

ALL NEW

October, 2020

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KATRINA'S
SUPER HERO
FILM IN TROUBLE

MEET THE
REAL HERO,
SONU SOOD

RANVEER SINGH'S
MASTERPLAN

ANUSHKA SHARMA

BRAVE NEW WORLD

HEROINES WHO
MAKE A DIFFERENCE

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 DESTINATION PARTNER: VISIT BRUSSELS
 TRAVEL CO-ORDINATORS:
 GLOBAL HOPPERS
 Dress: Maison Esve | Jewellery: Isharya



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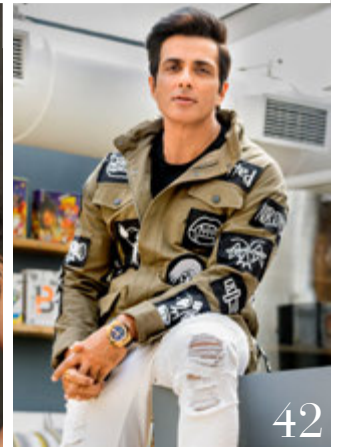
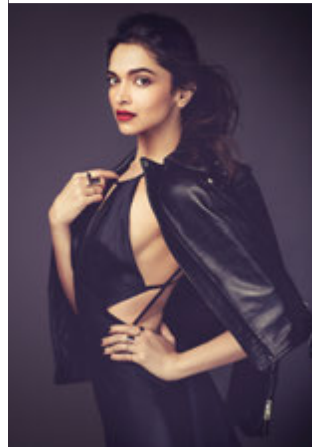
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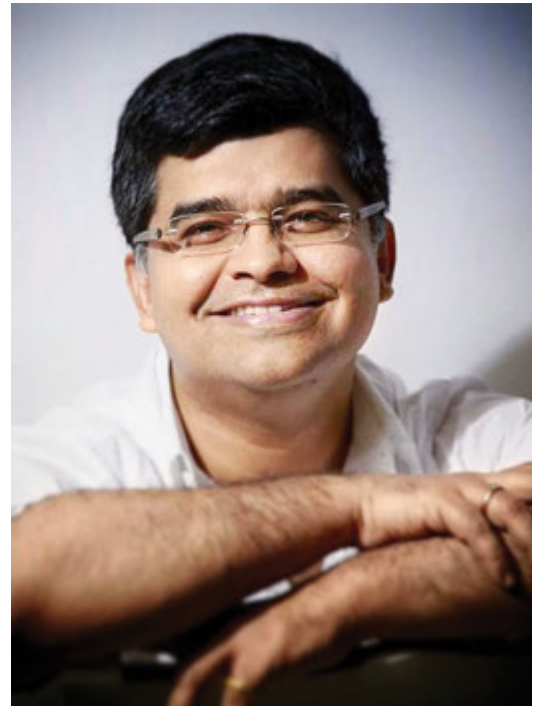
Letter from the Editor

It's reigning women

There was a time when film heroines, even when working for the biggest studios were paid a pittance. It all changed with Vidya Balan who set the ball rolling by refusing to bow down to male domination. She came, she saw, she snook at the system and others gladly followed suit. Women have travelled on a hard and lonely road before reaching that place of power from where they can demand the sum they wish for and get it. So, when we hear that Deepika Padukone was reportedly paid a whopping 29 crores for her next opposite Prabhas, it gladdens our hearts. Marriage and children often proved to be the death knell for actresses. Today, a much-married Kareena Kapoor Khan, mother to the adorable Taimur and with another baby on the way, still commands a healthy fee of ten crores plus for every project and was reportedly paid 21 crores for *Laal Singh Chaddha*. It tells you that the producers have finally woken up to the fact that heroines too are indeed responsible for making a film a hit. As is evident from the immense popularity they command on social media and the number of fan pages they have. Clearly, they have the required clout now to influence the numbers. And they are shrewd enough to point this to the producers and use it as a bargaining chip.

Another healthy practice that has emerged out of this new way of thinking is that heroines are now getting author-backed roles. And they're getting roles which resonate with the millions of women out there. And what's more without the proverbial hero to prop them up. Again Vidya Balan pioneered this trend in modern times. Taapsee Pannu starrer *Thappad* is another case in point. The film revolves around an ordinary middle-class homemaker's response to domestic violence. Women have been told to overlook minor acts of violence against them since ages. Now, they've started to resist and the film mirrors that. Women have to often let go of their careers because of the demands of motherhood. But of late, mothers have started making a comeback. Mirroring that, the Kangana Ranaut starrer *Panga* has her playing a former kabaddi star, who makes a comeback to the sport in her 30s. Actresses are at the forefront of the endorsement game as well. The buying power of women has increased. The FMCG companies want to cash in on that potential and as a result female stars are getting the bulk of endorsement deals. They're selling everything from soaps to smartphones. Needless to say, the moolah coming in has added to their wealth. Be it fashion, Priyanka Chopra's tent-like met gala gown is still being written about, or charities, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan has long been associated with the UN, they have been at the frontline everywhere. Sassy, smart and willing to take risks, our leading ladies are no longer content with arm-candy roles. They don't need men to be relevant. Let's hope their shining example trickles down to the women on the streets. Our present issue is dedicated to heroines who shine bright with both style and substance.

Turn the pages to know more about them...





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

masala fix



Karisma Kapoor



Taimur and Kareena Kapoor Khan

BIRTHDAY BUMPS

Birthday celebrations have lost their usual pomp and show, thanks to the coronavirus. Kareena Kapoor Khan brought in her 40th birthday some days ago and it was held at home in the midst of close family. Our paparazzi spotted the birthday girl in two outfits and that kind of caused a tizzy. One of the first to arrive was sister Karisma Kapoor. It's a wonder how much they resemble each other with their masks on.



Salman Khan's *Tiger 3* to be shot in seven countries *pg 08*

Taapsee Pannu bags a role alongside Shah Rukh Khan? *pg 12*

PHOTOGRAPH: YOGEN SHAH

SHAHID KAPOOR SAYS YES TO YODHA

Shashank Khaitan who's known for his films like *Humpty Sharma Ki Dulhania*, *Badrinath Ki Dulhania* and *Dhadak* is gearing up for his next project, which is said to be an action-drama tentatively titled *Yodha*. **Shahid Kapoor** has been signed for the film but we hear that he wasn't the only choice. The makers had first approached **Ranbir Kapoor**, who turned it down as he already has projects like *Shamshera* and **Luv Ranjan's** next on his plate and didn't want to clutter his diary. **Vicky Kaushal** and **Ayushmann Khurrana** too turned it down for reasons of their own. Shahid we hear, loved the script and agreed to come on board after listening to the narration. *Yodha* is Shahid's second collaboration with **Karan Johar** after *Shandaar* and his first project with Shashank. The director was supposed to begin *Mr Lele* with **Varun Dhawan** but the project got cancelled after Varun and he had creative differences.



MEANWHILE...

Shashank Khaitan may have found the leading lady for *Yodha*, starring Shahid Kapoor. According to reports, Shashank feels **Disha Patani** is perfect for the role. According to a source, the film is an actioner but the female has an interesting arc. Shashank has narrated the film to the actress, who has shown an interest in the project. but she hasn't signed on the dotted line as yet.

RANBIR KAPOOR AND SHRADDHA KAPOOR TO START SHOOTING FOR LUV RANJAN'S NEXT

Ranbir Kapoor and **Shraddha Kapoor** have been paired together for the first time in **Luv Ranjan's** next. Luv Ranjan is known for films like *Pyaar Ka PUNCHNAMA* series and *Sonu Ke Titu Ki Sweetie*. His next was supposed to go on floors early this year but the coronavirus pandemic came in the way. Now, we hear Ranbir and Shraddha will start shooting in November. The film will need six months to wrap up the shoot. Reports suggest that the makers are planning to wrap up the shoot by April 2021. The film is set in Spain and Shraddha reportedly plays a waitress while Ranbir plays a ladies' man who sets out to charm her. If Luv Ranjan's track record is anything to go by, this untitled project will surely be a love story with a difference.



SALMAN KHAN'S TIGER 3 TO BE SHOT ACROSS SEVEN COUNTRIES



According to reports, **Salman Khan** and **Aditya Chopra** have big plans for *Tiger 3*. Salman Khan is free to shoot in February and hence Aditya Chopra and director **Maneesh Sharma** are hurrying to get the script ready. According to reports, the film will be shot in seven countries and will be a visual delight. A source revealed the details, "If everything goes as planned, Maneesh Sharma and his team will conduct a recce across the UAE, Istanbul and the US in December. The rest of the countries have yet to be pencilled in. *Tiger 3* is close to Adi's heart as he has developed the screenplay along with **Jaideep Sahni**.

Despite the industry slowdown, Adi is certain that the film has the makings of a blockbuster. Maneesh and he want to take it on floors by February." Katrina Kaif will keep pace with Salman again in the film. The makers are now on the lookout for a fresh face to play the negative lead.

KATRINA KAIF'S SUPERHERO FLICK IN TROUBLE

Katrina Kaif has too many big projects in her kitty and she's raring to hit the road soon. Her *Sooryavanshi* with **Akshay Kumar** was ready for release but got stalled due to the lockdown. She also has *Phone Bhoot* with **Ishaan Khattar** and **Siddhant Chaturvedi** and *Tiger 3* with **Salman Khan**. According to reports, Katrina's most ambitious project, where she's reportedly playing a superhero, or shall we say, a superheroin, which is backed by **Ali Abbas Zafar** might be delayed. The filmmaker has not been able to get any producer or studio on board to finance it. Since it's a superhero flick, the film will be high on VFX and hence expensive. Looking at the current scenario, film studios are not ready to invest in a high-budget film. Ali Abbas Zafar and Katrina have worked together in films like *Mere Brother Ki Dulhan*, *Tiger Zinda Hai* and *Bharat*. Katrina Kaif incidentally has been prepping for the role for a while now. She wants to get the right physique for the film. We're sure she'll look marvellous as a super.



Healing

FOR THE GREATER GOOD, ONE STEP AT A TIME...



Vansa Bali is one of the front runners of self-development and empowerment gurus in the UAE. With credentials in psychology, experience in occupational psychology and exposure to the world of mindfulness, Vansa has channeled her life's purpose to awaken people to their highest potential by offering Theta healing & self-development seminars. She also conducts programs that awakens self-transformation and self-discovery in an individual to identify and achieve their

highest potential.

She has been invited on various platforms such as the Happiness Podcast, Khaleej Times, Gulf News and various other corporate houses to share her expertise and wisdom to bring positive change to society and the workplace. Her experience as a Holistic Therapist, Energy Healer and Coach, motivates her to share the wisdom that will help you listen and trust the 'inner voice' within.

With focus and determination, she believes that we all have the capability to live purposefully and

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abundantly on this planet. By sharing these simple and effective intuitive processes, we can learn how to turn inwards, awaken our natural intuition and cultivate a mindset for success that can help us grow exponentially faster in our journey mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually on the planet. ■

Do you know Akshay Kumar drinks cow urine every day?



Akshay Kumar is in Scotland shooting for his next *Bell Bottom*. So much that he had a working birthday this year. Recently he did an Instagram live with British host and adventurer **Bear Grylls** and revealed some secrets about himself.

The session had him narrating adventures he had with Bear Grylls when they both shot for *Into The Wild* at the Bandipur Tiger Reserve in Karnataka. While talking about the show, **Huma**

Qureshi asked the superstar how he convinced himself to drink elephant poop tea on the show. Pat came the reply, "I wasn't worried. I was too excited to be worried.

I have cow urine because of *ayurvedic* reasons every day, so that was okay."

Looks like we now know the secret of his fitness. Gives a whole new meaning to the phrase 'fountain of youth'.



SHAH RUKH KHAN HAS SIGNED TAMIL DIRECTOR ATLEE'S NEXT TITLED SANKI. AND WE KNOW WHO HE'LL BE ROMANCING IN THIS MUCH-AWAITED PROJECT. YES, IT'S NONE OTHER THAN DEEPIKA PADUKONE. DEEPIKA REPRTEDELY HAS LOVED THE STORY AND IS ON BOARD. THE FILM WILL BE DEEPIKA'S FOURTH VENTURE WITH SRK AFTER OM SHANTI OM, CHENNAI EXPRESS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR.

Aishwarya Rai Bachchan's Binodani Dasi biopic gets delayed due to COVID-19

Talks had surfaced early this year about **Aishwarya Rai Bachchan** having signed **Pradeep Sarkar's** next. It's a biopic on Binodini Dasi, a popular courtesan from the 1800s who became popular as a theatre actor. But now we hear that the project has been pushed to next year due to the pandemic. Talking about the delay, Pradeep Sarkar said that he'd narrated the script to Aishwarya and she'd given him the heads up but soon after the lockdown started. So he hasn't been able to work further on the project. He also revealed that even though Aishwarya is on board, he has not been able to

sign on other actors for the film. He's hoping that things will go back to normal by March 2021, so he can go back on sets. He said, "The writing is in progress. While Aishwarya has given her nod, I have not approached other actors because I am waiting for the crisis to abate. I hope the vaccine is developed by March so that we can start shooting." Pradeep Sarkar is also working on two other scripts but will only start narrations when he can meet the actors in person.



TIGER SHROFF TO PLAY A BOXER IN GANPAT

Looks like boxers are the flavour of the season. Last we heard, **Farhan Akhtar** had begun shooting for **Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra's** sports drama *Toofan*, where he plays a boxer. Now the buzz is that **Tiger Shroff** has been approached by the director of *Queen*, **Vikas Bahl** to play a boxer in a two-film franchise called *Ganpat*. According to a source, Vikas has been working on the script for a while now and Tiger, who loves MMA, wrestling and boxing, too was looking to do a film in this space. When Vikas narrated the script to him, it got an instant 'yes' from Tiger. Tiger Shroff apparently has already started prepping for the film. Though he has a great physique, he has to work on it to look the part of a boxer. He's also working on his boxing skills, as the film will obviously have many ring sequences. It's said that Bahl wants to include real boxers not only from India but from abroad as well in the film.

Post completing *Ganpat* and *Heropanti 2*, Tiger Shroff will then work on the *desi* version of *Rambo* which will be directed by **Rohit Dhawan**.

RANVEER SINGH WANTS SIGN LANGUAGE TO

Ranveer Singh likes to involve himself in various charities and causes. The actor has been doing his bit for people with speech and hearing disabilities. He has been supporting an initiative to make the sign language India's 23rd official language.

Thanking him for standing up for them, 25 members of the deaf community from across India said, "We were very happy to hear the good news about Ranveer Singh, who is a famous Bollywood actor, to support Indian Sign Language to be recognized as the 23rd official language of India. We are so glad that he supports

BECOME INDIA'S 23RD OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

this. With your support, we felt inspired. Indian Sign Language is a beautiful language. We want to thank Ranveer for showing support to the deaf community. We are all happy and grateful to you!" On the other hand, Ranveer said, "We are deeply committed to making Indian Sign Language become the 23rd official language of India. This progressive step will create a ripple effect in providing equal access across all areas from education to employment to entertainment to more than 10 million deaf people in India." Kudos to you Ranveer!

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Ayushmann Khurrana and David Beckham have something in common

Ayushmann Khurrana is one of the biggest stars of Bollywood today. The actor has always believed in promoting quirky scripts with a social message. Now the actor, who is a youth icon, has been roped in by UNICEF India as its celebrity advocate for promoting rights #ForEveryChild. While the actor will be supporting the cause for UNICEF's work in India, **David Beckham** works on this campaign globally. Talking about this wonderful collaboration, Ayushmann said, "I am very pleased to partner with UNICEF as a celebrity advocate. I believe that everyone deserves the best start in life. As I watch my children play in the safety and happiness of our home, I think about all the children who never get to experience a safe childhood and grow up with violence at home or outside. With UNICEF, I look forward to supporting the rights of the most vulnerable children, so that they grow up as happier, healthier, educated citizens in nurturing environments free from violence." We are mighty impressed with you, Ayushmann.



VICKY KAUSHAL AND MANUSHI CHILLAR TO START SHOOTING FOR THEIR NEXT

A few weeks back it was reported that **Vicky Kaushal** will do his first ever comedy film with YRF, which also marks his first with the banner. Miss World **Manushi Chhillar** bagged the role opposite the actor and now we hear that the actors have already started prepping for the film, which is all set to go on floors in October. Director **Vijay Krishna Acharya** has started reading sessions with them and the two actors are also doing workshops. The film will be shot primarily in Mumbai and the actors are said to be excited about it. This is Manushi's second film. Her debut film, the historical drama *Prithviraj*, is also backed by YRF. The film stars **Akshay Kumar** in the role of the valiant king Prithviraj Chauhan.



