bond has stayed over the years.

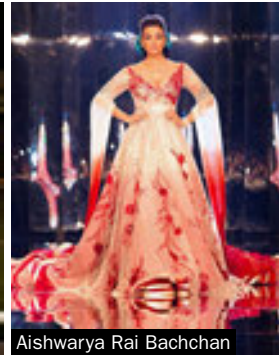
*I actually got closer to him (Karan Johar) after working with him for so long. I feel like his films are my films. And that bond has stayed over the years*



Ranbir Kapoor and Deepika Padukone



Kareena Kapoor and Kartik Aaryan



Aishwarya Rai Bachchan



With Salman Khan and Katrina Kaif

doing a lot more than I was asked or required to do. When there's someone who wants to work for you, then you have a really nice bond with them. Film after the film we've worked together, there've been so many successes, so much of travel together... And now, it's been almost 30 years of relationship with so many of them.

### Which director you feel has a similar vision in styling and fashion as you?

### Many of your looks have gained iconic status over the years. Which one is the most special to you?

I started the system of styling in films. There are so many looks I've created, like the ones in *Raja Hindustani*, *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge*, *Rangeela*, *Judaai*, *Daud*, *Satya*, *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai*, *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham*, *Dostana*, *Jab We Met*, *Dhadkan*, *Student Of The Year 2*... the list just goes on and on.

### How important it is to stick to your gut... especially in a field such as this.

It's very important to stick to your gut if your gut is something that supports you and your instincts work for you. This applies to any field, not just Bollywood. ■

# exclusives

what's on their mind?

## *Wake-up call*

The biggest learning I've had this year definitely has to be that we give ourselves too much importance. We all feel like we are invincible and that nothing can affect us. And that we are above everything else, well, we are not. I think the Universe has given all of us a tight slap and taught us a big lesson

**Bhumi Pednekar speaks about surviving 2020 and more...**

PHOTOGRAPH: LAKSHETA MODGIL,  
NIMISHA TIWARI



# Wake Beauty

THE RISE OF **BHUMI PEDNEKAR** AS AN ACTOR AND AN ENVIRONMENTALIST HAS BEEN INSPIRING TO SAY THE LEAST. **RAHUL GANGWANI** FINDS OUT MORE ABOUT HER JOURNEY

PHOTOGRAPHS: LAKSHETA MODGIL, NIMISHA TIWARI | STYLING: PRANITA SHETTY  
HAIR & MAKEUP: BHUMI PEDNEKAR | Outfit: Gauri & Nainika | Jewellery: Goenka India

**On screen, she's fighting patriarchy with her powerful roles,** on social media she's making the right noises for conserving the environment. Over our zoom call, I also meet the young, simple girl who loves doing make-up and likes to look good at all times. Clearly, there's more to Bhumi Pednekar than meets the eye. "You know because of the roles that I do... I don't get to glam up in my films. But in real life I'm so away from those roles or those characters that I play, I take out all my frustration on myself when I'm not in front of the camera. I love playing dress-up," chuckles the actress.

One wouldn't have known that she's as fond of make-up kits as she's of method acting. The stark contrast between Bhumi's on-screen and off-screen personalities makes her more real than most. Her candid replies make you aware she's actually woke and not pretending to be so. Her relatability is her USP and the more you learn of her inspiring journey, the more your respect grows. Bhumi started off on a strong note with Dum Laga Ke Haisha (2015), then went from one high to another in her career and five years later she's reached that point where author-backed roles are being written for her. 2020 started off on a high as she received the Filmfare Award for Best Actress (Critics) for Saand Ki Aankh, along with Taapsee Pannu. And she's closing the year with the spectacle called Durgamati, her first project where she's the solo lead. The candid, witty, compassionate actress talks nineteen-to-the-dozen about making her way in a man's world, surviving the lockdown, becoming a warrior for environmental issues and losing her heart to showbiz — that kind of explains the lack of a special someone in her life... Excerpts...

**This year has also given us a lot of time to sit back and introspect. What are the biggest learnings you've had this year?**

The biggest learning I've had this year definitely has to be that we give ourselves too much importance. We all feel like we are invincible and that nothing can affect us. And that we are above everything else, well, we are not. I think the Universe has given all of us a tight slap and taught us a big lesson that don't mess with the basic running of the world. The year helped me become a humbler human being. Also since I spent so much time with my family, on a lighter note, I feel I've relearnt a lot of things about my sister and my mother and a lot of things about myself as well. Things that I thought I'm not capable of doing like cooking... I'd thought oh my God I'd never be able to cook... you get so busy with your career that you start feeling that if you ever



←  
Outfit: A Humming way

have to stay home and do the household work, will you be able to manage? But I managed it really well. As I said, I learnt a lot about my sister's work. Her law world was completely unknown to me. I have a newfound respect for her because I've always looked at her as just my younger sister. For the first time, I saw her as a professional and realised the amount of work she puts into it. I learnt a lot from my mum as well. My mum writes and we discussed it a lot. I walked down our family history. I learnt so much about my grandparents and my uncles and aunts. Like this time was tough, but it's a period that I'm going to miss and I'm going to hold close to my heart. I'm already getting withdrawal symptoms. As much as I want to go shoot, nothing takes away from that, I'm already having withdrawals that I'm not going to have this for a long time again.

**Tell us one thing that really made you sad this year and one thing that you are thankful for?**

2020 has been a tough year. Losing a friend, a co-star, that was one of

*"I think all actors today have become quite woke about their responsibilities towards society, which is good. I feel happy that I'm an actor at a time I can contribute this much"*

the most hard-hitting moments not just for me but for Sushant's fans as well. And for so many people across the spectrum who'd worked with him. That was definitely one of the toughest moments for me. Apart from that, there are so many families I know, who've lost their loved ones, This time is such that you've only been hearing about heartbreaking, brutal things that are happening around. People are losing their jobs... But there've been some good moments too. I have a couple of friends who've become parents. Also, we're seeing some positive change in the way people are looking at things. The work I've been doing with the Climate Warrior campaign or with Abhyudaya Ashram is giving me immense joy. These were my guiding lights through the lockdown. The kids at Abhyudaya Ashram kept me afloat, they kept me rolling, they kept my competitive and ambitious side alive. *Dolly Kitty Aur Woh Chamakte Sitare* releasing was definitely a fantastic time for me.

→  
 Outfit:  
 Rahul  
 Mishra



“ I learnt so much about my sister's work. Her law world was completely unknown to me... For the first time, I saw her as a professional and realised the amount of work she puts into it. My mum writes and we discussed it a lot. I walked down our family history. I learnt so much about my grandparents and my uncles and aunts ”



The kind of love the film got... the reviews the film got... Now whatever happens with *Durgamati*, I don't want to jump the gun, hopefully that'll be good too.

***Durgamati* is your first project where you're the solo lead. What are your expectations from the film?**

Tons and tons! My expectations are extremely high. It's the first time I'm helming a project. The film already has a successful Telugu version which is called *Bhaagamathie*. And Anushka Shetty had done a fantastic job in it. I have a lot of responsibility where this film is concerned. Also, the names connected to the film, be it Akshay sir (Akshay Kumar), Abundantia, Amazon, all of them have a lot of credibility so I have to make sure that my hard work pays off. The film's a genre breaker, to be honest. I have not seen myself do the things I'm doing in the film. There's a lot of hard work that has gone into the film, it's a conspiracy thriller, with a horror story. I enjoyed making the film because it's a family entertainer. It's not one of those horror films that you can't watch. I'm nervous too.

**!!** *The work I've been doing with the Climate Warrior campaign or with Abhyudaya Ashram is giving me immense joy. The kids at Abhyudaya Ashram kept me afloat, they kept me rolling, they kept my competitive and ambitious side alive !!*

***Durgamati* was meant to release in theatres but then the world changed. How did you react when you came to know it's going to have a direct-to-digital release?**

I'm going to be honest.



I'm a consumer of the OTT platform. So I love all our OTT platforms. There's path-breaking work happening on these platforms. But being a film actor, someone who is so used to seeing her films release on the big screen and someone who loves the theatre-viewing experience, I had mixed feelings. I wasn't sure, especially for a film like *Durgamati* because it is a spectacle. The film is extremely larger than life. Once you see the film, you'll understand that it's an experience. So I was a little confused. I've already had *Dolly Kitty Aur Woh Chamakte Sitare* that came out on a similar platform. The love that the film got was amazing. And that experience taught me that if you have a good film, it doesn't matter what medium people watch it on. I'm glad that at least my film is reaching people in the same timeline that it was supposed to reach people earlier. I feel that films do get stale. Every film has a shelf life and you need to enjoy it then. We all move on with our lives, I'm going to start shooting my next

“*Durgamati* is a genre breaker, to be honest. I have not seen myself do the things I'm doing in the film. There's a lot of hard work that has gone into the film, it's a conspiracy thriller, with a horror story. I enjoyed making the film because it's a family entertainer. It's not one of those horror films that you can't watch”

film in January. There is a certain amount of relevance and also the business needs to keep rolling. Besides, the kind of reach all our OTT platforms have is immense.

**You worked with Akshay Kumar in *Toilet: Ek Prem Katha* but this time he's not acting with you. How is he as a producer?**

I would say he's more hands-on as a producer than he's as an co-actor. He's someone I keep learning from. I've always maintained that he has had the biggest influence in my career and in my life. I was fortunate that I did the film *Toilet...* with him so early in my career, so I learnt many things, professionalism, punctuality, mutual respect for everyone around, being happy, hard work.... When I saw him take on the hat of a producer or a presenter, I realised that he is as involved. Be it the script sessions that we had, the post-production work that went into the film, he was constantly checking with me when we were shooting or with the director. He was completely up to date with whatever was happening on the set. And he has four films in a year. I was like how do you make time, how is it possible? I don't know, he just has superhuman strength. I did not expect this level of knowledge and investment from him as he is so busy, but he surprised me.



←  
Outfit:  
Zwaan

**In your next project *Badhaai Do*, you're teaming up with Rajkummar Rao for the first time. How excited are you collaborating with him and secondly are you going to miss one of your favourite co-stars Ayushmann Khurrana who was part of *Badhaai Ho*?**

I'm definitely going to miss Ayushmann. I think the chemistry that AK and I have is cracking. It just happens. You know whenever we speak to each other we're constantly telling each

*“I've always maintained that Akshay Kumar has had the biggest influence in my career and in my life. I was fortunate that I did the film *Toilet...* with him so early in my career, so I learnt many things, professionalism, punctuality, mutual respect for everyone around, being happy, hard work...”*

other that we haven't found that comfort elsewhere, even though I have had the opportunity to work with some amazing co-stars. But me and Ayushmann, there is something special about what we do. And coming back to Rajkumar, he's one of my favourite Indian actors. I thoroughly love his work. I'm nervous that I really have to up my game. He's so good with comedy. I've met Rajkumar a couple of times in a professional space for *Badhaai Do*. He is such a nice guy, so sweet, so secure about his craft, that is something I really appreciate in a co-actor.

**Tell us about the time you decided to become a climate warrior...**

I can't pinpoint that one moment that changed me. I feel it was inherent... I've had it since I was a child. I've always been bothered by the lackadaisical attitude people have towards our planet and how irresponsible we all have been. We've just not had the knowledge. We were taught about planet conservation and the impact it would have in the future. But for us, the future felt like some 400 years later. But that's not the truth, it's now. After I became an actor, my reach increased and I could actually formalise the work that I was doing. I brought it under Climate Warrior. The idea was

←  
Outfit: A  
Humming  
way



*“I think the chemistry that Ayushmann and I have is cracking. It just happens. You know whenever we speak to each other we're constantly telling each other that we haven't found that comfort elsewhere, even though I have had the opportunity to work with some amazing co-stars”*

to create as much awareness and do as much groundwork as possible. I'm extremely passionate about this. I think the day my parents named me Bhumi, subconsciously something went off in my head. I've been like this since then. Even in school, I was affected by the things that happened around me. I went vegetarian this year. And that's one of the happiest things that has happened to me.

**Apart from you, there are others in the industry who are doing their bit for environment. Whose efforts do you appreciate the most?**

Shraddha (Kapoor) for sure. She's a very woke voice for planet conservation, and for co-existing with other species. She's quite compassionate towards the planet. Alia (Bhatt) too loves animals and is constantly posting about it. She has a



*“I've always been bothered by the lackadaisical attitude people have towards our planet and how irresponsible we all have been... We were taught about planet conservation and the impact it would have in the future. But for us, the future felt like some 400 years later”*

property called Coexist that does some good work. And of course, Dia Mirza, who's so devoted to the cause of the environment. She's someone by whom I'm extremely inspired. Amitabh Bachchan too does telethons

to raise awareness. I think all actors today have become quite woke about their responsibilities towards society, which is good. I feel happy that I'm an actor at a time I can contribute this much.

