

ALL NEW

March, 2022

A Times Of India Publication

# FILMFARE

FILMS | FASHION | LIFESTYLE

[www.filmfare.com](http://www.filmfare.com)

## VAANI KAPOOR STEALS THE THUNDER

GOODBYE  
KING, **BAPPI  
LAHIRI**

SOUTHERN  
INVASION:  
**JR NTR AND  
RAM CHARAN**

RETURN  
OF THE  
DIVA,  
**MADHURI  
DIXIT  
NENE**



# Letter from the Editor

## 70 Years Young...

*Filmfare* reached its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary this March. Age is just a number, as they say. One should count the experiences rather than the years. *Filmfare* got its first issue out in 1952. Back in those days, entertainment magazines were few and far between. Most were mostly trade journals really, giving information about which films are getting made and offered tidbits about the cast and the crew. *Filmfare* could truly be called a fanzine in every sense of the word. It's approach was refreshingly different. While it did offer readers insights about new films by carrying photos from the sets and shooting reports, it also helped the fans engage with their favourite stars in an intimate way. Stars wrote guest columns not only on their own lives but on each other. They shared photographs of their vacations and offered glimpses of their palatial homes. The magazine was the perfect bridge between the celebs and their admirers.

One can say that the stars were doing the same kind of things on *Filmfare* that they do now on Instagram. But minus the filters. It was raw, visceral, true to life. And that has been the template we've adopted since then. We try to portray as real a picture as possible of the stars today as we did back when we began.

Our films were in black and white when the magazine started. Colour photography was expensive but even then we strove hard to make our covers a colourful spectacle. *Filmfare* covers became the talking point among the masses. They were cut off and pinned to the walls and revered. We have kept that tradition alive and kicking. For example, we were the first and perhaps the only magazine to bring together superstars from three generations Dilip Kumar, Amitabh Bachchan and Shah Rukh Khan, to mark the special occasion of 100 years of Indian cinema. We broke ground when we featured 12 directors on the cover together. Also, history got made when Aamir Khan and Shah Khan graced the cover together, perhaps the only time they did so.

When I joined the magazine as a cub reporter 25 years ago, I knew I was standing in the shadow of a giant. That the love and respect the stars have for the magazine is unparalleled. You don't ever have to break the ice with anyone as they considered themselves part of *Filmfare's* inner circle. I've seen stars unburdening their joys and sorrows to us as if they're talking to family. And they know we'd exercise discretion and not carry any controversial information.

The same values have been ingrained in our website as well, which is flourishing as one of the top entertainment sites the past decade. And I needn't add that the Filmfare Awards are considered the premiere awards show both the masses and the industry.

We're a treasure trove of memories. Here's to making more in the next 70 years to come...



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jitesh Pillai".

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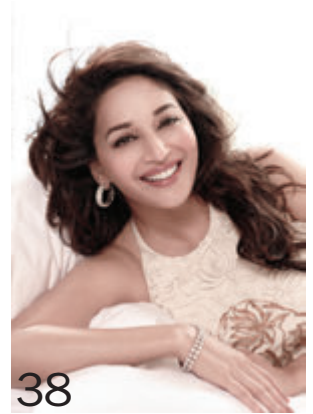
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戀愛好好說

लंबे समय से समुद्र नहीं देखा  
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只有大海知道

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

# masala fix

## HIS LAST BOW

Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor recently attended a special screening of Rishi Kapoor's last film, *Sharmaji Namkeen*. The actor passed away before the completion of the film and Paresh Rawal graciously stepped in and finished the film. What a nice gesture. The screening was also attended by Neetu Kapoor, Randhir Kapoor, Riddhima Kapoor, Sahni, Shweta Bachchan, Aadar Jain, other family members and friends of the Kapoor family. Alia was at Ranbir's side throughout and the two later reportedly went on a dinner date.



Priyanka Chopra opens up about wearing *mangalsutra*

Alia Bhatt says marriage is a state of mind *pg 09*

PHOTOGRAPH: YOGEN SHAH

# Rumours & More

## SHAH RUKH KHAN'S LIFE CHANGED AFTER THE BIRTH OF ARYAN KHAN



It's known to anyone that **Shah Rukh Khan** treats his children as friends instead of having authoritative control over them.

In an interview after the birth of **Aryan**, with an American TV channel, **Shah Rukh** was asked how it feels to be a father. The actor replied, "Everybody asks me this. It feels just the same."

On being further asked by the interviewer if it means life is not different, Shah Rukh said, "I just have a newer friend, that's all." The interviewer also asked the actor how he balances his work life with his personal life and if he wishes that he could spend more time with his family. To this, the Baadshah of Bollywood said, "I have loads of time with him. There is no problem on that count. I was just with them before I came here and maybe on Monday, I will go and be with them again in New York. They are with me but it's a little hectic travelling around." Shah Rukh and **Gauri** also have a daughter **Suhana Khan**, born in 2000 and **AbRam Khan**, born in 2013 through surrogacy.

## HUMA QURESHI SAYS WORK HAS MADE HER BRAVER

**Huma Qureshi** who completes a decade in showbiz this year, is astonished at how far she has come in her profession in recent years and believes that the pandemic has given her a new perspective on her job. "I think I have changed as a person. I am not the same person I was in 2018 or 2019. I look at things differently. I make choices very differently. Maybe it is the pandemic or the whole thing of being at home alone with our thoughts. For me the unimportant things, I have let them go," she shared recently.



Qureshi states she has consciously begun to pay greater attention to the projects with which she is associated. "I think I have also become a little braver. My first thought is chalo risk lete hai. *Kuch naya hai baaki log nahi kar rahe hai, shayad iss liye mujhe karna chahiye.* That is how I function now," she elaborated.

## FAN TATTOOS RANVEER SINGH'S FACE ON HIS BACK

**Ranveer Singh's** stardom keeps increasing manifold with each passing day. Recently the paparazzi requested him to come out of his car and pose when he was reaching **Sanjay Leela Bhansali's** office. "*Kya Covid khatam ho gaya kya* (Has Covid-19 come to an end?)," commented Ranveer. However, he obliged the paparazzi and he must be glad he did because he chanced upon a die-hard fan just then. This fan informed Ranveer that he had his face tattooed on his back and proceeded to take off his shirt and show the artwork to the star. Ranveer was pleasantly surprised at that and exclaimed, "*Kya baat.*" He expressed his gratitude and clicked pictures with the star.



## TIGER TALES

HIS PARENTS CALLED HIM **JAI HEMANT SHROFF** AT THE TIME OF HIS BIRTH, BUT HE GOES BY HIS NICKNAME, **TIGER**. THE STAR REVEALED THAT THE NAME CAME FROM PEOPLE COMPARING HIM TO A TIGER DUE TO HIS TENDENCY OF BITING. "I USED TO BITE AS A KID... I LIKED TO BITE EVERYONE AROUND," HE SAID. THE ACTOR REVEALED THAT ONE OF HIS VICTIMS WAS A TEACHER FROM HIS SCHOOL. "I BIT MY TEACHER IN SCHOOL, AND EVEN GOT PUNISHED FOR THAT," HE RECOUNTED.



## ALIA BHATT SAYS IN HER HEAD SHE'S ALREADY MARRIED RANBIR KAPOOR

**Alia Bhatt** has stated that she had wanted to marry **Ranbir Kapoor** since she first saw him on screen. The two have been in a relationship since 2017. Alia revealed in an interview that she is tired of press publications speculating on when she and Ranbir would tie the wedding. She claims that her marriage is a 'state of mind,' and that she is already married to him in her mind. "When people ask me, 'When are you getting married?'" I'm like, firstly, it's not anybody's business and secondly, if you ask me honestly, marriage is a state of mind and that's what I feel in terms of the peace I feel with my relationship. I'm already there. In my head I'm already married to him. Forget that! When I saw him for the first time on screen, that was the day I decided that I wanted to marry him. That was when I was a sweet little girl. But that's what I meant and I feel it's a state of mind. It's the peace that you have in your mind, in your heart and in your relationship." Cute!

## KAREENA SAYS AKSHAY'S PLANNING A TWO HERO FILM WITH TAIMUR

**Kareena Kapoor Khan** recently appeared on actor **Twinkle Khanna's** talk show on the Tweak India platform. During their conversation, Kareena talked about how little she was when she used to visit the sets of her sister **Karisma Kapoor's** films and shared one such incident when she witnessed **Akshay Kumar** in action. Kareena said, "I am romancing all of Lolo's (Karisma) co-stars, it's so weird. Akshay's first shot, I was in my school uniform. It's been such a long time, it just shows how amazing he is rather than me."

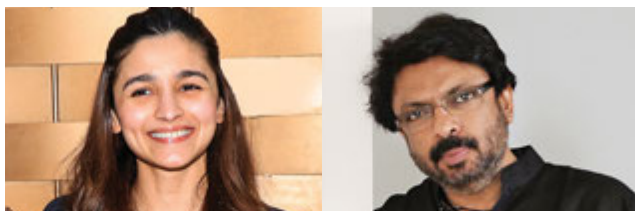
Kareena also said that she'll be ready to work with Akshay even when she will be 75 because "he will still be working". "He is already planning a two-hero film with **Taimur**, he's already told me that," she added jokingly. Kareena Kapoor and Akshay

Kumar have starred in several films like *Ajnabee*, *Talaash: The Hunt Begins...*, *Dosti: Friends Forever*, *Tashan*, *Kambakkht Ishq* and *Good Newwz*.



## Priyanka Chopra opens up about wearing mangalsutra

**Priyanka Chopra** recently shared a post on social media where she shared what feelings she went through when she wore *mangalsutra* for the first time after she married **Nick Jonas**. "I remember when I wore mine for the first time... because we have grown up with the idea of what it means. It was just a very special moment for me. At the same time, as a modern woman, I also understand the repercussions of what it means. Do I like the idea of wearing *mangalsutra* or is it too patriarchal? But at the same time, I am that generation that's sort of in the middle. Maintain tradition but know who you are and what you stand for. And we'll see the next generation of girls might do differently." Well said, indeed.



## ALIA BHATT AUDITIONED FOR BHANSALI WHEN SHE WAS JUST 9

**ALIA BHATT** WHO RECENTLY WORKED WITH **SANJAY LEELA BHANSALI** FOR *GANGUBAI KATHIAWADI* REVEALED THAT WANTED TO WORK WITH HIM SINCE SHE WAS A KID. ALIA SAID, "I HAVE WANTED TO BE DIRECTED BY HIM EVER SINCE I WAS 9-YEARS-OLD. THAT'S WHEN I FIRST WALKED INTO HIS HOUSE TO AUDITION FOR ANOTHER FILM HE WAS MAKING AT THAT TIME." ALIA REVEALED THE DIRECTOR SAW 'A FIRE' IN HER EYES. SHE SAID, "I WAS TERRIBLE, WHICH IS WHY I DID NOT GET THE PART. BUT HE LOOKED INTO MY EYES AND SAID TO HIMSELF THAT 'SHE IS GOING TO BE A HEROINE, A BIG ACTOR SOMEDAY. HE SAW THAT FIRE IN MY EYES WHEN I WAS 9 YEARS OLD. I REMEMBER VERY CLEARLY FROM THAT TIME ONWARDS, MY ONE POINT FOCUS BECAME ONE DAY I HAD TO BE DIRECTED BY HIM." WE'RE GLAD THE WISH CAME TRUE.

## URMILA MATONDKAR RECALLS WEARING 15 KG JEWELLERY FOR CHAMMA CHAMMA



Seeing our favourite yesteryear Bollywood Divas on various reality shows these days has become a common occurrence. **Urmila Matondkar** who made a special appearance on the hit music reality show – *Sa Re Ga Ma Pa*, shared a nostalgic memory of how she had to wear a five kg *lehenga* and jewellery weighing 15 kg for her hit song *Chamma chamma* from *China Gate* (1998). “When we did a look test and photo session for this song, **Rajkumar Santoshi** Sir asked me, ‘aren’t you wearing too much jewellery?’. I told him that the accessories are important for the *Banjaran* look in the song. The *lehenga* itself was around 5kg because of all the authentic work while the jewellery weighed around 15kg.” She joked lightheartedly saying, “When I started filming, the first step was that I had to give a side look, and as soon as I did, my own earring slapped me. *Us tamache ki goonj mujhe aaj tak yaad hai* (I still remember the echo of that slap).” Ouch!

## Taapsee Pannu made a career out of a seven minute cameo

**Taapsee Pannu**, who is often seen as a strong woman protagonist, recently said she was glad such roles were coming her way. “I am glad that I am getting central roles. I can unabashedly say that some of the best scripts in the industry with a female protagonist come to me, and I am not going to be modest about it. People come to me and tell me ‘this is written for you’, that’s the kind of situation I have no complaints about.” She also added that she “made a career out of a seven-minute role that really did wonders for me.” She was referring to her cameo in **Akshay Kumar** starrer *Baby*, where her performance as a die-hard undercover agent was widely appreciated.



