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May, 2022

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TWO HOT TO HANDLE

AYUSHMANN KHURRANA
AND ANDREA KEVICHUSA ALL SET
TO WOW THE AUDIENCE

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MAKE-UP: SANJAY YADAV
Suit: Ermenegildo Zegna
Neckpieces: Drip Project.Co

ANDREA KEVICHUSA: STYLIST: NEETU BHARDWAJ | HAIR: KRUTIKA JAIN
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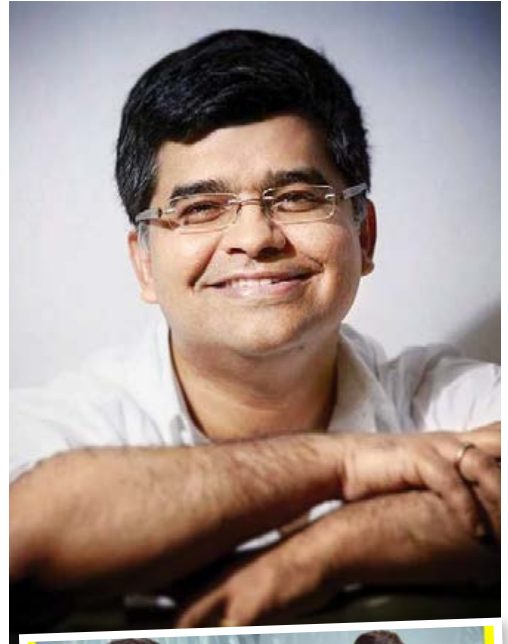
Man for all seasons

It's a bit of a mystery as to why John Abraham chose Ayushmann Khurrana to star in *Vicky Donor* (2012), his first ever film as a producer. He should be lauded for trusting his instincts by betting on a rank newcomer to star in a film about an alpha male sperm donor. It was a risky move for the former Radio Jockey and TV compere. He was boldly going where no one had gone before. Thankfully, the gamble paid off and he emerged as the thinking woman's sex symbol.

There are stars and there are actors. That was more or less the demarcation in our films, which is blurring these days. Ayushmann's immense popularity both as a star and as a performer has contributed to the lines being redrawn. He never shies away from a challenge. In *Dum Laga Ke Haisha*, for instance, he played a man who at first isn't happy with his overweight partner but later begins to appreciate the person she is. In *Badhaai Do*, he played the elder son of the family who can't understand how and why his parents are becoming parents again in their late middle age. In *Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan*, he endeared himself to the LGBTQ community by playing a gay character who helps the parents of his partner face their son's reality. And he took his popularity with the community a notch higher by playing a straight man falling in love with a trans woman in *Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui*. It was perhaps the riskiest movie of his career and Ayushmann did it fully knowing the consequences. It's an indicator of the changing nature of our society that his performance got appreciated.

It isn't that he's only acted in cause-based films. *Andhadhun*, said to be his biggest commercial release till date, was a modern-noir film where he played a blind pianist who somehow got entangled with a murderous crowd. *Bareilly Ki Barfi* was a romantic comedy where he was trying to woo Kriti Sanon's character under false pretences. And in another comedy, *Gulabo Sitabo*, he shared the screen with the giant called Amitabh Bachchan and won plaudits for the confidence he displayed in their confrontation scenes.

Article 15, directed by Anubhav Sinha, has been his most hard-hitting film yet. The film revolved around caste politics. He played a young ACP who tries to make sense of the caste discrimination around him, even as he investigates the rape and murder of two young girls. The film pointed out that we're all equal in the eyes of law and there should be no place for hate crimes in our country. He has teamed up with Anubhav Sinha again to bring *Anek*, a film about the North East. He plays an undercover cop in the film, who is chosen to bring peace to a turbulent region. It's a much neglected place, full of political strife. As seen from the trailer, the point that the film is making is that we've led ourselves to be divided on the basis of language and regionality and should now learn to become Indians instead, letting go of our biases and prejudices. It's a noble thought indeed. Ayushmann, who's on our cover this month, discusses *Anek* and more in a soul-searching interview. Turn the pages to know more about the gentleman actor...



Jitesh Pillai

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

masala fix



TRUE BOND!

Salman Khan and Shehnaaz Gill were photographed together while they attended Salman's sister Arpita Khan and her husband Aayush Sharma's Eid celebrations. Among the others who joined the celebration were Deepika Padukone, Ranveer Singh, Karisma Kapoor, Jacqueline Fernandez and Siddharth Malhotra. Shehnaaz is a super fan of Salman Khan and truly adores him. She insisted that he drop her to her car after the party and Salman obliged, much to the delight of the waiting paparazzi. It's said that Salman and Shehnaaz will appear together in *Kabhi Eid Kabhi Diwali*, where she's said to be paired opposite Aayush Sharma.

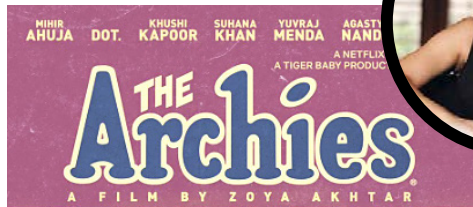
Tiger Shroff keen to join Hollywood? *pg 06*

Kareena Kapoor Khan to make OTT debut with Jaideep Ahlawat and Vijay Varma *pg 08*

PHOTOGRAPH: YOGEN SHAH

Rumours & More

ARCHIE COMICS GIVES A SHOUT OUT TO ZOYA AKHTAR'S THE ARCHIES



Ever since director **Zoya Akhtar** revealed the first look of *The Archies*, congratulations have been pouring in for the cast and crew. The film, an Indian adaptation of Archie Comics characters and stories, will be available on OTT platforms. It also marks the debut of three celebrity children: **Shah Rukh Khan's** daughter **Suhana Khan**, **Sridevi's** younger daughter **Khushi Kapoor**, and **Amitabh Bachchan's** grandson **Agastya Nanda**. Agastya plays Archie in the film, while Khushi plays Betty and Suhana plays Veronica. Archie Comics has given a shoutout too. Archie Comics is one of the world's largest comic book franchises in a world full of superheroes. Since the premiere of the hit show *Riverdale* in 2016, the franchise has grown in popularity. Archie Comics praised the Bollywood adaptation, saying, "Get ready to take a trip down memory lane." The cast also includes **Mihir Ahuja**, **Dot**, **Yuvraj Menda**, and **Vedang Raina**.

TAAPSEE PANNU CAST OPPOSITE SHAH RUKH KHAN IN DUNKI

It had been quite some time since the rumour mills were suggesting a possible collaboration of **Shah Rukh Khan** and ace filmmaker **Rajkumar Hirani**. Just a few days back the news was indeed confirmed by Shah Rukh Khan himself and the cherry on top was **Taapsee Pannu** coming onboard for the same. Like every other actor, Taapsee went on to share with a leading daily how she was thrilled to receive such a big project. About working with superstar Shah Rukh Khan, she commented, "With Shah Rukh sir, what I was most looking forward to spend that time off-screen with him, where I can just sit in chat with him, because I love his personality beyond his films as well – the wit, the humour, the experience that he has, and the honesty with which he narrates his experiences. I wanted to hear those experiences that he's gone through in those decades of creating what he has created."

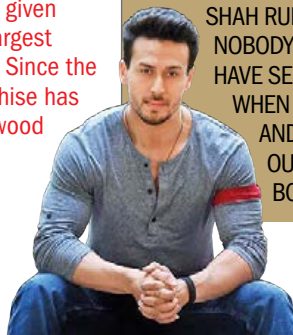


TIGER SHROFF WANTS TO BREAK INTO HOLLYWOOD

Tiger Shroff has established himself as an action star in the Bollywood industry over the years. Recently, Tiger reacted to a comment made by his sister about trying out a Hollywood stint. Responding to the comment, the actor said, "that is my eventual goal". Referring to the kinds of action heroes in Hollywood, the actor explained, "There is a void in terms of a young action hero in the West. It's been a while since you have seen somebody with that skill set, portraying action or the kind of action I do. That is my goal eventually to sort of get into that space and try my luck in the West. So I have been offered a couple of times. I have auditioned and failed a couple of times in auditions, but I am still trying," he said.

HERE ARE TIGER SHROFF'S FAVOURITE BOLLYWOOD ACTION HEROES

RECENTLY, **TIGER SHROFF** WAS ASKED TO NAME THE GREATEST ACTION HERO OF ALL TIME IN BOLLYWOOD. HE FIRST MENTIONED **AMITABH BACHCHAN**, THEN **AKSHAY KUMAR**, AND HIS THIRD CHOICE WAS **SHAH RUKH KHAN**. "I GENUINELY BELIEVE **SHAH RUKH KHAN** SIR IS VERY GOOD WITH HIS BODY, AND NOBODY CAN GET HIT AND REACT AS WELL AS HIM. IF YOU HAVE SEEN HIS FILMS, WHETHER IT'S *DARR* OR *BAAZIGAR*, WHEN HE GETS HIT, HE REALLY REACTS, HE GOES FOR IT AND VERY FEW STUNTMEN ALSO REACT LIKE THAT IN OUR INDUSTRY. HE IS AN ACTOR WHO USES HIS WHOLE BODY SO WELL, IT'S PHENOMENAL." WELL OBSERVED.



SHAHID KAPOOR'S DIGITAL DEBUT FARZI IS ABOUT COUNTERFEITING



Shahid Kapoor will make his digital debut in **Raj** and **DK's** upcoming web series *Farzi*, which also stars **Vijay Sethupathi** and **Raashii Khanna**. The web show, directed by *The Family Man* creators, began production last year. *Farzi* is supposedly set in the world of counterfeit money, with Shahid Kapoor at the centre of the black-market racket which boasts a world of guns, money, bravado, scams, corruption, crime, and dark humour. Shahid expressed his enthusiasm to work with the filmmaking duo, joked that he was chasing them as they also made his favourite show, "I was chasing Raj and DK because they made *The Family Man 1* and *2* which is my favourite show. I was chasing them to cast me after they had cast the legendary **Manoj Bajpayee**," he said. The star had previously hinted at collaborating with Vijay Sethupathi on his debut web series. He uploaded a video of himself and captioned it, "Waiting on set call me soon @rajanddk can't wait to share the frame with @actorvijaysethupathi sorry @raashiikhanna I've got too used to having you around on set."



LATA MANGESHKAR NEVER SANG AT WEDDINGS

WHILE SPEAKING AT THE FIRST **LATA DEENANATH MANGESHKAR** AWARD CEREMONY IN MUMBAI, THE VETERAN SINGER **ASHA BHOSLE**, SHARED AN INCIDENT ABOUT HER LATA *DIDI*. "SOMEONE INVITED US FOR A WEDDING. THEY HAD TICKETS WORTH MILLION DOLLARS OR POUNDS. THEY SAID THEY WANTED ASHA BHOSLE AND LATA MANGESHKAR. DIDI ASKED ME 'WILL YOU SING AT A WEDDING?' I SAID I WON'T AND SHE THEN TOLD THE REP, 'WE WILL NOT SING EVEN IF YOU OFFER 10 CRORE DOLLARS, BECAUSE WE DO NOT SING AT WEDDINGS.' THE PERSON WAS VERY DISAPPOINTED." LATA MANGESHKAR ALWAYS CHAMPIONED THE CAUSE OF SINGERS. SHE MADE SURE THAT THEIR NAME WOULD BE ON THE SONG RECORDS, AND THEY GOT ROYALTY.