**Now, this is one question all movie buffs want to know... What is the progress on Takht?**

I know everybody wants to know this, but I feel you should ask Karan Johar. It's one of the grandest and at the same

time one of the most powerful stories that I've heard and read. And whatever will happen with *Takht* will be great. There are people senior and higher up like Karan, who should give you clarity on this. ■



# A SUITABLE WOMAN

TABU TALKS TO ANALITA SETH ABOUT HER OTT EXPERIENCE

**Starting her career with the over-the-top commercial fare, making her presence felt there, then achieving glory in serious cinema to 30 years later, carving a new niche in the OTT arena with *A Suitable Boy*, Tabu has done all that and more. She has reunited with Mira Nair once again after *The Namesake* (2006). The intervening 14 years didn't prove detrimental to their camaraderie. It's as if they never stopped working together. Tabu has a way of making each role her own and watching her in *A Suitable Boy*, it feels like she was born to play Saeeda Bai. She worked with Shahid Kapoor in *Haider* (2014) and six years later finds herself working with his younger brother Ishaan Khatter, whom she finds a bundle of energy. She talks about old bonds and new in this candid chat. Excerpts...**

**You worked with Mira Nair after fourteen long years. How was it reuniting with her for *A Suitable Boy*?**

Fate brought Mira and me together after 14 long years, after our much-loved project, *Namesake*. *A Suitable Boy* has been well received both in the UK and in India. I always



jokingly tell her that we are a 'hit pair'. Mira and I have a special bond. Her being the person she is, it is easy to just pick up from where we left off. There is something so strongly unchanging about her that it feels dependable. It took me two years from the time she offered me the role to me agreeing to do it. But once that was done, it was exciting from the word 'go'. Because I know a role that Mira offers me will most definitely suit me and will be something we will enjoy working on together. Plus, Saeeda Bai was so starkly different from Ashima (my character in *Namesake*), that it was interesting to try it with the same director.

**From the *Namesake* to *A Suitable Boy*, how much have you and Mira Nair changed?**



A Suitable Boy

As I mentioned earlier, Mira is so easy-going and dependable, it is always a pleasure to work with her. Mira hasn't changed at all. Yes, she has become more of who she was and has honed her skills. She has incredible energy, drive and *joie de vivre* - it is not easy for everyone to keep up with her. She is also

very inspiring, she can fuel you to take action. That's what I love about her. She also has some strong connections that she's made over the years. I always tell her that she has a film family that has been consistent for more than 30 years... Actors and crew members that she regularly works with. I think that is one of her greatest strength. Three generations of the same families have worked with her, which is amazing.

**How do you look at your character, Saeeda Bai?**

She's a courtesan, surrounded by a rich culture specific to that time -- beauty, music, poetry. But she's also someone who is familiar with politics and the establishment. Confined

**ISHAAN'S GREATEST STRENGTH IS HIS DESIRE TO LEARN AND TO GROW AND TO APPLY HIS MIND AND TO EXCEL IN HIS WORK. I'M SURE THESE QUALITIES WILL PROPEL HIM TO GOOD PLACES IN HIS JOURNEY**



anyone else in the cast. The whole family of actors was a mad, happy bunch and it was such a fun experience. The whole bunch - Ishaan, Vijay Varma, Manoj Pahwa, Tanya, Rasika, Shahana and everyone else — is extremely talented. I am glad I got the opportunity to work with them. Shooting in Lucknow was an amazing experience, it was my first time in the city. Mira likes to make the shooting experience fun and celebratory for everyone, which added to the joy.

**Are there any significant differences in the book and the series according to you?**

I haven't read the book. However, I remember when the book was published in 1993, people were so impressed. There were praises all around

in the realm of her home, which is also her workplace, it's not possible (rather frowned upon) for her to integrate with society and lead a so-called normal life. Her fate is to lead the life that's given to her as an inheritance. Yet, she stands tall and is the master of her own territory. Though society has put a label on her, there's much more to her than her singing and enticing abilities. This is evident in her love of poetry, music, and appreciation of art and aesthetics. Her understanding of the language and its nuances show the depth of her feelings and the deep relationships she has had. It's evident that she has

loved, loved freely and has known the pain of not belonging. However, even her wisdom cannot protect her when a much younger man, Maan, falls head over heels in love with her. She gives in even though she knows there can be no future with him. Her journey with Maan is something she will treasure for as long as she lives.

**Ishaan Khatter is new to the industry. What did you like about him as an actor and what would be the one piece of advice you'd give him for the future?**

The very talented Ishaan is a bundle of energy. His greatest strength is his desire to learn and to grow, to apply his mind



and to excel in his work. I'm sure these qualities will propel him to good places in his journey

**How was it working with such a big ensemble cast?**

It's always fun to work with a big ensemble cast. I'd worked with Aamir Bashir in *Haider* and now have worked with him in *A Suitable Boy*. Interestingly, I haven't worked with

**I BELIEVE THAT WE LEARN THROUGHOUT OUR LIVES BECAUSE CHANGE AND GROWTH ARE THE TWO CONSTANTS. EVERY PROJECT IS A NEW EXPERIENCE. IT'S A NEW CHARACTER YOU DON, AND NEW PEOPLE YOU MEET AND WORK WITH. HERE, LEARNING IS AN AUTOMATIC EXPERIENCE**

the globe for Vikram Seth's novel. It is a timeless piece of art and I have immense respect for Vikram. I actually made it a point to speak to him to understand how he saw Saeeda Bai. I also spoke to him about the character's personal trajectory. Which shaped her character and who she is, the core of her as a person.

**What is your favourite thing about the series?**

*A Suitable Boy* has something to offer to all its viewers. There are so many different, complex characters and they are all walking their own paths. It has a range of stories, each with a different emotion at its core. Every character is significant and each of them has their own obstacles and internal and external struggles. They belong



The Namesake

to different families with different mindsets and different societal statuses. Amidst all of this is the backdrop of a newly independent India. It was a time of change and the values of parameters were shifting. It is a complex narrative but it's been woven beautifully together, which is its inherent charm.

**MIRA AND I HAVE A SPECIAL BOND. HER BEING THE PERSON SHE IS, IT IS VERY EASY TO JUST PICK UP FROM WHERE WE LEFT OFF. THERE IS SOMETHING SO STRONGLY UNCHANGING ABOUT HER THAT IT FEELS DEPENDABLE**

**You are one of the most sought-after actors in the industry. Do you feel you still learn when working on new projects and with new people?**

I believe that we learn throughout our lives because change and growth are the two constants. Every project is a new experience. It's a new character you don, and new people you meet and work with. Here, learning is an automatic experience. You cannot always identify it, it is not always obvious, but it is inevitable.

**You've completed 30 years in the industry. What do you feel about yourself, professionally and personally, when you look back at all this time?**

I am thankful for the 30 years that I have had in this industry and for getting the opportunity to do such versatile roles with such wonderful actors and directors. Talking about changes in me, I don't know. Looking back at all this time, I can say that there's surely more clarity within myself and I know the importance and the reasoning behind choosing a particular project. ■



**THE**  
**HANDSOME**  
**NEVER GO**  
**HUNGRY**

RAGHUVENDRA SINGH CHATS  
WITH THE CHARISMATIC  
SHARAD KELKAR

## SHARAD KELKAR HAS BEEN A PROLIFIC TV ACTOR AND ANCHOR

who has graduated to doing character roles in Hindi films and more recently in the OTT space. He has also been making a name for himself as a voice actor, his most recognised work being his voice over in the *Baahubali* franchise. His chiselled good looks have made him the heartthrob of millions. Sharad has the rare distinction of being counted as a star despite not appearing in lead roles. He doesn't want to run after stardom but wants to satisfy the actor within him. The actor recently appeared in an important role in *Laxmii*. He'll soon be seen in *Bhuj: Pride Of India*, where he plays a military officer. Sharad will also be making his acting debut down South. He's been taking it slow and steady so far and says he likes it that way. Excerpts from a candid interview with the unconventional sex symbol...

**We've been spotting you at dubbing studios. What kind of safety measures are being followed?**

I've been to the studio only about five-six times for dubbing for some film or web series. But it was important to follow the protocol, wear a mask, sanitise and cover yourself. You need to monitor yourself and others, and the Aarogya Setu app helped in that sense. The studios are also taking precautions. There are some that have complete protection shield inside the studio. It's a German technology. They were extra cautious and it was all for everyone's benefit. I was taking proper precautions and thankfully nothing happened. God has been kind.

**How much did the coronavirus pandemic affect you on a personal level? How did you spend the lockdown period?**

I am a workaholic. I'm used to going out every day, working back-to-back without taking

breaks. This year was looking quite busy. I was about to start working on three films from August onwards but then everything came to a standstill. So it was a bit of a rude shock for me. Being at home all the time was affecting me. But the pandemic taught me to do things that I missed doing in the last many years, like spending time with my family. I got to spend a lot of time with my daughter (Kesha Kelkar), wife (Keerti Gaekwad Kelkar) and with my mother. I helped my wife and mother in their household chores and even dabbled in the kitchen. I helped my daughter with her studies. While the initial days were tough, as it took time to come to terms with the pandemic, things eased out eventually.

**Are you a strict father? What are your dos and don'ts for your daughter?**

I'm not a strict dad at all. My wife always says that I'm spoiling our daughter. (Laughs)

My daughter is only six but I show her movies like *The Avengers*. I want to be a close friend and a confidant to my daughter. I want to be her best friend always.

**What's your favourite from among the OTT content you saw during the lockdown?**

I'm not a binge-watcher, but there are a few things I really enjoyed watching. One is *Scam 1992*. Pratik (Gandhi) is a dear friend and it's great to see one of your friends do so well. It's a great series by Hansal Mehta. I also enjoyed watching *The Boys* on Amazon Prime. It's a unique subject and it's been shot brilliantly. I also enjoyed watching *Lootcase* on Hotstar. All the actors, including Kunal Kemmu, Ranvir Shorey, Vijay Raaz, Rasika Dugal and Gajraj Rao were amazing.

**Has the digital medium emerged as a boon for the actors?**

Yes. With numerous OTT platforms in play, it has become

a good scenario for the actors as a lot of work is happening. It's a good time for actors. The pandemic made everyone sit at home but it also taught us to be patient. Now with the unlocking, work is resuming. It's a great time for all of us.

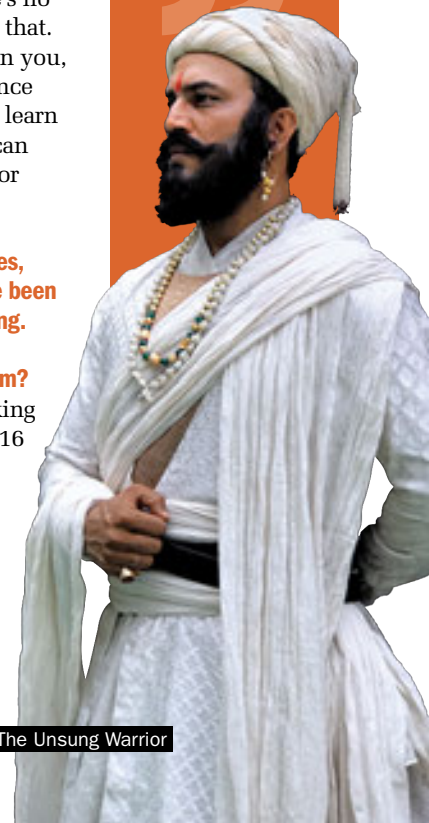
**Is it the best time to be an actor?**

There's no 'best' time to be an actor. You can become an actor any time if you have the passion, courage and a will to learn. There's no age or time for that. If you have it in you, have the patience and if you can learn the skill, you can become an actor anytime.

**Television, movies, digital. You have been part of everything. Which is your favourite medium?**

I've been working for the last 15-16 years. Acting is my passion. The platform doesn't matter to me. My work is to perform and I give my 100 per cent

“ THE BEST THING THAT HAPPENED IN RECENT YEARS IS TANHAJI: THE UNSUNG WARRIOR, WHERE I PLAYED CHHATRAPATI SHIVAJI MAHARAJ AND THAT ROLE CHANGED MY LIFE ”



Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior

to every platform. The medium is irrelevant.