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# preview

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

## CLOWNING AROUND

**ALISTAR PREM BENNIS**

**X FACTOR: UP FOR ANYTHING**

After returning from the Gulf strait, this Konkan beach boy, Alistar Prem Bennis moved from Mumbai to Bangalore to pursue a career in the Arts. Although he makes his livelihood out of acting, his first love would always be the circus. He finished his bachelor's degree in Performing arts from Christ University, after which he learnt clowning with Clowns Without Borders, Germany. In the digital medium, he has done small roles in a few films such as *Loop Lapeta* and *The Zoya Factor*. He says: "Amongst all of my co-actors, sharing screen space with Anil Kapoor, Amitabh Bachchan and Shreya Dhanwanthary were three pivotal points of my career. They inspired and taught me to look at the camera in a different light." As a writer, he was shortlisted for The Sultan Padamsee Award and Longlisted for the Hindu Metropolis playwright Award for his play *The Joker and the Thief*. He has also worked with brands like Instagram, Tata and StarSports to name a few. He also runs an arts collective called Alienstar Collective Theatrics (ACT). When not on stage or on set, he spends his time grocery shopping and exploring the nooks and crannies of Mumbai on his bike.

Newbie Shantanu  
Maheshwari shares his  
hopes and aspirations pg 12





# New kid on the block

**MAYUKH MAJUMDAR MEETS  
SHANTANU MAHESHWARI, WHO  
RECENTLY MADE HIS BIG SCREEN DEBUT  
WITH GANGUBAI KATHIAWADI**



is sweet and lovely.

The lack of dialogue doesn't bother Shantanu. He's happy that his segments with Alia where the two convey so much without saying anything have got much love from critics and the audience alike. "For me, it was such a unique love story where you don't have many dialogue but the emotions that you see on screen are so deep and profound and the language that we used to talk in... talking through our eyes, gestures, body language. It was just an amazing thing."

to teach her some dance steps. She was warmth and sweetness personified then and nothing has changed now. She's still the same person," gushes Shantanu. He says performing with her, as opposed to performing in front of her, was certainly different. "We broke the ice over casual conversation. I reminded her of our first meeting and we were yakking like old friends after a while. That helped when it came to doing our scenes together. We had many intimate scenes together, which would have been difficult



Gangubai Kathiawadi

**A**fter the release of *Gangubai Kathiawadi*, Shantanu Maheshwari was hailed by the media as a Sanjay Leela Bhansali discovery. But he isn't a rank newcomer. Thousands of fans know him as Swayam Shekhawat from the hit television show, *Dil Dosti Dance. D3*, as it is popularly called, was an instant favourite with desi millennials who were just hitting the peak of their adolescence. That's when Shantanu Maheshwari and his gang came into their lives and became the subject of many canteen discussions across schools and colleges in India. Looking back at his

**“I WAS THRILLED THAT I WAS GETTING A CHANCE TO AUDITION FOR SANJAY LEELA BHANSALI. I WASN'T EXPECTING ANYTHING OUT OF IT AND WHEN IT HAPPENED IT CAME AS A BIG SURPRISE”**

journey, he reflects, "It's been a long journey but I'm happy with whatever I have gone through. It feels amazing to be part of Sanjay sir's movie. He's the best that I could have ever dreamt of to work with," he says, overwhelmed. Shantanu plays the role of Afsaan, Alia Bhatt's love interest, in the film. His scenes with Alia are special because there aren't many words involved but the romance

He first met Alia on the sets of a reality show, when she was doing the promotional rounds for her debut film *Student Of The Year* (2012). She called him a hottie. Shantanu asked her if she remembered that when they met to do prep work for *Gangubai...* and was gratified when Alia remembered bumping into him all those years ago. "She was there as a guest and we shared a moment where I tried

to perform, if she wasn't so warm and friendly."

While there will be many who'll wonder about his overnight success, Maheshwari has had a long, long journey. It wasn't always roses and candy floss for the actor. It was a struggle to fit in mainly because the pace of Mumbai is so different from the city of his birth, Kolkata. Nevertheless, after his successful debut in *Dil Dosti Dance* in 2011,

Maheshwari went on to participate in *Fear Factor: Khatron Ke Khiladi 8* and won that season. While Shantanu is an actor by profession, dance is his first love. The 30-year-old is a member of *Desi Hoppers*, a dance crew that participated in the World of Dance 2015 Championship in Los Angeles and went on to emerge as winners. *Desi Hoppers* even had a special appearance on *America's Got Talent* (season 11). He's been a staple on reality shows in India whether it is *Nach Baliye*, *Jhalak Dikhhla Jaa* or *MTV Big F 2*. He also had a special performance on *Bigg Boss 10*.

**S**hantanu was selected for *Gangubai Kathiawadi* through an extensive audition process. "I cleared one round, second round, third round and I was still not very sure where this was heading. I decided to just enjoy the process and not think of the outcome. I was thrilled that I was getting a chance to audition for Sanjay Leela Bhansali. I wasn't expecting anything out of it and when it happened it came as a big surprise."

Initially, he had a hard time believing he was selected and almost didn't go to the final meeting with SLB because of a prior work commitment. He believes in sticking to his commitments and since he was already booked for another project he was finding it hard to leave that. His friends cajoled him to take one hour off and meet Bhansali. He went because he wanted to

meet the director for a long time. "I went just for the experience. The universe works in mysterious ways I guess, as said he was pleased with my auditions and offered me the role."

Despite getting accolades for his role, Shantanu still can't believe he's done the film. The reality of it has yet to sink in. "Sanjay sir is an icon. It's every actor's dream to work with him. And even after you've worked with him, it still feels like a dream. One doesn't absorb the fact easily." Shantanu says working with SLB is a huge ego booster. "Initially, you feel he's made a mistake in casting you. You doubt whether you're worthy of being directed by him. But as you spend time on the sets, you realise he has invested with you because you fit in his vision. Then you just surrender yourself to his commands and go with the flow."

The Bhansali set was

**“I KNEW WE'D MADE A GREAT MOVIE AND WAS ANXIOUS TO SEE HOW THE AUDIENCE WOULD REACT TO IT. IT'S DOING GREAT AT THE BOX OFFICE AND HAS BEEN LAUDED BY THE CRITICS. I'M FEELING RELAXED AND HAPPY THESE DAYS”**

also difficult for him to adjust to initially but he learned to let go of inhibitions and just trust in the master's process. "Most of the sets I come from, there is a bit of a chaotic feel to it, the hustle-bustle but on this set, there was absolute silence so being able to accept that silence and perform was initially something I found difficult because I was not used



to it. But once I adapted to it, it was fun, it had its own charm and its own value. Once I accepted the silence, I started enjoying the way the flow was happening in terms of the performance."

He struggles to give voice to his emotions when asked about the response to *Gangubai Kathiawadi*. "I'm glad that I'm getting positive responses for my

role, as well as for the film.. Because of COVID-19 and the constant lockdowns, it took two-and-a-half years for this movie to get released. I knew we'd made a great movie and was anxious to see how the audience would react to it. It's doing great at the box office and has been lauded by the critics. I'm feeling relaxed and happy these days." ■

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— 67<sup>TH</sup> FILMFARE AWARDS 2022 —

Log on to <http://awards.filmfare.com> and vote for the Best Film | Best Director | Best Actor in a Leading Role (Male) Best Actor in a Leading Role (Female) and much more...

## FILMFARE INVITES MOVIEGOERS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE POLL FOR THE 67<sup>TH</sup> FILMFARE AWARDS 2022

- Readers should confine their choice to films released between January 1 and December 31, 2021. An alphabetical list of the eligible films is provided.
- There is no entry fee for this poll.
- Fifty per cent weightage will be given to the readers' choice and an equal weightage will be given to the judgment of a specially appointed panel of judges.
- The management shall have the absolute right and discretion to reject votes that it has reason to believe have been manipulated or are not genuine. The decision of the management in that respect shall be final and binding on all parties concerned.

## POINTS TO NOTE WHILE FILLING IN THE POLLING FORM

- The closing date for all entries is March 25, 2022 and no entries received thereafter will be accepted.
- Please fill up the form in your own handwriting and make sure to sign it at the place marked.
- Typewritten forms, carbon copies and unsigned forms will be treated as invalid.
- Only one nomination is to be made in each category. In each case, the film must also be mentioned.

## ENTRIES ARE TO BE ADDRESSED TO

- The Editor, Filmfare, The Times of India building, Dr D N Road, Mumbai 400 001 with the word 'POLL' marked on the envelope.

**NOMINATE TODAY!**

To vote online, log on to <http://awards.filmfare.com>



# LIST OF FILMS RELEASED IN 2021

— IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER —

- 83
- 12 'O' Clock
- 14 Phere
- 200-Halla Ho
- 99 Songs
- Aa Bhi Ja O Piya
- Aafat-E-Ishq
- Ahaan
- Antim: The Final Truth
- Atrangi Re
- Ba Pass 3
- Babloo Bachelor
- Bansuri: The Flute
- Bawri Chhori
- Bekhudi
- Bell Bottom
- Bhavai
- Bhoot Police
- Bhuj: The Pride Of India
- Bob Biswas
- Bolo Hau
- Bombay Rose
- Bunty Aur Babli 2
- Cash
- Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui
- Chehre
- Chhorii
- Code Name Abdul
- D Company
- Dhamaka
- Dial 100
- Dybbuk
- Faactory
- Flight
- Haathi Mere Saathi
- Hello Charlie
- Helmet
- Hum Bhi Akele Tum Bhi Akele
- Hum Do Hamare Do
- Hungama 2
- Koi Jaane Na
- Kya Meri Sonam Gupta Bewafa Hai?
- Lahore Confidential
- Maasaab
- Machaan
- Madam Chief Minister
- Main Mulayam Singh Yadav
- Meel Patthar
- Meenakshi Sundareswar
- Mera Fauji Darling
- Mimi
- Mumbai Saga
- Nail Polish
- Oye Mamu
- Raag
- Raat Baaki Hai
- Radhe
- Ramprasad Ki Tehrvi
- Rashmi Rocket
- Roohi
- Saina
- Sakshi
- Sanak
- Sandeep Aur Pinky Faraar
- Sardar Ka Grandson
- Sardar Udham
- Satya Sai Baba
- Satyameva Jayate 2
- Shaadisthan
- Sherni
- Shershaah
- Shiddat
- Silence... Can You Hear It?
- Skater Girl
- Sooryavanshi
- Squad
- Sumeru
- Switchh
- Tadap
- Tank Cleaner
- Thalaivii
- The Big Bull
- The Girl On The Train
- The Power
- The Wife
- Time To Dance
- Toofaan
- Tuesdays And Fridays
- Urf Ghanta
- Velle
- Ye Mard Bechara



(The list of releases is complete as per trade information. In case of any omissions or change in the release date, producers are requested to bring it to the notice of Filmfare)



# NOMINATE THE BEST OF 2021

— CLOSING DATE: 25<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2022 —

In my opinion, the best of the movies for the period January 1 to December 31, 2021, in each category are:

Best Film .....

Best Director ..... Film .....

Best Actor in a Leading Role (Male) ..... Film .....

Best Actor in a Leading Role (Female) ..... Film .....

Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Male) ..... Film .....

Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Female) ..... Film .....

Best Music ..... Film .....

Best Lyrics ..... Film .....

Song .....

Best Playback Singer (Male) ..... Film .....

Song .....

Best Playback Singer (Female) ..... Film .....

Song .....

FULL NAME (In block letters) .....

ADDRESS .....

DATE ..... SIGNATURE ..... MOBILE NUMBER .....

**NOMINATE  
TODAY!**

To vote online, log on to  
<http://awards.filmfare.com>

# F&B

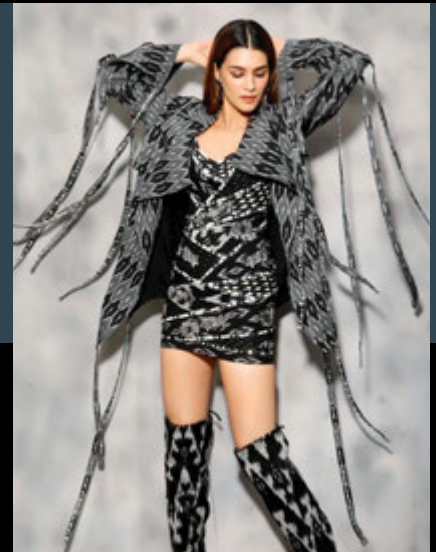
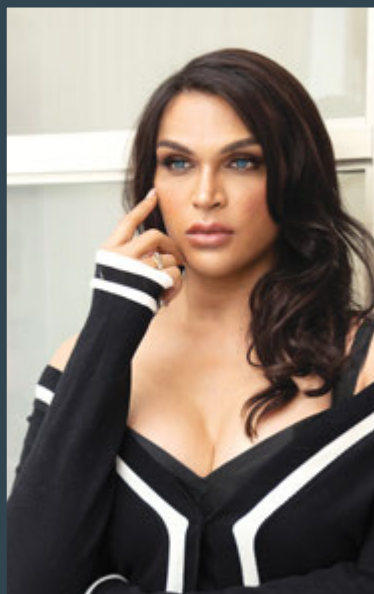
*fashion and beauty*

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



**“THE FASHION AND THE  
FILM INDUSTRY IS SO  
MUCH MORE INCLUSIVE,  
ACCEPTING AND WELCOMING  
OF ANY IDENTITY AND THEY  
HAVE CLEARLY PROVEN IT”  
– Saisha Shinde**

Designer Saisha Shinde is grateful that the film and the fashion industry has accepted her transition from a man to a woman



# A NEW HOPE

SAISHA SHINDE CELEBRATES A YEAR OF FREEDOM AND FASHION. ANALITA SETH LISTENS IN AS THE DESIGNER SHARES HER JOURNEY

The world knew Swapnil Shinde for his beautiful gowns, the colourful couture and the inspiration that he drew from global trends. Last year, Swapnil Shinde let go of his male identity and Saisha Shinde was born. Saisha became a trendsetter, both personally and professionally. Support poured in from everywhere and she soared her wings to take on the world of fashion yet again. Describing this journey as both tough and beautiful, Saisha is a new person now. Her understanding of women, femininity and fashion is better than ever before. As she says and does on social media, #SlayAwaySaisha is a motto she follows everyday. Here's to finding out more about her and her passions. Excerpts...