AJAY DEVGAN HAS THIS TO SAY ABOUT NYSA'S BOLLYWOOD DEBUT

When it comes to kids with celebrity parents, the question of whether they will follow suit and join the film industry always tends to linger. At present, all eyes are on **Ajay Devgn** and **Kajol's** daughter **Nysa** who turned 19 recently. Is she set to make her Bollywood debut any time soon? Ajay recently shared his thoughts on the subject. The actor said that he sees no compulsion for Nysa to choose a career in the entertainment industry and shared that he doesn't intend to ask his children to follow any path. In another interaction with a leading publication earlier this month, Ajay had said, "I don't know if she wants to come into this line." He added, "To this moment she has shown disinterest. Anything can change anytime with children." Nysa is currently studying International Hospitality in Switzerland at the Glion Institute of Higher Education.

SHEHNAAZ GILL TO MAKE HER BOLLYWOOD DEBUT WITH KABHI EID KABHI DIWALI

Shehnaaz Gill came to the limelight with *Bigg Boss 13* and other notable work in Punjabi movies. The actress will now make her Bollywood debut in the upcoming movie *Kabhi Eid Kabhi Diwali*. She has a strong fandom who cannot wait to see her make her big debut. The movie also stars **Salman Khan**, **Pooja Hegde**, **Kriti Sanon**, and **Aayush Sharma** in lead roles. In the movie, **Shehnaaz Gill** will be reportedly seen opposite Aayush Sharma, Other details of her character have been kept under wraps. *Kabhi Eid Kabhi Diwali* is directed by **Farhad Samji** and is a social family comedy. It will be released on December 30 this year.



KAREENA KAPOOR KHAN TO MAKE OTT DEBUT WITH JAIDEEP AHLAWAT, VIJAY VARMA

This is perhaps the best time for Bollywood A-listers to announce their digital debut. After **Madhuri Dixit Nene** and **Ajay Devgn** recently launched their streaming career with *The Fame Game* and *Rudra: The Edge of Darkness* respectively, **Kareena Kapoor Khan** revealed that she is set to make her OTT debut. The actress is attached to star in a film directed by **Sujoy Ghosh**. The film which also features **Jaideep Ahlawat** and **Vijay Varma** is described as a murder mystery. It's based on the bestselling novel, *The Devotion of Suspect X* by the Japanese author **Keigo Higashino**. Production for the project which will land on a popular streaming platform has begun in Darjeeling. Kareena had earlier shared her thoughts about the mystery film saying, "I can't wait to begin work on this exciting project. It's one that has all the right ingredients... a great story, a visionary director and a super talented cast and crew."

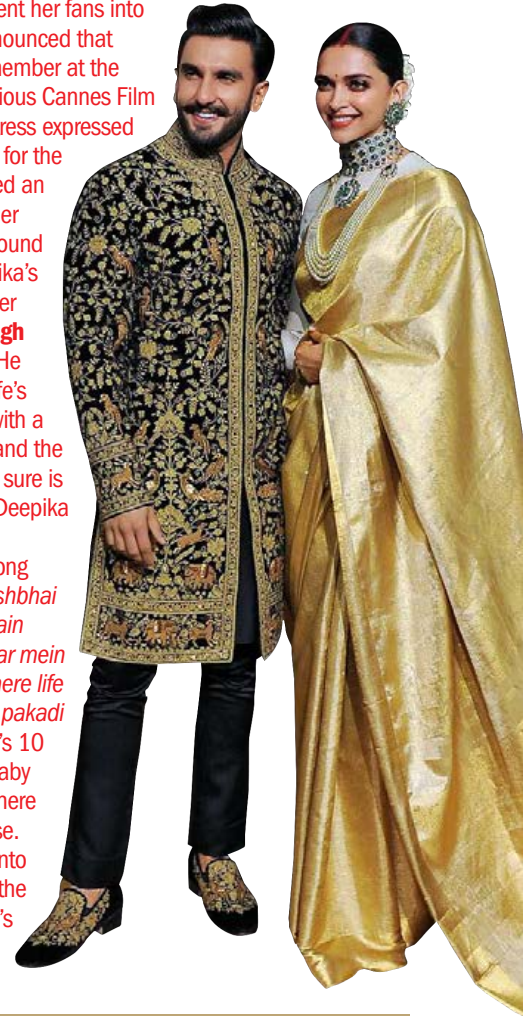


TWINKLE KHANNA'S SHORT STORY SALAAM NONI APPA TO BE ADAPTED INTO A FILM

Twinkle Khanna's career as an actress and a witty writer is about to take yet another interesting turn. The actress is now turning producer for a very special project. A short story from her bestselling book titled *The Legend of Lakshmi Prasad* is up for a movie adaptation. The film will be directed by debut filmmaker **Sonal Dabral**. Talking about the personal story, she said, "*Salaam Noni Appa*, from my second book, loosely based on the relationship between my grandmother and her sister, was first adapted into a lovely play." She took to social media to announce the movie on which she will serve as producer via Mrs. Funnybones Movies with Ellipsis Entertainment and in partnership with Applause Entertainment.

RANVEER SINGH CONGRATULATES DEEPIKA PADUKONE ON BEING PART OF CANNES JURY

Deepika Padukone sent her fans into a frenzy when she announced that she would be a jury member at the upcoming and prestigious Cannes Film Festival 2022. The actress expressed gratitude and humility for the honour, and she shared an official poster with other jury members from around the world. While Deepika's fans were overjoyed, her husband **Ranveer Singh** was equally pleased. He commented on his wife's announcement post with a clapping hand emoji and the words, "Wah." Ranveer sure is the best cheerleader Deepika has. He'd also praised her at the launch of song *Firecracker* from *Jayeshbhai Jordaar*. "Lucky toh main hoon, kyunki mere ghar mein Lakshmi hai. Jab se mere life mein aayi hai, jo patri pakadi hai maine. 2012 so it's 10 years of me and my baby (I am lucky because there is Lakshmi in my house. Ever since she came into my life, I have caught the right track. 2012 So it's 10 years for me and my baby)." Adorable.



KARNESH SSHARMA HIGHLIGHTS THE SIMILARITY BETWEEN BABIL AND HIS FATHER IRRFAN KHAN

THE WORLD TRULY LOST A GEM THE DAY **IRRFAN KHAN** LEFT FOR HIS HEAVENLY ABODE. HIS SON **BABIL** WHO ALSO SHOWED INTEREST IN AN ACTING CAREER IS SOON TO MAKE HIS DEBUT WITH *QALA*, A CLEAN SLATE PRODUCTION. TALKING ABOUT BABIL, PRODUCER **KARNESH SSHARMA** SAID THAT IRRFAN'S SON HAS SIMILAR QUALITIES TO HIS FATHER. "THE RAWNESS THAT IRRFAN HAD, BABIL CARRIES THAT. MY PERSONAL REQUEST TO ALL OF YOU IS THAT LET HIM BE AND LET HIM EXPRESS HIMSELF. HE IS REALLY YOUNG AND HAS A LOT OF PRESSURE ON HIM. A HUMBLE REQUEST WOULD BE TO LET HIM EXPRESS HIMSELF AND ENJOY WHAT HE HAS DONE, RATHER THAN PUTTING PRESSURE." WELL SAID.



F&B

fashion and beauty

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



*"Everything I know is because of cinema.
Our nation survives, consumes, and preys
on cinema" - Karan Torani*

Designer Karan Torani is a self-confessed Hindi cinema buff.
His major influences are all fuelled by Bollywood.



Rooted in TRADITIONS

TANISHA BHATTACHARYA MEETS **KARAN TORANI**, THE DESIGNER KNOWN FOR INCORPORATING MODERN TWISTS TO TRADITIONAL MOTIFS

One upcoming talent in the fashion landscape who has steadfastly taken up bits and pieces of his childhood, deeply entrenched in Sindhi roots, and put together collections worth connecting with is Delhi-based designer Karan Torani. His eternal favourite muse - Bollywood, seems to be deeply embedded as he crafts his tales that converse with his pieces. Previously his 2019 collection - Bazaar Of Love was inspired by Shyam Benegal's drama *Mandi* - which saw a spread of sarees, lehenga cholis, blouses, and kurtas - reminiscent of the vintage charm exuded by leading ladies Shabana Azmi, Neena Gupta, Soni Razdan, Smita Patil in the days of yore. His obsession for '90s Bollywood is quite stoic, as his latest collection Sindhi Tent House



Karan Torani

saw an interactive grid being laid down on social media that sees Bollywood stars like Richa Chaddha, Lillete Dubey, Vijay Varma playing their part in this weddings inspired collection.

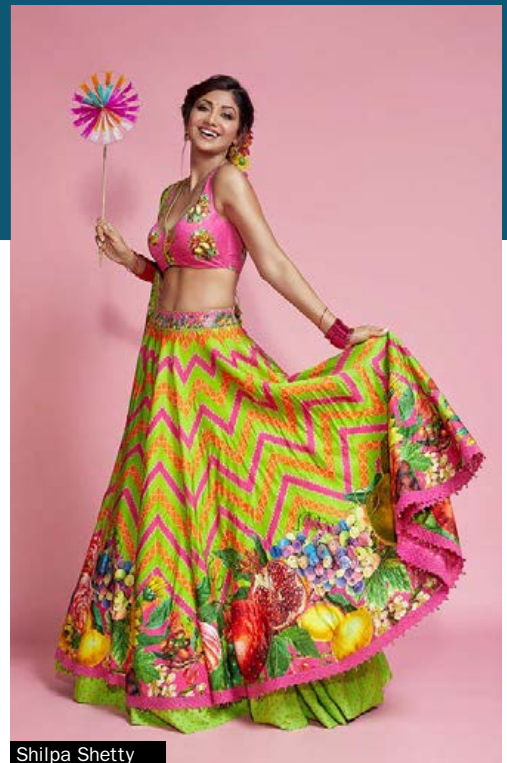
His father was a wedding tent decorator with a shop called Sindhi Tent House in Delhi's Lajpat Nagar around the late

'80s-'90s. "I spent a large part of my childhood around the weddings he decorated and often accompanied him to lighting shops and flower markets," reveals Karan. Like every '90s kid, the magic of *Hum Aapke Hain Koun..!* got to him. He was mesmerised by the celebration of the big fat Indian wedding that the



Madhuri Dixit

In the '90s, every girl wanted to be Madhuri Dixit and kind of dress like her with the blouses scooped like hers. Every boy wanted to be Salman Khan from Hum Aapke Hain Koun..!



