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MW25210401

(From L-R)  
Best Debut (Female)  
**Alaya F**  
Best Actress (Critics')  
**Tillotama Shome**  
Best Actor In A Leading Role  
(Female) **Taapsee Pannu**



**विवल**  
Elaichi  
66<sup>th</sup>  
**FILMFARE**  
AWARDS 2021

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# WHAT A NIGHT!

The glamour and glory of the  
66<sup>th</sup> Vimal Elaichi Filmfare Awards 2021

(From L-R) Best Director **Om Raut** | Best Playback Singer (Male) **Raghav Chaitanya**  
Best Playback Singer (Female) **Asees Kaur** | Best Film (Critics') **Prateek Vats**





(From L-R)

Best Actor In A Supporting Role (Female) **Farrokh Jaffar**

Best Film **Bhushan Kumar and Anubhav Sinha**

Best Choreography **Farah Khan**





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April, 2021

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**VOICE AND  
VIRTUE:  
SWARA  
BHASKAR**

# NAIL QUEEN

PRESENTING THE EMPRESS OF NAIL ART,  
DR LEENA S



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PHOTOGRAPH: PRASAD NAIK  
MAKEUP: FLORIAN HUREL  
HAIR: YIANNI TSAPATORI  
STYLIST: MOHIT RAI  
OUTFIT: FALGUNI SHANE PEACOCK  
HAIR ACCESSORY: VALLIYAN

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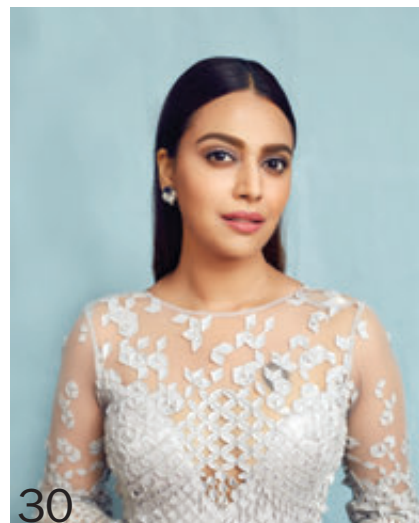
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# Letter from the Editor

## Keeping the faith

Thanks to the coronavirus pandemic and the resultant lockdown, the film industry came to a screeching halt in March last year. And our filmmakers, our film stars found themselves completely at sea for sometime. Then, they kind of collectively realised that if they're finding it tough, it must be hundred times tougher for the common populace to cope with this nightmarish scenario. They then set about sending support both in the form of money and supplies but also in the form of positive messages. Somehow, we survived the worst and slowly, by the end of the year, limped back to the new normal.

That we were apprehensive about how we were going to conduct our main Bollywood event is an understatement.

Nevertheless, we decided to go ahead and face the fears rather than doing nothing and speculating about them. Fortune favours the brave, as they say. Despite the mandatory tests, social distancing norms and the phased pattern of the awards, we pulled it off. Three cheers to my entire team and to everyone involved in giving birth to this mini miracle.

The event started at 2 pm in the afternoon. And that was the first hurdle. As the denizens of the film industry are notorious for keeping their own timings. But we needn't have worried as the *esprit de corps* kicked in. Knowing that through this ceremony they were signalling an all is well message out there, the industry folks turned up on time. And the 66th Vimal Elaichi Filmfare Awards 2021 were on.

We lost many illustrious stars last year. One of the brightest among them was Irrfan Khan. He used to make each nuance of every character he played stand out. One could vouch for the basic humanity of the characters he played and their believability, be it in *Haasil* (2003), which brought him mainstream fame, *Maqbool* (2004), where he touched Shakespearean heights with his performance, *Paan Singh Tomar*, where he looked like a Chambal legend or *The Lunchbox* (2013) where he played a middle-aged man in love. Irrfan was our Lifetime Achievement Award winner this year. His son Babil collected it on his late father's behalf and the industry greeted him as one of their own. There were only kind words and pats of encouragement for the youngster, who wants to carve a career in showbiz.

I missed the booming baritone of Bachchan *saab*, who couldn't attend due to medical reasons, and who won the Best Actor (Critics') award for his performance in *Gulabo Sitabo*. Turn the pages to know more about the drama and the madness of this year's magnum opus...



A handwritten signature of Jitesh Pillai.

For more on tinseltown's news and updates  
find me on Twitter @jiteshpillai



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# Treasure trove!

A HAMPER FULL OF EXOTIC SCENTS, COSMETIC WONDERS AND YUMMY TREATS ACCOMPANIED THE INVITES FOR THE **66<sup>TH</sup> VIMAL ELAICHI FILMFARE AWARDS 2021**

As the Black Lady celebrated its 66<sup>th</sup> year, we sent out a wonderful handpicked hamper to our stars along with the invites for the ninth successive year. The eclectic collection - from fragrances, flavours to delicious desserts - was selected with care. After all, the beautiful and the best deserve the finest. Here's showcasing the luxurious items that comprised the gift basket...





## JUS LIKE THAT

Finest ingredients, secret recipes & scrumptious confections — all personalised and packaged to perfection in elegant hampers; that's what is refreshingly striking about Jus Like That (JLT) — an award winning luxury chocolaterie that is successfully satisfying sophisticated palates across the globe. Affectionately designed and curated lavish hampers make for a splendid presentation. No wonder then that this young brand had already captured the hearts of the crème de la crème; making it the one-stop shop for all gifting requirements.



## PIOLA

PIOLA : Pure Indian Organic Life ART is a lifestyle just not a brand. Best seeds are procured directly from the farms to serve organically extracted oils in their purest and natural form. Indulge in exquisite range of edible oils like Mustard, Groundnut, Sesame, Coconut, Flaxseed, Walnut and Almond oil. PIOLA believes 'in eating right and saying no to preservative-laced products. We provide our products to cancer patients on pursuit of no profit and free of cost to underprivileged patients. Website: [www.piola.in](http://www.piola.in) Instagram: @piolaindia FB: @ItsPIOLA



## GLOBAL BEAUTY SECRETS

Global Beauty Secrets, a premium personal care brand, is a celebration of the collective wisdom of women across the world. The Global Beauty Secrets' Thai Lemongrass Body Cleanser is formulated with pure lemongrass essential oil and has been inspired by Thai wellness and healing ritual of Lu Pra Kob. The latest addition to the brand is their carefully curated kits on the go, especially the Greek Beauty kit with the exquisite Greek Yogurt and Lavender Body Moisturiser with the goodness of Yogurt, Vitamin E, and Lavender essential oil. You can connect with them at: Website: [www.discovergbs.com](http://www.discovergbs.com) Instagram: @discovergbs Facebook: Global Beauty Secrets



## MHYSAA

Founded by two passionate sisters, Jayshree and Nidhi, Mhysaa is inspired by the ancient science of healing, found in the purity of natural ingredients. Mhysaa cushions provide hot and cold remedy from muscle stiffness, aches, pains, cramps, sinus blockages, sore throats, fatigue and tiredness. These organic cushions are filled with highest quality flax seeds, a unique blend of aromatic flowers, herbs and essential oils that come together to relax and soothe you. To place an order whatsapp, call or mail: Mhysaa Relief Essentials: # +919625345252 Mhysaa.in@gmail.com, Follow us on Instagram or Face book @Mhysaa.Relief



## THE SEED BOX

Ever since we toasted our first batch of pumpkin seeds to startling crispness in 2018, our gourmet innovations have been transforming the conventional world of handcrafted mukhwas. Our passion for crafting the most mouthwatering flavors using only the finest ingredients and most authentic of processes is what sets The Seed Box apart. Our endeavor is simple - to transform naturally delicious ingredients into extraordinary experiences bite by bite without compromising on taste, texture or nutrition. And the best part? Unlike other variants in the market — there is nothing artificial about our mukhwas! At The Seed Box, everything is always all natural and all of our artisanal offerings are free from preservatives, chemicals, nitrates, MSG and absolutely any added sugar ensuring guilt-free scrumptiousness in every jar!

## FROAT BY TRUNATIV (OATS)

FROAT by TruNativ is the World's first real Fruit+Oat drink mix. FROAT is a tasty, healthy and convenient Breakfast in a sachet, providing you with nutrition equivalent to 2 Bowls of Oats and 2 Bowls of Fruits! Simply open, pour, add water or milk, and enjoy this natural and delicious drink. The assorted pack contains their 3 flavours; Very berry, Tropical Blast and Summer Splash. Instagram : TruNativ



## THE TRIBE CONCEPTS

The pioneer of holistic beauty and inspired by the ancient science of Ayurveda, The Tribe Concepts offers a renowned range of high performance and sustainably sourced, plant-powered products that are not only vegan and cruelty-free but feature eco-friendly, recyclable packaging too. Catering to all skin and hair types, The Tribe Concepts is birthed in the Indian soil and harnesses a modern approach to Ayurveda through its products.



## MY GLAMM

MyGlamm is a leading Indian beauty brand designed to offer the best of makeup, skincare and personal care to women all over. Their luxury range of products is featured under Manish Malhotra Beauty Exclusively by MyGlamm. For the young millennial woman, the brand offers its MyGlamm LIT collection showcasing statement-making hues across lip and eye products. The MyGlamm POSE HD collection features high definition make-up that is certain to keep you camera-ready, whenever, wherever. Lastly, experience the best of Korean skincare in the MyGlamm Glow iridescent brightening range.

## COUNTRY BEAN

Country Bean is a direct-to-consumer coffee brand that provides a cafe-like coffee experience at home. It is the first flavoured coffee brand from India. Now you can enjoy hazelnut lattes, caramel frappes, mint mochas and more from the comfort of your space. Website: [www.countrybean.in](http://www.countrybean.in) Instagram: @countrybeancoffee



## HEART AND SOUL

Heart and Soul- The Organic Harmony is the fruit of a dream knitted over the years of living a holistic life. A dream to connect with nature and create the purest, most ethical and non-toxic products. We believe the abundance of nature can be righteously used to enhance our bodies. In a world with personal care products disguised as "all-natural", we offer complete transparency about who we are and what we heartily bring to you. Simply put, our brand was born out of a pure dedication of discovering skincare, haircare and wellness



blends that are procured in the most natural and gentle ways possible. Email: [connect@hsorganic.co.in](mailto:connect@hsorganic.co.in) Instagram: @heart.soul.organics Website: [www.hsorganic.co.in](http://www.hsorganic.co.in)



## SPA LA VIE BY L'OCCITANE

Spa la vie by L'OCCITANE is an 8,000 sqft Mediterranean Wellness Sanctuary right in the heart of South Mumbai. Indulge in Provençal-inspired rituals on a heated stone Hammam bed, pamper the body and the face with our Shea from Burkina Faso and Immortelle from Corsica, enjoy well-being soaking ceremonies in free-standing Bathtubs in every treatment room, feel refreshed in your private steam chamber after a revitalizing signature aromachologie massage, spend soulful moments in the VIP Couple's Suites, host an intimate Spa Soiree with your friends and embrace freshness with the 20 feet living Green Wall in the Spa courtyard. Live the Spa Life. Live Spa la Vie by L'OCCITANE.





# Wedding Lounge

The Wedding Lounge hampers comprise gourmet chocolates, cookies, cakes and sugar-free, gluten-free and vegan confections making for a tasty and healthy gift for all occasions, says founder **Urvi Sethi Hemdev**



**W**edding Lounge is a bespoke wedding gifting & favors company, founded by Urvi Sethi Hemdev that helps put together bespoke hampers for Weddings. Started in 2018, they helped put together the most personalized hampers, favours & gifts that go well with the theme and aesthetics of the event. Hamper lounge is their sub vertical launched in 2020 that is a one stop shop for curating and designing luxury hampers for all occasions, be it a birthday,

anniversaries, corporate events, baby showers, birth announcements & many more.

Wedding Lounge is the brainchild of Urvi Sethi Hemdev, a gifting connoisseur with a Master's degree in Luxury Brand Management. She infuses her imaginative flair and her expertise in luxury brands into the most exquisite gifting solutions for her clients. With personalised and bespoke hampers and favors, she puts together the most warmth in your gifts for

your special day and other events. Speaking about her passion, she states, "I truly believe that personalisation is the key. I always found my passion in curating the most thought about gifts for my friends and family that is aesthetically put together to make it special for them. Its not about how big or small your event is, its about how you make your guest feel special with the smallest gestures. That's how wedding lounge came into place to put together hampers and present gifts in the most thoughtful manner. Working with multiple brands over the past few years and curating boxes for various events, I've realised that there is always room for innovation That's the challenge we love working through. Creating something different for each event that impacts someone is something that we love doing."

## OUR BIGGEST USP

The Wedding Lounge & Hamper lounge is a one stop shop for all your Bespoke gifting and packaging solutions. Their main aim to make it simpler for their clients to create the best possible gift as per their budget with a range of brands that they work with. "We can create something for you as per any theme. Each client is different and it's very importance to match the aesthetics and appeal of the occasion. Be it quirky or elegant, simple & classy or something grandeur we are here to help you create an impact through our hampers," informs Urvi.

Be it gourmet food hampers, to luxury gifts, wine & Champagne hampers to a wedding hampers, they are here to solve all your gifting needs.



# F&B

*fashion and beauty*

Here come the hotsteppers!  
Meet the trend makers and breakers spotted on the 66<sup>th</sup> Vimal Elaichi Filmfare Awards 2021 red carpet

## FASHION PARADE

The sparkling red carpet was laid out, the paparazzi gathered to click the perfect picture and the stars arrived with their arm candy, the mandatory designer mask and a sanitiser spritzer. The 66<sup>th</sup> Vimal Elaichi Filmfare Awards 2021 was a celebration of the movies in the new normal. A social event of such stature saw celebrities dressed to the nines and yet maintain social distance. Tuxedos, princess gowns, stunning ensembles... the runway was an amalgamation of grace, style and couture...





66TH  
VIMAL  
ELAICHI  
FILMFARE  
AWARDS  
2021

# DRESSED TO KILL

*THE STARS GRACED THE 66TH VIMAL ELAICHI FILMFARE AWARDS 2021 IN THEIR SARTORIAL BEST. ANALITA SETH ANALYSES THEIR FASHION GAME*

**Amruta Khanvilkar** opted for an Indo-Western look with a dramatic pleated red saree by Tasuvure. Her gelled back hair, smokey eyes and the minimal diamond jewellery elevated the look to perfection. **Sara Ali Khan** kept it icy cool in a blue tulle number by Aadnevik. Her voluminous look was topped with a messy ponytail, a pair of glittery heels and a light smokey eye.

**Taapsee Pannu**, who looked like a dream on the red carpet, made sure her outfit was as bright as her night. The actor donned an ombre pink and mauve gown with a soft bow on the back by Zara Umrigar and finished it up with a headband and scrappy silver heels. **Sanjana Sanghi** made quite an edgy statement in her custom Amit Aggarwal creation. A structural piece in dull metallic grey, Sanjana was a breath of fresh air amidst the trail gowns and dramatic looks. Talking of trails, **Divya Khosla Kumar** turned up the heat in a mauve Atelier Zuhra gown. The embellished gown that turned into a feathered trail shone at the red carpet.





**Tamannaah Bhatia** in her Benu Sehgal gown bedazzled everyone. The actor strutted like a million bucks in a princess gown, exuding her unmatched charm at the red carpet. **Nora Fatehi** made a fierce appearance in Georges Chakra and got all heads turning for her at the event. The lady opted for a golf metallic outfit and hit a hole-in-one with her minimal make-up, emerald jewellery and her undying sass. **Sunny Leone** sure loves white for her red carpet appearances and we're not complaining. The stunner picked a L'mane number with poker straight hair, blush make-up and some diamond jewellery. Needless to say, she stole the show. Christmas arrived a little early for us, as a very merry **Mithila Palkar** turned up in a mistletoe green gown by Sharnita Nandwana for the night. Retro waves in her hair and minimal jewellery, she was a vision in green at the red carpet. Another break from the usual was **Alaya F**, who arrived wearing a Gaurav Gupta number. The blush pink short dress complemented her vibe and made her stand out in style on the big night.



Only a few days ago, **Amruta Subhash** attended the Filmfare Awards (Marathi) wearing a saree previously owned by Smita Patil. She made yet another appearance in a nostalgic piece that was gifted to her by the late actor's sister, Anita Patil. Needless to say, we were in awe of how well she pulled it off. Another striking appearance with a dash of nostalgia was singer **Nikhita Gandhi** in her 'nana dadu's' pantsuit. She added oomph to her look with her long pink dreadlocks.

NIKHITA  
GANDHI

AKANSHA  
RANJAN  
KAPOOR

DHVANI  
BHANUSHALI

MAANVI GAGROO

AAHANA KUMRA

AMRUTA  
SUBHASH

ANUPRIA  
GOENKA

**Anupria Goenka** looked ravishing in a sequin number by Neeta Lulla. She topped the glittering gown with a high-brained tail and light make-up. First-timer on the red carpet, **Akansha Ranjan Kapoor** went all out blush in her Hala Al Mamari gown. She kept her make-up and hair simple and quite relatable for girls looking to go glam even in the summers. Floating like a pixie, **Dhvani Bhanushali** radiated grace in her Mondelifestyle dress. The plunging neckline and the feature plume detailing, made her look cute and sexy at the same time. **Aahana Kumra** strutted down the red carpet in a well-fitted Ambika Lal gown. The classic fit, perfected with her curly locks and the thigh-high slit were quite eye-catching. **Maanvi Gagroo** rocked a loose silhouette number by Vetemour for the night. She finished off the look with statement earrings and a contrasting cute pink heart bag.





SHRIYA  
PILGAONKAR

SONNALLI SEYGAL

TILLOTAMA  
SHOME

URVASHI  
RAUTELA

ELNAAZ NOROUZI

DAISY SHAH

**Daisy Shah** attended her first ever Filmfare red carpet in a stunning lavender number by Amir Gupta. The bodycon creation with a feathered bustier made her look like a mermaid on the red carpet. Working an all-black jumpsuit with cape sleeves, **Elnaaz Norouzi's** L'effet outfit was a hit for the evening. The red lip and Hollywood wave for the hairdo worked well for her.

**Urvashi Rautela** exuded the classic Jessica Rabbit vibe in her ruby Monisha Jaisingh gown. The fitting-silhouette, her long straight tresses and her subtle make-up, all worked for the lady. Making fashion look comfortable, **Tillotama Shome** opted for a co-ord by Norblack Norwhite and glamourised the look with a stunning necklace. Her tightly braided hair and kohl-ed eyes added to the perfection of this semi-formal look. Serving us a princess moment, **Sonnalli Seygal** dolled up in a hot pink gown by Neetu Rohra. She finished off the look with a ponytail and ear cuffs. **Shriya Pilgaonkar's** ensemble by Bloni was a dream outfit. The lady in her satin pantsuit with heavy curls and chocolate make-up looked stunning.



Whoever said men's fashion is limited, hasn't seen the Filmfare red carpet yet. The dapper **Freddy Daruwala** got heads turning in a jet black *bandhgala* by Manish Malhotra. With his black loafer and pulled back hair, Freddy rocked the fusion wear for the big night.



VARDHAN  
PURI

RAJAT  
BARMECHA

JAIDEEP AHLAWAT

PRATIK GANDHI

RITEISH  
DESHMUKH

FREDDY  
DARUWALA

Our first host for the evening, **Riteish Deshmukh** added a bit of jazz to a classic tuxedo by Jewellyn Alvares. A crisp bow tie and the classic combo made the star shine bright. Talking of oomph, **Vardhan Puri** turned up in a quirky striped rose gold blazer with black pants for the night. He made the unconventional ensemble work to perfection. Cool and comfy, **Rajat Barmecha** kept it semi-casual in a black blazer and a t-shirt. He finished off his look with chunky white sneakers. We couldn't keep our eyes off **Pratik Gandhi** in his all black tuxedo by Adani Creation. Vintage and striking, Pratik looked like a million bucks that night. It doesn't get cooler than **Jaideep Ahlawat** casually walking down the red carpet in a well-fitted maroon blazer, a crisp white shirt and black pants. The star looked dashing in the ensemble topped with his ponytail.



Our third host for the evening **Manish Paul** was both humour and style personified during the awards night. He opted for an all-black tuxedo with a contrasting scarlet bow tie to finish the look.

MANISH PAUL

SAHIL SALATHIA

AMAAL MALLIK

AYUSHMANN KHURRANA

RAJKUMMAR RAO

**Sahil Salathia** stood out in the crowd in his plaid-green suit with a white shirt. He accessorised the look with some funky jewellery and manicured black nails. We sure dug this OOTD. **Amaal Mallik** kept it classic in an all-black suit with his messy hair and beard. He looked quite charming walking down the red carpet. Next up is the man who defines men's fashion for all age groups. **Ayushmann Khurrana** dropped yet another style bomb wearing an OS by OS suit. Working the velvet blazer like it's meant to be, he sure was one of the finest dressed that night. Our second host for the night, **Rajkumar Rao** took the classic route in his Gaurav Gupta creation. A tailor-made tux with his unmatched charm, Rajkumar and his tuxedo were a match made in heaven.



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2021

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Riteish Deshmukh, Ayushmann Khurrana and Rajkummar Rao set the stage on fire

# THE SHOW GOES ON...

NOT EVEN THE THREAT OF THE PANDEMIC STOPPED  
THE DENIZENS OF THE INDUSTRY FROM COMING TOGETHER  
AS ONE TO CELEBRATE EXCELLENCE IN CINEMA, FINDS DEVESH SHARMA



Parveen Dusanj and Kabir Bedi are a cosy couple

The 66th Vimal Elaichi Filmfare Awards 2021 were held on a muggy day in Mumbai. But no one minded the heat and humidity, as well as the mandatory antigen test at the venue – Film City, Mumbai. Because it was all about celebrating hope, celebrating victory, celebrating rebirth. The film industry had come to a halt because of the coronavirus pandemic. Films weren't getting shot, weren't getting released. But our film industry folks are nothing if not survivors. They soaked in the pressure and waited for the storm to subside. And through shooting in safe destinations and releasing films on OTT, they managed to survive. And that resilient spirit was very much evident during the awards show. Presenting a bird's eye view of the proceedings...