**2022 marks one year of you turning into Saisha. How do you feel about it?**

Every time I get a new legal document which needs my name change, my gender change, I feel I'm being born again. Whether it was my *aadhar* card, pan card, driving licence or the passport, to see those changes in my documents felt like a rebirth everytime. My



Deepika Padukone



Anushka Sharma



Kriti Sanon

*Every time I get a new legal document which needs my name change, my gender change, I feel I'm being born again*

sister passed away four years ago. She battled with chronic kidney failure for a long time. She used to talk about how she couldn't live her life and that I should definitely live my life to the fullest. And the day she passed away, I specifically felt her sense of release because she'd struggled a lot.

**You didn't feel like you were taking a risk by going for a sex change procedure at the peak of your career?**

Our professional lives do offer a sense of stability and security. So when I decided to dive into something like this, there was always that risk factor whether

people would accept me. Will the stylists still want to work with me? Will my clients still want to flaunt my designs? Because now they'll have to proclaim that I am wearing Saisha Shinde. I'm wearing something designed by a trans woman designer. How comfortable will my clients be with that? But, you know, we really underestimate humanity. We underestimate Indian people to be specific. We think that we are not as progressive as the West but I feel we're by far the most progressive country. I have had the most amazing acceptance from my clients and my team. I have been stressing this

constantly since I've come out. The fashion and the film industry is so much more inclusive, accepting and welcoming of any identity and they have clearly proven it. The question should be asked to the corporate world, government sector, and the military. Why are there no questions being asked to those professions?

**In Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui Vaani Kapoor, plays a trans woman. What is your stance on the whole conversation about representation and casting trans women in such roles?**

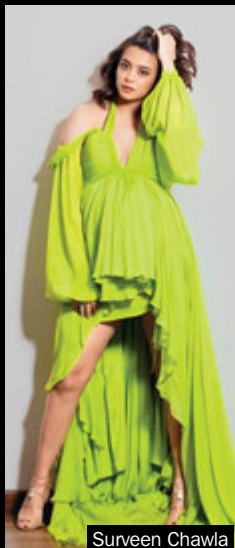
Considering it was the first movie of its kind, it was fine. You have to



Chitrangada Singh



Saisha Shinde



Surveen Chawla



Tamannaah Bhatia

understand that in India, for the masses at the grassroot level to understand and accept the reality of people opting for transition is never going to be easy. You don't want to scare them. You have to understand that this movie is not made for OTT or it's not made just for the metros. It's made for the entire country and 80 per cent of it is still orthodox. Which is why I feel taking Vaani Kapoor, a cisgender woman (Cisgender denotes a person whose gender identity and sex assigned at birth are the same) to play such a role was a great move.

**How have your sensibilities about fashion changed in the last one year?**

I used to favour heels all the time and now after wearing heels, I've understood that I can look hot and sexy and cool without heels as well. Secondly, small details like the armhole should be of a certain width, the back should be of a certain depth, especially if it's day

wear. If I'm wearing lingerie then I need to take care of this. The process is much more personal now. Each and every detail is something that I've experienced in my new life. Prior to my coming out, I used to just create without understanding on what occasion was my client wearing the outfit. Why she should be wearing this? But there is a much more sensitised understanding of what women are going through. It helps me understand the nuances better. Like what fabric or texture will work for a particular outfit. This attention to minute details is something I'm giving a lot more importance to right now.

**Where do you see yourself in the future**

It's literally a Pandora's Box that's opened in my life currently because there is so much that I have been wanting to do. We are working on a line of jewellery, we are working on

a line of bags, we are working on a line of shoes, apart from the collection. Beyond and above that, I am hoping to start a makeup line soon as well.

**What's your take on 'fat tax' that charges plus size women more for the same outfit?**

I've never charged a client anything extra than what the actual cost of the outfit has been. Probably the fabric consumption varies from person to person, but does that mean that if the client's size is much smaller than the model's size, are you going to reduce the cost as well? If you don't plan to reduce the cost when the fabric consumption is less, why do you plan to increase the cost when the fabric consumption is more. As Saisha, I realised the importance of making designs and creating designs that can work on all



Shruti Haasan

*We really underestimate humanity. We underestimate Indian people to be specific. We think that we are not as progressive as the West but I feel we're by far the most progressive country*



Harnaaz Kaur



Hina Khan



Sunny Leone

*We don't need to shop for a designer brand every second week. Adding value to each and every piece you design is far more superior than just randomly making designs every second day*

body types and all identities. I am limiting my biases to a specific size, which has taken a complete 180 degree turn since my coming out.

**Is fashion a necessity or is it a luxury?**

I personally feel fashion is for everyone depending on your pocket. We don't need to shop for a designer brand every second week. Adding value to each and every piece you design is far more superior than just randomly making designs every second day. If anyone wants to purchase a designer outfit, there should be value to it. But if you're going

to make two lakh pieces of the same style, its value is lost because it's no longer something that you'd aspire to own. It's as expendable as a pair of jeans that you can buy at a random store.

**Do you have a favourite look that a celebrity sported?**

Harnaaz Kaur's gown for Miss Universe is now going to be super special for me. But my new line of Saisha is not out yet. So, I have yet to see it on women but I'm dying to see it on Deepika Padukone because I love her. I've worked with her

and she's absolutely amazing.

**Do you have a specific stylist who you think styles your clothes the best?**

I can't stress more on how Shaleena Nathani has been instrumental in my professional life. She came out of nowhere and gave my clothes to Deepika. And that was like a second life to me. So, for me Shaleena is God, as far as styling is concerned. Eka Lakhani is God, I mean I have done a lot of period costumes with Eka for movies and her understanding of costumes for movies is unparalleled.

**What are the things that you are doing for the environment and sustainability?**

Fabric wastage is one big concern and the other one is of course labour wages. What we have consciously decided to do is make a certain number of styles and they are going to be produced in a specific amount only. And once those styles are sold out, they won't be produced again. There is less wastage and you get to wear a piece which is absolutely going to be limited. Because these pieces are special, they are gonna be priced, which means that

my workers will be given a good wage as well.

**Is social media a boon or a bane?**

There's no way to control the trolling. We wanted the world to grow smaller, we wanted everyone to access our lives, we wanted everyone to see where we are having breakfast, with whom we are having dinner and which restaurant we are sitting with and what we are wearing. You want to put your life out there? Well, guess what, everyone has an opinion on everything. Welcome to the jungle. ■

what's on their mind?

# exclusives



## rites of passage

**Maanvi's treatment in *Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui* really mattered. I don't think that a character like her has been depicted before on screen. I give the credit to my director Abhishek Kapoor for making her the way she is**

**Vaani Kapoor played a trans woman in *Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui* and has been lauded for her bravura performance. She feels the film is a conversation starter and is happy that it got most things right**

PHOTOGRAPH: KEEGAN CRASTO

# SHE'S GOT MOJO

MAYUKH MAJUMDAR  
CHATS WITH VAANI KAPOOR,  
WHO'S GETTING RAVE  
REVIEWS FOR HER ROLE IN  
*CHANDIGARH KARE AASHIQI*,  
AND COMES AWAY HAPPY

PHOTOGRAPHS: KEEGAN CRASTO  
STYLING: EDWARD LALREMPUIA  
HAIR AND MAKEUP: MARIANNA MUKUCHYAN  
Jacket: YSL | Necklace: Vintage | Jeans: Zara

# THERE IS A SCENE IN *CHANDIGARH KARE AASHIQUI* WHERE VAANI KAPOOR'S

character, Maanvi, decides to go on a dating app. Her fingers tremble slightly as she is asked to fill her gender. The camera pans and you see Vaani Kapoor's face, the trembling lips, the unsure eyes, the sorrow in those eyes...It isn't something grand that makes Vaani Kapoor's Maanvi stand out. Maanvi steals your heart solely through these subtle gestures. And, perhaps, that is the mark of a good actress. To be able to tell a story like that of Maanvi's without resorting to some booming background score or emotional dialogue. Few expected such a fine performance from Vaani Kapoor. She made her debut in 2013 and in these 10 years, she's done six movies. Her debut film, *Shuddh Desi Romance* earned her the Best Debut (Female) award at the Filmfare Awards but she went on to star in *Befikre* which didn't perform well and in movies like *War* and *Bell Bottom* where her skill set was woefully underused. With *Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui*, Vaani has clearly shown that she is not just another pretty face and here's hoping filmmakers take note.

Coord set: Rudraksh Dwivedi | Jacket: Shopmonokrom



I DON'T BELONG TO THE  
COMMUNITY SO YOU WANT  
TO DO THEM RIGHT. YOU DON'T  
WANT TO MISREPRESENT  
ANYTHING. SOMETIMES YOU CAN  
GO WRONG EVEN IF YOUR  
INTENTIONS ARE RIGHT

As a member of the LGBTQ+ community, when I saw the trailer for *Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui*, I was worried if it would treat the community sensitively. I never thought a film like this would be possible....

I am so happy it resonated with you. Thank you for watching and thank you for acknowledging it and loving it.

It's said that members of the community were apprehensive about how they would be portrayed in the film? And afterwards they were glad the film got made.

Yeah, a lot of people actually told me that. It was my biggest validation. I don't belong to the community so you want to do them right. You don't want to misrepresent anything. Sometimes you can go wrong even if your intentions are right. We were just hoping and keeping our fingers crossed that it doesn't do them injustice in any way. And I'm happy that today I'm talking to you and I've talked to other people. And they felt that it didn't do injustice to the community, it didn't disrespect them in any way. That's a big deal.

How relieved did you feel after seeing the reviews after the film's release?

I was grateful. I won't deny the fact that it was a huge sigh of relief. I wouldn't probably have said yes if it weren't for a filmmaker like Gattu (Abhishek Kapoor) who I knew had the right aesthetics to present this. Everything matters, from my co-actors to my filmmakers. They should possess the right sensibility

Top: Arushi Rawal | Represented by: Vanda Fashion  
Jeans: Zara | Ring: Misho | Shoes: Christian Louboutin



YOU DO HAVE LOW DAYS AND YOU DO FEEL RESTLESS AND  
YOU DO QUESTION WHY ISN'T IT COMING TO ME.  
I GUESS I CAN EITHER WHINE AND MULL OVER IT OR LOOK AT  
THE BRIGHTER SIDE AND BE GRATEFUL FOR THE THINGS THAT HAVE  
WORKED IN MY FAVOUR

Yellow coord set: Arushi Rawal

Represented by: Vanda Fashion



I TRY TO NOT GET SUCKED INTO THE  
NEGATIVE ENERGY AND THE TROLLS OR IN A  
CONVERSATION WHERE PEOPLE WRITE YOU OFF.  
THOSE VERY SAME PEOPLE WILL TALK HIGHLY ABOUT  
YOU TOMORROW IF YOU ACHIEVE SUCCESS

Dress: Hemant Nandita

Necklace: Misho



for such a subject. Thankfully, we were all on the same page mentally. So, that gives you some comfort. Maanvi's treatment in the movie really mattered. I don't think that a character like her has been depicted before on screen. I give the credit to my director for making her the way she is.

**Why wasn't a trans woman cast the role?**

See, I cannot be the decision-maker of who gets cast or not, that completely depends on the makers. This film is a conversation starter. Especially for people who aren't aware of the LGBTQ community per se. I really hope in the future there can be many more films, different storylines, different narratives on the same subject, where trans people get to play these parts. And not just this, I hope someday, a trans girl should be able to play a cis girl's part.

**When you are an actor, you don't make decisions in isolation. There are so many people involved. So, when you took that decision to play a trans girl, what was the reaction and how did you face them?**

I make my own decisions when I am doing a film. I don't go around looking for any validation from the outside. Yes, some people can guide me when I am confused. But I genuinely wasn't confused with this one. When I read the script, I truly felt it was mind-blowing. And I called up Gattu and figured out what the treatment of Maanvi would be like. Talking to him cleared my head and then I just went ahead with my gut feeling.