Shilpa Shetty



Kiara Advani



Shobita Dhulipala



Shweta Tripathi

There is beauty in pain, there is beauty in love loss and heartbreak, and female sexuality which for me was the beginning of Mandi. The idea was to make sure that fashion was more relatable and more conversational than fluff

film symbolised. And how the film influenced the fashion choices of the masses. “In the ’90s, every girl wanted to be Madhuri Dixit and kind of dress like her with the blouses scooped like hers. Every boy wanted to be Salman Khan from *Hum Aapke Hain Koun..!* and people started wearing the caps from *Maine Pyar Kiya* which had ‘Friends’ written on them.” He used these references for casting of the actors for showcasing his collection. “Richa was heavily inspired by a girl who is a Madhuri Dixit fan and Vijay was inspired by my father. Denzel was inspired by one of my father’s biggest clients ‘Magguji’, who used to give my father a lot of business because he had lots of weddings in the family. Lillete Dubey was inspired by one of my buas who would often



Vijay Varma

come and complain about things.”

He says Sridevi, Madhuri and Karisma were the fashion icons of the ’90s and what they wore on screen definitely influenced the fashion choices of the masses. “Sridevi’s looks from *Chandni*, Madhuri’s from *HAAK*, Karisma’s from *Coolie No 1* will always remain special. If I’m shooting a girl in a white saree, my

immediate response would be, ‘let us style her like Sridevi in *Chandni*’ or if I see somebody with a rose I’d be like oh ‘she looks like Rekha in *Silsila*’. His grandparents migrated from Sindh, Pakistan to India during the Partition. He grew up listening to their stories and says he tries to bring the Sindh culture to the forefront through his designs. A large part of his childhood was spent in Bhopal. It’s his mother’s hometown.

According to him, she’s had a huge role to play behind his decision of telling a story through fashion. “My grandmother would just randomly go to a *haat* in Bhopal which was about block printing and then she would tell me, ‘oh see this is Ajrakh and this is Bagh’. If there is an Orissa *haat* for example she’ll collect little miniatures of wooden crafted sculptures and put them in the house. Her whole house had become like a museum, every carpet was woven, something was from Kashmir, something was from Telangana, and the sarees were from Chanderi, which eventually became

my inspiration. My inquisitiveness was given a lot of love and there was an effort to teach me. She made me a better person and a better designer simply by engaging so much with me,” he recalls. The talk veers to his Bazaar Of Love collection which was inspired by Shyam Benegal’s *Mandi*. He was tired of the classist norms and wanted to move the conversation to somewhere else. “We are a country that also comes from poverty, sexism, patriarchy and so many other issues which can be addressed through our medium of fashion. There is beauty in pain, there is beauty in love loss and heartbreak,

F INTERVIEW

and female sexuality which for me was the beginning of the *Mandi*. The idea was to make sure that fashion was more relatable and more conversational than fluff,” he explains.

He incorporated the colours, styles, fabrics, and silhouettes of *Mandi* and the era in which it is set into his collection. There was a lot of visual referencing from the film itself. He recreated the iconic hair curls, the big *bindi*, and the paan tainted mouth. Loud and contrasting colours were the order of the day. “We scooped out the kind of *cholis* that were extremely bold and sexy with a deep neckline. The pleats and the fabrics were also very well thought out in terms of the era they belonged to. I didn’t want it to look too modern, but if the business aspect of it allows me, we are eventually selling fashion that is for the future and the new generation. So sometimes we take a little liberty to make it sexier, add newer fabrics or more layers,” adds Karan.

His bralettes from the collection, embroidered with gold embroidery, became bestsellers. “We came up with an array of golds and highly reflective

sarees which were a big thing in the 80s. To do those with bikini blouses and vibrant gold, almost making them like Egyptian goddesses. Their popularity kind of reinstated my faith in the cycle of fashion where you bring back stories and trends and make them relevant again for people to wear them.”

We’ve seen Kiara Advani, Vidya Balan, Sanya Malhotra, Shilpa Shetty, Madhuri Dixit, Deepika Padukone wearing his designs. Karan says it gives him great pride and satisfaction seeing Bollywood divas being styled in his ensembles.

“Everything I know is because of cinema. Our nation survives, consumes, and preys on cinema. You have all the stars and especially the retro ones like Madhuri, someone who I had grown up with feels like a full-circle moment. It feels special that your effort in bringing something authentic is being recognized and here is hoping there is more of it and we hopefully get a chance to style a film someday,” he gushes. His heart is set towards styling Rekha, as he considers her as the ultimate muse. “I think there is nothing above and beyond Rekha



Sridevi's looks from Chandni, Madhuri's from HAAK, Karisma's from Coolie No 1 will always remain special. If I'm shooting a girl in a white saree, my immediate response would be 'let us style her like Sridevi in Chandni'



Richa Chaddha

simply because there are hundreds and thousands of reasons and love letters, mood boards and stories, and a personal love affair that I probably share in my mind. I feel that our language of stories in design is something that she would identify with herself,” asserts Karan. His creations have been worn by Shefali Shah in *Human*, Rani Mukerji in *Bunty Aur Babli 2*, and Tabu and Janhvi Kapoor in their upcoming films. “It’s extremely gratifying, that the makers of these films have found semblance with what we are making

to style characters with. We also want to contribute to the personalities of the characters as I think clothes speak more about you than you do yourself. Like I said we’re hoping to style a full feature film or a series for me to probably explore in that direction.”

Sanjay Leela Bhansali’s films are also a big inspiration for him. “All SLB films, right from *Devdas* to *Gangubai Kathiawadi* have been extremely special for me and also exciting. So for me, inspiration would be reimagining *Gangubai* in a series of white sarees that

I would make or reimagining Paro and Chandramukhi in a series of looks that were never seen on screen but I imagined them as such. It will be such a meaty experience to play with your craft and go all the way to create something magical,” he shares. He certainly wants to costume for a Sanjay Bhansali film in the future. “It has to be an epic saga of some kind that enthrals me in the process. So one only hopes and dreams that it is a Sanjay Leela Bhansali film, I am putting it out in the universe for it to manifest...” Amen to that. ■

exclusives

what's on their mind?

RIGHT CAUSE

I am very proud of *Anek*. It's important and special. I remember when I did *Article 15*, I put this post on Instagram that said *Article 15* is one of the most important films... Today I want to say that *Anek* is one of the most important films

- AYUSHMANN KHURRANA

Not only are people from my region discriminated against based on where we come from and what we look like, but we are also homogenised into one community despite being extremely diverse. I hope the movie will be able to change that

- ANDREA KEVICHUSA

Both Ayushmann Khurrana and Andrea Kevichusa feel *Anek* will shed light on the North East and make the masses more aware of the beautiful region which has been mired in political conflict.

PHOTOGRAPH: KUNAL GUPTA



PHOTOGRAPHS: KUNAL GUPTA
AYUSHMANN:
STYLIST: ISHA BANSALI
HAIR: MOHAMED JAVED
MAKE-UP: SANJAY YADAV
Jacket: Siddhartha Tytler
Shoes: Melissa Shoes India

ANDREA:
STYLIST: NEETU BHARDWAJ
HAIR: KRUTIKA JAIN
MAKE-UP: ALISHA MONTERO

THE NON CONFORMIST

JITESH PILLAI

**ENGAGES IN A
CONVERSATION WITH**

**AYUSHMANN
KHURRANA**

**WHERE THEY TALK
ABOUT**

**UNITY IN
DIVERSITY,**

**LGBTQ
COMMUNITY,
MESSAGE-BASED
FILMS AND MORE...**

Suit: Pawan Sachdeva
Thick chain: Hifyer Jewels
Thin chain: Drip Project. Co



SOME ACTORS GET INTO THE SKIN OF A CHARACTER, AND THEN THERE ARE SOME WHO PLUMB THE SOUL OF A CHARACTER.

It's almost as if you can see the eddies and current churning within. Ayushmann Khurrana is that kind of actor. He interiorises his performances, and there's everything on display. The hurt, the angst, the healing. He's really the complete package.

Just when you think he embodies the middle class boy next door with his breezy romances, he takes up cause-based issues, be it *Article 15*, *Shubhmangal Zyaada Saavdhan*, or the more recent *Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui*. His latest outing, *Anek*, is about inclusivity and how regions separate human beings from one another. Pertinent in today's times with growing anarchy and communal forces making all the inappropriate noises. Does language bind us together or take us far away from the language of love and harmony?

And with Ayushmann toplining a project, you know it will be of a certain standard and sensibility. To call him a changeling artiste would be reducing him to a cliché, but he's all that and more. He defies categorisation. He's like water seamlessly taking the shape of the vessel he's in. Be it Shoojit Sircar, Abhishek Kapoor, or Anubhav Sinha, like the strings of the sitar, he can be tuned to fit into the rhythm and harmony. Watching him perform with these makers is like watching a *jugalbandi* of exalted stature. There is emotion, there is pain, and there is engagement. It's this engagement that makes him show his soul to you. He won't turn away from the truth, no matter how much it hurts. That's why Ayushmann will also be able to show every single time how it's done right. Excerpts from a one-on-one conversation:

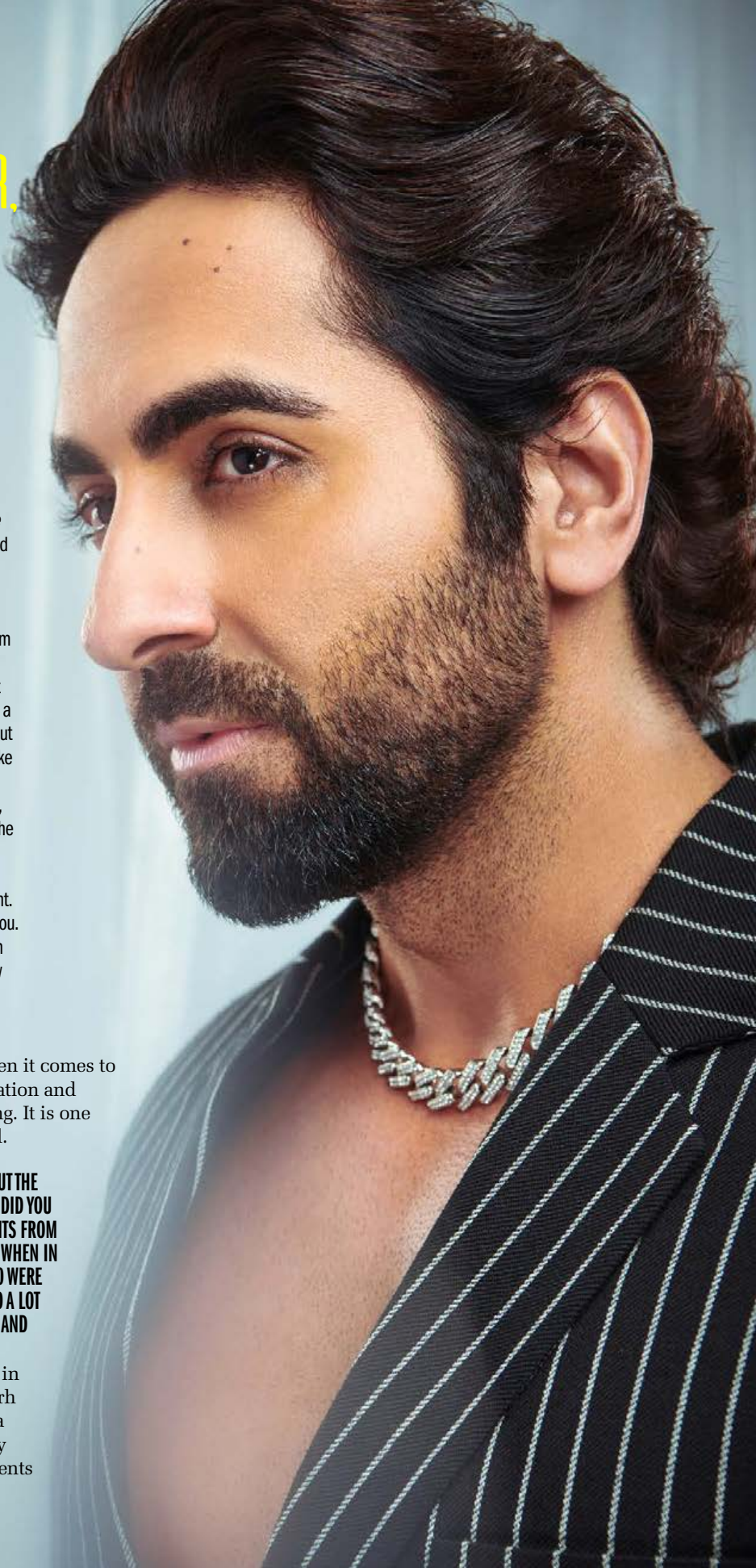
WHAT WERE YOUR THOUGHTS BEHIND SIGNING ANEK?