**You have the knack of picking powerful roles. Even if they are small in length, they still make an impact. *Ram Leela* and *The Family Man* are two examples. What are the factors that help you zero in your choices?**

I've been lucky to choose the right things. But you need to be patient to analyse what you want to do. For me, the quality of the role is more important than the length. So there are many parameters. The character I play is most important, money comes last.

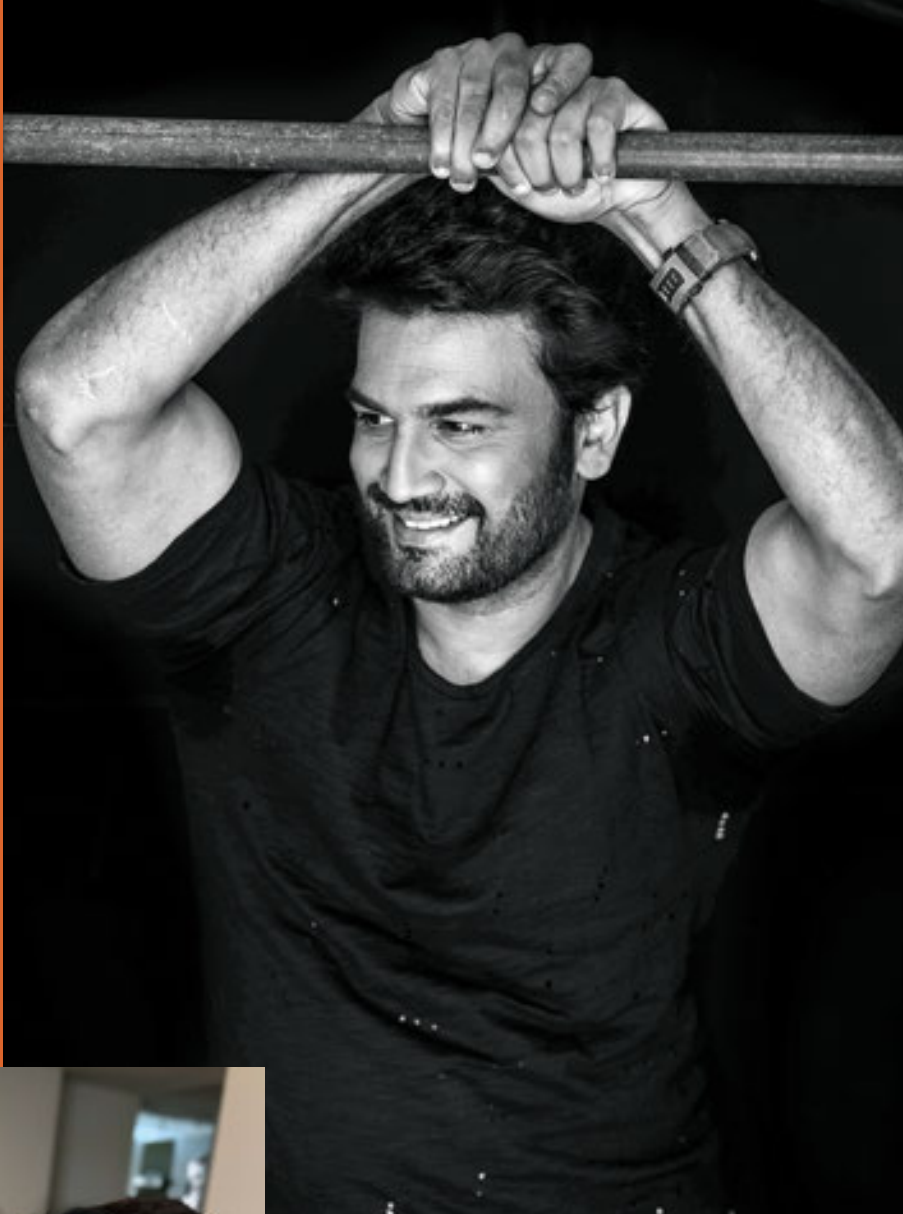
**Would you love to do an all-out commercial lead role? Do you see yourself doing that in films or on OTT in future?**

I'd love to do an out-and-out commercial lead role; everyone dreams of it. But I'll be selective about it. I won't jump on anything and everything. I'm an actor and I should be able to do all kinds of roles. I'm learning and I'd love to be part of such a project.

**Name one film or role you've done which satisfied you the most?**

I cannot name one film, as all the films I've done are special

“ THE PANDEMIC TAUGHT ME TO DO THINGS THAT I MISSED DOING IN THE LAST MANY YEARS, LIKE SPENDING TIME WITH MY FAMILY. I GOT TO SPEND A LOT OF TIME WITH MY DAUGHTER (KESHA KELKAR), WIFE (KEERTI GAEKWAD KELKAR) AND WITH MY MOTHER ”



With wife Keerti and daughter Kesha

to me. The best thing that happened in recent years is *Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior*, where I played Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and that role changed my life. I am thankful to Om Raut, Ajay Devgn and Bhushan Kumar for giving me the opportunity.

**One iconic role you wish you can replicate?**

The Hindi film industry is so vast

that it's difficult to name one film. But Mr Amitabh Bachchan's role in *Shakti* is something I'd love to reprise. It's really interesting. The movie is also among my favourites.

**As an outsider, what's your take on the outsider-insider debate?**

I don't believe in the insider-outsider theory. There are so many actors who don't belong to the

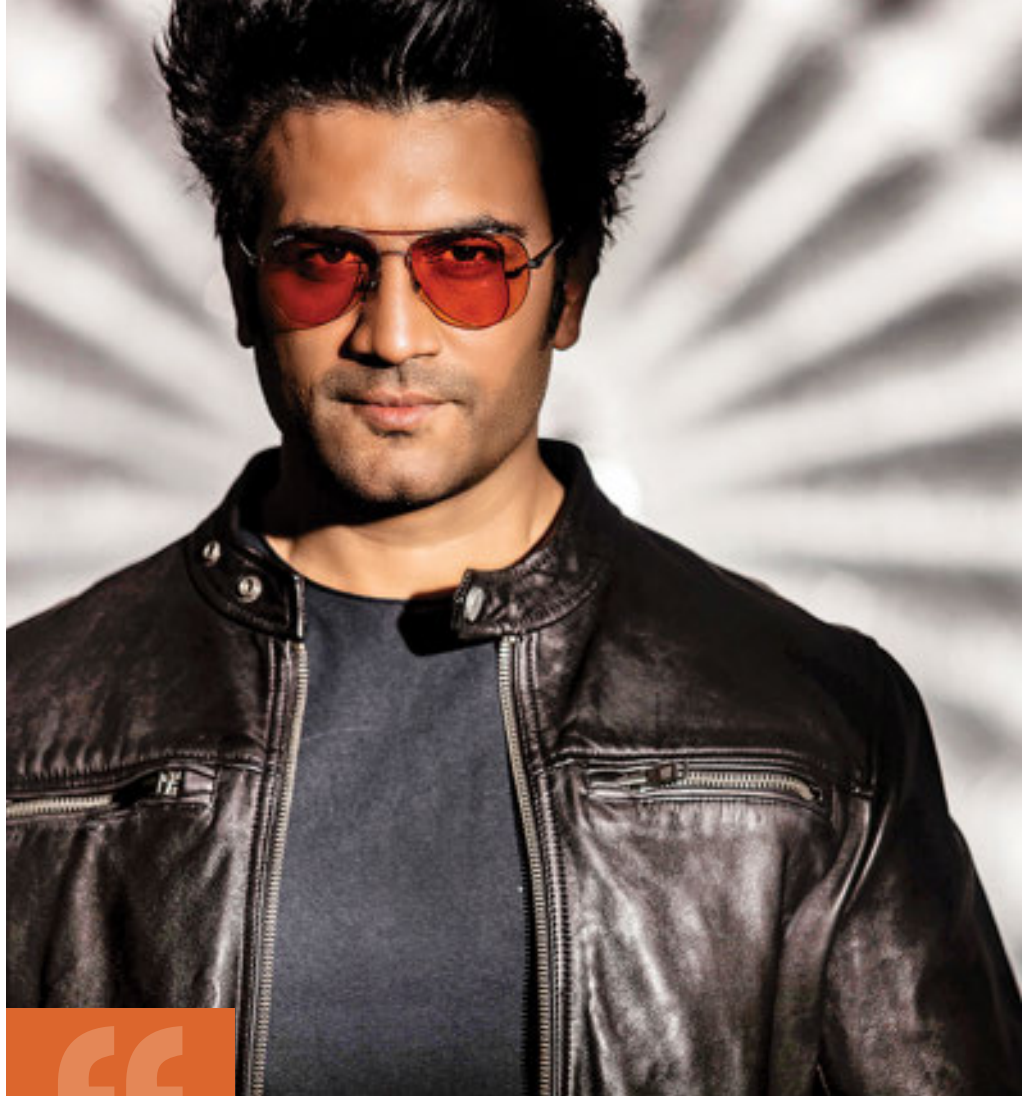
industry but have made it big. On the other hand, there are many actors who are from the film fraternity but they haven't clicked. The audience makes the stars, not the industry.

**One actor you've had the best working experience with?**

I've been lucky to have worked with many great actors from the TV and film industry. I've been lucky that they all liked and supported me - right from Akshay (Kumar) sir, Sanju (Sanjay Dutt) sir to Manoj (Bajpayee) sir. They've all been good to me and have treated me like a younger brother.

**You dubbed for Prabhas for the Hindi version of the Baahubali franchise. Is there any other South actor you've dubbed for or would love to dub for?**

I dubbed for Prabhas and he's a fantastic actor. The list is quite long because there are many actors in the South film industry who are my favourites. Some of them do dub for themselves. I'd love to dub for Vikram someday. He is a fantastic actor. I'd also love to dub for Rajinikanth sir. I recently dubbed for a special promo of Sushmita's show, *Aarya* on Hotstar.



**“ YOU CAN BECOME AN ACTOR ANYTIME IF YOU HAVE THE PASSION, COURAGE AND A WILL TO LEARN. THERE'S NO AGE OR TIME FOR THAT. IF YOU HAVE IT IN YOU, HAVE THE PATIENCE AND IF YOU CAN LEARN THE SKILL, YOU CAN BECOME AN ACTOR ANYTIME ”**



The Family Man



Goliyon Ki Raasleela: RaamLeela

**When you look back to your journey, do you feel satisfied? Would you like to change anything?**

I'm pretty satisfied with it, touchwood. Things are moving slow, but they are moving. So I'm quite happy with my journey in the industry so far. I got to learn a lot; *agar jaldi karta to shayad kam seekh paata* (I'd have learnt less if I'd moved faster). My only regret is that I entered the industry quite late. Otherwise, I don't have any regrets. I'm quite happy with my journey. ■

# She's Ex ot ic

OF MOROCCAN DESCENT,  
THE STUNNING  
NORA FATEHI IMPRESSES  
RAGHUVENDRA SINGH  
WITH HER SOFT AND  
SENSITIVE SIDE



**H**er lineage can be traced back to Morocco – a land where the East meets the West. She was born and bred in Canada. That explains why actor/dancer/singer Nora Fatehi's charisma is global. She made her debut in the Hindi film *Roar: Tigers of the Sundarbans* (2014), and gained popularity in Telugu cinema with item numbers in films like *Temper* and *Kick 2*. She's also starred in Malayalam films, *Double Barrel* and *Kayamkulam Kochunni*. What won her massive fans are her sensuous and groovy item numbers in Bollywood like *Manohari* (*Baahubali: The Beginning*), *Dilbar* (*Satyamev Jayate*), *O saki saki* (*Batla House*), *Kamariya* (*Stree*) and *Ek toh kam zindagani* (*Marjaavaan*), besides her recent hit *Garmi* with *Varun Dhawan* in *Street Dancer 3D*. But Nora's not only about sizzling moves. With her sharp sensibilities, she enjoys a strong presence on social media (13.5 million followers on Instagram). Where she urges her followers to be more aware, more humane. Looking forward to her next *Bhuj: The Pride of India* – she gets chatty about life, career and more...



## Rapid Fire

★ **YOUR SEX-APPEAL LIES IN...**  
Self-confidence.

★ **THE BEST THING A MAN HAS TOLD YOU...**  
I believe in you.

★ **THE WEIRDEST HABIT YOU HAVE IS...**  
Stressing.

★ **THE CRAZIEST THING A FAN HAS DONE FOR YOU...**  
Followed me home.

★ **A THEME SONG FOR YOUR LIFE...**  
*Dance monkey.*

★ **A SONG THAT MAKES YOU CRY...**  
*Ya rayah* by Rachid Taha.