**You made a fantastic debut and even won the Filmfare award for the Best Debut Actor (Female) for *Shuddh Desi Romance*. But since then, you have been extremely selective with your projects.**

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There is no right or wrong over here. Whatever instinctively feels right, one follows that path. This just felt more comfortable and honest to me and feels truer to who I am. Do less work but good work and be a part of good cinema. And that's what my intention has been. I can also only pick from the handful of offers that come my way. And I tried to be honest to what felt right to me. There has been no calculation. Whatever felt right to me I went ahead with that.

**Has there ever been a sense of frustration that I am just not getting the right script or I am getting the same script from different people.**

I'm also human at the end of the day. You do have low days and you do feel restless and you do question why isn't it coming to me. I guess I can either whine and mull over it or look at the brighter side and be grateful for the things that have worked in my favour. Do I hope that I had more projects like these? Yes, of course. Better late than never, right?

**Why haven't you gotten more roles like this?**

I don't know, I mean I hope they don't feel that way at least anymore because in *Shuddh Desi Romance* I was playing a small-town girl and I was getting those kinds of roles. At the end of the day, you are an actress and you should be able to pull off just about anything. I would love to challenge myself, I would love to do

---

# HRITHIK ROSHAN WENT ALL THE WAY. HE POSTED STORIES AND HE CALLED US ALL UP AND HE WAS PLEASED WITH THE FILM. AND HE IS SOMEONE WHO'S HONEST AND IF HE DOESN'T LIKE SOMETHING, HE WILL SAY IT

---

things I haven't done before. After *Befikre*, which was uber cool and set in Paris, I started getting roles where I had to play an urban character. I think with every movie, people decide differently. But I am hoping that after *Chandigarh*...people will have more faith in my versatility.

## How has the response been from the industry?

It was in a good way and I am just very happy that people have kind of given that respect to the film and me as an actor. So it does feel nice. I am just hoping that that can materialise into films and projects.

## What's your favourite feedback that you received from someone in the industry?

They all have been kind and generous with feedback. I don't know whom to quote but someone like Hrithik Roshan went all the way. He posted stories and he called us all up and he was pleased with the film. And he is someone who's honest and if he doesn't like something, he will say it. There were many filmmakers who I looked up to and they commented on the film and texted me and said lovely things. I am happy that it made Anurag Kashyap cry in the second half of the film. I told him that I am happy that you cried because that means you connected with the film. The most significant validation came from the community itself.

## As an actor, everything you do is scrutinised. Has it gotten easier over the last few years?

In this industry, I am very aware

that your success is loud but your failure is louder. Everybody gets to have a say and have a judgement about your work and life decisions. But I try to not get sucked into the negative energy and the trolls or in a conversation where people write you off. Those very same people will talk highly about you tomorrow if you achieve success. So, I think this is also temporary. Nothing is permanent - success is not permanent, we all will have ups and downs.

## You also have *Shamshera* coming up and we loved the teaser. So, tell us a little about that...

All I can say right now is that it is a period drama. I am thrilled about this one because it's with people I've always wanted to team up with. You have Ranbir Kapoor, you have Sanjay Dutt sir, you have Karan Malhotra. And it's a big entertaining film and I'm looking forward to it. Unfortunately, I really can't talk much about it but it is going to be a different one.

## How much more of the unexpected can we expect from you?

I really hope I can

do the unexpected. I am not trying to box myself right now and I'm also looking forward and feeling hopeful that something different is going to come my way and the energy is good about it. So, I am just keeping my fingers crossed and hoping it happens soon. ■





# HEAR THEM **ROAR!**

AS THE WORLD AWAITS THE  
RELEASE OF **RRR**, **ANALITA  
SETH** CHATS WITH MEGASTARS  
**RAM CHARAN** AND **JR NTR**  
ABOUT THEIR MAGNUM OPUS  
DIRECTED BY **SS RAJAMOULI**

PHOTOGRAPH: YOGEN SHAH

**R**ise, Roar, Revolt... *RRR* by SS Rajamouli is one of the most awaited pan-India epic. The film picks two historical figures, Komaram Bheem played by Jr NTR and Alluri Sitarama Raju played by Ram Charan from the Indian Independence movement and tells a fictional story about the revolutionaries. The film also stars Ajay Devgn, Alia Bhatt and Shriya Saran in pivotal cameos. As this epic pre-partition drama faces several rounds of delays because of the pandemic, the eager cast of the film waits with bated breaths for the grand theatrical release. The strenuous shooting, long post-production hours and this extended period of promotion has given the actors a lot of time to reflect on their film. Known as the megastar and power star across India, Jr NTR and Ram Charan carry an air of calm and humility with them despite their crazy fan following and the impeccable body of work. Here they take us through the mindscape of their director SS Rajamouli and the effortless camaraderie they share on and off the screen. Excerpts...

#### HOW IS MUMBAI TREATING YOU?

**Ram Charan:** Fabulous.

**NTR:** Fabulous indeed. Mumbai has never been an alien space for us. We come here quite a bit. Mumbai is fantastic.

#### WHEN YOU WALK INTO THE SET OF A RAJAMOULI FILM, DO YOU HAVE SOME SENSE OF INHIBITION OR IS IT GAME FACE FROM SHOT ONE?

**N:** It's game on from shot one.

**R:** Shot one, we're at home. We walk onto the sets and we know everybody.

**N:** (Laughs) Yeah, we're on a marathon run from the beginning and there are no inhibitions. Rajamouli makes sure there are no inhibitions. Everything is laid out crystal clear for the actor. No inhibitions at all.

#### HOW STRENUOUS IS PRE-PRODUCTION AS COMPARED TO GOING ON SETS?

**N:** See the preparation is also equally very important for an actor,



Ajay Devgn, Alia Bhatt and Jr NTR

“WE’RE ON A MARATHON RUN FROM THE BEGINNING AND THERE ARE NO INHIBITIONS. RAJAMOULI MAKES SURE THERE ARE NO INHIBITIONS. EVERYTHING IS LAID OUT CRYSTAL CLEAR FOR THE ACTOR - NTR”



Jr NTR as Bheem in *RRR*

especially when you're being a part of a movie like *RRR*, also when you're being directed by Rajamouli himself. Yes, it is very strenuous for sure. It involves more of your mental strength but there's a physical aspect too which you have to master. He makes sure you're at your peak in all aspects.

**R:** He is one of the few directors who enjoys the hard work.

**N:** And the process...

**R:** And he knows that it will pay off so yeah...

**DO YOU THINK INCLUSION OF TWO ACTORS FROM THE HINDI FILM FRATERNITY ADDS THE PAN-INDIA STATURE TO YOUR FILM?**

**N:** Rajamouli always says that it's always the story which is paramount for him, and not the marketing. It's him and his story first. In the later stages, yes marketing strategies and blah blah blah comes in. But it's his story and his characters and his main star cast that cement his products together.

**WAS THERE SOME SORT**

“**RAJAMOULI ISN'T GOING TO GIVE YOU A DAY OR A SCHEDULE TO GET INTO YOUR CHARACTER. YOU BETTER REALISE THAT FROM DAY ONE ITSELF.**”  
 – RAM CHARAN

**OF A LEARNING-UNLEARNING PROCESS INVOLVED? YOU KNOW AS A DUO AND AS INDIVIDUALS?**

**N:** Every movie you learn something and you get out, but when you are stepping into a new project, especially with Rajamouli, it's better to unlearn everything and then get into it with a fresh slate.

**R:** Absolutely. You undo a lot. You have to. It's better for your growth as an actor.

**WHAT ABOUT TRUSTING YOUR CO-STAR AND HAVING FAITH? WAS THERE EVER FRICTION ON-SET OR OFF-SET?**

**R:** Never. I think we were only complimenting each other

**N:** Yes! Absolutely.

**R:** We just do what is required. Rajamouli is so particular that he makes us do exactly what is required. We are in a very comfortable space working with him. The actors are always complimenting each other.

**N:** I think in general also, Rajamouli has always made his actors compliment each other because you



← Ram Charan

are working towards a vision, there is no personal interest there. It's the product which has to shine so we never had that friction, never.

**DO YOU RECALL THE MOMENT WHERE YOU REALISED YOU'RE LIVING A HISTORICAL CHARACTER?**

**R:** *(Laughs)* Yes, I realised it on day one. Rajamouli isn't going to give you a day or a schedule to get into your character. You better realise that from day one itself.

**N:** The sooner you realise, the better it is for you.

**R:** NTR is an experienced actor, and I too have done a couple of films and I know how to get into roles, especially when you have a director like Rajamouli.

**N:** Yes... Like he takes you through a lot of things during the preparation stage itself, you know, so it makes it easier for the actor.

**WHAT WAS THE HARDEST PART OF PLAYING BHEEM AND RAM IN THE FILM?**

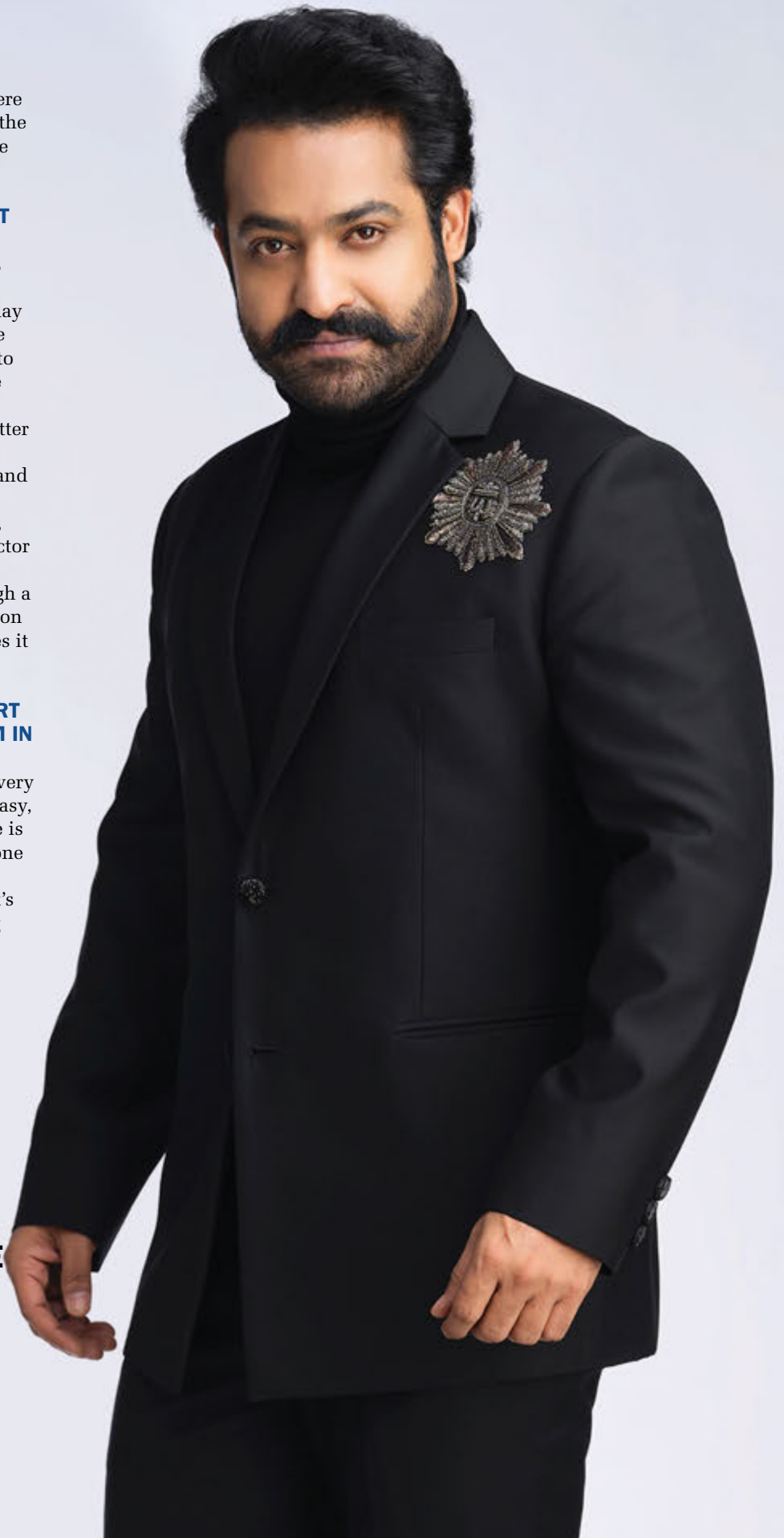
**R:** Playing Bheem and Ram was very hard. To an outsider it looks so easy, effortless and seamless, but there is a lot of preparation which has gone into the characters.

**N:** Though the film is fictional, it's based on the legend surrounding them. Their vision for fighting against the British. It was a challenge to get that right.

**R:** Yeah that was a responsibility.

**N:** But as the movie is fictional, that did make it a bit easier.

**“WE JUST WANT THE MOVIE TO GET OUT TO THE THEATRES BECAUSE WE HAVE BEEN HOLDING ONTO IT FOR QUITE A LONG TIME, ALMOST THREE-AND-A-HALF YEARS –NTR”**





Ram Charan as Ram in *RRR*

**WHAT KIND OF RESEARCH GOES INTO YOUR CHARACTERS AS AN ACTOR?**

**N:** Rajamouli did the research for us.

**R:** And we have to be equipped, mentally, to understand the research.

**N:** It's his vision and the less you put in your inputs, the better it is. We just trusted his judgement and went with the flow.

