

ALL NEW

June 2022

A Times Of India Publication

# FILMFARE

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## WOMEN ON TOP

MEET ANUSHKA SHARMA  
AND OTHER ACTOR  
ENTREPRENEURS

Nawazuddin  
Siddiqui  
doing it  
his way

Samantha  
uncensored

Alia  
Bhatt  
tells it  
like it is





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PHOTOGRAPH: ERRIKOS ANDREOU  
DEU: CREATIVE MANAGEMENT / GRAZIA

Tube dress: Aimée | 18K rose-gold diamond choker necklace with lapis and turquoise stone inlay work: Her Story

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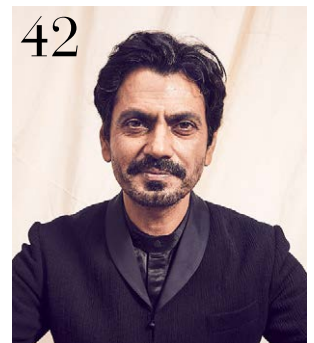
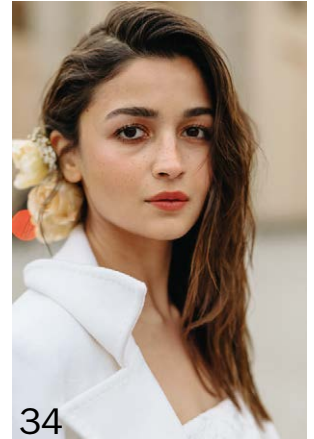
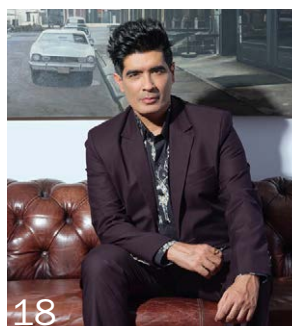
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# Letter from the Editor

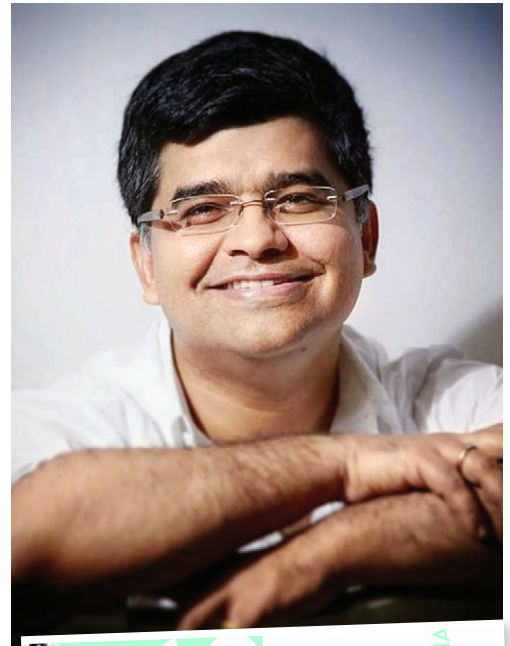
## She means business

What do women want? This has been debated since ages and no consensus regarding it has been found. But like everyone else, they do like power and money. Our film industry may have been called male-dominated, but women have always held subtle power, making sure their decisions held sway. Jaddanbai, Nargis' mother, was not only an acclaimed musician and composer but was said to be an astute businesswoman who used to finance films during the '30s and '40s. Devika Rani, whose chequered life needs to be chronicled in a film, was a shrewd producer who discovered stars like Dev Anand, Dilip Kumar, and even Dadamoni Ashok Kumar, through her production house Bombay Talkies, which was founded by her and her husband Himanshu Rai.

During current times, apart from owning production houses, our leading ladies have also turned entrepreneurs. They might not have pay parity with their male counterparts when it comes to being paid for film roles, but the tremendous social media clout they enjoy has seen more and more moolah coming their way through brand association and endorsements. And they've wisely chosen to channel this money back into businesses, thus multiplying their portfolio even more. Some have become angel investors, some have chosen to buy into partnerships, and some have chosen the direct investment route. Katrina Kaif and Alia Bhatt, for instance, both made substantial investments in a beauty brand. When the brand decided to come out with an initial public offering, their asset valuation jumped tenfold.

Deepika Padukone has invested in a set of startups ranging from those providing rental furniture to yoghurt to aerospace engineering solutions. That she's invested in such a diverse portfolio shows her keen business acumen. Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, Shraddha Kapoor, and Sara Ali Khan too have become angel investors. Priyanka Chopra has also invested in everything from edtech to real estate and also runs a profitable restaurant in New York, which has become the talk of the town. Anushka Sharma, till very recently, was a hands-on producer who produced quality products. But now she has handed the reins completely over to her brother Karnesh as she wants to concentrate more on her acting career, as well as mommy duties. She runs a successful clothing brand, and so does Sonam Kapoor, who has also invested in a gaming startup.

One should note that these ladies have taken more risks in investing than their male counterparts. Given the way they're going, it won't be long before they rule the film business as well. Our cover story profiles Anushka and other multi-tasking divas. Turn the pages to learn more about how they're conquering the world, one investment at a time.



*Jitesh Pillai*

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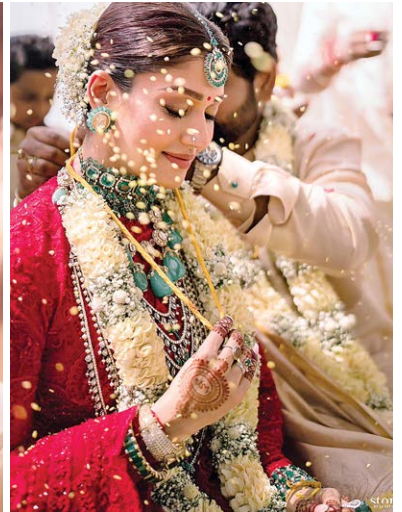
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a bird's-eye view of show town's happenings

# masala fix



## HOLY BOND

Nayanthara and Vignesh Shivan got married on June 9 after seven years of courtship. The duo met in the sets of 2015 movie *Naanum Rowdy Dhaan*, and the rest is history. The couple got married in Chennai in an intimate ceremony. The filmmaker has been actively sharing stunning shots from his and Nayanthara's wedding album. Vignesh Shivan announced the news of his and Nayanthara's wedding on social media with these words: "On a scale of 10... She's Nayan and am the one. By God's grace. Just married Nayanthara." Rajinikanth, Shah Rukh Khan, Suriya, Vijay, Mani Ratnam and many other high-profile guests were spotted at the wedding.



Ayushmann Khurrana on why he does commercial films *pg 09*

Tabu calls Ajay Devgn and Vishal Bhardwaj her safety nets *pg 10*

PHOTOGRAPH: YOGEN SHAH

# Rumours & More

## KAREENA KAPOOR SAYS JEH WAS PART OF *LAAL SINGH CHADDHA*

*Laal Singh Chaddha*, is an official remake of the critically acclaimed Hollywood film *Forrest Gump*, starring **Tom Hanks**. **Kareena Kapoor Khan**, who is playing the female lead in the movie revealed that her son **Jehangir** played a big role, as she got pregnant during the shoot of the film. Sharing the film's trailer on Instagram, the actress wrote, "A pandemic, two lockdowns, and a baby later... one of my most special films... also because my Jeh baba is very much a part of it (in my tummy). Thank you Advait and Aamir for having not just me but the both of us in it. It's something I will cherish forever. Over to you guys, finally... #LaalSinghChaddha. Jeh was born on February 21 last year. The movie, directed by **Advait Chandan**, will be released theatrically on August 11. It is produced by Aamir Khan Productions, **Kiran Rao**, and Viacom18 Studios.



## AKSHAY KUMAR SAYS WE'RE ONE INDUSTRY

THE PROS AND CONS OF HAVING A NATIONAL LANGUAGE HAVE BECOME A HEATED TOPIC OF DISCUSSION AMONG CELEBRITIES AFTER **AJAY DEVGN** AND **KICCHA SUDEEP'S** EXCHANGE SPARKED A DEBATE ON THE SUBJECT. WHEN **AKSHAY KUMAR**

WAS ASKED WHAT HE THOUGHT ABOUT THE LANGUAGE DEBATE, THE ACTOR RESPONDED BY SAYING THAT HE DOESN'T ACKNOWLEDGE THE DIVISION BETWEEN THE NORTH AND SOUTH INDUSTRIES. HE ADDED, "IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE UNDERSTAND THAT THIS IS HOW THE BRITISH CAME AND DIVIDED US. THEY INVADDED US AND RULED US. WE DON'T SEEM TO HAVE LEARNT OUR LESSON. WE ARE STILL NOT UNDERSTANDING THIS. THE DAY WE UNDERSTAND THAT WE ARE ALL ONE INDUSTRY, I THINK THINGS WILL START WORKING MUCH BETTER." WELL SAID.



## AISHWARYA RAI BACHCHAN'S MODELLING CONTRACT FROM 1992 GOES VIRAL

**Aishwarya Rai Bachchan** was well-known on the modelling circuit in the 1990s before becoming a true blue Bollywood star. Three decades later, a copy of her modelling invoice has surfaced on the internet, and fans have a lot to say about it. According to the contract, which was signed on May 23, 1992, the actress was paid Rs 1,500 for a magazine shoot. The single-page contract, signed in Mumbai, bears the actress' signature. A fan shared the contract on the internet along with the caption, "Aishwarya Rai got paid Rs 1,500 for one day's work in 1992. I wasn't even born then!" Another fan acknowledged that Aishwarya Rai Bachchan was always a star, saying, "In 1992 my father's income was Rs 8,000 per month which was sufficient to run our house of 5. This is massive money for a day's work for an 18-year-old." True that.



## KARAN JOHAR'S TAKE ON THE SUCCESS OF PAN-INDIAN FILMS

**Karan Johar** was recently asked about the success of pan-India films which we have witnessed this year. Opening up about the impressive success of films like **SS Rajamouli's RRR** featuring **Ram Charan** and **Jr NTR**, Yash starrer *KGF: Chapter 2* and **Allu Arjun**-led *Pushpa: The Rise*, Karan Johar said that these films have "raised the bar of Indian films" on a whole. He said, "We can say with a lot of pride that we are a part of Indian cinema. We are proud of *RRR*, *KGF*, and *Pushpa* which did phenomenal business. These films have raised the bar of Indian films, telling us that our standards can be so massive and we can reach so far ahead." That's a laudable thought, indeed.





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## Hema Malini wasn't happy with SRK's first audition

**Hema Malini's** biography, *Hema Malini: Beyond The Dream Girl*, sheds light on how **Shah Rukh Khan** auditioned for the movie *Dil Aashna Hai*. Hema Malini revealed that when she first saw Shah Rukh Khan in the audition, she never thought that he could become the star that he is today. Displeased with his first take, she suggested that they try again. She revealed that during the second round, SRK made a better impression. Hema even asked her husband **Dharmendra** to come over to meet the young actor. Dharam, it is believed, took a liking to the young man instantly. In an interview, Shah Rukh Khan revealed that he was an odd-looking boy and that he spoke too fast. He said, "I spoke too fast and I was not from a film background, but they gave me an opportunity. Who gets an opportunity in his life to sit across from the Dream Girl and she says, – I like your nose, it's very aristocratic and you got into my film because of that."



## SHAH RUKH KHAN SAYS GAURI KHAN IS THE BOSS OF MANNAT

In a recent appearance in Delhi, **Shah Rukh Khan** showered praise on his wife, celebrity interior designer **Gauri Khan**. Not only did he praise her, but he also described how she had changed the aesthetic of their heritage home, Mannat. He mentioned that Gauri Khan is the 'lady of the house' and a 'wonderful designer'. SRK revealed that Gauri does not allow anyone to "disrupt the design in the house". He further added, "In my house, most of the stuff that is bought for the house is obviously bought by the lady of the house, my wife Gauri. You are not allowed to disrupt the design in the house because she is a wonderful designer herself. But one of the few things that I'm allowed to do because there is this understanding that maybe I know technology the best in the house."

## NEETU KAPOOR'S WITTY RESPONSE WHEN ASKED ABOUT ALIA BHATT

**Karan Johar's** 50th birthday bash saw the creme-de-la-creme of Bollywood in attendance, and it was a night full of glitz and glamour. **Ranbir Kapoor** and **Neetu Kapoor** were also on the list and made chic appearances on the red carpet. **Alia Bhatt**, who is busy shooting for her Hollywood project, *Heart of Stone*, alongside **Jamie Dornan** and **Gal Gadot**, couldn't make it, unfortunately. Ever since Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt's marriage, Neetu Kapoor has been repeatedly asked how her "bahu" is doing, and she has warm-heartedly responded about her well-being. This time, when she was asked about Alia, she had a rather funny response. The paparazzi were heard asking her, "*Bahu ke baare mein kuch batao na.*" To which Neetu jokingly replied, "*Phir bahu. Abhi bahu bahut kushal mangal hai and she is very happy. Ab aage badho.*" Hilarious.

## POOJA HEGDE FEELS WE'RE FINALLY BECOMING INDIAN CINEMA

**POOJA HEGDE'S** FIRST RED CARPET WALK AT THE CANNES FILM FESTIVAL THIS YEAR WAS VERY SPECIAL BECAUSE IT WAS NOT FOR A BRAND, BUT FOR INDIA. SPEAKING ON THE SUBJECT, SHE STATED, "I WENT AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF INDIA. THIS YEAR, INDIA IS THE COUNTRY OF HONOUR AT MARCHE DU FILM. IT TOOK US 75 YEARS TO REACH HERE, BUT FINALLY, WE'RE HERE." POOJA, WHOSE RECENT FILMS INCLUDE *RADHE SHYAM* AND *BEAST*, AND *ACHARYA*, SAID, "OUR CINEMA IS FINALLY BECOMING INDIAN CINEMA. I THINK THE CROSSOVER HAS FINALLY STARTED. INSTEAD OF DIVIDING US, WE SHOULD LOOK AT IT AS OUR STRENGTH, INDIA IS SO CULTURALLY VAST AND DIVERSE. FILMS ARE A GREAT WAY OF GETTING AN INSIGHT INTO OTHER PEOPLE'S CULTURES. I THINK THAT IT IS REALLY IMPORTANT FOR US TO WATCH DIFFERENT CINEMAS, WITHIN INDIA AS WELL, TO UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER. AND THAT'S HAPPENING NOW."







## PRIYANKA CHOPRA JONAS CALLS ALIA BHATT, AND KATRINA KAIF TWO OF THE TOP ACTRESSES IN INDIA

**Priyanka Chopra Jonas** is on a roll. The actress, who got back to work a day after welcoming her 'baby girl' home, is looking at a packed slate of upcoming projects. One of those projects is the highly anticipated film *Jee Le Zaraa*. The road movie, directed by **Farhan Akhtar**, will feature Priyanka alongside Alia Bhatt and Katrina Kaif. And now Priyanka has opened up about why she chose to join the film. In an interview with a leading entertainment publication, Priyanka Chopra Jonas called **Alia Bhatt** and **Katrina Kaif** the "top actresses" in India. She said, "I'm doing a movie in India now with two of the top actresses in the country, Katrina Kaif and Alia Bhatt, and the three of us decided we wanted to do a movie together and partner together to produce it." Priyanka Chopra Jonas is currently filming for her upcoming series, *Citadel*, in which she stars alongside *Eternals*' fame **Richard Madden**. The **Russo Brothers**-helmed show is a spy thriller. She is also attached to star in *It's All Coming Back to Me* alongside **Sam Heughan**.

## KARTIK CLEARS UP THE RUMOURS ABOUT SARA

**KARTIK AARYAN** AND **SARA ALI KHAN** STARRED TOGETHER IN **IMTIAZ ALI'S** *LOVE AAJ KAL* AND WERE RUMOURED TO BE DATING AT THE TIME. THE ACTORS NEVER PUBLICLY DISCUSSED THEIR RUMOURED ROMANCE AND SUBSEQUENT BREAKUP. WHEN ASKED IF THE REPORTS THAT THE LINK-UPS ARE FOR FILM PROMOTION WERE TRUE, KARTIK SAID, "NO, NO. THERE WAS NOTHING PROMOTIONAL THERE. HOW DO I EXPLAIN THIS? NO DEAR, I MEAN, WE ARE HUMANS AS WELL. NOT EVERYTHING IS PROMOTIONAL. THIS IS ALL THAT I WILL SAY ON THIS TOPIC." SARA LATER CONFIRMED THAT SHE WAS NOT DATING KARTIK. SHE INITIALLY AVOIDED THE QUESTION, SAYING IN 2020, "I AM DATING HIM IN THE FILM. THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS. PLEASE COME AND WATCH US 'DATING' FOR 2.5 HOURS ON VALENTINE'S DAY." WHEN SPECIFICALLY ASKED, SHE STATED THAT SHE WAS NOT DATING HIM.