TAAPSEE PANNU BAGS A ROLE ALONGSIDE SHAH RUKH KHAN?



Taapsee Pannu is, without doubt, one of the most talented actresses of today's time. She has proved her mettle as an actress with powerful performances in films like *Pink*, *Badla*, *Manmarziyaan*, *Saand Ki Aankh* and *Thappad*. Besides, she has a string of good films coming up. According to our sources, she might star in **Rajkumar Hirani's** next alongside the one and only **Shah Rukh Khan**. Well, if this is to be believed, the project will surely be Taapsee's biggest coup till date. Though Taapsee's film *Badla* was produced by SRK's Red Chillies Entertainment, this will be the first time she will star opposite the superstar on the big screen. Well, we hope an official confirmation comes soon.

RAJINIKANTH'S GOLDEN GESTURE WINS OUR HEART

Rajinikanth is one of the biggest actors in the country and enjoys an unheard of fan following. His fans consider him God and worship him. Recently, we came across a story of how Rajinikanth gave succour to one of his fans suffering from coronavirus. Thalaivaa sent a voice message to one of his ailing fans who regretted not meeting his idol in person. This fan named Murali from Mumbai had been tested COVID-19 positive and took to Twitter to reach out to the actor. Murali tweeted in Tamil saying, "Rajinikanth, my leader, it is my last wish that you win the 2021 assembly elections and be a great leader, spiritual guru for the Tamil people. You should lead the state in a way that even our villagers earn up to Rs 25,000 a month. My only sorrow is that I am leaving without working towards seating you on the throne." Soon one of Rajinikanth's fan clubs tweeted saying that Rajinikanth replied to the actor through a voice message and his message said, "Murali, this is Rajinikanth speaking, nothing will happen to you *kanna*. Be confident, I will pray for your recovery. You will recover soon and come back home. Once you recover, please come home with your family. I will meet you. Be confident, I will pray for your speedy recovery. Be confident." Soon it was reported that Murali had tested negative for COVID-19 and shared the news saying, "With the blessings of Thalaivar and fans my kidney will also recover soon. Thank you for your prayers." Miraculous indeed.



ADITYA ROY KAPUR AND TARA SUTARIA WERE ALL SET TO TEAM UP FOR **EK VILLAIN 2**, WHICH ALSO STARS DISHA PATANI AND JOHN ABRAHAM. HOWEVER, ADITYA OPTED OUT OF THE FILM DUE TO CREATIVE DIFFERENCES WITH THE DIRECTOR MOHIT SURI. LOOKS LIKE ADITYA AND TARA ARE MEANT TO WORK TOGETHER. ACCORDING TO REPORTS, TARA SUTARIA HAS BEEN APPROACHED FOR A ROLE OPPOSITE ADITYA ROY KAPUR IN AHMED KHAN'S NEXT. THE FILM IS TITLED *OM* AND IS AN ACTION-DRAMA. WHILE TARA HAS SHOWN INTEREST IN THE MOVIE, WE HEAR DISHA'S NAME IS BEING BANDIED ABOUT AS WELL...



preview

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



ACTING ACE

ASIF KHAN

X FACTOR: ACTING PROWESS

From waiting to buy the *Filmfare* magazine second hand to featuring in it, Asif Khan has had quite a journey in showbiz. The actor made his way to the maximum city from his town Nimbahera in Chittorgarh in 2010. It took him a decade to taste the nectar of success. The actor joined Jaipur's Sarthak Theatre Group which had Irrfan Khan as one of its former members. He is deeply inspired by the late actor and wishes to do Irrfan's and poet John Elia's biopic one day. Asif acted in films like *Agneepath*, *Toilet Ek Prem Katha* and *Pari* in supporting roles but soon got his big break in Raj Kumar Gupta's *India's Most Wanted*, where he had a crucial role alongside Arjun Kapoor. Asif has also done web shows like *Mirzapur*, *Paatal Lok* and *Panchayat* and has even shot for a preview for the series *Narcos Mexico* for Netflix. The actor will soon be seen in Balaji Motion Pictures' *Pagglait* starring Sanya Malhotra. Asif believes that the one thing that has kept him going through these years is his father's advice of always giving his full commitment to everything.

Meet newbie singer Leena Bose and actor Ritwik Bhowmik pg 16

F ADVERTORIAL

RISING STAR

CHASING DREAMS, CHASING
DESTINY **AQIL KHAN** IS A
MAN ON A MISSION...





Aqil Khan is a commercial director in an import and export food product company in Europe. But that's not it. This man moves out of the board room and straight onto the runway. A model and aspiring actor, Aqil believes in following his dream no matter what.

After completing his education with a degree in Commerce, Aqil started his job as the commercial director and has been working hard to balance out his profession and his passion for the last five years. He participated in a modelling competition in 2019 and stood third in a total of twenty-two thousand candidates. He recounts that moment as one of the most pivotal moments in his life.

On a pursuit to make his passion his

“
**A DIEHARD
FAN OF SHAH
RUKH KHAN,
HE WISHES
TO REACH
GREATER
HEIGHTS IN
HIS CAREER
LIKE THE
SUPERSTAR**
”

profession, Aqil believes in working on himself and likes to stay in shape and considers his physique an asset. Breaking through the barriers of a five-day job, Aqil likes to let loose and relax over the weekends. He is passionate, dedicated and respects the commitment and focus it takes to achieve one's goals in life.

A diehard fan of Shah Rukh Khan, he wishes to reach greater heights in his career like the superstar. Aqil also looks up to his father and aspires to be a businessman like him someday.

Young and high on energy, Aqil's in the game for the long haul. He believes he has to continue to struggle until he achieves the success he strives for in his life. He describes himself as free-spirited, calm, spontaneous and highly organised. ■

BREAKING FREE

Singer **LEENA BOSE** hasn't let the coronavirus dampen her enthusiasm, finds **RAGHUVENDRA SINGH**

At the time of writing this, singer Leena Bose has been isolated at her Kolkata home as she has tested positive for the coronavirus. But she's still in high spirits, all set to hit the deck running once she tests negative. *Sadak 2* might have had the dubious distinction of being the lowest-rated film on IMDB, but the song *Tum se hi*, which she has sung with singer and composer Ankit Tiwari has been well received. The Bhattas have been known for their musical acumen, and this time too they've nailed their music. Leena's phone wouldn't stop ringing when the song came out. While she rues the fate of the film, she's happy with the compliments coming her way. "No one could have predicted this kind of backlash for the film. People wrote it off without even watching it," she comments. "But what has happened, has happened. The music has been



“No one could have predicted this kind of backlash for the film (*Sadak 2*). People wrote it off without even watching it”



Sadak 2

appreciated. No one can take that away from us.”

Sadak 2 came her way just out of the blue. One fine day, Ankit Tiwari called her up and said he wanted to try out her voice. And many studio sessions later, the song was crafted out. Thankfully, it met the approval of the Bhattas as well. Leena points out that she could have got her big break long ago but for the circumstances. It was in 2013 that Leena Bose was shortlisted to sing *Sun raha hai na tu*'s female version from *Aashiqui 2*. However, the makers thought Shreya Ghoshal's voice would be more suited for the song and Leena lost out on a big opportunity. The singer says that losing out on such big chances does leave an impact. “It can affect you on so many levels especially when you're extremely young, naive and new in Mumbai and you know you've done your job right,” she points out. “I took it as a part of my journey and focused on building my craft and worked on my confidence. These experiences and rejections have made me who I'm today.” Ask her if there is gender disparity in the singing world and she says, “I think it's not about male or female singers. It's more about famous and non-famous singers.” She is pragmatic enough to understand that she isn't such a big name as yet that people will give her work or a song will become a hit just because her name is associated with it. “It doesn't happen that way. In today's scenario, you're



“The original music scene has definitely started again but singers need the support on all levels to produce an album. Most newcomers can't bear the costs involved”

as good as your last hit,” she reasons.

Leena started participating in music shows at a young age and was winning prizes and praise everywhere from the Dover Lane Music Conference (Jr.) to the Pandit Ravi Kichlu Foundation.

She began performing on regional television shows as well. She confides that such shows definitely put pressure on the participants but if you persevere, they can help jumpstart your career. Says she, “It's full of drama and after a certain point, you get pressurised. That's not how music happens

for me. It certainly does give a lot of fame though. When you know your purpose you take the road accordingly.” The talented singer has worked with stalwarts like AR Rahman -- in Coke Studio, Anup Jalota, Sachin-Jigar, Ankit Tiwari, Arko Pravo Mukherjee. And she continues to perform Bollywood and semi-classical, *bhajans* and *ghazals* in live shows. Her struggle in Mumbai was pretty straightforward. She started pounding the street, reaching out to people, giving out audition tapes -- and hoping for a callback. “That's how I got selected for a lot of

ad jingles and TV spots,” she reveals. “You have to keep meeting people and hope for that big break. There's nothing more to it. You keep doing whatever comes your way, expand your portfolio and just keep having faith in your abilities.”

Currently, releasing independent tracks is considered the way forward. While Leena agrees that putting up original work does get you noticed, she also points out that producing a professional album on their own is beyond the reach of most new talent. “Original music scene has definitely started again but singers need support at all levels to produce an album. Most newcomers can't bear the costs involved.” She earns her money doing shows and mentions that's the case with most singers. In such a scenario, it's hard to invest both time and money in putting up independent singles. And anything you put up needs marketing as well. “You can't just jump into it. Everything needs to be planned,” she states.

She could have happily continued with a music career in Kolkata but came to Mumbai as she wanted to spread her wings. And asserts that despite the hardships, she doesn't regret a single moment spent here. “I wanted to see the world. I want to live life on my own terms. And I'm doing it. I've no complaints as I'm enjoying the journey.”

Well, we first wish her a speedy recovery from coronavirus. And hope all her dreams come true. ■



That heady feeling

VEDANSHI PATHAK CATCHES UP WITH RITWIK BHOWMIK, WHO'S BASKING IN THE SUCCESS OF THE HIT OTT MUSICAL BANDISH BANDITS



“INITIALLY, I NEVER USED TO HAVE THAT LIBERTY, I USED TO CRAVE FOR ONE OPPORTUNITY, BUT NOW, AFTER BANDISH BANDITS, I CAN SAY THAT I HAVE THE LIBERTY TO CHOOSE AND I'M LOVING IT



Hundreds of newcomers enter and exit showbiz almost every single day. For anyone to make their mark in such a situation requires a combination of talent, hard work and luck. Looks like that's the case with Ritwik Bhowmik, who's waited for the dice to roll for him quite patiently. Ritwik, who is a

typical Bengali, was born in a family of intellectuals. He, however, wanted to travel on a different road. Calling himself the 'black sheep of the family', Ritwik says he always wanted to make a name for himself in showbiz. He confided in his mother one day about his aspirations and to his relief, she replied she already

With Shreya Chaudhary

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“**JUST BY BEING WHO HE IS, NASEERUDDIN SHAH HAS GIVEN ME A LOT OF LESSONS AND GUIDELINES TO LIVE BY, ESPECIALLY AS AN ACTOR AND I’LL CHERISH THAT TILL MY LAST BREATH**”

had an inkling. What’s more, she encouraged him to follow his dreams. “I was confident about becoming an actor, but the way my family supported me emotionally and financially is something I’ll always be grateful for. It’s only because of them that I am here today,” he gushes.

Ritwik, who has wowed the audience with his stellar acting in *Bandish Bandits*, directed by Anand Tiwari, says that the opportunity came to him as a surprise. Like most actors in Mumbai, he would send audition tapes to casting directors and one fine day, he got a call for a live audition. When he came to know he had been selected as the lead for a music-based series starring such stalwarts as

Naseeruddin Shah and Atul Kulkarni, his joy knew no bounds. Since he was playing a classical singer, Ritwik had to attend numerous workshops to get his expressions and body language right. It was a laborious process but he shone through. They were shooting in Rajasthan and the harsh sun sometimes took its toll. Remembering one such tough day on the sets, the actor spoke about the scene where he had to give the 24-hour *pariksha*. “It was 44 degrees and I had to walk up those temple stairs bare feet. My face and feet were burning. It was the toughest day of shooting for me. I had to look haggard in that shot, so it helped, but to shoot in so much

heat was a big task,” he reflects.

The series gave him a chance to work with one of his idols, Naseeruddin Shah. Ritwik says the experience has been surreal. He mentions working with the veteran was everything he had dreamt of and more. He gushes that Naseer could inspire people with a line, with a gesture. “That’s what differentiates a legend from any other artiste. Just by being who he is, he’s given me a lot of lessons and guidelines to live by, especially as an actor and I’ll cherish that till my last breath.”

He had to do a couple of intimate scenes in the series as well and says his co-star Shreya Chaudhary was very

accommodating. “It must have been more awkward for her than for me but we kind of gelled together from our first meeting itself and were quite comfortable with each other. So doing intimate scenes wasn’t a problem. Director Anand Tiwari made sure to shoot them aesthetically and with a minimum of fuss,” he reveals.

The series was well received and things have definitely changed for Ritwik after its release. He has become more active on social media. Posting about different aspects of his life and posing for ‘candid’ photos has become a regular thing now. He smiles at that and says he has no issues about becoming a public figure as that’s kind of expected.

He also relishes the newfound superpower of saying no to a project. “Initially, I never used to have that liberty, I used to crave for one opportunity, but now, after *Bandish Bandits*, I can say that I have the liberty to choose and I’m loving it.”

Every actor wants to look like a MMA fighter currently but Ritwik says that’s not his aim. He likes his lean body and says according to him an actor should have a flexible body, which he can change according to the requirements of the role. He doesn’t believe in looking back. It wasn’t easy reaching where he has today but Ritwik feels no bitterness about the past. Newcomers get flooded with advice but according to him, the best advice is not to take any advice. We’ve heard that he’s been signed by a big talent company and has been offered a couple of lucrative projects. Ritwik chooses to be hush-hush about them for now. Says he, “All I want is to keep doing good work, that’s all. It doesn’t matter whether it’s on OTT or films. I want to be recognised as an actor. All other things are secondary.”

He sure has got all his priorities figured out, alright. ■

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STYLE SAGA

Designer **Shehla Khan** opens up about what motivates her to put her best foot forward when it comes to creativity



Jacqueline Fernandez



With Tara Sutaria

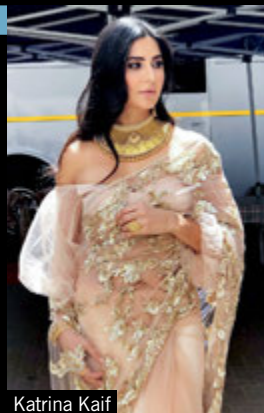
"I love making people look beautiful"



Bhumi Pednekar



Sonam Kapoor



Katrina Kaif



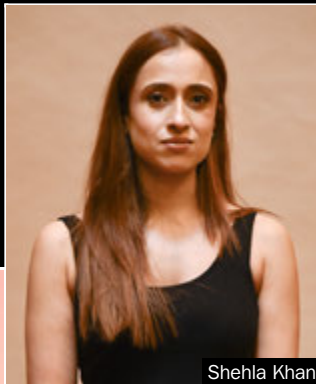
Nargis Fakhri

COUTURE CONSCIOUSNESS

DESIGNER **SHEHLA KHAN** SHARES THE SECRET OF DESIGNING AND HER PASSION FOR HER WORK WITH **ANALITA SETH**

Fashionistas like Sonam Kapoor, Anushka Sharma, Kareena Kapoor Khan and Jacqueline Fernandez are known to swear by Shehla Khan's creations. Her father Sajjid Khan took the Indian embroidery to the world of Valentino, Elie Saab, Roberto Cavalli and Giorgio Armani. Hence, Shehla grew up watching the magic of fashion unravel in front of her eyes. Designing was never a chore for her. It was literally in her blood and came as easy as breathing. Having seen the melange of the East and the West first hand, it's natural that her designs reflect the best of both the worlds. Feminine yet bold, classic yet chic...

She works every day to give back to the fashion industry what it has given to her. Excerpts from a free-wheeling interview with one of the brightest sparks on the Indian fashion scene...



Shehla Khan

WHAT'S YOUR TAKE ON DESIGNER MASKS AND HOW FASHION IS EVOLVING WITH THE PANDEMIC?

I think it's necessary to contribute and also make money for yourself. As a designer, it is your job to

cater to people's needs. If there is something a person is looking for, it is our job to provide them with it. I think it's great that everyone is coming up with their own version of masks. They are anyway a necessity and now people can have fun with them.

WHERE DO YOU SEE THE FASHION INDUSTRY HEADING ONCE THE PANDEMIC IS OVER?