**R:** It was a smooth ride throughout.

**ARE YOU RELIEVED THAT IT IS RELEASING IN THEATRES, AND HOPING THAT IT WILL REACH 100 PER CENT OCCUPANCY IN THE COMING WEEKS?**

**R:** Absolutely. Fingers crossed for that.

**N:** And we have to be positive about that. I mean that is what we have been hoping for these past two years. Positivity is the key. We have been positive about the pandemic, what drove us was our positivity.

**R:** *Sooryavanshi* did so well despite the 50 per cent occupancy. So just imagine...

**N:** Yeah, just imagine. Every film that is doing well is bringing our audience back to the theatres. Every seat, every head counts. So everyone is doing their job and we hope even *RRR* will do its job.

**R:** The tag is also bringing back the glory of Indian cinema so we hope that happens.



Ram Charan, Ajay Devgn, Jr NTR and SS Rajamouli

**“PLAYING BHEEM AND RAM WAS VERY HARD. TO AN OUTSIDER IT LOOKS SO EASY, EFFORTLESS AND SEAMLESS, BUT THERE IWS A LOT OF PREPARATION WHICH HAS GONE INTO THE CHARACTERS – RAM CHARAN”**

**IS THERE THIS PRESSURE OR BURDEN ON YOUR SHOULDERS, BECAUSE IT IS ALREADY BEING CALLED A BLOCKBUSTER AS SOON AS PEOPLE SAW THE TRAILER**

**R:** We don't feel any pressure.

**N:** No pressure. Absolutely not.

**R:** We have done our job; we are satisfied with our work and we have given our best.

**N:** Our director is satisfied for sure. We are just waiting for the people to watch it and give their verdict. We just want the movie to get out



“RAJAMOULI IS SO PARTICULAR THAT HE MAKES US DO EXACTLY WHAT IS REQUIRED. WE ARE IN A VERY COMFORTABLE SPACE WORKING WITH HIM - RAM CHARAN”

to the theatres because we have been holding onto it for quite a long time, almost three-and-a-half years, so yeah, we are just waiting for it to be there in theatres and can't wait for people to watch it.

#### WHAT'S YOUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION?

**R:** Resolution... I think my resolution will be to see cinema theatres with 100 per cent occupancy, this is my resolution. I have no other personal resolutions. That is my biggest resolution. My wish and pray to God



Ram Charan Sharing a light moment with SS Rajamouli

that this happens and to bring back all the livelihoods that were lost during this pandemic.

**N:** I don't believe in resolutions...

#### YEAH, BUT THEY ARE MEANT TO BE BROKEN, SO WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO?

**N:** I'm looking forward for the pandemic to end. Everyone is hurt, everyone has suffered. The entire movie industry has taken a toll. I hope everything gets back to normal soon and the Indian film industry keeps on rising up and up. ■



# The real game

**JITESH PILLAAI CHATS WITH MADHURI  
DIXIT, WHOSE THE FAME GAME HAS  
TAKEN THE OTT WORLD BY STORM**

PHOTOGRAPHS: VISHESH VERMA / FEMINA

**I** have always been a Madhuri Dixit fanboy ever since her *Tezaab* days. She looked believable even in the most commercial of films. You couldn't take your eyes off her. Filmmakers knew that and started writing meaty roles for her. Her male actors felt vulnerable doing films with her as they knew they'll have to up their game in every frame to match her histrionics. Her dance numbers weren't just cherry on the cake. Sometimes, they were the whole cake. People used to leave the theatre after the songs got over. Madhuri made a name for herself in the art circuit as well, shining in non-glam roles as effortlessly as she did in mass cinema. After now, through *The Fame Game*, she has conquered the OTT space as well. The series has offered her a chance to explore nuances of her character much more in depth than movies and the audience is in love with what she's done. Excerpts from candid chat with the lovely actress who is always fun to talk to...

**IF YOU WERE TO MEET YOUR CHARACTER, ANAMIKA ANAND, FROM THE FAME GAME WHAT WOULD YOU TELL HER?**

I would tell her that things will work out. Don't worry. Anamika is shown to have all the problems possible because the series is in that genre where you have to create that mysterious atmosphere. Yet at the base it's all family drama and relationships.

**HOW CLOSE ARE OUR MOVIES, AND THE LIFE YOU HAVE LED IN THE MOVIES TO WHAT IS SHOWN IN THE FAME GAME?**

I am not saying that in our private lives everything is always hunky dory. Of course there are hiccups, but that happens in everybody's life. She's trying to survive that fame which is very important to her because that's the life she has led

and that's where the mother always pushes her saying 'to be famous you always have to be in the limelight'. Honestly, I could never imagine my mom saying that to me. I am very secure with who I am, I am very comfortable in my skin. But she is not. Anamika Anand is a very insecure person.

**DID YOU EVER FEEL 'OH I HAVE GONE THROUGH SOMETHING**





## I am very secure with who I am, I am very comfortable in my skin. But she is not. Anamika Anand is a very insecure person

### LIKE THIS' WHEN DOING SOME SCENES?

Yes. The scene where I give Manav Kaul a piece of my mind because he's late on the set. Remember earlier we used to do two to three shifts a day, and at times wait endlessly on the sets for a costar to turn up because he would be shooting on another set. That scene with Manav reminded me of that.

### ANY FAMILY PORTIONS IN THE FILM YOU RELATE TO?

If tomorrow my son wants to work in films I would be a little apprehensive, explaining to him

that he would have to work very, very hard. What can go wrong and what can go right and so forth. I'd give him the same advice I gave Amara in the series. 'You have to have focus, you have to go about it relentlessly and not care about anything else. And go through the ups and downs with a level head'.

### WHEN YOU CAME FROM THE US YOU SAID YOUR KIDS WERE COMPLETELY UNAWARE OF YOUR POPULARITY AS AN ACTOR. WHEN DID THEY UNDERSTAND

### THAT PART OF THE FAME GAME?

When we moved to India my sons were very young - six and eight. When we moved here there were paparazzi everywhere. They were a little confused and wondered what was happening but slowly started realising the 'fame game' as you call it. They are more comfortable now. They take it in their stride and are chilled about it.

### WHAT ARE YOUR SONS' INTERESTS? WHAT DO THEY COMMENT ON WHEN

### THEY WATCH YOUR MOVIES?

They don't watch my movies. My elder son, Arin, is interested in music. He's a very good musician and produces his own music. He plays the piano, the tabla, the guitar, and drums. At the same time he is interested in physics, maths and computers. Arin had high level maths and physics and also drama which is a very strange combination. He's done a few plays and he's quite good on stage. My younger son, Ryan, is more into science and

technology. He's also into music. When he watches something he can read between the lines and tell you exactly what's going on. When he saw the teaser of *The Fame Game* he said 'mom she's saying my life is so beautiful but she sounds sad'. He got the gist by watching a few seconds of the teaser.

### WHAT KIND OF A MOM ARE YOU?

I'm a protective mom but not over protective. I'm not a worrier but I don't want my kids to have any bad experiences in life and want their life to be smooth.

“

**I'm a protective mom but not over protective. I'm not a worrier but I don't want my kids to have any bad experiences in life and want their life to be smooth**”



But I think life teaches you a lot and I want them to learn from life.

**The LGBTQ COMMUNITY LOVES YOU BECAUSE YOU HAVE EMPATHY FOR THEM. HOW MUCH EMPATHY IS REQUIRED AS AN ACTOR WHEN DOING A SCENE WHERE YOUR SON IN THE SERIES REVEALS THE TRUTH ABOUT HIS SEXUALITY?**

For me that scene where my son Avi talks about his sexuality was so beautiful. I wanted to be sure that what was being touched upon was pure and real and exactly how it should be. Then I had such a good actor in Lakshvir Saran, who plays my son. We wanted to make sure it did not sound false even for a second. On a personal level, I think your sexuality should not define you. You should be free to love who you like. All that was in my mind when I did that scene.

**CAN YOU TALK ABOUT A REAL LIFE INCIDENT WHEN A FRIEND OR SOMEONE HAS CONFIDED IN YOU ABOUT THEIR SEXUALITY OR THEIR DEMONS?**

When I was in Denver there were people who talked to me about different things in their lives. Like



“There was a time when people said she should get married. And I would think why should that be the end of everyone’s achievement”

how hard it is hard for people to understand what they are going through. After the series was released some fans wrote to me about the mother-son scene saying they cried because that is exactly what they said to their mothers when they came out. There was someone who said she wished her mother had reacted the way Anamika did. It brought tears to my eyes.

**YOU ALSO ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF BODY SHAMING BEAUTIFULLY WITH YOUR DAUGHTER AMARA IN THE SERIES.**

I had faced it when I started out as an actor. People used to think I was too skinny to be a heroine because at that time the ladies were so buxom. And here I was a Maharashtrian youngster, petite and small. People used to say ‘isko mota karo’. But my mom stood by me like a rock. She used to say ‘you are what you are, you just

do your work, and the day you become famous they will forget this and say everyone should look like Madhuri'. And that's the attitude I had with Amara when she says that she doesn't feel beautiful or she hates herself. That scene shook me. After the director said 'cut' I couldn't stop crying because it really hit me. Maybe that's what I went through when people were criticising me and I felt there should be something different about me.

**HAVE THERE BEEN MOMENTS AT THE PEAK OF YOUR CAREER WHERE**

**YOU HAVE FELT VULNERABLE LIKE ANAMIKA AND YOU HAVE BOUNCED BACK?**

Sometimes your success brings that vulnerability. After *Hum Aapke Hain Koun..!* became a success, it was like, now what? This film was so successful. What else can she do now? And then *Raja* came on the heels of *Hum Aapke...* and also became a big hit. After that when *Dil To Pagal Hai* happened people stopped saying anything. Also there was a time when people said she should get married. And I would think why

should that be the end of everyone's achievement? Thankfully girls don't have to face that today.

**AT ONE TIME YOU WOULD JUST HAVE ONE OR TWO PERSONS AROUND YOU BUT NOW YOU HAVE AN ARMY OF PEOPLE**

Initially when we did film promotions there used to be a few film magazines and newspapers for which we did interviews. Then they used to release the trailers and some songs and that was it. But today because of social media there are so many departments.

Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, digital magazines. You need people to manage those different things.

**WHAT ELSE HAS CHANGED AND HOW HAVE YOU REINVENTED YOURSELF?**

One has to keep thinking forward. I want to do roles where I can sink my teeth, show my craft. When Sri Rao came to me with this subject I thought it was a very good combination of director and producers.

**YOU THINK THERE WAS A STRAIN OF SMITA PATIL'S FILM**

**BHUMIKA IN THE SERIES, ESPECIALLY THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR MOM SUHASINI MULAY?**

You hear about overbearing mothers from different directors. There was a time when parents used to be very overbearing because the children used to be the only earners in the family. So that's what we did with the whole relationship between Suhasiniji and me. She played it so well. What I like about Anamika is that despite all that she doesn't disrespect her mother. She would even tell her off but in a very respectful tone.

**WHAT'S THE BEST AND WORST PIECE OF ADVICE THAT YOU HAVE GOT?**

When I wanted to do *Mrityudand* a lot of people advised me against doing it saying I was from commercial cinema and *Mrityudand* was a very artistic film. But I wanted to do it because I loved the script. It was a good woman empowerment kind of thing and the actors were brilliant - from Shabanaji to Mohan Joshi to everyone. I did it and even today people talk about *Mrityudand* when they talk about my filmography. ■

**“If tomorrow my son wants to work in films I would be a little apprehensive, explaining to him that he would have to work very, very hard. What can go wrong and what can go right and so forth”**



With husband  
Sriram Nene



With sons Ryan and Arin

# The Little Big sensation

*JITESH PILLAAI HAS A CONVERSATION WITH MITHILA PALKAR, AN ACTRESS WHO HAS GROWN WITH EVERY OUTING*

*Good things come in small packages. Mithila Palkar started out doing skits on the internet and her natural ease stayed. She's never out of element – be it in her OTT series Little Things, Marathi films or Hindi cinema – Her big chirpy smile, her twinkling eyes make her out to be a person high on life. She has retained the ability to look at everything with a waif like curiosity. She's in love with her craft and can't think of anything else besides acting. Her zest for life is infectious and you feel like smiling along with her as she yammers nineteen-to-the-1900 about everything from Gulzar to '70s songs to Madhuri Dixit. Reproduced below are excerpts from a chat with a talented Ms Palkar...*

**You were the winner of the Filmfare Best Debutant Award in Marathi cinema, and Best actress at Filmfare OTT Awards. Can you describe your two Filmfare moments?**

The Marathi Filmfare was my first Filmfare award. I did not expect it at all. Because that year I did not win any of the Marathi debutant awards so I didn't expect one from Filmfare. I thought I'd go, look pretty and come back. But I won. So no words to describe the feeling. And also the first

Filmfare OTT award was so, so special. Both Dhruv (Sehgal) and I won for a show that's, once again, special to us.