## AYUSHMANN KHURRANA ON WHY HE DOES COMMERCIAL FILMS

**Ayushmann Khurana** is one of the most reliable stars in Bollywood. With his versatile body of work, the actor has a way of landing box office hits and shining in films that offer social commentary. Ayushmann Khurana recently talked about why it's important to do films that perform well at the box office. He said, "*Dream Girl*, *Badhaai Ho*, and *Bala* were light-hearted films. *An Action Hero* is a commercial film. You have to do commercial cinema so that films like *Anek* and *Article 15* will find support. You get courage from your commercially successful films to do films like *Anek* and *Article 15*. That balance is very important. He also gave **Fahadh Faasil** a shoutout, saying, "I watch all kinds of cinema. I love watching Malayalam cinema. I am a huge fan of Fahadh Faasil. His films are not commercial per se. He listens to his heart." Hmm...



## KARTIK AARYAN TOOK THIS LONG TO LEARN TANDAV FOR *BHOO! BHULAIYAA 2*

**Kartik Aaryan** is currently basking in the glory of his film *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2* doing exceptionally well at the box office. It is safe to say the film, which is a sequel to the blockbuster film *Bhool Bhulaiyaa*, has left the audience mightily impressed. One of the most stunning sequences in the film was Kartik Aaryan breaking into a *Tandav*. It took Kartik a week to perfect the moves. A source commented, "Kartik trained non-stop for an entire week to nail that small dance sequence where he performs *Tandav*. It is a very difficult dance form for someone who has never learnt Indian classical dance and he managed to grab it and within a week's training under Guru **Chinni Prakash**."





## Neena Gupta's autobiography is to be turned into a movie

Veteran actor **Neena Gupta** has revealed that her autobiography, *Sach Kahun Toh*, will now be adapted into a movie. She is in conversation with those who have taken an interest in the book. *Sach Kahun Toh* was launched by **Kareena Kapoor Khan** last year. The memoir took 20 years to complete as Neena Gupta

was initially unsure about it. The book detailed her personal life in depth, from a marriage that lasted a year to raising **Masaba Gupta** as a single mother. She opened up about her life beyond stardom. The book became a big hit, and the story will be on screen soon. When asked if they had found an actor to essay the role, she said, "My opinion doesn't matter. The producer will decide who is fit for it. I cannot interfere in it and I have not even thought about it yet."

## RAJKUMAR SANTOSHI PRAISES MADHURI'S DEDICATION

In a recent interview, filmmaker **Rajkumar Santoshi** revealed how dedicated **Madhuri Dixit** is towards her work. He shared an incident where she shot for a comedy scene despite the fear of a raid at her father's house. Santoshi added that she would not let her personal life affect her professional one. He said, "We were shooting for *Pukar* in Ooty. The production in-charge came to me and asked me if we could wrap up by 2:30 pm because Madhuri might have to leave by the evening. I told him I would try. During lunchtime, I got to know that there was a raid at Madhuri's father's house, and she was tense about it. Madhuri's mother was with us at the shoot. Despite this tension, Madhuri was shooting for a comedy scene. She didn't let the director know that she was under stress and had to reach Mumbai." True grit, indeed.



## TABU CALLS AJAY DEVGN AND VISHAL BHARDWAJ HER SAFETY NETS

In a recent interview, **Tabu** opened up about the close-knit relationship she shares with **Vishal Bhardwaj** and **Ajay Devgn**. She shared that she really values the creative partnership she shares with them. The actress strongly believes that they always come to her with, "work of substance". Sharing that Devgn and Bhardwaj were her safety net in the industry, the actress said, "Vishal and Ajay come to me with something of substance. They know me so well. They know the best and worst of me, and I know the best and worst of them." She also added, "I think I'm in my safety net for some time until I finish these films, and then I don't know. It is like work, chill, and having fun." Speaking on her bond with Ajay Devgn, Tabu said, "The fact that we have known each other since we were like 13-years old, it's become like family. It's a relationship that has been there. So, when I walk on Vishal and Ajay's sets, I feel this is my world and this is my kingdom."



## SIDHU MOOSEWALA'S CREMATION SITE HAS NOW BECOME A PLACE OF PILGRIMAGE

**SIDHU MOOSEWALA'S** TRAGIC DEATH WAS A GREAT SHOCK TO THE PUNJABI MUSIC INDUSTRY AND HIS FANS AND FAMILY ALIKE. THE SINGER AND POLITICIAN'S LAST RITES TOOK PLACE RECENTLY. THE CEREMONY WAS ATTENDED BY HIS CLOSE FRIENDS, FAMILY, AND HUNDREDS OF FANS. MOOSEWALA WAS BRUTALLY SHOT DOWN IN PUNJAB'S MANSA DISTRICT. HE WAS JUST 28. TO KEEP THE SINGER'S MEMORIES ALIVE, HIS FAMILY CREMATED HIM IN THEIR FIELDS INSTEAD OF THE CREMATORY. THE SITE HAS NOW TURNED INTO A MEMORIAL AS FANS COME IN FLOCKS TO PAY THEIR RESPECTS. SOME BOW THEIR HEADS TO SEEK BLESSINGS; SOME OFFER FLOWERS WHERE THE SINGER'S PHOTOGRAPHS ARE KEPT. SOME FANS TAKE SELFIES WITH A PHOTOGRAPH OF MOOSEWALA. THE PICTURE BEARS THE INSCRIPTION, "SOORME MARDE NAHI AMAR HO JAANDE NE," WHICH TRANSLATES TO "WARRIORS NEVER DIE, THEY BECOME IMMORTAL."





# preview

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

## INVESTING IN DREAMS

**LEAH KHAMBATA**

**X FACTOR: A STRONG FOUNDATION**

Leah Khambata is an actress and singer-songwriter in Mumbai. Most recently, she was in the OTT show *Guilty Minds*. Growing up, she acted in several musicals at the NCPA through the Mehli Mehta Music Foundation, then went to Wesleyan University in Connecticut where she double majored in Film and Psychology. Leah worked in film production in NYC after that, then got her MBA from Cornell, all the while acting in Off Off Broadway shows, short films and web series in the US. She then wrote, produced and acted in her short film called *(t)here* which had its NY premiere at HBO's South Asian International Film Festival. After almost 10 years in the US, Leah moved back to Mumbai in December 2019 where she's been continuing to act. She has done several advertisements as well including Titan Raga, Upgrad, Dettol Laundry Sanitizer, The Souled Store and Snackible.

Newbies Namrata Sheth  
and Anya Singh share their  
hopes and desires pg 22



# Courting Success

**Tanisha Bhattacharya** chats with model-turned-actor **Namrata Sheth**, who has found praise for her work in *Guilty Minds*

PHOTOGRAPHS: ROHAN SHRESTHA

**T**he newest OTT star on the block, Namrata Sheth, has won plaudits for her work in *Guilty Minds* and says it's been the perfect launch for her. She's happy that the masses have liked the series and is grateful for the love that has been coming her way. Modelling has often been the first step on the ladder of success for many actors and Namrata followed a similar trajectory. She started modelling at the age of 16, appearing in a commercial for a face wash brand at that tender age. She says she realised she loved performing ever since she first faced the camera. "I ended up getting a lot of assignments after that and slowly, I realised that this was a route I wanted to take," she elaborates. She's been modelling for a decade

*“I had to struggle initially with rejection but then I learnt to take criticism in my stride and use it as a tool to better myself”*





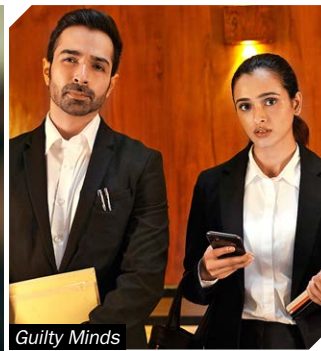


now and says keeping herself motivated has been the biggest life lesson she's imbibed thus far. "I had to struggle initially with rejection but then I learnt to take criticism in my stride and use it as a tool to better myself. And I also learnt how to keep my spirits up and bounce back from disappointments."

She'd been auditioning for shows for sometime and finally, luck smiled on her when she got selected for *Guilty Minds*. It's a courtroom drama and Namrata reveals she visited the High Court several times to understand how lawyers slug it out in the court. She was reportedly taken on just 12 days before the shooting

started and trusted the instincts of her director to guide her through the role. She plays a lawyer who has studied abroad and wants to make a career in India. Everything is both alien and exciting for her character. "Shafali Bhushan, my director, met me a day after the audition and told me all about Shubhangi. She gave me the script to read and I found it interesting. It got me excited about my character and the series as well. I could relate to Shubhangi because like me she was young and bouncy. She was just starting out and full of energy about everything. I instantly connected with her."

Shriya Pilgaonkar and Varun Mitra were her co-stars in the series



*"I could relate to Shubhangi (from Guilty Minds) because like me she was young and bouncy. She was just starting out and full of energy about everything"*

and she had a gala time working with them. Some of her scenes with Shriya were shot on outdoor schedules and the two girls bonded well while travelling. "I was just so in awe of her because I had seen her in so many things. I think she set such a great example for how women-supporting-women relationships should be like. She instantly makes you feel comfortable, is so motivating and she's such a beautiful person," gushes Namrata. She has known Varun for years. They'd been friends since their salad days and used to prepare for auditions together. So it was great for her to have her bestie as a co-star, as she knew she could depend on him to give her a helping hand if she goofed up. "He is

such a great performer it is almost effortless to do scenes with him because he is always in character. I learned a lot by watching both of them perform. It was the best acting class that you could ask for," she asserts.

She's been part of *Eternally Confused And Eager For Love* as well. She was shooting for *Guilty Minds* when she auditioned for it and got selected. She was able to shoot for it as *Guilty Minds* got held up because of covid. She was excited about the project as it was produced by Zoya Akhtar under her Tiger Baby banner. "I just love Zoya Akhtar as a storyteller. I was hoping that this one would work out and it did. I was just really thrilled to be a part of it. It was a very sweet, quirky, and I did it for my love for Zoya."

Like every other millennial, Namrata too likes to binge watch shows. She loves shows like *Mirzapur*, *Sacred Games*, *Gullak* and *WeCrashed*. She doesn't want to stick to one genre when it comes to future projects. She's quite gung ho on doing an action-oriented project as of now. "I am trained in kickboxing and I love doing adventurous things and so I would love to do something like that. But I also really enjoy watching real emotions and drama and think that they are just taken out of life. For example, the kind of things that Zoya Akhtar makes or Shoojit Sircar makes. I would love to be part of stories like that and show genuine human emotion."

# Kiss & tell

**Tanisha Bhattacharya** meets **Anya Singh**, who is making waves with the OTT show *Never Kiss Your Best Friend*



**A**nya Singh hails from Delhi. She had a natural affinity for dance and was always performing in front of her friends and neighbours at the behest of her parents. After finishing high school, she enrolled in a college in Rajasthan, where she first considered becoming a professional actor. She wanted to move to Mumbai. Her parents said no at first, then they gave her a year after graduation to pursue her dreams. The city proved completely alien to her. "I initially just felt very lost, alone, and lonely because I'd left my friends and family behind. It took me a while to adjust to the new reality."

After doing a round of auditions, she landed her first ad, which was for a shampoo brand. She also landed a role in the short film *Lex Talionis* (2016), a revenge drama. She landed her first

“I COUNT *QAIDI BAND* AS A HUGE LEARNING EXPERIENCE AS I LEARNT SO MUCH FROM MY DIRECTOR HABIB FAISAL DURING THE MAKING OF THE FILM”





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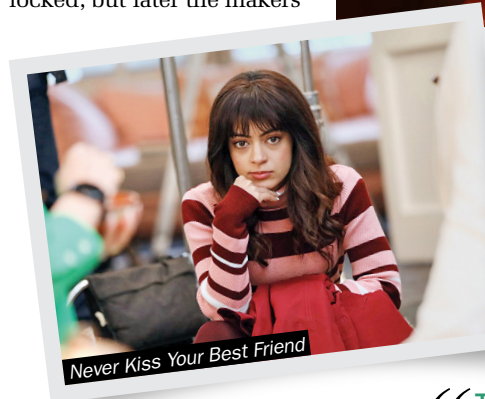
feature film, *Qaidi Band* (2017), by chance. She ran into casting agent Shanoo Sharma at a coffee shop. Shanoo took a liking to her and asked her if she was interested in being tested for something. “She told me to come to her office tomorrow. I was given a long monologue from *Pyaar Ka Punchnama* to recite. I must have done something right as I found myself being selected for the *Qaidi Band*.”

**R**anbir Kapoor’s cousin, Aadar Jain, was being launched with the film. Being launched alongside him in a Yash Raj film was a big responsibility. She was interviewed by Anushka Sharma about it and felt it was a dream come true. “I played a maid’s daughter in the film and was appreciated for my efforts. The film got talked about a lot but unfortunately didn’t do well. Nevertheless, I count it as a huge learning experience as I learnt so much from my director, Habib Faisal, during the making of the film and also during the various workshops we had for seven-eight months prior to the film’s shooting.”

She says the real struggle began after *Qaidi Band*’s release. She’d had to fight a lot of personal battles as she lost her father and her mother got sick. She landed a Telugu film, *Ninu Veedani Needanu Nene* (2019), after that, and also acted in the crime comedy *Velle* (2021) after that, where she was cast opposite Karan Deol. She counts herself lucky to have landed *Never Kiss*

*Your Best Friend* during the height of the coronavirus outbreak. “When I read the audition scene, I thought, ‘This is so much fun!’ At the audition, my director and I just knew ‘*ki main ye ladki hu.*’ *Never Kiss... changed things for me because I realised I am getting to do things I enjoy and what I came to do here.*”

She was asked to audition for another character in *Kaun Banegi Shikharwati*, but she very much wanted to play Uma’s character. She was initially told the spot was locked, but later the makers



told her it had opened up again. “I remember I was in Delhi and took an early morning flight and tested for it before anyone else could reach there,” she reveals. She had grown up watching Naseeruddin Shah and was glad she could share screen space with him, as well as with Lara Dutta, Soha Ali Khan, and Kritika Kamra. “Lara is someone whose aura I have always been in awe of. Soha, she’s so witty and so sarcastic. I love it. Kritika is also smart. We got on well and we also had Naseer sir and Raghubir (Yadav) sir who could sit and talk to you and tell you so many stories,” she gushes.



“TANIE (FROM *NEVER KISS YOUR BEST FRIEND*) IS THAT EXTENSION OF MYSELF THAT I CAN’T REALLY BE IN REAL LIFE”

She instantly relates to humour, and she was glad she was able to play a witty, sarcastic character in *Never Kiss Your Best Friend* Season 1 and 2. “Tanie is that extension of myself that I can’t really be in real life. She’s childish, she never really thinks before she speaks, she has so many fun characteristics that I would love to have in real life. In Season 2, I also added physical quirks to the character. I made sure her body language was sloppy. And she can’t run because she isn’t fit

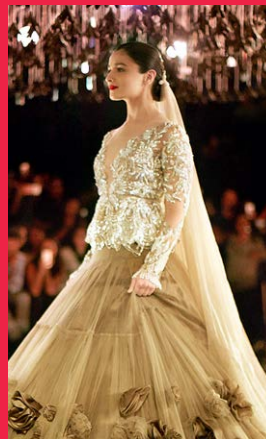
enough. “While rom coms are her favourite, she’d love to do thrillers as well and play a grey character. “I want to play twisted grey characters because I feel like I have an innocent face. And to see that turn into something that you would not expect is very interesting to me,” she reveals. Her next two projects will see her playing characters different from what she has been up to now. “I don’t want to play vanilla characters, and you’ll hopefully see me playing someone with plenty of spice.” ■



# F&B

***fashion and beauty***

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



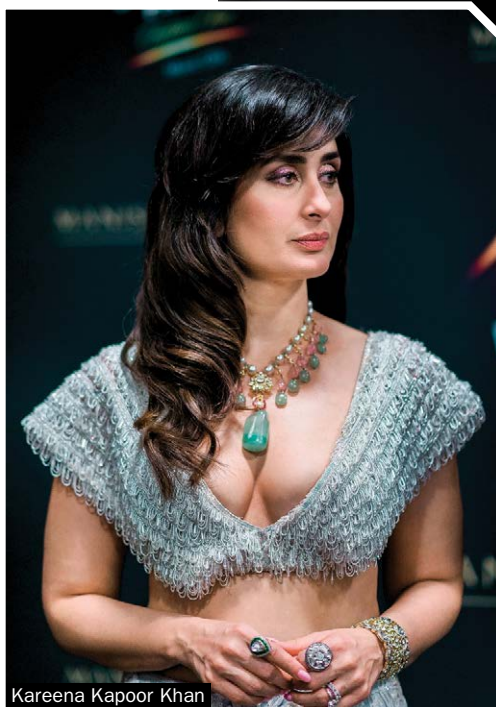
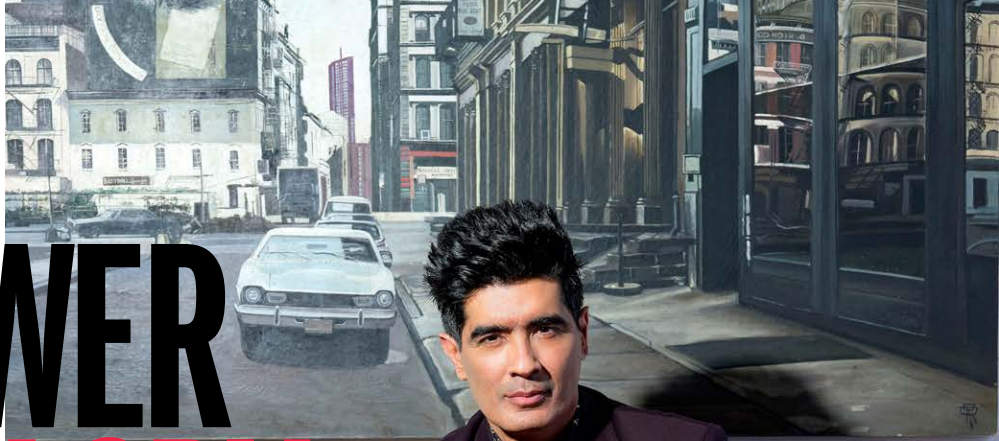
**“I LOVE WHAT I DO. I VIEW FASHION AS AN  
INTEGRATED LOOK THAT ENCOMPASSES DESIGN,  
STYLING, AND MAKEUP” – Manish Malhotra**

Ace designer Manish Malhotra considers fashion as an  
extension of one's personality.