Anubhav Sinha and Taapsee Pannu are all smiles

Maniesh Paul and Tamannaah jive together



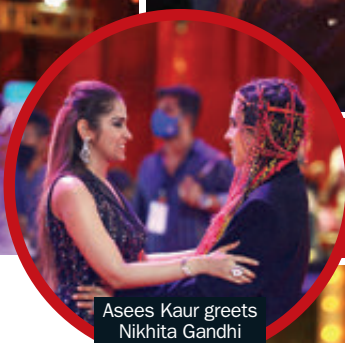




Priyamani enjoys the proceedings with her husband Mustafa Raj



Sanjana Sanghi takes in the proceedings



Asees Kaur greets Nikhita Gandhi



Urvashi Rautela, Sara Ali Khan and Nora Fatehi are amused by the proceedings

## TAAPSEE PANNU LARGE-HEARTEDLY DEDICATED HER AWARD TO ALL HER COLLEAGUES WHO GOT NOMINATED IN HER CATEGORY



Taapsee Pannu



Anupriya Goenka, Farah Khan and Aahna Kumra indulge in a selfie



Amruta Subhash and Mithila Palkar pose with Farrokh Jaffar

### ROMANCING LIFE

**Irrfan Khan** was our Lifetime Achievement Award winner this year and also won the Best Actor In A Leading Role (Male) for *Angrezi Medium*. The awards were given posthumously and were collected by his son **Babil** on his behalf. Babil came wearing an ensemble which belonged to his father, at the event. He became teary-eyed while collecting the trophies and the audience choked-up as well. It was an emotional moment

for all. Babil wants to make a career in showbiz and commented that he wanted his father to teach him acting. But in his absence, he'll learn it from his father's colleagues. He vowed to carry forward his father's glorious legacy and we wish him all the success in the world.

### THAPPAD KI GOONJ

*Thappad*, produced by **Anubhav Sinha** and T Series, was the much-celebrated movie at the ceremony, and won a slew of popular as well as technical awards.

**Taapsee Pannu** won the Best Actor In A Leading Role (Female) for the film and commented that while last year she won the Best Actress (Critics'), which she shared with **Bhumi Pednekar** for *Saand Ki Aankh*, she was glad that her popularity had soared within one year.

She large-heartedly dedicated her award to all her colleagues who got nominated in her category, stating that each one was a woman of substance and excelled in their respective roles. And that this was a collective victory



A true- blue entrepreneur, a humanitarian , a music aficionado, and a style Icon Prayag Khose does it all. Recently Prayag Khose was spotted at 66th Vimal Elaichi Filmfare Awards 2021 ,



Prayag Khose with Nora Fatehi



Prayag with Sanjana Sanghi



With Alaya F



With Taapsee Pannu





Maniesh Paul having a lively banter with Farrokh Jaffar



Babil reminisces about his father Irrfan as Ayushmann Khurrana looks on



Rajkummar Rao and Riteish Deshmukh are the perfect hosts



Niranjan Iyengar and Ryan Stephen enjoy the proceedings



Daniel Weber and Sunny Leone enjoy the show

## RAGHAV CHAITANYA WON THE BEST PLAYBACK SINGER (MALE) FOR SINGING THE SOULFUL *EK TUKDA DHOOP* FROM THE FILM *THAPPAD*

for women in the industry and women everywhere. She also said her director Anubhav Sinha had kind of predicted this victory at the start of the film and thanked him for making this thought-provoking film about women's empowerment. **Raghav Chaitanya** won the Best Playback Singer (Male) for singing the soulful *Ek tukda dhoop* from the film. It was the first Bollywood outing for the internet sensation and the lad's excitement was palpable. We'd like to thank **Amaal Malik** for driving all the way from his home in Andheri to present the award to his protégé.

### BIG THANKS!

*Thappad* also took home the Best Film trophy. While the stars get all the limelight,

the people behind the marquee names remain largely unknown. Partnering with Cadbury, we decided to acknowledge the unacknowledged this year. As a part of the initiative, Anubhav Sinha's and **Bhushan Kumar's** support staff were called upon to the stage and both the producers dedicated their award to the silent heroes working with them. They were also given Cadbury hampers to further sweeten the memory. We also organised a red carpet activity where the support staff of various stars were put under the limelight and quizzed about the life they lead by **Siddharth Kannan**. He asked them fun questions about their association with stars and at the end gifted them Cadbury hampers.



Pratik Gandhi

Sara Ali Khan





Dr BU Abdullah, Chairman of BU Abdullah Group, presented the 66th Vimal Elaichi Filmfare Award to the stunning Bollywood actress Sara Ali Khan who took it on behalf of her father Saif Ali Khan who won the Best Supporting Actor (Male) for the movie Tanhaji - The Unsung Warrior.

## CHAIRMAN, BU ABDULLAH GROUP

**D**r Bu Abdullah is an Emirati businessman of par excellence, having his expertise in law and business, and he currently owns more than 270 companies in Asia and other parts of the world with his company Bu Abdullah Group of Companies which includes Real Estate, Legal firm, and business consultancy.

His work has been applauded for his commitment and thorough professionalism. In 2005, he embarked with his own company, Bu Abdullah Group of Companies, where he roped in top lawyers and business professionals to come together to make a successful team. His degree in law ensures that he can offer the best services to his clients. His professional advice has worked for many and so far, he has dealt with more

than 200 companies across the Middle East and Asia catering to business and law solutions to big corporations as well as small-size companies.

His humble nature and competence have helped him connect with top people from different walks of life including influential people from political circles from the Middle East and Asia. He has good terms with the Royal Family of UAE and with the top politicians of India and Pakistan.

Dr Bu Abdullah currently is a Guinness World Holder and he won big rounds of applause for being the 1st Emirati to visit the Lok Sabha in India for the Atal Bajpayee Awards 2019. His works speak a lot and have even helped him bag several awards including getting Dynamic Emirati Entrepreneur by Ramdas Bandu Minister of State for Social Justice, Empowerment in the Narendra Modi Government, and the Most Iconic Emirati Business Personality of the Year 2019.

Dr Bu Abdullah plays a crucial role in nurturing the concerns of non-residents and ensuring communal unity among the NRIs in the Gulf region and with his good connections in Bollywood, we never know he would embark on a project in Tinsel Town soon!



with Ayushmann Khurrana



With Rajpal Yadav and Tamanna Bhatia



with Taapsee Pannu





Pritam poses with son Purvesh



Neha Jaiswal – LIVA Miss Diva Runner - up 2020 & Aavriti Choudhary – LIVA Miss Diva Supranational 2020

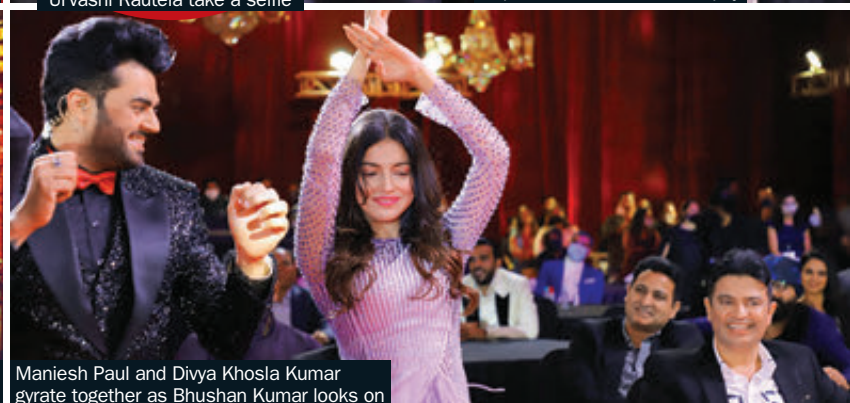


Divya Khosla Kumar and Urvashi Rautela take a selfie

Nora Fatehi and Maniesh Paul pose like the Filmfare trophy



Rajkummar Rao, Riteish Deshmukh and Maniesh Paul rake in the laughs



Maniesh Paul and Divya Khosla Kumar gyrate together as Bhushan Kumar looks on

## FARROKH JAFFAR, THE WINNER OF BEST ACTOR IN A SUPPORTING ROLE (FEMALE) IS CLOSE TO 90 AND YET CHOSE TO TRAVEL ALL THE WAY FROM LUCKNOW FOR THE BIG NIGHT



Tamannaah

The delight on their faces made our day. **Tamannaah Bhatia**, who arrived at the red carpet while her staff was being interviewed, joined in the proceedings and even shook a leg with all of them. That's called team spirit, alright.

### SUPER SINGER

Singer **Malobika Banerjee** introduced her new song on the *Filmfare* stage. Malobika, whose rendition mesmerised the audience, said that she was glad she was attending Filmfare this year when the going has been bleak for the industry. She said our

Ayushmann Khurrana

awards are sure to boost the morale of the industry in such trying times. Sweet words, indeed.

### LUCKY LUCKNOW

*Gulabo Sitabo* was another big winner of the night. **Farrokh Jaffar**, the winner of Best Actor In A Supporting Role (Female), Award for her enthralling performance in *Gulabo Sitabo*, is close to 90. And she chose to travel all the way from Lucknow for the big night. The film is set in Lucknow and looks like the city proved lucky for her, as well as for the makers. She was

a veritable delight and made everyone's spirit soar through her infectious laughter. **Amitabh Bachchan** won the Best Actor (Critics') Award for his performance in the film but unfortunately wasn't able to attend the function. We missed you, sir.

### CALL FOR WARRIORS

**Saif Ali Khan** couldn't make it to the venue to collect his Best Actor In A Supporting Role (Male) trophy for his role in *Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior*. His daughter

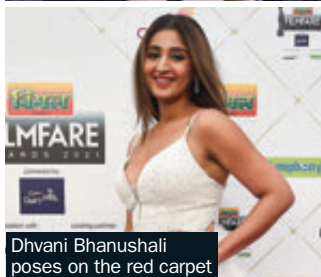




Manasa Varanasi – VLCC Femina Miss India World 2020 & Manya Singh – VLCC Femina Miss India Runner-up 2020



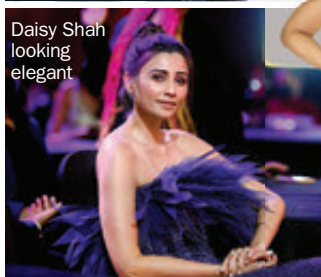
Raghav Chaitanya and Asees Kaur enjoying the show



Dhvani Bhanushali poses on the red carpet



Rajpal Yadav poses at the red carpet



Daisy Shah looking elegant



Anurag Basu and Manish Paul have fun together



Om Raut poses with Jaideep Ahlawat



Mr. Ajit Andhare – COO Viacom18 Studios



Shriya Pilgaonkar poses with Anubhav Sinha



Malobika Banerjee croons for the audience as Manish Paul looks on

## LUDO WON FOR PRITAM HIS FOURTH FILMFARE TROPHY FOR BEST MUSIC. THE COMPOSER WAS IN FINE SPIRITS AND SAID HE WAS EXPECTING TO WIN FOR LOVE AAJ KAL

Sara Ali Khan turned up instead to collect the trophy on her father's behalf. Thanks kiddo. *Tanhaji's* director **Om Raut**, who self-confessedly grew up on stories concerning our glorious history couldn't contain his joy on winning the Best Director's trophy. The film was a visual extravaganza and it's no wonder that it won the Best VFX award as well.

### MUSICAL CHAIRS

*Ludo* won for **Pritam** his fourth Filmfare trophy for Best Music. The composer

was in fine spirits and said he was expecting to win for *Love Aaj Kal* and was hugely surprised when his name was announced for *Ludo*. He had brought his son **Purvash** along with him for the first time and kept checking with him whether he had thanked everyone in his speech. We were having our awards in three segments and when Pritam went home after his session, his daughter **Ishqa** chided him for not taking her along. He called us up to ask if he could attend the next session with her and it was our pleasure to have him again with us. **Asees Kaur** won the Best Playback Singer (Female) for the title song of *Malang* and was brimming with joy at the ceremony. She loved posing with the trophy at the photoshoot room and gave some stunning shots. We missed **Gulzar saab**, our Best Lyrics winner. The writer, despite his advanced age, has kept himself relevant in today's era. This was his 13th win in the category, which is an all-time record.



Nora Fatehi

Amruta Khanvilkar

Sunny Leone





Maniesh Paul dances with Urvashi Rautela



Team Thappad poses on the red carpet

**TILLOTAMA SHOME SAID SHE HAS HAD A TWENTY-YEAR JOURNEY AS AN ACTRESS AND STILL FELT LIKE A DEBUTANTE ON THE FILMFARE STAGE HOLDING HER TROPHY**



Tamannaah is being interviewed by Siddharth Kannan



Sara Ali Khan's spot girl Jharna Ray being felicitated

## TO SIR WITH LOVE

**Tilottama Shome** won the Best Actress (Critics') trophy for her sublime performance as a housemaid who falls in love with her employer in **Rohena Gera's** *Sir*. Tilottama said she has had a twenty-year journey as an actress and still felt like a debutante on the Filmfare stage holding her trophy. Rohena, who won the Best Screenplay Award for her sensitive writing, was out of India at the time and sent a friend to collect it.

## DREAM DEBUTS

**Alaya F** is a little bundle of energy who made her presence felt with her



Rajat Barmecha and Mithila Palkar

endearing performance in the romcom *Jawaani Jaaneman*. Her joy knew no bounds when her grandfather, the towering **Kabir Bedi**, turned up to present her with her Best Debut (Female) trophy. It was a sweet family reunion on stage. Alaya was all teary-eyed and so overwrought with emotion that she forgot her winner's speech. Awww... A beginning can be made at any age and our Best Debut (Director) **Rajesh Krishnan** personified that. The middle-aged filmmaker won the award for *Lootcase* and was as happy about it as Alaya. The film was a

rib-tickling comedy

and let's hope he goes on to make many more laugh riots in the future.

## KEEPING IT SHORT

**Arnav Abdagire**, our Best Actor in the short film segment, is a blind child. He didn't let his handicap deter him from acting in the film *Arjun*, which also won the Best Short Film Award. He posed happily for our photos and was one of the happiest souls around. The film's director, **Shivraj Waichal**, who is an actor in Marathi cinema, revealed that the project got made because of lockdown. He and producer **Vishal Bhujbal** were tired of sitting idle and thought of making





Taapsee Pannu and Jaideep Ahlawat pose at the podium



Sonali Sehgal poses for the camera



Anupria Goenka

a short film to keep their creative juices flowing. Our Best Short Film Non Fiction winner **Nitesh Parulekar** likewise was stuck in his home at Konkan during the lockdown and decided to make a film on the wildlife found in the local backyards. His film, *Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary*, made with the help of family and friends is an eyeopener indeed. **Purvi Savardekar**, our Best Actor (Female) in short films, for the film *First Wedding*, is a stage actor from Goa. She was in the middle of a show when we called her and thought someone was pranking her. **Ryan Stephen** and **Niranjan Iyengar** made

a thought-provoking short film about rape called *Devi* which was immensely successful on the internet. It's no wonder that it won the People's Choice Award. Kudos to them on their victory.

### E=MC3

Our three emcees, **Rajkummar Rao**, **Ritesh Deshmukh** and **Maniesh Paul** were a bundle of energy and kept things in sync with their split-second timing. Maneish, in particular, was at his impromptu best. Maniesh interacted with **Sunny Leone** and their banter raked in the laughs. He also made celebs like **Anurag Basu**,



Veera Kapur Ee is ecstatic over her win



Amaal Malik

Elnaaz Norouzi



Vardhan Puri



Priyamani poses with hubby Mustafa Raj

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DESIGNED, SCRIPTED, DIRECTED & MANAGED BY  
**HYPERLINK**

SHOW DIRECTOR  
**MARGARET ALEXANDER**

Tamannaah and several others dance as per his instructions and had the audience rooting for more.

We would like to thank everyone – be it winners, presenters or the nominees for coming to the function even in these trying times and making the event their own. We need to lean on each other to sail through these difficult times, so the show of support was welcome indeed...



# FEELING FRESH WITH FILMFARE!



**THE 66TH VIMAL ELAICHI FILMFARE AWARDS 2021 ADDED A DOSE OF FRESHNESS TO THESE MIASMIC TIMES**

Separated by a pandemic but united by the 66th Vimal Elaichi Filmfare Awards 2021, Bollywood's top celebrities like Anurag Basu, Sara Ali Khan, Anubhav Sinha, Amruta Khanvilkar, Nora Fatehi, Taapsee Pannu and Sunny Leone had a blast on the red carpet which they walked on after a year of staying locked in. Every celebrity who attended was thrilled at this semblance of normalcy and equally excited to meet members of the film fraternity whom they hadn't seen in ages. It was truly a refreshing feeling being back on the red carpet and at the prestigious awards ceremony which was held with utmost care and precaution, keeping in mind these trying times. The message was clear - despite all the hardship, the film industry was together and united.



Sara Ali Khan



Sanjana Sanghi



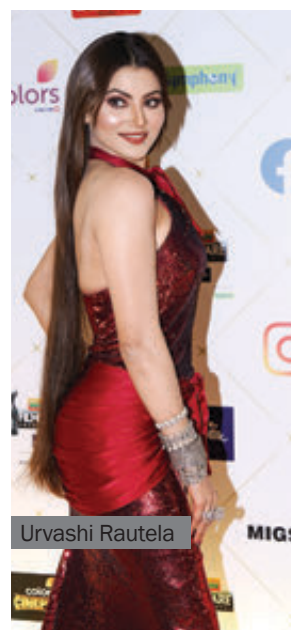
Taapsee Pannu



Tamannaah



Farah Khan



Urvashi Rautela





Anurag Basu



Nora Fatehi



Amruta Khanvilkar



Sunny Leone



Mithila Palkar



Anupria Goenka



Pritam



Daisy Shah



Amruta Subhash



Anubhav Sinha



Priyamani  
with husband  
Mustafa Raj





66TH  
VIMAL  
ELAICHI  
FILMFARE  
AWARDS  
2021—

(From L-R) Best Debut (Female) **Alaya F**  
Best Actress (Critics') **Tillotama Shome**  
Best Actor In A Leading Role (Female)  
**Taapsee Pannu** | Best Director **Om Raut**  
Best Playback Singer (Male) **Raghav Chaitanya**



# WINNERS TAKE ALL

**DEVESH SHARMA** profiles the winners of the 66th Vimal Elaichi Filmfare Awards 2021

PHOTOGRAPHS: MEETESH TANEJA

(From L-R) Best Playback Singer (Female) **Asees Kaur**  
Best Film (Critics') **Prateek Vats** | Best Actor In A Supporting Role (Female) **Farrokh Jaffar**  
Best Film **Bhushan Kumar and Anubhav Sinha** | Best Choreography **Farah Khan**



## What does a single slap entail?

Probably everything when it comes to self-respect. *Thappad* showed us that it's not always right to turn the other cheek. The film, about marital discord, won the Best Picture trophy for its producers Anubhav Sinha and Bhushan Kumar. Anubhav also won the Best Story trophy, along with Mrunmayee Lagoo Waikul, for the same film.

And Taapsee Pannu took home the Best Actor In A Leading Role (Female) trophy for her sensitive portrayal of a homemaker who chooses not to be a victim and fights back at the first instance of violence. *Eeb Allay Ooo!* The title will have you scratching your head but this unheard of film about the plight of migrant workers is certainly worth a dekho, especially in such uncertain times. Amitabh Bachchan is furiously reinventing himself these days, taking greater risks than he did in his heyday and shaming younger actors into upping their game. He won the Best Actor (Critics') Award as an eccentric landlord at odds with everyone in the world in *Gulabo Sitabo*. The Best Actress (Critics') trophy went to Tillotama Shome for *Sir*. Her true-to-life portrayal of a maid who finds herself falling for her employer is really out of this world. The late Irrfan Khan was both our Best Actor and the Lifetime Achievement Award winner. The cruel hand of death snatched him away from us at a time when he was touching his peak both nationally and internationally. Know about them and about every other winner in this specially-curated segment...



BEST ACTOR IN A  
LEADING ROLE (MALE)

# IRRFAN KHAN

ANGREZI MEDIUM

Irrfan Khan, as we know, was undergoing treatment for a near-fatal disease and was in much pain throughout the shooting of the film. So kudos to him for overcoming the odds and giving us another masterful performance. The film was all about the bond between fathers and daughters and it all felt achingly real. The film proved to be his swan song. Through his courageous efforts, he proved that not even death can dilute the power of a heartfelt performance.



Angrezi Medium



Anurag Basu and Jaideep Alhawat hand over the trophy to Irrfan's son Babil

## NOMINEES

- Ajay Devgn  
(Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior)
- Amitabh Bachchan (Gulabo Sitabo)
- Ayushmann Khurrana (Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan)
- **IRRFAN KHAN**  
(**ANGREZI MEDIUM**)
- Rajkummar Rao (Ludo)
- Sushant Singh Rajput (Dil Bechara)





BEST ACTOR IN  
A LEADING ROLE  
(FEMALE)

## TAAPSEE PANNU

THAPPAD

Taapsee Pannu is growing as an actor with each passing film. In *Thappad*, she plays a woman who chooses to walk out of her marriage after a single incident of domestic abuse as she feels she's been slighted. Her silences, her body language say it all. She stays within her character throughout and makes you root for her. She makes you experience the world through her character Amrita's eyes and makes you understand the importance of her fight. It's another fine portrayal from the actor.