★ **A SONG THAT BRINGS A SMILE ON YOUR FACE...**  
*Aicha* by Cheb Khalid.

★ **A SONG YOU WISH YOU HAD DONE...**  
*Laila main Laila.*

★ **ONE THING YOU'D LIKE TO CHANGE ABOUT YOURSELF IS...**  
My anxiousness.

★ **IF YOU WEREN'T AN ACTRESS, YOU WOULD BE A...**  
Lawyer.

★ **THE QUALITIES THAT GOT YOU AHEAD...**  
Fearlessness.

★ **THINGS THAT MAKE YOU SMILE...**  
Babies and puppies.

★ **SOMETHING EVERY WOMAN SHOULD TRY ONCE IN HER LIFETIME...**  
Travelling alone.

★ **ADVICE TO A WOMAN WITH A BROKEN HEART...**  
Time will heal.

★ **ONE MISTAKE YOU'D NEVER REPEAT IN A RELATIONSHIP...**  
Don't ignore red flags.

**RECENTLY IN ONE OF YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA VIDEOS YOU SAID, "I'M READY TO QUIT 2020... MAKE IT STOP" WHAT'S UPSET YOU THE MOST ABOUT THIS YEAR? HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO REMEMBER IT?**

Generally, my videos are humorous and made in a comic spirit to make people laugh. Regardless, 2020 has been a terrible year for the entire world so far. It's testing our patience and opening our eyes to things we've been ignorant and oblivious about. I believe this year will be remembered as the start of the New World Order.

**YOU DONATED PPE KITS TO THE GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS IN THE COUNTRY. THAT WAS A GREAT MOVE...**

It's a small gesture. I believe whatever little one can contribute matters in the bigger picture. It's unfortunate that such essential resources are limited despite the fact that a lot of money has been

collectively raised by people, throughout this pandemic. It seems it isn't translating in the way it should. Basic medical supplies should never be a privilege. Rather it should be a right for all.

**WHAT LESSONS HAVE YOU IMBIBED DURING THIS UNCERTAIN PERIOD?**

Well not that I didn't believe in these lessons before. However, I had more time to appreciate a lot of things. That is not to take health, family and loved ones for granted. I can't wait until I can start my own family one day and have my own beautiful kids. These few months have reminded me that a lot of things, I studied in school regarding our global, political and economic system along with the global agenda, are now unfolding. Strong political leaders in the past warned the world of many things, which were dismissed and laughed upon

“One of my best friends' father passed away due to Covid-19. It was heart-breaking as he died on Eid. I decided not to celebrate out of respect. Losing a parent is scary. To see your friend struggle to get past it is humbling and emotionally exhausting”

at that time. They were not joking. I'm grateful I had the opportunity to receive education and the ability to think critically, something many fail to do. Critical thinking is the need of the hour. There's a massive change happening beyond what the media wants to show us. We must read and educate ourselves immediately.

**WE HEARD YOU LOST SOMEONE CLOSE TO YOU DUE TO COVID-19. HOW DID YOU DEAL WITH THE LOSS?**

One of my best friends' father passed away. It was extremely difficult for me to see my friend go through such an experience. It was heart-breaking as he died on Eid. I decided not to celebrate out of respect as it was an emotional moment for all of us. Losing a parent is scary. To see your own friend struggle to get past it is humbling and emotionally exhausting. I thank God every day that we wake up healthy and that our families are healthy too.

**AT PRESENT, EVERY INDUSTRY IS FACING SALARY CUTS. WILL FILM ARTISTES ALSO ACCEPT SUCH CUTS?**

I'm sure there will be a lot of changes in our industry this year.

**YOU RECENTLY BECAME THE MOST FOLLOWED MOROCCAN ARTISTE IN THE WORLD. WHAT KEEPS YOU SO ENGAGED TO SOCIAL MEDIA?**

I've been particular about my social media since day one – even before entering the industry. I'm an extremely creative person. My social media pages, including my YouTube channel, are my gateways to project my creativity and talent to the audience. It's my platform to make people laugh through my comedy, to show off new dance skills, while also educating people about world events and spreading awareness. I'm driven to entertain and showcase my talents. I've always believed I don't need to wait for someone to give me a platform to showcase that. I should create a platform for myself. That's why



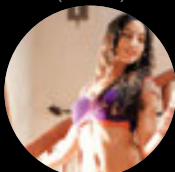
★ **MANOHARI**  
(Baahubali: The Beginning)



★ **DILBAR**  
(Satyamev Jayate)



★ **KAMARIYA**  
(Stree)



★ **EK TOH KAM ZINDAGANI**  
(Marjaavaan)



★ **GARMI**  
(Street Dancer 3D)



★ **SAKI SAKI**  
(Batla House)



*“My social media pages, including my YouTube channel, are my gateways to project my creativity and talent to the audience... I've always believed I don't need to wait for someone to give me a platform to showcase that. I should create a platform for myself”*

*“Of course, it’s been challenging (being an outsider). However, I don’t dwell on that much. I keep pushing regardless. I believe in myself... It shows that it doesn’t matter where you are from. It’s the hard work and talent that counts. It’s been a roller-coaster ride. I wouldn’t have it any other way”*

I work so diligently on social media. It’s a borderless world, where one reaches out to just about anyone in the globe. I’m blessed to have such a multicultural and diverse following.

**HOW CHALLENGING HAS BEEN YOUR JOURNEY GIVEN THE FACT THAT YOU WERE AN OUTSIDER?**

Of course, it’s been challenging. However, I don’t dwell on that much. I keep it going. I keep pushing regardless. I believe in myself. I know the right people will always work with me. I feel thankful that I’m a celebrated artiste in India and in other parts of the world. It shows that it doesn’t matter where you are from. It’s the hard work, dedication, talent and earnestness that counts. It’s been a roller-coaster ride. I hope that inspires people. I wouldn’t have it any other way.

**HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE KNOWN - AS A BEAUTIFUL DANCER OR AN ACTOR?**

Why should one be known for only one trait? Can’t I be known for both? While growing up, I was never considered a good dancer due to my lack of training. However, I worked on myself and became a good dancer. I still work on my dance every day because there’s so much to learn. An artiste can be multidimensional. One should be able to celebrate an artiste for his/



*Nora Fateh's success mantra*

- ★ Don't get distracted, focus on yourself and keep learning.
- ★ There's always room for growth.
  - ★ Don't let people make you believe that you can only do one thing.
  - ★ Break the stereotypes.
  - ★ Be fierce and hungry.

her multiple skills. I will be known both as a great actor and dancer by the end of my journey for sure.

**YOUR FAVOURITE BOLLYWOOD DANCE NUMBERS...**

It's hard to choose. It would be all of Helen's and Madhuri Dixit's songs. Others would be *Chikni chameli* (Agnepath), *Kala chashma* (Baar Baar Dekho), *Kamli* (Dhoom 3) and of course all my songs. ■

# HOME & AWAY!

Back in 1953, the illustrious *Life* Magazine had the late Audrey Hepburn on its cover for the December issue. The monochrome photoshoot, shot by the talented Mark Shaw, left everyone speechless. We decided to pay homage to that iconic photo-play. Fatima Sana Shaikh was very much game for it...



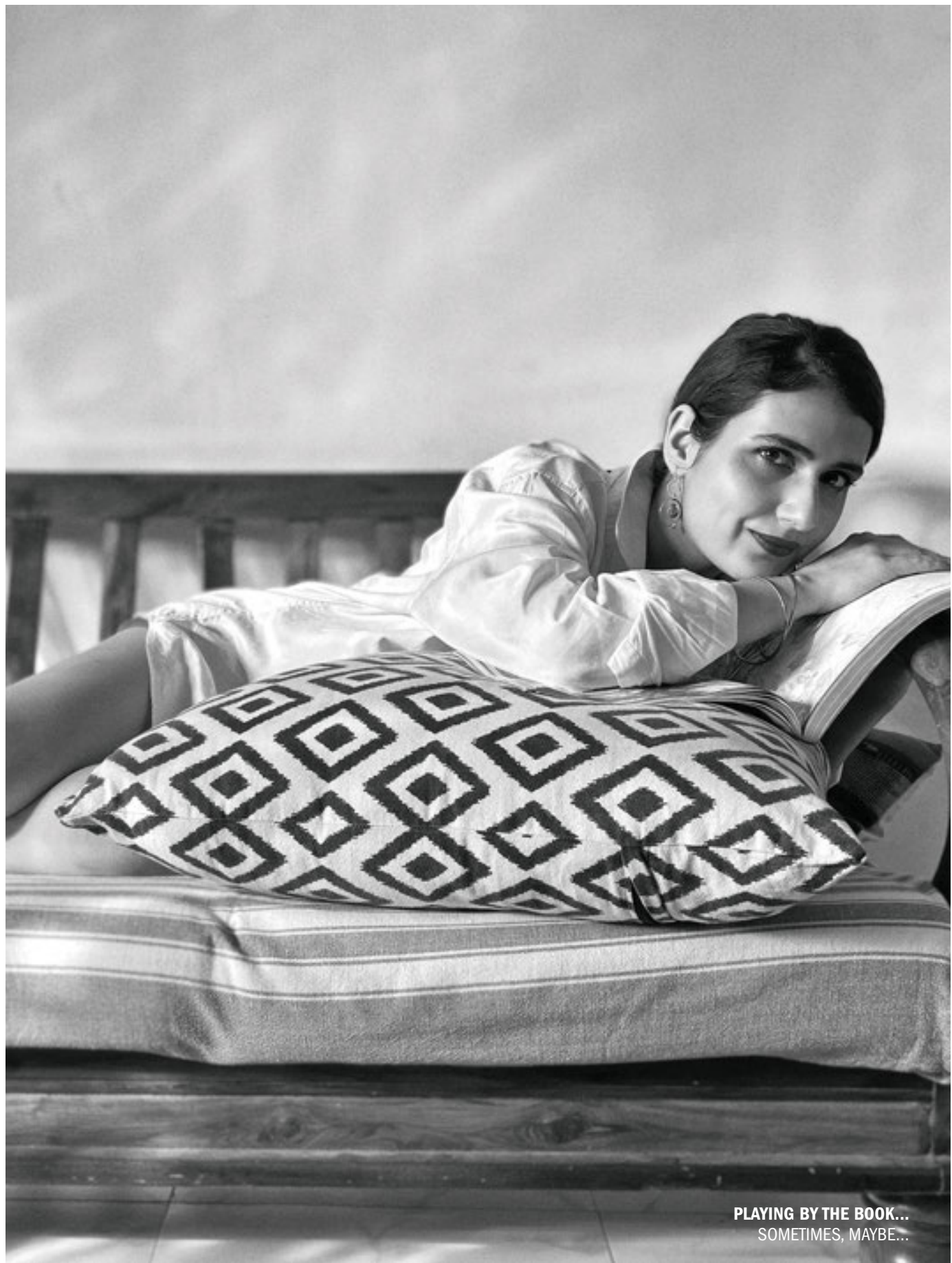
**KISSED BY THE SUN...**  
FEELING ALL WARM INSIDE



EYES WIDE OPEN...  
AND STILL DREAMING



LIPS DON'T LIE...  
LIPSTICKS DO



PLAYING BY THE BOOK...  
SOMETIMES, MAYBE...

# 40

## QUESTIONS WITH SAIYAMI KHER

SAIYAMI KHER VOLLEYS SUMAN  
SHARMA'S QUERIES WITH APLOMB



Saiyami Kher bedazzled us all recently in her portrayal of a lower middle class working woman who miraculously finds money flowing out of her sink in *Choked*. From the Dadar market sarees to her being an industrious homemaker who knows her way around a hundred household hacks, to the easy camaraderie she has with her neighbours, she had it all down pat in this dark comedy directed by Anurag Kashyap. This resurrection of sorts first with *Choked*, then with the series *Breathe: Into The Shadows*, has brought the smile back on the face of this bubbly girl whose debut film *Mirzya* failed to hit the mark at the box office. Saiyami is a sports buff and thanks to her passion, doesn't have to go out of the way to acquire that athletic frame. She's as happy wearing-down her shoes out running as she's walking the ramp or facing the camera. We ask the chirpy lass some rapid-fire questions and she hits back with some witty replies. Excerpts...

THE FIRST THING YOU DO WHEN YOU WAKE UP IN THE MORNING?

**DRINK ONE LITRE OF WATER.**

**2** If your life were a movie, which one would it be?

Let's hope I achieve something so that a movie can be made someday on my life.