# POWER & GLORY

**MANISH MALHOTRA** REMAINS AS GUNG-HO AS EVER OVER STYLE AND FASHION AFTER 30 YEARS AS HE WAS WHEN HE WAS STARTING OUT, FINDS **MAYUKH MAJUMDAR**



Kareena Kapoor Khan

**M**anish Malhotra's power lies in the fact that he is instantly recognisable. We're used to celebrities being mobbed by their fans but very few fashion designers enjoy the kind of fame that Manish has. He won Filmfare's inaugural Best Costume Design award in 1996 for *Rangeela* and you could credit him with seamlessly merging the twin worlds of fashion and film. Also, he brought about the death of the supermodel when he began getting his A-list celeb buddies to walk as showstoppers on the ramp. Much like his peer Sabyasachi, a Manish Malhotra outfit is instantly recognisable. You don't have to be a design student to know that the saree Katrina Kaif wore in the *Tip tip barsa pani* remake was by Manish Malhotra. High glamour has always been his mainstay. No wonder, then, that he counts Kareena Kapoor Khan and Karan Johar in his list of besties. Though he's just turned 55, he doesn't look a day over 40. He has his well-manicured fingers in multiple pies - movies, design, jewellery, beauty, technology and now, film direction. We spoke to the maverick designer about all things fashion and style...



**A designer, a costume designer and now a director - how do you manage to play so many roles?**

I love what I do; ventures and collaborations are a part of the journey. I view fashion as an integrated look that encompasses design, styling, and makeup. My love for cinema enabled me to create some iconic looks on-screen while mounting a whole brand simultaneously. Now I'm fulfilling my childhood dream of sitting on a director's chair, bringing the magic of fashion, films, and fun to life.

**You've had the kind of longevity in fashion and cinema that very few have - what do**



Alia Bhatt

*My love for cinema enabled me to create some iconic looks on-screen while mounting a whole brand simultaneously. Now I'm fulfilling my childhood dream of sitting on a director's chair, bringing the magic of fashion, films, and fun to life*



Ranbir Kapoor

**you think is your secret sauce?**

Have fun, experiment and most importantly, find something you're truly passionate about. You wouldn't be just working but genuinely enjoy the journey and bumps on the way.

**You always seem like you're up to try new things, open to new ideas - is that a learned experience or were you always like that?**

I have always been like that. I love change. Change for me means moving ahead with the times. It never hurts to try something new. With the required efforts and long-standing experience, I can transition from one segment to another while maintaining my signature aesthetics. Being in fashion, I've always looked at the bigger picture beyond fashion. My fashion inspiration is the outcome of

innovative research, which in turn is an essential part of my designing process.

**Trends come and go, but what do you think truly stays?**

I don't know about trends; what I did in 2000 is trending now. For example, sneakers with Lehengas, Kareena's Poo's looks resonate with today's Y2k fashion and some memorable runway designs



Shah Rukh Khan and Anushka Sharma



that reflect today's generation aesthetics. I can never let go of my classics as it witnesses their existence in every weave amidst the constant stream of fluctuating trends.

**What is your design philosophy?**

I run my business out of pure passion; the lines between my work and play have blurred. My work trips are often accompanied by personal recreations, such as travelling, discovering cultures, art, architecture, and meeting old friends and new people. Every experience is linked to my design expressions. However, my wearer's delightful personality brings out multiple variants of philosophy.

**Everyone gets styled these days, whether it is for the airport or just a simple dinner - what's your take on that?**

As they should, fashion should always be viewed as an integrated look. It doesn't necessarily pertain to one style, but you can keep reinventing and experimenting with alternative accessories or silhouettes.

**Who is the one Bollywood celebrity**

**you think has a good sense of style?**

Everyone has a unique style and persona; I couldn't name anyone specific. They're all lovely. However, for me, Rekha ji will always be that classic beauty with style that is eternal.

**Do you think celebrities are losing out on their unique sense of style, given that they are all getting styled?**

I started as a costume stylist, and it was my job to use my creative skills to produce visually appealing displays. Primarily, it's essential to identify your client's style and then integrate your inputs, so they feel comfortable



Katrina Kaif



Vicky Kaushal

*I love change. Change for me means moving ahead with the times. It never hurts to try something new. With the required efforts and long-standing experience, I can transition from one segment to another while maintaining my signature aesthetics*

embracing a more refined look. It's all about amplifying their self-expression. And I see so many upcoming stylists doing an exceptional job in reinventing and delivering impressive looks on and off-screen.

**One person, past or present, you would love to dress?**

Meryl Streep is at the top of it all; I would love to dress her.

**Do you think celebrities are more open to trying new stuff nowadays? If yes, can you give an example?**





Ranveer Singh

*I run my business out of pure passion; the lines between my work and play have blurred. My work trips are often accompanied by personal recreations, such as travelling, discovering cultures, art, architecture, and meeting old friends and new people*

self-confidence and when a person feels good about their appearance, regardless of the dress, they would feel good. A good outfit would just elevate that feeling I feel, but I still maintain it's the person who wears an outfit and not the other way around.

**How different is your current collection from the ones you've done before?**

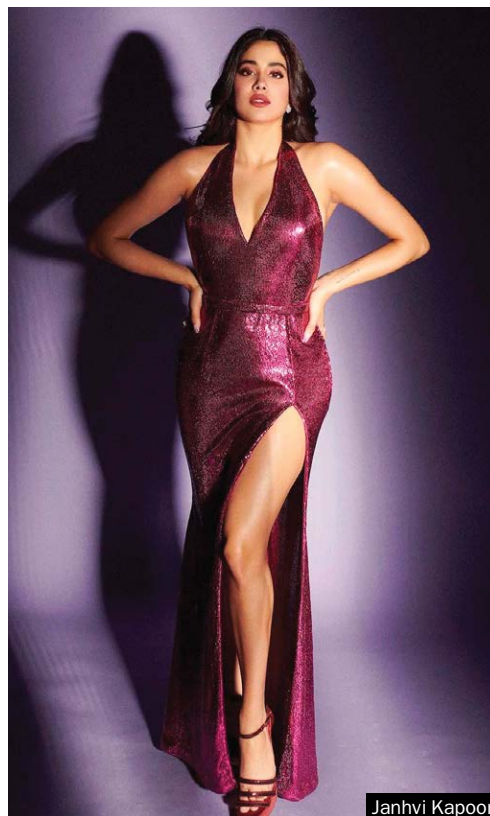
Diffuse is a bridge line, a new segment, and a new vocabulary. It's consciously priced, therefore more attainable, and accessible to the younger demographic. The formal silhouettes join forces with youth-centric celebrations with eclectic gender-fluid editions of sweatshirts & zipper jackets, a new diaspora of business. The line primarily features distinct geometric patterns & eccentric prints peppered with metallic details. There's street-style-meets-glamour-athleisure wear and spunky blazer sets with overcoats. And of course, my signature elements like sequins, sequins, metallics, feathers, fringes, tassels, and mirrors to glamorize it all.

Why only celebrities, today everyone's open to trying new stuff, especially the youth with their open-mindedness. They tend to be more creative and imaginative, as their inspiration is just one google tap or Instagram scroll away. The world generally dislikes routine; everyone identifies differently and tries to experiment within their domain. For example, Sara (Ali Khan) loves a Kurta Suit, yet she never shies away from experimenting with vibrant contemporary looks.

Alia (Bhatt) and Deepika (Padukone) are big on sarees, yet they can pull off a pantsuit like no other. The younger lot like Shanaya (Kapoor), Ananya (Panday), and Suhana (Khan) have an impressive Y2K style, yet they dress impeccably well in Indian Sarees, gowns, and Lehengas.

**If you dress good, you look good and you feel good - how much do you agree with that statement?**

The importance of appearance depends on an individual's style. Internally, it's the person's



Janhvi Kapoor





Vijay Deverakonda

*I think sustainability is one of the most critical factors coming in. As a label and as a first-tier designer today; I believe it is imperative for me to consider factors like technology; sustainability; and empowerment*



Sidharth Malhotra

**What is your take on sustainable fashion? Is it here to stay?**

I think sustainability is one of the most critical factors coming in. As a label and as a first-tier designer today, I believe it is imperative for me to consider factors like technology, sustainability, and empowerment. For enterprises that are so trusted, or for any company, it is necessary for

us to move with these values. We are working on imbibing all of them in our journey. We work with an NGO for empowerment and are very particular about electricity and water.

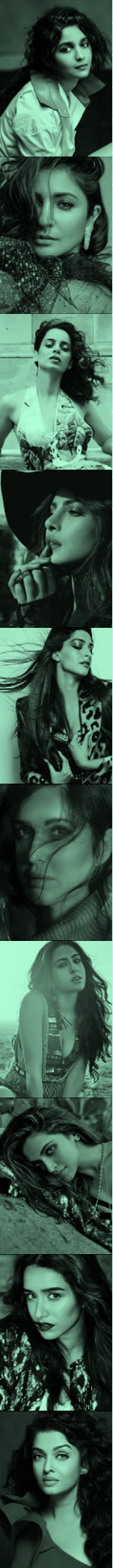
**The pandemic was a tough time for all industries but it significantly impacted the fashion industry. How did you cope with it?**

The pandemic was



unfortunate and unprecedented but we did manage to adapt to the new standards. In this fast-paced technological world, the pandemic propelled us to take our long-overdue avenue of virtual store and consultation to offer a seamless and safe shopping experience. We were the first luxury brand to launch a 360-degree virtual store in India. Now our customers are willingly giving orders online. Also, to answer your question, the fear of being at the rough end of business stints doesn't hold me down for long. Change excites me as I have never been averse to adapting to changing times. ■





# LIKE A



Women have been known for their multi-tasking abilities and our leading ladies are no exception. They not only have been conquering the marquee with their acting skills but also chalking up identities in other fields as well. Shilpa Shetty and Preity Zinta have been part of IPL franchises. Madhuri Dixit runs a successful edtech business, Malaika Arora has a popular yoga studio. Even earlier, Hema Malini and Reena Roy were successful producers and so were pioneers like Shobana Samarth and Devika Rani. Our contemporary actresses have not just been venturing into film productions but have been funding startups as well. They're investing in everything from clothing lines, beauty products, alternate energy to yoghurt. They're not afraid to take risks and are empowering others by their example. Here's looking at some of the leading actresses of today who are having the best of the both worlds...

**DEVESH SHARMA**  
PROFILES THE  
CONTEMPORARY  
ACTRESSES WHO ARE  
ALSO SUCCESSFUL  
ENTREPRENEURS



# ANUSHKA SHARMA



Anushka Sharma made her debut alongside Shah Rukh Khan in *Rab Ne Bana Di Jodi* (2008). She launched her production house called Clean Slate Filmz in 2013, which is now being managed solely by Karan Sharma as Anushka wants to primarily focus on her acting career. The actress was a hands-on producer and was involved in every aspect of the filmmaking process, be it casting, screenplay or music. She produced critically acclaimed films like the thriller *NH10* (2015) that featured herself in the lead. Other films like *Phillauri* (2017) and *Pari* (2018), which were a ghost story and a horror film respectively, followed. Her tryst with horror continued with the production of *Bulbbul* (2020) for OTT. *Paatal Lok* (2020), an OTT series, which was part police procedural and part political satire, won her several plaudits, including the Best Series Award, at the Filmfare OTT Awards. In 2017, she also started her own clothing brand called Nush, which was aimed at providing comfortable yet chic options for women. She appeared in *Forbes Asia's 30 Under 30* in 2018 and on *Fortune India's 50 Most Powerful Women in Business* both in 2018 and 2019.

SHE LAUNCHED HER PRODUCTION HOUSE CALLED CLEAN SLATE FILMZ IN 2013. IN 2017, ANUSHKA STARTED HER OWN CLOTHING BRAND CALLED NUSH, WHICH WAS AIMED AT PROVIDING COMFORTABLE YET CHIC OPTIONS FOR WOMEN



# AALIA BHATT



Alia Bhatt is said to be the brightest shining star currently in the pantheon of Bollywood gods and goddesses. She made her debut with *Student Of The Year* (2012), where she radiated oomph, and followed it up with *Highway* (2014), where she showed the world her inner steel as an actor. Branded as a natural actor, she proved to be a natural investor as well. She launched Ed-a-Mamma, a sustainable clothing brand, in November 2020. The clothing brand aimed at children became a 150 crore venture in the last quarter of 2021. She also invested in beauty e-tailer Nykaa, and saw her investment soar when the brand went public. She'd also invested in the startup Style Cracker in 2017, which is a personal styling platform. Her latest investment is said to be in Phool. co, an incense brand which makes incense sticks through leftover flowers offered at temples.

ALIA LAUNCHED ED-A-MAMMA, A SUSTAINABLE CLOTHING BRAND, IN NOVEMBER 2020. SHE'D ALSO INVESTED IN THE STARTUP STYLE CRACKER IN 2017



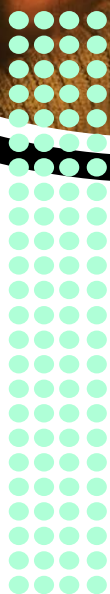
After winning the Miss World Crown in 2000, Priyanka Chopra made her Bollywood debut in *The Hero: Love Story Of A Spy* (2003). She established herself as an actor with *Aitraaz* (2004), where she played a grey-shaded character and never looked back. In 2015, she and her mother launched Purple Pebble Pictures, a film and TV studio primarily aimed at making regional films. Her first Marathi film, the 2016 comedy-drama *Ventilator*, was a box office success. *Pahuna: The Little Visitors* (2018), the Nepali language film produced by her, got critical acclaim. In 2018, she made her first big investment in Bumble, a dating app, following up with an investment in Holberton School for software engineering—a coding education startup. In 2021, she invested in US-based rental marketplace Apartment List; and in Genies, a virtual avatar firm, along with Camila Cabello and Paris Hilton. Her most talked about investment remains a restaurant called Sona, based in New York, which is generating rave reviews from food writers. She also invested in hair care and came up with her own line of sustainable hair care products called Anomaly.



# PRIYANKA CHOPRA

IN 2018, PRIYANKA MADE HER FIRST BIG INVESTMENT IN BUMBLE,  
A DATING APP, FOLLOWING UP WITH AN INVESTMENT IN HOLBERTON SCHOOL  
FOR SOFTWARE ENGINEERING





Katrina Kaif started her career with Kaizad Gustad's *Boom* (2003), though the film didn't create any waves for her. She bounced back with back-to-back hits like *Maine Pyaar Kyun Kiya?* (2005) and *Namastey London* (2007) and has been ruling the marquee ever since. Being a beauty icon, we weren't surprised when she launched a beauty products brand called Kay Beauty which espouses inclusivity as its core. She also invested with Nykaa and her investment soared 10-fold when the brand came out with an IPO. She recently won an award for her entrepreneur skills.