Thappad



Anurag Basu, Jaideep Alhawar and Mr. Ajit Andhare – COO Viacom18 Studios present the award

### NOMINEES

- Deepika Padukone (Chhapaak)
- Janhvi Kapoor (Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl)
- Kangana Ranaut (Panga)
- **TAAPSEE PANNU (THAPPAD)**
- Vidya Balan (Shakuntala Devi)





BEST ACTOR  
(CRITICS')

## AMITABH BACHCHAN

GULABO SITABO

The thespian plays an ageing landlord who is always at odds with the people around him. His is an unsatisfied soul who is never at peace. The actor has done many unusual roles before – *Black* and *Paa* are two examples – and he continues to amaze us with his virtuosity. It's as if he's taken upon himself to increase the difficulty levels as he ages. Bachchan is almost hidden under layers of make-up but he doesn't let that hinder his acting skills and comes up with a commanding performance once more.



Gulabo Sitabo



Priyamani gives away the Black Lady to Riteish Deshmukh who collects it on Mr Bachchan's behalf

### NOMINEES

- AMITABH BACHCHAN (GULABO SITABO)
- Irrfan Khan (Angrezi Medium)
- Rajkummar Rao (Ludo)
- Sanjay Mishra (Kaamyaab)
- Shardul Bhardwaj (Eeb Allay Ooo!)

BEST ACTRESS  
(CRITICS')

## TILLOTAMA SHOME

SIR

Tillotama Shome shines as a maid from rural Maharashtra who sees Mumbai as a chance to begin life anew. She soon develops an emotional bond with her America-retuned landlord. He's hurting from a broken engagement and finds solace in her company. But the maid is practical enough to know that love isn't enough as the chasm between them is too deep. The little touches she imparts to her character, the body language, the palpable sense of unease – you feel as if you're watching a real maid and not an actor portraying a role.



Sir



Priyamani and Mrs. Jonaki Bakeri, Director - Symphony Limited, hand over the trophy

### NOMINEES

- Bhumi Pednekar (Dolly Kitty Aur Woh Chamakte Sitare)
- Konkona Sen Sharma (Dolly Kitty Aur Woh Chamakte Sitare)
- Sanya Malhotra (Ludo)
- Taapsee Pannu (Thappad)
- **TILLOTAMA SHOME (SIR)**
- Vidya Balan (Shakuntala Devi)





BEST DIRECTOR

## OM RAUT

TANHAJI: THE  
UNSUNG WARRIOR

A disclaimer before the beginning of the film states that it doesn't vouch for historical accuracy so don't go into looking for facts here. What director Om Raut has done is bring alive the valour of Tanhaji on the silver screen. The film follows the adventures of Tanhaji Malusare and his band of bravehearts as they attempt to wrench the tactically important Kondana fort from the hands of the Mughals. From an obscure footnote in history, the warrior looks like the stuff of legend as his exploits get recreated on celluloid.



Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior



Pratik Gandhi gives away the Black Lady

### NOMINEES

- Anurag Basu (Ludo)
- Anubhav Sushila Sinha (Thappad)
- **OM RAUT (TANHAJI: THE UNSUNG WARRIOR)**
- Sharan Sharma (Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl)
- Shoojit Sircar (Gulabo Sitabo)



BEST FILM (CRITICS')

## EEB ALLAY OOO!

PRATEEK VATS

The film is an absurd comedy about the plight of migrant workers in metros. It reaches out to the people belonging to the grassroots level and points out that sometimes the fate of such marginalised people is worse than that of the animals. The protagonist can't land a job and gets hired to curb the monkey menace and develops a strange empathy with the apes. The film is a moving document of human suffering and should be lauded for pushing the envelope when it comes to narrative treatment as well.



Eeb Allay Ooo!



Mr. Prayag Khose, Entrepreneur and Nora Fatehi hand over the Black Lady

### NOMINEES

- **EEB ALLAY OOO!**  
(PRATEEK VATS)
- Gulabo Sitabo (Shoojit Sircar)
- Kaamyab (Hardik Mehta)
- Lootcase (Rajesh Krishnan)
- Sir (Rohena Gera)
- Thappad (Anubhav Sushila Sinha)





## BEST FILM

# THAPPAD

The film points out that women have been conditioned for generations to support wrong practices for the sake of domestic peace. It makes a case for the fact that even the smallest act of domestic violence is an offense. What you see on screen looks and feels real. The film shakes you up as you realise that patriarchy is indeed deeply ingrained in the very bones of our society. Kudos to the makers for making us face this grim reality, which we often turn a blind eye to.



Thappad



Kabir Bedi presents the trophy to Anubhav Sinha and Bhushan Kumar

## NOMINEES

- Gulabo Sitabo
- Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl
- Ludo
- Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior
- **THAPPAD**

BEST DEBUT  
(DIRECTOR)

## RAJESH KRISHNAN

LOOTCASE

*Lootcase* is a rollicking document about human greed. It tells a story of a man who inadvertently finds a suitcase full of money and doesn't know what to do with it. Carrying the absurdist leanings of the film further, the protagonist is shown to develop a relationship with the suitcase, pouring his heart out to the inanimate object. The hilarious monologue spouted by the protagonist provide for rib-tickling comedy.



Lootcase



Mr. Yash Miglani – Managing Director Migsun Group and Akanksha Ranjan Kapoor present the Black Lady





BEST DEBUT (FEMALE)

## ALAYA F

JAWAANI JAANEMAN

Alaya Furniturewala makes a confident debut, displaying a mixture of strength and vulnerability that was needed in the film. She fits right in there with Saif, hoping for his friendship, his support but is okay with a life without him as well. The most refreshing thing about her character is that it isn't judgmental of anyone's life decisions. Her character just goes with the flow, hoping for the best and Alaya's portrayal catches the easy optimism of youth quite effectively.



Jawaani Jaaneman



Kabir Bedi joyfully presents the trophy to his granddaughter Alaya F

LIFETIME  
ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

## IRRFAN KHAN

Irfan studied drama at NSD after doing his MA. He moved to Mumbai after passing out and acted in numerous television serials, including *Chanakya*, *Bharat Ek Khoj*, *Sara Jahan Hamara*, *Banegi Apni Baat*, *Chandrakanta*, *Shrikant* and *Sparsh*. He made his big-screen debut with the Academy Award nominated film *Salaam Bombay!* (1988) directed by Mira Nair. He was also seen in the acclaimed art film *Ek Doctor Ki Maut* (1990).

He became a known face in the West when London-based director Asif Kapadia gave him the lead in *The Warrior* (2001), which won acclaim in several film festivals abroad. He later went on to act in several prestigious projects from the West like *The Namesake* (2006), *The Darjeeling Limited* (2007), the Academy Award winning film *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008), *New York, I Love You* (2009), *The Amazing Spider-Man* (2012), *Life of Pi* (2012), *Jurassic World* (2015) and *Inferno* (2016).

He won the Filmfare Award for Best Villain for *Haasil*. Besides that, he won the Filmfare Best Supporting Actor trophy for *Life In A... Metro* (2007), Best Actor (Critics') for *Paan Singh Tomar* (2012) and the Best Actor trophy for *Hindi Medium* (2017) and for *Angrezi Medium* (2010), its sequel. The award was given posthumously to the actor. In February 2018, Irfan was diagnosed with an undisclosed disease, which later turned out to be a neuroendocrine tumour. He travelled to London and returned after one year of treatment. He was hospitalised due to a colon infection on April 28, 2020 and died of subsequent complications.



Irfan's son Babil receives the award from Ayushmann Khurrana





BEST ACTOR IN A  
SUPPORTING ROLE (MALE)

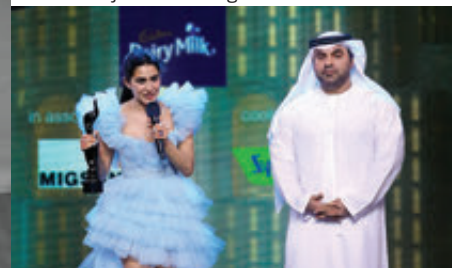
## SAIF ALI KHAN

TANHAJI: THE  
UNsung WARRIOR

Saif Ali Khan teamed up with his *Omkara* colleague Ajay Devgn and created history once more. He plays Udaybhan, a Rajput who has joined hands with the mughals. Udaybhan is ruthless and cunning and that's what makes his character more interesting. Saif gets the nuances just right and plays the character with just the right touch. One can see he's having a lot of fun playing a slightly unhinged character having a set of quirks. It's one of the best roles played by the actor in recent years.



Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior



Sara Ali Khan collects her father's trophy from His Excellency Dr BU Abdullah, Chairman of BU Abdullah Group

### NOMINEES

- Deepak Dobriyal (*Angezi Medium*)
- Gajraj Rao (*Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan*)
- Kumud Mishra (*Thappad*)
- Pankaj Tripathi (*Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl*)
- Pankaj Tripathi (*Ludo*)
- **SAIF ALI KHAN (TANHAJI: THE UNSUNG WARRIOR)**



BEST ACTOR IN A  
SUPPORTING ROLE  
(FEMALE)

## FARROKH JAFFAR

GULABO SITABO

She's close to 90 but hasn't lost her zest for life. Farrokh Jaffar has the most delightful role in the film. She plays Amitabh's wife who is older to him by a decade or so. She married him as she couldn't find the courage to rebel against her parents. She holds the purse-strings and keeps her husband under control. Her character hasn't lost the will to live despite her old age and her survival instincts are sharp as hell. It's a wonderful performance indeed from the actor.



Gulabo Sitabo



Amruta Subhash and Mithila Palkar present the trophy

### NOMINEES

- FARROKH JAFFAR  
(GULABO SITABO)
- Maanvi Gagroo (Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan)
- Neena Gupta (Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan)
- Richa Chadha (Panga)
- Tanvi Azmi (Thappad)





BEST MUSIC ALBUM

# PRITAM

LUDO

*Ludo's* soundtrack celebrates life, celebrates love. Pritam has always been known for his melodious output and this album is no exception. He has offered songs which you can listen to without the reference point of the film. At the same time, they do help in driving the narrative forward. The songs grow on you on repeated listening. He shares a long relationship with director Anurag Basu and knows what's expected of him and has delivered more than what was required of him.



Ludo



Divya Khosla Kumar does the honours

## NOMINEES

- Chhapaak (Shankar Ehsan Loy)
- Dil Bechara (A R Rahman)
- Love Aaj Kal (Pritam)
- **LUDO (PRITAM)**
- Malang (Various Artistes)



BEST LYRICS

## GULZAR

MOVIE - CHHAPPAK  
SONG - CHHAPPAK

Gulzar is a master of packing a wealth of meaning in a few deft lines. Here too, he talks about how a few drops of acid can have life-changing consequences. The whole philosophy of the film is captured in this thought-provoking song by the evergreen wordsmith who seems to be growing better and better as he ages. He has already set the benchmark of winning the most Filmfare Awards as a lyricist. And we somehow get the feeling that it won't get surpassed any time soon.



Chhappaak



Anu Malik and Manya Singh – VLCC Femina Miss India Runner Up 2020 read out Gulzar saab's name

### NOMINEES

- **GULZAR - CHHAPPAK (CHHAPPAK)**
- Irshad Kamil- Mehrama (Love Aaj Kal)
- Irshad Kamil- Shayad (Love Aaj Kal )
- Sayeed Qadri- Humdum Hardam (Ludo)
- Shakeel Azmi- Ek Tukda Dhoop (Thappad)
- Vayu- Mere Liye Tum Kaafi Ho (Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan)





BEST PLAYBACK  
SINGER (MALE)

## RAGHAV CHAITANYA

MOVIE - THAPPAD  
SONG - EK TUKDA DHOOP

Raghav has a unique, soulful voice which brims with technical virtuosity as well. *Ek tukda dhoop* talks about having one's own place in the sun. It's a homage to freedom, to the ability of doing things for one's own sake and not under the compulsion of others. Of being your own person. It's the choice everyone would like to possess and the song reminds you of it. The song is layered with meaning and he makes every nuance come alive through his mellifluous voice. The more one listens to the song, the more one feels enriched.



Thappad



Amaal Malik and Aavriti Choudhary  
– LIVA Miss Diva Supranational  
2020 present the award

### NOMINEES

- Arijit Singh- Shayad (Love Aaj Kal)
- Arijit Singh- Aabad Barbaad (Ludo)
- Ayushmann Khurrana- Mere Liye Tum (Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan)
- Darshan Raval- Mehrama (Love Aaj Kal)
- **RAGHAV CHAITANYA- EK TUKDA DHOOP (THAPPAD)**
- Ved Sharma- Malang (Malang)

BEST PLAYBACK  
SINGER (FEMALE)

## ASEES KAUR

MOVIE - MALANG  
SONG - MALANG

The song is about living life on a high without any regrets. It will appeal to the nomad in you. This female version of *Malang* has a dance-floor feel to it and Asees Kaur has sung it with the verve it required. It's a song about being free, roaming wildly without a care in the world and one feels those kinds of vibes while listening to the song. The repetition of hook line *Malang malang* adds to its charm.



Malang



Anu Malik and Neha Jaiswal –  
LIVA Miss Diva Runner Up 2020  
hand over the Black Lady

### NOMINEES

- Antara Mitra - Mehrama (Love Aaj Kal )
- ASEES KAUR- MALANG (MALANG)
- Palak Muchhal- Mann Ki Dori (Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl)
- Shradha Mishra- Mar Jayein Hum (Shikaara)
- Sunidhi Chauhan- Paas Nahi To Fail (Shakuntala Devi)





BEST STORY

## ANUBHAV SUSHILA SINHA & MRUNMAYEE LAGOO WAIKUL

THAPPAD

*Thappad* is a story of a woman's fight for self-respect. At the first glance, getting slapped by her husband in a fit of anger might look like a small thing but it had deeper repercussions. That one incident makes the protagonist question all the minute details which have been eroding her personality bit by bit. The insightful story brings to light the big and small abuses women have to put up with in a marriage.



Thappad



Shriya Pilgaonkar presents the award

### NOMINEES

- ANUBHAV SUSHILA SINHA & MRUNMAYEE LAGOO WAIKUL (THAPPAD)
- Hardik Mehta (Kaamyaab)
- Juhi Chaturvedi (Gulabo Sitabo)
- Kapil Sawant and Rajesh Krishnan (Lootcase)
- Rohena Gera (Sir)
- Shubham (Eeb Allay Ooo!)



BEST SCREENPLAY

## ROHENA GERA

SIR

Is love enough? That's the question being asked by the film. In India, especially, where class, religious and racial divides still dominate, love is never enough. And this is brought forth poignantly through the screenplay. Without going over the top, in subtle, small ways, the screenplay hints at the chasm of difference that exists between the two protagonists. We're made aware that even if they have strong feelings towards each other, it would be impractical for them to be together as the society won't tolerate it.



Sir



Nikita Gandhi and Daisy Shah  
do the honours

### NOMINEES

- Anubhav Sushila Sinha & Mrunmayee Lagoo Waikul (Thappad)
- Anurag Basu (Ludo)
- Kapil Sawant and Rajesh Krishnan (Lootcase)
- Prakash Kapadia, Om Raut (Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior)
- **ROHENA GERA (SIR)**



BEST DIALOGUE

## JUHI CHATURVEDI

GULABO SITABO

*Gulabo Sitabo* uses folklore motifs to weave a story about greed and human need. The dialogue feels like something real people would speak, rather than something culled from a book. At the same time, they are full of little hints and meanings that compel you to keep watching the film, waiting for the surprise to unravel. And the idiom of Lucknow is brought home just right as well. All in all, Juhi Chaturvedi scores off on a high on all points with this one.



Gulabo Sitabo



Vardhan Puri gives away the trophy

### NOMINEES

- Bhavesh Mandalia, Gaurav Shukla, Vinay Chhawal, Sara Bodinar (*Angrezi Medium*)
- **JUHI CHATURVEDI** (*GULABO SITABO*)
- Kapil Sawant (*Lootcase*)
- Prasad Kapadia (*Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior*)
- Samrat Chakraborty (*Ludo*)





BEST BACKGROUND  
SCORE

## MANGESH URMILA DHAKDE

THAPPAD

The art of background score lies in concealing it to the background. It should run parallel to the film's narrative without disrupting it. *Thappad* is a sensitive film about marital abuse. The film, without going shrill, makes a case that such things shouldn't be tolerated. And it is paralleled by the background score as well.



Thappad



Aahana Kumra reads out the winner's name

### NOMINEES

- AR Rahman (Dil Bechara)
- **MANGESH URMILA DHAKDE (THAPPAD)**
- Pritam (Ludo)
- Sameer Uddin (Lootcase)
- Sandeep Shirodkar (Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior)



BEST  
CINEMATOGRAPHY

## AVIK MUKHOPADHAYAY

GULABO SITABO

*Gulabo Sitabo* is all about lost glory. Hence the heightened shadows, grime and grim faces and the overall sense of disillusionment which pervades the film are highlighted by the deft camerawork. Avik reportedly chose to shoot in natural light and that made all the difference indeed. He has not shot Lucknow like a tourism department video but has emphasised the heat and the dust, letting the elements add to the story of greed and human failings. The masterful camerawork adds another layer to the film.



Gulabo Sitabo



Anupiya Goenka does the honours

### NOMINEES

- Archit Patel, Jay I. Patel (Panga)
- **AVIK MUKHOPADHAYAY**  
(GULABO SITABO)
- Keiko Nakahara  
(Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior)
- Saumyananda Sahi (Eeb Allay Ooo!)
- Soumik Sarmila Mukherjee (Thappad)



BEST PRODUCTION  
DESIGN

## MANSI DHRUV MEHTA

GULABO SITABO

*Gulabo Sitabo* is set in Lucknow. It tells a tale of once wealthy landowners who are well-past their golden age and are eking out a living renting out their palatial homes, which are crumbling due to lack of maintenance. Mansi Mehta makes sure that Amitabh Bachchan's house which is the focal point of the majority of action doesn't look out of place from the theme of the film. The crumbling paint, the deteriorating brickwork, even the lighting sockets to old but functional bicycles — It all feels real indeed.



Gulabo Sitabo



Niranjan Iyengar presents the award

### NOMINEES

- Aditya Kanwar (Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl)
- Anurag Basu (Ludo)
- **MANSI DHRUV MEHTA (GULABO SITABO)**
- Sandeep Meher (Panga)
- Sriram Kannan Iyengar, Sujeet Sawant (Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior)





BEST  
COSTUME DESIGN

## VEERA KAPUR EE

GULABO SITABO

*Gulabo Sitabo* belongs to a world caught between modernity and agelessness. Its characters belong to the lower-middle class, somehow making ends meet. They don't know that they are caught in a loop with no end in sight. The costumes look well-worn. In fact they look like clothes people might have brought for themselves rather than designed by a designer. That's a fine touch by Veera Kapur Ee indeed and adds to the overall appeal of the film.



Gulabo Sitabo



Manasa Varanasi – VLCC Femina Miss India World 2020 does the honours

### NOMINEES

- Abilasha Sharma (Chhapaak)
- Nachiket Barve, Mahesh Sheria (Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior)
- Ashish Dwyer (Ludo)
- Niharika Bhasin (Shakuntala Devi)
- **VEERA KAPUR EE**  
(GULABO SITABO)



BEST SOUND DESIGN

## KAAMOD KHARADE

THAPPAD

Domestic violence has become such an everyday thing in our country that we have become blasé about it. We have normalised it to the extent that it seems like a problem only when the victim is beaten to death or burnt alive. But the film points out that even a slap is one too many. Kaamod Kharade keeps the ambience alive in such a scenario. He also makes sure his sound design pushes the narrative smoothly without getting intrusive.



Thappad



Elnaaz Norouzi reads out the winner's name

### NOMINEES

- Abhishek Nair, Shijin Melvin Hutton (Ludo)
- Ali Merchant (Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl)
- Dipankar Jojo Chaki, Nihar Ranjan Samal (Gulabo Sitabo)
- **KAAMOD KHARADE (THAPPAD)**
- Lochan Kanvinde (Lootcase)
- Bigyna Bhushan Dahal (Eeb Allay Ooo!)



BEST EDITING

## YASHA PUSHPA RAMCHANDANI

THAPPAD

On the surface, the film has a single-line story. A husband slaps his wife in a fit of rage and then let alone apologising, feels there's nothing wrong in his actions. The wife quietly rebels against this injustice for the sake of her self-respect. The drama in the film is created by silences that lengthen with each passing frame, heralding the storm that's gathering inside the protagonist's heart. Thanks to the deft editing, the pathos and the angst stand out. Kudos to Yasha Ramchandani for her inspired cutting.



Thappad



Niranjan Iyengar hands over the award

### NOMINEES

- Ajay Sharma (Ludo)
- Anand Subaya (Lootcase)
- Chandrashekhara Prajapati (Gulabo Sitabo)
- Jacques Comets, Baptiste Ribault (Sir)
- **YASHA PUSHPA RAM CHANDANI (THAPPAD)**



BEST  
CHOREOGRAPHY

## FARAH KHAN

DIL BECHARA

Art lies in concealing art, as they say. The choreography of *Dil Bechara*'s title track doesn't appear rehearsed. Rather, it smacks of impromptu improvisations of a seasoned dancer dancing his heart out and having a good time of it doing so. Dance shouldn't just consist of deft moves but showcase emotions as well and that's what Farah Khan's choreography does best. She really makes Sushant Singh Rajput come alive in the track.