**With so many online shows to your credit you are like the queen of OTT. What is your take on this platform?**

I personally enjoy being on OTT because there is so much choice, for the audience, and as an actor. I remember I auditioned for Filter Copy's show called News Darshan for YouTube when I started out. And



*Little Things*

**“What kept our characters Dhruv and Kavya exciting for the audience was they had all the uncomfortable conversations to figure out whether the relationship was working out or not”**

Dhruv Sehgal, who happens to be the writer and my co actor in *Little Things*, auditioned me for the part. We worked together on the show and that transitioned into the two sketches that Dhruv and I did together, and that led to *Little Things*. That's my journey.

**Are you as quirky and mad as your characters? (Laughs) Yes! Absolutely.**

**You live with your grandparents who didn't really approve**

“

*My grandfather once told me that you are becoming Jack of all trades and master of none, so better be focussed on one thing. But I think it's good because I get to do everything unabashedly*

”

of your acting career. How did you get them to come around?

My grandfather knew I had it in me to do something in the performing arts space. But he wasn't sure of this space. So his way of protecting me was by not letting me get into it. Also I didn't have a mentor or a godfather or any reference to showbiz. I had to sit him down and tell him that even if it didn't work out, I should at least be given a chance. He reluctantly agreed but was confused. He said he knew I was acting but asked me why wasn't I on television or newspapers. That's the time I had started working with Filter Copy and everything was on YouTube and I had to explain to him that he had to see me



online. Then my 'cup song' went viral which a Marathi news channel covered. When I came home one day he said some family member of ours called him and said that I was in the news. That's when he said 'now you are famous'. We got him a smartphone and a tablet so he could google me. After that he started collecting my interviews and articles. He's my biggest fan now.

**How did the cup song come about?**

I knew I wanted to have fun with those beats popularised by Anna Kendrick in the song *When I'm gone* from *Pitch Perfect* (2013). So I put my singing to use with the beats during my college summer vacation and then put it online. I had no idea about the reaction. Imtiaz Ali, Vicky Kaushal and everyone started sharing the video and soon it blew out of proportion. I met Imtiaz Ali one year after the video was released and he said 'oh you're that girl who did that cup song'. That cup song is special because it put me on the map. Many people thought I was a singer, and then I got introduced as an actor, and the Marathi industry took note of me because of the



*“That year I did not win any of the Marathi debutant awards so I didn't expect one from Filmfare. I thought I'd go, look pretty and come back. But I won”*

song. It opened the floodgates of opportunities for me.

**How do you look back at *Little Things* now that you have done three seasons?**

*Little Things* has been an incredible journey because I don't think there will be anything like that for me, or for anyone who has been associated with

the show. We were literally all starting out, not only as actors, but as writers, DOPs, editors. We have all grown with the show as artists and as human beings.

**Did fatigue set in at any time?**

I think I lack the creativity of thinking how a character can grow from

one season to the other. I just held on to Dhruv and he did everything that was to be done in the writing. What kept our characters Dhruv and Kavya exciting for the audience was they had all the uncomfortable conversations to figure out whether the relationship was working out or not.

**What has been the experience of working in big films and then doing series?**

I absolutely enjoy being in this space where I am not in one category and get to be everywhere. My grandfather once told me that you are becoming Jack of all trades and master of none, so better be focussed on one thing. But I think

it's good because I get to do everything unabashedly.

**How was it working with actors like Dulquer Salman, Irrfan Khan in *Karwaan* and then Kajol and Tanvi Azmi in *Tribhanga*?**

When I first met Kajol I didn't know how to react, because she has

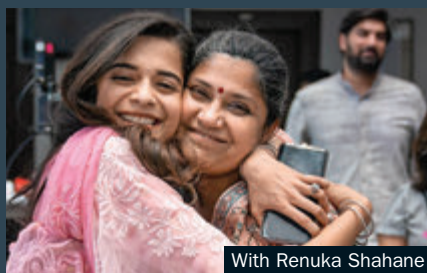
**What are your memories of Irrfan?**

Irrfan sir had this childlike energy and curiosity. I think after *Karwaan* he was to start work on a web show and he was intrigued about the entire space. He often sat me down and asked me about the reach of web content, about how we make our money,

There's nothing like a perfect family. And *Tribhanga* is a good example of how to embrace the oddities. I was very grateful to director Renuka Shahane for my character Masha. Like I wouldn't resonate with Masha's choices but the fact that she could make her choices

*Game*. Then I loved *Killing Eve* because of the way Jodie Comer changes her accent in the blink of an eye. She's a Liverpool girl with a pretty thick English accent and the way she transitions is just amazing. Just the curiosity of languages is making me watch these shows.

Nisha from *Hum Aapke Hain Koun..!* I am a huge fan of the film and have always wanted to play Nisha just to dance in that purple outfit. Another thing on my wishlist is that I want to be in the same frame as Meryl Streep even if it's a tree in the background. Also I would love to be



With Renuka Shahane



*Karwaan*



*Muramba*

*I love my grandparents to death but there are days when we fight and we don't want to speak to each other... There's nothing like a perfect family. And Tribhanga is a good example of how to embrace the oddities*

been my idol when growing up and suddenly I was sharing screen space with her. But she made it so easy with her infectious laughter. It was the same with Irrfan sir. As for DQ (Dulquer), if you are unaware of who he is you won't know that he's a superstar because he is that humble. I was like a child in Disneyland on all these sets soaking in everything. When shooting for *Karwaan* I would go on the sets even when not needed. I just wanted to watch these actors work.

etc, etc. He called me *Binaca Geetmala* because I was always that person on sets singing somewhere. And my range of music would be anything from the '70s to the '90s to anything. He was a special human being.

***Tribhanga* was about a dysfunctional family living with the ghost of the past. Since you come from such a normal family, did the two worlds collide?**

I love my grandparents to death but there are days when we fight and we don't want to speak to each other. Ditto with my mom.

independently to overcome her baggage and to safeguard her insecurities was commendable.

**Five shows or films you have loved in the last couple of years?**

I enjoy watching shows in different languages. That's very aspirational for me because I want to work in different languages. I recently did a Telugu film and after that I was like 'hey I can try more languages.' So which is why it's *Money Heist*, *Call My Agent* (the original) *Sex Education* and *Squid*

**If you were to list out five characters you wanted to play, which ones would they be?**

Fresh on my mind is Jodie Comer's character Villanelle in *Killing Eve*. I've been saying this again and again that I would like to play an assassin like her because the character is so outside of me. Actually I am going to manifest this, and not list any other character right now,

**You could talk about a character from any film you have watched.**

Hmmmm. Then it has to be Madhuri Dixit's character

in a Gulzar *saab* film because his *Ijaazat* was sooo poetic.

**Whom would you like to play in *Ijaazat*... Sudha or Maya?**

My heart is in Maya, as much as I like Rekhaji's character Sudha. The beauty is the way her character is written. And the way *Mera kuchh saamaan* is put in the film is so very special. I remember Gulzar *saab* saying in an interview the reason he likes to write his songs for his films is because he knows where to use them. Suddenly the song became more meaningful. ■

# REMEMBERING BAPPI LAHIRI

DEVESH SHARMA OFFERS A BRIEF PROFILE OF THE PROLIFIC COMPOSER AND SINGER WHO PASSED AWAY RECENTLY

(NOVEMBER 27, 1952–  
FEBRUARY 15, 2022)



Veteran singer and music composer Bappi Lahiri passed away due to multiple health issues on February 15. He was 69 and breathed his last at Juhu’s CritiCare Hospital in Mumbai. He had survived COVID-19 last year but had not been keeping well all this while.

Bappi, who was known as the ‘Disco King’ among the masses, had a penchant for wearing gold jewellery and trademark black glasses. It’s said he idolised Elvis Presley, and was inspired by him to wear multiple gold chains. “I remember once a man refused to accept that I am Bappi Lahiri,” he once said in an interview to *The*

*Times Of India*, “because I was wearing a coat to protect myself from the cold and he couldn’t see my gold chain.”

Bappi was said to be instrumental in making the disco genre popular in India. Some of his hit disco songs include *Mausam hai gaane ka* (*Surakshaa* 1979), *Jimmy jimmy jimmy* (*Disco Dancer*, 1982), *I am a disco dancer* (*Disco Dancer*, 1982), *Yaar bina chain kahan re* (*Saaheb*, 1985), *Zoobi zoobi* (*Dance Dance*, 1987), *Tamma tamma loge* (*Thanedaar*, 1990) and many more.

He had been making music since 1971, both as a singer and a composer. One can say that he has

IT’S SAID THAT HIS FATHER MADE HIM LEARN TABLA WITH MAESTRO SAMTA PRASAD AT THE RECOMMENDATION OF LATA MANGESHKAR



With Anil Kapoor



With Ranveer Singh and Vidya Balan



With Lata Mangeshkar

been active since the days of Dilip Kumar, Dev Anand and Raj Kapoor to the era of Ranbir Kapoor, Ranveer Singh and Varun Dhawan. In between, his songs had been pictured on the likes of Amitabh Bachchan, Jitendra, Rishi Kapoor, Mithun Chakraborty to Govinda, Anil Kapoor, Jackie Shroff, Sanjay Dutt and even Aamir Khan.



With his World Book Of Records certificate



With Shah Rukh Khan

He had also sung playback for a whole gamut of stars as well. As a composer, Bappi was fortunate to have worked with luminaries like Lata Mangeshkar, who treated him like a son, Mohammed Rafi, Asha Bhosle, Kishore Kumar, Manna Dey in Hindi films and P Susheela, Yesudas, SP Balasubramaniam, S Janaki in South Indian movies.

Bappi *da*, as he was popularly known in the film industry, was born as Alokesh Lahiri on November 27, 1952 in Kolkata. Bappi's father Apresh Lahiri and mother Bansari Lahiri were great exponents of classical music and Shayama Sangeet. Bappi was a child prodigy who could play multiple instruments

like tabla, dholak, drums, guitar, piano and even saxophone effortlessly. He started learning music at the age of three and composed his first song at the age of eleven. It's said that his father made him learn tabla with maestro Samta Prasad at the recommendation of Lata Mangeshkar. When he turned 19 in 1971, he came to Mumbai to try his luck in the Hindi film

HE RECEIVED HIS FIRST OPPORTUNITY IN A BENGALI FILM, *DAADU* (1972) AND THE FIRST HINDI FILM FOR WHICH HE COMPOSED MUSIC WAS *NANHA SHIKARI* (1973)



With Salman Khan

music scene. He received his first opportunity in a Bengali film, *Daadu* (1972) and the first Hindi film for which he composed music was *Nanha Shikari* (1973). The film which established him in Bollywood was Tahir Husain's Hindi film, *Zakhmee* (1975), for which he composed music and doubled as a playback singer. Bappi completed 50 years in Bollywood and

is said to have 625 films to his credit jointly as a composer and a singer. He also marked his presence in Hollywood, what with his songs being used in films like *Lion*, *You Don't Mess With The Zohan*, *Moana*, *Will To Live* and *Witness to Murder*. The young generation took to his music in a big way, thanks to remixes like *Tamma tamma* again from



With Usha Mangeshkar and Anandji



With David Dhawan



With Govinda



With Moon Moon Sen

**BAPPI WON THE FILMFARE AWARD FOR SHARAABI (1984) AND WAS LATER AWARDED WITH THE FILMFARE LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD IN 2018**



With Sanjay Leela Bhansali and Chitragda Singh

*Badrinath Ki Dulhania* and *Ooh la la* from *The Dirty Picture*.

**B**appi was accused of plagiarism all his life and in his interviews defended it saying every musician and composer took inspiration from somewhere else. Ironically, Bappi Lahiri sued musician Dr Dre for copying his track *Kaliyon ka chaman* from *Jyoti* (1981) for the song *Addictive* from the album *Truth Hurts*, and won the copyright case. Incidentally, it's said that the song *Chidiya chon chon*, sung by Kishore Kumar from the same is based on *Marianne* by famous calypso singer and composer Roaring Lion.

In Bengali cinema he's known for the music he

composed for Prosenjit starrers. It started with *Amar Sangi* (1987) whose song *Chirodini Tumi je aamar*, sung by Kishore Kumar and Asha Bhosle, became a love anthem of sorts and is still hugely popular today. Prosenjit posted a video where he sang a few lines of the song in Bappi's honour, after his death. His Bengali hits include *Ogo Bodhu*

*Shundori* (1981), *Guru Dakshina* (1987), *Asha O Bhalobasha* (1989), *Bolidaan* (1990), *Tomar Naam Likhe Debo* (1992) and many more.

Besides Hindi and Bengali, Bappi had a flourishing career in the Telugu industry as well. His Telugu compositions were mostly picturised on Chiranjeevi and Mohan Babu. Bappi has given

music for hit Telugu movies like *Simhasanam* (1986), *Thene Manasulu* (1986), *State Rowdy* (1989), *Rowdy Gaari Pellam* (1991), *Gang Leader* (1991), *Rowdy Alludu* (1991), *Rowdy Inspector* (1992), *Brahma*, *Big Boss* and many more. He also composed music for some Kannada films like *Africadalli Sheela* (1986), *Krishna Nee Begane Baro* (1986) and *Police Mattu Dada* (1991). He had a brief foray into Tamil films as well, composing songs for films like *Apoorva Sahodarigal* (1983) and *Paadum Vanampaadi* (1985).