# KATRINA KAIF

KATRINA INVESTED WITH NYKAA AND HER INVESTMENT SOARED 10-FOLD WHEN THE BRAND CAME OUT WITH AN IPO. SHE RECENTLY WON AN AWARD FOR HER ENTREPRENEUR SKILLS



# DEEPIKA PADUKONE



Deepika Padukone made her debut opposite Shah Rukh Khan in *Om Shanti Om* (2007) and soon established herself as an established actress. Being from Bangalore, she's in tune with the changes in the technology space and hence has also invested with Bellatrix Aerospace which is a private aerospace manufacturer and satellite company based in Bangalore. She's also invested in Blu Smart, an electric taxi startup. She's known to be a foodie and has invested in yoghurt brand Epigamia's parent company Drum Foods International.

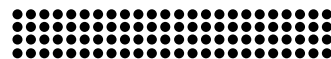
As a brand initiative, the company markets spreads especially curated by her. She's also interested in education, and has invested into edtech with FrontRow, which is a celebrity-taught learning platform, offering lessons in creative arts like music, acting, cricket etc. Being a fashionista, it was expected of her to come up with a clothing line, which is called All About You. She's also said to have invested with Furlenco, a furniture rental platform.



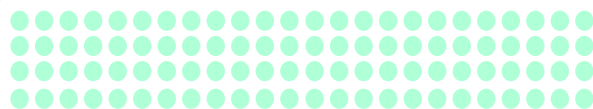
DEEPIKA INVESTED IN BELLATRIX AEROSPACE WHICH IS A PRIVATE AEROSPACE MANUFACTURER AND SATELLITE COMPANY BASED IN BANGALORE. SHE'S ALSO INVESTED IN BLU SMART, AN ELECTRIC TAXI STARTUP







Sonam Kapoor made her acting debut in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's romantic drama *Saawariya* (2007), which didn't fare well at the box office and had her first commercial success with the romantic comedy *I Hate Luv Storys* (2010). She's been called the numero uno fashionista by the press and it was obvious that she'll venture out in the clothes retail space. In 2017, Sonam and her sister Rhea launched the high-street fashion brand Rheson, known for its affordable prices and chic styling. Sonam recently invested in the blockchain-based game *MechaFightClub* (MFC). "I've grown up playing video games and love everything about them. The art, the storytelling, the creativity that goes into developing a game that is exciting today and also stands the test of time is something that's always intrigued me," she said on Twitter.



# SONAM KAPOOR AHUJA

IN 2017, SONAM AND HER SISTER RHEA LAUNCHED THE HIGH-STREET FASHION BRAND RHESON. SONAM RECENTLY INVESTED IN THE BLOCKCHAIN-BASED GAME MECHAFIGHTCLUB

# SHRADDHA KAPOOR



Shraddha Kapoor began her acting career with a brief role in *Teen Patti* (2010), and followed it with her first leading role in the teen drama *Luv Ka The End* (2011). She met commercial success while playing a singer in the romantic musical *Aashiqui 2* (2013). She's one of the most highly followed stars from Bollywood.

Shraddha expanded her blueprint by investing in the beverage brand Shunya last year.

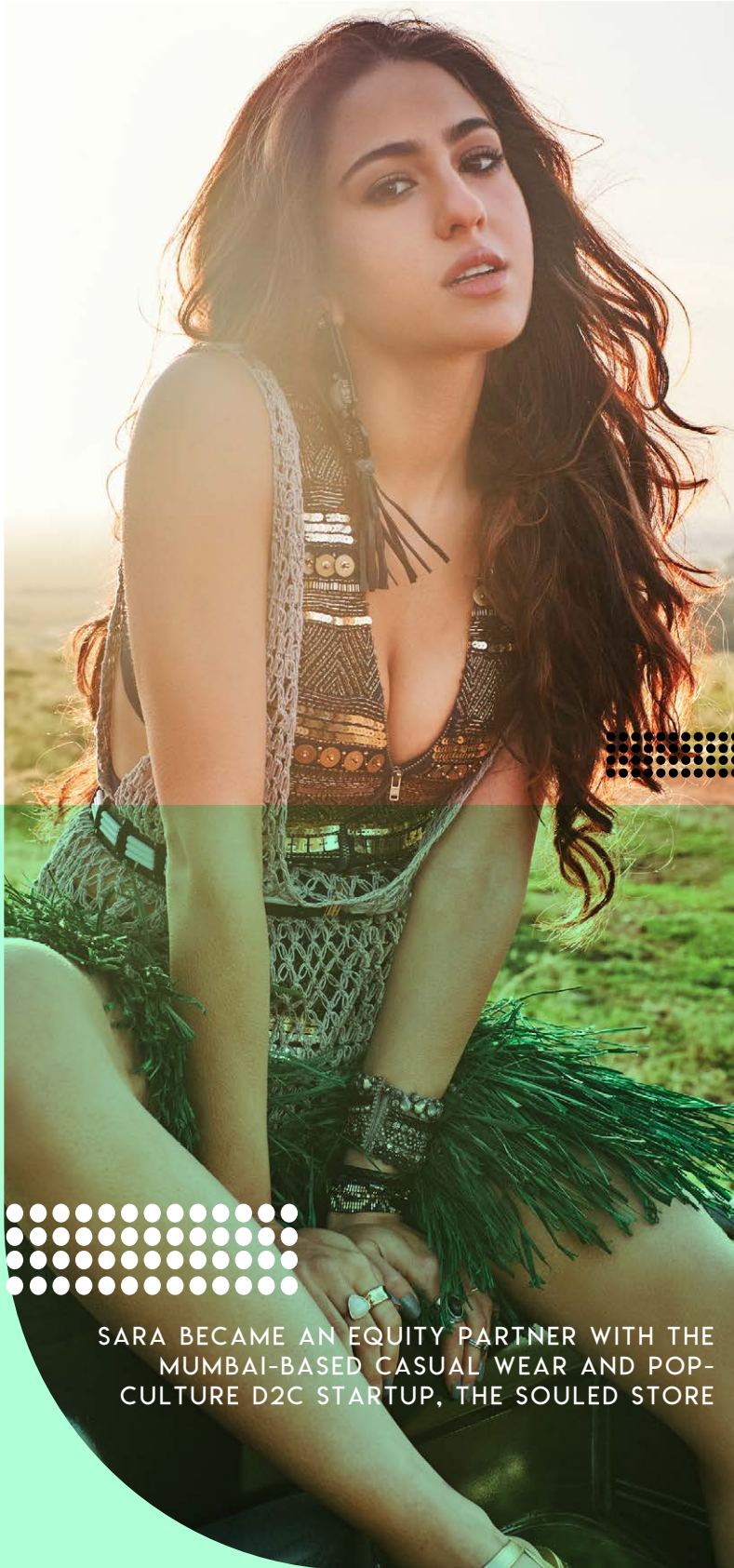
Shraddha said the brand resonated with her personal beliefs when it comes to nutrition.

"The values of Shunya completely align with who I am. My journey with health, fitness, self love all started from there. I am super excited to be associated with Shunya," she'd said while talking about her partnership. She also put in money in the D2C clothing brand MyGlamm in 2021, becoming both an investor and brand ambassador for the popular fashion brand.

SHRADDHA EXPANDED HER BLUEPRINT BY INVESTING IN THE  
BEVERAGE BRAND SHUNYA LAST YEAR. SHE ALSO PUT IN MONEY IN  
THE D2C CLOTHING BRAND MYGLAMM

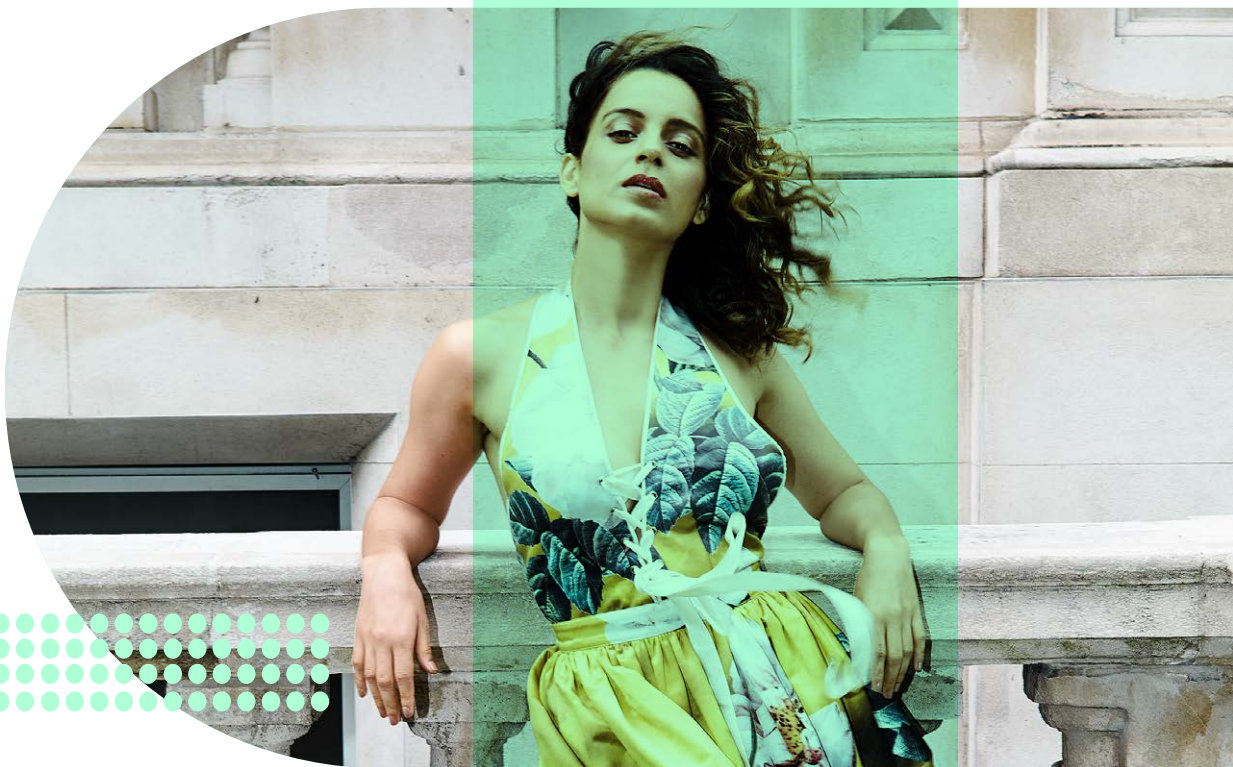


# SARA ALI KHAN



SARA BECAME AN EQUITY PARTNER WITH THE MUMBAI-BASED CASUAL WEAR AND POP-CULTURE D2C STARTUP, THE SOULED STORE

Sara Ali Khan made her acting debut in 2018 with Abhishek Kapoor's romantic film *Kedarnath*, in which she was paired opposite Sushant Singh Rajput. She was praised for the natural ease she displayed in front of the camera and won the Filmfare Award for Best Debut for it. She's just 26 but decided to turn a businesswoman this march. She became an equity partner with the Mumbai-based casual wear and pop-culture D2C startup, The Souled Store. Sara put up an undisclosed amount in the D2C startup. The Souled Store has more than 180 licences from brands such as Disney, Warner Bros, WWE, IPL, and Viacom18. Taking to her social media, the actress shared a post about her turning entrepreneur. "Today's the day! I have been waiting so long to make this announcement I am very proud to let you all know that I've invested in the souled store It's the first of its kind investment for me."



# KANGANA RANAUT



Kangana Ranaut made her debut in the 2006 thriller *Gangster*, for which she was awarded the Filmfare Award for Best Female Debut. Known for her sharp portrayals on screen, the actress co-directed the National Award-winning film *Manikarnika: The Queen Of Jhansi* (2019). She wanted to expand her horizons further and started her production house Manikarnika Films in 2021. Her first independent production is *Tiku Weds Sheru*, a rom com starring Nawazuddin Siddiqui and Avneet Singh, which will have a direct to OTT release. She also ventured into the food and beverage business last year by opening a cafe and restaurant in her hometown Manali.

KANGANA STARTED HER PRODUCTION HOUSE MANIKARNIKA FILMS IN 2021. SHE VENTURED INTO THE FOOD AND BEVERAGE BUSINESS LAST YEAR BY OPENING A CAFE AND RESTAURANT IN HER HOMETOWN MANALI







Aishwarya Rai has been named as one of the most beautiful women in the world ever since she was crowned Miss World in 1994. She immediately started getting film offers and made her debut with Mani Ratnam's *Iruvar* in 1997. Her first Hindi film was *Aur Pyaar Ho Gaya*, released the same year. Aishwarya is said to have keen business acumen. She's said to have invested in wind power generation more than a decade ago and set up plants in Rajasthan and Maharashtra. In 2019, she became an angel investor along with her mother Brinda Rai for the environmental startup Ambee, which uses data to measure metrics like air quality. She also invested in the nutrition-based healthcare startup called Possible last year. The company offers research driven nutrition service and healthy food products through its website for maintaining sustainable health, wealth loss and living with lifestyle diseases.



# AISHWARYA RAI BACHCHAN

AISHWARYA INVESTED IN THE NUTRITION-BASED HEALTHCARE STARTUP  
CALLED POSSIBLE LAST YEAR



# Belle *of the* day

ALIA BHATT TALKS  
ABOUT HER ROLE IN  
GANGUBAI KATHIAWADI  
AND MORE IN A CANDID  
CHAT WITH MAYUKH  
MAJUMDAR







## Everyone

and their mother is privy to the fact that Alia wedded Ranbir in Bandra on April 14 this year. Breaking from Bollywood tradition, the wedding was a simple and intimate affair. It created a lot of media hype, to say the least, for three days and we still see ourselves reminiscing over it.

But we aren't here to talk about her dream wedding. Instead we're decoding her other dream, -- that of working with Sanjay Leela Bhansali. She's completed a decade in Bollywood and her dream of working with SLB finally came true with *Gangubai Kathiawadi*. It's a dream that she had since she was nine years old when she

went to audition for a role in *Black*. "Yeh heroine hai, yeh child actor nahi, yeh toh heroine hai," Bhansali had said about her then. 20 years later, she's playing the titular role in a Bhansali film. It's said that her performance in the song *Dholida* from *Gangubai Kathiawadi* gave him goosebumps. "When she danced

**"I HAVE BECOME MORE PRIVATE. I FEEL LIKE THERE'S WAY MORE POWER AND IMPACT IN JUST BEING SILENT AND JUST DOING THE WORK AND NOT REALLY CREATING ONE BIG HOO-HA"**



Gangubai Kathiawadi

in *Dholida*, I thought there was an actor who'd finally transcended. It's a very gooseflesh moment for me to even talk about it and think about it -- that you transcend where you are, you forget all space, you forget where you are, you forget who's in front of you, cameras, what you look like, what you feel. She just became one with that character and expressed all her angst and all that she had gone through in that one song. It's a song that I will take to my grave. If there is any shot that I want to be played when I breathe my last -- it would be Alia doing that shot because it is completely the best

thing that I have seen an actor do in a very, very long time," SLB said during a press conference at the Berlinale.

**T**hat's high praise indeed coming from SLB. Many would say that Alia wasn't the obvious casting choice for Bhansali to play Gangubai, the feared and revered madame of Kamathipura. But SLB saw something in her and only had Alia in mind for the role.

It took her a while to start seeing herself as Gangubai. "It takes about a week sometimes, sometimes two days, sometimes one schedule for you



to start being one with the character. We started with this section where she had not become Gangubai, she was just Gangu. There is a whole transition to her age and everything. Initially there was still a lot of pull and push with the character and the voice and the sound and this and that. I remember there was a scene where I think Sir (Sanjay Leela Bhansali) was happy and I could tell that okay, that was the first time he was happy and felt I have started to understand the character now.”

**B**ut becoming Gangubai wasn't easy. Bhansali wanted the dialogues to be hard-hitting but Alia's eyes to be vulnerable. He wanted the pain to reflect in her eyes but the swagger to be

visible in her body language. Alia admits that she found this dichotomy and contrast to be difficult. “There's a scene where Gangubai speaks in front of so many people in Azad Maidan. It's one of the biggest highlights of the film as it tells you about all the work that she did for the women because that got her recognition. It was very important to get that scene right. I could feel a tingling sensation in my body after some takes while doing the scene. I used to shake and shiver because it was quite hard-hitting and intense and very truthful.” Her eyes sparkle as she recalls shooting those sequences.