Dil Bechara



Aahana Kumra presents the award

### NOMINEES

- FARAH KHAN - DIL BECHARA (DIL BECHARA)
- Ganesh Acharya - Shankara Re Shankara (Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior)
- Ganesh Acharya - Bhankas (Baaghi 3)
- Kruti Mahesh, Rahul Shetty (Rnp) - Illegal Weapon (Street Dancer 3d)
- Kruti Mahesh, Rahul Shetty (Rnp) - Nachi Nachi (Street Dancer 3d)







BEST ACTION

## RAMAZAN BULUT, RP YADAV

TANHAJI: THE  
UNSUNG WARRIOR

*Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior* has some unbelievable action scenes comprising not only close-contact swordplay but long-drawn battle sequences as well. The whole film is set up as a series of adventures that befall Tanhaji Malusare and his soldiers as they attempt to climb up the Kondana Fort. And those sequences, each containing edge-of-the-seat moments, are the highlights of this taut actioner.



Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior



Anupria Goenka gives away the award

### NOMINEES

- Ahmed Khan (Baaghi 3)
- Harpal Singh (Chhalaang)
- Ivanov Victor and Andreas Nguyen (Khuda Haafiz)
- Manohar Verma (Lootcase)
- **RAMAZAN BULUT, RP YADAV (TANHAJI: THE UNSUNG WARRIOR)**



BEST VFX

## PRASAD SUTAR (NY VFX WALA)

TANHAJI: THE  
UNsung WARRIOR

The image of a heavy canon being dragged up the hill is arresting indeed. And so is the scene where the warriors rappel down slopes using ropes at breakneck speeds. The final battle scene, where Tanhaji stops the canon from being engaged, is the money shot. Guess what – all that was created using computer imagery. The film has some of the most intricate VFX work in recent history. The makers supposedly spent a major portion of the film's budget on it. The VFX artists did a superb job indeed.



Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior



Prasad Sutar receives the Black Lady from Elnaaz Norouzi

### NOMINEES

- Keitan Yadav & Harry Hingorani For Redchillies.VFX (Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl)
- Mahesh Baria (Baaghi 3)
- **PRASAD SUTAR (NY VFXWAALA) (TANHAJI: THE UNSUNG WARRIOR)**





BEST SHORT FILM  
IN NON FICTION

## NITESH RAMESH PARULEKAR

BACKYARD WILDLIFE  
SANCTUARY

As the name suggests, this short documentary film is shot in the backyard, showing the natural diversity found in it. The film starts with the drawing of a prehistory couple trying their best to learn farming. After that it is suggested that the backyard is also a farming experiment done by our ancestors. The camera moves in the backyard and vast diversity from butterflies, birds and snakes are shown. All these creatures get water, food, shelter in backyards. The message is that we should provide safety to all these creatures, as wildlife sanctuaries do.



Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary



Vasan Bala hands over the Black Lady



BEST SHORT FILM  
IN FICTION

## SHIVRAJ WAICHAL

ARJUN

*Arjun* is a story of a little blind boy who sees the world, through his own vision. This slice-of-life film is about a simple incident in his life. Arjun is introduced to the art of pencil sketching by his cousin and an artist, Ateesh. For someone who perceives this world through touch, this is another way of seeing the beauty of the world. He wants to give a sketch to his favourite teacher. The story revolves around the feelings that Arjun experiences while drawing and perceiving things differently.



Arjun



Vasan Bala does the honours





BEST ACTOR MALE  
SHORT FILM

## ARNAV ABDAGIRE

ARJUN

Arjun is a little blind boy who doesn't want his handicap to define him. He wants to experience life differently. His cousin Ateesh, who is an artist, tries to teach him pencil sketching. Through sheer persistence and hard work, Arjun learns how to sketch and a world of possibilities opens up for him. It's a fine performance by the child actor who is actually blind.



Arjun



Vasan Bala hands over the trophy

BEST ACTOR FEMALE  
SHORT FILM

## PURTI SAVARDEKAR

THE FIRST WEDDING

In a world made up of same sex couples, a man and a woman fall in love and decide to get married, a first of its kind. Along with an interview about their battles with themselves and the society, we see their life in homemade video footage. It's an absurd drama which emphasises the struggles of homosexual couples by reversing the reality. Purti comes across as a free spirit who wants to create an example for others. It's an honest portrayal which moves you.



The First Wedding



Vasan Bala presents the trophy



PEOPLE'S CHOICE  
AWARD FOR BEST  
SHORT FILM

# DEVI

DEVI

*Devi* is the story of nine oppressed women, from different strata of society, living in a small room, faced with the dilemma of sharing their space and stories in a country all too used to tragedy and pain. It tells you that rape victims can belong to any age group, any caste, creed or religion. That there is no reason per se for their tragedy to occur. All they can look forward to is death and hope that the afterlife will be kind to them.



Devi



Vasan Bala presents the award



# WE THANK THE ESTEEMED MEMBERS OF OUR JURY

## POPULAR CATEGORY



**ALKA YAGNIK**  
Singer



**AMAR KAUSHIK**  
Director



**AMIT MASURKAR**  
Director



**ANIRUDDHA ROY  
CHOWDHURY**  
Director



**ANU MALIK**  
Composer



**ANURADHA  
PAUDWAL**  
Singer



**AVINASH ARUN**  
Director



**KRISHNA DK**  
Director

## POPULAR CATEGORY



**NIKKHIL ADVANI**  
Director



**PRIYADARSHAN**  
Director



**RAMESH TAURANI**  
Producer



**SAKET  
CHAUDHARY**  
Director



**SUJOY GHOSH**  
Director



**SURESH TRIVENI**  
Director



**USHA UTHUP**  
Singer

## TECHNICAL AND CRITICS' CATEGORIES



**SHAKUN BATRA**  
Director



**PROSIT ROY**  
Director



**ABHISHEK  
CHAUBEY**  
Director



**TUSHAR  
HIRANANDANI**  
Director



**VASAN BALA**  
Director



**RENSIL D'SILVA**  
Director



**RAJ NIDIMORU**  
Director

## SHORT FILM JURY



**AANAND L RAI**  
Director



**NIKKHIL ADVANI**  
Director



**HANSAL MEHTA**  
Director



**ONIR**  
Director



**CHANDAN ARORA**  
Director



**RENSIL D'SILVA**  
Director



**DINESH VIJAN**  
Producer



**TUSHAR  
HIRANANDANI**  
Director



66<sup>TH</sup>  
VIMAL  
ELAICHI  
FILMFARE  
AWARDS  
2021 —

# STARRY STARRY NIGHT

THE STARS SHONE A LITTLE BRIGHTER WHEN NORA FATEHI, HRITHIK ROSHAN, SARA ALI KHAN, SUNNY LEONE AND AYUSHMANN KHURRANA TOOK THE STAGE AT THE **66<sup>TH</sup> VIMAL ELAICHI FILMFARE AWARDS**, FINDS **MAYUKH MAJUMDAR**







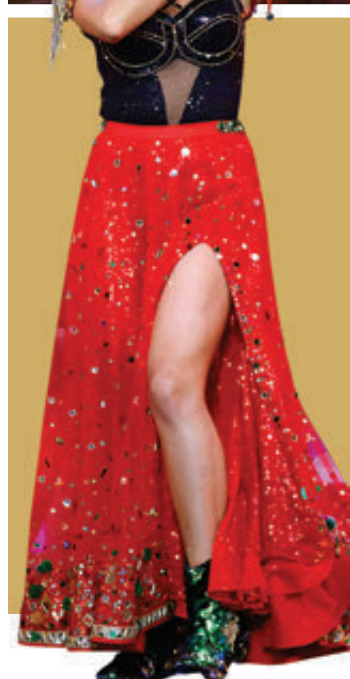
## 20 YEARS AND COUNTING

**HRITHIK ROSHAN**

Ever since Bollywood's very own Greek God, **Hrithik Roshan** blazed across our screens in a mesh T-shirt that could barely contain his bulging muscles in *Kaho Naa...Pyar Hai* (2020), the entire country has been obsessed with the man. Crushingly handsome with acting chops to match, Hrithik is also one of the best dancers in the industry. He's so smooth he makes dancing look easy. This year was all about celebrating 20 years of his career on screen and he danced to his biggest hits down the years right up to *Jai Jai Shivshankar* from *War*. It took us back to the good old days when his songs and hook steps would go viral as soon as they got released. That they still do is testimony to his star power.











## TOUCHED BY MAGIC

**SARA ALI KHAN**

We've all been in love with **Sara Ali Khan** ever since her debut with *Kedarnath* (2018). It was her first-ever performance at the Filmfare Awards but the jitters were absent. She was confidence personified. The actress swayed with grace to some of her top hits like *Shayad*, *Twist*, *Husn hai suhana*, *Aankh maare*, *Mera wala dance* and *Mirchi*. During the rehearsals itself, it was evident that Sara's performance was going to be unique. She greeted everyone with an *adaab* and glided towards the stage, looking like a dream. While we loved the entire medley, we were completely bowled over when she began her sway to the song, *Shayad*, from *Love Aaj Kal*.





## PITCH PERFECT

**RAJKUMMAR RAO**

It's always lovely to have **Rajkumar Rao** host the prestigious Filmfare Awards. He's the uncrowned king of middle-of-the-road cinema and brought his inherent charm to the proceedings. He knows how to shake a leg when occasion demands. And so it didn't come as a surprise when he danced away with gay abandon for the opening deck of the ceremony. Looking at his smooth moves, it's surprising that he hasn't been cast in a musical already.

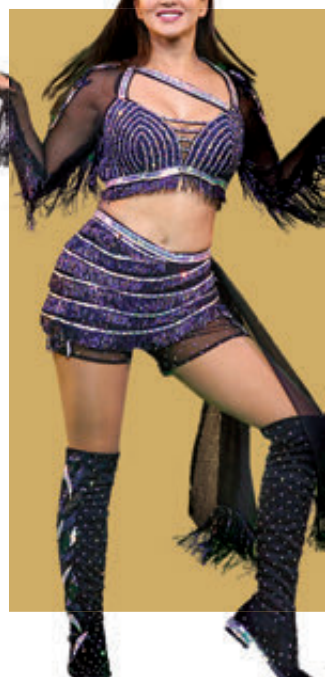




# NOW SHOWING











## SCORCHER ON THE MOVE

**SUNNY LEONE**

**Sunny Leone** returned to the prestigious Filmfare stage to perform on some of the biggest musical hits of recent time. Dressed in a shimmery black and silver outfit, Leone looked something out of a dream indeed. Sweet of her to banter with the background dancers and put them at ease before the start of her performance. Like everyone else present, they too had eyes only for her once she started to sway on the stage. She closed her act with the remixed classic *Nadiyan paar* and had the audience asking for an encore.











## ***BINDAAS VIBES***

**RITEISH DESHMUKH**

**Riteish Deshmukh** hosted the awards with Rajkummar Rao. Riteish, we know, has a passion for dancing. He brought in his

A game while pretending to romance the Black Lady for the opening act of the Filmfare Awards. Both he and Rajkummar complemented each other to a T and moved as one.

Given the short time they had for preparation, that was a laudable achievement indeed.







## SIZZLING HOT!

### NORA FATEHI

**Nora Fatehi** was in top form on the Filmfare stage. The applause that echoed across the auditorium when Nora made her scintillating appearance was proof of her enormous popularity. The actress danced to her greatest hits from *Garmi* to *Dilbar*. Her act was a mixture of oomph, panache and gravity-defying splits. The audience sat up mesmerised as she made short work of the intricate steps and proved she's the queen of the twerk. Take a bow, lady.















## VERSATILE MOVES

### AYUSHMANN KHURRANA

**Ayushmann Khurrana** has always been one of the most charismatic actors. With his newly buffed-up body, he's also one of the hottest men in Bollywood at the moment. At the Filmfare Awards, the versatile actor proved once again why he's box office gold. A complete package, Khurrana set off fireworks onstage with his performance which celebrated all the festivals of India. The actor grooved to *Don't be shy again*, *Balam pichkari*, *Chogada*, *Jumme ki raat* and *Deva Shri Ganesha*. Ayushmann's trademark boy-next-door smile never left his face and we couldn't help but groove along with him as he danced away to glory.





# ALL FOR WORDS

**SAGAR SARHADI** DID AN INTERVIEW WITH *FILMFARE* A FEW DAYS BEFORE HE PASSED AWAY. **DEVESH SHARMA** CHRONICLES THE WRITER/DIRECTOR'S LAST WORDS...

(May 11, 1933 – March 22, 2021)

Writer/filmmaker Sagar Sarhadi was born in Baffa, Pakistan on May 11, 1933. Like millions of others, he became a refugee after Partition. Destiny brought him to Mumbai, where he lived in a small room with his elder brother's family. He was of Marxist leanings and was interested in becoming an Urdu writer and poet. The need for financial security gravitated him towards films. After initial struggles, he became associated with Yash Chopra and the rest, as they say, is history. He became known for his dialogue and screenplays in Yash Chopra's love sagas like *Kabhi Kabhie* (1976), *Silsila* (1981), *Faasle* (1985) and *Chandni* (1989), among others. He even wrote the dialogue for Basu Bhattacharya's *Anubhav* (with Kapil Kumar, 1972), Raj Kanwar's *Deewana* (1992) and Rakesh Roshan's *Kaho Naa... Pyaar Hai* (2000) but would forever be known for his association with Yash Chopra.

He turned director with *Bazaar* (1982). Starring Farooq Shaikh, Smita Patil, Naseeruddin Shah and Supriya Pathak, the film was reportedly based on a true story about Muslim girls in Hyderabad,

who were being forced to marry rich expatriates for money. The film had some soul-stirring music by Khayaam, with songs like *Dikhayee diye yun*, *Karoge yaad to and Dekh lo aaj humko jee bharke* being popular even now. It was considered one of the hallmarks of the neo-realistic cinema in India and despite its art film tag, was a commercial success as well. Unfortunately, despite the film's success, Sarhadi wasn't able to carve a career as a filmmaker. He had set his heart on making the sequel to *Bazaar* but couldn't see his dream come true.

He had planned a film called *Tere Shaheer Mein*, starring Naseeruddin Shah, Smita Patil, Deepti Naval and Marc Zuber, but the film couldn't be made. Also, his last project *Chausar*, starring Nawazuddin Siddiqui and Amruta Subhash, couldn't see the light of the day.

Sarhadi was said to be close to several women but he never married. He passed away on March 22 and is survived by his nephew, filmmaker and theatre personality Ramesh Talwar. Excerpts from his last interview with *Filmfare*...

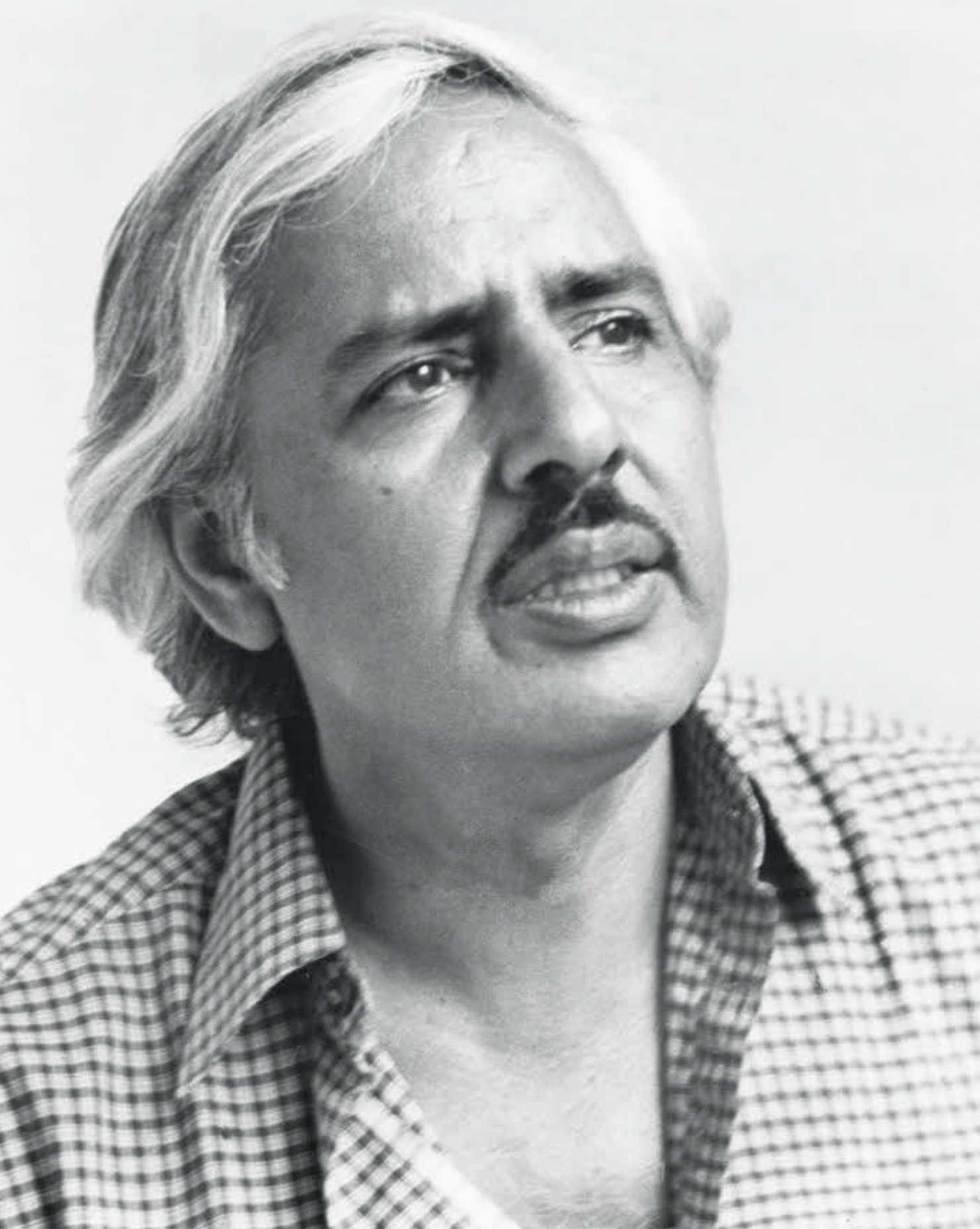


←  
Amitabh Bachchan and Rekha in *Silsila*

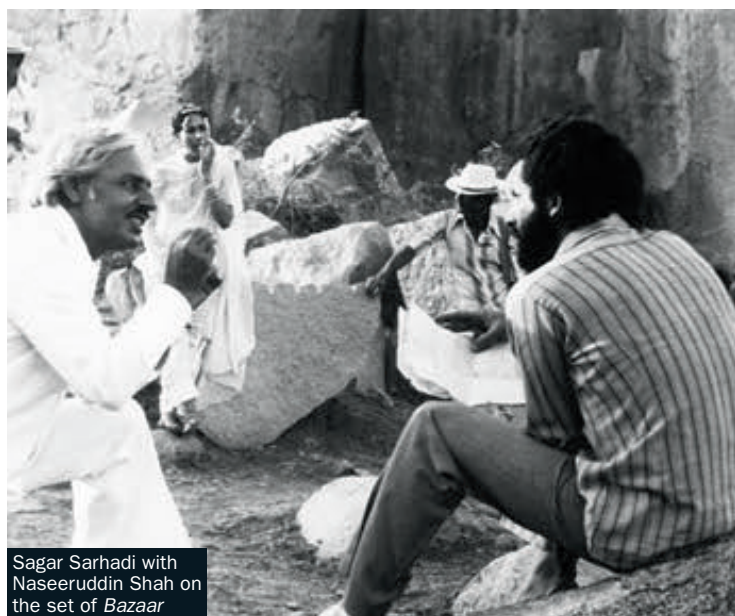


→  
Naseeruddin Shah, Bharat Kapoor and Smita Patil in *Bazaar*

**“I left behind my beautiful village, which had a stream running alongside it. The best days of my life were spent there. I yearn to return to it always. In my memory and dreams I still do”**





Amitabh Bachchan and Raakhee in *Kabhi Kabhie*Sagar Sarhadi with Naseeruddin Shah on the set of *Bazaar*

### How did Ganga Sagar Talwar change into Sagar Sarhadi?

There used to be a gentleman living in my neighbourhood who was called Ganga Sagar and hence I didn't want people to confuse him with me. And Zia Sarhadi was quite a famous screen writer when I was starting out. He was from a border town like I was, so taking Sagar from my own name and borrowing Sarhadi from Zia *saab* I became Sagar Sarhadi. The *nom de plume* suited me and brought me fame.

### Do you still retain memories of your home in Abbottabad, Baffa, which is now in Pakistan?

Why would we want to leave our ancestral home? We were told to run away otherwise we'd be killed. I left behind my beautiful village, which had a stream running alongside it. The best days of my life were spent there. I yearn to return to it always. In my memory and dreams I still do.

Hrithik Roshan and Ameesha Patel in *Kaho Naa... Pyaar Hai*

**“Yashji liked everything I wrote. And he never changed anything without asking me. That creative freedom he gave was the reason I came up with so many beautiful things for him. And not only was it satisfying creatively, I reaped monetary benefits as well”**

### Coming to Mumbai after Partition must have felt like a cultural shock

There was a sense of uprootedness which hasn't really gone even after all these years. I still feel uprooted. There was a sense of loss but being young, I was also full of hope. I wanted to learn, to earn, to make a name for myself in this new place

where everything, be it the language, the cuisine, the architecture seemed alien. It was a whole new country. But at the same time I knew that it had better opportunities as well. So I decided to stay here and began my struggle.