**Recommend five Hindi movies that are a must-watch according to you...**

*Guide, Abhiman, Dil Chahta Hai, Sholay,*

*Rang De Basanti.*

**Which is the one movie you wish you could have been a part of?**

*Million Dollar Baby.*

**Name three Hollywood films that you'd watch over and over again**

*Notting Hill, Catch Me If You Can, Air Force One.*

**One actor you want to romance on screen?**

Ranbir Kapoor from Bollywood and Ryan Gosling from Hollywood.

# 6

**7** IF YOU WERE TO PICK THREE PEOPLE TO SPEND ALL YOUR TIME WITH, WHO WOULD YOU PICK?

**ROGER FEDERER, SACHIN TENDULKAR, AND GULZAR SAAB**



**8**  
One actor of this generation you think you will make an amazing pair with?  
Daniel Radcliffe.

**The Bollywood celeb you'd want as a neighbour?**  
Anil Kapoor. I love the food at their home.

**If you were a journalist, who's the first actor you would like to interview?**  
Amitabh Bachchan. He's an institution by himself.

**11** THE HAPPIEST MOMENT OF YOUR LIFE WAS...  
**RUNNING A FULL MARATHON AND EATING A 16-INCH PIZZA AND HALF A LITRE OF ICE CREAM AFTER THAT.**

**A feeling that you hate the most...**  
I hate, hate. Negativity, anger.

**Which was the last film that made you cry?**  
I don't cry while watching films but *3 Idiots* makes me very emotional every time I watch it.

**14** ONE PROFESSIONAL MISTAKE THAT YOU WILL NEVER MAKE...  
**DO A FILM FOR THE WRONG REASONS**

**What is your idea of perfect happiness?**  
Close friends and family, a beach, water sports and good food.

**DESCRIBE YOUR FIRST DATE...**  
**16**  
**LUNCH AT GAYLORD'S AFTER COLLEGE.**

**Are you single?**  
Yes.



**18**  
WHICH FILM CHARACTER WOULD YOU LIKE TO DATE?  
**SPIDER-MAN.**

**Will you date anyone from the industry?**  
No. I like to know people who do different things than me.

**What's the one tip you'd give to girls when it comes to dating?**  
Follow your heart.

**Qualities that put you off men?**  
Lies and someone being full of themselves.

**Your take on open relationships?**  
Not something I believe in.

**If a person of the same sex hits on you...**  
I would take it as a compliment and smile.

**ONE MISTAKE YOU WOULD NEVER REPEAT IN A RELATIONSHIP? I'VE FORTUNATELY NOT MADE A MISTAKE SO GRAVE THAT I DON'T WANT TO REPEAT**  
**28**

**One embarrassing moment in your life that still makes you cringe?**  
Not recognising a very famous author at a party.

**WHAT'S YOUR ONE ANNOYING HABIT? OVERTHINKING.**  
**30**

**ONE MIDDLE-CLASS HABIT THAT YOU SIMPLY CANNOT LET GO OFF SQUEEZING THE TOOTHPASTE TUBE TO GET THE LAST BIT, TILL MY HAND HURTS.**

**The one thing you would love to change about yourself?**  
Become more positive.



**IF YOU COULD DO ONE CRIME WITHOUT GETTING CAUGHT WHAT WOULD IT BE? STEAL A LINDT CHOCOLATE MACHINE THAT WILL MAKE ME UNLIMITED CHOCOLATE.**

**If time was money where would you invest it?**  
On my health, fitness and eating well.

**What would be the hardest thing for you to give up?**  
Sugar.

**THE BIGGEST DREAM YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE? WIN AN OSCAR.**  
**36**

**If you have only 24 hours to live what would you do?**  
Wake up, go for a trek, see the sunrise, come back have mom-made breakfast and then go diving with family and friends.

**If you ever win a lottery what would you do?**  
Invest half the money. And blow up the rest on travel.

**If you could travel back in time, which period would you go?**  
I would love to go back to the 1930-40s. Witness the struggles people of that era went through and act in black and white films.

**FIVE WORDS THAT BEST DESCRIBE YOU? I'M A WORK IN PROGRESS.**  
**40**

**WHAT IS YOUR IDEA OF A ROMANTIC DATE? A TREK IN THE HIMALAYAS OR A DIVING TRIP**  
**21**

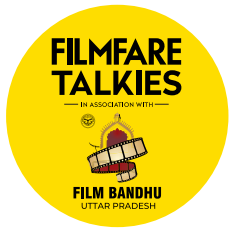


**WHO IS THE SEXIEST STAR IN BOLLYWOOD? HRITHIK ROSHAN**  
**22**

**QUALITIES THAT DRAW YOU TO MEN... HUMILITY, HUMOUR, A SENSE OF ADVENTURE**

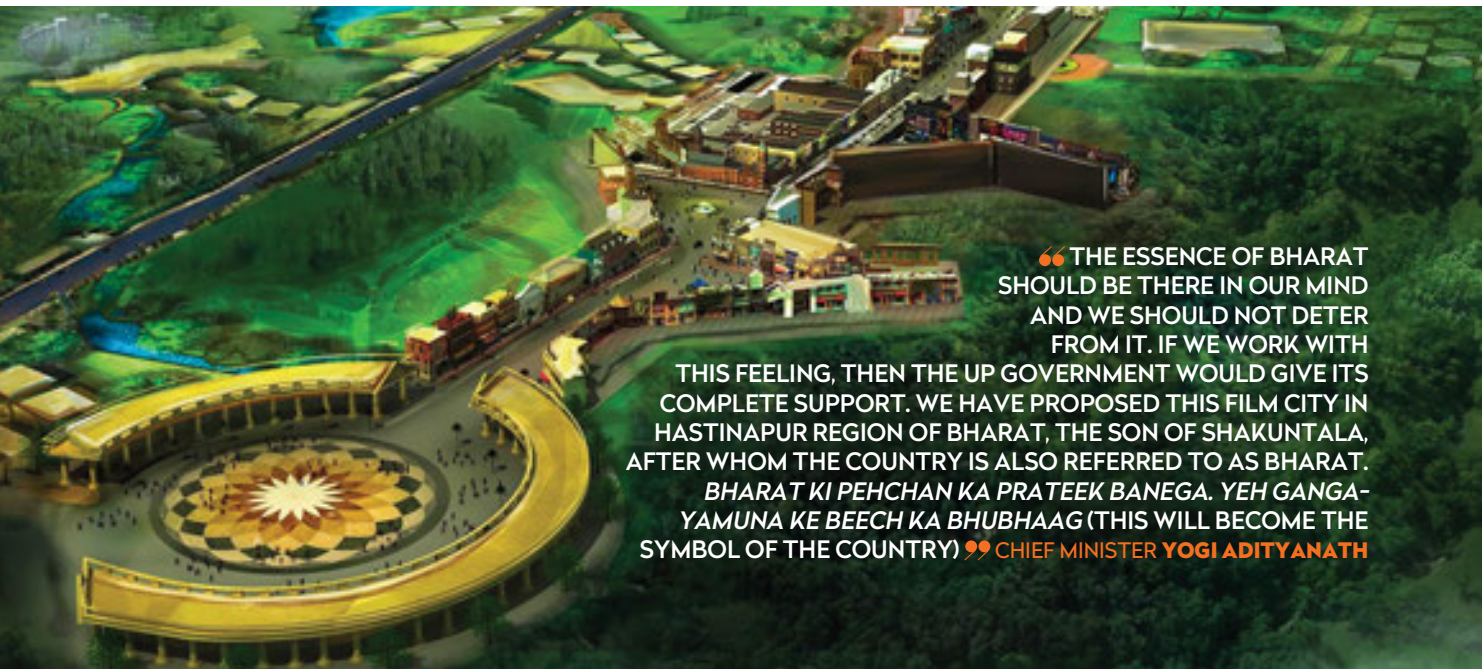
**WHAT KIND OF WEDDING WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE? JUST 40 PEOPLE ON A BEACH**  
**24**





# HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PROPOSED UP FILM CITY

The proposed Film City in UP is being hyped as a **multi-level studio** on the lines of Hollywood's Paramount Studios and UK's Pinewood Studios. The Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA) has earmarked 1,000 acres in Gautam Budh Nagar for the proposed Film City. The anticipated setup will have indoor and outdoor shooting areas. The idea is to create sets of **villages, forts, historical places and urban and rural environments** from India and abroad. The setup will also have dedicated **blue screen and green screen areas**, pre and post-production labs, SFX studios, an animation studio and a dedicated data centre. The aim is to provide a comprehensive filmmaking experience – a film unit can enter with just the cast and crew and return with a finished product. To facilitate that, there will be five-star, three-star and budget hotels erected on the premises. The proposed site is 50 kilometres away from the national capital and five kilometres from Jewar, where the construction of the country's biggest international airport with an aviation hub is underway. Later on, the Film City would have a **film school**, a **film museum** and **entertainment rides**, which would be on par with those offered by the Universal Studios. Filmfare conducted a virtual panel discussion on Film Destination UP and the Proposed Film City, where stalwarts like directors Rajiv Menon, Nikkhil Advani, Amit Sharma, Amar Kaushik, Neeraj Ghaywan, Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury, actor Malvika Mohanan and Aparna Purohit, head Amazon India Originals, participated. Presenting some of the highlights of the proposed film city, interspersed with thoughts of the esteemed panellists.



“ THE ESSENCE OF BHARAT SHOULD BE THERE IN OUR MIND AND WE SHOULD NOT DETER FROM IT. IF WE WORK WITH THIS FEELING, THEN THE UP GOVERNMENT WOULD GIVE ITS COMPLETE SUPPORT. WE HAVE PROPOSED THIS FILM CITY IN HASTINAPUR REGION OF BHARAT, THE SON OF SHAKUNTALA, AFTER WHOM THE COUNTRY IS ALSO REFERRED TO AS BHARAT. **BHARAT KI PEHCHAN KA PRATEEK BANEGA. YEH GANGA-YAMUNA KE BEECH KA BHUBHAAG** (THIS WILL BECOME THE SYMBOL OF THE COUNTRY) ” **CHIEF MINISTER YOGI ADITYANATH**

## UNDERWATER STAGE

The water stage will be equipped to handle every kind of underwater coverage. The studio will have fool-proof tanks for shooting submerged scenes. The water will be filtered using ultraviolet rays. A comfortable temperature of 30 degrees will be maintained throughout. Specialised underwater lights, supply lines and camera set-ups will be provided.

## PERMANENT SETS

The studio will have permanent sets replicating real-life locations including an airport, railway station, mandir, court, chawl, school, hospital... There are plans to provide mock-ups of aeroplanes and railway carriages too.

## POST-PRODUCTION UNITS

Multiple post-production facilities will be provided to filmmakers. These include cutting-edge technology for sound design, sound editing and sound effects, SFX labs, DI labs, recording rooms, dubbing rooms etc. Once again, the idea is to cater to every need of the filmmaker under one roof.

## DEDICATED GREEN/BLUE SCREEN STAGES

International experts would be brought in to create world-class green-screen and blue-screen stages. There will also be a facility for working

## DESIGN PROGRAMME

- Avenues to represent the evolution of film industry
- Promote tourism
- Hotels for all economic categories
- Indoor studios for TV serials & media art production
- Well developed convention center
- Museums to accommodate films, exhibits and Indian culture
- Well developed ready to use outdoor locations
- Promotion of film education institute
- Sustainable Development

## OUR VISION

- One-stop shop for film makers
- Iconic and international landmark
- Vision with future expansion strategy
- Must see tourist destination on world map

## INFRASTRUCTURE

- Proper compound wall and fencing to prevent trespassers
- Vehicle-free pedestrian zone
- Cluster wise parking lots
- Good transportation facilities
- Inviting entrance gate with security
- Separate VIP entry/exit
- World class film rides
- Good security systems with watch towers

## ECOFRIENDLY DEVELOPMENT

- Rainwater harvesting and optimal water use
- Solid waste management
- Use of environment friendly material
- Preservation of flora and fauna
- Use of renewable energy such as solar energy and biogas



**NIKHHIL ADVANI**  
FILMMAKER

“IF YOU ARE GOING TO BUILD A FILM CITY IN NOIDA, THEY NEED TO START COLLABORATING WITH EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS, THE LINE PRODUCERS AND THE PRODUCERS TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IS NOT AVAILABLE IN MUMBAI. WHY WOULD I GO TO UP? WHY WOULD I GO TO NOIDA TO SHOOT IF I'M GETTING EVERYTHING IN MUMBAI? SO IF I'M GETTING WHAT IS NOT AVAILABLE IN MUMBAI, THAT'LL BE MY INCENTIVE TO GO THERE”



**AMIT SHARMA**  
DIRECTOR

“IF WE ARE GOING TO THE FILM CITY OF UP AND WE HAVE TO GET OUR OWN CREW FROM MUMBAI, THEN IT'S GOING TO BE VERY EXPENSIVE... IF WE HAVE LOCAL TALENT, LIKE A UNIT OF LIGHT BOYS WHO KNOW WHICH LIGHTS GO WHERE, THEN IT WILL BECOME EASY FOR US. WE NEED TO TRAIN AND FOSTER LOCAL TALENT FOR LONG-TERM FEASIBILITY”

## ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTERISTICS



with miniatures. Motion capture technology will also be provided. Filmmakers can seamlessly incorporate the animation at one go and indulge in world-building from scratch, just like in the ILM or Peter Jackson Studios.