She's used to living in constant media spotlight and Alia says she's now become better at blocking it out. “I've

“IF I PUT UP A PICTURE, WHATEVER PICTURE IT MAY BE, I AM DOING IT BECAUSE OF WHAT I'M FEELING AT THAT MOMENT, AND THAT'S IT, THERE'S NO OTHER EXPLANATION FOR IT”

## ALIA-RANBIR WEDDING VIGNETTES



➔ Alia Bhatt's ring was a custom made Van Cleef and Arpels creation which was specially crafted for

Alia by Ranbir. As 8 is Ranbir's lucky number, the ring had 8 beautifully encrusted diamonds and had been specially ordered from London.

➔ Alia looked like a goddess in her golden and ivory Sabyasachi saree. Ditching the red hue, she

opted for a regal ivory shade with intricate golden embroidery all across the hand-dyed organza saree which looked stunning.

➔ Her *mangalsutra* had a very thoughtful design crafted for her with the number '8', or when tilted, one would assume to look at it as a symbol of infinity. The number 8 is

very special as it is Ranbir's lucky number, a mention of it in her *mangalsutra* design was extremely well cut out.

➔ Pooja Dhingra, who is the founder of *Le Patissiere* shared how two cakes were made and what was special about it. “We made 2 cakes for the wedding. The wedding

planner wanted a simple chocolate-hazelnut cake covered with white buttercream for the first one. The flower company Interflora added pressed flowers to the cake. The second cake for the party on the 16th was 3-tier and decorated with dried peonies that had hand-painted gold accents.”



turned 29 this year. I have become more private. I feel like there's way more power and impact in just being silent and just doing the work and not really creating one big hoo-ha. So, maybe earlier I had a jumpy kind of energy and now I am like yaa, I will do what I need to do and I don't need to kind of plaster it all," she confesses.

**B**ut she'd be lying if she said that she isn't affected at times. Despite showcasing her acting chops in films like *Highway*, *Raazi*, *Dear Zindagi* and *Gully Boy*, she is still dogged by allegations of nepotism and having gotten everything on a platter. "I just don't understand when people assume that. It really unsettles me to think that people think that anything that is achieved happens by fluke. It all happens with hard work. You can rob people of praise but you can't deny them the hard work that they put in," she points out. One wonders how much weight those dainty shoulders have shouldered in these past 10 years.

The subject moves to social media. Unlike most celebrities, who are tight-lipped about

their love life, she has been very open about her feelings for Ranbir Kapoor and that seems to have rubbed off on the media-shy Kapoor scion as well. "I am putting up a picture that I want to put up. I am not doing it because I feel 'ki mere followers badh jayenge' and all. So, if I put up a picture, whatever picture it may be, I am doing it because of what I'm feeling at that moment, and that's it, there's no other

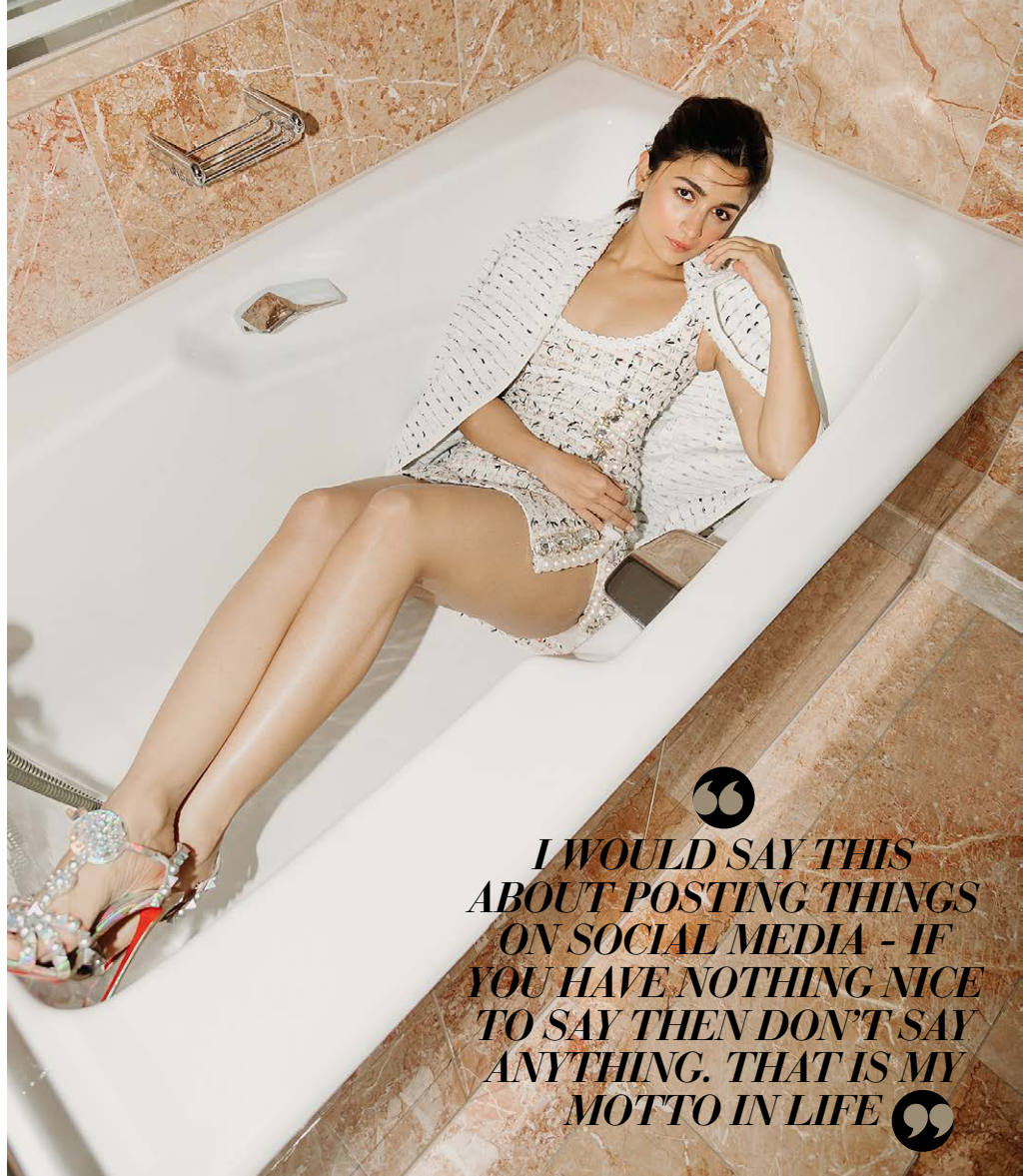
explanation for it. The other side to it is the pressure of having this perfect life because like I said everybody has bad days and you have to start speaking about the fact that it's normal to have a bad day. You can't always look Insta ready," she reflects.

*Darlings*, her first production venture is going straight to OTT and Alia is happy about that. "It is a film that I believe will do well

on an OTT platform, it's that kind of narrative and that kind of story. We have got this stellar cast comprising Shefali Shah, Vijay Varma, Roshan Mathew and me and I am quite excited to be part of this new journey," she comments.

She'll also be seen in *Jee Le Zara* in the august company of Priyanka Chopra Jonas and Katrina Kaif. She's excited about the project and says it was Priyanka

who set the ball rolling on getting them all together. "PC and I have been friends for quite a few years and so have PC and Kat and Kat and me. So, we just kind of all came together on this and said 'yaa, let's do this' and let me tell you it was not easy. It took many, many zoom calls. Just imagine three of us getting our schedules together? It worked out really well in the end and we can't wait to start." ■



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**I WOULD SAY THIS  
ABOUT POSTING THINGS  
ON SOCIAL MEDIA - IF  
YOU HAVE NOTHING NICE  
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ANYTHING. THAT IS MY  
MOTTO IN LIFE**”



# Glory road

**JITESH PILLAAI INTERVIEWS SAMANTHA RUTH PRABHU, THE SOUTH SENSATION WHO'S ALL IN THE NEWS THESE DAYS**

*Samantha Ruth Prabhu has made the nation swoon through her sensuous moves in Oo antava song from Pushpa. Juxtaposed to that is her rock solid performance in The Family Man Season 2, where one saw her as a hardcore terrorist. She's seemingly at ease in both worlds and that's the mark of a brilliance in an actor. She's had an amicable separation with husband Naga Chaitanya and hasn't let the emotional turmoil deter her from pursuing excellence. She's learnt to live life on her own terms and has made sure to put the past behind her, immersing herself in work and travel and charity. Excerpts from a heart-to-heart talk with the supremely talented diva...*







**Samantha, what were you thinking when you were approached for *The Family Man 2*?**

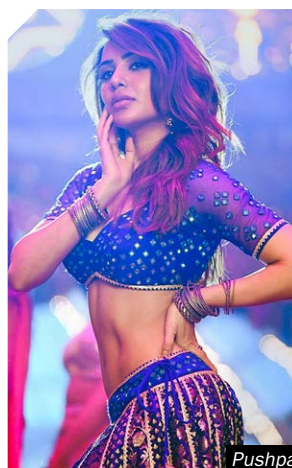
When *The Family Man 2* came to me I had been looking for a challenging role for over two years. Female actors don't get too many characters that allow them to explore different dimensions. They always get unidimensional characters, which can be pretty frustrating. So when this role was offered to me it was a chance to explore a new facet which was not familiar to me. The actor in me couldn't resist the challenge.

**You have done the entire gamut in the South**

**whether it's *Mahanati* or *Super Deluxe*. What are the challenges you look for as an actor?**

I always want to explore unfamiliar emotions. Otherwise you tend to get typecast with the same familiar characters, and your performances start getting boring and repetitive. You can't really do much when you constantly get roles that explore the same emotional space with the same cute bubbly persona. It's important to break free from that and choose your roles. I know it's definitely a risk when the audiences love you for something. But sometimes the risk pays off, like *The Family Man* did for me.

**“Female actors don't get too many characters that allow them to explore different dimensions. They always get unidimensional characters, which can be pretty frustrating”**



Pushpa

**While being a popular actor and star you haven't stuck to the song and dance routine. How do you manage an item song in *Pushpa* and a *Family Man*?**

An item song is also extremely challenging. Things like getting the steps right, the right rhythm and being energetic throughout even if you are dead tired. On the other hand, playing Raji in *The Family Man 2* had its own challenges. Her character seemed strong but she was vulnerable inside. I have seen life and know the kind of brutality women suffer. According to me her character was loosely based on real people.

I could feel her anger, her pain and the injustices she and her people faced. So my emotions were true and honest. Honestly, it was very traumatic for me to play Raji.

**You said 'vulnerable', was it because you were playing the baddie and that the audience sympathy would not be with you?**

I believe that in contemporary cinema the villains are hijacking the audience. The Joker from *Batman* is a good example. The baddies are real, not stupid and they don't mouth some ridiculous dialogues. They are layered characters and could be any of us. Like we all go through similar feelings of rage and pain. Some people can control that pain and rage but some people can't and they express it through different actions. It's just that we don't pick up a gun and shoot people but I think we must have thought of it several times. I cannot justify the path she took but I don't think Raji was the bad guy.

**You have been pretty vocal about body and fat shaming. You run an NGO of your own and also run an organisation. When did you decide that you will not just be a pretty face but also do things that will make a difference.**

I have gone through my own struggles. I came from nothing and found it very difficult to believe that people would love me so much after my first film. I could not process that love. So I had a



The Family Man 2

**“I always want to explore unfamiliar emotions. Otherwise you tend to get typecast with the same familiar characters”**

lot of insecurities and always felt that I was not good enough. My own personal struggle has been long and difficult. I felt I should speak about it and let the other girls know that we all go through our struggles. No one is spared. Some choose to speak about it and some don't. But I like to share it and have always vocalised it. If that helps someone else to make their journey a little less difficult then I shall be extremely happy. I wish someone had helped me during my struggle.

**Can you articulate those struggles? Many people struggle with body issues and self esteem, always wanting approval and validation. What would be your advice to them?**

People think that if you are successful, have superhit films and millions love you, you feel like a million bucks all the time. But it's not true. I came from very humble beginnings and

like I said I saw success immediately with my first film. It would be like 'hey she has hit the jackpot. She must be feeling so happy'. But it wasn't like that. I felt I didn't deserve all this adulation. I didn't look like any of the other girls and didn't deserve all the big projects I was offered. But today I have stopped fighting that feeling. The feeling comes, I accept it, and it goes away. So I would tell girls it's okay if they are having a bad day. They should vocalise it and understand it. As soon as they accept what they are going through, half the battle is won. It's when they don't want to accept it that the problem begins. And fighting it is a never ending battle. I thought with my separation I would crumble and die. I never thought I could be this strong. I think most people are strong. It's just that they don't give themselves enough credit. Today I am very, very proud of how strong I am.



**There was a backlash on social media and everybody had their own opinions on everything. How easy is it for an actor after a stressful day to read good and bad things. What would your advice be to your fans on social media?**

Like I told you I like to share, so I have invited all my followers into my personal life. It's a decision that I made. So when they get involved in my life they have a say in whatever I do. I don't feel that everyone

on social media needs to love me and whatever I do and accept all my decisions and my choices. I believe that we live in a time where everyone should have their opinion and still be able to live amicably. So I don't have any problem with social media. I do have a problem with YouTube and other channels who go to any length for that clickbait. And unfortunately for me they were using their platforms to fire over my shoulder everything that they





**“I believe that in contemporary cinema the villains are hijacking the audience. The Joker from *Batman* is a good example”**

disagreed with, and felt about women who didn't conform to their thinking. It got very dirty in that sense. I wouldn't say that it was my social media that was the problem but people looking for those clickbaits.

**What are you watching**

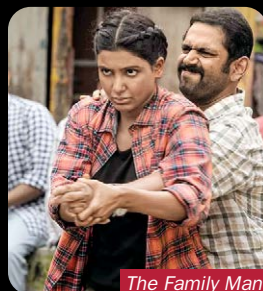
**these days?**

*Mayor of Kingstown* was the last great show that I watched.

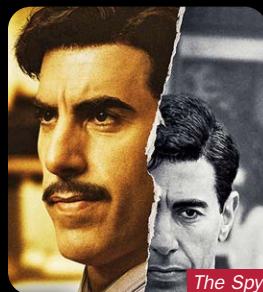
**What have been your all time favourite shows in the last few years?**

Definitely *Downton Abbey*, and I recently started rewatching it.

## FIVE SPY MOVIES OR SHOWS YOU LOVE



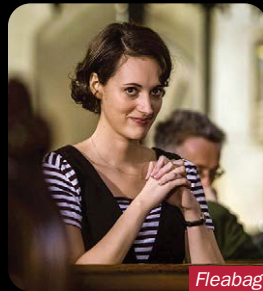
*The Family Man*



*The Spy*



*Homeland*



*Fleabag*



*Inside The Mossad*

I was so kicked when I went to meet the *Downton Abbey* director Philip John with whom I am working on my next project *Arrangements Of Love*. I was so nervous when I went to audition for the part because he had directed Maggie Smith in *Downton Abbey*! But it turned out to be such an amazing experience. Yes *Downton Abbey* is right up there and I love *Bridgerton* too. Then there was *Modern Love*.

**You are playing a strong bisexual in *Arrangements Of Love*. Have you worked closely with the LGBT community?**

I haven't started work on the project but when we do, we definitely intend to. I would like to get all the smallest details right.

**You went to some spiritual places where you did some spiritual cleansing. What was that journey like?**

I've always wanted to go to the Himalayas ever since I read the Mahabharata. And my journey happened at the point when I really needed it. Everything was put together within a week. I found the right people to go with on this *Char Dham*. It was so beautiful and it feels like I just went yesterday. What you feel is so strong. I have been to the most beautiful places in the world but the mystique of the Himalayas, the vibration and the energy is so palpable. Each one of us should visit it at least once in our lifetime. ■

# DIFFERENT strokes

JITESH PILLAAI CHATS WITH NAWAZUDDIN SIDDIQUI,  
WHO HAS MADE A HABIT OF GIVING HIS UNIQUE  
TOUCH TO ALL HIS ROLES



Sacred Games Season 1

Nawazuddin Siddiqui is the kind of actor who grows on you. He peels off layer after layer of his character, and you sit mesmerised, marvelling at his virtuosity. In person, he can go from being this intense student of cinema to being a raconteur who can regale you with stories for hours. It's not easy to pigeonhole him into one single slot. He can play a killer, a bumpkin, a gangster, a poet, and a common man with equal measure. And he makes sure you root for him even when he's evil personified. He's become Mr. Dependable for filmmakers. They cast him with the blind assurance that he'd surely come through. And he does so every time. He doesn't follow trends but goes where his heart takes him, not caring about what the world thinks of him. Presenting excerpts from an engaging chat with the actor who could never do no wrong.