### You were associated with the Progressive Writers'

Sridevi and Rishi Kapoor in *Chandni*

### Association...

I met Kaifi Azmi *saab* and through him became part of the Progressive Writers' Association. I did have Marxist leanings back then and like most idealistic young men, wanted to do something for my country. We all felt that art should be used for the betterment of the society. I came across feminism and



Being felicitated by Yash Chopra

feministic writers during that phase and that kind of left an impression on me. If you notice, all the films I wrote had strong female characters.

**You started off with writing the dialogue for Basu Bhattacharya for *Anubhav*. Tell us something about that**

Basu Bhattacharya was a little older to me. He had worked with Bimal Roy and carried forward Bimal da's sensibilities. He was a well-read, well-articulated, well-rounded man. I started working with him because I felt being associated with him would make me grow as a writer. *Anubhav* was a realistic film and the dialogue was meant to be echoes of actual conversations.

**How did the association with Yash Chopra come along?**

Yashji called me up after watching a one-act play of mine which I had written and my nephew Ramesh

**“I realised that if a writer wants to make what's dear to him then he has to direct it himself. So I joined a film society, watched hundreds of films from all over the world and picked up nuances. One day, when I was confident about making a film independently, I became a director”**

Talwar, who is also a good friend, had directed. Ramesh used to work with Yashji and he asked Ramesh to bring me along one day. He offered me *Kabhi Kabhie* after that first meeting. He sent me to Taj Hotel in Kashmir after narrating the germ of an idea. I used to go on long walks in Kashmir, lost in my own thoughts and then come back and write what I gathered. Strangely, Yashji liked everything I wrote. And he never changed anything without asking me. That creative freedom he gave was the reason I came up with so

many beautiful things for him. And not only was it satisfying creatively, I reaped monetary benefits as well. My future was secure and bright.

**Tell us a memory from *Kabhi Kabhie*...**

Well, it was my first film with Yashji and yet he gave me pride of place on the posters. Written by Sagar Sarhadi came before Lyrics by Sahir Ludhianvi. Now, Sahir *saab* was a much senior, much-respected writer. He didn't like it and was angry with Yashji for doing so. He complained to Yashji and the director

in his own way explained that you're well known, let this youngster also get a share of the limelight and then Sahir was mollified.

**Yash Chopra didn't give you a chance to direct?**

Yashji never saw me as a director. He knew me as a writer. And hence he only gave me work as a writer. It was through my own epiphany that I became a director. I realised that if a writer wants to make what's dear to him then he has to direct it himself. So I joined a film society, watched hundreds of films from all over the world and picked up nuances. One day, when I was confident about making a film independently, I became a director and became successful in that field as well.

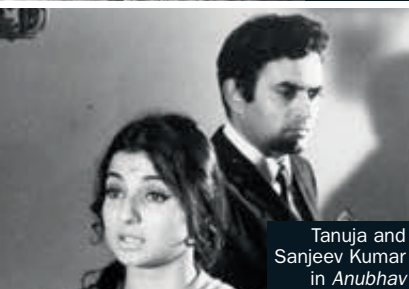
**From Yash Chopra's world to the world to *Bazaar*, it was quite a leap...**

I read an article on the





Smita Patil

Tanuja and Sanjeev Kumar in *Anubhav*Nisha Singh, Sagar Sarhadi, Khayyam and Farooque Sheikh and the team of *Bazaar*

fake marriage racket and couldn't believe such a thing was happening. I went to Hyderabad and met the journalists and social workers who had exposed the racket. I've always been a staunch feminist and was moved by the plight of girls being sold by their own parents for money. I decided to make a film about it so the society at large comes to know about the practice. I had no money and borrowed from friends to make the film. It was nice of actors like Naseeruddin Shah and Smita Patil to trust me as I had never directed before. Later, Smita told me I was one of the finest directors she has ever worked with. It was a huge compliment for me.

**You wrote the screenplay and dialogue for *Deewana*, SRK's first film. Tell us an anecdote about that**

I don't remember any anecdotes as such. But I was happy that I was writing a movie which was

**“I've always been a staunch feminist and was moved by the plight of girls being sold by their own parents for money. I decided to make a film about it so the society at large comes to know about the practice”**

introducing a new face. Writing with a new actor in mind is a challenge. Your responsibility increases as you want his debut film to do well. I kept him loud and aggressive in the first half and emotional and sensitive in the second half so that he could showcase a complete range of emotions to the audience. He was the height of confidence when we were shooting and predictably went on to scale great heights in years to come both as an actor and a star. It's a matter of pride for me that he began his innings with my screenplay.

**Gulzar, Salim-Javed, used to be your contemporaries. What sort of a rapport did you have with them?**

Gulzar had a mastery of

language which I admired and wanted to emulate. I respected and loved him and the feeling was mutual. When we were younger, I used to regularly drop by his place in Bandra, share a drink or two. I learnt much from him and would always be grateful to him for everything he taught me. You grow when you associate with people who have a unique grasp on reality. There was no rivalry between writers back then. We were all brimming with ideas and we all grew through that association of ideas. Salim-Javed were at the top of their game back then. Their word was law. They used to write with a particular actor in mind and the filmmakers used to respect

their casting choices. No other writer in the industry has ever wielded that kind of power. They were very organised in their lives and that's what I learnt from them. We knew each other but we were never close. But the mutual respect was there.

**Any advice to young writers of today?**

Change is compulsion, Change is constant. Change is the only reality there is. A new grammar, a new technique of working will emerge and you'll have to learn that fast in order to survive, in order to excel. You should constantly keep reading new books, new plays, keep watching good cinema from different parts of the world, and constantly try to evolve. Also, don't let success make a home in your head. Be humble. In the film world, your fortunes change every Friday. So keep your head down and keep striving for excellence with every endeavour.

# your say

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

## INSTA LIKE

### Medley of moments

Check out the best Instagram posts of the stars from recent times

@aliaabhatt: major missing 🥰❤️

*Alia Bhatt was missing Ranbir Kapoor while he quarantined after testing positive for COVID-19. These two keep giving us couple goals with effortless ease. Made for each other alright!*



@priyankachopra: One way or the other... 🤔

*Priyanka Chopra after winning the Filmfare Award, once said that her dad wouldn't mind if she brought home this Black Lady. We're guessing Nick won't mind her bringing this golden man home either.*



@anushkasharma: लाइट कैचर 📸

*Candid photos never looked so good. Anushka Sharma only gets better and more flawless with each passing day and this picture is proof.*



@kareenakapoorkhan: Can't stop staring... at him 🥰❤️

*Mother's diary: Kareena Kapoor Khan is back to work, but she sure can't get enough of her new born baby boy.*



@rajkummar\_rao: #ShardulThakur in #BadhaaiDo. Being a pure vegetarian and to strictly avoid any kind of steroids, it wasn't easy to get this transformation but nothing seems impossible when you love what you do. #BadhaaiDo is a film which is really close to my heart and we had a blast shooting this film.

@jungleepictures

*Well, Rajkummar Rao ko Badhaai Do because this transformation is surely applause worthy. Rajkummar is now all set to be an action star as well.*



Readers send in their feedback pg 88

Shatrughan Sinha's racy rejoinders pg 90





# IN THE MAIL

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

**1<sup>st</sup> Prize**  
**₹1500**

## ↓ AAMIR'S A TRUE PERFECTIONIST

Read the snippet in your last issue (March) about Aamir Khan switching off his phone till the release of his next release just so that he can concentrate on his work. Well, wish we millennials could do even half of that.

Aayush Negi, Aurangabad



Mr Perfect: Aamir Khan

**2<sup>nd</sup> Prize**  
**₹1000**

## BHUMI'S IMPRESSIVE ACT

It felt good reading about Bhumi Pednekar adopting a no-plastic-and-no-wastage-policy on the sets of *Badhaai Do* in your last (March) issue. It's impressive to watch celebs taking active steps to set the right example. It's high time all corporates followed suit.

Yash Deora, Mumbai

## UPDATE ON JUG JUGG JEEYO

I read an exclusive article by *Filmfare* on their website which spoke about *Jug Jugg Jeeyo* going on floors in April end. Thanks for the update guys, I am super stoked about this one.

Rohil Sharma, Kolkata

## MARATHI MANIA

The in-depth coverage of the Marathi Awards in *Filmfare* (March) was refreshing. It's great to read about actors in regional cinema, who are doing some great work. The pictures from inside the ceremony and of the winners with the trophy were a delight to see.

Meghna Chaudhary,  
Guwahati



Winners all: Bhagyashree Milind, Lalit Prabhakar, Sonalee Kulkarni and Mukta Barve

## FASHION AT ITS BEST

I am an avid reader of fashion stories and always look forward to reading the fashion column in *Filmfare* magazine. A big thumbs up for keeping us updated about all the latest trends from tie-and-dye to turtle necks in your last (March) issue.

Shweta Kapoor, Chennai

## KIARA'S AWESOME JOURNEY

I absolutely loved the cover story on Kiara Advani (March) She seems like a girl who has had her fair share of ups and downs and has still made her way to the top. Kudos to you guys for promoting such deserving talents through your esteemed publication.

Rahat Jahan, Hyderabad

## KATRINA AND KARTIK'S FIRST CINEMATIC BABY

It was great to know that Katrina Kaif has been finalised for SRK's next venture as a producer (March). What is surprising is that Kartik Aaryan is being considered for the film. This boy is surely creating some major waves with his success.

Mohammed Asif, Ahmedabad

## DEEPIKA'S DANCE TRACK IN CIRKUS

I read an article about Deepika Padukone having a dance track in Ranveer Singh's *Cirkus* on *Filmfare*'s website. Always a treat to watch this couple on the big screen.

Vansh Narang,  
Gurugram



Couple of aces: Ranveer Singh and Deepika Padukone



## EMRAAN HASHMI'S ACE MOVE

It was awesome to read in the I Spy section of your magazine (March) that Emraan Hashmi will play a villain in *Tiger 3* opposite Salman Khan and Katrina Kaif. Can't wait for this one.

Ruchika Sharma,  
New Delhi

Going places: Kartik Aaryan



## KAJOL'S HEARTFELT REVELATIONS

My family and I read the interview by Kajol (March). We all love her. And the way she answered all your questions made for an interesting read.

Shivansh Sharma,  
Rohtak

Class act: Kajol

## Just one Point



Farewell: Rajiv Kapoor

The late Rajiv Kapoor's film journey in the March issue took me back to his hey day. RIP Rajiv Kapoor.  
**Mohit Mehta, Varanasi**

The last (March) issue gave in-depth information on Kiara Advani's journey to big ticket films. It was on-point for sure.

**Rahul Jain, Mumbai**

Looks like Marathi Awards were a huge success. Even with the pandemic raging, *Filmfare* managed to pull it off.

**Shalini Singh, New Delhi**

Fashion story about the tie-and-dye trend was creative. Thanks for updating us with the latest trends.

**Hardee Shah, Surat**

I adore the engaging posts you keep putting on social media. Big thumbs up to your digital team.

**Ria Kohli, Mumbai**

## KARTIK'S ON A ROLL

Kartik Aaryan has come a long way. Read in your March issue that he will be working with *Scam 1992* director Hansal Mehta if all goes well. This is so exciting. Kartik is a good actor and should definitely think of adding to his repertoire.

Pooja Arora, Amritsar



Roaring wild: Disha Patani and Tiger

## TIGER AND HIS TIGRESS

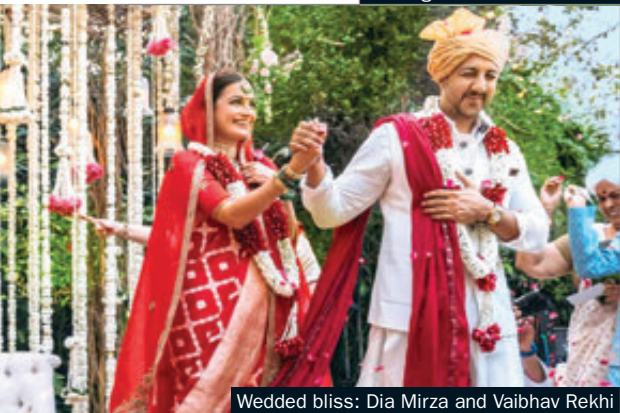
Tiger and Disha look adorable together and the images that you people used in the magazine's latest issue (March) were so lovely. Haven't seen their pictures anywhere else. They truly have each other's backs.

Ritika Rathore, Jaipur

## BIG B'S GRANDDAUGHTER'S BIG DECISION

Read in the March issue of *Filmfare* that Shweta Bachchan's daughter Navya Naveli Nanda will be joining her father's business and not movies. That's a revelation. Way to go girl!

Needhi Mehta, New Delhi



Wedded bliss: Dia Mirza and Vaibhav Rekhi

## DIA-VAIBHAV'S WEDDING OF EQUALS

I followed every tiny detail about Dia Mirza and Vaibhav Rekhi's wedding on your website and I was blown away by their decisions. From having a female *pandit* to different vows, these two made us fall in love with love all over again. *Filmfare*'s social media updates on them and their love story were bang on.

Kritika Bhardwaj, Patna

## PARINEETI'S THE IT GIRL

Parineeti Chopra's interview about *The Girl On The Train* (March) and how her character has taken a toll on her was rather informative. It gave me an insight into what went on behind the scenes. I appreciate *Filmfare* for bringing us informative interviews. Thank you.

Tejasvi Parekh, Jaipur



Bold decision:  
Parineeti Chopra

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PHOTOGRAPH: MEETESH TANEJA

# Shatrughan Sinha's Rapid fire

**You are an actor-producer. After producing *Kalka* (1983) why didn't you try for direction? Did we lose a talented director?**

Anil Torne, Pune

I got attracted to politics, thanks to the teachings of the dynamic leader Shri Jai Prakash Narayan. Hence, I wasn't able to concentrate on direction back then and now it's too late to try. I do believe I would have made a decent enough director.

**How do you deal with all the hate and negativity on the Internet?**

Nisha Gupta, Gurugram

Try not to go on the internet that often. I don't use the internet regularly and hence manage to avoid the negativity. If your job depends upon the internet then please avoid social media as much as possible. Social distancing from social media posts

**What do you think of the man who could recall only two happy days in his 25 years of marriage?**

N.K. Mani, Indore

Two days? Where's that man? I want to congratulate him. Such a man doesn't exist, my friend. It's always been said that a man can either be happy or married and I firmly believe in it.

should be your mantra. Be safe, and remain positive. Stay blessed.

**Apart from all the hindrance in our lives, this epidemic has kept our minds away from busy schedules and given us time for creativity. What kind of extracurricular activities have you undertaken in the lockdown?**

Azimuddin Molla, West Bengal

I spent a lot of time with my family dreaming of new visionary songs for my country. Apart from that, I indulged in lots of yoga, meditation, breathing exercise and sleep. I have spent these months relaxing in the company of my family, something I hadn't done in my entire life before the lockdown. I've always been a traveller and instead of travelling outward, I'm travelling inwards these days.

**"Man is a social animal" used to be everybody's favourite opener for essays in school. Can we today say that "man is a social media animal"?**

Abhijit Ghosh, West Bengal

Well said and apt too. Yes we've become greedy to read and hear things instantly. Not necessarily

all good things though. Most of it is gossip and though we know it's false, it helps pass the time.

**Do you believe in the power of prayer?**

Dhawal Sahani, Bhilai

Absolutely. Prayer is the surest and easiest way to talk to the Almighty. So everyone should believe in the power of prayer. I certainly do.

**Is globalisation the biggest contributor to global warming?**

Naveen Bhardwaj, Mohali

Yes, to some extent. We human beings have interfered with nature and the outcome is there for everyone to see.

**In your opinion, what significant changes have you seen, good or bad, in the film industry and in politics after you left an illustrious acting career behind?**

Lalitkumar Kumpalath, Mumbai

In the industry, I see the changes in film technology. In the way, films are shot or directed. Some say the films of today lack soul when it comes to story or songs and maybe it's true. In politics, we have seen a bit of deterioration. It has



Dream film: *Kalka* SHATRUGHAN SINHA KALKA



Common man's fantasy: *Ghayal*

become more corrupt, more cutthroat. The less said the better.

**Will the world be more atheistic in the future?**

**Seema Sabharwal, Chandigarh**  
Definitely, as we are becoming more insensitive, emotionless and selfish.

**How does one deal with anxiety?**

**Subhash Chand, Chandigarh**  
With anxiety to begin with and then, of course, you go for yoga and for meditation

**Do you believe in astrology?**

**Kanika Mishra, Ratlam**  
So far it hasn't come true where it mattered. So if you know of any authentic astrologer who can give guaranteed results

within a week or most a month's time frame, please let me know.

**Shouldn't the government give some incentives to teachers who have toiled hard to continue giving lessons online to the student fraternity in India? Instead, we hear the teachers are scared that their salary will be cut or delayed. Please comment.**

**Rakesh Verma, Doha**  
Even during the pandemic teachers have toiled long and hard and have been doing their duty admirably. Yes, many have faced cuts in their salaries and the government should look into that and help them out. They should ideally be compensated for their loss. Please remember

## 1st Prize

**What's the worst place you've ever visited, and the best?**

**Sowmya Chaturvedi, Bhopal**  
The best place is our own country. *Saare jahan se accha Hindustan hamara*. India is incredible indeed and even though I'm an avid traveller, I haven't explored it completely.

## 2nd Prize

**Why does our PM speak so much but never listens?**

**Tribhuvan Mendiratta, Kanpur**  
Our honourable PM loves to preach but seldom practices what he preaches. Please ignore all the *jumlas*.

that globally, all those who have faced salary cuts or have lost their jobs in these times have been compensated. So why not in India?

**Most films show illegal nexus between underworld dons, religious gurus, bureaucrats and politicians and a simple common man in films like *Ghayal* comes from nowhere and fights it all only with his dedication and will power. Dear *Shotgun*, do you think this is possible in the real world?**

**Adv. S Sridhar, Kolkata**  
Films do portray reality but many times things are shown as being larger than life. It's not possible for the common man to fight the demons among us and films give him that escape to fantasy.

**When there is Goddess Kali and Lord Krishna — both dark-skinned, why do people think dark skin is not beautiful and cosmetic companies sell products saying it will change skin colour shade from dark to fair?**

**Merlin Thomas, Bhopal**  
I think we got obsessed with white skin thanks to being ruled by the British. They might have left but our mindset hasn't changed in all these years. Kali and Krishna are worshipped as Gods, they're beyond the petty boundaries of colour and shape. Period.

(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**

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**₹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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# REMEMBERING SHASHIKALA

AUGUST 4, 1932 - APRIL 4, 2021

*The veteran character actor passed away recently.  
Devesh Sharma offers a brief profile of her life and career*

**S**hashikala Jawalkar Saigal was born in 1932 at Solapur. Her father Anantrao Jawalkar was a cloth merchant. She had five other siblings. Her father's business unfortunately collapsed when she was still a child. It was tough going for the actor, who then joined a dance and drama troupe to make ends meet. Her troupe enacted mythological plays at fairs and child Shashikala became famous for playing Krishna. The family later shifted to Mumbai. She started going to film studios to find work. It's said she was discovered by singing star Noorjehan. The singer and her husband Shaukat Hussain were making a film called *Zeenat* (1945) and wanted to cast her as Noorjehan's daughter in the film. Her lack of mastery over Urdu

**IT'S SAID SHASHIKALA WAS DISCOVERED BY SINGING STAR NOORJEHAN, WHO INCLUDED HER IN A QAWALLI SCENE IN ZEENAT (1945)**

IMAGE COURTESY: TIMESCONTENT





With Ashok Kumar and Meena Kumari at a Filmfare ceremony

## A MEETING WITH MOTHER TERESA PUSHED HER INTO SOCIAL SERVICE. MOTHER ASSIGNED HER TO LOOK AFTER NIRMAL HRIDAY, A HOME FOR THE DYING

didn't get her the speaking role but she was included in a *qawwali* scene in the film.

She started getting work regularly through the good graces of Noorjehan but all that changed when the singing star and her husband migrated to Pakistan after Partition. Her struggles started all over again. She married Om Prakash Saigal, a relative of singer and actor Kundan Lal Saigal when she was barely 19. She'd been getting roles in films but wasn't getting the recognition she deserved despite being talented. The lead roles too weren't coming. Her husband tried to make a film starring her



With Kiran Shantaram

PHOTOGRAPH: SACHIN GOKHALE/BCCL

but it took too long to make and ultimately nothing came of it. The film, ironically titled *Krorepati* (1961), which starred Kishore Kumar opposite her, bombed at the box office, taking all their savings with it. Financial insecurity led to marital discord at home. It's said she even left her husband for a while, though they reconciled later.

It was her decision to concentrate on character roles that saved her career. The change came with the film *Aarti* (1962), starring Meena Kumari, Ashok Kumar, and Pradeep Kumar. She played a villain's role in this family drama. The negative role

won her plaudits and even won her a *Filmfare* trophy. Offers started pouring in and she never looked back after that. She did important roles in films like *Gumrah* (1963) – which won her another Filmfare Best Actor In A Supporting Role Award– *Ayee Milan Ki Bela* (1964), *Waqt* (1965), *Anupama* (1966), *Phool Aur Patthar* (1966) and many more. While she was financially secure, she wasn't mentally at ease and it's at this point of life that she reportedly started searching for spiritual solace. Her search first took her to vipassana meditation and later attracted her towards Mother Teresa. She was very much influenced by Sisters of Mercy and even worked in their ashram in Pune as a volunteer. A meeting with Mother Teresa pushed her further into social service. Mother assigned her to look after Nirmal Hriday, a home for the dying. Working with the organisation brought her the spiritual ease she had long wished for. Later, when she lost one of her daughters to cancer in 1995, she was able to draw strength from the work she was doing. In between, she converted to Christianity, though in her interviews she maintained it wasn't Mother Teresa's influence but the compulsion of her own heart which made her take the step.