### FILM SCHOOL

The proposed UP Film City has a long term vision. It will have an on-location campus to teach acting and other crafts like direction, cinematography, editing, special effects, sound design, film writing etc. National and international film luminaries will be invited to teach at the campus. Students will get a hands-on experience working with professionals. The Film City plans to create job opportunities for those passionate about cinema.

### MUSEUM AND RIDES

A film museum dedicated to Indian cinema and world cinema is in the works. Visitors will be able to visit various eras in cinematic history and relive the moments through VR kiosks. Film tourism is seen as an emerging trend in the future. Hence, there are plans to provide observation galleries for viewers. The idea is also to turn certain areas into glass-fronted galleries so that visitors can observe the shooting without disturbing the proceedings. Also, plans



### FACILITIES

- FILM PRODUCTION
- STUDIOS
- OUTDOOR LOCATIONS
- POST PRODUCTION
- SPECIAL EFFECT STUDIO
- HOTELS
- RECREATIONAL AND AMENITIES
- CLUB HOUSE
- VILLAGES
- WORKSHOP
- TOURIST AND ENTERTAINMENT
- FILM UNIVERSITY
- RETAIL AND SHOPPING
- FOOD COURT
- AMUSEMENT PARK
- HOSPITALITY
- CONVENTION
- PLAYFIELD



**NEERAJ GHAYWAN**  
DIRECTOR

“I THINK WE ALSO NEED TO BUILD HUMAN CAPITAL, WHICH IS VERY, VERY ESSENTIAL. WHY DO WE GO TO UP? BECAUSE WE LOVE THE LANGUAGE, WE LOVE THE PEOPLE, WE LOVE THE ARCHITECTURE OF IT. IT IS THE CULTURE THAT INHERENTLY IS PULLING US THERE. NOW, HOW DO WE FOSTER THAT, BECAUSE ONCE WE GO THERE, WE'RE ALL HIRING MUMBAI ACTORS? WE'RE ALL HIRING SINGERS FROM MUMBAI. SO I'M THINKING THAT FOSTERING TALENT, FROM THE PLACE, TOO IS CRUCIAL FOR REAL GROWTH TO TAKE PLACE”

“TO ACTUALLY CREATE A VIBRANT FILM INDUSTRY, GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION AND INVESTMENT IS REQUIRED. IF IT DOESN'T HAPPEN, THEN WHAT HAPPENED IN BENGAL CAN HAPPEN WHERE THE INFRASTRUCTURE STARTS DECLINING AT A CERTAIN POINT AND WHAT'S HAPPENING TO A CERTAIN EXTENT, IN CHENNAI, WHERE NEW STUDIOS AND OLDER STUDIOS HAVE ALL CONVERTED TO REAL ESTATE AND THEY HAVE MOVED AWAY”



**RAJIV MENON**  
DIRECTOR

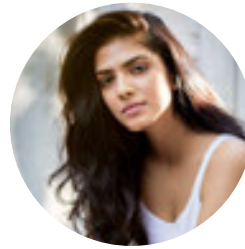
are afoot to incorporate a certain section of the studio into a film-based amusement park, complete with rides, movie-making workshops, 4D shows et al. There would also be a

food court and souvenir shops for film enthusiasts.

### HOSPITALITY AND OTHER FACILITIES

The studio aims to make things easy for filmmakers in

“IT FELT SURREAL TO BE THERE TO SEE THE GHATS IN PERSON. AND JUST THE VARIETY THAT IT OFFERS. THERE'S A GHAT WHERE YOU SEE WHITE TOURISTS TAKING PICTURES OF LITTLE CHILDREN. THEN THERE'S A GHAT WHICH IS KNOWN FOR DIFFERENT KINDS OF FOOD, THEN THERE'S A GHAT ADJACENT TO THIS ONE WHERE YOU SEE LIKE 10 BODIES BURNING AT THE SAME TIME. VISUALLY IT'S SO UNLIKE ANYTHING WE WILL BE ABLE TO SEE ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD. SO IT WAS A REALLY BEAUTIFUL EXPERIENCE FOR ME. IT'S A PLACE I DEFINITELY WANT TO GO BACK TO”



**MALAVIKA MOHANAN**  
ACTOR



**ANIRUDDHA ROY CHOWDHURY**  
DIRECTOR

“IF I WANT TO SHOOT A TSUNAMI, I SHOULD BE ABLE TO SHOOT THAT WITH A MERGER OF GRAPHICS AND OTHER TECHNOLOGY. IF I WANT TO CREATE A VOLCANO, IT SHOULD BE EASILY DONE. IF I WANT TO TAKE MY TRAIN UP ON A HILL AND IT JUMPS... SO ALL THESE THINGS WHICH WE SEE IN DISNEY, WE NEED TO GET THEM HERE IN UP FILM CITY. IT'S COMPLEX, BUT WE HAVE TO GET THE LATEST TECHNOLOGY AS IT'S THE NEED OF THE HOUR”



“UP HAS SUCH INCREDIBLE TALENT. SOME OF OUR PHENOMENAL CREATORS AND MOST OF THEM HERE ON THE PANEL TODAY ARE YOU KNOW, FROM THAT PLACE. SO MUCH TALENT BEHIND THE CAMERA AND IN FRONT OF THE CAMERA. SO OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENGAGING WITH LOCAL TALENT ARE THERE. THEN, THE ARCHITECTURE, THE LANDSCAPE OF UP, IT IS SO VARIED AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO GET ALL OF THAT I THINK IT'S FANTASTIC NEWS FOR OUR INDUSTRY”



**APARNA PUROHIT**  
HEAD, INDIA ORIGINALS,  
AMAZON PRIME VIDEO



**AMAR KAUSHIK**  
DIRECTOR

“I FEEL IF WE CAN INVEST IN AN AIRCRAFT MACHINE WHERE WE CAN SHOW EVERYTHING LIKE IT TAKING OFF, LANDING ON THE RUNWAY ETC. EVEN A RAILWAY PLATFORM... AS A FILMMAKER, IT GETS HARD TO SHOOT AT REAL LOCATIONS LIKE THESE. WE SHOULD INVEST IN THIS AND GET IT AS CLOSE TO REAL AS POSSIBLE. IF WE CAN RECREATE THESE TOUGH SPOTS WHILE MAINTAINING AUTHENTICITY, THEN I THINK A NEW FILM CITY WOULD BE REALLY BENEFICIAL”

every department. Hence, five-five-star accommodations, three-star accommodations and budget hotel facilities will be provided to the visiting units. A 24-hour cafeteria and catering service will take care of the meals of the crew. A clubhouse with a world-class gym and pool is also proposed so that the artistes can both exercise and relax. Green-rooms, make-up rooms, dressing rooms, storage areas for props and costumes and other sundry equipment will be provided as well. Multi-level parking is also in the pipeline.

#### OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

The proposed studio is centrally located and will be well-connected to Delhi and other parts of UP by rail and road. The international airport in Delhi is nearby and an international airport, said to be the biggest in India, is being built at Jewar. A Knowledge Park is being planned to provide round-the-clock technical support and data to filmmakers.

Summing up, the proposed UP Film City promises the strengths of both the traditional studios and their modern counterparts. It aims to make Uttar Pradesh a shooting centre for Indian filmmakers and international teams. It intends to provide top-of-the-line services to big-budget producers and small and medium budget banners too. ■

# FAREWELL, FELUDA...

(JANUARY 19, 1935 — NOVEMBER 15, 2020)

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THESPIAN **SOUMITRA CHATTERJEE** PASSED AWAY RECENTLY. **DEVESH SHARMA** OFFERS A SHORT PROFILE OF THE LEGENDARY ACTOR'S LIFE AND CAREER

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**S**oumitra Chatterjee was born in Sealdah, West Bengal on January 19, 1935. His grandfather and father both were associated with theatre. Soumitra too joined theatre while still in school and started getting accolades for his work from a very early age. Soumitra graduated from the City College, Kolkata with honours in Bengali literature and later did his post graduation in the same subject from the University of Calcutta. He joined the famous theatre personality, Ahindra Choudhury, while still a student. The doyen of Bengali drama, Sisir Bhaduri, was also one of his mentors. After college, he briefly worked as an insurance agent and then joined All India Radio as an announcer and also started looking for work in films. After two decades in films, he returned to theatre, his first love, in 1978, with his production *Naam Jiban*. His other noted plays include *Rajkumar* (1982), *Phera* (1987), *Nilkantha* (1988), *Ghatak Biday* (1990), *Tiktiki* (1995), an adaptation of *Sleuth*, *Nyaymurti* (1996), and *Homa Pakhi* (2006). Besides acting, he also wrote

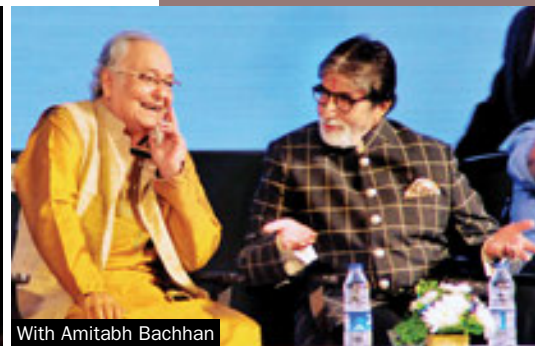


With mentor Satyajit Ray

SATYAJIT RAY AND SOUMITRA WORKED IN SOME 14 FILMS TOGETHER. HE HAD THE HONOUR OF MAKING HIS DEBUT IN THE THIRD PART OF RAY'S MOST FAMOUS WORK — *THE APU TRILOGY*. IN *APUR SANSAR* (1959), HE PLAYED A YOUNG WRITER DEALING WITH THE TRAVAILS OF NEWLY-WEDDED LIFE



With Arun Jaitley and Karisma Kapoor



With Amitabh Bachchan

and directed plays and was an avid translator as well. He also took to performance poetry in his later years. His swan song in the theatre was *Raja Lear* directed by Suman Mukhopadhyay, a play based on *King Lear* by William Shakespeare.

His claim to fame lay in his long and fruitful association with that giant of Indian cinema, Satyajit Ray. The duo worked in some 14 films together. He had the honour of making his debut in the third part of Ray's most famous work — *The Apu trilogy*. In *Apur Sansar* (1959), he played a young writer dealing with the travails of a newly-wedded life. His sensitive performance won



At a Filmfare event

him accolades and admirers worldwide. Soumitra also brought to life that masterful creation of Ray, the detective Feluda. Ray's stories revolving around the adventures of this Indian Sherlock

Holmes were a rage and Soumitra captured the nuances brilliantly in films like *Sonar Kella* (1974) and *Joi Baba Felunath* (1979). His other notable films with Ray include *Devi* (1960), *Teen*

*Kanya* (1961) and *Charulata* (1964).

He didn't just restrict himself to his mentor but worked with other notables of Bengal cinema too. One remembers him for the natural ease he displayed in Mrinal Sen's *Akash Kusum* (1965) and In Tapan Sinha's *Jhinder Bondi* (1961), an adaptation of *The Prisoner Of Zenda*, where he incidentally played a villain opposite Uttam Kumar. The duo were portrayed as rivals by the press but were friends in real life and maintained cordial relations throughout.