**When you joined NSD to become an actor, who did you first speak to?**

I just spoke to myself. I come from a small village where the environment was not the kind where someone would motivate you to become an actor. Ever since I wanted to become an actor,

everyone, including my relatives, would comment on my looks and say I should stop thinking of becoming one. But after my graduation, I realised that I wanted to do something out of the ordinary. I had seen this film called *Ek Doctor Ki Maut*, and there was

a dialogue in the film which changed my life. It was Pankaj Kapur saying, "The moon and stars in the universe have secrets and there are some people who challenge those secrets." That stuck in my mind, and I said to myself that I had to do something

to challenge myself. What I wanted to do was not clear. Then one day, someone took me to a theatre to see a play, and I realised that this was it! I would never get bored of playing different characters and discovering new things. Then someone suggested

that I should join NSD. That was how my journey started.

**Did you have a mentor during your theatre days? If so, what was the best advice that this person gave you?**

There was this Russian teacher, Valentine Taplico. He lived in Moscow

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”

and passed away recently, but during the National School of Drama days he taught me a lot about different aspects of acting. And it's because of him that I am here today as a versatile actor, because during my theatre days, Rajpal Yadav and I were doing only comedy. During those days, and also during my days of struggle, I was constantly in touch with my teacher in Moscow. If I faced any problem during the shoot, I would call him. In this way, he would mentor and guide me and educate me about acting techniques.

PHOTOGRAPHS: KEEGAN CRASTO





**Do you remember your first audition? Who did you call and say that you had bagged a role?**

It was mostly my mother who I would call and say that I was doing a film. But soon she stopped believing me because whenever I would tell her I was doing a film, it would slip from my hands after a few days. Then I decided I would only tell her I was in a film after it had been released in the theatres.

**Did anyone tell you during your struggling days that you would not make it and to go back to your village?**

Yes, especially during the days when things were really bad. But there were many actors around me who were in the same situation. The feeling that nothing was moving for anyone was a bit consoling. But the taunts started from the family itself, including my aunt (my dad's sister), who would tell me that with my face the film industry was not the place for me. But I thought, like other actors, I was also human, so I continued with my journey.

**What was that one thing that kept you going during your struggling days? Where did you get that confidence?**

I never had any confidence, so I did everything to gain confidence and sharpen my skills. Like during my training, I would lock myself in a room for 12-15 hours and just live on water. There I would keep

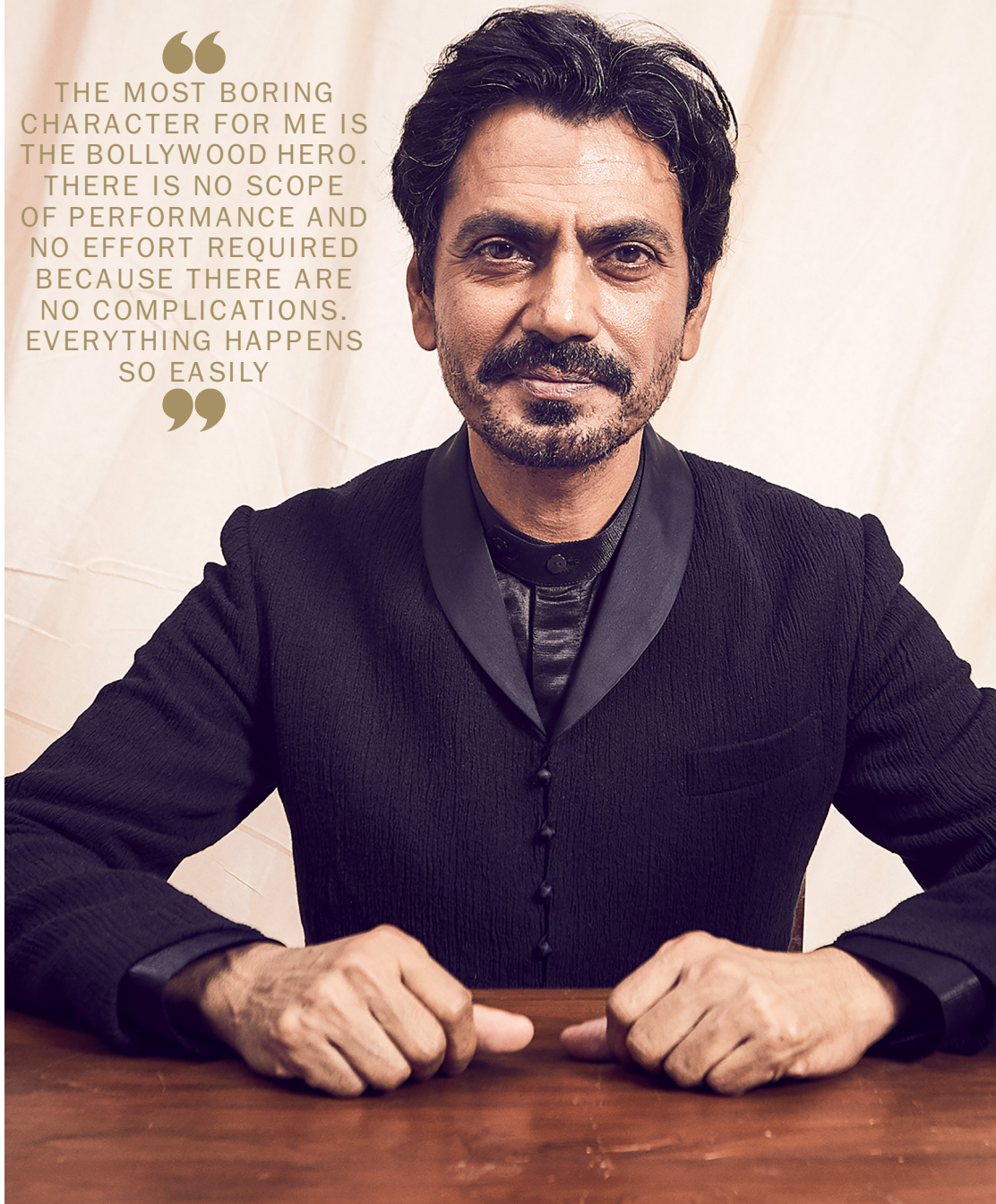
practising because I knew I really had to work hard on myself. I realised very early in my journey that if one has the passion, keeps practising, and has an open mind, things start happening. So I never let that go.

**What did you think when you first saw yourself on a movie poster?**

Initially there were many films which didn't have posters, and then slowly I was there on some posters, but between two other actors. Then *Gangs Of Wasseyapur* got

released in 2012, and I was placed prominently on a poster. Of course it was a good feeling, any actor would feel good. I remember my daughter was only two then, but she instantly recognised me on the hoarding. When that poster was

“  
THE MOST BORING  
CHARACTER FOR ME IS  
THE BOLLYWOOD HERO.  
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NO COMPLICATIONS.  
EVERYTHING HAPPENS  
SO EASILY  
”





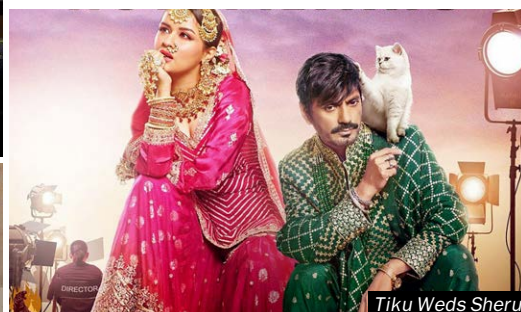


Serious Men



With Anurag Kashyap

“ANURAG UNDERSTANDS ME SO WELL THAT IF I GO TO HIM, THERE IS NO NEED FOR ME TO TELL HIM ANYTHING. HE INSTINCTIVELY UNDERSTANDS IF I AM GOING THROUGH ANY PROBLEMS AND WHAT IS GOING ON IN MY MIND.”



Tiku Weds Sheru



The Lunchbox

something would come up and to leave everything to God. Whenever we met, we would chat about cinema, films, and the nuances of acting. Then he got the chance to direct *Alvida*, a film for *Star Bestsellers*. When he selected me for the main lead in the film, I developed confidence that I could play a lead role. Later, we even went to a couple of festivals together and shared meals several times. When it came to work, he used to give me fantastic tips. I remember while shooting a scene in *Alvida*, I had a cycle in my hand and I was telling this girl to sit on my cycle. Irrfan *Bhai* then explained that the audience could see the cycle on screen, so there was no need to say cycle. I really liked that. There are certain nuances in acting, like the less done, the better. You should see the object. Text is not important; subtext is.

**What was your last conversation with him?**  
The last interaction I had with him was mostly through messages where I enquired about his health.

pulled down, she would look at that space, wondering where my picture was. I couldn't explain to her at that time that the movie was no longer in the theatres. My daughter recognising me on a hoarding was a precious moment in my life.

**You have done several films with Anurag Kashyap. You even mentioned in one interview that if one of you was a woman, you would have gotten married to the other. Is he your go-to person?**  
Anurag understands me so well that if I go to him, there is no need for me to tell him anything.

He instinctively understands if I am going through any problems and what is going on in my mind. In real life and in reel life. I mean, if I am doing a scene and I have a mental conflict as to how to do it, he knows instantly. If you put Anurag and me in a room for five hours, we may barely talk except for small things like passing the matchbox to light a cigarette, but that time is the best time for us.

**Gangs Of Wasseypur or Sacred Games?**  
*Sacred Games*, especially the second season. The role was so

complicated for me as an actor!

**Whether it is Raman Raghav or Badlapur or Sacred Games, you play a lot of dark characters. What draws you to these types of roles?**

The most boring characters in Bollywood are the ones played by the hero. These roles have only one shade-being goody-goody. The hero has all the amazing traits-he can attract girls, he can beat up 10 people, he can ride horses, fly planes. He can do everything and gets to speak the best dialogues. Why he does all this is never shown, and I, for one, could never comprehend

how he acquired all these skills. So the most boring character for me is the Bollywood hero. There is no scope of performance and no effort required because there are no complications. Everything happens so easily. Barring the hero's role, I don't mind playing any other character.

**Can you talk about your relationship with Irrfan?**  
Irrfan *Bhai* was a friend and a mentor. Whenever I was disturbed about something, I would call him. I would confide in him if there was no work happening, and he would console me by saying that

# TICK TICK BOOM!

**RAM MADHVANI'S**  
DHAMAKA WAS LARGELY  
APPRECIATED BY THE  
MASSES. **ANALITA SETH**  
TALKS TO THE AD-FILMMAKER  
TURNED DIRECTOR ABOUT  
WHAT GETS HIS CREATIVE  
JUICES FLOWING

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*Ram Madhvani is a doyen of advertising, churning out one hit commercial after another. When he switched tracks to the movies, he debuted with the sharp and edgy Let's Talk. And followed it up with the moving biopic Neeraja. His latest outing Dhamaka has wowed both the masses and critics for its incisive social commentary. A candid conversation with the filmmaker who's always seen himself as a struggler both in the world of advertising and films. Excerpts...*

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“MY PROCESS IS A VERY DIFFERENT KIND OF PROCESS BECAUSE I MAKE FILMS WITH THREE-FOUR CAMERAS, OR SOMETIMES EVEN SEVEN CAMERAS. WITH *DHAMAKA* WE USED 10 CAMERAS”

**When did you decide that you wanted to make *Dhamaka*?**

(Laughs) I decided I wanted to work with Kartik Aaryan. We were discussing many projects. And one time Kartik mentioned the Korean film *The Terror Live*. So I said let's have a look at it and we decided to collaborate on remaking it. So this is how that came about.

**But Kartik is known for doing rom coms. How did you convince him to act in a thriller?**

My process is a very different kind of process because I make films with three-four cameras, or sometimes even seven cameras. With *Dhamaka* we used 10 cameras. I surrounded the actor

in a world where there is no action, there is no cut, there are no marks, there are no lights. I did it in a very theatre meets documentary meets film kind of way. We employed the same techniques in *Neerja* and also in my web series *Aarya*. If my actors buy into my system, that's really the only thing I'm interested in. And I think that was the great thing about Kartik. When I said this is how I want to make it, this is how I want to shoot it, and he said yes, let's do it like this.

**What was that magical moment when you and Kartik struck the right chord?**

On the fifth day, I was shooting with seven cameras. There were



two cameras on Mrunal Thakur, three on Kartik and two on Amruta Subhash and nothing was going right. I was so fed up that I told my team let's go back to shooting the film traditionally. Let's just use one camera, shoot everyone's scene individually and then combine them in editing, as is done the traditional way. Kartik was listening to this quietly and he came up to me, put a hand on my shoulders and said we'll go back to the traditional set-up not tomorrow but the day after. Let's give this new set-up another try tomorrow. And that's when I knew that he had not only started believing in my system, he had started enjoying himself

doing things in a new way. It wasn't about me and him being on the same page as far as the script was concerned. He had to believe in the process and once he did that, I knew everything would go off smoothly.

**Amruta Subhash's character says in the film that, "*Hum news bechte hain*." Is that your point of view about today's media?**

The film isn't about the media at all. It focuses on human drama. Amruta plays an ambitious editor but she's an individual in the film and doesn't stand for all media. The film is about life choices you make and how you have to live with the consequences of those choices. There's

a price you have to pay for success. That's all we wanted to show. Thinking anything beyond that would be mere conjecture. We all know the kind of world we live in and so I wouldn't further comment on that.

**Are you okay with the OTT system or do you pine for theatrical releases and the whole legacy associated with them?**

I think I am very happy that the OTT partner decided to come on board. We had wanted Ronnie Screwvala, and we wanted this particular partner. The only thing I was worried about was that traditionally, the film is assured of being in the cinemas for a week. You at least get to gauge the reaction of the audience on that first day, first show. If nothing else, you're satisfied that your movie reached out to an audience. Here, you don't know what's going to happen. Because your viewer is an all-powerful entity who has this super weapon in his hand called the remote control. He can throw you out by pushing a button. So I'm glad my film got so much love and acceptance from the audience.

**You shot the film when COVID-19 was at its peak. Tell us something about the experience.**

One of things that we did was that we booked a whole hotel - The Renaissance at Powai for our shoot. We constructed a COVID Corridor and a COVID bubble. The safety protocols that we followed were huge, thanks to



“DHAMAKA IS ABOUT LIFE CHOICES YOU MAKE AND HOW YOU HAVE TO LIVE WITH THE CONSEQUENCES OF THOSE CHOICES. THERE'S A PRICE YOU HAVE TO PAY FOR SUCCESS. THAT'S ALL WE WANTED TO SHOW”



Amita Madhvani, my co-producer. We built the set at the Maidan, which is there at Renaissance. So everyday, everybody would just step out, take a five minute walk and we would come back. We did all the normal protocols and also tested everyone each day. And everyone who wasn't in the frame had to wear a mask. I'm proud to say that when we wrapped up the shooting, we didn't have a single person testing positive.

**As a filmmaker, do you still have moments of learning and unlearning?**

Each one of us constantly goes through the process of learning and unlearning so how could I be immune from that? No one shouts on my sets. So one thing we're constantly learning is patience. I'm learning how to tackle the everyday problems of filmmaking in a more compassionate way and I think that learning affects other areas of life as well. My commitment is towards making a film in a more humanitarian way. Sometimes you have to be forceful to get work done and you've to learn the limits of that force. I keep telling my team, "I'm not your mentor. We're all co-learners, we're all co-mentors."

**We're living in an age where people get offended quite easily. Public pressure sometimes leads to censorship issues. Calls for boycott are becoming common. Do you feel we've gone on a backfoot as far as creative freedom is concerned?**

I haven't faced such issues



With the cast of *Dhamaka*



Neerja

**“YOUR BIGGEST WORRY, WHETHER IN FILMS OR ADVERTISING, IS THAT YOU SHOULD KEEP GETTING WORK. SO I TELL PEOPLE IN ADVERTISING I'M NOT MAKING FILMS AND I TELL FILM PEOPLE THAT I'M NOT MAKING COMMERCIALS”**

yet. I try to make what can be best described as a *thaali* kind of cinema – there's something there for everybody. I am a non-conflict, non-confrontational, non-controversial kind of a filmmaker. So I don't want to get there.

**Talking about *Neerja*, do you recall the moment when the film won the Filmfare Award and Sonam also won the Filmfare Award? What was going on in your mind at that point?**

It was huge because what happened was that, for

me, we knew that we had something going, right because the masses had loved the film so much. In India, if you look at the pinnacle of awards then there are Filmfare Awards and then there are the National Awards. So for me, this formed a part of my bucket list. And when I got the Black Lady, and gosh it was quite heavy, that's when it started to sink in. It was a big deal and so was getting the National Award.