She soon graduated to doing *bhabhi* and *maa* roles. Not all were negative in nature. One remembers her matching Rekha's footwork in *Khubsoorat* (1980), where she played the eldest *bahu* of the house. She hadn't formally

learnt Kathak and yet so apt were her moves that it felt she was a trained dancer. Earlier, in *Phool Aur Patthar*, she had even done a cabaret dance. She certainly could move if she set her mind to it. The wind of new wave cinema was blowing in the '70s -'80s and she too wasn't untouched by it. Her performance in the 1977 film *Swami*, where she acted side-by-side with art film veterans like Utpal Dutt, Girish Karnad and Shabana Azmi was admired by the masses and the critics alike.

Like most character artistes, she gravitated towards television in the later stage of her career. Her best known work for TV remains *Sonpatri*. She was also seen in series like *Kise Kahen Apna*, *Jeena Isi Ka Naam Hai*, *Apnapan* and *Dil Deke Dekho*. She remained an outgoing personality, remaining active in the field of social service and was in touch with her industry friends. The pandemic and the resultant lockdown reportedly took a toll on her personality. She hated being homebound and felt caged by the restrictions. God chose an auspicious day for her passing away. On April 4, Easter Sunday, which is seen as a celebration of new life, she passed away at her home in the presence of her granddaughter Soniya and her great-granddaughter Shanaya.

She may no longer be with us in the flesh but will always be known to us through her work on the silver screen...





# Politically incorrect

ANALITA SETH CHATS UP WITH SWARA BHASKER AND IS BOWLED OVER BY HER CANDOUR AND SASS

Swara Bhasker is one actress who has happily hopped onto the OTT bandwagon and is reaping rich benefits. While others were sitting idle and baking banana bread during the lockdown, Swara had four web series out on OTT. And she isn't averse to taking risk or shying away from something risqué as long as it indulges her creative cravings. She's always spoken her mind and is known for her anti-establishment stance. She reasons if the artistes don't speak up when other sectors get affected, then being quiet will become a habit and they'll easily submit to curbs when creativity gets targeted. She doesn't know about others but she's unwilling to go gently into that dark night. Excerpts from a rollicking interview with the feisty actress who doesn't believe in being just another pretty face...

**How does it feel to have had four web series released during the lockdown?**

It feels great. *Rasbhari* got released in June 2020, then came *Flesh* in August, *Bhaag Beanie Bhaag* in December and the latest is *Aapkey Kamrey Mein Koi Rehta Hai* (AKMKRH), streaming on MX from January 2021 onwards. So I'm loving it. For a year dominated by the coronavirus pandemic, this is great.

**Horror-comedy is not a**

**highly explored genre in India. Were you skeptical before signing AKMKRH?**

When I read a script, I never think of what genre it belongs to. I read it for what it is. So when I read its script, I really liked it. It was edgy and funny. For me, the horror in the series is how can four boys be so dumb. Gaurav Sinha, the writer and director of the series has done a good job with balancing the humour and the scary bits. Of course, there is horror but it's a story of four friends, a comedy of errors. The only



Bhaag Beanie Bhaag

“WHENEVER A STORY REQUIRES A SUSPENSION OF DISBELIEF, IT CAN GET TACKY OR CHEESY. I FEEL IF YOUR AUDIENCE IS INTERESTED IN YOU, THEY DON'T NECESSARILY HAVE TO BELIEVE IN WHAT THEY ARE WATCHING. IF YOU'VE GOT THEM HOOKED IN, THEN YOU'RE OKAY”



Aapkey Kamrey Mein Koi Rehta Hai



thing I was worried about was that whenever a story requires a suspension of disbelief, it can get tacky or cheesy. I feel if your audience is interested in you, they don't necessarily have to believe in what they are watching. If you've got them hooked in, then you're okay. So the challenge for me was whether as an actor I can engage you enough that you'll be interested in my performance even though you don't believe in what's happening.

**What were the shooting timelines for your series? Did you shoot anything during the lockdown?**

All four were shot between the end of 2018 till the start of 2020. *Bhaag Beanie* *Bhaag* was the last thing

**it difficult to flow from one to the other?**

As much as possible, I try not to shoot two things together. I've done it once before and it's most distracting and irritating. It's also very hard. Later, when I watched these shows, I realised I had prepared well for each of them. The transition from one to the other happened during the process of preparation. So for me, if you prepare well for each role, you will be able to find that transition in the preparation. There's also this new thing I've started doing. Actors always try hard to get into a role, but we never have a process of getting out of it. I've started to do that now. Especially after *Anarkali Of Arrah*. I hadn't realised that it

“ACTORS ALWAYS TRY HARD TO GET INTO A ROLE, BUT WE NEVER HAVE A PROCESS OF GETTING OUT OF IT. I'VE STARTED TO DO THAT NOW”

I shot before the lockdown. But I dubbed for two or three of these shows during the lockdown. So we had this impressive set-up with the sound engineer in Mumbai and I was in a studio in Delhi with a different sound engineer. Everything was sanitised after each sitting and I bought my own headphones. Everything was shot before but a lot of the post-production happened during the lockdown.

**All your four roles are different from each other. How did you prepare for them and was**

had affected me psychologically. After that film, I started to question myself as to why there was so much anger within me or what was happening with me. I realised that I got into the role but never got out of it.

**Do you feel being an entertainer and an active voice of activism can go hand-in-hand?**

I never saw them as being in opposition with each other. Having an opinion is the most natural thing. We are born with a brain and a mouth. Opinions make us human. My pet can't have an opinion and even if it





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does, it can't express it. So I don't understand why being an actor and having an opinion are two opposite things. I'm an artiste, I pay taxes here, I'm a citizen of this country... whatever happens in the country affects my work directly. I feel as an actor I should have an opinion. I believe in the policy of live and let live. If I have an opinion, it doesn't mean you need to have the same opinion as well. I don't judge people for not speaking up, for the choices they make or choosing to stay silent. I do judge people for breaking the law. Have whatever opinion you do, but don't try to justify murder and don't normalise hate. If you have used your voice or platform to harm someone, especially a community, then I'm not okay with that. It's okay if you don't want to work with someone to avoid the toxicity.

#### What is your take on censorship and the hike in ban culture?

I do not believe in censorship. The legacy of censorship in India is very problematic because those laws were made by the British colonial government to repress the

voice of India during the freedom struggle. They didn't want people to go out there and demand freedom. That is literally the origin of censorship in India. So I don't understand why these laws still exist and why do we have to bear the burden of our colonial past even now. I believe in certification. Yes, there is content that children shouldn't watch. It's only meant for adults. It's terrible that censorship is happening in our country and of course, it is politicised. It is a bad sign for democracy because you don't know what you'll say that will hurt someone. In the last six months, every other week there is a new controversy where people are trying to ban content. That is such a terrible sign for us as a modern society. We've also become too petty as a society. One of the biggest conditions for good art and creativity to flourish is the freedom and safety of your thoughts and expressions. If you make our creativity criminal and if people can go to jail for having a certain expression, then we have to go back to the nonsense formula of filmmaking with item numbers, cars flying and the same old storyline.

#### What do you feel about escapist cinema compared to realistic stories?

It is fine to have escapist cinema but one day they'll come to control our fantasies also. If you can't crack a joke today, one day they'll tell you, you can't dream a dream. Your

fantasies will hurt their sentiments. No genre is problematic. Look at *Avatar*. It is a prime example of cinema that can be called escapist but look at the kind of critique it is making of authoritarianism, capitalism and the American foreign policy. So the problem is not the genre but the mentality we have as a society.

#### How was it working with Shabana Azmi and Divya Dutt in *Sheer Qorma*?

Shabana ji and Divya ma'am are two of my most favourite actors in the industry. Shabana ji is an inspiration for me and she's someone I've always looked upto. So when I heard that they both were going to be in the film, I didn't care what it was about, I knew I wanted to be in it. I was okay if I had one line, I would still go ahead and say it. To share screen space with Shabana ji after ten years of my career, I feel fulfilled. It's a lovely film with great performances and Shabana ji and Divya ma'am are both in great form.

#### What next on your plate?

I have started shooting for my next film *Jahan Chaar Yaar* which is a fun story of four housewives from a small town in Uttar Pradesh who decide to take a vacation to Goa. It stars my 'veere' Shikha Talsania, Meher Vij and Pooja Chopra. Fingers crossed, this year I'm also planning to turn producer. There's something I've written and I'm trying to make sure that it goes on the floor. So it's going to be a busy year. ■





# BEST FOOT *forward*

**RENUKA SHAHANE** TALKS ABOUT BEING A DIRECTOR AND SHARES ANECDOTES ABOUT HER CO-STARS AND HER PERSONAL LIFE.

**VEDANSHI PATHAK** TAKES NOTES



Bossing around on the sets

**YOU STARTED YOUR JOURNEY AS A CO-PRESENTER IN DOORDARSHAN'S SURABHI. HOW HAS THE JOURNEY BEEN FROM THEN TILL NOW?**

I didn't start my journey with *Surabhi*, I started with a serial called *PC Aur Mausii* in 1987 starring Farida

Jalal, Pankaj Berry and me. Then I did *Circus*, *Lifeline* and then *Surabhi* came into my life. And I did it for 10 years. I still have viewers coming up to me. They are CEOs of companies and they approach me saying I was their childhood icon. During *Lifeline* in

My parents used to watch *Surabhi* and loved it. What they liked most was the ever-smiling anchor Renuka Shahane, who together with Siddharth Kak regaled the viewers for 10 years. The actress made her mark in films with *Hum Aapke Hain Koun..!* (1994) playing Madhuri Dixit's elder sister. Though strangely, she never capitalised on that success. She married Ashutosh Rana in 2001 and afterwards got busy with her married life. Her sons Shauryaman and Satyendra kept her busy. She did come on and off in TV serials but didn't pursue acting actively. Renuka was seeking different horizons and made her debut in direction with Marathi film *Rita* (2009). Now a decade later, she has made her directorial debut in Hindi cinema with *Tribhanga*. She has some fond memories of working with Madhuri Dixit Nene, Salman Khan, Shah Rukh Khan in the past and also of directing *Tribhanga*. She also speaks of her sepia romance with Ashutosh Rana. Excerpts from an all-heart interview



With hubby Ashutosh Rana

**“I NEVER THOUGHT MARRIAGE WOULD SUIT ME SO MUCH BUT IT HAS. AND THE CREDIT GOES TO RANA JI FOR MAKING LIFE SO MUCH BETTER. HE'S ONE OF MY BEST FRIENDS. HE'S VERY INTELLIGENT AND EXTREMELY WELL-READ. WHATEVER I WRITE, HE'S LIKE MY SOUNDING BOARD”**

1988 I was also an assistant director to Dr Vijaya Mehta I was her fourth assistant and that's when I developed this interest in

direction. After marriage, at the behest of my husband Rana ji (Ashutosh Rana) I started writing screenplays. The

first film I directed was the Marathi film *Rita* (2009) which I adapted from my mother's (Shanta Gokhale) novel *Rita Welinkar*. In 2013 I was part of Mumbai Mantra's Screenwriters workshop and I wrote a 10 page treatment which later was expanded into *Tribhanga*. I had named it *Tribhanga* because I wanted this metaphor where three women from different generations offer three different perspectives about similar things in life.

**HOW WAS YOUR EXPERIENCE OF DIRECTING THREE AWESOME ACTORS LIKE KAJOL, TANVI**



“KAJOL JUST LOVED THE SCRIPT AND HER CHARACTER ANU...TANVI AND KAJOL HAD ALREADY WORKED TOGETHER IN *DUSHMAN*. WHEN I NARRATED THE SCRIPT TO TANVI, SHE LOVED THE SCRIPT, SHE LOVED HER CHARACTER SO SHE CAME ON BOARD. MITHILA ALSO LOVED MASHA AS SHE FELT THAT NOBODY ELSE WOULD HAVE CAST HER AS MASHA



With Mithila Palkar and Kajol

**AZMI AND MITHILA PALKAR FOR *TRIBHANGA* AND HOW DID YOU MANAGE TO BRING THEM TOGETHER?**

When I approached Kajol for the role of Anu, she just loved the script and her character Anu. And once she stepped into it, everything just fell into place. Tanvi and Kajol had already worked together in *Dushman*. When I narrated the script to Tanvi, she loved the script, she loved

her character so she came on board. Mithila also loved Masha as she felt that nobody else would have cast her as Masha because she's always that chubby little girl next door. Once Kajol was on board, Ajay Devgn also read the script and stepped in as the producer. Then we got Siddharth Malhotra, Banijay Asia, Netflix on board as producers as well. It was like a dream production for me.

**WHAT DO YOU THINK OF YOURSELF AS MORE – RENUKA THE ACTOR OR RENUKA THE DIRECTOR?**

Definitely as a director because I feel I'm more driven as a director than as an actor. As an actor you're dependent on other people. As a director you're doing your own thing. You're the captain of the ship.

**HOW DO YOU LOOK BACK AT *HUM AAPKE HAIN KOUN..!***

I had to give three auditions before

they selected me for it. Working with Sooraj ji (Barjatya), Madhuri (Dixit) and Salman (Khan) and Reema ji (Lagoo), Laxmikant Berde was such a beautiful experience. And the amount of fun we had on the sets and the amount of warmth we did the work with, got reflected in the film. Nobody thought it would run for long at that time and it did. It broke all kinds of records. It made me feel powerful, you know.

I could say no to projects at the time when I was getting really good roles.

**WHAT'S IT TO HAVE TWO SEASONED ACTORS UNDER THE SAME ROOF? HOW DOES THAT WORK? TELL US ABOUT YOUR JOURNEY OF LOVE WITH ASHUTOSH RANA?**

We met at the trial of Hansal Mehta's film *Jayate*, which never got released but at least we got introduced that day. And after that we kept in touch.



but it has. And the credit for it goes to Rana ji for making life so much better. He's one of my best friends. He's very intelligent and extremely well-read. Whatever I write, he's like my sounding board. Most people think there might be an *Abhimaan* like situation between us. There is nothing like that because we are completely

he's playful on the sets. Shah Rukh is a director's delight. If you tell him to work for 72 hours straight, he will. Every time he comes on the set, he has the same kind of freshness, the same kind of energy and the same kind of passion, which is really what I learnt from him. Because I'm not as driven, and he's a very driven person.

it. I think OTT, is a huge blessing, as we get to see content not only from our country but also from all over the world. And it allows us to put our stories out there for the world to see.

#### WHICH IS THE ONE SERIES OR FILM WHICH HAS STAYED WITH YOU?

*Big Little Lies*. The women's characterisations

All the characters in *Andhadhun* stayed with me. And recently, *Ludo* – I liked all the characters in *Ludo*. I liked the quirkiness of the characters. I liked the fact that all the men as well as the women are shown with a lot of shades of grey in both *Andhadhun* and *Ludo*.

#### WHO'S YOUR ALL-TIME FAVOURITE

“WORKING WITH SOORAJ JI (BARJATYA), MADHURI (DIXIT) AND SALMAN (KHAN) AND REEMA JI (LAGOO), LAXMIKANT BERDE WAS SUCH A BEAUTIFUL EXPERIENCE. AND THE AMOUNT OF FUN WE HAD ON THE SETS AND THE AMOUNT OF WARMTH WE DID THE WORK WITH, GOT REFLECTED IN THE FILM”



With Madhuri Dixit



With Salman Khan



With Shah Rukh Khan

We were supposed to do a television serial together, so we got talking on the phone and we actually fell in love over the phone. After three months of just talking with each other on the phone, we started dating. The dating then converted into marriage in 2001 after two years. I never thought marriage would suit me so much

egoless with each other because like I said – friends don't have ego amongst them.

#### YOU HAVE WORKED WITH BOTH SALMAN KHAN AND SHAH RUKH KHAN, HOW DIFFERENT IS THEIR WORKING STYLE?

Their style of working is different. Salman is an impulsive, spontaneous sort of an actor. And

#### WHAT ARE YOUR VIEWS ON THE OTT CONTENT THAT'S BEING MADE THESE DAYS AND WHAT IS ON YOUR WATCH LIST CURRENTLY?

Well I want to watch *The White Tiger* as I've heard great things about it. I'm a crime fiction fan. So that's always on my watch list – from all over the world – so Spanish, Polish, German – you name it and I have seen

many of them in both season 1 and season 2 were awesome. They were women of various shades at various points in their lives, whether marital or work life. It was wonderful to see all those actresses playing those roles and wonderful to see Reese Witherspoon being the producer of that kind of content.

#### CO-STAR AND WHY?

My all-time favourite co-star is Madhuri Dixit. Because she's wonderful as a human being and so beautiful to see as an actor. Her discipline, her grace, her poise. She's such a huge star but she never throws her weight around. She's just the most delightful co-star to work with.



# RENAISSANCE MAN

.....  
**RAGHUVENDRA SINGH** TALKS TO **MANOJ  
BAJPAYEE**, WHO IS UNDERGOING ANOTHER  
TRANSFORMATION IN HIS CAREER, THANKS  
TO HIS POPULARITY ON OTT  
.....

PHOTOGRAPHS: MEETESH TANEJA  
STYLING: KRISH KHATRI

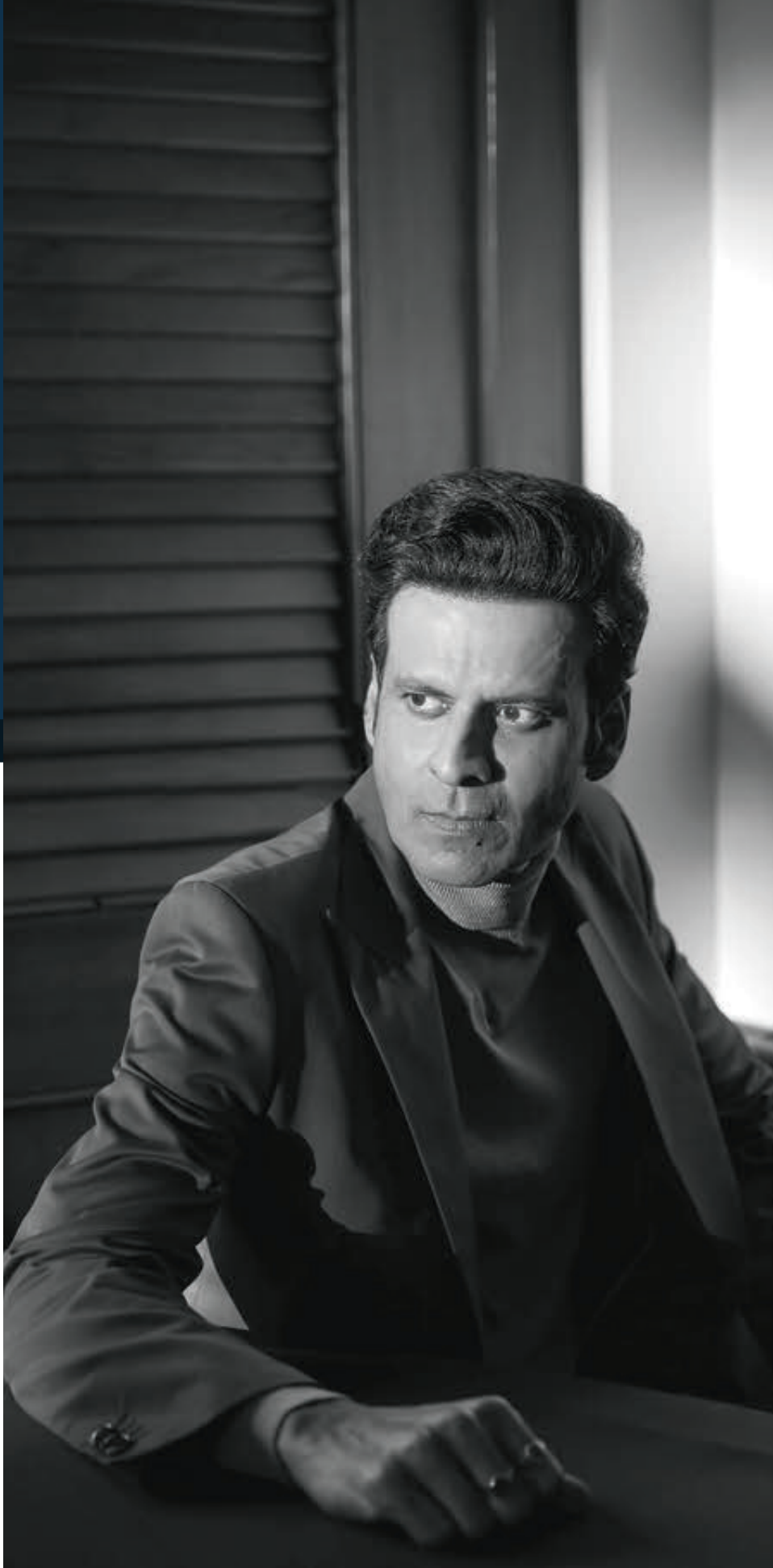


## THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT

is described as a phenomenon whereby a minute localised change in a complex system can have large effects elsewhere. That's what the emergence of OTT platforms has done to the lives of both content creators and viewers. Actors have benefited most from it as now they're being judged on the merit of their performance and not their star value. Manoj Bajpayee, a star performer for the last 20 years, found himself marginalised in movies lately. But he made a resurgence, thanks to the humongous popularity of *The Family Man*, where he played the title role. He was an unusual choice to play a secret agent but proved to be the show's leading light, thanks to his split-second timing. The second season of the show will start soon and Manoj is understandably excited about it...