I have a soft corner for Anubhav Sinha. He is a very credible director with a distinct voice, and whatever he did with me, and the film *Article 15* was phenomenal. Also, it was the novelty of *Anek*. We were touching a new demographic, a new subject, and uncharted territory. Nobody has explored the North East like he has in the film and kept it true to the character. The film ticks all the right

boxes when it comes to representation and storytelling. It is one of its kind.

TALKING ABOUT THE NORTH EAST, DID YOU HAVE STUDENTS FROM THIS REGION WHEN IN COLLEGE WHO WERE SUBJECTED TO A LOT OF BULLYING AND RACISM?

I grew up in Chandigarh which is a young city with students



from all states. There was a decent population of people from the North East in Punjab university and DAV college where I studied. I was part of a band and I remember this physician from Manipur who was our lead guitarist. He used to call us 'mayang' which in Manipuri means an outsider. We became great friends. That was my first induction to the North East. That's when I got to know their feelings when they were in the mainland. Since we were all artistes (I was 19 and also a guitarist) and art has no race or religion, we could collaborate. Later I hosted this show called *Rock On* with him for MTV and we went to Shillong to get some musicians to form a band. I have also hosted *India's Got Talent* and interacted with people and talent from the North East. So it was there at the back of my mind that we should be doing something about these states through cinema and have that binding element with the mainstream.

WHAT IS THE UNDERLYING POLITICS AND WHAT IS THE DIRECTOR TRYING TO SAY IN *ANEKAND* HOW HAVE YOU CONTRIBUTED AS AN ACTOR?

As I said, Anubhav Sinha has a distinct voice and his viewpoint will be reflected in every film. This is our second collaboration and I know he has done a lot of research. Do you know there are a 100 dialects in the North East? Nobody has touched this subject with so much nuance till now. It's a complex situation out there and he has stayed quite true to the politics of the entire region. Also there are a lot of veteran theatre actors from there who are working in the film. I am not the main actor. All the other actors are also protagonists of the film. The lead female protagonist's father is played

Suit: Ermenegildo Zegna
Neckpieces: Drip Project.Co
Boots: Christian Louboutin
Dress: Dor
Andrea's Jewellery:
Vidhisinghfinejewels

YOU CAN'T FORCE A LANGUAGE ON ANYONE. I COULD SAY THAT PUNJABI SHOULD BE THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE... IT WOULD BE VERY UNFAIR IF WE FORCED SOMEONE TO SPEAK A CERTAIN LANGUAGE. WE NEED TO BIND OUR NATION, AND I THINK EVERY REGION, EVERY LANGUAGE, AND EVERY RELIGION IS VERY IMPORTANT

by one such actor and so is Tiger Sanga the main antagonist. Anubhav Sinha and Mukesh Chhabra have done a great job with the casting. I play the one who travels from the mainland and finds out certain things. But there's no saviour feeling in the film. It ticks all the right boxes and we have stayed as true as possible to the region.

AS AN ACTOR, WHAT DO YOU TAKE AWAY FROM A FILM LIKE THIS AND WHAT DO YOU GIVE TO IT?

For one, I get to know my country much better. I have a learner's licence and will always learn and evolve. More than knowing about international cinema and reading stuff from outside India, artistes should know their country well. That's why certain cinemas work very well because they know their audience. They are sons of the soil who want to emulate that person on the road. They have this empathy and connection with them. If you don't know your country, you will fail as an artiste. And if with every film of mine I touch on these subjects, I get to know them more and evolve as an artiste. What I give is attraction and getting this subject into the mainstream. So it's a give and take relationship.

YOU DO FILMS LIKE *ARTICLE 15* AND

FRANKLY, I HAVE NOT DONE A MASALA ENTERTAINER TILL NOW. I HAVE BEEN PART OF REALISTIC FILMS WHICH HAVE DONE WELL COMMERCIALY. MY FILMS HAVE BEEN OUT OF SYLLABUS FOR THE RULES OF COMMERCIAL INDIAN CINEMA

NOW *ANEK*. DO YOU WORRY WHEN YOU HAVE TO GIVE UP ON CERTAIN MANNERISMS THAT COMMERCIAL CINEMA EXPECTS OUT OF YOU? DO YOU HAVE TO UNLEARN A LOT OF STUFF?

Frankly, I have not done a *masala* entertainer till now. I have been part of realistic films which have done well commercially. My films have been out of syllabus for the rules of commercial Indian cinema, so I have not unlearned anything. I have learned a lot because of the kind of body language and physicality I have shown in *Anek* as this alpha macho soldier, which I don't think I have in *Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan* or *Gulabo Sitabo*. It's more about learning than unlearning. As an actor, I am prepared to do any kind of role, so the natural or realism will never go out of my films.

WHAT KIND OF DISCUSSIONS DID YOU HAVE WITH ANUBHAV SINHA DURING *ARTICLE 15* AND *ANEK*?

He's a very learned man. I have worked with him as a student so I don't dictate anything to him. I can say certain things about the engagement of the script, how it's landing, how people will consume the film. That's the perspective I will give him. I will never say that this is politically wrong. I think he has a certain voice as a filmmaker and



Blazer: OS by Owais Shaikh
Boots: Christian Louboutin
Shirt: Abkasa

given the kind of research he puts in I can't really question that. That's beyond me but I can only see or consume a script at the engagement level and has to be palatable to the majority. It's a tough one. It's always been a part of my career, that middle path. That's why it's called middle of the road cinema. It'll always be tough, I have taken to this genre and every film is a challenge for me.

WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON *ANEK*?

I am very proud of the film. It's important and special. I remember when I did *Article 15*, I put this post on Instagram that said *Article 15* is one of the most important films and you had said, "aise bhi koi bolta hai"! Then I got the Filmfare Award and you said I was right. It is one of the most important films. Today I want to say that *Anek* is one of the most important films.

DO YOU BELIEVE THAT THERE IS A NORTH-SOUTH DIVIDE AND THAT HINDI SHOULD BE THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE?

You can't force a language on anyone. I could say that Punjabi should be the national language. It could be a default setting. In Maharashtra, everybody speaks Hindi. It would be very unfair if we forced someone to speak a certain language. We need to bind our nation, and I think every region, every language, and every religion is very important. Culture should be preserved instead of being pushy about one language because that is not going to work. We are a multilingual country,



and that's the beauty of our nation.

DOES A FILM LIKE *SHUBH MANGAL ZYADA SAAVDHAAN* TEACH YOU MORE EMPATHY FOR THE LGBTQ COMMUNITY? DID IT CHANGE YOU AS A PERSON?

There's definitely a lot to learn. Like, the LGBTQ community is not united, in the sense that they are different people with different viewpoints just like people outside the community. Just like we are all different, they are all different. There will be purists, then right of centre and left of centre. I've learnt that they are normal people. That's the beauty of the whole thing. I think cinema has a great role to play in today's society because it's a great opinion leader. But you have to reach a middle ground because you are not making a documentary but an entertaining film through which you can send a message across to society. At the same time, I also believe that the message should not overpower the entertainment or engagement quotient of the film, or it will not reach the audience. Also, I don't believe that every film should have a message. My film *Action Hero*

NOBODY HAS EXPLORED THE NORTH EAST LIKE ANUBHAV SINHA HAS IN *ANEK*.

THE FILM TICKS ALL THE RIGHT BOXES WHEN IT COMES TO REPRESENTATION AND STORYTELLING. IT IS ONE OF ITS KIND



I DON'T BELIEVE THAT EVERY FILM SHOULD HAVE A MESSAGE.

MY FILM *ACTION HERO* DOESN'T HAVE A MESSAGE, AND NEITHER DO SOME OTHER FILMS I AM DOING NOW. THEY ARE JUST ENTERTAINERS. THEY MAY JUST PROVOKE A CERTAIN THOUGHT, BUT NOTHING LIKE AN UNDERLYING MESSAGE

Jacket: Siddhartha Tytler
Shoes: Melissa Shoes India

doesn't have a message, and neither do some other films I am doing now. They are just entertainers. They may just provoke a certain thought, but nothing like an underlying message.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR CAREER TRAJECTORY?

I have been a part of street theatre in Chandigarh. We were the first ones who made street theatre entertaining, which was otherwise dull, dark, and message-oriented. In 2002, when we started doing plays at BITS Pilani and IIT Powai, people started noticing us because we made them entertaining. So now I am just an extension of my street theatre personality where we took a social subject and presented it in an engaging way. It's both by design and default because I started my film career with a certain genre and I carried it forward. I am glad that I got filmmakers and script writers who were writing something interesting and adding value to society. It was not just entertainment, it had a subtle message. At the same time, I always say that films should not be about messages. Their core job is to entertain people, to take them away from reality. To make them feel good about themselves and maybe just a little bit about how society could be.

IF GIVEN A CHANCE, WOULD YOU HAVE DONE ANY OF YOUR SUCCESSFUL FILMS DIFFERENTLY?

I think we discussed this with *Shubh Mangal*

Zyada Saavdhan. Hitesh Kewalya, Aanand L Rai, and I all agreed that the last ten minutes could have been slightly different. We always have these discussions when looking back at films, as there is no end to perfection. If you are a creative person, you will always be self-critical. I am not someone who is self-obsessed; I am very critical of myself and all my films. When I see the edit, I always find some fault.

CAN YOU GIVE A SPECIFIC INSTANCE WHERE FRIENDS OR FAMILY HAVE AGREED OR DISAGREED WITH YOU ABOUT YOUR FILMS?