**You've been one of the big names in advertising. How different is that world from the world of filmmaking?**

I've always seen myself as a newcomer, even in advertising. Your biggest worry, whether in films or advertising, is that you should keep getting work. So I tell people in advertising I'm not making films and I tell film people that I'm not making commercials in the hope that both avenues remain open for me.

# FAREWELL KK

DEVESH SHARMA OFFERS A SHORT PROFILE OF SINGER KK, WHO PASSED AWAY RECENTLY

(AUGUST 23, 1968 – MAY 31, 2022)



**K**rishnakumar Kunnath, fondly known by his stage name KK the world over, was a versatile singer with romantic songs as his forte. Songs like *Khuda jaane, Tu hi meri shab hai, Aankhon mein teri, Zindagi do pal ki, Tu ashiqui hai, Tadap tadap ke, Aawarapan banjarapan* have set millions of hearts beating and have stayed in the hearts of the audience forever.

He was born to Malayali parents C. S. Menon and Kunnath Kanakavalli in Delhi and went to Delhi's Mount St Mary's School and graduated from Kirori Mal College. He reportedly has no formal training in music. He grew up listening to Malayali songs and also Hindi film songs and used to hum along with them. He used to sing in school and college and was popular because of his naturally gifted voice.

He married his childhood sweetheart Jyothy Krishna in 1991. He has a son called Nakul Krishna Kunnath and daughter, Tamara Kunnath, from his marriage.

After doing his graduation in Delhi, he started his own rock band. He had to work part time in the hotel industry in the marketing department to earn a living. Being a creative person, he found the job suffocating and some time later he quit it to start working for the advertising sector, where he sang 3500 jingles in 11 different languages. His wife Jyoti, as also mentor Hariharan were instrumental for his success. They always encouraged him to try his luck on the playback circuit. Hariharan heard him sing at the Meridian Hotel in Delhi and asked him to come to Mumbai and try his hands at



Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam

**KK REACHED STARDOM WHEN COMPOSER ISMAIL DARBAR OFFERED HIM *TADAP TADAP KE* FROM SANJAY LEELA BHANSALI'S *HUM DIL DE CHUKE SANAM***

singing in films. In an earlier interview with *Filmfare*, he had stated, "My wife wanted me to try my luck in Mumbai. I believed in her and I came to Mumbai in 1994. We were expecting our first born then. I had a cassette with me in which I had recorded two English songs. I met Hariharan and

Leslie Lewis and handed over my cassette to them." The rest, as they say, is history.

It was at this time when Sony music was being launched in India and they were looking for a singer. They chose KK and came out with an album named *Pal* which did well. KK then sang for AR Rahman



# KK'S TOP 15 SONGS

## 1. *Tadap tadap ke is dil se*

Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam  
(1999)

## 2. *Banda bindas*

Aks (2001)

## 3. *Mujhe kucch kehna hai*

Mujhe Kucch Kehna Hai  
(2001)

## 4. *Tu aashiqui hai*

Jhankaar Beats (2003)

## 5. *Awarapan banjarapan*

Jism (2003)

## 6. *Aashayein*

Iqbal (2005)

## 7. *Maine dil se kaha*

Rog (2005)

## 8. *Tu hi meri shab hai*

Gangster (2006)

## 9. *Kya mujhe pyaar hai*

Woh Lamhe... (2006)

## 10. *Alvida*

Life... In A Metro (2007)

## 11. *Ankhon mein teri*

Om Shanti Om (2007)

## 12. *Khuda jaane*

Bachna Ae Haseeno  
(2008)

## 13. *Dil ibadat*

Tum Mile (2009)

## 14. *Dil kyun ye mera*

Kites (2010)

## 15. *Piya aaye na*

Aashiqui 2 (2013)



**IN 2008, KK RELEASED HIS SECOND ALBUM HUMSAFAR AFTER A GAP OF EIGHT YEARS. THE SONGS AASMAN KE, DEKHO NA, YEH KAHAN MIL GAYE HUM, AND RAIN Bhai KAARI BECAME POPULAR**

in *Sapne* (Strawberry aankhein) and a few Tamil and Telugu songs as well. He was slowly making a mark for himself and was getting known among music circles. He reached stardom when composer Ismail Darbar offered him *Tadap tadap ke* from Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam*. It's said that after listening to the recording, Bhansali got emotional and had tears in his eyes. Reflecting on the same, the singer had said, "I have had no tragedies in my life. I married the girl I love and I am a very happy man. It's about convincing yourself about the lyrics and singing."

In 1999, he launched his debut album titled *Pal*. The

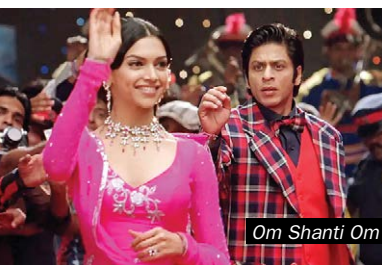
songs *Pal* and *Yaaron* from the album became hugely famous and are even remembered today. In 2008, KK released his second album *Humsafar* after a gap of eight years. The songs *Aasman ke*, *Dekho na*, *Yeh kahan mil gaye hum*, and *Rain bhai kaari* became popular after its release. The album had 10 tracks out of which eight were composed by him.

A part from films, KK has also sung for many television serials like *Just Mohabbat*, *Shaka Laka Boom Boom*, *Kuch Jhuki Si Palkein*, *Hip Hip Hurray*, *Kkavyanjali* and *Just Dance*. Though he kept himself away from reality shows, he was part of *Fame Gurukul* and *Indian Idol Junior*. He sung extensively for popular shows like *Coke Studio*, where his rendition of the hit *qawwali Chadta suraj* in the company of Sabri

brothers became famous. He often sang for MTV Unplugged and Sony Mix as well.

The reticent singer, who always shied away from publicity, was a well-known name in the show circuit. He toured extensively across India and abroad and performed to sold-out venues. On May 31, he was performing at Sir Gurudas Mahavidyalaya fest at Nazrul Mancha, Kolkata and complained of chest pain while going back to the hotel after his performance. He suffered severe cardiac arrest and was rushed to CMRI hospital in Kolkata from his hotel, where he was declared dead on arrival. He was just 53 and is survived by his wife and children.

He may have left for his heavenly abode but will forever be in our hearts, thanks to his songs and memories...



# THE LAST SHOWMAN

*Subhash Ghai recently made a comeback with a small film called 36 Farmhouse. Analita Seth interviews the showman*

*Subhash Ghai started out as an actor, tried his hand at writing and then made a name for himself as a director. He took on the mantle of showman from Raj Kapoor. Larger than life films, with their roots in Indian mythology and folklore, teeming with pulsating music became his hallmark. He became bigger than the stars he employed. A Subhash Ghai movie became an event to look forward to. From 1976 to 1999 he had a successful run at the box office, churning out hits after hits and scaling new heights. For perhaps the first time in his career, Subhash Ghai made a single-location film set in a farmhouse. Released on an OTT, 36 Farmhouse is unlike any other thriller made by the director. Excerpts from an interview with the filmmaker who has a never-say-die spirit...*

**YOUR NEW FILM 36 FARMHOUSE WAS MADE AT HOME FROM THE CONCEPT TILL THE EXECUTION. HOW WAS THE EXPERIENCE WORKING IN A BUBBLE DURING THE PANDEMIC?**

We took five to six months to write the script at home. We have a story lab, a room for young writers, we developed the entire film there. I have a

habit of writing poetry, so I wrote three songs for the film and then I called my students from Whistling Woods to compose them. When the rough draft was done then we went to the studio to record. We started shooting the film on June 24, 2021 in the Lonavala farmhouse. Since there was a lockdown, we had to be very

careful during the shooting. Our executive producer, Vishal Gandhi was very particular about it and he took care of every artist and unit member. If we have made a good film in this kind of stress, then the credit goes to all the members.

**THE FILM IS REFLECTIVE OF THE IMMIGRATION CRISIS WHICH**



With Amol Parashar and Sanjay Mishra

**WHENEVER I WRITE A SCRIPT, THE FIRST THING IS WHO IS THE RIGHT ACTOR TO DO THIS ROLE. HE HAS TO BE A GOOD ACTOR, DOESN'T MATTER IF HE IS A NEW OR NON-ACTOR OR FROM THEATRE OR SCHOOL OR FROM STARDOM**



**I BEGAN MY  
CAREER AS AN  
ACTOR, THEN AS A  
WRITER, DIRECTOR,  
AND PRODUCER  
FOR KARZ,  
THEN AS CORPORATE  
IN MUKTA ARTS, AND  
FINALLY AS A FOUNDER  
OF WHISTLING WOODS.  
MY JOURNEY HAS BEEN  
A JOURNEY OF DEBUTS**





**HAPPENED DURING THE EARLY STAGES OF THE PANDEMIC.**

Yes. It's a narrative about labour migration. A father and son duo – Sanjay Mishra and Amol Parashar, take refuge in the farmhouse of a wealthy person by chance and then, owing to circumstances, concoct a

scheme to rob the place. They soon discover that the people living in the house are themselves in the middle of a larger conspiracy. I wrote a song on this called, “*Bade logo ki badi fikr chote logo ki chote fikr*, mind your business and *aage nikal*”. The

theme of the song is “Some steal for the need, some steal for greed”. It was a new narrative, a new experience for me.

**YOU HAVE ALWAYS MADE LARGER-THAN-LIFE FILMS. THIS MUST BE A CULTURE SHOCK FOR YOU OF SORTS?**

You must select stories that are appropriate for the time and generation. As a filmmaker, I always prefer to make films that are entertaining for the whole family. So this film is also about two families and I am very happy that it turned out well.

**AFTER CATERING TO THE BIG SCREEN ALL YOUR LIFE, HOW DOES IT FEEL TO MAKE A FILM FOR THE OTT PLATFORM?**

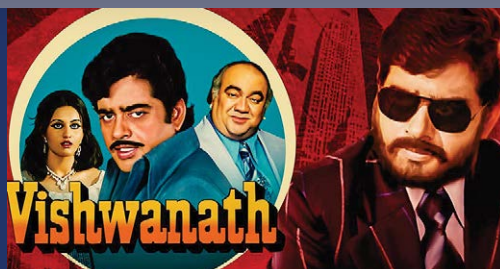
It's great to make a debut at my age. It's as if you're rediscovering yourself for the first time. In any field, I will continue to make my

debut. I began my career as an actor, then as a writer, director, and producer for Karz, then as corporate in Mukta Arts, and finally as a founder of Whistling Woods. My journey has been a journey of debuts. Today If I feel I should debut as a music director

## TOP TEN FILMS OF SUBHASH GHAI

**KALICHARAN (1976)****1**

The film was the directorial debut of Subhash Ghai. The masses loved the stylised thriller where Shatrughan Sinha played a double role, that of an honest police inspector and his lookalike criminal. Shatrughan Sinha and Reena Roy were lauded for their roles. It was later remade into the Telugu film *Khaidi Kalidasu* (1977), the Kannada film *Kaalinga* (1980), the Tamil film *Sangili*, (1982) and the Malayalam film *Pathamudayam* (1985).

**VISWANATH (1978)****2**

It again starred Shatrughan Sinha and Reena Roy in the lead. The film, a revenge drama, proved to be a blockbuster. Shatrughan Sinha played a hotshot lawyer who later takes to crime to avenge himself, becoming the monster he was trying to slay in the process. The film was remade in Telugu as *Lawyer Viswanath* (1978) and in Tamil as *Naan Mahaan Alla* (1984).

**3****KARZ (1980)**

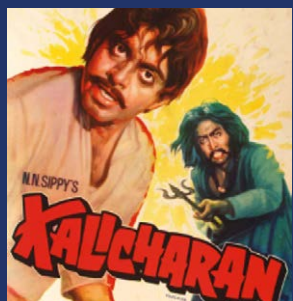
Starring Rishi Kapoor, Tina Munim, Simi Garewal and Raj Kiran, the film touched upon the theme of reincarnation. It was a stylised thriller and Subhash Ghai was much appreciated for the narrative as well as song picturisation. The songs of the film inspired several film titles, notably *Dard-e-dil* (1983), *Paisa Yeh Paisa* (1985), *Main Solah Baras Ki* (1998), *Ek Hasina Thi* (2004), *Aashiq Banaya Aapne* (2005) and *Om Shanti Om* (2007), which also dealt with reincarnation.

**4****HERO (1983)**

Jackie Shroff played the anti-hero in the film and achieved stardom. His pairing with former Miss India, Meenakshi Sheshadri, was much appreciated. Jackie played a goon who kidnaps a cop's daughter through false pretenses but ends up falling in love with her. Laxmikant-Pyarelal's music in the film was much appreciated.

**KARMA (1986)****5**

Featuring an ensemble cast including Dilip Kumar, Nutan, Jackie Shroff, Anil Kapoor, Naseeruddin Shah, Sridevi, Poonam Dhillon and Anupam Kher, the film was Subhash Ghai's take on *Sholay*. It was the first film where veterans Nutan and Dilip Kumar ever appeared together.





# IF YOU LOOK AT IT, EVERY GENERATION BRINGS A NEW CHANGE. AND TRENDS CHANGE AFTER THIRTY YEARS.

CHANGE IS OF COURSE INEVITABLE. SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, EVERYTHING PLAYS A HAND IN IT. WHAT DOES NOT CHANGE IS LOVE AND HATE, GREED AND JEALOUSY

or explore the OTT medium, I will do that. Tomorrow if some Broadway shows are happening I would like to debut on that too. I do not belong to the

past. You will be surprised to know that I haven't seen my single film for a second time after release. My future is my ongoing work and my favourite

people are the actors who are working in it.

**WAS IT A CONCISE DECISION TO TAKE AMOL PARASHAR AND BARKHA SINGH WHO**

**ARE VERY WELL ESTABLISHED ON OTT?**

Whenever I write a script, the first thing is who is the right actor to do this role. He has to be a good actor, doesn't matter

if he is a new or non-actor or from theatre or school or from stardom. This is my formula. So when I wrote *36 Farmhouse*, I had Sanjay Mishra in my mind for a particular role. Vijay Raaj is also a powerful actor. These two actors are everywhere in cinema, OTT. Then I asked the writers in

my team and they introduced me to Amol. I didn't know him or Barkha Singh. There are so many actors right now it's hard to watch everyone's performance. When Amol came to me, I narrated the story. I find him a very nice, humble boy. Whoever touches my heart is a



## 6 RAM LAKHAN (1989)

Ram Lakhan starred Raakhee, Jackie Shroff, Anil Kapoor, Dimple Kapadia, Madhuri Dixit and Amrish Puri in lead roles. It was a tale of two brothers, the elder Ram, a straight cop and the younger, Lakhan, a corrupt cop. How the two unite to seek revenge for the wrongs done to their mother forms the crux of the film.

## 10 TAAL (1999)

Starring Anil Kapoor, Akshaye Khanna, Aishwarya Rai, Amrish Puri and Alok Nath, the film marked the musical collaboration between Subhash Ghai and AR Rahman. The film, revolving around a folk singer who blossoms into a worldwide star, was a huge musical hit, whose songs are remembered till now.



## 7 SAUDAGAR (1991)

It starred two legends of Hindi cinema, Dilip Kumar and Raaj Kumar and was the second film in which the two actors came together after *Paigham* (1959). Vivek Mushran and Manisha Koirala made their debut with the film. It proved to be a musical hit.



## 8 KHALNAYAK (1993)

The film gained notoriety because of its raunchy song, *Choli ke peeche kya hai*. It starred Sanjay Dutt as a notorious criminal, while Jackie Shroff played an honest police officer searching for him. Madhuri Dixit plays an undercover cop who infiltrates his stronghold. The film drew upon the themes of the Ramayana for inspiration.



## 9 PARDES (1997)

Starring Shah Rukh Khan, newcomer Mahima Chaudhry and Amrish Puri among others, the film aimed to woo the NRI audience. The film involved an NRI tycoon's wish to have a traditional Indian *bahu* for his wayward son, only to have her fall in love with one of his foster sons.

good actor to me. During the workshop, after one or two screen readings, I was sure he could do the job. The same was with Barkha Singh. She was shooting in Hyderabad when I talked to her over a video call. I have that much experience to understand how much potential a person

brings a new change. And trends change after thirty years. Change is of course inevitable. Science, technology, everything plays a hand in it. What does not change is love and hate, greed and jealousy. Possessions, obsessions, passion, greed, anger vendetta, jealousy are

seniors before and now I've to compete with juniors. The struggle remains the same for me.