**You seem ahead of your times. You did short films much before anyone else and won awards for them. Then you jumped on the OTT bandwagon and won the Filmfare Best Actor In A Drama Series (Critics') Award for *The Family Man* as well...**

Thank you very much. When I was in Cannes a couple of years ago to promote *Bhonsle*, I saw a 20-year-old boy getting mobbed by the French audience. And when I enquired about it, they told me that he is a YouTube star from France. No other Hollywood or French actor got that kind of attention from the audience. So I learnt that this is the way ahead. This is the way the world is spinning these days. My wife kept pushing me to do short films. All of them got so many awards. Looking at the world and the changing patterns, you can realise what's the way forward. This is not rocket science. I just keep my eyes open about every activity and the way the world is responding to it. I have an eye on each and every actor who's working today. All the young actors and how they're experimenting





with their performances and how they're reinventing the craft. So you keep changing, reinventing yourself — otherwise, survival would be difficult.

**How has the COVID-19 situation changed things for an actor?**

Our immediate entertainment source was only cinema earlier. Then the next preference was satellite channels and then OTT. But suddenly because of the pandemic, everyone got locked inside their homes. OTT platforms were already there for people to watch anything and everything from anywhere. That changed the demographics. When people started watching more and more OTT stuff,

**LOOK AT THE KIND OF TALENT EMERGING FROM OTT PLATFORMS. I DON'T THINK THEY COULD HAVE GOT JUSTICE IN THE CINEMA HERE. I AM HAPPY THAT THE SCENE HAS CHANGED**

*Man* season 1 was streamed pre-covid. There was no sign of coronavirus back then. It was a massive success. And it was not only a successful show nationally, but it kind of crossed the borders as well. It was a hit even internationally. And the second season, will stream at a time when the cinema halls aren't still fully functional. So you can understand how much the fan base is going to increase. It gives you all the more reasons to be hopeful and optimistic that if *The Family Man* could be that kind of blockbuster pre-covid, the next season will definitely get higher ratings in today's scenario when cinema halls are reportedly being shut down again.



*The Family Man*

**But would it be as impactful as a film?**

It gives you the experience of three films put together. You really dig into the characters and understand every aspect of the story, of the characters. Thinking aloud, I feel the impact would still be the same if it were made as a film because each character is so relatable. If you present the audience with relatable characters, they will take to them no matter what the format is.

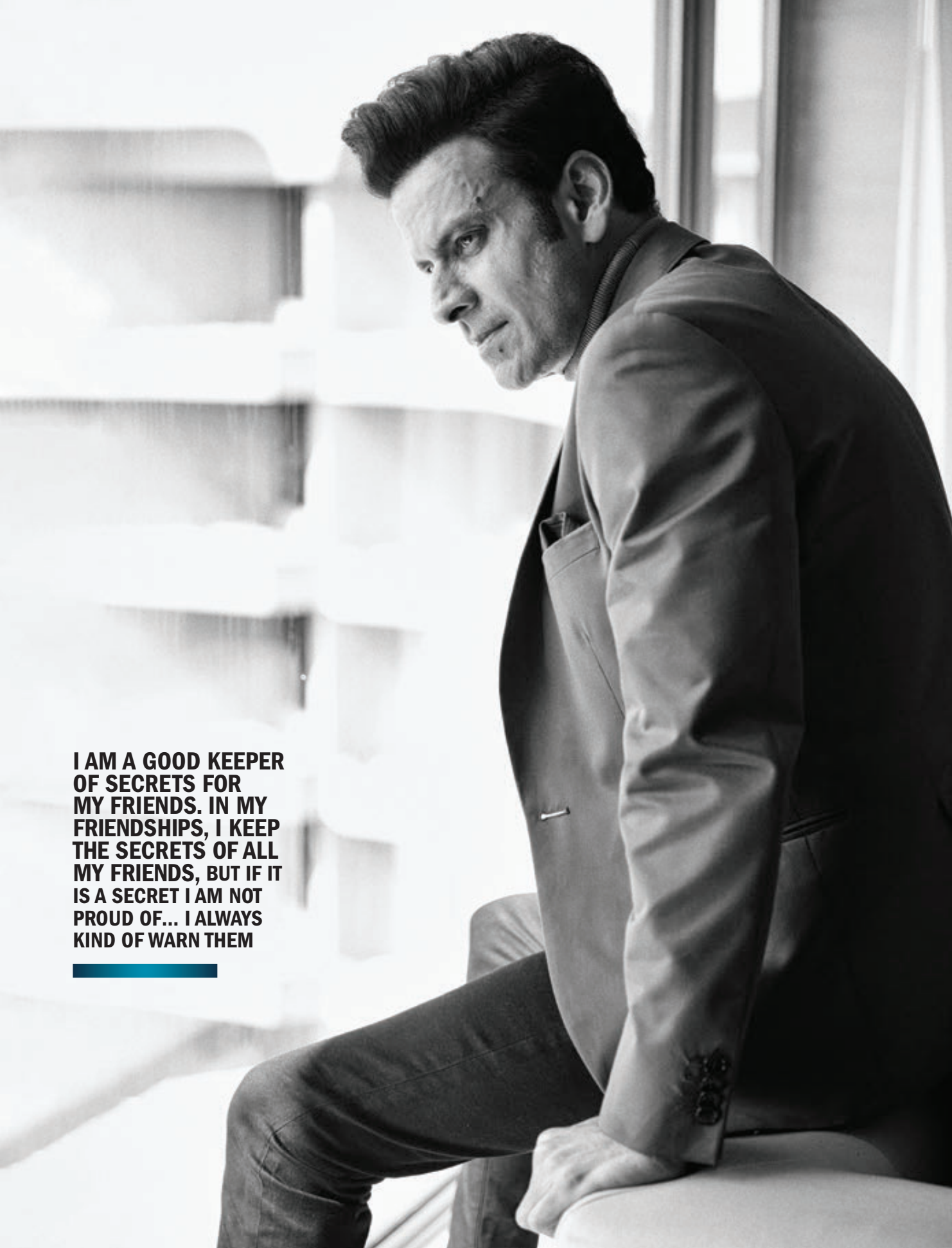
they started investing heavily in their own favourite shows, favourite actors and suddenly by the end of nine months, you had a parallel world of entertainment. When theatres were still struggling, this emerged as a viable option even for filmmakers. The audience got exposed to not only different content, but also to content which opened their eyes to different kinds of talent that weren't fully utilised in cinema. Because cinema has its limitations — due to box-office and/or its length. I just hope, even after cinema-life comes back to normal, these new choices made by the audience will continue to flourish.

**If *The Family Man* were made into a film today, would the impact be the same as on the digital platform?**

Let me remind you that *The Family*

With his Filmfare trophy for *The Family Man*



A black and white photograph of a man with dark hair, wearing a suit and tie, sitting on a ledge or window sill. He is looking out of a window with a view of a city skyline. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and shadows.

**I AM A GOOD KEEPER  
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**You're shown to be super secretive in *The Family Man*. Are you like that in your personal life as well?**

I am a good keeper of secrets for my friends. In my friendships, I keep the secrets of all my friends, but if it is a secret I am not so proud of... I always kind of warn them. And reprimand them. But you know, the only place where I'm completely myself is with my family. With them I can be both black and white. In that way, I am not Shrikant Tiwari at all.

**What can we expect from *The Family Man* Season 2?**

It's far bigger than what came earlier. And it's a lot more intense this time as well. Because Shrikant's life has changed in Season 2. So definitely his relationships are looked at differently. But his quirks, his way of responding to other characters, his way of handling his marriage and his job... at times it's quite baffling and funny — that hasn't changed.



With directors Raj and DK, Samantha Akkineni and Priyamani

**SAMANTHA HAS BECOME A BIG STAR BY GIVING IT HER 200 PER CENT BOTH PHYSICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY. SHE DELVED DEEP INTO THE CHARACTER WHILE SHE WAS SHOOTING FOR THE CHALLENGING SEQUENCES. THAT'S COMMENDABLE INDEED**

**What's your wife's take on *The Family Man*?**

Neha loved it. She was chosen as one of the test audience for the second season. Even I was not allowed by her to watch any episode. She is strict about her responsibility. All she said was that the show is good. She shared her observations directly with Raj and DK. But she loved the series. I hope once she feels a bit free of her responsibility towards Ava, our daughter, she returns to acting. Ava and I will cheer her from the sidelines.

**You got to spend a lot of time with Ava during the lockdown...**

I haven't seen any child with that much energy. She is like a doll who wakes up and starts moving and never thinks of stopping for a moment after that. Till we are really tired and exhausted in the night and put her to bed. She keeps us busy. She was not allowed to go down and

play or meet her friends. But it was good that for the initial four months we were stuck in Uttarakhand and she was hiking and trekking 10 km, 12 km every day with me. So you can imagine the kind of energy that she has. She needs that kind of activity to exhaust her.

### **Are you loving this phase of your career where you're the protagonist of an action series?**

Look at the kind of talent emerging from OTT. I don't think they could have got justice in the cinema here. I am happy that the scene has changed and people are loving the OTT platforms and their content. They are looking forward to the work of good directors and actors. If you ask me, it has come a little late for me per se because I'm not in my 20s today. But at the same time, I am trying to make the most of it. Every day, I keep getting calls from people to be part of their shows. That's where I feel completely grateful and humble. So yeah, it's a fantastic time, we all have our hands full. And I just hope it continues for a long, long time.

are struggling because the masses are still staying away. People are still a little wary of going to the theatres. I just hope they show a lot more enthusiasm. And courage to go to the theatres and not feel fearful. Because I somewhere feel that theatres are safe. They are as safe as flying today. So if they can sit in a flight for two-three hours, why can't they sit in theatres where all the protocols are being followed. Theatre owners are making sure to sanitize the seats, wearing a mask is compulsory and the seating capacity has been reduced to 50 per cent. I think we should go to the theatres. All the medium of entertainment should do well simultaneously.

### **How was your experience working with Samantha Akkineni in *The Family Man*?**

She started shooting with me in Chennai and then we got pally. She has been very dedicated. She's become a big star by giving it her 200 per cent both



With wife Neha



With Neha and daughter Ava

**I JUST KEEP MY EYES OPEN ABOUT EVERY ACTIVITY AND THE WAY THE WORLD IS RESPONDING TO IT. I HAVE AN EYE ON EACH AND EVERY ACTOR WHO'S WORKING TODAY. ALL THE YOUNG ACTORS AND HOW THEY ARE EXPERIMENTING WITH THEIR PERFORMANCES AND HOW THEY ARE REINVENTING THE CRAFT**

### **We don't think age is a hurdle or a barrier in your case...**

Definitely not a hurdle. But it doesn't give me the option of playing a 28-year-old guy anymore. All the roles that come to me are of characters who are 35 and above, 45 and above. So yes, that's the only thing. Otherwise, I'm happy. I feel blessed. There are no regrets or complaints. I was just stating a fact.

### **Will people flock to the theatres again?**

Samantha (Akkineni) and I were discussing this. She told me in South India people are filling up the halls to see their favourite stars and films. But in North India especially, for Hindi films, theatres

physically and emotionally. She delved deep into the character while she was shooting for the challenging sequences. That's commendable indeed. And even during the promotions, she made sure she had the full attention of the media. I just hope we get to do more stuff together.

### **Why are you not a part of South cinema? Are you open to doing South films?**

Since last October, I have been shooting back to back. There is no breathing space or window to take up another project. And all the last year's commitments have been pushed to this year. It will take me another year before I pick anything

else. I am open to doing South films provided they offer me something worthwhile. Let's see.

### **OTT is a new industry. Is there pay disparity here as well?**

I haven't experienced it. I have always been getting a fair amount of compensation for all the work I have done. But yes, I expect better compensation. I don't think there should be any kind of disparity if there is an already established name coming on OTT. It has its own audience base and it has its own market. And at the same time, I would say that whatever the budget allows, you are paid accordingly. And till now I don't have anything to complain about. ■



# THE ROYAL DIVA OF NAILS **DR. LEENA S.**

PHOTOGRAPHY: PRASAD NAIK | MAKEUP: FLORIAN HUREL | HAIR: YIANNI TSAPATORI | STYLIST: MOHIT RAI

OUTFIT: ABU JANI SANDEEP KHOSLA | CAPE: ROHIT BAL | HAIR ACCESSORY: VALLIYAN



**D**r. Leena S. is the embodiment of the progressive Indian woman who not only has confidence but also has a lot to show for it. From growing up in Dubai to making it big in India, Dr. Leena S. is a royal diva who has carved a niche for her own beauty brand, The Nail Artistry, a successful chain of salons that specializes in nail art, manicures and pedicures apart from regular beauty procedures.

What sets The Nail Artistry apart is the fact that it is patronised by the likes of the who's who from the worlds of Indian cinema, beauty, glamour and industries. Some of the most prominent names include Karisma Kapoor, Nora Fatehi, Sunny Leone, Nushrat Bharucha, Isha Talwar, Tamannaah, Kajal Aggarwal, Anushka Shetty, Keerthy Suresh, Akshara Haasan, Mamta Mohan, Nazriya Nazim, Rashi Khanna, Sneha Prasanna, Kavya Madhavan, Kushboo Sundar, Aparna Balamurali, Nikki Galrani, Shamna Kasim and Prasanna.

However, celebrity patrons are not that big a deal as the real celebrity here is the brand, The Nail Artistry, which Dr. Leena S. has created. The celebs actually keep coming back because of the world class quality of service at The Nail Artistry salons in Kochi and Chennai, far away from their regular lives, which is a remarkable feat in itself.

With her first salon, Dr. Leena S. wanted people to experience the therapeutic capabilities of manicure and pedicure and how they help relax one's body and mind. But she wanted the focus to be on the services and not on her. She wanted to make sure that her idea will be appreciated because of the quality of service by the people who visited The Nail Artistry and not because she was the force behind it.

"I did not want to start The Nail Artistry from a place like Delhi or Mumbai where people would compare us to regular salons. Our focus was completely different and I wanted to gauge if my business idea

can really make a difference to the people who would spend money on it. In a place like Kochi, it was only our brand philosophy and quality of services that mattered. I reckoned that if The Nail Artistry proves to be good enough and got accepted by the people in Kochi, I could say that my business idea really had merit. So, it was kind of a test and it proved to be the right thing to do," shares Dr. Leena S.

With the kind of high profile clients that The Nail Artistry salons in Kochi and Chennai attract and the quality of services and attention they get, it is no wonder that the locals also flock to the premium abodes of luxurious beauty routines. Conceptualised and initiated by Dr. Leena S., a visionary woman entrepreneur, The Nail Artistry has

been growing at a phenomenal pace over the last few years.

"Everyone deserves a good manicure and pedicure routine once in a while to keep them free of stress. I have instilled a culture in my team to understand the needs and preferences of our patrons and make sure that they all get the care they deserve. Our patrons, of course, appreciate the attention to details and the fact that The Nail Artistry team values little things about their routines and provides them with excellent services," says Dr. Leena S.

Dr. Leena S. trained to be a dentist but realised that she can touch many lives and help many more people being an entrepreneur and therefore, she established 'The Nail Artistry'. Her passion for nails and her belief in the therapeutic abilities



OUTFIT: FALGUNI SHANE PEACOCK  
HAIR ACCESSORY: VALLIYAN





Dr Leena with Sunny Leone  
at her salon in Kochi



Dr Leena is with  
Nusrat Bharucha at  
Inauguration of her New  
showroom in Kochi



Dr Leena with Nora  
Fatehi at the launch  
for her Cancer  
Foundation



of a manicure and pedicure led her to come up with the ingenious idea of setting up an exclusive salon that will specialize in nail art, manicures and pedicures. What's remarkable is that she took this idea and turned into a viable business that is highly successful and thriving.

"I know from experience that having a good manicure or pedicure is far more relaxing than anything else after a stressful day. I realised it could be a viable business idea. Our first The Nail Artistry salon was India's first super luxury nail art salon located in Kochi, Kerala. We created a unique space specially for Nail Art lovers. The idea was to showcase the customer's persona through their nails. With the state of the art interiors and extremely well trained staff, The Nail Artistry offered an exclusive experience of a unique kind and soon became famous," says Dr. Leena S.

Coming to think of it, the idea of Dr. Leena S. is definitely unique. It is, in fact, true that most people spend their lives taking good care of their families and even friends but simply ignore their own well being. The fact that they also need pampering that they shower upon their loved ones is an idea that simply escapes their minds.

"Things picked up slowly but surely and the people in Kochi loved what The Nail Artistry had to offer. What more, they kept coming back. And the word-of-mouth publicity generated by the patrons gave the business a real boost within the first year itself. From then on, it's been an ongoing journey that has earned me much respect and recognition and I am so thankful to everyone for their support and appreciation for The Nail Artistry," reminisces Dr. Leena S.

But as is true for every entrepreneur, Dr. Leena S. has had to work hard to prove that The Nail Artistry was an idea whose time had come. What is also remarkable and really sets The Nail Artistry apart from its competitors is the fact that Dr. Leena S. believes that competition is irrelevant for them. She believes that what they do at The Nail Artistry is special and unique and while others might try to copy, they can never



OUTFIT: FALGUNI SHANE PEACOCK  
FOOTWEAR: GUCCI



have the absolute focus that The Nail Artistry has.

"Most regular salons miss out on the nuances of a professional manicure or pedicure. They treat them just as a part of their routine while at The Nail Artistry, this is what we super-specialise in. We're

India's first super luxury nail salon and our focus is altogether on a different level. No regular salon can even come close to the unparalleled quality of service at The Nail Artistry," emphasises Dr. Leena S.

Because of the pandemic, The Nail Artistry has a sharpened focus on safety and hygiene while ensuring a luxe experience for its clientele. The Nail Artistry salons follow elaborate safety measures and strict hygiene protocols and procedures that only big hospitals follow. The Nail Artistry salons have their own autoclave machines to sterilize instruments that are used and all the manicure and pedicure pods are disinfected after every session.

"All our clients draw confidence from our efforts and it has helped us a great deal in pulling them all back to our salons for their nails and beauty routines, says" Dr. Leena S.

Needless to say, under the able leadership of Dr. Leena S., The Nail Artistry has been growing at a phenomenal rate. The warm response to the first salon in Kochi, Kerala, enthused her to open up the 2nd salon in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. In the coming few months, Dr. Leena S. plans to open new The Nail Artistry salons in the cities of Las Vegas, USA and Dubai, UAE. She also wishes to expand in India with new salons at Hyderabad, Bangalore and Goa too.

"I truly believe that the industry has immense potential and its best phase is yet to come. What has gradually changed over the last couple of decades is that more and more people, especially youngsters, have started to take themselves very seriously. They value their appearance and spend time and money to look and feel good. You can see so many of them regularly visiting gyms, health clubs, and high-end salons, which used to be a rarity just a decade ago," concludes Dr. Leena S.

Seeing the success of The Nail Artistry and the vision that Dr. Leena S. has for the brand, it won't be an exaggeration to say that she is indeed the Royal Diva of Nails! ■



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## MOMMY'S DAY OUT

Kareena Kapoor Khan may have given birth to her second son just three months ago but her recovery rate is phenomenal. She's back in shape and back to work in no time. Gone are the days when heroines disappeared into obscurity after motherhood. Now they roll back their sleeves and come back to the arena roaring for more, remarkably soon...

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Varun Dhawan and Alia Bhatt to unite for another *Dulhania* film pg 114

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Kriti Sanon cast opposite Prabhas in *Adipurush* pg 115

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PHOTOGRAPH: YOGEN SHAH





## KAREENA KAPOOR KHAN SHARES A GLIMPSE OF HER SECOND BABY ON THE OCCASION OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

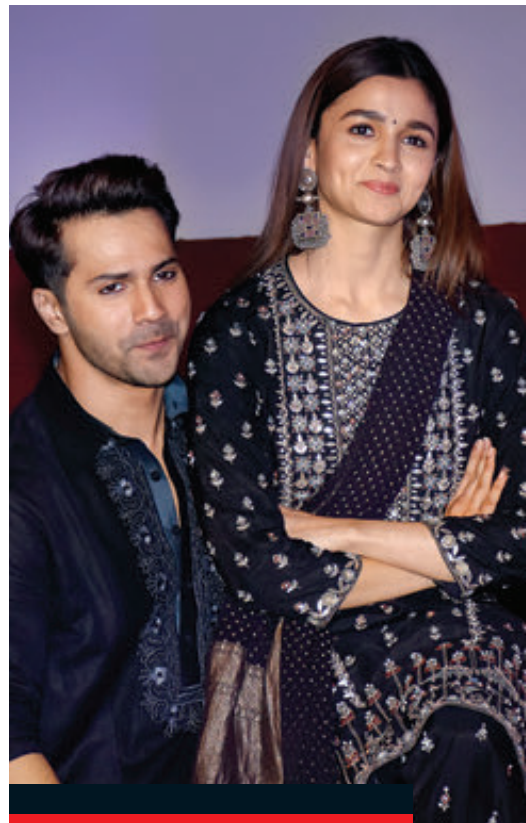
Ever since **Kareena Kapoor Khan** gave birth to her second kid, her fans have been

waiting with bated breath to catch a glimpse of the newborn. On International Women's Day, the actress finally showed us a glimpse of her second baby. Kareena shared a picture where she's holding her baby in her arms. This monochrome picture is all heart. Her caption reads, "There's nothing women can't do. Happy Women's Day my loves." Now that strong message and the lovely click along with it, sums up the spirit of this special day. Kareena has time and again proved that neither marriage nor pregnancy can stop a woman achieving new heights in her career.