Bappi won the Filmfare Award for *Sharaabi* (1984) and was later awarded with the Filmfare Lifetime Achievement Award in 2018. He had won the



With Family



IN BENGALI CINEMA HE'S KNOWN FOR THE MUSIC HE COMPOSED FOR PROSENJIT STARRERS. IT STARTED WITH *AMAR SANGI* (1987), WHOSE SONG *CHIRODINI TUMI JE AAMAR*, BECAME A LOVE ANTHEM OF SORTS



With Ranveer Singh



With AR Rahman



With Subhash Ghai and Poonam Dhillon

Golden Lotus Award – Best film at the National Awards, for producing the film *Lal Darja* (1997), directed by Buddhadev Dasgupta. He was also the recipient of Sangeet Samrat Award, and several Silver Jubilee and Golden Jubilee trophies for the films like *Namak Halaal*, *Disco Dancer*, *Sharaabi*, *Himmatwala*, *Toofan*, *Thanedaar*, *Chalte Chalte* and many more. He entered the Limca Book of World Records for recording over 180 songs for 33 films in 1986.

Besides his illustrious film career, he has also done commendable private work. He has collaborated with international artistes like Samantha Fox , Boy

George, Snoop Dogg , MC Hammer, Akon and more. He also composed songs on Bharat Ratna Shri. Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Bharat Ratna Dr. Ambedkar. His short film *Slum Stars* won the Best Short Film award at the International Film and Entertainment Festival Australia (IFEFA).

The composer was popular in the TV circuit for judging the singing reality show, *Sa Re Ga Ma Pa*. In 2006, he judged *Sa Re Ga Ma Pa* alongside Alka Yagnik and Abhijeet. In 2007, he appeared as a judge on *Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Challenge*. Apart from that, he was seen making guest

appearances in several other talent shows as well. In 2020, Indian Idol paid a tribute to Bappi da for the completion of 50 years in the industry.

He's survived by his

wife Chitrani, daughter Rema, son Bappa and two grandsons. Bappi is no longer there with us in flesh but will forever remain with us through his songs and films... ■

# PERFECT PARTNERSHIPS

**DEVESH SHARMA** EXPLORES **BAPPI LAHIRI'S** COLLABORATIONS WITH SINGERS SUCH AS KISHORE KUMAR, LATA MANGESHKAR, ASHA BHOSLE AND YESUDAS

**B**appi Lahiri formed formidable partnerships with different singers. He was related to legendary Kishore Kumar, who was his maternal uncle. In fact, Bappi *da* made his acting debut in Kishore's *Badhti Ka Naam Dadhi* (1974). Bappi played a character called Bhopu in the madcap comedy. It's said Kishore Kumar's last song, *Guru guru*, was recorded by Bappi just a day before Kishore died. Bappi was reportedly hugely upset by his uncle's death and even thought of quitting films. However, better sense prevailed and he went back to composing. Bappi benefited a lot from Kishore's versatility, especially when it came to rendering the numbers of South remakes like *Himmatwala* (1983), *Maqsad* (1984), *Bewafai*



Bappi Lahiri with Lata Mangeshkar and Kishore Kumar



Disco Dancer

**BAPPI WAS REPORTEDLY UPSET WITH HIS UNCLE KISHORE KUMAR'S DEATH AND EVEN THOUGHT OF QUITTING FILMS**

(1985) and many more. *Sharaabi* (1984) remains their most talked about album, where Kishore sang a *ghazal* like *Intehan ho gayi intezaar ki* on one hand a comedy song like *Jahan char yaar* on the other.

Lata Mangeshkar knew him since he was two. He used to call her Ma and was devastated when she passed away some days before him. She supported him throughout his career and in fact sang in his first Bengali film *Daadu* (1974). Lata Mangeshkar is often called the queen of melody and perhaps keeping that sobriquet in mind, Bappi Lahiri composed many soft, lilting melodies for her in films like *Zakhmee* (1975), *Chalte Chalte* (1976), *Aangan Ki Kali* (1979) and many, many more.

Bappi is often called the King of Disco and one singer who helped him reach that lofty status was Asha Bhosle. He gave her many disco numbers in films like *Namak Halaal*

**LATA MANGESHKAR IS OFTEN CALLED THE QUEEN OF MELODY AND PERHAPS KEEPING THAT SOBRIQUET IN MIND, BAPPI LAHIRI COMPOSED MANY SOFT, LILTING MELODIES FOR HER IN FILMS LIKE ZAKHMEE, CHALTE CHALTE AND AANGAN KI KALI**



**KISHORE KUMAR HITS BY BAPPI LAHIRI**

→ **Jalta hai jiya mera bheegi bheegi raaton mein**

Movie: *Zakhmee* (1975)  
Lyrics: Gauhar Kanpuri  
Co-singer: Asha Bhosle

Lyrics: Amit Khanna

→ **Ke pag ghungroo**

Movie: *Namak Halaal* (1982)  
Lyrics: Anjaan

→ **Chalte chalte**

Movie: *Chalte Chalte* (1976)  
Lyrics: Amit Khanna

→ **Thodi si jo pi li hai**

Movie: *Namak Halaal* (1982)  
Lyrics: Anjaan

→ **Ye naina ye kajal**

Movie: *Dil Se Mile Dil*  
Lyrics: Amit Khanna

→ **Manzilein apni jagah hain**

Movie: *Sharaabi* (1984)  
Lyrics: Prakash Mehra

→ **Chahiye thoda pyar**

Movie: *Lahu Ke Do Rang* (1979)  
Lyrics: Faruk Kaiser

→ **Inteha ho gayi**

Movie: *Sharabi* (1984)  
Lyrics: Anjaan

→ **Haan pehli baar**

Movie: *Aur Kaun?* (1979)

→ **Kya khabar kya pata**

Movie: *Saaheb* (1985)  
Lyrics: Anjaan



**YESUDAS HITS BY BAPPI LAHIRI**

→ **Maana ho tum behad haseen**

Movie: *Toote Khilone* (1978)  
Lyrics: Kaifi Azmi

→ **Teri choti si ik bhool**

Movie: *Shikshaa* (1979)  
Lyrics: Gauhar Kanpuri

→ **Zid na karo**

Movie: *Lahu Ke Do Rang* (1979)  
Lyrics: Faruk Kaiser

→ **Char din ki chandni hai**

Movie: *Ek Baar Kaho* (1980)  
Lyrics: Maya Govind

→ **Shyam ranga rang re**

Movie: *Apne Paraye* (1980)  
Lyrics: Yogesh

→ **Dheere dheere subah hui**

Movie: *Haisiyat* (1984)  
Lyrics: Indeevar



*Chalte Chalte*



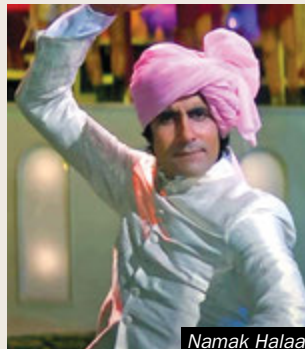
*Sharaabi*



*Lahu Ke Do Rang*



*Zakhmee*



*Namak Halaal*



*Apne Paraye*



**LATA MANGESHKAR HITS BY BAPPI LAHIRI**

- **Aao tumhe chand pe le jayen**  
Movie: Zakhmee (1975)  
Lyrics: Gauhar Kanpuri
- **Dur dur tum rahe**  
Movie: Chalte Chalte (1976)  
Lyrics: Amit Khanna
- **Pyaara ek bangla ho**  
Movie: Aap Ki Khatir (1977)  
Lyrics: Shaily Shailendra
- **Doob raha hai mera dil**  
Movie: Tootte Khilone (1978)  
Lyrics: Kaifi Azmi
- **Saiyyan bina ghar soona**  
Movie: Aangan Ki Kali (1979)  
Lyrics: Shaily Shailendra
- **Zid na karo**  
Movie: Lahu Ke Do Rang (1979)  
Lyrics: Faruk Kaiser
- **Thoda resham lagta hai**  
Movie: Jyoti (1981)  
Lyrics: Anand Bakshi
- **Bheega bheega mausam**  
Movie: Suraag (1982)  
Lyrics: Kaifi Azmi
- **Naino mein sapna**  
Movie: Himmatwala (1983)  
Lyrics: Indeevar  
Co-singer: Kishore Kumar
- **Hum apni wafa yaad**  
Movie: Bewafai (1985)  
Lyrics: Hasan Kamal
- **Milne se pehle bichad jaaye**  
Movie: Aag Hi Aag (1987)  
Lyrics: Anjaan
- **Maahiya teri kasam**  
Movie: Ghayal (1990)  
Lyrics: Anjaan  
Co-singer: Pankaj Uddhas



Bewafai



Tootte Khilone



Ghayal



**ASHA BHOSLE HITS BY BAPPI LAHIRI**

- **Raat baaki, baat baaki**  
Movie: Namak Halaal (1982)  
Lyrics: Anjaan
- **Jawani jaaneman haseneen dilruba**  
Movie: Namak Halaal (1982)  
Lyrics: Anjaan
- **Disco station disco**  
Movie: Haathkadi (1982)  
Lyrics: Majrooh Sultanpuri
- **Taki o taki**  
Movie: Himmatwala (1983)  
Lyrics: Indeevar  
Co-singer: Kishore Kumar
- **Mujhe naulakha manga de re**  
Movie: Sharaabi (1984)  
Lyrics: Anjaan
- **De de pyaar de**  
Movie: Sharaabi (1984)  
Lyrics: Anjaan
- **Kisi nazar ko tera**  
Movie: Aitbaar (1985)  
Lyrics: Hasan Kamal  
Co-singer: Bhupinder
- **Tuku tuku pyar karoongi**  
Movie: Saaheb (1985)  
Lyrics: Anjaan
- **Nakko baba nakko baba**  
Movie: Gair Kanooni (1988)  
Lyrics: Indeevar  
Co-singer: Bappi Lahiri
- **Pyar kabhi kam nahi karna**  
Movie: Prem Pratigya (1989)  
Lyrics: Indeevar

(1982), *Haathkadi* (1982) but didn't just limit her to disco songs or item numbers. He gave her a *ghazal* as well in *Aitbaar* (1985). Bappi loved to use Asha for his solo songs and it's her punchy numbers always stood apart from the context of the film and have remained popular till now.

Thanks to being associated with disco, people kind of forget that Bappi was classically trained. One singer who pushed him to compose *raag*-based tunes was Yesudas. The South maestro is known for

his intricate *murkis* and *harkats* even while singing a simple song and the duo came up with some catchy earworms in films like *Toote Khilone*, *Haisyat*, *Ek Baar Kaho* and many more. Listening to his songs with Yesudas provides us with another side of Bappi, one which was more in sync with SD Burman than RD Burman, the man he was unfortunately always compared with. Bappi perhaps was the connection between the old and the new, and through remixes and covers, continues to gather new fans even today. ■

# your say

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

## INSTA LIKE

### Medley of moments

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



@aliaabhatt: The magic of movies is now 100% 🎬  
*Alia Bhatt blew our minds away with her performance in Gangubai Kathiawadi. All hail the queen!*



@tarasutaria: Desert 🏜️ daze  
*Tara Sutaria managed to make the desert hotter in this frame. Sizzling...*



@iamhumaq: Fun at the Press Meet #Hyderabad #Valimai... Thank you to all the wonderful people of Hyderabad... Now Chennai bound... Who is watching the First Day First Show with me ??? Raise ur hands please ❤️  
*Huma Qureshi made heads turn at the Valimai promotions. The film's minting money at the box-office, last we heard...*



@rohanshrestha: The Love Story Lehenga 4.0 lehenga beautifully plays on the concept of 3D. Layers of green silk organza, covered in beading like a glass house. Crystals, beads, pearls... colors in blush, lavender, rainbow and glass. The story is brought to life with 3D flowers growing across the lehenga as they would in a rose garden.



*Doesn't Shraddha Kapoor look gorgeous in this picture? She's a heartstopper alright.*

@aslisona: 🏍️ danger ladki  
*Sonakshi Sinha's biker chick avatar is truly badass. We're loving it.*



*Newlyweds Sheetal Thakur and Vikrant Massey make for the most adorable couple.*

@Vikrantmassey: ✨ सात सालों का ये सफ़र आज सात जन्मों में बदल गया।

इस सफ़र में हमारा साथ देने के लिए बहुत बहुत शक्रिया। 🙏❤️🌟

शीतल एवं विक्रान्त  
18.02.2022.

Readers send in

their feedback pg 56

Shatrughan Sinha's

racy rejoinders pg 58



# IN THE MAIL

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



Golden voiced: Lata Mangeshkar

**1st Prize**  
₹1500

## LATA FOREVER

Though fans like me never knew her personally, we all felt like we've lost a close family member when news of Lata Mangeshkar's demise came through. My mother has the habit of putting on the radio early in the morning and going to sleep listening to old Hindi songs late at night. So me and my brother have literally grown up surrounded by Lata's voice. And that voice is going to stay with us forever.