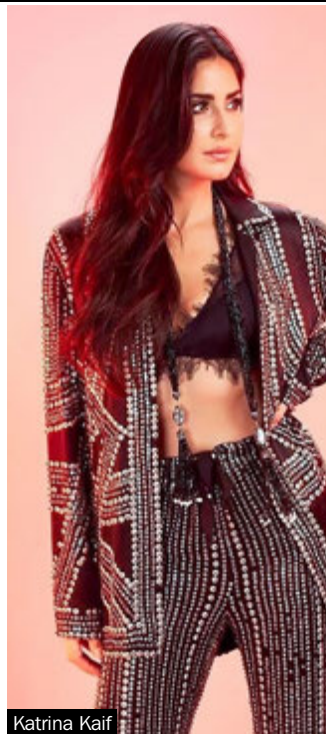
This is the time for everyone to reflect on how much wastage happens when we create a collection. It's time to rethink and evolve in terms of benefiting the environment.

All the different industries have abused nature. But as part of the fashion industry, I'm looking into how much I can contribute to environment. You have to also look into sustainability. Sustainable fashion is something everyone needs to think about.

"I love making people look beautiful. So every single person I have ever dressed up has been a pleasure to work with. But having said that, right from the time I started my brand, Sonam (Kapoor) has been very supportive. When I launched my first campaign, she modelled for it"



Sonam Kapoor Ahuja



Katrina Kaif



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As for changes, things are going digital. Internationally, fashion weeks have already gone digital. A lot of designers have decided to cut down on their collection. Instead of having six collections a year, they are looking to making seasonless collections. It stops mass production and wastage.

WHO ARE YOUR ALL-TIME FAVOURITE FASHION ICONS?

I'll name a few. Audrey Hepburn and Lady Diana for sure. Maharani Gayatri Devi, she was the face of Cartier, and Karisma Kapoor. I'm a big fan and her personal style is chic and eclectic.

WHO ACCORDING TO YOU PULLS OFF YOUR DESIGNS THE BEST?

I love making people look beautiful. So every single person I have ever dressed up has been a pleasure to work with. But having said that, right from the time I started my brand, Sonam (Kapoor) has been very supportive. When I launched my first

campaign, she modelled for it. She had also started her career around the same time. So my first collection was created with her as my muse. It will be eternally special to me.

WHO ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVOURITE DESIGNERS?

Internationally, I love Christian Dior, Valentino, Versace.... I really like Alexander Wang. But these are more my personal style than inspirations. Amongst Indian designers, I love Abu Jani and Sandeep Khosla. I also love Anuradha Vakil's work, Anamika Khanna, Rohit Bal for his classic couture and Manish Malhotra. He was actually my first boss and knows how to make a woman look so beautiful and sensual at the same time.

DO YOU REMEMBER THE FIRST PIECE OF DESIGNER CLOTHING THAT AWED YOU?

I have grown up looking upto Dior. So, the first person who inspired me right before I started working was John Galliano,



Sonam Kapoor Ahuja



Anushka Sharma

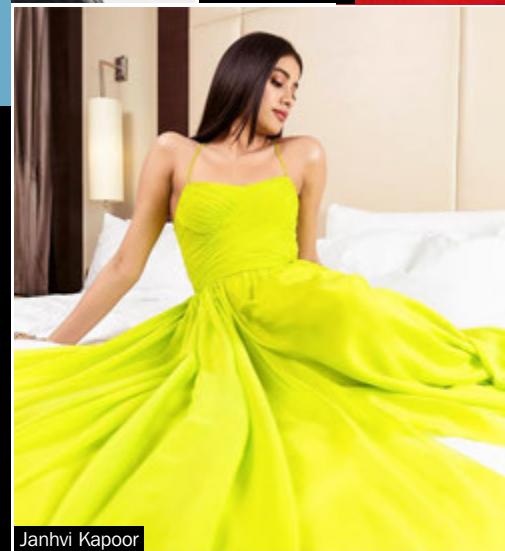
ABOUT THIS LOOK

Rhea (Kapoor) and I conceptualised that look together. She had this veil that she had bought and she wanted to do something extraordinary with it. So she suggested we do a saree with it. I told her I have this beautiful lace and we could make the saree just out of it. We then went for the corset. Personally, I was happy with just the saree, corset and veil but she wanted to add more drama. So Rhea went in for a cape. That's how we came up with it together.

when he was designing for Dior. I was still working as an intern at that time. I always knew I wanted to get into this profession but it was after I was introduced to Dior's collection, that I was sure. I loved how they brought drama into their clothes while maintaining the femininity. They were beautiful couture creations.

WHEN DID YOU DECIDE TO BECOME A FASHION DESIGNER?

I was introduced to the fashion world when I



Janhvi Kapoor

"I love Christian Dior, Valentino, Versace... I really like Alexander Wang. But these are more my personal style than inspirations. Amongst the Indian designers, I love Abu Jani and Sandeep Khosla. I love Anuradha Vakil's work, Anamika Khanna, Rohit Bal for his classic couture and Manish Malhotra"

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Tara Sutaria



Yami Gautam



Jacqueline Fernandez



Athiya Shetty

was a toddler and couldn't even understand a thing. My father and aunt have been in the embroidery business for the last forty years. They've been working with European and American designers and brands like Chanel, Dior and many more. It was all I ever

wanted to do. So I eventually studied it.

YOU WORK WITH A LOT OF PASTELS, FRILLS AND FEMININE MOTIFS IN YOUR DESIGNS. ARE THOSE YOUR PERSONAL FAVOURITES?

I believe ruffles aren't seasonal and so I do try to add an element of it in my designs in



Kareena Kapoor Khan

"I use a lot of black because you can never go wrong with it. There are some regular elements and everything else is seasonal. I also love vintage embroideries from the 17th and the 18th centuries. I take a lot of design inspirations from the Victorian and the Mughal eras"



Rakul Preet Singh

every collection. I also love lace. It's been an integral part of my collections. Other than that, I have broken away from the pastel shades. It has been my signature as I started with it, so there is always a section of my collection where I use them. But I have evolved into using bolder and brighter colours. I use a lot of black because you can never go wrong with it. There are some regular elements and everything

else is seasonal. I also love vintage embroideries from the 17th and the 18th centuries. I take a lot of design inspirations from the Victorian and the Mughal eras.

WHICH ACCORDING TO YOU ARE SOME ELEMENTS IN DESIGN THAT WILL NEVER GO OUT OF STYLE?

A saree never goes out of style. I always try to bring back the saree in all my collections. There's a traditional saree which is always a part of my repertoire. In terms of colour, black, white and blue will never go out of style. They are safe, flattering and versatile.

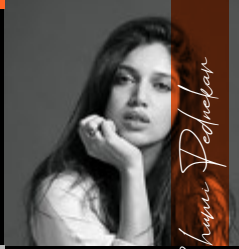
WHAT'S YOUR TAKE ON DIETSABYA'S SCOOPS?

As long as it's relevant, it's fair. I've been following DietPrada even before DietSabya came into play. It's fair to have a portal to call out people. As a person from the

fashion industry, I strongly believe in originality. Even when taking inspiration from another design, it should not look like the original. You may take inspiration from designers but you have to be careful that it's not just picked up and put into your design. It's not just unfair but also disrespectful to someone's hard work. Copying and pasting it and putting your label is wrong. So it is correct to have portals that put out relevant information.

IS FASHION A LUXURY OR A NECESSITY?

It's subjective. For people like me, it's a necessity. For me, it's my bread and butter. It's all I've known. For someone who doesn't take interest in fashion and just dresses up to go to work or step out of their house, it's a luxury. ■



Bhumi Pednekar



Katrina Kaif



Alia Bhatt



Kalki Koechlin



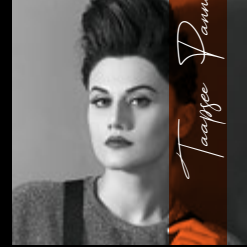
Kangana Ranaut



Ashwarya Rai



Deepika Padukone



Taapsee Pannu

A M A Z I N G

Grace

DEVESH SHARMA SALUTES THE WOMEN OF STYLE AND SUBSTANCE THAT ARE CURRENTLY REIGNING IN BOLLYWOOD

An actress isn't just a pretty face or an hourglass figure anymore. Like women in different sectors are breaking glass ceilings and pushing the envelope, the Hindi film heroine too has evolved into a multi-faceted personality. Today, she's no longer content being in the hero's shadow or his arm candy. Rather, she demands an equal amount of screen time. And also equal pay. Off-screen too, she's no dainty magnolia but has a core of steel holding her up, braving everything the world throws at her, building a monument out of the bricks. She speaks up not only for her rights but also for the rights of those, who aren't as fortunate as her. She's not merely a mannequin for brands but is the face of several movements. She's supporting causes not just through money or influence but is also willing to get her hands dirty out on the frontline. Unapologetic about glamour, untiring in grit, she's a force to reckon with...



Pragya Choppa



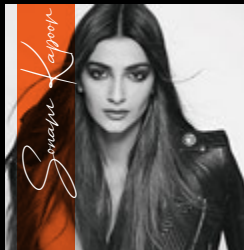
Radhika Apte



Kareena Kapoor Khan



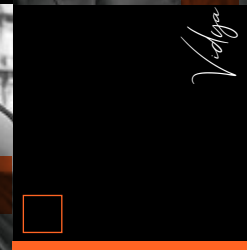
Balara



Sonam Kapoor



Anushka Sharma



Vidya

Ahija

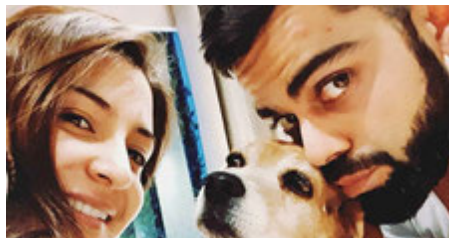
Anushka Sharma



SHE HAS BEEN A TOP-RATED ACTRESS EVER SINCE SHE APPEARED OPPOSITE SHAH RUKH KHAN IN HER DEBUT FILM *RAB NE BANA DI JODI* (2008). But Anushka wasn't just content with being a top actor. She turned producer with *NH10*, forming her own production company Clean Slate Films. Her other productions are the horror film *Pari* and the ghost comedy *Phillauri*. Recently, her production for the OTT platform *Paatal Lok* won her much applause. The banner is slowly acquiring a reputation for off-kilter stuff. She went into full entrepreneurial mode by launching her own line of clothing called Nush. She's been known to lean towards comfort when it comes to fashion and has spoken about her fondness towards clothes with pockets.

Anushka believes that human beings share the planet with different species and has always been vocal about animal rights. Some years ago, she launched Pawsitivity, which aimed at educating people about the adverse effects of noise, air, water and soil pollution on animals. That she's ace cricketer, Virat Kohli's wife, is incidental to her identity.

With hubby Virat Kohli



SOME YEARS AGO, SHE LAUNCHED PAWSITIVITY, WHICH AIMED AT EDUCATING PEOPLE ABOUT THE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF NOISE, AIR, WATER AND SOIL POLLUTION ON ANIMALS

Deepika Padukone



SHE'S STRONG AND YET, SHE'S VULNERABLE. And she isn't afraid to show her vulnerability. Deepika Padukone has openly spoken about her bout with depression. In 2015, she started the Live Love Laugh Foundation to create awareness about mental health. Coming from a family of sportspersons, her father Prakash Padukone is a revered name in the field of badminton, Deepika was also involved with the Olympic Gold Quest initiative. It was formed to nurture new talent. She's devastatingly beautiful and yet took the initiative to play an acid attack survivor in *Chhapak*, which marked her debut as a producer as well. Sartorially, she's been known to balance the best of Indian traditional ensembles with top international labels. Since 2012 onwards, most of her off-screen looks have been red-carpet ready. She's an aspirational figure in all senses of the word.



Chhapak



COMING FROM A FAMILY OF SPORTSPERSONS, HER FATHER PRAKASH PADUKONE IS A REVERED NAME IN THE FIELD OF BADMINTON, DEEPIKA WAS ALSO INVOLVED WITH THE OLYMPIC GOLD QUEST INITIATIVE

Sonam Kapoor Ahuja



FILM FOLKS WERE ALWAYS OUR FASHION ICONS BUT SONAM KAPOOR HAS TAKEN THE FASHION GAME TO ANOTHER LEVEL. She's the uncrowned fashion queen of Bollywood. Even her peers have acknowledged that. You would think she would be into chick flicks, given her persona. But Sonam's movie choices have been diverse. Leading from a modern fable on communal harmony in *Delhi-6*, to playing the braveheart air hostess in *Neerja*, to propagating menstrual hygiene in *PadMan*, she has done it all. Sonam has been a vocal supporter of LGBTQ rights. She's also supportive of Ogaan Cancer Foundation and has tried to increase awareness about breast cancer. She has auctioned her clothes to raise funds for charity. The proceeds of her video with Hrithik Roshan, *Dheere dheere*, too went to charity. Sonam and her sister Rhea also successfully run the high-street fashion brand Rheson, known for its affordable prices without compromising on quality and design.

SONAM HAS BEEN A VOCAL SUPPORTER OF LGBTQ RIGHTS. SHE'S ALSO SUPPORTIVE OF OGAAN CANCER FOUNDATION AND HAS TRIED TO INCREASE AWARENESS ABOUT BREAST CANCER



With sister Rhea



Kareena Kapoor Khan

SHE BELONGS TO BOLLYWOOD ROYALTY. AND YET HAS NEVER TAKEN THAT SILVER SPOON FOR GRANTED, seeking out newer challenges and staying at the top of her game since the last 20 years. Kareena has been admired for her natural ease in front of the camera and for her hourglass figure. She swears by yoga and has even collaborated with nutritionist Rujuta Diwekar on two books about healthy eating habits. She has been part of the UNICEF campaign since many years, to impart education to girls and has also been supportive of other causes taken up by UNICEF.

While she opted for comfort clothing in her off-duty clothes in the beginning, after her size zero phase post-Tashan, Kareena has incorporated figure-hugging silhouettes in her wardrobe as well. From being a jeans and t-shirt person, she has been bold in her fashion choices post her marriage to Saif Ali Khan, and looks red-carpet worthy even while going to the airport. She has dabbled in bringing out her own line of clothing and accessories as well. That she has hosted a radio show and judged a dance show are other manifests of her multi-faceted persona.



SHE HAS BEEN PART OF THE UNICEF CAMPAIGN SINCE MANY YEARS, TO IMPART EDUCATION TO GIRLS AND HAS ALSO BEEN SUPPORTIVE OF OTHER CAUSES TAKEN UP BY UNICEF

Rai Bachchan



SHE WAS CROWNED MISS WORLD IN 1994. Time seems to have frozen since then as her beauty, her aura remains the same. You run out of superlatives when it comes to describing Aishwarya Rai Bachchan. Her face has launched a thousand brands since 1994. She remains the most sought-after brand ambassador even today. Aishwarya has lent her beauty to support various causes. She has endorsed The Eye Bank Association of India for years. She has also been associated with the Pulse Polio campaign and has been the Goodwill Ambassador for UNAIDS and of Smile Train, an organisation which helps treat children with clefts, around the world.

She's had an almost two-decades-long association with the Cannes festival, appealing as a brand ambassador for various beauty brands. Labels like Gucci, Oscar de la Renta, Armani Privé, vie to clothe her for various events. Whatever she wears is termed stylish. Though she's always been impeccably dressed, she has been known to carry off the Indian saree with unprecedented elegance.

Aishwarya



SHE HAS ENDORSED THE EYE BANK ASSOCIATION OF INDIA FOR YEARS. SHE HAS ALSO BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH THE PULSE POLIO CAMPAIGNS





SHE DIDN'T STOP AT WINNING THE MISS WORLD CROWN IN 2000 AND HAS BEEN RULING OUR HEARTS AND MINDS EVER SINCE. After carving a niche for herself in Bollywood, Priyanka truly became a global icon after bagging the lead role in the hit American TV series *Quantico*. She has been using her global popularity to support various causes and has been associated with UNICEF since 2006 under various capacities. She has been vocal about gender equality and gender pay parity as well. She wasn't just satisfied with acting and has a flourishing singing career as well internationally, what with her singles becoming a rage worldwide. Her production company, Purple Pebble Pictures, produced *The Sky Is Pink*. She has also produced small-budget movies in regional languages. Her Marathi movies include *Ventilator*, *Kaay Re Rascalaa*, *Firebrand* and *Paani*. She has been known for her hugely experimental streak when it comes to red-carpet fashion, pulling off OTT ensembles with elan. Off-duty, she's known to prefer relaxed fits and goes for the girl-next-door looks.