## Amitabh Bachchan goes for his eye surgery

**Amitabh Bachchan** has been in the industry for several decades now. The megastar has been entertaining the audience with some great content over the years and has given Indian cinema characters to remember forever. Big B, as he is lovingly called, has great projects coming up too. From *Jhund* to *Brahmastra*, the actor will be seen playing interesting roles in all his upcoming films. However, the actor hasn't been well physically for some time now. After battling COVID-19 last year, this year he had an eye surgery. He even posted a poem about the same on his blog. He wrote, "I am without sight, but sightless not in my path, I am without convenience, but never inconvenienced.. I have sweet company, of them that caress me; they that court me, around in decorated best, be in good health, have I received abundant love, a gracious opulent heart, doth blossom with gratitude ... for some time I am but time bound now, for the prayers I get I am folded hands bound yes folded hands bound... ever folded hands bound". After his surgery, he tweeted a motivational message saying, "Just because we are struggling doesn't mean we are failing." He really is an epitome of both fortitude and motivation, alright.



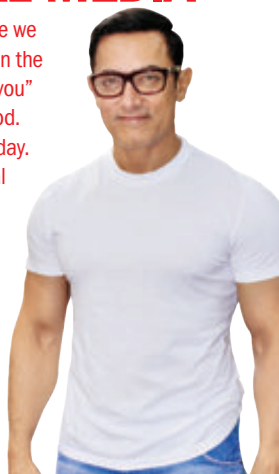
## ALIA BHATT AND VARUN DHAWAN TO REUNITE FOR ANOTHER DULHANIA FILM?

**Alia Bhatt** and **Varun Dhawan** began their career together in 2012, with *Student Of The Year*. The duo was then seen together in a few more films like *Humpty Sharma Ki Dulhania*, *Badrinath Ki Dulhania* and *Kalank*. The *Dulhania* series surely worked well for the stars as both the films were a huge success. On the fourth anniversary of *Badrinath Ki Dulhania*, Alia, Varun and the director of the film **Shashank Khaitan** caught up over a video call. However, what caught our attention was that the director as well as both the actors captioned the picture hinting at a collaboration once again. All three of them said that they were secretly busy discussing *Dulhania 3*. Well if they were serious or just getting their fans excited is something we'll only get to know with time. Fingers crossed!

## AAMIR KHAN QUILTS SOCIAL MEDIA

**Aamir Khan** is hardly ever active on social media. Almost every update we get about the actor is from his fan pages or from other stars working on the same projects with him. Now, on his birthday, after a flurry of "thank you" posts on Twitter, the actor said that he's giving up social media for good. "Hey guys, thank you so much for all the love and warmth on my birthday. My heart is full. In other news, this is going to be my last post on social media. Considering that I'm SO active anyway, I have decided to drop the pretence," he wrote. However, fans needn't worry as the actor has announced a separate handle where they can interact with him.

"We will continue to communicate as we did before. In addition, AKP has created its official channel! So, future updates on me and my films can be found there. Here's the official handle - @akppl\_official. Lots of love, always," he added. Come back Aamir, we miss you already



**WE HEAR THAT RANVEER SINGH'S CIRCUS WILL HAVE A SPECIAL DANCE NUMBER BY DEEPIKA PADUKONE. THE FILM IS BEING DIRECTED BY ROHIT SHETTY AND SOURCES CLAIM THAT DEEPIKA MIGHT HAVE ALREADY SHOT FOR THE SONG WHICH HAS BEEN PUT TOGETHER ON A GRAND SCALE. NOW WE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE THIS ONE.**



## AYUSHMANN KHURRANA-TAHIRA KASHYAP CELEBRATE TWENTY YEARS OF TOGETHERNESS

**Ayushmann Khurrana** and his wife, **Tahira Kashyap** celebrated 20 years of togetherness recently. The couple had been dating since 12th grade. Tahira shared a lovely video to commemorate the occasion. The actor jokingly stated that Tahira ruined his chances of becoming a doctor. "This girl was solely responsible for my bad scores in class 12 boards. We decided to date just before our chemistry exam. Had terrible ranks in PMT and CET exams as well. Thank you @tahirakashyap for ruining my attempt to be a doctor. No no it's not your fault, I'm just a bad multi-tasker and you on the other hand were so good with it. It was the year 2001, when we heard Bryan Adams' *Inside Out* on loop, cassette *ghis gayi thi*. We were also afraid *ki parallel line se parents phone na utha lein*. *Aaj do dashak ho gaye*. Now you'll ask me what's a *dashak*? Go figure out! Happy anniv. Umm," Khurrana wrote. Sweet!



### ANUSHKA SHARMA TO OPEN AN ANIMAL SHELTER NEXT YEAR

**Anushka Sharma** has been a champion for animal rights for years now. She has also constantly advocated that we amend our laws against animal cruelty and implement stricter punishment for such crimes. Anushka often spoke about her dream of building an animal shelter on the outskirts of Mumbai. Looks like that dream will come true soon. A well-placed source says, "If all things go as per plan, her shelter will be ready for operations sometime next year! Work on the shelter has resumed again after the coronavirus pandemic had forced all operations to be temporarily postponed. Anushka wants to build a state of the art animal shelter, a first of its kind in India and she is leaving no stone unturned to ensure this happens." That's wonderful news indeed.

## AND IT'S OFFICIAL! KRITI SANON OPPOSITE PRABHAS IN ADIPURUSH

Ever since **Om Raut** announced his mega budget film *Adipurush*, the media and the industry had been waiting with bated breath to know its female lead. We were the first one to tell you that **Kriti Sanon** has been in talks with the team. Recently the makers made the news official. Director Om Raut took to his Twitter and shared a lovely picture with his *Adipurush* team. In the clip we see him posing with **Prabhas**, Kriti Sanon and **Sunny Singh**. He captioned this picture saying, 'Welcoming @kritisanon and @mesunnysingh to the #Adipurush family.' Now while Kriti Sanon plays Sita in this adaptation of *Adipurush*, it looks like Sunny Singh will play the role of the loyal brother Lakshman. Kriti Sanon who is ecstatic about the news, tweeted saying, 'This one is too special.. Proud, honoured and beyond Excited to be a part of this magical world..' She further tweeted the pictures from her own account and said, 'A new journey begins.. One of my most special ones.. overwhelmed to be a part of #Adipurush.' Looks like the actress is truly overwhelmed to be part of this one. And why not, after all *Adipurush* has been the talk-of-the-town project ever since its inception. Moreover with Prabhas doing his first pan-India film and marking his debut in Bollywood, this one is surely one of the most anticipated films in the coming year.



### KARTIK AARYAN AND KRITI SANON TO TEAM UP AGAIN?

**LAST YEAR THE NEWS WAS OUT THAT ROHIT DHAWAN IS ALL SET TO REMAKE THE HIT ALLU ARJUN FILM ALA VAIKUNTHAPURRAMULOO WITH KARTIK AARYAN IN THE LEAD ROLE. DUE TO THE PANDEMIC, THE FILM WAS DELAYED BUT THE REMAKE IS STILL ON CARDS. ACCORDING TO REPORTS ON AN ONLINE PORTAL, WE HEAR THAT KRITI SANON HAS BEEN IN TALKS WITH THE MAKERS FOR THIS REMAKE. THE ACTRESS APPARENTLY HAS LOVED THE SCRIPT AND THE MONIES HAVE ALSO BEEN WORKED OUT BUT THE ACTRESS' BUSY DIARY IS AN ISSUE RIGHT NOW. KRITI SANON IS CURRENTLY SHOOTING FOR VARUN DHAWAN STARRER BHEDIYA AND THEN SHE WILL MOVE ONTO THE MAGNUM OPUS ADIPURUSH WITH PRABHAS. KARTIK AARYAN'S FILM ROLLS OUT IN JUNE, HENCE THE ACTRESS IS TRYING TO SHUFFLE HER DATES. REPORTS ALSO SUGGEST THAT APART FROM KRITI, TWO OTHER ACTRESSES ARE ALSO IN TALKS FOR THIS ONE. NOW LET'S SEE WHO'S THE LUCKY GAL TO ROMANCE KARTIK AARYAN.**





## VARUN DHAWAN TO PLAY A SEXY WEREWOLF IN *BHEDIYA*?



Varun Dhawan's energy has always been infectious. He's also known to experiment with his roles and reports suggest that viewers are in for a surprise in his next. The actor has started shooting for his new titled *Bhediya* and he is already giving us beastly vibes. Varun took to his social media and shared a video where we see him on an aircraft. And his team is egging him on to howl like a wolf. *Bhediya* is his first horror-comedy and he's super kicked about it. The film is produced by **Dinesh Vijan**. It's the third film by the makers in this genre after *Stree* (2018) and *Roohi* (2021). *Stree* and *Roohi* both have a female lead related to the myth of a ghost and a witch respectively. This time around they are going ahead with beast horror. The film is directed by **Amar Kaushik** of *Stree* fame.



## AKSHAY KUMAR FINDS HIS LEADING LADIES FOR HIS NEXT *RAM SETU*

**Nushratt Bharuccha** and **Jacqueline Fernandez** have been signed in for *Ram Setu* opposite **Akshay Kumar**. The film will go on floors mid this year. This is the first time Akshay Kumar and Nushratt will work together and it will be an interesting pair up. Jacqueline and Akshay on the other hand, have done several films together like *Housefull 2* and *Housefull 3*, *Brothers* and *Bachchan Pandey*. Akshay Kumar is currently wrapping up the shoot for *Bachchan Pandey* in Jaipur. He has shot for the film since mid-January and wants to quickly finish this film and move on to his next. The film's leading ladies **Kriti Sanon** and **Jacqueline** have finished their Jaipur schedule and even shared their respective looks from the film. Apart from *Ram Setu*, Akshay Kumar has *Raksha Bandhan* and *Prithviraj Chauhan* up for release.



## FATIMA SANA SHAIKH TO STAR IN THE REMAKE OF HIT TAMIL FILM *ARUVI*

**FATIMA SANA SHAIKH HAS BEEN ROPED IN FOR THE REMAKE OF THE HIT TAMIL FILM *ARUVI*. THE FILM WAS A SMASH HIT DOWN SOUTH BECAUSE OF ITS UNIQUE CONTENT AND LEAD ACTRESS ADITI BALAN'S FABULOUS PERFORMANCE. THE FILM REVOLVES AROUND A WOMAN WHO DECIDES TO RISE ABOVE THE SOCIETY AND ITS MALE-DOMINATED WORLD. THE HINDI VERSION WILL HAVE FATIMA STEP INTO THE LEAD'S SHOES. SPEAKING ABOUT HER ROLE, FATIMA SAID, "I AM THRILLED TO DO THE *ARUVI* REMAKE, AND AM LOOKING FORWARD TO DIVING DEEP INTO THE CHARACTER."**

## KANGANA RANAUT DOES SOME INTENSE ARMY TRAINING FOR *TEJAS*



**Kangana Ranaut** has a knack for going the extra mile for her films. Whether it is putting extra hours at the shoot, gaining weight, doing her own stunts or even prepping for a role with some intense training, the actress always slays her performances. Kangana recently took to her Instagram to share her prep for her upcoming film *Tejas*. In this short video, we see her doing some intense army training. Kangana even captioned the picture where she says no matter what people say or do to her, she will soar. She captioned the video saying, "Jealous crabs will always try and pull us down but we must rise higher and higher!!." Kangana had recently taken to social media to give a shoutout to her *Tejas* director, **Sarvesh Mewara** who is making his directorial debut with the film. Kangana plays an Air Force officer in *Tejas* and we are super kicked about it.



## KATRINA KAIF AND SALMAN KHAN TRAIN WITH INTERNATIONAL STUNT ARTISTES

One of the biggest hit franchises for **Salman Khan** and **Katrina Kaif** is the *Tiger* series. After *Ek Tha Tiger* (2012) and *Tiger Zinda Hai* (2017), the makers are going to be back with *Tiger 3* and the leads are going all out preparing for the action sequences. We hear that Katrina Kaif has a South Korean stunt artiste to prepare her for the action flick. Salman Khan on the other hand has a South African stunt team to prepare him for the action. Now we're sure that this team is going to blow our minds off with their action-packed flick. *Tiger 3* is being directed by **Maneesh Sharma**. The directors have always changed for this franchise. While the first part was helmed by **Kabir Khan**, the second was directed by **Ali Abbas Zafar**. The film has **Emraan Hashmi** in a negative role and there are rumours that **Shah Rukh Khan** in his character from *Pathan* or **Hrithik Roshan** in his *War* avatar, might have a cameo in this one.

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

# preview

## PASSION PLAY

**HARSHITA  
SHEKHAR GAUR**

X FACTOR: LOVE FOR  
THE CRAFT

Born and raised in Delhi, Harshita never planned to join the glamour world.

It just happened. After studying engineering, she decided to give acting a try and auditioned for Channel V's *Sadda Haq* on a whim. She got selected and her debut role was a hit amongst the millennials.

There's been no looking back ever since. She was quick to get projects like *Mirzapur*, *Kanpuriya* and *Sacred Games* and soon developed a decent fan-following. An ardent lover of the craft, she looks up to late Irrfan Khan's and Tabu's work for inspiration. Ask her about the two roles she'd like to play and she chooses Tabu's character in *Chandni Bar* and Villanelle from *Killing Eve*. Apart from acting and modelling, Harshita is a trained Kathak dancer and is now learning to play the flute.

Actors Yogita Bihani  
and Amol Parashar  
share their hopes  
and aspirations *pg 12*







# PRECIOUS COMMODITY

**AMOL PARASHAR** IS SLOWLY MAKING A NAME FOR HIMSELF ON THE OTT CIRCUIT.  
**ANALITA SETH** INTERVIEWS THE RETICENT ACTOR



**A**mol Parashar is an IIT graduate. He started doing theatre in college and fell in love with the process. After his graduation, while he did grab a high-paying corporate job, his heart wouldn't commit to the corporate rat race. He decided to take a break from his job to pursue theatre professionally, which led to more opportunities, including ads and films.

He played Ranbir Kapoor's friend in *Rocket Singh: Salesman Of The Year* (2009). Though his work got appreciated, offers were still hard to come by. He did act in films like *Babloo Happy Hai* (2014), *Dombivli Return* (2014), *Mili* (2015) and *Traffic* (2016). The same year, he cut his teeth on the OTT circuit with *TVF Tripling* and since then there has been no looking back as far as the OTT is concerned. Ask him what he finds more difficult, working in films versus working in a web series and he goes all serious saying that the medium shouldn't concern an actor. "My job is to give my best to every role, irrespective of where it's getting aired. The length or the treatment might defer but essentially an actor's job is to be as truthful to his role as he can be," he asserts.

He felt no qualms when his film *Dolly Kitty Aur Woh Chamakte Sitare*, which was to get released in cinemas, got released on OTT because of the pandemic. "I was born of the digital space. For me it's my hometown. It's

true that when I signed it, it was supposed to have a theatrical release but none of it changes the fact that we all gave it our best. I found out that the film was released in 193 countries digitally and it was accessible to millions. Maybe this wouldn't have been the case with a theatrical release. Also, my audience has been watching me on digital platforms so it's better for me. People didn't have to go to the theatre and wonder who's this new guy."

The film got a fair share of flak because a certain section of the audience felt that it depicted women



*Dolly Kitty Aur Woh Chamakte Sitare*

as having loose morals. He shakes his head at that and says today we have a problem with everything, even with a women-centric film that talks about women empowerment. "We are starting to call things sensitive because some people are getting sensitive. There are people who might like or dislike it but they don't get sensitive about it. If we keep saying it's sensitive, we are manipulating their outlook towards the film or show," he reflects.

Currently, there is a huge hue and cry over censoring OTT content. Amol wonders why it's so

He explains that you have to consciously use the remote to reach the content you want. "So if someone doesn't want to watch a particular programme, then he/she just shouldn't pick up the remote. It's that simple. No one is forcing them. The platforms also categorise content as violent or sexual in nature for the viewers to make their own choices," he reasons.

Amol's latest show on



*Aapkey Kamrey Main Koi Rehta Hai*

**I FOUND OUT THAT DOLLY KITTY AUR WOCHAMAKTE SITARE WAS RELEASED IN 193 COUNTRIES DIGITALLY AND IT WAS ACCESSIBLE TO MILLIONS. MAYBE THIS WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN THE CASE WITH A THEATRICAL RELEASE. ALSO, MY AUDIENCE HAS BEEN WATCHING ME ON DIGITAL PLATFORMS SO IT'S BETTER FOR ME**

Netflix, *Aapkey Kamrey Main Koi Rehta Hai* (AKMKRH) also stars his *Tripling* co-star Sumeet Vyas, and Swara Bhasker. The show has paranormal elements in it, involving Swara Bhasker. Amol says there is no difference between Swara's reel life and real life personas. "She is who she is. There is no difference in the Swara you see in person or in interviews. She's a bulldozer who bulldozes through people and it's fun. Unfiltered, unabashed and unpretentious, she doesn't behave in a way people

expect her too. Sometimes we have to remind her that she's famous so a little sophistication will help."

Ask him to reveal whether he felt closer to Chitvan from *Tripling* or to Kavi from *AKMKRH* and he goes into Zen mode once again. "I feel the more you tell yourself I'm a lot like a character, you start to limit yourself to those traits. So when a different character is given to you, you start to stress about what all

preparation needs to go into it. I try not to create such self boundaries," quips he, Yoda-like.

He's all set to play Bhagat Singh in Shoojit Sircar's *Sardar Udham Singh*, starring Vicky Kaushal. He's keeping his fingers crossed on that. He doesn't want to reveal much about the future. Says he, "My only criteria is that I should enjoy myself doing a role. If that's met, I'm happy." For someone who's just about taking baby steps in showbiz, he sure knows his mind. ■



# BIG LEAGUE BLUES

**VEDANSHI PATHAK TALKS TO YOGITA BIHANI, THE TELEVISION STAR WHO MADE HER FILM DEBUT WITH AK VS AK**

After graduating from Delhi University in computer science, Yogita Bihani took the corporate route to middle-class happiness. After working for an year in Delhi, she moved to Mumbai for better prospects. Her foray into the world of glamour happened in 2018, when she shot an ad for *Dus Ka Dum* with Salman Khan. Ekta Kapoor reportedly noticed her and offered her a role in the serial *Dil Hi Toh Hai* (2018), which turned her into a household name. She considers Salman her lucky mascot as thanks to the ad she got instant exposure. Talking about the experience she says, "Shooting with Salman sir was a magical experience. The minute he would enter the set it would light up, his aura would take over. At first I was nervous but then it only got better, he made me feel extremely comfortable."

She wasn't just a computer geek in college



Shooting with Salman sir was a magical experience. The minute he would enter the set it would light up, his aura would take over. At first I was nervous but then it only got better

but took active part in theatre as well. That helped her while she was churning out episodes after episodes of her debut serial. She played a mother at just 23 during the second season last year and relied

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One day Anil Kappor sir told me that he was talking about my work with his daughter Rhea and son Harshwardhan. That made my day, I felt extremely happy



AK vs AK

on her theatre training to pull through. “I’ve no experience with kids except for the interaction I’ve had with my nephews and nieces.” My instructors in theatre told me that as an actor it’s my job to do any role I get with conviction and remembering that I just went with the flow,” she muses. She maintains that pursuing acting wasn’t her dream growing up or even a long-term goal initially. However once she was into it, she started liking the process of being an actor. And the more she delved in it, the more she liked what she was doing. She decided to push her limits and liked the outcome. “I

decided I should continue to put my best and perfect my art, with every character I played, as an artiste it added more to my calibre and since then there has been no looking back,” asserts the actress.

**Y**ogita was recently seen in Vikramaditya Motwane’s Netflix original *AK v/s AK* where she played the character of a cinematographer who’s also Anurag Kashyap’s assistant and who has to endure a lot because of Kashyap’s maverick ways in the film. Yogita enjoyed the complexities that came with the role

“My experience of working with Anurag sir has been extremely enriching. As you know I was not only acting in the movie but I was also shooting the movie he was making in the film. He had full faith in me and he knew with a bit of camera training I would be able to live up to his expectation. At first I wasn’t sure if I would be able to manage such a huge camera while legends like Anil Kapoor were in front of it. You don’t want to mess anything up,” she confesses. Her day of reckoning came when they were shooting an eight minute long take. She was in tears as she thought she wouldn’t be able to do it. That’s when Kashyap calmed her down and told her he had every confidence in her ability. “I actually managed to finish the shot perfectly. It was a scene where glass was to be crushed and we only

had one sheet. Thankfully, I managed to capture that without any mistake. It was a day where I conquered my fear,” she reflects.

While Anurag Kashyap and director Vikramaditya Motwane had faith in her, it was Anil Kapoor who felt she was ill-suited for the role and felt she wouldn’t be able to do justice to the twin responsibilities. She was unfrazzled by this lack of trust from the senior actor and went about her work quietly. It took time but Anil did come to appreciate her later on. “One day he told me that he was talking about my work with his daughter Rhea and son Harshwardhan. That made my day, I felt extremely happy. On the sets Anil sir is extremely professional, very warm, always full of new ideas and suggestions,” she gushes.

The starlet is buzzing with enthusiasm post the critical success of the film and wishes to work with the likes of Imtiaz Ali, Zoya Akhtar and Sriram Raghavan. Though she wants her next stop to be Bollywood after trying her hand at television and the digital space, she’s wise enough to know a meaty role trumps the medium. She says as an actor she’s open to everything from films, TV to digital space. “As an artiste the character I play is more important for me than the platform. If I’m good it’ll be appreciated irrespective of the medium. “The more work you do, the better you become. My only worry is that I shouldn’t be typecast. Barring that, I’m open to anything and everything.” ■





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