It would be unfair to pinpoint, but I know people like Hitesh and Aanand Rai agree with me, but there are people who don't. But you can't really take that to heart. You just move on. I generally collaborate with people who are on the same page, creatively very malleable, and can also take criticism and improve in the future. Every film will receive criticism. With *Anek*, we are checking all the boxes when it comes to representation, story

telling, and delving deeply into the subject. So with every film, we try to evolve, keeping in mind the previous films.

IS THERE ALWAYS A DANGER OF YOU SAYING PEOPLE WILL BE POLARISED? DO THESE DISCUSSIONS COME UP BEFORE THE RELEASE OF A FILM?

Absolutely, they do! Every subject is deep, and we are also learning. I was not

I THINK WE DISCUSSED THIS WITH SHUBH MANGAL ZYADA SAAVDHAN, HITESH KEWALYA, AANAND L RAI, AND I ALL AGREED THAT THE LAST TEN MINUTES COULD HAVE BEEN SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT. WE ALWAYS HAVE THESE DISCUSSIONS WHEN LOOKING BACK AT FILMS, AS THERE IS NO END TO PERFECTION

I STARTED MY FILM CAREER WITH A CERTAIN GENRE AND I CARRIED IT FORWARD. I AM GLAD THAT I GOT

FILMMAKERS AND SCRIPT WRITERS WHO WERE WRITING SOMETHING INTERESTING AND ADDING VALUE TO SOCIETY. IT WAS NOT JUST ENTERTAINMENT, IT HAD A SUBTLE MESSAGE

born in the North East and was not aware of the LGBTQ community when growing up in Chandigarh, which is very conservative, and it was only later when I started street theatre that I got in touch with people from Delhi, Mumbai, different communities and the minorities. It's an ever evolving process. And when you are doing something different, you are born with a certain vulnerability. But I am also against "cancel culture." One should see the intent of the artiste more than anything else

CAN YOU GIVE AN EXAMPLE?

It could be anything. People like to criticise. You take that in your stride. They don't understand that the person is also human and that his intent is right. They should encourage that person and not cancel him out.

WHEN YOU LOOK AT YOUR CHILDREN, DO THEY REMIND YOU OF YOUR GROWING UP DAYS IN CHANDIGARH?

No. The current generation is not like us. The reason is that the mode of entertainment is changing. They don't consume the same entertainment. Back then there was only

Suit: Rajesh Pratap Singh | Neckpiece: Hiflyer Jewels
Boots: Christian Louboutin



Doordarshan and cable television with one or two channels. Children today are not consuming the same entertainment. That's why it's so different. I think in another 10 years we will have Indian cinema in English and we will do well. Prateek Kuhad is the first Indian who is successful commercially as an English singing artist. It never happened in the past. If it has happened with music it will happen with films as well. There will be Indie and English films, but made in our heartlands or Delhi or Mumbai but everything will be in English including the songs. And in this situation we are asking people to put a certain language in the forefront. But that's not going to work.

IS IT DIFFICULT FOR YOU TO SAY NO TO SOMEBODY WHO HAS COME UP WITH A LOVELY FILM AND SCRIPT BUT YOU DON'T SEE YOURSELF AS A PART OF THAT?

It used to be difficult earlier, as I used to be overwhelmed by people, situations, names, or stature. But I think I have learnt how to say no. But I have realised that most of my successful films were by first-time filmmakers, so I don't owe anything to anyone. I consume the script, which is the real hero of the film.

YOUR WIFE WRITES ABOUT INTIMACY AND YOUR SEX LIFE IN A FUNNY MANNER. IT SHOWS HOW YOU ARE AS A COUPLE. WHEN YOU READ HER BOOK FOR THE FIRST TIME, HOW DID YOU TAKE IT AS A HUSBAND AND AS A READER?

As a reader, it may be entertaining, but personally, I am a very private person. She is very different from me. I don't like talking about my private life, but that's how we are different from each other. It could be entertaining for some people, but I don't read it.

DID YOU CRINGE?

I don't know! She'll do whatever she wants, but I am not that person.

WHAT KIND OF FATHER ARE YOU? ARE YOU STRICT OR DEMOCRATIC?

I shoot for six months out of a year, so I am hardly at home. I can't be strict, otherwise my children will start hating me. Tahira plays the bad cop and I play the good cop. I had a very strict childhood as my father was a disciplinarian. But I am not like that at all. I am very different, very laid-back and chilled. They can do whatever they want. Also, I am easier with my daughter than I am with my son. I have a feminist in the house who is also easier on our daughter. My son is having a hard time. No, I'm just joking.

HOW DID YOU GET ATTRACTED TO BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY, AND HOW MUCH OF IT DO YOU USE IN YOUR LIFE?

The basic philosophy of Buddhism is world peace, equality, and parity, and it tells you to be happy in any

situation. So I don't lose my cool and am patient because of that philosophy. My wife encouraged me to grasp that and make it a practice. I chant for about 20 minutes daily, 10 in the morning and 10 in the evening, and read every day about Buddhism. It really helps me and calms me down.

Like now, I am working till June without a day off,

so in this situation I am very patient! It's also a very active practice.

It's action-oriented.

So it's not that chanting helps you to achieve anything, you have to work towards it. I'm a laid-back person, so it works for me.


IT'S ALMOST A DECADE SINCE YOU CAME INTO THE INDUSTRY. DO YOU CATCH YOUR BREATH SOMETIMES AND WONDER HOW IT HAPPENED?

It's unbelievable. I think it's a miracle because in these 10 years I have given some wonderful films. I am proud of my filmography and my journey. After my first film, Bollywood didn't know what to do with me. It's been a good progression, and I am very proud of my journey.

IS THERE ANY CLOSE GROUP OF FRIENDS THAT CAN GIVE YOU THEIR FRANK OPINION?

My close group of friends have been trolling me since my school days and haven't stopped till now. So I am glad I have these friends to tell them as they are. There are no yes men around. The best part of my life is that I have these friends. And mentors like Shoojit Sircar and Aditya Chopra, who are both from different schools of cinema, I also have friends from different walks of life, like lawyers, politicians, teachers,

I AM A VERY PRIVATE PERSON. SHE (TAHIRA) IS VERY DIFFERENT FROM ME. I DON'T LIKE TALKING ABOUT MY PRIVATE LIFE, BUT THAT'S HOW WE ARE DIFFERENT FROM EACH OTHER. IT COULD BE ENTERTAINING FOR SOME PEOPLE, BUT I DON'T READ IT



and doctors, so I get varied viewpoints from different people. It helps me to introspect and become a better performer.

WHAT'S THE SITUATION IN THE INDUSTRY RIGHT NOW? IS EVERYBODY STILL TALKING NUMBERS?

Right now, nobody knows what's going to work for Bollywood. We are in that phase where we haven't hit the sweet spot. The industry is concerned, so I guess we have to discover or rediscover or evolve in some way. Everybody needs to get together and see what kind of cinema is going to work now. It's also about your conviction, like I cannot do something that I wouldn't like to watch. I will only do films with which I resonate, or I won't be true to my craft. So I will keep on doing films that have something to say, are unique and not obsessed with the box office.

DID THE PANDEMIC CHANGE YOU IN ANY WAY?

We should not talk about the

Suit: Rajesh Pratap Singh
Neckpiece: Hiflyer Jewels
Boots: Christian Louboutin

I HAVE A LEARNER'S LICENCE AND WILL ALWAYS LEARN AND EVOLVE. MORE THAN KNOWING ABOUT INTERNATIONAL CINEMA AND READING STUFF FROM OUTSIDE INDIA, ARTISTES SHOULD KNOW THEIR COUNTRY WELL

pandemic at all because we have already suffered a lot. We should move forward and look at better times. And it's happening now! Theatres have opened and people are getting out and watching films, be it from the South or Hollywood. That's a bright spot.

ARE SOUTH FILMS SUCH AS *RRR* AND *KGF2* A WAKE-UP CALL TO BOLLYWOOD FILMMAKERS THAT THEIR FILMS HAVE PROGRESSED TO THE NEXT LEVEL?

I have never tried that territory. I would love to attempt something like that, but the script should resonate with me. I loved *Gangubai Kathiawadi*, which was a visual delight and poetic, and it was a hit. So the films are working. If you have something new to give, you can excite the audience with any genre or subject. I realised that a film has to be a family entertainer to begin with. The

family should go together to watch it; otherwise, each has a home screen or a phone to watch different kinds of entertainment. And it's great that there's OTT, another platform that has created a lot of employment in the industry. In fact, OTT saved the cinema, and it's a blessing. At the same time, the charm of the theatre will never wane because going to the theatre means dressing up, going out with family or friends, and watching the film all in one go. ■

I SHOOT FOR SIX MONTHS OUT OF A YEAR, SO I AM HARDLY AT HOME. I CAN'T BE STRICT, OTHERWISE MY CHILDREN WILL

START HATING ME. TAHIRA PLAYS THE BAD COP AND I PLAY THE GOOD COP.

I HAD A VERY STRICT CHILDHOOD AS MY FATHER WAS A DISCIPLINARIAN. BUT I AM NOT LIKE THAT AT ALL

PHOTOGRAPHS: KUNAL GUPTA
AYUSHMANN:
STYLIST: ISHA BANSALI
HAIR: MOHAMED JAVED
MAKE-UP: SANJAY YADAV

ANDREA:
STYLIST: NEETU BHARDWAJ
HAIR: KRUTIKA JAIN
MAKE-UP: ALISHA MONTERO
Outfit: Dor
Jewellery: Vidhisinghfinejewels

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

SUMAN SHARMA TALKS TO NEWCOMER ANDREA KEVICHUSA,
WHO'S MAKING HER DEBUT WITH ANEK



ANDREA KEVICHUSA, WHO IS ORIGINALLY FROM NAGALAND, IS ALL SET TO DEBUT WITH DIRECTOR ANUBHAV SINHA'S *ANEK*

which deals with issues that have plagued the people of the North East. She's one of the protagonists of the film and plays a boxer in it. Andrea has been modelling since the age of 15 and has made a name for herself in the ad world. She's been a constant with Sabyasachi Mukherjee and has also worked for top beauty brands. Andrea talks about her journey and her big Bollywood break and more in this exclusive chat...

TELL US SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND...

I was born and raised in Kohima and I am the youngest of five daughters. My late father belonged to the Angami tribe and my mum to the Ao tribe. Being all girls, my siblings and I had a very sheltered life and in many ways, we still do. My parents were very protective and my sisters and I always had strict curfews and a long list of do's and don'ts. I attended an all-girls' Catholic school, Little Flower Hr. Sec. School till my 10th standard after which I moved to Shillong, Meghalaya to complete the rest of my schooling. I started modelling when I was 15.

DID YOU ALWAYS WANT TO BECOME AN ACTOR?

For the entirety of my childhood and through most of my teenage years, my principal ambition was to study medicine so that I could become a doctor and work back home in Kohima. Because I was still studying and also given the opportunity to explore other things, I was, in a way, given a gist of what things could be like for me if I chose to pursue modelling. I loved that I was a part of such creative projects and so, the notion of taking up a more conventional profession took a different course after I gave modelling a shot.