Priyanka Chopra Jonas



With Nick Jonas



Quantico

SHE HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH UNICEF SINCE 2006 UNDER VARIOUS CAPACITIES. SHE HAS BEEN VOCAL ABOUT GENDER EQUALITY AND GENDER PAY PARITY AS WELL

Bhumi Pednekar



WHO KNEW A LEADING LADY WOULD CHOOSE TO PLAY AN OVERWEIGHT LASS IN HER DEBUT FILM and not only be praised for it but attract a huge fan following as well! Bhumi Pednekar's role in *Dum Laga Ke Haisha* has been unconventional to say the least. But even after that, she has made a career out of unconventional choices. For instance, *In Toilet: Ek Prem Katha*, her character revolts against open defecation, while in *Saand Ki Aankh*, she plays a grandmother, who discovers she has the talent to become a champion pistol shooter. She has voiced her opinion over gender pay parity as well as reproductive health. She is also associated with the Climate Warrior campaign, using her influence to raise awareness about global warming. Functional dressing seems to be her personal style. Her wardrobe is a healthy mix of Western and ethnic dresses with her preference for monochrome being an individualistic statement.



SHE HAS VOICED HER OPINION OVER GENDER PAY PARITY AS WELL AS REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH. SHE IS ALSO ASSOCIATED WITH THE CLIMATE WARRIOR CAMPAIGN



Bhatt

Alia

ALIA BHATT IS SUCH A NATURAL SHE MAKES US FORGET WE'RE WATCHING AN ACTOR PLYING HER CRAFT IN FRONT OF THE CAMERA. She's often been described as the best thing ever in a film and it's no exaggeration. Alia is also a naturally-gifted singer, something which even music maestro AR Rahman has endorsed. Coming from a filmmaking family, it was but a logical step for her to open her own production house, Eternal Sunshine Productions. Alia has been involved with PETA, and has launched an initiative called CoExist to raise awareness about street animals. When it comes to style, silhouettes, bodycon dresses, athleisure to shararas, Alia has experimented with everything. She has the ability to pull off any and every kind of ensemble. She's been a brand ambassador to many global brands and is counted to go higher up the celebrity rankings as times goes by.



ALIA HAS BEEN INVOLVED WITH PETA, AND HAS LAUNCHED AN INITIATIVE CALLED COEXIST TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT STREET ANIMALS



Koechlin

SHE HAS STUDIED DRAMA AT GOLDSMITHS, LONDON. She has acted, written and directed plays. She's made a name for herself in both commercial and independent cinema and can speak four languages fluently. Clearly, Kalki Koechlin is something of a prodigy. Her bravura performances in films such as *Dev.D* or *Margarita With A Straw* speak volumes of her prowess as an actor. Having suffered sexual abuse as a child, she's been vocal about the issue time and again. She believes that raising awareness about it helps put a stop to such situations. She has also spoken up on pay parity, on women safety and on LGBTQ issues. She cares a lot about the environment and has been part of the 'adopt a tree' drive. She has been on board of several brands and has spoken about endorsing brands, which match one's ideologies. She's been known to favour Indian designers when it comes to red-carpet fashion.

Kalki



SHE HAS ALSO SPOKEN UP ON PAY PARITY, ON WOMEN SAFETY AND ON LGBTQ ISSUES. SHE CARES A LOT ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT AND HAS BEEN PART OF THE 'ADOPT A TREE' DRIVE

Radhika Apte



SHE'S A POLYGLOT ACTRESS, WHO HAS WORKED IN HINDI, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Bengali and English films. That alone makes her special. She also has this inherent ability to become the character she's portraying. She gives it all to every project, whether it's a small role in *I Am* or opposite superstar Rajinikanth in *Kabali*. She's been actively involved in experimental theatre. Her various portrayals in different web series have made her the poster girl of OTT platforms. She has spoken up against sexual harassment and has been supportive of the #MeToo campaign. In February this year, she launched her own all-inclusive fashion label for women in association with IS.U. She's been called an unconventional style icon by fashion writers for her experimental and risqué red-carpet looks.



SHE HAS SPOKEN UP AGAINST SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND HAS BEEN SUPPORTIVE OF THE #METOO CAMPAIGN



Katrina Kaif

SHE MADE A FORGETTABLE DEBUT WITH *BOOM* (2003) BUT SUBSEQUENTLY MADE SURE THE AUDIENCE DIDN'T FORGET HER IN A HURRY. Blockbusters like *Namasteey London* (2007), *Partner* (2007), *Welcome* (2007), *Race* (2008), *Singh Is Kinng* (2008) and *Ajab Prem Ki Ghazab Kahani* (2009) soon propelled her to the top. Accused of being part of male-dominated films, she subsequently made her presence felt in films like *Rajneeti* (2010), *Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara* (2011), *Jab Tak Hai Jaan* (2012) and *Zero* (2018). In the latter, she totally floored the critics playing a top film star. Katrina Kaif has been a model since her teenage years and has been known for her sartorial grace since the beginning of her career. Her wardrobe consists of healthy doses of ethnic wear like sarees and anarkalis. She has the figure to carry off everything - be it a Nikhil Thampi creation, a Versace or a Tarun Tahilliani ensemble. Katrina is associated with Relief Projects India, a charitable trust, which works for the education of underprivileged girls. She also launched her make-up brand called Kay last year, which has made the right kind of noises.



KATRINA IS ASSOCIATED WITH RELIEF PROJECTS INDIA, A CHARITABLE TRUST, WHICH WORKS FOR THE EDUCATION OF UNDERPRIVILEGED GIRLS

Balran

Vidya



PHOTOGRAPH: FEMINA / ROHAN SHRESHTA

SHE CAN EASILY BE CALLED THE MOST AWARDED ACTRESS IN THE HISTORY OF BOLLYWOOD. Right from her debut in *Parineeta* (2005), Vidya Balan has been dazzling the audience with one virtuoso performance after the other. She has been acknowledged for her natural ease in front of the camera. She's been involved with various causes like the Child In Need Institute (CINI), Arpan, an NGO that works towards creating awareness about sexual abuse. She also promotes the education of underprivileged children. For her attempts to empower women, Vidya was awarded The Prabha Khaitan Puraskar in 2012. She put the sexy back in the saree and looks her best in Indian clothes. She is a big believer in the fact that women should celebrate their curves and be comfortable in their skin.



SHE'S BEEN INVOLVED WITH VARIOUS CAUSES LIKE THE CHILD IN NEED INSTITUTE (CINI), ARPAN, AN NGO THAT WORKS TOWARDS CREATING AWARENESS ABOUT SEXUAL ABUSE



FROM PLAYING THE MASSY HEROINE IN SOUTHERN MASALA ENTERTAINERS, Taapsee today is counted as among the breed of *Avante Garde* actresses who get roles written for them. From playing a spy in *Naam Shabana*, a con-woman in *Badla*, an old woman with a deadly aim in *Saand Ki Aankh* to a housewife who refuses to give in to patriarchy in *Thappad*, Taapsee's film choices have been unconventional, to say the least. She has been known to be vocal about women-related causes, be it pay parity or domestic violence. She has been associated with the NGO, Myna Mahila Foundation, a Mumbai-based outfit that works towards educating women about menstrual hygiene.

She'll be seen in cricketer Mithali Raj's biopic *Shabaash Mithu* and loves playing sports in real life and is part owner of the badminton team Pune Seven Aces. She's rumoured to be dating its coach and captain, Danish player Mathias Boe. She was a self-confessed tomboy growing up and went through a phase where she experimented with exaggerated colours and is now known for her subtle yet chic ensembles.

Pannu

Taapsee

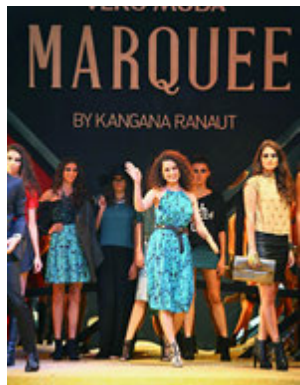


SHE HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH THE NGO, MYNA MAHILA FOUNDATION, A MUMBAI-BASED OUTFIT THAT WORKS TOWARDS EDUCATING WOMEN ABOUT MENSTRUAL HYGIENE

Kangana Ranaut



SHE'S FIERY AS HELL AND KNOWN FOR HER OUTSPOKEN WAYS. AFTER MAKING HER DEBUT WITH THE GRITTY **GANGSTER** (2006) Kangana Ranaut has made her mark in women-centric films like *Fashion* (2008), *Tanu Weds Manu* (2011), *Queen* (2013), *Simran* (2017) and *Manikarnika: The Queen of Jhansi* (2019). Just like her movie choices, Kangana Ranaut's fashion style is hard to categorise. One one hand, she sticks to traditional wear like saris and is known to carry highly experimental ensembles on the other. There came a period when she was seen in Tom Ford dresses. Among Indian labels, she's known to favour Sabyasachi and Sanjay Garg. Kangana loves to try out new ventures and collaborated with the fashion brand Vero Moda to launch two clothing lines for the company, named Marquee and Venice Cruise, becoming an entrepreneur in the process. She's spoken time and again for women's rights, has contributed towards water conservation and was part of Jack Ma's Alibaba group's charity initiative in India. She's also actively involved with the Smile Foundation, a charity dedicated to providing education to poor children.



SHE'S SPOKEN TIME AND AGAIN FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS, HAS CONTRIBUTED TOWARDS WATER CONSERVATION AND WAS PART OF JACK MA'S ALIBABA GROUP'S CHARITY INITIATIVE IN INDIA

BRAVEHEART

SUMAN SHARMA TALKS TO SONU SOOD, WHO HAS APPEARED AS THE MESSIAH OF THE MIGRANTS IN THESE TROUBLED TIMES

At a time when the entire country is struggling with the coronavirus pandemic, Sonu Sood has emerged as the unlikely hero for thousands of migrant workers wanting to reach home. He has become so successful that people have started naming their shops, businesses, even their children after him. In the midst of doom, he's become a beacon of hope for the downtrodden. We all were moved by the disturbing images of the migrants walking miles under the hot sun, but it was Sonu who decided to act on the impulse and reached out. He started interacting with them and soon organised transport for 350 migrants

from Mumbai to Karnataka. That kind of opened the floodgates and people started reaching out to him for help. He has been busy ever since trying to sort out their problems. It wouldn't have been easy for Sonu to cut through the red tape and get the required permissions for inter-state travel for so many people but the golden-hearted actor says the problems sorted themselves out. Says he, "I felt the power of the prayers of all the migrants' families praying for their sons or husbands to come back. I think their prayers did the trick. And watching the smiles on those faces and tears in their eyes made me believe that

I was doing something right."

He initially put in his own money and later friends, acquaintances, and even complete strangers started reaching out financially. He names longtime friend Neeti Goyal, who helped him start out, as his biggest supporter. At the last count, Sonu had helped some

90 thousand people reach home safely. That's surely some kind of a record. But this also begs the question that if a single person was able to help so many, why has the government been so lethargic in its response? Sonu cuts the government some slack and says they too did their job. He however adds that

they could have done much more. "I wish the interstate buses had started sooner for the people who were walking on foot. A prompt response could have saved many more lives," he reflects.

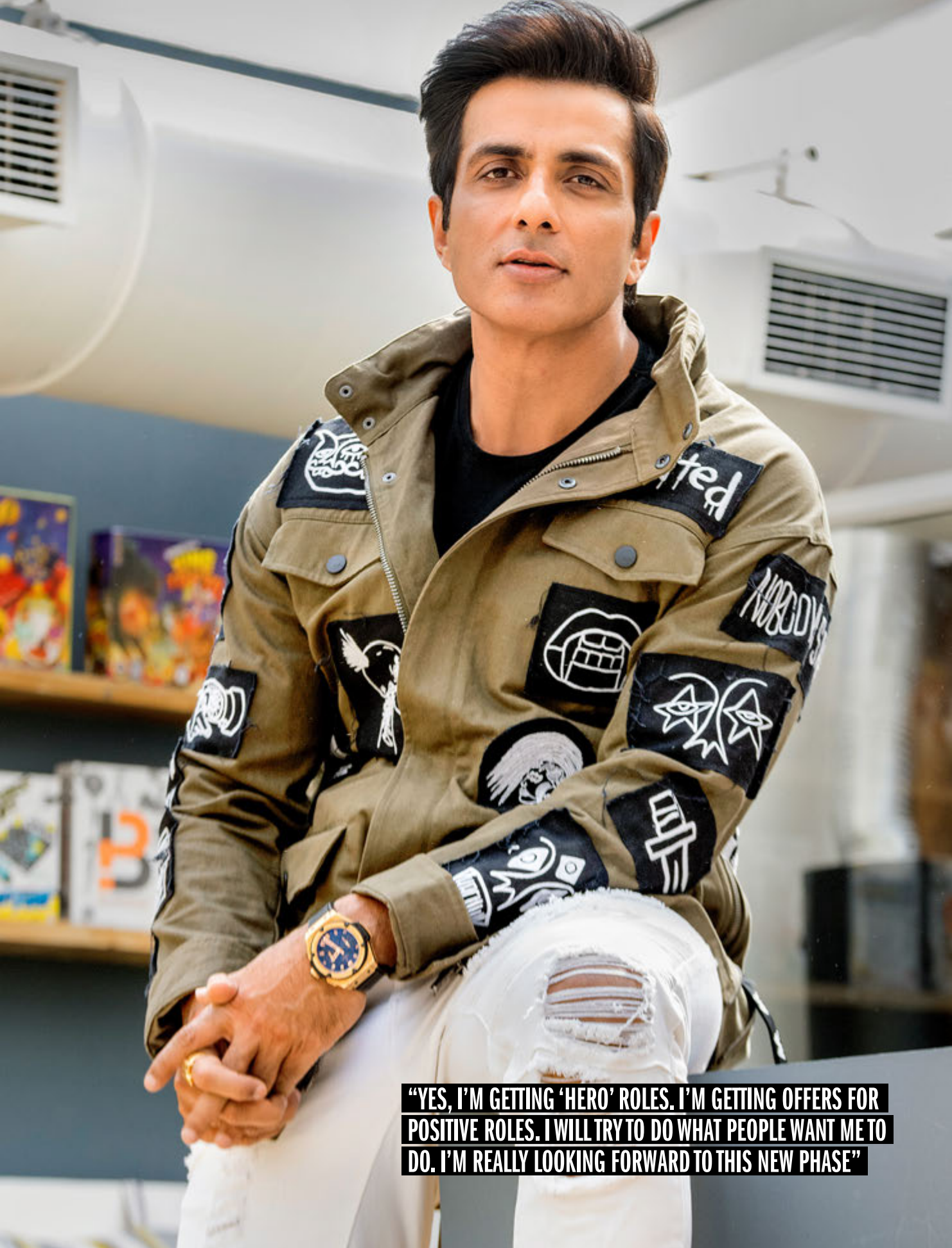
Some naysayers point out that he's doing it all for future political gains. That he might join politics soon. Sonu laughs at these assumptions and says he's doing it not for political but for spiritual reasons. "I have come to believe I came to Mumbai all those years ago just to do this very thing," he asserts. The effort is taking a



Spending time with the immigrants



"IF AN EXTRA MEAL IS COOKED IN EVERY SINGLE KITCHEN NO ONE WILL BE SLEEP HUNGRY IN THIS COUNTRY. TRY TO MAKE AN EXTRA MEAL FOR YOUR WATCHMAN OR VEGETABLE VENDOR, ANYONE WHO IS OUT THERE, WHO NEEDS YOUR HELP"



“YES, I’M GETTING ‘HERO’ ROLES. I’M GETTING OFFERS FOR POSITIVE ROLES. I WILL TRY TO DO WHAT PEOPLE WANT ME TO DO. I’M REALLY LOOKING FORWARD TO THIS NEW PHASE”



“SHE NAMED HER SON SONU SOOD. I WAS HUMBLLED BY THE GESTURE. IT WAS A POINTER TOWARDS THE FACT THAT I WAS DOING SOMETHING RIGHT”

toll on him for sure. He's cut back on his sleep because of this and sometimes doesn't sleep for 2-3 days at length. He comments that he doesn't feel tired as the love he receives from immigrants keeps him going. Besides rest, safety is a concern as well. Sonu says he takes every precaution he can. His family is rightfully fearful about his health. He

An admirer has named his shop after Sonu



jokes he promises them in the night that he won't venture out the next day but he persistently breaks his promise every day. "I know I have to take this step to save those who are risking their lives walking on the highway. There is risk involved regarding my own health and I'm aware of that. I'm willing to take the risk. I'm always extra careful and take all the necessary precautions. I keep on sanitising my hands. I don't touch anything when I am out, and I wear a mask always," he maintains.