Kanchana Pant, Dehradun

**2nd Prize**  
₹1000

## REMEMBERING THE NIGHTINGALE

Lata Mangeshkar has one of those unforgettable voices, near or far you always seem to find peace in her music. I have been heartbroken with her demise. Her songs seem to have been playing all the more on loop - serving as solace for her absence. The in-depth chronicling of her flourishing career by *Filmfare* in their last issue (February) has indeed been a gift not only for her die-hard fans, but also for the generations to come who will want to be informed about a living legend such as she.

Renu Choudhury, Kolkata

## FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS

My father always keeps telling me how Lata Mangeshkar was more than just the Nightingale of India. At a time when women hardly dared to pave their career path - we had this legendary singer who made the entire nation swoon to her mellifluous tunes. People often underestimate the ability that public figures have in our lives and how their death can leave a void in our life. As for someone like me who is interested in the history of Indian Cinema and its many facets, *Filmfare's* heartfelt ode to the legendary singer in their last issue (February) is truly a gift to be cherished.

Chirag Raghuvanshi, Nashik

## GOODBYE DIDI

I can't believe Lata Mangeshkar is no more with us today. She was indeed a giant whose place can never be filled by anybody. She was the favourite singer for everyone in my family. Her voice suited every kind of song and situation and the depth of calm one felt while listening to her was literally her gift to mankind.

Babli Shrivastava, Prayagraj

## LONG LIVE LATA MANGESHKAR

Lata Mangeshkar's soulful tunes are omnipresent in the world of Indian Cinema. For someone who has grown up listening to her tunes, she and her voice will be missed for generations to come. I thank *Filmfare* for penning down such an emotional and heart-wrenching tribute to the Nightingale of India in their last issue (February). She truly will live on in our hearts forever.

Bhartesh Singh, Revari



Bindas babe: Sonakshi Sinha

## BOLD AND BEAUTIFUL!

I am often empowered by women who cannot be baulked down. They're strong with the first taste of success and stronger with every failure. Precisely why Sonakshi Sinha is one of those actresses whose sharp mind I truly admire. I never miss any of her films and have been waiting for a long time to get some solid information on her upcoming projects. Sonakshi's vivaciousness seemed to be reflecting even more in her interview carried in *Filmfare's* last issue (February). Loved reading her candid replies.

Poonam Arora, Bangalore



Queen of charm: Deepika Padukone

### ALL HAIL THE QUEEN

Deepika Padukone is a reigning queen and there are no second thoughts about that. As a millennial girl who looks up to women who represent poise, elegance, and fierceness - Deepika has been my greatest inspiration. With her latest release - *Gehraiyaan*, whatever little confirmation I needed about her talent was further acknowledged.

Vidya Ahuja, Surat

### NO GUTS, NO GLORY

Versatility is the key to success in today's modern world and Kiara Advani seems to have cracked the code effortlessly. With her easy transition from a girl-next-door to making bold choices by signing films like *Shershaah* - she has come a long way. Her effortless style and gutsy ambitions are a matter-of-interest for a lot of young minds today, and I am no exception! The small listicles on 20 questions with Kiara in your last issue (February) was all things fun. Give us more snippety articles please, *Filmfare*

Sneha Mathews, Panjim



Cutting edge: JJ Valaya

### FASHION PARADE

The concoction of Indian traditions with that of style factors has been ruling the fashion landscape for quite some time now. As a fashion student, keeping an eye out for designers who bends the moulds and surpasses their credibility as niche designers is always a win. JJ Valya and his extravagance painted luxuriously in this couture canvas is a sight for sore eyes. For an aspiring designer, the key is in the details and that is exactly what *Filmfare* served me with in their last issue (February). Valaya's interview gave me an insight into his mind that crafts such opulent designs and that which makes me fall in love with couture even more.

Tia Sharma, Guwahati

### DEPTHS OF DESIRE

Shakun Batra has been my absolute favourite for aeons now. His craft of interlacing emotions with effortless storytelling tugs at my heartstrings like no other. Your latest issue (February) was a must-have for me as soon as I saw the easy camaraderie of the gorgeous cast of *Gehraiyaan* shining on the glossy magazine cover. Not only did it look surreal, but it also looked candid as well and the depths of the characters appealed to me even more after reading their interesting interview.

Ruchi Bhatnagar, Lucknow

### ONE FOR MOTHER EARTH

Bhumi Pednekar is no ordinary Hindi film heroine. If anything, her archetype of being a quintessential Bollywood heroine has been constantly changed and challenged by none other than herself. Her deep commitment towards the well-being of the environment has inspired many. When I read her latest interview in your last issue (February), I was bowled over by her selflessness in wanting to make a difference. She's quite rooted despite being a big star and I hope she remains like this forever.



Talent powerhouse: Bhumi Pednekar

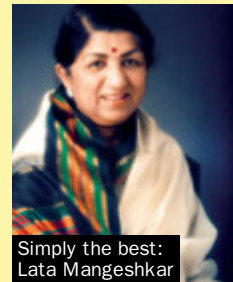
Veer Rastogi, Meerut

### HONESTY IS THE BEST POLICY

With so much content being churned out, I often pick films that truly make me connect with my inner self. Aanand L Rai has always been one of the most stellar directors Bollywood has ever had. Your last issue (February) caught my attention as Aanand L Rai was featured in it. He was candid and honest in his answers and I loved the way he described how he manages to get the desired result from his actors.

Asif Sheikh, Kalyan

## Just one Point



Simply the best: Lata Mangeskar

"I got to learn so much about the legendary life of Lata Mangeskar in your last issue (February).

Thanks *Filmfare* for all the info.

Sameer Rai, Mangalore

*Gehraiyaan* cast weaved magic with their inputs and that head-turner of a cover (February) made my day.

Arya Gunjal, Ratnagiri

Your February Issue had stories on some of the bravest heroines from the industry - from Sonakshi Sinha to Bhumi Pednekar - each interview was so enriching.

Sanober Sikka, Chandigarh

I love *Filmfare's* fashion coverage. JJ Valaya's interview in your last issue (February) was sublime indeed. Keep up the good work.

Jhilmil Basu, New Delhi

Thank you *Filmfare* for your beautiful ode to Lata Mangeskar in your last issue (February). It is a gift to all her well-wishers and greatest admirers.

Rahat Sheikh, Ahmedabad

Post your reviews to



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PHOTOGRAPH: MEETESH TANEJA

# Shatrughan Sinha's Rapid fire

**When were you most nervous, while facing the camera for the first time, at the time of getting married or entering politics?**

**Atul Tankha, Ratlam**

When I was getting married I knew I was going to get roasted. As far as politics is concerned, not me but the other politicians were nervous that I was entering their field.

**Hindi films heroines take time in deciding for marriage, like Katrina Kaif, unlike the heroes, like Vicky Kaushal. Comment.**

**Atul Tankha, Ratlam**

Not necessarily, it all depends on our destiny. In any case Katrina's beauty appeals to everyone so it's

**A new wave of cinema emerged in the '70s and the films like *Chetna*, *Doraha*, *Mere Apne* etc were liked by the public immensely. What is your opinion on these parallel movies, which can primarily be attributed to Pune Film Institute. Who inspired you to be part of such cinema?**

**Rajesh Ranga, New Delhi**

That era was different. The filmmakers, the audience were open to change. And we were fortunate enough to be part of that change. I've always been inspired by the great showman Raj Kapoor. And from the film institute it's none other than the great teacher Roshan Taneja, whom I consider as my ultimate guru.



**Inspiring: *Jai Bhim***



**Mass entertainer: *Pushpa***

a no-brainer that Vicky Kaushal didn't want to wait it out.

**If God were to grant you one boon what would be your fervent wish?**

**Dr C Janardhan Singh, Hyderabad**

Besides the good old childhood days, name fame and money would be the priority.

**What are your biggest strengths?**

**Subhash Chand, Chandigarh**

Confidence, strong will power, sharp memory, and of course, my family.

**Can you give one good reason to believe in God?**

**Neeraj Sabharwal, Chandigarh**

Our existence itself is the biggest reason. By the way, can you give me one good reason not to believe in God?

**The golden queen of melody, Lata Mangeshkar, passed away recently but we didn't see many female actresses paying tribute to the legend. That's sad indeed. What do you have to say about that?**

**MD Salim, Kolkata**

Please understand that

covid protocols are still in place. What's the point of gathering in large numbers while the pandemic still prevails? The whole nation is grieving for Lataji. It doesn't matter if someone hasn't done so publicly. We're all praying for her in our hearts.

**Lata Mangeshkar. How would you describe the singing miracle in just one sentence ?**

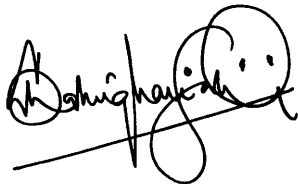
**Anil R Torne, Pune**

Phenomenal, magical, exceptional, and a gift from God in true sense.

**Lata Mangeshkar the Nightingale of India passed away recently. Please comment.**

**Amit Jain, New Delhi**

She was a Bharat Ratna in true sense. A hugely talented individual and a gem of a human being. Her songs will live on forever. We shall always be indebted to her for her tremendous body of work. Her voice will continue to enthral fans in generations to come. I had the fortune of recording a song in her company and those





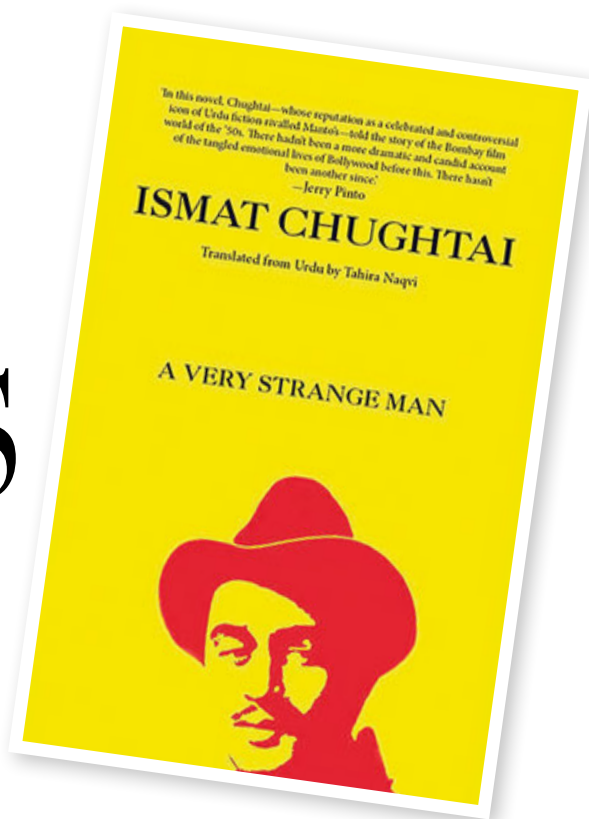
# LOVE & OTHER THIRSTS

**O**n a second rereading of Ismat Chughtai's *A Very Strange Man* on the turbulent life and times of Guru Dutt, I'm inclined to believe the book is as much as an exposition of dark human also has a misogynistic streak. So Guru Dutt is Dharam Dev, Waheeda Rehman is Zarina Jamal, Geeta Dutt is Mangala. One of Dharam Dev's close confidants keeps referring to Jamila in a derogatory manner, even Mangala is shown as conniving and foul mouthed despite being vulnerable. Make no mistake it's a very readable book and Tahira Naqvi who's translated it from Urdu to English has done a commendable job. But certain transliterations jar a lot. The similar problem I had with Naqvi's english rendering of Chughtai's *Masooma*.

How much can a man and woman fall to the boondocks in

love? Through a haze of alcohol and other addictive substances, besides numbing the brains it also shatters their spirit. Chughtai says those involved in the story couldn't pick up the pieces and heal because their souls had become "shards of glass". Guru Dutt is shown as wilful, mercurial person not able to handle either genius or his excesses and yes a man madly in love. In our extreme deification of Dutt, we must realise the ones who have been vilified and wronged are Waheeda Rehman and Geeta Dutt.

Mangala in the book falls prey to many substances and her dalliance with a young man Farid who once called her "aunty" makes you wince. It also appears to me that those who swore by Dutt and other loyalists have provided fodder for this novel which was first released in 1970.



Chughtai's writing is sharp and trenchant. Her observation of the industry is probably fuelled by her own experiences that she saw. Her husband Shaheed Latif who was the allegedly the ghost director on *Baharen Phir Bhi Aayengi* was at the receiving end of Dutt's temper too.

It's by all accounts a very readable and gossipy tale of heartbreak. Minus empathy. A sneaking feeling that a radical novelist who empowered generations of women could have shown more sensitivity while etching out the tragedy of Geeta or how unfair history has been to Waheeda ji. Life in tinsel town is inexorably

sad. Some will always be more sinned against than sinning.

They say memory changes with every retelling. And that's perhaps true of this book as well. It'll make you believe that the gods and giants of tinseltown were all too human and were as prone to frailties as you and me.

In retrospect, that isn't a bad thing at all. Guru Dutt in his films showed we're not heroes or villains but mere clay in the hands of time, constantly being moulded. He would perhaps approve of the different interpretations of his persona...

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