IT MUST HAVE BEEN DIFFICULT TO JUGGLE STUDIES AND MODELLING?

It's hard to describe my journey as being 'smooth sailing', but at the same time it's difficult



BEING ALL GIRLS, MY SIBLINGS AND I HAD A VERY SHELTERED LIFE AND IN MANY WAYS, WE STILL DO. MY PARENTS WERE VERY PROTECTIVE AND MY SISTERS AND I ALWAYS HAD STRICT CURFEWS AND A LONG LIST OF DO'S AND DON'TS

to argue otherwise as well. I had to leave my home at 16 to pursue my higher education while also having to travel to Mumbai every summer/winter break to work. Having to juggle shoots and studies was an uphill task in itself. I would often have to prepare for

upcoming exams in flights and in-between shoots. It was definitely a difficult transition, being a girl from a small town and trying to figure out how the real world works. After finishing my schooling, I moved to Mumbai and I didn't know anyone in

the city besides my work peers. I had to figure a lot of things out on my own. But those experiences made me a stronger and an independent person. I have been able to travel to many places and grow so much more as a person than I would have, had I chosen a different

path in life.

HOW DID YOU GET ANEK?

The opportunity to act in *Anek* came to me as a complete surprise. I had moved to Mumbai a few months before being cast. I received news from my agent that I had to go to a meeting for a movie. We did not have any further information about the role since it was confidential at that point. I remember being excited to go to the meeting because, being 18, I was eager to try something new. And Bollywood was something I was completely unfamiliar with. When I met Anubhav Sinha sir, the writer and director of *Anek*, he told me that he wanted to cast me in his next film, not only as the female lead but as a boxer as well. I remember thinking “ummm are you sure you have the right girl?!!”. When I received the script, I was happy to find that Aido, my character in the film, was an empowered three-dimensional character that I could explore extensively. The role wasn't there to push the plot forward, but built to grow and have the potential of being able to stand on its own merit. Aido is an independent character that very much embodies a strong female lead.

HOW DID YOU PREPARE FOR THE ROLE?

To be completely honest, I was 'gifted' the role by Anubhav sir, who was kind enough to see the potential in me. I put in a ton of hard work after that, with my boxing and

acting classes. I also had to work on my Hindi for the film. Because it is an action thriller, we had to make the fights look as realistic as possible. To achieve that, I had to take action training classes. I also learned how to ride a bike. It took a long period of hard-work and training to get me to where I was for the film. I'm so glad I got to not only learn, but hone so many new skills.

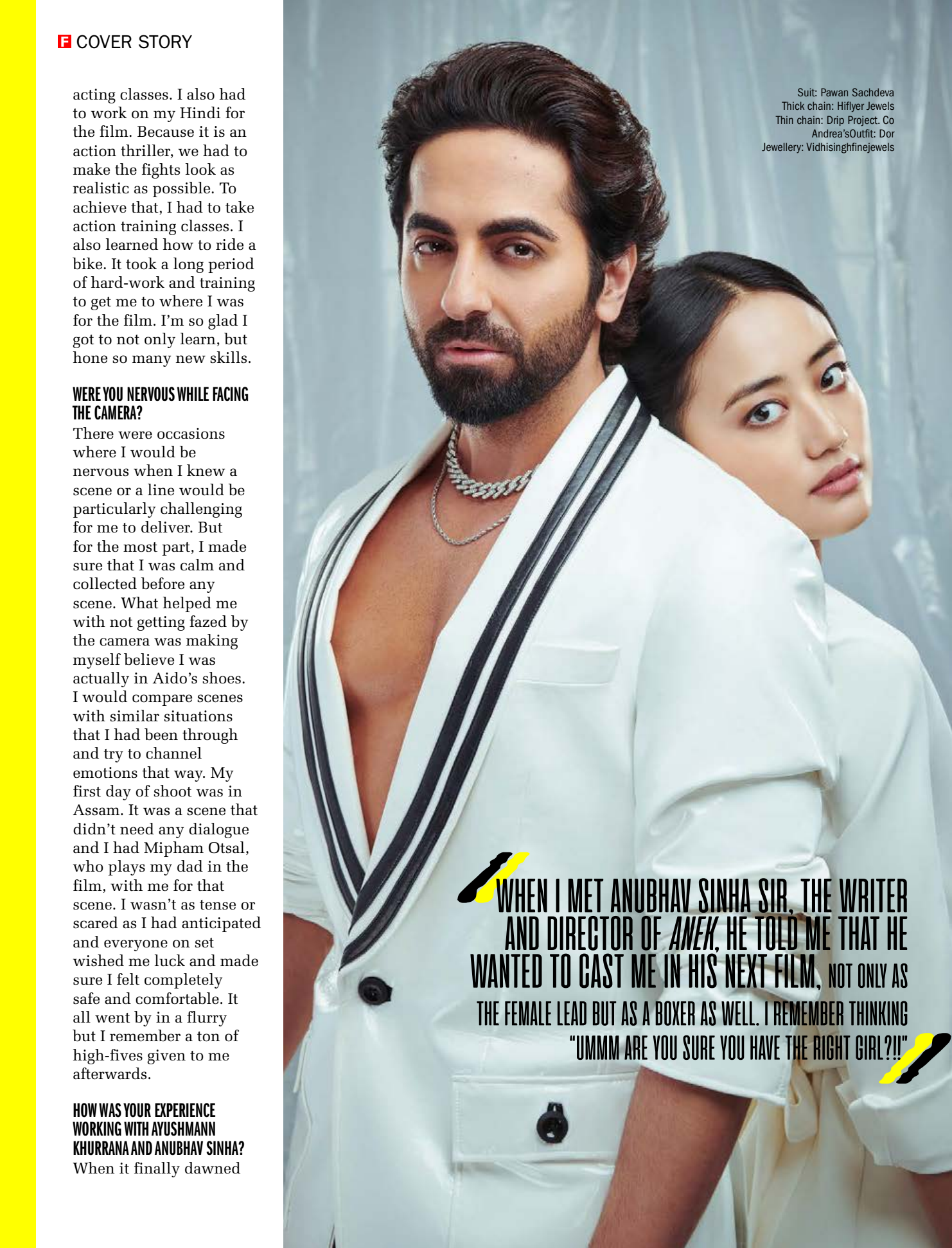
WERE YOU NERVOUS WHILE FACING THE CAMERA?

There were occasions where I would be nervous when I knew a scene or a line would be particularly challenging for me to deliver. But for the most part, I made sure that I was calm and collected before any scene. What helped me with not getting fazed by the camera was making myself believe I was actually in Aido's shoes. I would compare scenes with similar situations that I had been through and try to channel emotions that way. My first day of shoot was in Assam. It was a scene that didn't need any dialogue and I had Mipham Otsal, who plays my dad in the film, with me for that scene. I wasn't as tense or scared as I had anticipated and everyone on set wished me luck and made sure I felt completely safe and comfortable. It all went by in a flurry but I remember a ton of high-fives given to me afterwards.

HOW WAS YOUR EXPERIENCE WORKING WITH AYUSHMANN KHURRANA AND ANUBHAV SINHA?

When it finally dawned

Suit: Pawan Sachdeva
Thick chain: Hiflyer Jewels
Thin chain: Drip Project. Co
Andrea's Outfit: Dor
Jewellery: Vidhisinhfinejewels



WHEN I MET ANUBHAV SINHA SIR, THE WRITER AND DIRECTOR OF *ANEK*, HE TOLD ME THAT HE WANTED TO CAST ME IN HIS NEXT FILM, NOT ONLY AS THE FEMALE LEAD BUT AS A BOXER AS WELL. I REMEMBER THINKING "UMMM ARE YOU SURE YOU HAVE THE RIGHT GIRL?!"



BECAUSE IT IS AN ACTION THRILLER, WE HAD TO MAKE THE FIGHTS LOOK AS REALISTIC AS POSSIBLE. TO ACHIEVE THAT, I HAD TO TAKE ACTION TRAINING CLASSES. I ALSO LEARNED HOW TO RIDE A BIKE. IT TOOK A LONG PERIOD OF HARD-WORK AND TRAINING TO GET ME TO WHERE I WAS FOR THE FILM.

on me that I would be working with creatives that are such big names in the industry, I was scared I wouldn't be able to deliver as well as they had expected me to. But Ayushmann and Anubhav sir created such a comfortable environment for me on set that I felt no added pressure to over-

perform or do anything that was beyond my capabilities. Ayushmann is such a friendly soul. We got along well because we have a similar sense of humour. He manages to showcase his skills as an actor so well. He's unabashed and unaffected by his surroundings. And the fact that he is

still so eager to learn is admirable. I'm glad that as a newbie, I was lucky enough to work with someone who was so helpful and good at what they do.

ANEK DEALS WITH THE POLITICAL CONFLICTS OF NORTH EAST INDIA AND DISCRIMINATORY ISSUES. CAN YOU SHARE YOUR

EXPERIENCE ABOUT RACIAL OR GEOGRAPHICAL DISCRIMINATION?

I have experienced name-calling in the cities, I have been stared at, my accent made fun of. When it comes to discrimination, there are many layers that go beyond that. Not only are people from my region discriminated against based on where we come from and what we look like, but we are also homogenised into one community despite being extremely diverse. I hope the movie will be able to change that and help people be more aware of how diverse, culturally rich, progressive and pioneering Nagaland is.

PEOPLE FROM OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY AREN'T FAMILIAR WITH THE NORTH EAST REGION. CAN YOU LIST DOWN A FEW THINGS WHICH PEOPLE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THIS REGION?

I cannot speak for the entire region, being that I am only from Nagaland. I wouldn't say people from other regions are completely unaware of the area. We do get a lot of tourists and it's heartwarming to see the efforts they put in to learn about and appreciate our culture. Nagaland, my home state, is a place that is rich in its culture and tradition. Ethnically, there is a mixture of many tribes and sub-tribes, all having different customs, languages, cuisines and festivals. I can proudly claim that my people are kind, hospitable and well rooted to the land we come from. Fun Fact: Nagaland is the most Baptist state in the world.

WHAT ADVICE DID YOU GET FROM YOUR PARENTS WHEN YOU ENTERED



Suit: Ermenegildo Zegna
 Neckpieces: Drip Project.Co
 Boots: Christian Louboutin
 Dress: Dor
 Jewellery: Vidhi Singh
 fine jewels

I MADE SURE THAT I WAS CALM AND COLLECTED BEFORE ANY SCENE. WHAT HELPED ME WITH NOT GETTING FAZED BY THE CAMERA WAS MAKING MYSELF BELIEVE I WAS ACTUALLY IN AIDO'S SHOES

THE FILM INDUSTRY?

Initially, I was quite uncertain on whether to accept the role or not. Being aware of how challenging the task would be, I wasn't sure if I was prepared enough to take that big of a step in my life. My parents of course trusted me with the decision but also advised me to look at things from a larger perspective. I was in a state of complete dilemma for quite some time but eventually came around to the idea. I knew it would create an amazing space for me to not only grow as a person but to also learn many new skills. After the project started taking flight and I was preparing for my role, I remember my father once

sat me down and told me, "It's all in the eyes."