He has many heartbreaking stories to share. There was a man stuck in Australia who wanted to come home because his father had passed away. Sonu

facilitated that. Another person stranded in Chennai came to know that his father had met with an accident. He called up Sonu, who helped him out. Another man who had lost his wife, was helped by Sonu to reach his village. The actor received a call from him afterwards and the

man was sobbing. That left the actor teary-eyed as well. He certainly has touched many lives and is overwhelmed with all the love and adulation coming his way. One pregnant woman whom he had helped went on to name her newborn son after him. "She named her son Sonu Sood. I was humbled by the gesture. It was a pointer towards the fact that I was doing something right," narrates the Good Samaritan with a lump in his throat.

He reveals he was doing social work earlier too but the scale has now escalated thanks to the coronavirus pandemic. Sonu maintains he will continue to help people in the future as well. "I'm just a phone call, a message away for them." He adds he plans to connect with each and every individual he has helped and see how they are faring after the lockdown. He wants to help them in any which way he can to rehabilitate their lives.

The performer turns philosophical and comments that the lockdown has taught him many lessons. One of the things he has learnt is to be prepared for anything new

life has to offer. The present crisis has also reinstated his belief in giving back to society. “If an extra meal is cooked in every single kitchen, no one will sleep hungry in this country. Try to make an extra meal for your watchman or vegetable vendor, anyone who is out there, who needs your help.” Another thing he has learnt is that life is fickle and hence one should spend as much time as possible with one’s family and loved ones.

The industry is poised to resume work in the coming months and Sonu is definitely looking forward to facing the arlights once more. He thinks the smaller banners will lead the way and slowly the bigger houses will follow suit. He calculates that by October, life in showbiz might become somewhat normal. He’s aware of the risks ahead and believes that everyone has to be extra vigilant towards their own safety while on the sets and learn to live with the threat of the virus. It’s heard that he’s getting more lead roles now and he confirms that indeed is the case. Says he, “Yes, I’m getting ‘hero’

roles. I’m getting offers for positive roles. I’ll try to do what people want me to do. I’m really looking forward to this new phase.” He’s a complete outsider who has made it big through the sheer dint of hard labour. Ask him about the whole outsider vs insider debate and he reiterates that life has always been difficult for outsiders. He



working out with son Ishant



“WHEN YOU AREN’T CONNECTED TO THE INDUSTRY OR ANY CORPORATE HOUSE, YOU NEED TO MAKE YOUR OWN MARK. AND THAT’S THE ONLY WAY YOU CAN SURVIVE. YOU CAN’T JUST COMPLAIN THAT YOU ARE AN OUTSIDER AND THINGS AREN’T HAPPENING THE WAY YOU WANT THEM TO HAPPEN”

points out that one has to stay strong at all times. “When you aren’t connected to the industry or any corporate house, you need to make your own mark. And that’s the only way you can survive. You can’t just complain that you are an outsider and things are not happening

the way you want them to happen. Stay humble and focused. Patience is the key.” Pictures of Sonu working out with his teenage son Ishant went viral recently. The young lad has developed an enviable physique already and rumours are that Sonu might launch him soon.

The actor laughs at that and says his son is too young currently for all that. “He’s a kid but I’m glad he is working hard. He has yet to start college. We haven’t thought about what he wants to do in future but as of now, he’s a fit boy who is focused, humble, grounded

and wants to do well in life. I’m sure he’ll work hard to make his parents proud,” chirps the proud father.

Time to wind up our conversation then. And he sends out a message of positivity for the readers. “Stay strong. Stay positive. Convey to your family how much you love them and try to make some memories which will stay with you for years to come...” ■

“I’M MUCH TAMIER THAN MOM”

YOUNG ALAYA
FURNITUREWALA
HAS INHERITED
THE SASS FROM
THE WOMEN IN HER
LIFE. EXCERPTS
FROM AN INTIMATE
CHAT WITH
JITESH PILLAI



Her gene pool is dramatic. Her grandmother, actor-danseuse Protima Bedi, grabbed headlines when she dropped the garb of convention in the flower-power '70s. Her mother, actor-host Pooja Bedi too was all about stark candour unlike her plasticine contemporaries. It's not a surprise then that Alaya Furniturewala too chose to play out her dreams, her way. Her unconventional debut in Jawaani Jaaneman – where she played an unwed mother in search of her father – didn't fetch a single bad review, so convincing was her act. Being part of a family that's been free and fluid, Alaya F understood early that relationships are nurtured more with freedom than force. And that being a parent doesn't entail a renunciation of personal pursuits. In a no-holds-barred interview, she shares how she's enjoying this trip of finding her bearings both as an actor and a person...

WHAT WAS YOUR ROUTINE LIKE DURING THE LOCKDOWN?

It remained the same. Even now, I wake up around 10.30 am. I take a shower. I have breakfast. Then I draw a bit and chill. After that I go in to do video meetings and interviews. I have lunch. Around the sunset hour, the light is good. That's when I shoot my social media content. After that, I read books. I've begun learning Photoshop. I've gone back to editing software, something I was learning at New York University (NYU). I read scripts too. *(Smiles)* Thankfully, people still remember who I am.

DID YOU TAKE UP COOKING?

Occasionally, I did. I'm good at following a recipe. But I'm not an instinctive cook. *(Smiles)* I cooked banana bread because everyone was doing it. I made pancakes and pasta. I'm better with sweet stuff than I'm with



Toddler Alaya with mother Pooja and grandmother Protima

the savoury things. Everyone likes my protein pancakes. They're healthy.

TELL US SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR DAYS IN THE NEW YORK UNIVERSITY.

I went to NYU to study filmmaking. That's when I realised I wanted to act. I dropped out of NYU and went to New York Film Academy (NYFA) to learn acting. I realised I wasn't terrible at it. My real training started when I returned to Mumbai. I could barely speak Hindi. I grew in an English-speaking household. Now, I curse them for it. I had to get rid of this godawful accent that

I'd picked up from America. I couldn't dance to save my life. I began training in Kathak, hip-hop, Bollywood dance. I also learnt singing, gymnastics, MMA and Pilates.

DID JAWAANI JAANEMAN COME EASILY?

Not at all. I had to give lots of auditions. I got rejected many times. People would say, 'Oh you're very good but blah blah blah...' Then I realised there's some sort of a pattern in the rejection. I started wondering whether I'd ever get a film. Then *Jawaani Jaaneman* happened. Things took off from there.

“ I FIRST BEGAN READING GRANDMA'S (PROTIMA BEDI) BOOK (TIMEPASS) A LONG TIME AGO. I STOPPED READING IT HALFWAY. I FOUND IT SCANDALOUS...FEW YEARS LATER, I PICKED IT UP AGAIN. IT'S AN INCREDIBLE BOOK ABOUT AN INCREDIBLE WOMAN. ALL THE WOMEN IN OUR FAMILY HAVE THIS ONE COMMON STREAK OF BEING BOLD AND UNAPOLOGETIC ”

HOW GOOD ARE YOU AT HANDLING REJECTION?

Honestly, I appreciate criticism. Obviously, it stings. But that's the best way to learn. I'm good at handling rejection in the sense I bounce back quickly. But that moment feels like the end of the world. Like I remember there was one audition for which I'd worked the scene inside-out with my acting coach. I'd arranged for the make-up artist and had rented hair-extensions as well. But just the night before the audition, they cancelled it. It was the worst experience. But I told myself it's a test of my determination.

Every film has its own destiny. What's meant to happen, will happen.

YOUR GRANDMOTHER, THE LATE PROTIMA BEDI, WAS A NONCONFORMIST. HAVE YOU READ HER MEMOIRS TIMEPASS?

Grandma passed away when I was just about a year old. I've heard stories about her. I first began reading her book a long time ago. I stopped reading it halfway. I found it scandalous then. It was about people I know. Few years later, I picked it up again. It's an incredible book about an incredible woman. When my grandmother decided to become a classical



Odissi dancer, she'd never danced before. She began training for 10 hours a day. She put her heart into something and she just did it. That motivated me too. All the women in our family have this one common streak of being bold and unapologetic. My mother is crazy but

less crazy than my grandmother. I'm much tamer than mom.

A PIECE OF ADVICE YOUR MOTHER GAVE YOU...

Be kind to people and work hard. That's the one consistent advice she's given me. At the end of the day, people will

***“I'M GOOD AT HANDLING REJECTION IN THE SENSE I BOUNCE BACK QUICKLY. BUT THAT MOMENT FEELS LIKE THE END OF THE WORLD. THERE WAS ONE AUDITION FOR WHICH I'D WORKED THE SCENE INSIDE-OUT WITH MY ACTING COACH... BUT JUST THE NIGHT BEFORE THE AUDITION, THEY CANCELLED IT. IT WAS THE WORST EXPERIENCE*”**

remember you for how you've treated them. You can do a great job. But if you've been horrible to someone, they'll remember that. So I just try to be nice to everyone.

WERE YOU A TEMPERAMENTAL KID WHILE YOU WERE GROWING UP?

Yeah I was. But I've calmed down a lot. My mother has always borne the brunt of my bad moods. But we've always had an open relationship where we converse, argue and fight. She got the worst and the best of it. Earlier I used to get angry. I used to have strong views. Over the last few years, I've understood that things aren't always black and white. There are shades of grey. It's nicer to keep quiet sometimes. You don't have to give your point of view always.

DID THE SEPARATION OF YOUR PARENTS' (FARHAN EBRAHIM FURNITUREWALA AND POOJA BEDI) BOTHER YOU?

My parents are great friends. I was around five when they divorced. So I don't remember a time when they were together. When I look at them now, I can't believe they were ever a couple. Two incompatible people but wonderful

friends. I've grown up in a happy home. Whether it's with my *Nana* and whoever he's been with. Whether it's my mother and the people she's been with or my father... I'm happy for people when they're happy.

HAS YOUR GRANDFATHER (ACTOR KABIR BEDI) EVER GIVEN YOU ANY ADVICE?

We grew close when I returned to Mumbai. I wanted to make a showreel

of all my scenes from my acting classes to show it to filmmakers. So I'd go to him at least twice a week with all my scenes and seek his recommendation. I was prompt in following his suggestions. He was impressed.

WERE YOU ABLE TO UNDERSTAND YOUR PARENTS BETTER AFTER *JAWAANI JAANEMAN*?

In a way yes. Even in *Jawaani Jaaneman* it's an open family.



With brother Omar



With mother Pooja and grandfather Kabir Bedi

“EARLIER I USED TO GET ANGRY. I USED TO HAVE STRONG VIEWS. OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS, I'VE UNDERSTOOD THAT THINGS AREN'T ALWAYS BLACK AND WHITE. THERE ARE SHADES OF GREY. IT'S NICER TO KEEP QUIET SOMETIMES. YOU DON'T HAVE TO GIVE YOUR POINT OF VIEW ALWAYS”



No one's judging anyone for their choices. I could relate to Tiya, my character, because we share similar values and ideas. Having said that, it didn't change the way I understand my parents. I guess I figured them out a bit more. I understand when my mother's being extra temperamental. I try to pinpoint the reason. When my father's upset, I know how to calm him down.

DOES YOUR MOTHER SAY THAT HER RELATIONSHIP WITH YOU IS A LOT LIKE THE ONE SHE SHARED WITH HER MOM?

My grandmother left my mother when she was around 18-20. She went on to do her own thing (Protima founded Nriyagram India's first modern Gurukul for classical dance). My mother had to

handle the house and support herself. Now I support myself. I pay the salaries and bear the daily expenses. My mother has moved to Goa because she works there. My brother's off at the University. The other day mom told me, 'It's funny I was so upset when my mother left me to fend for myself. Now I've done the same thing to you'. But I do enjoy living alone.

ARE YOU SINGLE, DATING OR IT'S COMPLICATED?

(Smiles) Everyone's been asking me about my relationship status. I'm too simple to be single and too complicated to be in a relationship. But I'm trying to make it in this industry. So right now, let's just focus on that.

ARE YOU SEEING SOMEONE OR NOT?

Ummm... I mean I'm enjoying life. ■



JOURNEYS TO

JITESH PILLAAI CHATS WITH THE MAVERICK FILMMAKER IMTIAZ ALI

HEARTLAND

LIFE'S A JOURNEY, OR SO IMTIAZ ALI FILMS LIKE TO MAKE US BELIEVE.

His films are testimonials to Sufi philosophy where his characters journey both outwards and inwards. He seems to be the most sorted of filmmakers and yet you feel he's a nomad who hasn't really set roots in the film world. Or in the real world either. He's a hermit who belongs to the mountains. He can talk at length on any topic and his deadpan wit can be quite deadly. He gives off the impression of being an old acquaintance, someone you feel you know a lot about and yet there's a hint of mystery that clings to him like a muted fragrance. And that's true of his films as well. You feel you know what his formula is by now but you're left with something new with every release. Likewise, you like conversing with him because you never know what might come up. Excerpts from a free-wheeling conversation with the supremely-talented filmmaker...



On the sets of Rockstar with Ranbir Kapoor

WHAT WERE YOU DOING IN LOCKDOWN? WITH WHOM WERE YOU STAYING?

I shifted in with my daughter Ida. I was writing a lot. Thinking, conceptualising. I wanted to finish the first round and go to the outer realm, which is like those stories that were remote and I couldn't really reach them because there was

always something more urgent to do.

IS THERE ANYTHING YOU HAVE DABBLED WITH IN THE KITCHEN?

The only thing I am challenged about is cooking. But I am the best when it comes to eggs. (Smiles) And I'm the best tea and coffee maker in the world.

HOW DO YOU PROCESS THE LOCKDOWN?

People were restless initially. But then they were fine. And if given the opportunity, I don't know if they'll rush back to those pubs and cafes immediately. I also think people have discovered a bit of themselves. They have taken refuge in themselves so to speak. There are lots of people who are displaced and don't have access to daily bread, etc etc. But the air is cleaner. You can see the moon better, the sunset is better. And while we can we should enjoy all of this...

WHAT KIND OF PERSON WERE YOU WHEN YOU CAME FROM DELHI. DID YOU ALWAYS WANT TO TELL STORIES?

I was in XIC – Xavier's Institute of Communication and I stayed in the

hostel there. It was a great time to land in Mumbai. I was already directing plays. So I wrote and directed a play here. I was already writing stories, already doing theatre in a big way, in the biggest way actually.

PROFESSIONAL THEATRE?

I used to do it when I was in college in Delhi. In Mumbai, this was the only play I did. *Phir roti, rozi, mazdoori mein main lag gaya paise kamane ke liye. Phir chhoot gaya...* (then I drifted towards making money. And theatre got left behind)

HOW DO YOU LOOK BACK AT THE DAYS WHEN YOU WERE DOING IMTIHAAN FOR DOORDARSHAN. RETROSPECT ALWAYS GIVES EVERYTHING A GOLDEN GLOW...

Yeah, it does.



Alia Bhatt in Highway

I wonder whether movies are for me a reflection of what I have experienced, or they are my aspiration to do things that I haven't done in my life. The first time I saw a mountain was when I went to Kashmir in the 9th standard. How much I have shot in the mountains. I'm always in the mountains now

There was a lot of insecurity because I didn't know this shit. I was directing *Purushkshetra* before *Imtihaan*. Anupam Kher's wife Kirron Kher used to be the anchor. He used to come to meet her and he was impressed by me. Because I was technically sound. He used to see me doing online edit etc... so he used to think *ki bahut smart banda hai*. Ravi Rai, who wrote and directed *Imtihaan* for 98 episodes, suddenly fell out with Anupam. I don't know what exactly happened. They needed a director mid-episode. He said – do this one. And I said *nahi* it's not fresh and all that. He said – *arrey yaar*



Saif Ali Khan and Deepika Padukone in *Love Aaj Kal*



Kareena Kapoor and Shahid Kapoor in *Jab We Met*



Ayesha Takia and Abhay Deol in *Socha Na Tha*

abhi toh koi nahi hai tu kar de... you are smart (We don't have anyone, you do it). I said, I haven't ever done fiction. He said *nahi, nahi tu kar lega* (You will be able to do it). *Abhi jab choice nahi hoti hai toh confidence dikhana padta hai*

(When you have no choice, you have to show confidence). So that's how I started doing it. But while doing it, I remember that I was constantly feeling that I'd be called out. Because I didn't know how to direct.

YOUR CHARACTERS TRAVEL A LOT, THERE IS AN ISSUE OF IDENTITY AS WELL...