**ACCESSIBILITY HAS GOTTEN BETTER AND EVERYTHING'S JUST ONE CLICK AWAY. HAS THIS AFFECTED THE SUPERSTARDOM STATUS OF THE ACTORS?**

What is stardom? An actor portrays a

**WHAT IS STARDOM? AN ACTOR PORTRAYS A CHARACTER WHO IS THE STAR OF THE SHOW.**

**HE IS GIVEN CREDIT FOR PLAYING A PROMINENT AND COLOURFUL CHARACTER. WHAT HAS CHANGED IS THAT A STAR'S LIFE, WHICH USED TO LAST 30 TO 50 YEARS, BUT NOW IT ONLY LASTS THREE TO FOUR YEARS**

has during a conversation. I like good souls around me. The casting was apt and characterization was done beautifully. I am very happy about Amol and Barkha. We know each other now, much more than when I started.

**YOU WERE PART OF THE NEW-AGE COMMERCIAL CINEMA IN THE '80S. HOW HAVE YOU MANAGED TO STAY RELEVANT?**

If you look at it, every generation

common emotions. If you know these emotions very deeply you will understand the psychology of the character and the philosophy of the story. You can never fail if you concentrate on emotions. Technology is the padding around the content. Today's filmmakers are talented and professional. I am very proud of them and I try my best to match them. I tried to match

character who is the star of the show. He is given credit for playing a prominent and colourful character. What has changed is that a star's life, which used to last 30 to 50 years, but now it only lasts three to four years. Another star appears, followed by another. If you see top 10 stars like Khans, Hritik Roshan, Akshay all are '90s stars. How many stars can you see now?

Now there are popular actors but not stars.

**CONTENT IS GETTING CENSORED EVERY YEAR. DO YOU SUPPORT THAT AND WHERE DO YOU SEE GOING FROM THERE ON? ESPECIALLY NOW IN OTT, EVERYONE CAN ACCESS THE CONTENT.**

Nobody likes censorship. We are in a hugely populated country and because of social media, everybody has the power to write anything.

Earlier there were only four or five newspapers and one or two channels. It was sorted out easily. Now there are 3000 TV channels, 10000 YouTube channels, and so many OTT channels. How would you censor them all? It is good to have freedom of expression, but it should not be chaotic. I've always believed in elegance and that should be the key here for content creators. Censorship

should be there but we should also be able to debate on policies from time to time. It should be a democratic process and not a draconian one.

**WHEN WILL WE SEE YOU DIRECTING A MOVIE AGAIN?**

As soon as I get a good script. Directing is now more of a passion than anything else. I don't need it to make money. I just want to enjoy the process.





# 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



@realpz: Never a dull moment with these hotties  
❤️🍷👯 #nightout #friendsforever #memories  
#strikeapose #ting

*Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, Preity Zinta, Kareena Kapoor Khan, and Saif Ali Khan look even better now than they did 20 years ago. Aged wine and all that...*



@ranveersingh:  
Rocky Bhai vibes  
*Rocking the retro look. Ranveer Singh carries off the '70s vibes in style.*



@deepikapadukone:  
@louisvuitton,  
@nicolasghesquiere,  
@cartier  
@festivaldecannes,  
#Cannes2022

*Deepika Padukone is a study in scarlet as she poses in Cannes. She looks ethereal indeed.*

@shahidkapoor:  
The sky!

*Blue isn't just a colour, it's a mood as well. Shahid Kapoor explodes in a happy shade of blue in this picture and you can't help feeling serene.*



@hrithikroshan:  
Last night. Also last post with beard.

*Beard tales. Hrithik Roshan looks like a modern viking in this mirror selfie. Don't you agree?*

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Readers send in their feedback pg 58

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Shatrughan Sinha's racy rejoinders pg 60



# IN THE MAIL

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

**1<sup>st</sup> Prize**  
₹1500

## NEW HOPE

The cover of your last

issue (May) was an absolute head-turner. I would never have thought an actor from the North East would get representation on *Filmfare*'s cover. So imagine my surprise when I saw Andrea Kevichusa sharing space with Ayushmann Khurrana. They looked so good together. It is so refreshing to see new talents being embraced. The cover story was interesting indeed. I loved how Andrea took up for her region and made a case for unity in diversity.

Ramesh Dave, Gandhinagar



Gritty: Ayushmann Khurrana

## MAVERICK ACTOR

I was really interested in reading your last issue (May) as I saw my favourite Ayushmann Khurrana on the cover. I am always excited about his films and wanted to know more about *Anek*. I loved the cover story.

Shikha Bisht, Patna



Genius: Karan Torani

**2<sup>nd</sup> Prize**  
₹1000

## EASTWARDS HO

Andrea Kevichusa's story, which I read in your last issue (May), is so inspiring. It's so good to see North-Eastern talents being welcomed with open arms into Indian cinema. There are so many talented actors from the region that need to be drawn into the mainstream. Andrea's entry into Bollywood should lead to more talented individuals finding their feet in Hindi films. I hope it happens soon.

Rimjhim Sahay, Rourkela



Pioneer: Andrea Kevichusa

## TRUE GRIT

Ayushmann Khurrana is multi-talented and his constant versatility when it comes to selecting scripts is amazing. Ayushmann has always taken risks in his career and has given us some thought-provoking films. *Anek* was no exception. I loved *Anek* and was eager to read his interview in your last issue (May), which featured Ayushmann and Andrea Kevichusa, the lead cast. It might not have done well at the box office, but it is saying all the right things.

Aabha Singh, Bangalore

## FASHION MEETS TRADITION

Karan Torani is an exceptionally skilled storyteller who weaves tales through threads. His love for traditional fashion is so rich. I've been following them on social media diligently. I really loved the interview with him talking about how Bollywood is one of his major inspirations in your last issue (May). Thanks, *Filmfare*!

Tanya Sen, Kolkata

## FASHION MOGUL

Torani is a beautiful brand. I really love their ethnic collection and lovely designs. I was pleasantly surprised to find an interview with its creator, Karan Torani, in your last issue (May). I loved how he described the story behind his most successful collections. Apparently, they all have a connection with Bollywood. What a genius he's proved to be.

Sanobar Sheikh, Hyderabad



## MARATHI EXTRAVAGANZA

It is so exciting to see an iconic magazine like *Filmfare* constantly raising its bar every year when it comes to regional awards. Your last issue (May) was replete with the images of the much-deserving winners of the Marathi Filmfare Awards. And I also loved the snippets about what happened that night. Thanks to *Filmfare* for the information and the pictures. They really made my day.

Seema Raut,  
Aurangabad



Sensational:  
Sonalee Kulkarni



Mesmerising: Amruta Khanvilkar

## ALL HAIL CHANDRAMUKHI

Amruta Khanvilkar is an excellent performer and dancer. The Planet Marathi Presents Filmfare Awards Marathi appeared to be very entertaining on television. The highlight of the evening was Amruta's breathtaking dance. She performed the title track from her movie *Chandramukhi*. It was intricately choreographed and she must have practised day and night to get the steps right. *Lavni* is an ancient dance form, and it's great that it's being kept alive through films.

Vaibhav Kamble, Kolhapur



Impactful: Sonali Kulkarni

## WINNING EDGE

All the winners at the Filmfare Marathi Awards were so well-deserved. Most of the films that I have enjoyed watching won big at the ceremony which was amazing. So good to see all the happy faces and deserving candidates posing with their trophies in your last issue (May).

Shantanu Godbole, Pune

## GLAMOROUS WINNERS

The Filmfare Marathi Awards were full of glamour. The telecast was amazing, the performances breathtaking and the winners truly deserved their trophies. It's great to see so many stalwarts of Marathi cinema coming together to celebrate excellence. It was a nice experience indeed for all lovers of Marathi cinema. Thanks for putting on another fab show, guys.

Suresh More, Sangli

## Just one Point



Winsome: Vaibhav Tatwadi

The Planet Marathi Presents Filmfare Awards Marathi was packed with great performances. Nothing like a scintillating Filmfare Awards night.

Rohit Gupta, Thane

It was good to see the Marathi stars getting their place in the sun in your last issue. Great job, *Filmfare*.

Mohit Deshpande, Ahmednagar

The Marathi film industry is as old as the Hindi film industry and it was great to see *Filmfare* making sure its stars got their due.

Rohini Joshi, Mumbai

Ayushmann Khurrana is my favourite actor and it was great to see him on the cover of your last issue (May).

Rehan Sheikh, Nashik

It was great to see Andrea Kevichusa being on the cover of your last issue (May). Kudos to *Filmfare* for recognising talent from the North East.

Robin Seraphim, Shillong

## STAR-STUDDED MARATHI AWARDS NIGHT

I was super excited to witness Amey Wagh and Siddharth Jadhav host this year's The Planet Marathi Presents Filmfare Awards Marathi. They were entertaining throughout the ceremony and put up a great show.

They say anchors can make or break a ceremony and the way they kept the ball rolling was commendable indeed. I also salute their ability to laugh at themselves. Their camaraderie was heartening.

Veena Kumbhare, Jalgaon



Winners all: Neha Pendse, Sai Tamhankar, Ankush Chaudhary

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PHOTOGRAPH: MEETESH TANEJA

# Shatrughan Sinha's Rapid fire

**Does God care about us?**

**BR Bhatia, Panchkula**

If he didn't we wouldn't be here in the first place. He cares about us undoubtedly. Our life, birth and death are totally dependent upon him. He is the Master. I'm surprised that you need to ask this question.

**In Western countries it is common to see women marrying men much younger than them. And now it has started in India as well. Why so?**

**Dr Vaishali Pandit Shenai, on email**

Well, we've adapted so many harmful practices from the West, so why not adapt something which is positive. Progressive thinking should be

**Nowadays, stars look good due to a lot of surgical procedures. But the stars from an earlier era looked so beautiful without any surgery. Your take.**

**Dr Vaishali Pandit Shenai, on email**

There is no harm in adopting new technologies. But I feel one should invest in having a better lifestyle instead of surgical procedures to preserve youth and beauty.

encouraged. And age doesn't matter where love is involved, isn't it?

**Ayushmann Khurrana has completed 10 years in Bollywood. Would you give him 10 on 10?**

**Amit Jain, New Delhi**

Ten years is too little time to test anyone's merit. He still has a long way ahead of him. Kudos, congratulations and blessings to the handsome and talented Ayushmann for reaching this milestone.

**A poor man who becomes a politician becomes rich very soon. How?**

**Atul Tankha, Ratlam**

Not every poor man gets to change his fortune. Power has its uses for sure and the glamour of power surely can change fortunes. But exceptions to the rule always exist.

**What should be India's national language? Kindly comment**

**Amit Jain, New Delhi**

The answer to your question is quite simple.

Everyone needs to be on the same page for that to happen. Don't you think controversial topics and discussions should be best avoided in order to maintain peace and harmony in today's times?

**Prices of petrol, diesel, LPG, CNG, essential commodities, vegetables have skyrocketed but political leaders in Maharashtra are engaged in verbal fighting over Hanuman Chalisa and loud speakers. What will be the outcome?**

**Anil R Torne, Talegaon**

It's an unfortunate state of events for sure. I hope, wish and pray that the powers involved wake up to the grim reality of today and work towards lessening the burden of the common man, instead of...

**What is the length, breath and area of love?**

**Atul Tankha, Ratlam**

Love has no barriers or boundaries. It can never be measured. It's a limitless phenomenon. So enjoy the feeling while you can. Don't go about



**Dependable star : Ayushmann Khurrana**

*A. Shatrughan Sinha*





**Winsome smiles:** Sonakshi and Poonam Sinha



**Super successful:** Pushpa

## 1st Prize

**In this world of greed for power, money, and supremacy, how can we find inner peace and true love?**

**Harshita, Mumbai**

In today's times, when everyone is running after power, does anyone care for such things as inner peace and true love? Money, greed and supremacy are the things people wish for. Instead of love and peace, people hanker for guns, goons and leverage to get the things they want. You're in the minority, my dear, if you're thinking of inner peace and true love.

## 2nd Prize

**Have you ever been subjected to humiliation in your life? How did you overcome it and what message would you like to give to the young generation who face humiliation at any juncture?**

**Rajesh K Ranga, New Delhi**

We all have been humiliated at some point in our life. I would overcome it by remaining focussed on my goals and career ignoring the rest. This is my message to the younger generation. At times, inspiration and motivation take birth through humiliation.

measuring its dimensions, my dear friend.

**The world is crazy about your smile. Whose smile makes you crazy?**

**Dr Devki Yadav, Ratlam**

The apple of my eye, my most adorable and darling daughter, Sonakshi and besides her, my only wife Poonam. If and when I'm fortunate enough to get a smile from her, of course.

**Does regret beget regret?**

**Neeraj Sabharwal, Chandigarh**

Yes I do believe that regret breeds regret. If you don't believe in it, then please write to Lord Shankaracharya.

**What is the biggest demerit of democracy?**

**Shivani, Udaipur**

We unfortunately do things selfishly. Only thinking about ourselves is the biggest demerit of democracy. Those in power should adopt a more holistic approach to things.

**If Indian politicians abruptly disappear, what would happen?**

**Bharat Kalaria, Mumbai**

That would be expecting the impossible. But if and when it does happen it would be a wonderful change. And our goal of governance for that matter should be peace, prosperity, progress and pride, besides communal harmony.

**What impact would the success of Pushpa: The Rise,**

**RRR and KGF: Chapter 2 will have on the Hindi film scene?**

**Jaideep Sarkar, Kolkata**

We belong to the same country and the same film family. Their success is our success. So don't worry. Hindi cinema isn't in any danger at all as we belong to one big, happy family comprising all cinemas.

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

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

**Win!**  
**CASH PRIZES**

**1st prize**

**₹3000**

**2nd prize**

**₹2000**

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

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# Shining bright

**A**kshay Kumar, Shah Rukh Khan, Aamir Khan, Salman Khan, Ajay Devgn – these stars have ruled for three decades now. They aren't ready to walk into the sunset anytime soon. They've been written off before and have always bounced back and we're sure they'll this time as well.

Aamir Khan is known as Mr Perfectionist in the industry. Even his rivals admire the way he physically transforms himself for every role. And his marketing tactics should be seriously taught

in business schools. Aamir has always admired Tom Hanks and has got a chance of his lifetime acting in the official Hindi remake of Hank's cult classic film *Forrest Gump*. The first trailer of the film came out recently and the fans went crazy watching it, praising it sky high. His chemistry with Kareena Kapoor Khan too got talked about and he sure has another winner on the cards by the looks of it.

Shah Rukh Khan took a sabbatical after the release of his last release *Zero* (2018). Fans were wondering about what he was doing. King Khan

was bidding his time going over scripts and listening to narrations. The queries of his fans were answered when the teaser for *Pathaan* dropped. The film is said to be a spy thriller and is said to be part of Yash Raj's grand spy universe. They were in for a bigger surprise when his first look from Atlee's *Jawaan* was released. Suddenly, the SRK craze was back with a bang. He has also been signed by Rajkumar Hirani to play the lead in his migration saga *Dunki* and that too has got the fans excited. SRK always wanted to work

with Hirani and now his wish is coming true.

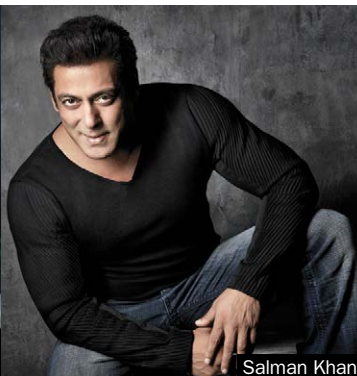
Akshay Kumar too has plenty more ammunition left in his arsenal. He has the emotional roller coaster, *Raksha Bandhan*, directed by Anand L Rai coming up. Akshay has said the film is his tribute to his sister Alka Bhatia and also to the brother-sister relationship. Alka is also the presenter of the film, along with Rai. Then, he also has the mystery thriller *Ram Setu* coming up, where he allegedly plays an Indiana Jones like figure. Action fans are in for a treat as Akshay has teamed-up with the young action star Tiger Shroff for *Bade Miyan Chote Miyan*. The film is said to be a reboot of the Amitabh Bachchan and Govinda film of the same name which was released in 1998.

Ajay Devgn has the *Kaithi* remake *Bholaa* coming up. He also has the comedy *Thank God*, mystery *Drishyam 2* and the period sports drama *Maidaan* in the pipeline, besides the next film in the *Singham* series. Salman Khan has the family drama *Kabhi Eid Kabhi Diwali* in the pipeline and his *Tiger 3* is all set to roar as well. He'll also make his South debut with *Godfather*, where he'll co-star with Chiranjeevi.

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Aamir Khan



Salman Khan



Shah Rukh Khan



Ajay Devgn



Akshay Kumar