WHAT KIND OF FILMS DO YOU WATCH?

Watching films has always been a leisure activity for me. For the most part, I've enjoyed films with a mere casual eye but films like Jean-Pierre Jeunet's romantic comedy *Amelie* and *Little Miss Sunshine* by Valerie Faris and Jonathan Dayton, have been some of the early films that have resonated with me. I've always enjoyed a wide variety of films and never stuck to a particular genre. I am capable of watching anything from light hearted K-dramas to more serious award winning movies like *1917*. I can also re-watch my

guilty pleasure films like *White Chicks* anytime, anywhere. Some of the most recent films I've watched were Asghar Farhadi's Oscar winning film *The Salesman* and *The Embrace of the Serpent* by Ciro Guerra. Both have been masterfully crafted. Also, the new Paul Thomas Anderson movie called *Licorice Pizza* and *The Northman* by Robert Eggers, both blew me away. Anything related to true crime fascinates me. Be it documentaries, podcasts to books. I relish reading and I'm currently reading *Crying In H Mart* by Michelle Zauner.

I highly recommend it. During the process of getting into the psyche of Aido, I watched similar films like the *Million Dollar Baby*, and the *Rocky* series as part of my education.

WHO ARE THE ACTORS OR ACTRESSES WHO INSPIRED YOU TO BECOME AN ACTOR?

Since I never aspired to be an actor, I hadn't drawn inspiration from anyone as such. But some personalities that inspire me as a person are Nelson Mandela, Amal Clooney, Natalie Portman and Emma Watson.

HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE YOUR PERSONALITY?

People have told me that I can be very goofy.

I definitely take time to warm up to people and may even come across as shy or reserved sometimes, but for the most I am easy going. I am definitely a home-body and I spend most of my time watching shows on my laptop or reading, like most Gen-Z out there.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF ROMANCE FOR YOU?

Romance, for me, is effort and consistency. If you want something to work, you have to not only work hard for it but also be consistent in the ways you make the relationship work.

ARE YOU DATING SOMEONE?

Yes, I am in a very happy relationship.

WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM YOUR LIFE?

At the end of the day, come what may, being content with what I have and appreciating the good things while in the moment, are the things that are important in life. And being passionate is the most important thing, according to me. People finding what they are passionate about is so rare and once they do, the level of hard work that they are willing to put into it is so inspiring. If you aren't passionate about what you do, you are never gratified with the work you achieve. ■



JAI MAHARASHTRA!

NOTES FROM THE PRESS CONFERENCE OF PLANET MARATHI PRESENTS FILMFARE AWARDS MARATHI 2021



Celebrating the finest performances from the Marathi Film Industry, Filmfare hosted the 6th edition of the Planet Marathi Presents Filmfare Awards Marathi on March 31, 2022 in association with Planet Marathi as the title partner. This year's show was held at St. Andrew's Auditorium, Bandra, Mumbai and brought double the excitement and celebrations as it honoured Marathi Films released between 2020-2021. The celebration witnessed the biggest and most-talented names from the Marathi Film industry make a grand entry on the red carpet. Hosted by Amey Wagh and Siddharth

Jadhav, the night saw accomplished actors Pooja Sawant and Manasi Naik pay a heartfelt tribute to the late Lata Mangeshkar, an icon who moved generations with her voice. The two stars celebrated the stellar career and songs sung by the 'Queen of Melody', who left behind a lasting legacy and gave us music that will live on forever. Furthermore, showing great skill and taking the entertainment a notch higher in their individual acts were Mrunmayee Deshpande, Sonalee Kulkarni, Vaibhav Tatwawadi and the versatile Amruta Khanvilkar in a special performance. Talking about the awards during the press conference, Deepak Lamba, CEO, Worldwide Media said, "Filmfare, for decades, has witnessed the ascent of Marathi cinema, that has always attracted cinephiles seeking compelling narratives. Having been

part of this remarkable journey, we, through the Filmfare Awards Marathi, have rejoiced in shining the spotlight on this talented film industry and its exceptional cinematic performances. We are delighted to partner with Planet Marathi for a grand award ceremony that will see fans of Marathi cinema marvel at the industry's excellence and watch their favourite celebrities perform." Sharing his thoughts about the awards, Jitesh Pillai, Editor, Filmfare, said, "Marathi cinema is an integral part of India's entertainment industry that continues to produce stellar films year on year. The iconic Black Lady has been the embodiment of cinematic excellence in the country, and we always look forward to enhancing her glory at the upcoming ceremony. Proud to celebrate not one, but two terrific years of Marathi cinema, we put together an entertaining show that is one of a

kind and will be long remembered." Speaking about the collaboration with Filmfare, Akshay Bardapurkar, Head and Founder, Planet Marathi OTT said, "The Marathi film industry is taking slow, but gradual steps towards becoming the very epicentre of Indian entertainment. The experience of Marathi cinema is today beginning to transform the audience that consumes it. They're all real, human, believable stories told by excellent actors and filmmakers, with simple yet gripping screenplays. We are delighted to extend our long-standing association with Filmfare that celebrates the cinematic excellence of an industry we are all very proud of." Sonalee Kulkarni, actor, said, "I'd like to firstly congratulate Filmfare for yet another year of celebrating Marathi Cinema. For years, the Filmfare Awards Marathi have inspired artistes to push the envelope for the coveted Black Lady. I am excited to be part of such a popular and grand ceremony where we celebrate the industry that has made its presence felt on the global stage."

"FOR YEARS, THE FILMFARE AWARDS MARATHI HAVE INSPIRED ARTISTES TO PUSH THE ENVELOPE FOR THE COVETED BLACK LADY. I AM EXCITED TO BE PART OF SUCH A POPULAR AND GRAND CEREMONY"
- SONALEE KULKARNI



GUTS, GLAMOUR, GLORY

DEVESH SHARMA CHRONICLES THE MADNESS AND MAGIC OF THE RECENTLY HELD PLANET MARATHI PRESENTS FILMFARE AWARDS MARATHI 2021



Sai Tamhankar, Sonalee Kulkarni and Mrunal Kulkarni enjoying the show



← Adinath Kothare and Amruta Khanvilkar pose together

The Planet Marathi Presents Filmfare Awards Marathi 2021 were held at the St Andrews Auditorium, Bandra, Mumbai this year. The show must go on has always been the motto of the showbiz. Last year, we held the function under the threat of the coronavirus and the mood was somewhat subdued. This year, the covid norms had just been relaxed and hence the members of the Marathi film industry came in a more joyful mood to celebrate excellence in cinema. It's often said that the film industry is akin to a family and like



Amey Wagh, Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Ankush Chaudhary and Siddharth Jadhav are all smiles



Smita Jaykar, Kushal Badrike and Siddharth Jadhav share an emotional moment



Pushkar Sthothi and Pratik Gandhi follow the proceedings



Nishigandha Wad and Deepak Deulkar enjoying the show

Siddharth Jadhav, who won the Best Actor In A Supporting Role (Male) trophy for *Dhurala*, called up his longtime friend, Kushal Badrike on stage



Sachin Pilgaonkar and Sai Tamhankar clap on

a family, the gathered gentry let their hair down and enjoyed the comfort of each other's company as they applauded the winners.

Our LTA Award went to **Sulochana Latkar**. Sulochana started off her career as a leading lady in Marathi films and later took to doing character roles in both Marathi and Hindi films. She gained prominence as a screen mom from the '60s onwards. The actress couldn't come to the venue because of her age but sent a lovely recorded message conveying her regards.

It was a night of the Kulkarnis alright as **Sonali Kulkarni** won the Best Actress Critics' trophy for *Pension* while **Neena Kulkarni** won it for *Photo Prem*. Both commented that it was a delight to share the award with each other as they loved and respected each others' work. Neena Kulkarni said that her film was shot amidst the pandemic. It wasn't lavishly mounted and was a simple one character drama. She never hoped to win an award for it and



← Prajakta Mali

→ Nawazuddin Siddiqui and Geetanjali Kulkarni



Niranjan Iyengar and Prasad Oak are all smiles



Vijay Patkar and Deepali Sayyad enjoying the show

← Jeetendra Joshi



Sameer Vidhwans, Hemant Dhome, Kshitee Jog laughing out loud



Hemangi Kavi, Sonalee Kulkarni, Viju Mane and Bhau Kadam take a selfie



Archana Nevrekar, Smita Jaykar and Anuradha Paudwal take a selfie



Smita Shewale and Rajan Bhise look engrossed



Shrabani Deodhar, Kshitij Patwardhan and Sai Deodhar are all excited

→ Neha Pendse and Sonali Khare



← Priya Bapat

Sonalee Kulkarni and Geetanjali Kulkarni had a mutual admiration society going and profusely praised each other on the dais

hearing her name being announced came as a pleasant surprise. Sonali said that she's had a long association with *Filmfare* and winning the Black Lady has always been a pleasure as it proves you're on the right track. To top it all Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Female) trophy too was shared by **Sonalee Kulkarni** for *Dhurala* and **Geetanjali Kulkarni** for *Karkhanisanchi Waari*. Sonalee and Geetanjali too had a mutual admiration society going and profusely praised each other on the dais. Later, Sonalee reached out to Sonali and touched base and also posed for a photo together, making for a memorable moment.

Lata Bhagwan Kare is the real-life story of a 65 year old rural woman who raced a marathon for the prize money to take care of her ill husband. **Naveen Deshaboina**, who won the Best Debut Critics' Award for the film, hails from Telangana. He read about Lata in the papers, came to meet her and persuaded her to star in the film he wanted to make on her life. The rest, as they say, is history. **Raman Deokar** who won the Best Child Artiste Award for *Mhorkya*, has grown leaps and bounds ever since the film's release. One couldn't believe that the young man, who now



← Deepali Sayad and Rupali Bhosle

PLANET
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FILMFARE
AWARDS MARATHI 2021



Team *Jhimma* celebrates with Sachin Pilgaonkar and Padmini Kolhapure



Pooja Sawant

↑ Raturaj Wankhede

Nawazuddin Siddiqui and Pratik Gandhi graced the event with their presence. The Marathi industry welcomed them with open arms

looks like a rugby player, was the chubby child from the film. He was teased by all for his size and took it sportingly.