A lot of people ask me and I think about it myself as to why this theme repeats itself in my films but I have no answers for it. Maybe when I was young I used

Earlier, I used to be terribly interested in what the critics had to say. I got one-and-a-half and two stars for *Socha Na Tha*. *Kisi mai ke laal ne dhai star se zyada nahi diya tha Jab We Met ko* (No one gave more than two-and-a-half stars to *Jab We Met*). Now it's hailed as a cult classic. When *Love Aaj Kal* released, I looked at the critics and they had all given... more stars but each one said not as good as *Jab We Met*. And I'm like what the hell, it doesn't add up

to wonder about who I am? But I don't know why my films have these people doing that.

the 9th standard. I don't know where it comes from... maybe some yearning I'm not aware of. How much I have shot in the mountains. I'm always in the mountains now.

ALSO, THERE IS A KARMIC CONNECTION WITH NATURE IN YOUR FILMS.

I wonder whether movies are for me a reflection of what I have experienced, or they are my aspiration to do things that I haven't done in my life. The first time I saw a mountain was when I went to Kashmir in

DESCRIBE YOUR WRITING PROCESS?

I usually write quickly. Maybe because I don't enjoy it too much. I've heard Karan Johar and other more prolific people than myself, go



With AR Rahman

When I saw *Delhi 6*, I felt I want to make this film again, right now, in my own way. But as far as classics are concerned, there are a lot of songs that I would like to picturise. Like *Rahe na rahe hum...* I will do it someday, There is a societal barrier or even the barrier of life itself in *Rahe na rahe hum*

and write in some exotic location... *woh mujhse nahi hota* (I can't do that). I'd rather chill at an exotic place. You finish writing at home before you leave. That's how it is. I'm not completely aware of what I'm doing when I am writing.

YOU HAVE AN INNATE INSTINCT FOR MUSIC. HOW DID THAT GET DEVELOPED?

My mom wanted me to be a singer initially. When I was a kid, we were staying in Patna those days, I was enrolled in a music class. I learnt a few *ragas*. But then cricket came into my life, in the 5th grade or something. So I stopped going to music classes. Also at home, *qawwalis* were played constantly. It was

high-grade poetry, Amir Khusrow's stuff on tapes. It was constantly on at my place and I used to dislike it because it was not as entertaining as Kishore Kumar singing a song on Binaca Geetmala. But all of that seeped into my bones. It shaped me, I think. And that got me involved in the whole process of making music. I

like interacting with composers. If you get a chance to hang out with Rahman, you want to spend more time... You enjoy it so much that you spend more and more time and get more and more involved. That's all I can think of.

HOW DO YOU REACT WHEN CRITICS SLAM YOUR FILMS?

Earlier, I used to be terribly interested in what the critics

had to say. I got one-and-a half and two stars for *Socha Na Tha*. *Kisi mai ke laal ne dhai star se zyada nahi diya tha Jab We Met ko* (No one gave more than two-and-a-half stars to *Jab We Met*). Now it's hailed as a cult classic. When *Love Aaj Kal* released, I looked at the critics and they had all given, the same guys, more stars but each one said not as good as *Jab We Met*. And I'm like what the hell, it doesn't add up. Then I realised they themselves had forgotten what they wrote about my earlier film. So, let me stop taking them seriously. And from that point, I didn't read criticism.

YOU HAVE WRITTEN *SHE*. IS IT ALMOST LIKE MAKING A MOVIE OR

DOES A MINI-SERIES REQUIRE A DIFFERENT DISCIPLINE?

I'm the showrunner of *She*. It's my story idea. But there are other writers that came in. We had seven episodes, I mean it's like three feature films.

YOUR DAUGHTER IDA ALI IS A DIRECTOR NOW. WHICH FILMS OF YOURS DOES SHE LIKE?

She used to dislike *Rockstar* when it was released. *Bechari* was calculating that it won't be as successful as I would want it to be. She was 11 years old then. But now it's her favourite. She likes it now.

IF THERE IS ONE FILM YOU COULD REDO FROM THE PAST CLASSICS OR A SONG, WHICH ONE WOULD IT BE?

When I saw *Delhi 6*, I felt I want to make this film again, right now, in my own way. But as far as classics are concerned, there are a lot of songs that I would like to picturise. Like *Rahe na rahe hum...* I will do it someday, There is a societal barrier or even the barrier of life itself in *Rahe na rahe hum*. Amazing! I will take permission and I will redo it for my own kick. I would also like to do *Lag ja gale...* And a few other songs that show an almost mystical connection between two people. ■



With daughter Ida

REMEMBERING JOHNNY BAKSHI

DEVESH SHARMA PROFILES THE VETERAN FILMMAKER, WHO PASSED AWAY RECENTLY
 ——— (1938-SEPTEMBER 5, 2020) ———



Johnny Bakshi was born in North-West Frontier Province in pre-Partition India in 1938. He reportedly lost his family in the Partition riots and found himself stranded in India. It's said he lived his early life in Odisha, before moving to Kolkata. He was a good sportsman and could play football, hockey and even boxing tolerably well. He reportedly got work in the railways under the sports quota. But he wasn't destined

to be a sportsperson. Destiny brought him to Mumbai. He found work at the Filmalaya Studio and started learning the intricacies of production there. He became friends with Raj Khosla, who he considered his *guru*. Mahesh Bhatt was another of Khosla's assistants. It was Johnny who gave Mahesh his first break as a director by producing *Manzilein Aur Bhi Hain* (1974). The film was miles ahead of its time in the sense that it revolved



With Mahesh Bhatt

around the relationship of a prostitute with two criminals. The censors reportedly refused to pass it. Bakshi had to put up a fight to get it released. Kabir Bedi acted as one of the leads in the film and became a lifelong friend. It can be said that while Johnny was unlucky when it came to commercial success, he was lucky in his choice of friends. His office in Mehboob studio, was said to be a place where the stars could unwind. He was always joking around, his booming laughter bouncing off the walls, as he passed around innumerable cups of tea and coffee and lent a sympathetic ear to their real and imagined woes. He was said to be the confidant of half the film industry.

The failure of his debut film as a producer didn't deter him. He soon made another thriller, starring Sanjeev Kumar in a double role, called *Vishwasghaat*

(1977). It was again directed by Mahesh Bhatt. He got a chance to pay back his *guru* Raj Khosla when he produced *Mera Dost Mera Dushman* (1984). It was a dacoit film starring Shatrughan Sinha, Sanjeev Kumar, Smita Patil and Danny Denzongpa and was one of the last offerings of Khosla. Bakshi was quite close to Smita Patil, he produced and directed an art film called *Raavan* (1984) for her. It was a story about how a woman's love can change a man from being evil to being good. Jagjit Singh gave the music. Bakshi went on to make a few more films. He was friends with Rajesh Khanna and produced and directed *Khudai* (1994) with the former superstar in the lead.

Bakshi had a fascination for foreign celebrities and named his three sons after them. One of his sons is called Brando (named after the thespian Marlon Brando), another is called Bradman (named after cricketing legend Sir Don Bradman) and the third is called Kennedy (after the American President John F Kennedy). His daughter is called Priya. The filmmaker remained actively involved with various film trade bodies all his life and genuinely cared for the welfare of everyone associated with the cine trade. One day before he died, Bakshi complained of breathlessness and was put on a ventilator. A COVID-19 test was done, which turned out to be negative. He died of cardiac arrest in the early hours of September 5. The veteran was 82 at the time of his death. ■

FAREWELL, ASHALATA WABGAONKAR

DEVESH SHARMA CHALKS UP A BRIEF PROFILE OF THE ACTRESS, WHO PASSED AWAY RECENTLY

(JULY 2, 1941 – SEPTEMBER 22, 2020)

Ashalata Wabgaonkar was a multi-talented personality. Not only was she an acclaimed theatre and film actress, who'd made her mark in both Marathi and Hindi cinemas, she was also a trained classical singer. And had reportedly learnt music under the tutelage of renowned vocalist Pandit Jitendra Abhisheki. She used to sing in Konkani, her native language for the All India Radio. She was also a proficient *sangeet natak* (musical drama) artiste. Her most famous musical was the acclaimed *Matsyagandha*. She displayed her range in the play by playing a character whose arc ran from 18 to 80 years. She loved theatre and rubbed shoulders with the who's who of Marathi theatre, doing plays like *Guntata Hriday Hey*, *Raigadala Jevha Jaag Yete*, *Chinna* (where her co-stars were Smita Patil and Sadashiv Amrapurkar) and *Mahananda*. She also acted in *Savitri*, *Umbartha*, *Pudhcha Paul*, *Maherchi Saree*, *Navri Mile Navryala*, *Eka Peksha Ek*, *Atmavishwas* and several other Marathi films.

The actress was born in Mumbai but traced her roots to Goa's Palolem village in Canacona. She



ASHALATA STARTED OFF HER HINDI CAREER WITH DIRECTOR BASU CHATTERJEE'S APNE PARAYE... SHE ACTED IN MORE THAN 200 HINDI FILMS

studied at the prestigious St. Colombo High School in Girgaum and reportedly also worked briefly in Mantralaya after her matriculation. She did her post-graduation in psychology from the SNDT University. She then got associated with The Goa Hindu Association and her career took off under its aegis. She also associated with other associations like Chandralekha, Mumbai Marathi Sahitya



Maherchi Saree

Sangh, Mauli Production, Kalamandir, INT etc and acted in many plays produced by them.

She became known as a reliable character artiste in Hindi films as well. Ashalata started off her Hindi career with director Basu Chatterjee's *Apne Paraye* (1980). It's said Chatterjee saw her in the play *Guntata Hriday Hey* and immediately offered her his film. She held her own amidst actors like

Utpal Dutt, Amol Palekar and Shabana Azmi in the film and won mass acclaim. She soon made her mark doing mother and *bhabhi* roles in films. She acted in more than 200 Hindi films. Chief among them being *Sharabi*, *Namak Halal*, *Shaukeen*, *Coolie*, *Sadma*, *Nikaah*, *Chalte Chalte*, *Aaj Ki Aawaz*, *Woh Saat Din*, *Marte Dam Tak*, *Ghayal*, *Yeh To Kamaal Ho Gaya*, *Pasand Apni Apni...* She was also a writer and has written an autobiographical memoir called *Gard Sabhovati*.

Nearing 80, she was still active as a character artiste in serials. She was acting in the serial *Aai Majhi Kalubai* at the time of her death. It's said that around 22 members of the unit working in the serial got infected with COVID-19. Most reportedly recovered and so did Ashalata initially. Then she had a relapse and succumbed to the illness. She was admitted to a private hospital in Satara, Maharashtra and died on the morning of September 22. Her remains were cremated at Satara itself by fellow actress Alka Kubal, a long term associate, on the request of Ashalata's family members. She was 79 at the time of her death. ■

In Memorium: S. P. Balasubrahmanyam

THE LEGENDARY SINGER **S. P. BALASUBRAHMANYAM** PASSED AWAY RECENTLY. **DEVESH SHARMA** PENS A SHORT PROFILE OF THE MULTIFACETED SINGER



(JUNE 4, 1946-SEPTEMBER 25, 2020)

The prolific singer, who sang predominantly in Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam as well as in Hindi, showed a natural tendency towards music from an early age. S. P. Balasubrahmanyam (SPB)

was born in Nellore, Andhra Pradesh on June 4, 1946. His father, late S. P. Sambamurthy, was a *Harikatha* artiste and perhaps SPB picked up the nuances from there. He also, time and again, spoke about being influenced by Mohammed Rafi and

LAXMIKANT-PYARELAL REPORTEDLY WEREN'T CONVINCED HIS WAS THE RIGHT VOICE FOR *EK DUUJE KE LIYE*. SP BALASUBRAHMANYAM HAD TO GIVE AN AUDITION AND WON L-P OVER WITH HIS VERSATILITY. THE FILM PROVED TO BE A MUSICAL HIT



With Illaiyaraaja



Ek Duuje Ke Liye



Chennai Express

considered him as his guru. He revered the way Rafi brought alive the feelings contained in the songs and confessed to emulating him. The other singer he held in high esteem was Yesudas. In fact, in 2016, SPB had organised a *padapuja* in honour of Yesudas.

He has the rare distinction of rendering the most songs on a single day by any singer. He recorded 21 songs in Kannada for the composer Upendra Kumar in Bangalore from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm on February 8, 1981. He also recorded 19 songs in

Tamil, 16 songs in Hindi in a day which is also a notable achievement. He reportedly had absolutely no formal tuition in Carnatic music. But had such a good ear for it that he was able to pick up on the subtleties without any hindrance. Director K Vishwanath's superhit *Shankarabharanam* secured a National Award for Balasubrahmanyam his first, in 1979. All six songs in the film were classical. Such was the case even with *Ganayogi Panchakshari Gawai* (1995), the Kannada film based on the life of the blind Hindustani music

visionary Panchakshari Gawai. He initially refused to do the project but later won a National Award for it.

SPB made his debut as a playback singer with *Sri Sri Maryada Ramanna* (1966), a Telugu film scored by his mentor, S. P. Kodandapani. His first Kannada song was recorded in 1966 for the film *Nakkare Ade Swarga*, starring Kannada comedy king T. R. Narasimharaju. Other early songs he sang were duets with P. Susheela, *Iyarkai ennum ilaya kanni* in the



FILMFARE AWARDS FOR SPB

BEST PLAYBACK SINGER (MALE)
SONG: DIL DEEWANA
FILM: MAINE PYAR KIYA (HINDI 1989)

SPECIAL AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO MUSIC (1986)

BEST FILM (TELOGU)
(SUBHA SANKALPAM 1995)

BEST PLAYBACK SINGER (MALE)
SONG: ADIGADIGO
BHADRAGIRI
FILM: SRI RAMADASU (TELOGU 2006)

BEST PLAYBACK SINGER (MALE)
SONG: KANNAL PESUM
PENNE
FILM: MOZHI (TAMIL 2007)

BEST PLAYBACK SINGER (MALE)
SONG: GHARANE GHARA
GHARANE
FILM: AAPTHA RAKSHAKA (KANNADA 2010)





Andha Kanoon



Love



Roja



Andaz Apna Apna



Patthar Ke Phool

1969 Tamil film *Shanti Nilayam*, starring Gemini Ganesh, and *Aayiram nilavae vaa* for MGR in *Adimaippenn* (1969). He was introduced to the Malayalam film industry by G. Devarajan in the film *Kadalppalam* (1969), starring Prem Nazir. His first work in Hindi films was in *Ek Dooje Ke Liye* (1981), for which he received the National Award for Best Male Playback Singer. The film was a remake of director K. Balachander's *Maro Charitra* (1978), where SP was Kamal Haasan's voice in all the songs. The Hindi had Laxmikant-Pyarelal as the composers and they reportedly weren't convinced his was the right voice for the film. He had to give an audition and won L-P over with his versatility. The film proved to be a musical hit.

He has won six National Awards in all. His fame in Hindi cinema got cemented when he became Salman Khan's voice in *Maine Pyar Kiya* (1989). The album became a huge hit and SPB won a Filmfare Award in 1990 for his efforts. Apart from this, he has bagged six Filmfare trophies. He became the voice of Salman Khan after giving playback for the actor in *Maine Pyar Kiya*. He continued to sing for the actor in many films like *Saajan* (1991), *Patthar Ke Phool* (1991), *Hum Aapke Hain Koun..!* (1994), *Andaz Apna Apna* and many more.

SPB also tried his hand at acting and shone in Tamil films like *Keladi Kanmani* (1990), *Thiruda Thiruda* (1993), *Kadhalan* (1994), *Ullaasam* (1996) and many more. He became

BEST HINDI SONGS

- ◆ **TERE MERE BEECH MEIN**
Film: *Ek Dooje Ke Liye* (1981)
Composer: Laxmikant-Pyarelal
- ◆ **MAUSAM KA TAQAAZA**
Film: *Andha Kanoon* (1983)
Composer: Laxmikant-Pyarelal
- ◆ **SACH MERE YAAR HAI**
Film: *Saagar* (1985)
Composer: RD Burman
- ◆ **DIL DEEWANA**
Film: *Maine Pyar Kiya* (1989)
Composer: Raamlaxman
- ◆ **BAHUT PYAR KARTE HAIN**
Film: *Saajan* (1991)
Composer: Nadeem-Shravan
- ◆ **TUMSE JO DEKHTE HI PYAR HUA**
Film: *Patthar Ke Phool* (1991)
Composer: Raamlaxman
- ◆ **SAATHIYA TUNE KYA KIYA**
Film: *Love* (1991)
Composer: Anand-Milind
- ◆ **ROJA JANNEMAN**
Film: *Roja* (1992)
Composer: AR Rahman
- ◆ **YEH RAAT AUR YEH DOORI**
Film: *Andaz Apna Apna* (1994)
Composer: Tushar Bhatia
- ◆ **PEHLA PEHLA PYAR HAI**
Film: *Hum Aapke Hain Koun..!* (1994)
Composer: Raamlaxman
- ◆ **CHENNAI EXPRESS**
Film: *Chennai Express* (2013)
Composer: Vishal-Shekhar



TWITTER REACTIONS

#ripspb ...Devastated
AR Rahman

#RIP Balu sir ... you have been my voice for many years ... your voice and your memories will live with me forever ... I will truly miss you ...