Entering the 1980s and 1990s, he started working with contemporary directors, like Goutam Ghose, Aparna Sen, Anjan



With Nandita Roy, wife Deepa and Shiboprosad Mukherjee

# Best films of SOUMITRA CHATTERJEE



Performing a play

**BESIDES ACTING, SOUMITRA ALSO WROTE AND DIRECTED PLAYS AND WAS AN AVID TRANSLATOR AS WELL. HE ALSO TOOK TO PERFORMANCE POETRY IN HIS LATER YEARS. HIS SWAN SONG IN THE THEATRE WAS SAID TO BE THE PLAY *RAJA LEAR* DIRECTED BY SUMAN MUKHOPADHYAY, A PLAY BASED ON *KING LEAR* BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**



At a play reading

Das and Rituparno Ghosh and even acted on television. In 1986, he played the role of a swimming coach in the film *Kony* (1986) directed by Saroj Dey, a role that came to be much admired by all. Soumitra didn't lose his command over acting to age. The new directors in Bengali films recognised that and wrote roles keeping him in mind. His famous films during his latter years include *Asukh* (1999), directed by

Rituparno Ghosh, *Shadows Of Time* (2004), directed by Florian Gallenberger, *Paanch Adhyay* (2012) directed by Pratim D Gupta, *Hemlock Society* (2012) directed by Sijit Mukherji, *Rupkatha Noy* (2013), directed by Atanu Ghosh, *Shunyo Awnko* (2013) directed by Goutam Ghose, *Bela Seshe* (2015) directed by Nandita Roy and Shiboprosad Mukherjee, *Posto* (2017), directed by Nandita Roy and Shiboprosad

## **APUR SANSAR (1959)**

**DIRECTOR:** Satyajit Ray

**CAST:** Soumitra Chatterjee, Sharmila Tagore, Alok Chakravarty, Swapan Mukherjee



The film marked the debut of Soumitra into films and what a debut it turned out to be. Apurba Kumar Roy "Apu" (Soumitra Chatterjee) is an unemployed graduate living in Kolkata. He accompanies a friend to the latter's ancestral village for the marriage of his friend's cousin Aparna (Sharmila Tagore). On seeing that the prospective groom has a mental disorder, the bride's mother breaks off the marriage. Apu is forced by the villagers to marry Aparna and after initial reluctance, he agrees. Both he and she are in marital bliss despite living in poverty. Their happiness is cut short when Aparna dies giving birth to their son Kajal. Apu blames Kajal for his mother's death and is inconsolable. He leaves the newborn with his maternal grandparents and becomes a sort of recluse, travelling to different parts of India. Later, he comes to his senses and takes the responsibility of Kajal once more, his heart full of hope about starting life afresh with his young son in Kolkata.

## **JHINDER BONDI (1961)**

**DIRECTOR:** Tapan Sinha

**CAST:** Uttam Kumar, Soumitra Chatterjee, Arundhati Devi, Tarun Kumar and Radhamohan Bhattacharya



This reportedly was a retelling of *The Prisoner Of Zenda*. It marked the beginning of the Uttam-Soumitra pairing on screen. Both the actors, portrayed as rivals by the press, enjoyed squaring off each other in films. Soumitra played the role of Mayurvahan, an antagonist against Uttam Kumar's Shankar Singh. That Soumitra would essay a negative role was met with apprehension as it was outside his comfort zone. He, however, made his naysayers take back their words and gave the performance of a lifetime.

## **ABHIJAN (1962)**

**DIRECTOR:** Satyajit Ray

**CAST:** Soumitra Chatterjee, Waheeda Rehman, Ruma Guha Thakurta, Gnyanesh Mukherjee, Charuprakash Ghosh, Rabi Ghosh, Arun Roy



Soumitra played an angry, headstrong taxi driver named Narsingh who has difficulty forming human relationships and is in love with his taxi. It's the fear of losing this car, which he considers his pride and joy, that propels him towards a path of no return. It's the love of a woman Gulabi (Waheeda Rehman), which propels him back in the right direction. The film is considered a watermark in his career. It's said that Martin Scorsese based his *Taxi Driver* (1976) on Narsingh's character.

Mukherjee, and *Mayurakshi* (2017) directed by Atanu Ghosh. He was to appear in a spiritual sequel to *Bela Seshe* called *Bela Shuru* in 2020. The film was complete but got stuck due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

A true legend of Bengali cinema, Soumitra Chatterjee, who was an admirer of Balraj Sahni, sadly never crossed over to Hindi films. It's said Hrishikesh Mukherjee offered him, *Anand*, Shashi Kapoor offered him *Junoon* but he refused them. His apathy towards Hindi cinema was a veritable loss to

millions of film buffs down the generations who'd have surely enjoyed his superlative acting. Not that he doesn't enjoy a cult following outside Bengal. Connoisseurs the world over recognise him as one of the sublime actors of the modern era. He was honoured by the Government with the Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 2012 for his contribution to cinema. The French Government conferred The French Legion of Honour on him in 2017 for his contribution to Arts. His other awards and honours conferred by the Government of India include the Padma Bhushan



With former President Pratibha Patil



Being felicitated at a function

HE WAS HONoured BY THE GOVERNMENT WITH THE DADASAHEB PHALKE AWARD IN 2012 FOR HIS CONTRIBUTION TO CINEMA AND HAD ALSO BEEN HONoured BY THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT WITH THE FRENCH LEGION OF HONOUR FOR HIS CONTRIBUTION TO ARTS IN 2017

## Best films of SOUMITRA CHATTERJEE

### SAAT PAKE BANDHA (1963)

**DIRECTOR:** Ajoy Kar

**CAST:** Suchitra Sen, Soumitra Chatterjee, Pahari Sanyal, Tarun Kumar, Gita Dey



This urban romance brought two stalwarts, Suchitra Sen and Soumitra together on screen. Suchitra was always seen as Uttam Kumar's heroine but it wasn't entirely true. She had the knack of giving her best, whoever her co-star maybe. Soumitra underplayed his performance here, letting her take the front seat. He plays an impoverished college professor who falls in love with a rich girl. Everything is fine for a while but the marital bliss is shattered by the constant interference by the girl's mother. Differences crop up between the couple and they settle for mutual separation. The film was later remade in Hindi as *Kora Kagaz* (1974) and starred Vijay Anand and Jaya Bhaduri.

### CHARULATA (1964)

**DIRECTOR:** Satyajit Ray

**CAST:** Soumitra Chatterjee, Madhabi Mukherjee and Sailen Mukherjee



The film is based on the novella *Nastanirh* (The Broken Nest) by Rabindranath Tagore. Some say it's Ray's crowning achievement.

It's famous for its feminist overtones, its 'female gaze'. Till then, the female desire wasn't overtly expressed in cinema. But Ray brought it out in the open and got a conversation started about it. The film revolves around Charulata "Charu" (Madhabi Mukherjee), the intelligent and beautiful wife of Bhupati (Sailen Mukherjee). Bhupati is an intellectual lost in his own world. His younger cousin Amal (Soumitra Chatterjee), is a budding writer. Being of the same age group as Charu, they both instantly connect. She's attracted to him and he's also drawn to her but societal norms prohibit him making his interest known to her. Guilt-ridden, he leaves abroad to study. A distraught Charu is caught mourning for him by her husband. The last scene of the film though, hints towards a rapprochement.

### AKASH KUSUM (1965)

**DIRECTOR:** Mrinal Sen

**CAST:** Soumitra Chatterjee, Aparna Sen, Subhendu Chatterjee



The film was a bitter-sweet comedy woven around middle-class aspirations. Soumitra plays a middle-class man who is smitten by a rich girl played by Aparna Sen. He wants to woo her despite knowing she's way above his league. He has a rich friend who owns a posh flat and a fancy car. He makes use of his friend's riches to pursue the girl. He keeps saying one lie after the other, leading to one comical situation after the other. One day, he's exposed and the girl's father asks him to leave the girl alone. The film was remade in Hindi as *Manzil* (1979) by Basu Chatterjee and starred Amitabh Bachchan and Moushumi Chatterjee.

HE WORKED WITH OTHER NOTABLES OF BENGAL CINEMA TOO. ONE REMEMBERS HIM FOR THE NATURAL EASE HE DISPLAYED IN MRINAL SEN'S *AKASH KUSUM* (1965) OR IN TAPAN SINHA'S *JHINDER BONDI* (1961), AN ADAPTATION OF THE *PRISONER OF ZENDA*, WHERE HE INCIDENTALLY PLAYED A VILLAIN OPPOSITE UTTAM KUMAR



With Rituparna Sengupta



With Prosenjit



With Mamta Banerjee

(2004), Sangeet Natak Akademi Tagore Ratna (2012), National Film Award – Special Jury Award for *Antardhan* (1991) and *Dekha* (2001), and Silver Lotus Award - Best Actor for *Podokkhep* (2006). His Filmfare Awards include Best Actor (Critics) for *Rupkatha Noy* (2013) and *Mayurakshi* (2017).

He was having health issues since some time and was reportedly suffering from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). The veteran tested positive for the novel coronavirus on October 6, following which he was admitted to Bellevue Nursing Home in Kolkata.

On October 9, Soumitra Chatterjee was moved to the ICU and put on oxygen support after his health worsened. He was later put on BiPap ventilation. His condition worsened on October 25 and was put on life support. According to the doctors, his key problem was Covid-19 encephalopathy. He stopped responding to treatment later and passed away on November 15, 2020

He's survived by his daughter Poulami Bose, who learnt acting under Utpal Dutt and is an active theatre worker and is the artistic director of her group Mukhomukhi. ■

# Best films of SOUMITRA CHATTERJEE

## **BAKSA BADAL (1965)**

**DIRECTOR:** Nityananda Datta.  
**CAST:** Soumitra Chatterjee, Aparna Sen, Prasad Mukhopadhyay, Subrato Sen, Sabitri Chatterjee and Satindra Bhattacharya



This was a film which Ray wrote but strangely didn't direct. It was a romantic comedy written in the style of Hollywood romcoms. The movie starts with the exchange of Amita (Aparna) and Pratulya's (Soumitra) luggage when they are travelling. The belongings are returned to the owners in due time. This mishap starts off a series of coincidences where Pratulya tries to woo Amita and succeeds in the end.

## **TEEN BHUBANER PARE (1969)**

**DIRECTOR:** Ashutosh Bandyopadhyay  
**CAST:** Soumitra Chatterjee, Tanuja, Rabi Ghosh, Chinmoy Roy, Tarun Kumar Chatterjee, Sumita Sanyal



This film offered a new take on the *Pygmalion* story. What will the creator do if the sculpture he's carved begins to have a mind of his own? Montu (Soumitra) is a factory worker, a drunkard and a lout. A new girl Sarasi (Tanuja) moves in the colony with her family. She initially hates his loutish behaviour but begins to like him when he saves a child. She wants to reform him and educate him and goes about her mission with a vengeance. In the process, she becomes a tyrant of sorts. He gets a PhD degree, becomes a respected professor but they grow apart as a couple despite his rise in status.

## **SONAR KELLA (1971)**

**DIRECTOR:** Satyajit Ray  
**CAST:** Soumitra Chatterjee, Santosh Dutta, Siddhartha Chatterjee, Kushal Chakraborty



This was the film, they say, which made Soumitra as popular as Uttam Kumar. He played the immensely popular fictional Bengali detective, based on Sherlock Holmes. Feluda was the protagonist of several detective novels written by Satyajit Ray himself, so bringing it to celluloid was easier for him. Many other actors have depicted Feluda but Soumitra's version is said to be the finest. Mukul Dhar (Kushal Chakraborty), sees visions of a golden fort and Dr. Hemanga Hajra (Sailen Mukherjee), a parapsychologist, thinks it's visions of the boy's past life. Their quest takes them to Rajasthan where a couple of conmen plan to capture the boy. That's when the boy's father hires the famous detective Feluda, who comes to the boy's rescue.

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

## INSTA LIKE

### Medley of moments

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

@aliaabhatt:  
my muse ❤️

*Just purrfect. Alia Bhatt and her cat Edward are both extremely photogenic, don't you think?*



@shahidkapoor:  
Anyone want a ride..  
*One for the road. Yes, yes, a big yes, Shahid, we sure want to hop on that beast with you.*



@taapsee: The boot camp like schedule 1 gets done, now running towards the lola family. Going to have a very chill cool stopover with the loopers. The best unwinding I could've asked for! This is going to be 'crazy' fun. #RashmiRocket to #LooopLapeta

*This picture is a perfect depiction of how Taapsee Pannu is pacing up to success, one film at a time.*

@vickykaushal09:  
Shubh aarambh!  
*Who's the fairest of them all? Vicky Kaushal is excited to be back at work and he sure has been prepping for it with much gusto.*



@tarasutaria: 🌴🌊

*Sorry, we're in need of a little vacation just to get over this vacay picture of Tara Sutaria soaking up the sun in the Maldives.*

Readers send in their feedback pg 60

Shatrughan Sinha's racy rejoinders pg 62





# IN THE MAIL

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

**1st Prize**  
₹1500

↓ **PRATIK GANDHI DOES IT AGAIN**

Pratik Gandhi is the new star of the OTT generation. His acting credentials were never in doubt.