Rajinikanth

I'm honoured to have lived as the shadow version of Annayya SPB's voice. His fame will live on for seven generations.

Kamal Haasan

Heartbroken to hear about #SPBalasubrahmanyam sir... you will forever live on in your undisputed legacy of music! condolence to the family #RIP

Salman Khan

Deeply saddened to hear about the demise of Balasubrahmanyam ji. Just a few months back I'd interacted with him during a virtual concert in this lockdown..he seemed hale, hearty & his usual legendary self...life is truly unpredictable. My thoughts & prayers with his family #RIPSPB

Akshay Kumar

Pratibhashaali gayak, madhurbhashi, bahut nek insan SP Balasubrahmanyam ji ke swargwas ki khabar sunke main bahut vyathit hun. Humne kai gaane saath gaaye, kai shows kiye. Sab baatein yaad aarahi hain. Ishwar unki aatma ko shanti de. Meri samvedanaayein unke pariwar ke saath hain.

Lata Mangeshkar

A true loss to the world of Music...Heart breaking ... May his soul Rest in Peace.

Mohanlal



Rest in peace #SPB garu. Very sad to hear this devastating news of the greatest, the legendary #SPBalasubrahmanyam passing away. We were so hopeful that he was on the path to recovery.

Shreya Ghoshal

Oru Sahabdham samaptam. Thank you for the memories. Thank you for showing that a singer can be a fantastic singer, act, voice act, produce, compose & more. You lived and how! Your art will live for aeons and I'll always celebrate you. #SPB

Chinmayi Sripaada

Someone so special can never be forgotten, may his soul rest in peace my deepest condolences to the family....#ripspb sir.

Ramya Krishnan

I am shocked to learn that our ever smiling SPB garu is no more. This loss to our fraternity is unimaginable. My deepest condolences to his entire family.

Ram Charan

Unable to process the fact that #SPBalasubrahmanyam garu is no more. Nothing will ever come close to that soulful voice of his. Rest in peace sir. Your legacy will live on. Heartfelt condolences and strength to the family

Mahesh Babu



SPB ALSO TRIED HIS HAND AT ACTING AND SHONE IN TAMIL FILMS LIKE KELADI KANMANI (1990), THIRUDA THIRUDA (1993), KADHALAN (1994), ULLAASAM (1996) AND MANY MORE

a well-known dubbing artiste as well. In his long career, he provided his voice for stars like Kamal Haasan, Rajinikanth, Vishnuvardhan, Salman Khan, K. Bhagyaraj, Mohan, Anil Kapoor, Girish Karnad, Gemini Ganesan, Arjun Sarja, Nagesh, Karthik, and Raghuvaran in various languages. He also dubbed for Ben Kingsley in the Telugu-dubbed version of *Gandhi*. And he dabbled in music composition too.

SPB was admitted to the MGM Healthcare hospital in Chennai with mild Covid-19 symptoms on August 5.

He was transferred to the ICU on August 13 and his situation was said to be critical. He had been connected to life support since then. He underwent plasma therapy and physiotherapy at a later stage when his condition seemed to be improving. He remained on a ventilator and ECMO (Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation) support. But while his condition remained critical, he was stable and responding to doctors. Sadly, S.P. Balasubrahmanyam passed away at 1.04 pm in Chennai on September 25. He was 74.

GHAZAL KING

JAGJIT SINGH REDEFINED THE *GHAZAL* AND ALSO MADE IT A NOTEWORTHY GENRE IN HINDI FILM MUSIC. FARHANA FAROOK REMEMBERS THE MAESTRO AND HIS MELODIES AROUND HIS DEATH ANNIVERSARY WHICH FALLS ON OCTOBER 10

In an era predominated by a handful of singers, singer and composer Jagjit Singh's contribution to music can best be described as being genre defining. The ghazal, the prerogative of classical singers like Mehdi Hassan, Begum Akhtar, Angoori Bai and others and patronised by the literary elite, was brought into the mainstream thanks to Jagjit Singh's efforts. His constant companion in his endeavours was his wife Chitra Singh, an accomplished singer herself. He handpicked the works of noted poets like Mirza Ghalib, Mir Taqi Mir, Daagh Dehlvi right upto Sudarshan Fakir, Nida Fazli, Gulzar and Javed Akhtar, reaching across the demographics. Staying away from the usual tropes of sharab and shabab, his compositions spoke of the rites of passage... of loving, losing and learning, appealing to ghazal connoisseurs



Jagjit and Chitra Singh

as well as to the masses. Jagjit's style of composing and singing was what the learned dub as bol-pradhan (emphasis on words). Also, his raag-based renditions relied both on the strains of the saxophone and the guitar alongside the tabla and the sitar... The same fusion of melody and melancholy, he brought to films like Saath Saath and Arth in the '80s, making it a character in the relationship-driven films of the era. After losing their only son Vivek Singh in a tragic road accident in 1990, a heartbroken Chitra stopped singing, while Jagjit took it on as a panacea for his pain. Just as his passion for horses and penchant for humour... were all but engagements to keep the sadness at bay... Around his ninth death anniversary, we pay a tribute to the maestro, who not only popularised the ghazal as a genre but also gave it a pride of place in Hindi cinema...

EARLY YEARS

Jagjit Singh Dhiman was born at Sri Ganganagar, Rajasthan, in a Ramgarhia Sikh family. His father, Sardar Amar Singh Dhiman, was a surveyor with the government's Public Works' Department. Initially, Jagjit learned music from a visually-challenged master, Pandit Chagan Lal Sharma and later from Ustad Jamal Khan of Maihar Gharana. Ustad Jamal trained him in vocal traditions of *khayal*, *dhrupad*, *thumri* and others. While his father hoped he would become an engineer, music was what pulled Jagjit. He began his career in 1961 singing at All India Radio's (AIR) Jalandhar station. In March 1965, he came to Bombay to make a career in music. Jagjit managed to survive by hosting *mehfils* and home concerts. He sang at film parties in the hope that a music director would hear him and give him a break. But it was tough to break into a competitive industry.

JAGJIT & CHITRA

Still a struggler, he met singer Chitra Dutta in 1967, when a music director wanted to compile an album with various singers.

“
Jagjit and Chitra's vocals added to the ambience of Raman Kumar's Saath Saath. The film traced the conflict between ideals and reality: Yeh tera ghar yeh mera ghar, Pyaar mujh se jo kiya tumne, Yeh bata de mujhe zindagi and Tumko dekha toh yeh khayal aaya, lyricised the themes of romance, rancorem and redemption
 ”

When Chitra heard him sing, she found his voice unique but heavy. She feared she wouldn't be able to sing with him. Eventually, she sang. And as his voice grew on her, so did his 'caring' personality. Chitra married Jagjit in 1969 (she was earlier married to Debu Dutta, who helmed a recording studio). Gradually, the couple found its groove in the realm of *ghazals*. Their album, *The Unforgettables* in 1978, remains unforgettable till date. Exquisite poetry rendered with light traditional music, the selection was a precursor to the genre they were to later define and own. *Raat bhi neend bhi, Baat niklegi* and *Ahista ahista...* the lyrical and lucid *ghazals* were loved by the masses. Through the '80s, albums like *A Milestone*, *Main Aur Meri Tanhai*, *The Latest* (the entire album was written by Sudarshan Fakir with *Woh kaagaz ki kashti* turning immortal), *The Gold Disc*, *Ae Mere Dil*, *Ecstasies*, *A Sound Affair* and *Echoes* carried their fame across countries. *Beyond Time* (1987) was the first digitally recorded album by an Indian artiste. "A friend in England insisted that the doctors play our album *Beyond Time* each time his wife went in for



the delivery of their three children,” shared Chitra with *Filmfare*.

FORAY IN FILMS

The '80s brought them unprecedented glory in films too. Though Jagjit had done playback before, he found mainstream recognition with *Hothon se choo lo tum*, filmed on Raj Babbar in *Prem Geet* (1981). He also composed the soundtrack for the film. The year 1982 remains a landmark in his film career. Suiting the tone and tenor of arthouse cinema, Jagjit and Chitra's vocals added to the ambience of Raman Kumar's *Saath Saath*. The film traced the conflict between ideals and reality as played out by Farooque Shaikh's and Deepti Naval's characters. Kuldeep Singh's compositions,

“*Gulzar's poetry is at times abstract. Papa (Chitra's endearment for Jagjit) wouldn't hesitate to say, 'Mujhe samajh mein nahi aaya, toh logon ko kya aayega?'*”
 — Chitra Singh

JAGJIT SINGH'S MEMORABLE FILM HITS



**HOSH WALON KO
KHBAR KYA**
- Sarfarosh



**BABUL MORA
NAIHAR** (Jagjit-
Chitra) - Aavishkar



**TUM ITNA JO
MUSKURA
RAHE HO** - Arth

HOTHON SE CHHO LO TUM - Prem Geet
TUM KO DEKHA TO YEH KHAYAAL AAYA - Saath Saath



**CHITHI NA KOI
SANDESH**
- Dushman



**KOI
FARIYAAD**
- Tum Bin



**HAATH
CHOOOTE**
- Pinjar

TERE KHAYAL KI - Leela
YEH FAASLE TERI GALIYON KE - Mammo

Yeh tera ghar yeh mera ghar, Pyaar mujh se jo kiya tumne, Yeh bata de mujhe zindagi and Tumko dekha toh yeh khayal aaya, brought out the themes of romance, rancour and redemption.

Mahesh Bhatt's *Arth* yet again endorsed Jagjit's penchant to play around with poetry and pain. Bhatt's narrative, reportedly based on his unhinged relationship with the late Parveen Babi, was a study of conflicting emotions. It spoke of broken promises and broken people. Kaifi Azmi's lyrics were in sync with Homi Mullan's and Jagit-Chitra's compositions. Chitra sang *Tu nahi toh zindagi mein*, while the rest were rendered by Jagjit. Bringing forth the bitter-sweet nuances of life was *Tum itna jo muskura rahe ho*. While *Jhuki jhuki si nazar* spoke of suppressed love *Koi yeh kaise bataaye*, questioned the impermanence of feelings. The music of *Saath Saath* and *Arth*, sold in a single cassette, proved to be a bonanza for Jagjit-Chitra fans.

Jagjit's other popular film songs include the heart-breaking *Chithi na koi sandesh* from *Dushman* (1998), the poetic



With Lata Mangeshkar



With Ghulam Ali



With Javed Akhtar

Hoshwalon ko khabar kya filmed on Aamir Khan and Sonali Bendre in *Sarfarosh* (1999), the plaintive *Koi fariyaad* from *Tum Bin* (2001), *Tere khayal ki* from his composed soundtrack for *Leela* (2002), *Badi nazuk hai* from *Jogger's Park* (2003), *Haath choote* from *Pinjar* (2003) and *Tum paas aa rahe ho* from *Veer-Zaara* (2004). "Gulzar's poetry is at times abstract. Papa (Chitra's endearment for Jagjit) wouldn't hesitate to say, 'Mujhe samajh mein nahi aaya, toh logon ko kya aayega?'" Chitra once shared with *Filmfare* adding, "*Haath chhooto bhi toh rishte nahin chhoota karte* (*Pinjar*) was their favourite." Chitra added that classifying Jagjit as a 'ghazal singer' would be restricting his genius. "He was a unique musician. His voice was so rich, it could seldom match any hero. When Mahesh Bhatt used Jagjitji's voice for Raj Kiran in *Arth*, it didn't sound as heavy. We also sang for *Saath Saath* (1982), where his voice suited the mood of the film. But generally, his renditions remained background songs," she analysed.

Another milestone was the TV serial

“*My world came crashing down (after their son Vivek died in a car accident). I had reduced to 43 kilos and looked like a ghost. I couldn't face people. Mera gala apne aap band ho gaya. And it stayed like that for nearly 14 years - Chitra Singh*”

Mirza Ghalib in 1988. Jagjit popularised the legendary 19th-century poet by composing and singing his *ghazals* in the eponymous serial, directed by Gulzar. Traditional *ghazals* like *Dil hi to hai*, *Hazaaron khwahishein aisi*, *Aah ko chahiye ek umr* and *Yeh na thi hamari qismat*, given the contemporary spin, enjoyed a mass appeal. "A song is not about vocal acrobatics, it's the sound of your soul," reflected Chitra.

THE TRAGEDY

The couple's musical odyssey came to a jarring halt in 1990 when their 20-year-old son, Vivek, died in a tragic road accident. "My world came crashing down. I had reduced to 43 kilos and looked like a ghost. I couldn't face people. *Mera gala apne aap band ho gaya* (I was struck speechless). And it stayed like that for nearly 14 years," recalled the grief-stricken mother, who gave up singing altogether. She took refuge in spirituality and Bowen healing. Jagjit and Chitra's tribute to Vivek came in the form of the album *Someone, Somewhere*, which was recorded before the mishap. Starting



With Pandit Jasraj



Bhupinder Singh, Jagjit, Mitalee Singh, Sanjeev Kohli and Talat Aziz (extreme right)



An early picture of Jagjit and Chitra rehearsing

with a *Shabad Gurubani*, Jagjit began a new journey from thereon. His music changed forever. It veered towards the spiritual and the philosophical. Apart from an album with Lata Mangeskar, titled *Sajda*, Jagjit's other notable albums include *Hope*, *Marasim*, *In Search*, *Mirage*, *Silsilay* and many devotional albums including Kabir *bhajans*. His last film track was *Har aur tabahi ka manzar* for the film *Gandhi To Hitler* (2011).

THE LAST YEARS

Another tragedy that hit the family was when Chitra's daughter and ex-model Monica Dutta, 50, committed suicide on May 29, 2009. Jagjit was shaken after

“*Since Vivek (Singh) passed away; there was this thing between my daughter Monica (Dutta), Jagjitji and me as to who would meet him first. Both of them have beaten me to it! Everything in life is momentary ya jee lo, yaa jhel lo.*”
-Chitra Singh

Monica's death. “He had seen her as a five-year-old. She was like his daughter,” shared the equally bereaved Chitra. Jagjit was touring America then. He cancelled his shows and caught connecting flights to reach home. While Chitra found solace in spirituality and in looking after her young grandsons Umair and Armaan (Monica's sons from her first marriage with cinematographer Jehangir Choudhary), Jagjit, keeping his grief private, immersed himself in music. Reportedly, in 2011, a series of 70 musical events were planned the world over to celebrate his 70th year. One such was a show with Ghulam Ali in Mumbai. Sadly, just prior to that, he suffered a brain haemorrhage on September 23, 2011. He was in a coma for over two weeks and passed away on October 10. After his demise, Chitra released the album, *The Voice Beyond* (2013), which includes seven of Jagjit Singh's unreleased compositions. “Since Vivek passed away, there was this thing between my daughter Monica, Jagjitji and me as to who would meet him first. Both of them have beaten me to it!” she told *Filmfare*. “Everything in life is momentary *ya jee lo, yaa jhel lo* (enjoy the moment or endure it),” she summed up quoting their *ghazal*, “*Manzil na de, charag na de, hausla toh de...* I know he's around and that gives me strength.” ■

your say

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

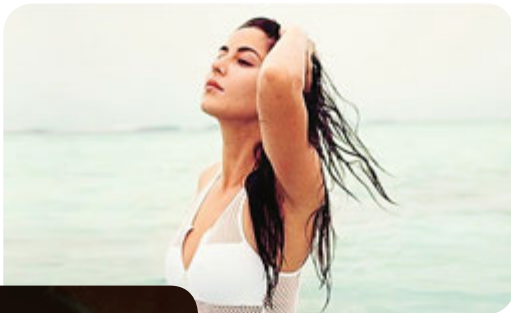
INSTA LIKE

Medley of moments

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

@katrinakaif: 🌊💙

Hey Katrina, Mumbai weather called, it wants its hotness back.



@priyankachopra:
Chasme Badoor
Far be the evil eye.

We don't know about evil eye, but PeeCee's freshly-cut bangs are surely catching eyeballs all around the globe.



@sanyamalhotra:



Life isn't perfect for us right now, but Sanya Malhotra and her curly hair sure are.



@iamsrk: Ami TKR we rule. Awesome display boys...u make us proud, happy and make us party even without a crowd. Love u team. @tkriders @simmo54 and my fav @dmbravo46 well done @kieron.pollard55 & my man @djbravo47 love you how many now4!!! @bazzmccullum42 come to IPL lov u. Thank you Trinidad & Tobago and the @cplt20 for the tournament. @gototnt
It's cricket time for Indian households and that means we get to cheer with SRK for his Knightriders.



@kareenakapoorkhan:

Sister sledge ❤️❤️❤️
Happy birthday beautiful Ridz
@riddhimakapoor
sahniofficial
A smiling Riddhima Kapoor Sahni, big sister Karisma and sleepy-head Kareena Kapoor Khan with

their grandfather, Raj Kapoor. Don't ever say perfect pictures don't exist.📷



Readers send in their feedback pg 66

Shatrughan Sinha's racy rejoinders pg 68



IN THE MAIL

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

1st Prize
₹1500

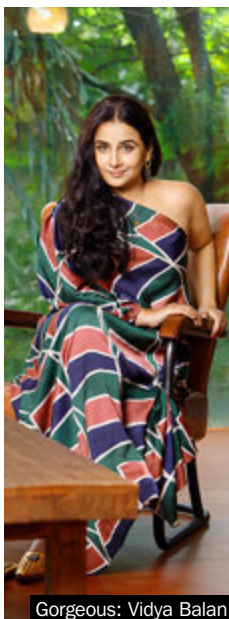
↓ GET WELL SOON, SANJU!

When I read the news of Sanjay Dutt being diagnosed with lung cancer in your last issue (September), it put me in a state of shock. As if 2020 wasn't bad enough already. This just made things much worse. I hope that Sanjay Dutt is back to his healthy self soon. He has overcome several difficulties in the past and I'm sure he will bounce back once again. My prayers are with him. And I'm sure all his fans worldwide are praying for him as well.

Supriya Shinde, Jalgaon



Rock steady: Sanjay Dutt



Gorgeous: Vidya Balan

↑ THE ULTIMATE BEAUTY - VIDYA BALAN

I've always been a fan of Vidya Balan. It was lovely to see her feature on the cover (September). She is one star who always speaks from her heart. And that is evident in her interview this time too.

Rohan Narang, Darjeeling

↓ SAIF-KAREENA ANNOUNCES SECOND PREGNANCY

Saif Ali Khan and Kareena Kapoor Khan are one of the most loved couples in Bollywood. So it wasn't surprising to see everyone (including me) get super excited when they announced that Kareena was pregnant with their second child. I admire both of their work and pray they're blessed with a healthy baby in time to come.

Rashmi Tyagi, Jaunpur



Stork calling: Kareena Kapoor and Saif Ali Khan

BOBBY DEOL BACK IN BUSINESS

Through the lockdown, we've seen multiple projects of Bobby Deol hitting OTT platforms. I am glad about the content as I always felt Bobby had more to give when it comes to acting. I was impressed by his performances in *Class Of '83* and *Aashram*. I hope to see more of him in the coming future. Kudos to Bobby for this comeback.

Gauri Sen, Bhubaneswar

DEEPIKA-RANVEER ARE A CUTE COUPLE

In your last issue (September), I came across pictures of Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh caught coming back home. Trust me when I say this, but seeing the good old airport clicks made me happy as it brought back a sense of normalcy after a long time. Great job guys!

Ramesh Jain, Allahabad

2nd Prize
₹1000

→ NEETU KAPOOR'S COMEBACK

I cannot imagine what Neetu Kapoor must be going through, considering even I haven't gotten over Rishi Kapoor's death as yet. However, as they say, life goes on. So I'm glad to read that she has decided to resume work once again. She's always been one of the most iconic leading ladies. I'm sure she'll bring back the magic once again with her next film in the company of Varun Dhawan, Kiara Advani and Anil Kapoor.

Victor Pereira, Goa



Encore: Neetu Kapoor

ADDING A PERSONAL TOUCH

I've noticed you've made special sections on your website that give us a deeper insight into a star's life. For a Bollywood buff like me, it is indeed a welcome change as we get to know more about the star's life apart from their work. More of the same, please!

Alka Chaudhry, Gurgaon

THE RETURN OF THE KING

Ever since I read about Shah Rukh Khan's next project in your last issue (September), I cannot seem to contain my excitement. He's always been my favourite in Bollywood and I've followed him since his *Fauji* days. The fact that he'll team up with John Abraham in *Pathan* makes the whole deal even sweeter. Can't wait to watch this one for sure.

Arif Jani, Baroda

PRABHAS' GRAND PLANS

Initially, I wasn't too aware of South Indian cinema and its stars. However, Prabhas is one actor who made me take more interest in South cinema. I loved his work in *Baahubali* and decided to explore more South Indian films. I'm sure that with *Adipurush*, he will knock the box office figures out of the park once more. Fingers crossed.

Prachi Joshi, Gandhinagar



Killing it: Priyanka Chopra Jonas

↑ PRIYANKA CHOPRA'S MEMOIRS

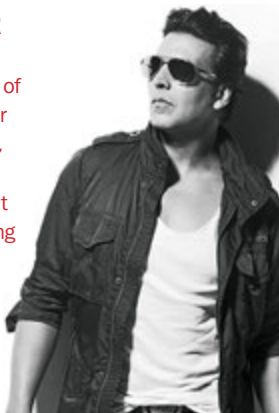
I was glad to read in the September issue that Priyanka Chopra has written her memoir, titled *Unfinished*. The actress is a role model in every sense and reading tidbits about this journey will indeed be special. I'm eagerly waiting to get my hands on the book. I'm sure I'm going to 'finish' it in one go.

Stella Gomes, Mangalore

→ AKSHAY KUMAR GOES RETRO

When I saw the photos of Akshay Kumar's look for *Bell Bottom* in *Filmfare*, my excitement for the film grew even further. It still feels surreal knowing that a Bollywood film is actually in production. I hope things only get better from here.

Rohan Iyer, Mumbai



A DEEPER INSIGHT INTO THE DIRECTOR'S MIND

The reason I like *Filmfare* so much is that you guys look beyond the stars that we see on screen. Your recent interview with Om Raut (August) helped me learn a lot more about the director's mindset and his vision. Kudos guys! Keep up the good work.

Kishore Waghmare, Sangli

VIRAT-ANUSHKA GOING TO BE PARENTS

Virat Kohli and Anushka Sharma are individuals who are dominating in their receptive fields. They are true inspirations for their fans and so, when they announced they'll be having a baby, I was extremely happy for the two. I wish them all the best for their new journey.

Lalita Mathur, Ujjain

ABHISHEK BACHCHAN'S SECOND INNINGS

Abhishek Bachchan according to me is one of the most underrated actors in the industry. Now, the actor is back and finally proving his worth on-screen with a string of seriously impressive performances. It was great to read his interview (August) in your magazine. His views on the future of digital media are indeed spot on. I'd sure like him to do many more assignments on OTT.

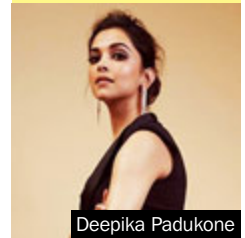
Navin Adhikari, Almora

NOSTALGIC JOYRIDE

Filmfare's rich history in Bollywood was brought to the forefront yet again when I read your piece on late Rajesh Khanna (September). I'm of the opinion that he'll always remain Bollywood's greatest hero. Would really love to see more nostalgic pieces on other legends in your forthcoming issues.

Barun Acharya, Rourkela

Just one Point



Deepika Padukone

Two of my favourite film stars - Prabhas and Deepika Padukone - are coming together for a project and I cannot wait to witness the magic they'll bring on screen.

Naaveen Rai, Mumbai

I absolutely loved your interview with Vishal Jethwa (August). His performance in *Mardaani 2* was simply breathtaking.

Roshan Shah, Ahmedabad

When I read about Amitabh Bachchan's handwritten note to Kunal Kemmu for his performance in *Lootcase*, my respect for the superstar grew even further. The fact that he's still keeping tabs and appreciating the work of younger actors is truly commendable.

Sharanya Shetty, New Delhi

Your piece on the late choreographer Saroj Khan (August) brought back a lot of memories for me. Her legacy is something that will live on forever.

Tukaram Naik, Kolhapur

I'm waiting for the theatres to reopen and I hope it happens soon. I'm bored now of watching films at home.

Ramesh Pawar, Mumbai

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PHOTOGRAPH: MEETESH TANEJA

Shatrughan Sinha's Rapid fire

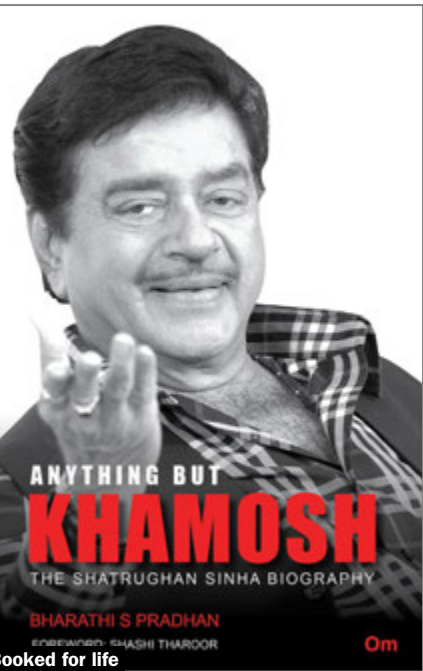
Making a woman walk in a two-piece in front of millions of people in beauty pageants is a direct exploitation by the organisers. Women too sometimes self exploit themselves for name, fame and money. In movies too, the same thing happens. Vulgarity is not beauty. What's the end to such low standards of human behaviour?

Dibyasha Mishra, Bhubaneswar
Unfortunately, even today women aren't treated the way they should be. The objectification of

women isn't as blatant now as it was earlier but there's always room for improvement. The mindsets need to be changed. Our society is getting more progressive as time goes by and hopefully will reach an ideal state soon. On the other end of the spectrum, if the girls wearing skimpy costumes feel no vulgarity, then who are we to impose our views on them? Beauty lies in the eye of the beholder, as they say.

The year 2020 is giving us one disaster after another, the pandemic, unexpected deaths, strained international relations, etc. Is it not time to turn inward, become more spiritual and pray, asking God for forgiveness and peace?

Mehek Mahtani, Pune
I agree with the sentiment wholeheartedly. I hope every one of us who has sat at home has tuned inwards and has become spiritual, asking God for



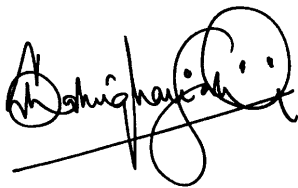
forgiveness and peace. No doubt this year has been a hell of a ride. But I believe in the adage that this too shall pass.

Has something happened in your life where you have no explanation for how it happened?

Subhash Chand, Chandigarh
Everyone goes through something that they find difficult to explain, so I suggest you should look inward for an answer. On the other hand, you can buy my bestselling autobiography, *Anything But Khamosh* to become better acquainted with all the expected and the unexpected happenings in my life.

Man achieved the unbelievable task of stepping on the moon but is lagging many steps behind in finding a vaccine for COVID-19. Don't you think so?

Anil R Torne, Pune
Well, the moon is always where it is but this virus keeps changing its



Which dance performance by a male actor in Bollywood do you like the most? Is it Dilip Saab's *Mere pairon mein*, or Raj Saab's *Ramaiya vastavaiya* or your own *Aaj mere yaar ki shaadi hai* and why?

B Ajit, New Delhi
Raj Kapoor's performance in *Ramaiya vastavaiya* is a masterpiece. And living legend Dilip Kumar's dance performance from *Gunga Jumna* is truly immortal. However *Aaj mere yaar ki shaadi* from the film *Aadmi Sadak Ka*, sung by the great Mohammed Rafi and composed by the genius Ravi is close to my heart. It's still immensely popular today. No wedding is complete without this song. It's the favourite of all the *band baaja baraat* companies as well.



Sadak 2: Road to nowhere

1st Prize

A citizen calls her nation as mother nation, language as mother tongue. We always say 'ladies first'. But in movies, we see the male stars getting priority in the credits? Why can't they roll the credits with the names of female actors displayed first?

Dr Manju Mookerjee (Sridhar), Kolkata

It's a complicated question indeed and there's no right answer to this. I state once again that our mindset as a society needs to change towards certain matters.

2nd Prize

Everything seems to be going wrong in Bollywood during the lock down...

Sabojit Baro, Guwahati

Life goes on. We've seen different kinds of investigations and raids and summons of late. The denizens of the so-called Bollywood have been rattled. They are being bashed by the media on TV as well as by the common people on social media. But everything is a phase and this will pass as well.

structure. And it took decades for the scientists to achieve what they did when it came to a moon landing. Have faith in them. They'll crack this code too. Have patience.

Why does no political leader talk about population explosion? Is it possible to control India's mind-boggling population?

Santosh Mohan Joshi, Miraj

Not true, politicians have raised this issue time and again. Cutting down the size of our humongous population is a Herculean

task indeed. Sadly vote bank politics comes in the way of doing something concrete about it.

What exactly is heaven?

Subhash Chand, Chandigarh

Some place where peace, joy and happiness exist under one roof. Please find out the location if you can and share it with me if possible.

How should husband and wife practice social distancing?

Santosh Mohan Joshi, Miraj

That's a very tricky and difficult question. Being a

decent man, I can only tell them to practice whatever everyone else is following.

Considering what happened to Sadak 2 (more dislikes than likes, not a hit movie), which was a backlash against star kids and answer to nepotism, is there a chance that movies of star kids will be avoided by the public in the near future?

Rohit Singhania, Kolkata

Yeh public hai sab janti hai. Aur sab kuch mumkin hai. No one can say how the masses will react. Let's all wait and watch.

Which category of animals is mostly found in politics - lions, monkeys, owls, donkeys or chameleons?

Rajesh K Ranga, New Delhi

Why should I compare politicians to animals? I can only add that all kinds of people from all walks of life do end up in politics.

(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

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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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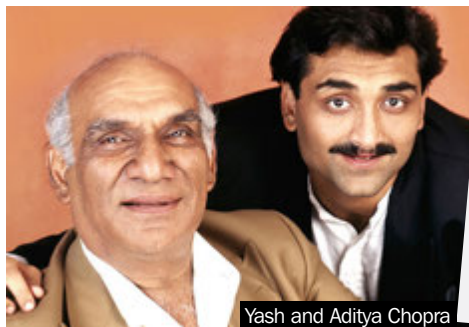
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50 years of YRF

Yash Chopra, as everyone knows, is the younger brother of noted filmmaker BR Chopra. While BR was known for his socialist stance in his movies, Yash concentrated on human emotions and later came to be known as the king of romance.

In Yash's eyes, the heart knew no boundaries. He understood that love blinds human beings to the norms of the society and more often than not people end up breaking rules. He tried to show that there was no malice involved when people did so. In *Daag* (1973) for instance, Rajesh Khanna is presumed dead. He starts a new life and meets Raakhee. He's forced by circumstances to marry her. Later, when he comes across his first wife once more, he finds it hard to choose between the two. He lets the women decide and they all end up living together happily.

In *Silsila* (1981) in a casting that reportedly mirrored their real-life situation, Amitabh Bachchan and Rekha indulge in an extra-marital romance as Jaya Bachchan looks on. Here too, the director didn't take sides. He told the tale of human follies like it is and let the audience pass their own judgement. The film's box office prospects was marred by its too real casting, though today it enjoys a cult status.



Yash and Aditya Chopra



Silsila



DDLJ

The filmmaker believed in making his offerings larger than life. He loved shooting at foreign locations and was even honoured by the Swiss government for promoting Switzerland through his films. They have even installed his statue there. Also, he kind of pioneered designer films. The leading stars of YRF films wore the best clothes, travelled in the best cars, ate in top-of-the-table restaurants and lived in top-class homes. He showed us how the rich lived and partied and made us live their lives vicariously. But he also made sure to show them as people like us beneath the designer togs.

Music also played a large hand in making brand YRF a success. Strangely, he worked with unconventional composers, be it Khayaam, Shiv-Hari, Uttam Singh or even Pritam, who was unknown at the time of *Dhoom*.

Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge can

be said to be his, and by extension, his banner's crowning achievement. The film was a simple love story at heart which defines society's norms, had some great music to boot and was shot all over Europe and in Punjab. It starred Shah Rukh Khan and Kajol and cemented their superstardom. The baton from the old to the new passed seamlessly with this film. His elder son, Aditya Chopra, took over the reins. While romance still remains the core, the banner has started investing in action too. The highly successful *Dhoom* series or the recent *War*, which too will reportedly be developed as a franchise, are proof enough that Adi has made the right call.

Yash Chopra is no more but his banner continues to make his legacy shine year after year, for both the old and the newer generations of fans...

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