All he needed was a push to propel him towards stardom. *Scam 1992*, where he plays Harshad Mehta, has done it for him. I'd love to see him do more such substantial roles in the future.

Manhar Joshi, Gandhinagar



Too good: Pratik Gandhi

**IMPRESSIVE TRAILER**

I've been looking forward to seeing Priyanka Chopra and Rajkummar Rao share the big screen ever since *The White Tiger* was announced. Watching them in the trailer I can safely say that the hype is justified. Can't wait to watch the film.

Raj Saxena, New Delhi



**2nd Prize**  
₹1000

**INFIDELITY SUCKS**

I read Taapsee Pannu's cover story (November) and must admit that her viewpoint on infidelity is indeed spot on. While we all are aware that our bodies have certain needs, cheating on your partner to satisfy them is a big no-no in my book. And I guess everyone will agree with that.

Mihika Shah, Surat

→ **TOPPER TAAPSEE**

Taapsee Pannu's interview in your last issue (November), definitely helped me know a lot more about the actress. I liked the bit where she spoke about how she was as a child and how her experiences in school helped her reach where she is today. Inspirational indeed.

Harshali Raut, Aurangabad



Indian idol: Taapsee Pannu

**LAXMII DISAPPOINTS**

I watched Akshay Kumar and Kiara Advani's *Laxmii* online because I'm a huge fan of Akshay. But I must admit I came away disappointed. The magic of *Kanchana* just wasn't replicated. I only sat through the film because of Akki.

Urmila Reddy, Hyderabad

**AYUSH AHOY!**

I've possibly seen every sketch of Ayush Mehra online and believe he's one of the brightest stars in the digital space. To see his name show up on a platform like *Filmfare* (November) was definitely a delight. I hope you feature more such talents in the future.

Sumitra Mahajan, Surat



Below par: Laxmii



Golden memories: Rangeela

### RANGEELA REUNION

When I read the article on the *Filmfare* website about *Rangeela's* 25-year reunion, it brought back several memories. I believe it's one of Ram Gopal Varma's best works. Both Aamir Khan and Urmila Matondkar were brilliant in it and so was Jackie Shroff. Seeing the gang reunite once again for this special occasion made my day.

Aniket Godbole, Mumbai

### OTT SPOTLIGHT

OTT ventures getting the same kind of recognition in our country as traditional cinema was long overdue. So it was good to see *Filmfare* spearheading the movement with their show *Spotlight* featuring OTT stars. The guest list features actors who have gone on to become household names. I expect more such talent to come through in the near future.

Gautam Saini, Rewari

### MAKE-UP MAGIC

I've been following Namrata Soni's work for quite some time and it was good to learn more about makeup from her in your latest issue (November). Her tips will help me take even the simplest of looks to another level.

Nikita Singh, Mohali

### SPOT ON

Your interview with Namrata Soni (November) gave me an insight into what exactly goes into making Bollywood divas look absolutely perfect in front of the camera. I want to try my hand as a makeup artist and these tips surely were helpful. Thank you, Namrata and team *Filmfare*.

Swati Majumdar, Kolkata

## Just one Point



Farewell: Bhanu Athaiya

I loved reading *Filmfare's* piece on the late Bhanu Athaiya (November). She put India on the world map by winning an Oscar. Her legacy will live on forever  
**Varun Bakshi, Noida**

Taapsee Pannu is currently one of my favourite actors so I was glad to see her on the *Filmfare* Cover (November). I hope to see many more editions with her on the cover.

**Rakesh Sinha, Darbhanga**

When I read about SP Balasubrahmanyam passing away on the *Filmfare's* social media account, it left me in a state of complete shock. Our beloved SPB will always remain in our hearts.  
**Laxmi Iyer, Chennai**

On Prabhas's birthday, I saw the new poster of *Radhe Shyam* on *Filmfare's* Instagram page. It left me even more excited about the film.  
**Ranjana Pawar, Belgaum**

I've always followed Shatrughan Sinha's rapid-fire diligently. I think his sense of humour is spot on.  
**Gaurav Sahu, Ranchi**



All dolled up: Sonam Kapoor

### BADSHAH'S ROYAL RIDE

I read about Badshah's Roll Royce on the *Filmfare* website and was blown away by the specifications of the car. I've always been a petrolhead and I hope to own such a grand vehicle someday.

Gurpreet Singh, Jalandhar



Going places: Tripti Dimri

### BRIGHT START

Tripti Dimri had impressed me in *Laila Majnu*. I had high hopes from her and now, after watching her in *Bulbbul* I feel my first impressions were bang on. Her interview in the November issue just goes to show how particular she is about her craft. I see a bright future ahead for the young talent.

Mariam Abbas, Kolkata

### PM MODI'S BOLLYWOOD CONNECTION

On the occasion of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's birthday, I came across an article on the *Filmfare* website that shared some of the best moments of our supreme leader with the Bollywood stars. I really enjoyed going through those pictures.

Ajay Goswami, Lucknow



Music maven: Mithoon

### MITHOON ROCKS

My obsession with Bollywood music has existed right from my childhood and one of my favourite artistes in the industry is Mithoon. Reading about his take on film music (November) increased my respect for him and his work even more.

Rajneesh Pant, Almora

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PHOTOGRAPH: MEETESH TANEJA

# Shatrughan Sinha's Rapid fire

**Following the imposition of ₹1 as fine on Prashant Bhushan by the apex court, columnist Jug Suraiya wondered whether MRP for contempt was fixed at ₹1. What is your response?**

**Tanishk N, Mumbai**

Well, it needed a senior, seasoned, learned, admired, respected and talked about social-political activist to send out a clear message to the highest law of the land, the Hon'ble Supreme Court...

**In movies of your time, a hero would never kill a villain, no matter what. Even Thakur did not kill Gabbar in *Sholay*. The law used to take its own course. But now, a hero has to kill a couple of people in every film.**

**Where are the likes of Basu Chatterjee who could make an endearing and enduring film like a *Chhoti Si Baat*?**

**Jaideep Sarkar, Kolkata**

With the passing away of the great Basu Chatterjee the era of sweet, realistic, common man's cinema has surely ended. However, we still have some expectations from makers like Vidhu Vinod Chopra, Rajkumar Hirani, and Goutam Ghose. God bless them.

**And he receives applause for that. Has the law of the land changed or our morality has become rotten?**

**Rajneesh Batra, New Delhi**

Our morality has become rotten. This is *Kalyug*, isn't it? Only money talks in our society. Our conscience seems to be dead. So morality is at its lowest and that reflects on the celluloid too.

**Why is Bollywood being targeted for all kinds of vices? Is it because it's a soft target?**

**Anil Saxena, Rohtak**

People follow, idolise, almost worship our heroes. So anything negative about them isn't tolerated by the idolising masses. They tend to forget actors are humans too.

**Are you getting OTT offers?**

**Vikas Sharma, Chandigarh**

Yes indeed. Offers have been coming from the right, left and centre. We'll talk about it later. Though I must admit OTT is here to go a long way.



**Art addict: Goutam Ghose**



**Old school romantic: Vidhu Vinod Chopra**

**Are we living in the age of apocalypse?**

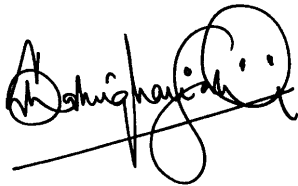
**Renuka Iyer, Chennai**

Well, the way things are moving, with lots of turns and twists, and situations turning nasty in every sphere, it won't be wrong to say that we're indeed living in the age of apocalypse... Jai Hind!

**Web series are becoming popular these days. Do you think they will take over audiences watching films in theatres?**

**Nirmala Khemlani, Pune**

No doubt the web series are becoming popular as most people are stuck at home. We can watch them at our convenience without the danger of contracting the infection. I've heard the cinema halls are now being allowed to open. The news about their occupancy rates hasn't been positive. The masses aren't willing to risk infection for the sake of a film. So OTT platforms seem to be the *sundar, sasta aur tikau* option for now.





**Gentleman director:**  
Basu Chatterjee



**Screen giant:**  
Rajkumar Hirani



**Best of all:** Sholay

**Most of the actors have faced a series of rejections before making a name for themselves. This doesn't mean they should end their lives. What message do you want to give to the younger generation, pursuing a career in Bollywood?**

**Shabina Begum, Kolkata**

Getting rejected is different than being made to feel like an outcast. Rejections are part of our journey called life. Talking to your family, friends, colleagues about it can show you the way forward. My humble request to everyone is that if you hear of someone

who is depressed then reach out. Lend your shoulder to lean on. Talking helps so don't hesitate to draw the person out. You may save a life.

**Why do we still follow news on social media accounts when we know most of it is fake?**

**Mohini Srivastava, Noida**

For the sake of entertainment and timepass.

**Do you think you need to believe in God to be a 'good' person?**

**Puneet Chadha, Yamuna Nagar**

## 1st Prize

**How long will COVID-19 affect our economy? Is it possible for the common man to survive in this pandemic situation for long?**

**Anant Krit Sharma, Muzaffarpur**

It has already almost ruined our economy. For how long? We don't know — we're all waiting for the vaccine to arrive and hopefully, that will improve the economy. I hope, wish and pray that the common man gets the assistance of the government in procuring the vaccine. Only after the masses get vaccinated that the economy will crawl back to normal.

## 2nd Prize

**Why are more and more people becoming atheists?**

**Naveen Bhardwaj, Mohali**

Because of so many deaths worldwide due to the coronavirus, they feel God is sleeping. Their lack of faith in humanity has led them to shake off their faith in God. Man has been known to overcome many a crisis and I'm sure this too shall pass. Also, their need to possess things which they don't deserve, their inability to work towards them, and also their lack of patience makes men go away from God.

Not necessarily. Just be a good human being. God will take care of you automatically. I certainly believe in a superpower, in being good and doing good.

**A 0.06-micron size virus does not discriminate between anyone, so why are we human beings so discriminatory in our behaviour?**

**Rajneesh Batra, New Delhi**

God only knows — and he's not telling.

**We have no money to extract water for drylands but have money to look for water on Mars. Please comment?**

**Lalitkumar Kumpalath, Mumbai**

We have money to do both. It's our willingness or political will that's lacking.

(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**

**₹2000**

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YOUR QUESTIONS WILL BE FORWARDED TO: Shatrughan Sinha, who insists his answers do not reflect his political and social views.

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# FLYX FILMFARE OTT AWARDS: A NEW BEGINNING

I've always been a child of cinema. I may not have been the first day, first show buff but nevertheless watching films in a cinema hall was always magical for me. And still is. But we're evolving. Stationery phones gave way to mobile phones, which in turn evolved into smartphones. VCRs -- some of you won't even know what that means -- gave way to DVD players and now everything is available on cloud servers, you don't even need a DVD player. Likewise, viewers are now happier watching content on their phones, their tablets, laptops and smart TVs. Earlier, it used to be downloaded content. Now, thanks to the increase in data speeds and lowering of data tariffs, content can directly be streamed to devices. Instead of watching content on a weekly and daily basis, people are binge-watching the entire season at one go. And long-form content, ie. the series or specials which have a longer length than a standard

feature film, is the preferred staple for viewers these days. One can say that the pandemic and the lockdown hastened the process but even before that there were signs that the taste of the viewers was changing.

Successful OTT content has shifted the focus back to the story, mostly having realistic strands. It has also helped give rise to performers who are getting appreciated not just for their good looks but also for their impactful portrayals. As said earlier, the attention of the viewer needs to be engaged for a longer time, who has many platforms and diverse content from which to choose. The viewer has verily become the king as even subscribing to one OTT platform leaves him with a wealth of shows and movies from across the globe.

Keeping these trends in mind, *Filmfare*, which has been the pioneer when it comes to award shows, has decided to honour excellence in the OTT space as

well. It pleases me to say that the response from the industry has been heartening indeed. Everyone, be it actors, directors, technicians, all responded heartily. And so did the various platforms. We found a content sponsor in FLYX, a renowned name whose USP is to give you information about various series and films available on the OTT platforms from all over the world. Given *Filmfare's* legacy and FLYX's reach, it's a win-win partnership indeed.

The coronavirus pandemic is far from over. This property is a symbol of our endeavour to assimilate ourselves towards the new normal. One of the tenets of showbiz is that come what may, the show must go on. You have been instrumental in supporting us in our different endeavours all these years and I'm sure you'll extend the same love and support to our latest venture as well...Vive la change!

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