Aditya Modak, our Best Actor Critics' winner for *The Disciple* is actually a trained classical singer. He got into acting by chance and said that he never expected to win the trophy because acting wasn't his forte. But winning the award has given him the required confidence and he was open to more acting offers. **Ankush Chaudhary** who won the Best Actor Award for *Dhurala* sportingly sat with Aditya to give the newcomer company. While receiving the trophy, he said that the film was about three brothers and hence he's dedicating the win to his screen brothers, **Amey Wagh** and **Siddharth Jadhav**, who happened to be our emcees. They'd started off the proceedings saying they're afraid to make fun of anyone in the audience as they don't want a repeat of the 'slapgate' that happened at the Oscars. The audience proved sporting enough, and friends like **Pushkar Sthothri** and **Jitendra Joshi** happily helped them land a couple

← Sailee Sanjeev



Amey Wagh, Pratik Gandhi and Siddharth Jadhav having fun



Vaishali Samant, Amitraj and Adarsh Shinde take a selfie



Resham Tipnis and Ashok Shinde catch up

covered by



Adarsh Shinde, Aamey Wagh and Siddharth Jadhav sing along



Shiv Thakare, Kishori Shahane Vij and Abhijit Kelkar bond together



Bharat Dabholkar and Mahesh Limaye look engrossed



Pushkar Sthothri, Abhijit Panse, Prajakta Mali, Adinath Kothare and Niranjana Iyengar enjoy the proceedings

Sonalee Kulkarni reached out to Sonali Kulkarni and touched base and also posed for a photo together, making for a memorable moment

of gags. They kept the ball rolling without any hiccups. Siddharth, who won the Best Actor In A Supporting Role (Male) trophy for *Dhurala*, called up his longtime friend, **Kushal Badrike** on stage. He said he and Kushal started together and always supported each other at every milestone of their journey. And hence had to call his friend to share this victory as well. Kushal too got emotional and said winning a Filmfare in future wouldn't be sweeter than this gesture.

Our Best Debut (Male) winners **Ruturaj Wankhede** and **Virat Madke**, who won it for *Jayanti* and *Kesari* respectively were seen bundling like old pals. Ruturaj's excitement was palpable as he struggled to give words to his emotions. Virat too was moved by the reception he got. The strapping, macho heroes are already into their next assignments and are keen to try their luck on the OTT platforms as well. We wish them the best in the world. Our Best Debut (Female) winner, **Resham Shrivardhan**, who won it for *June* knows her social media game.



Varsha Usgaonkar is all smiles



Renuka Shahane looks amused



→ Smita Gondkar



Sonalee Kulkarni and Sonali Kulkarni touch base with each other

← Mansi Naik and husband Pradeep Kharera



Amruta Khanvilkar and Akshay Bardapurkar, Head and Founder, Planet Marathi OTT



Neena Kulkarni



Ravi Jadhav



Samruddhi Porey

Naveen Deshaboina, read about Lata Bhagwan Kare in the papers, came to meet her and persuaded her to star in the film he wanted to make on her life



Team Lata Bhagwan Kare with Siddharth Jadhav



↑ Bhushan Pradhan

← Resham Shrivardhan

← Sandeep Pathak

She didn't like the initial photo we put of hers and somehow tracked down one of our colleagues and requested a change. We admire her tenacity. She was confidence personified and said winning the award is surely going to boost her career and we'd soon meet her at the Hindi ceremony as well.

Nawazuddin Siddiqui and Pratik Gandhi graced the event with their presence. The Marathi industry welcomed them with open arms. They took part in Amey and Siddharth's gags and left everyone in splits with their timing. Both evinced a desire to act in Marathi films, as Marathi cinema has some great content going nowadays. They even mouthed some dialogue in Marathi, which endeared them to the crowd.

The event was marked by scintillating performances by **Amrita Khanvilkar, Vaibhav Tattawadi, Mansi Naik, Pooja Sawant, Pushkar Jog and Mrunmayi Deshpande**. It was a night to remember and ended on a note of optimism and positivity. Everyone went home with a twinkle in their eyes and a promise in their hearts of making it bigger and grander the next year...

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VICTORY PARADE

DEVESH SHARMA PROFILES THE WINNERS OF THE RECENTLY HELD PLANET MARATHI PRESENTS FILMFARE AWARDS MARATHI 2021

The Marathi industry is known for its wonderful human interest stories. The winners of this year's Planet Marathi Presents Filmfare Awards Marathi 2021 proved that point once again. Karkhanisanchi Waari, our Best Film, was all about a dysfunctional family; while Jhimma, the film it shared the award with, was about a group of women finding themselves on an excursion abroad. Best Film Critics' Award was shared by The Disciple, a film about the harsh training of classical singers, and Bhonga, which highlighted noise pollution. Dhurala, a film about a political family's infighting and its aftermath, took home multiple trophies.

Here's taking a look at all the winners from the glorious event.

PHOTOGRAPHS: MEETESH TANEJA



**BEST ACTOR IN A
LEADING ROLE (FEMALE)**

NEHA PENDSE

JUNE

Known mostly for her glam roles, the actress is a revelation in a role which requires her to plumb the depths of her soul. Her character has gone through a tragedy in life which leads her into a spiral of depression. How she deals with it forms the crux of the story. It was a bravura performance from the actress who deservedly won the trophy.



June



Akshay Bardapurkar, Head and Founder, Planet Marathi OTT does the honours

N O M I N E E S

- Anaya Phatak (Vegali Vaat)
- **NEHA PENDSE (JUNE)**
- **SAI TAMHANKAR (DHURALA)**
- Sayali Sanjeev (Basta)
- Sonalee Kulkarni (Pandu)
- Sonali Kulkarni (Pension)



**BEST ACTOR IN A
LEADING ROLE (FEMALE)**

SAI TAMHANKAR

DHURALA

The film centred around a political family in a village. The members seemingly get along well with each other but when the elections come along, their political ambitions take flight. The elder daughter-in-law of the house gets caught in the crossfire and unwittingly becomes a candidate at the insistence of her husband. She's also pregnant at the time and all this takes a toll on her health and mental well-being.



Dhurala



Mrunal Kulkarni hands over
the Black Lady



NOMINEES

- Anaya Phatak (Vegali Vaat)
- NEHA PENDSE (JUNE)
- SAI TAMHANKAR (DHURALA)
- Sayali Sanjeev (Basta)
- Sonalee Kulkarni (Pandu)
- Sonali Kulkarni (Pension)



**BEST ACTOR IN A
LEADING ROLE (MALE)**

**ANKUSH CHAUDHARI
DHURALA**

Politics is a funny business. Relationships have no value here. You can go against your brother, mother, friends in pursuit of power. That's what's shown in *Dhurala*. The elder son expects the power to come to him by default and is stunned when members of his own family revolt against him. All the turmoil, angst, anger at the situation, as well as the guilt of using underhand tactics comes out in the actor's portrayal.

N O M I N E E S

- **ANKUSH CHAUDHARI (DHURALA)**
- Bhau Kadam (Pandu)
- Gashmeer Mahajani (Bonus)
- Jitendra Joshi (Choricha Mamla)
- Pranav Raorane (Preetam)
- Swapnil Joshi (Bali)



Dhurala



Nawazuddin Siddiqui hands over the award.

BEST DIRECTOR

MANGESH JOSHI

KARKHANISANCHI WAARI

A road-trip movie is something that isn't much attempted by our filmmakers because it's something that's so damn hard to execute. Taking a group of actors from point a to point b in a car or a bus and extracting performances out of them is no joke but the director proceeded to do that and came up with a humane story in the process.



Karkhanisanchi Waari



Kanchan Dhamadhikari, Varsha Usgaonkar, Priya Bapat and Prasad Oak do the honours

NOMINEES

- Achyut Narayan (Vegali Vaat)
- Hemant Dhome (Jhimma)
- **MANGESH JOSHI**
(KARKHANISANCHI WAARI)
- Sameer Vidwans (Dhurala)
- Shailesh Baliram Narwade (Jayanti)
- Tanaji Ghadge (Basta)





Viraj Gawas and
Kshitee Jog

BEST FILM

JHIMMA

It revolved around a group of Maharashtrian women, led by their male guide, roaming in and around London. On the surface, they appear to be trouble-free individuals who have come to enjoy some me-time on foreign shores. But the truth lies elsewhere. They all have issues of their own and connecting with each other helps provide closure to the issues.



Jhimma



Sachin Pilgaonkar, Padmini Kolhapure and
Ashwini Chaudhary, President (India) - Content,
Vistas Media Capital present the award

NOMINEES

- Basta
- Dhurala
- Jayanti
- **JHIMMA**
- KARKHANISANCHI WAARI
- Vegali Vaat

BEST FILM

KARKHANISANCHI WAARI

Families are largely dysfunctional. But birth and death are two things that help bring about dysfunctional families together. The film brings home this home truth in spades. It's a little gem of a situational comedy but at the same time has moments of genuine pathos and empathy as well. You'll come across familiar sights and sounds while watching the film.



Karkhanisanchi Waari



Sachin Pilgaonkar, Padmini Kolhapure and Ashwini Chaudhary, President (India) - Content, Vistas Media Capital do the honours

NOMINEES

- Basta
- Dhurala
- Jayanti
- JHIMMA
- KARKHANISANCHI WAARI
- Vegali Vaat



BEST FILM CRITICS'

SHIVAJI PATIL

BHONGA

The film revolves around a middle-class Muslim family where a nine-month-old baby is suffering from a chronic disease named Cerebral hypoxia. Their new house is bang opposite a mosque and the noise from the loudspeakers keeps the baby awake all the time, leading to further deterioration of his health.



Bhonga



Pratik Gandhi does the honours

NOMINEES

- **SHIVAJI PATIL (BHONGA)**
- Vaibhav Khisti And Suhrud Godbole (June)
- Naveen Deshaboina (Lata Bhagwan Kare)
- Achyut Narayan (Vegali Vaat)
- Aditya Rathi And Gayatri Patil (Photo Prem)
- **CHAITANYA TAMHANE (THE DISCIPLE)**



BEST FILM CRITICS'

CHAITANYA TAMHANE

THE DISCIPLE

Indian classical music still follows the tradition of guru-shishya parampara (teacher-student bond) where a disciple learns music from a guru for years, imbibing every notation, every harkat, rendered by the guru till he's considered worthy enough to strike out on his own. The present film follows the travails of one such disciple in a modern setting.

NOMINEES

- SHIVAJI PATIL (BHONGA)
- Vaibhav Khisti And Suhrud Godbole (June)
- Naveen Deshaboina (Lata Bhagwan Kare)
- Achyut Narayan (Vegali Vaat)
- Aditya Rathi And Gayatri Patil (Photo Prem)
- **CHAITANYA TAMHANE (THE DISCIPLE)**



The Disciple



Pratik Gandhi hands over the trophy to Aditya Modak, who collects it on Chaitanya Tamhane's behalf

BEST ACTRESS CRITICS'

NEENA KULKARNI

PHOTO PREM

The human mind can get obsessed with the strangest of things. In the film, the protagonist becomes infatuated with the idea of finding the perfect photo for her obituary. She grows through various misadventures and overcomes certain inhibitions to achieve that goal. The actress conveys the poignancy of the situation without saying much and not only wins our sympathy but also our appreciation for her performance.



Photo Prem



Ashok Shinde and Deepak Deulkar hands over the trophy to Neena Kulkarni as Sonali Kulkarni looks on

N O M I N E E S

- Anaya Phatak (Vegali Vaat)
- Lata Bhagwan Kare (Lata Bhagwan Kare)
- **NEENA KULKARNI (PHOTO PREM)**
- Padmini Kolhapure (Prawaas)
- **SONALI KULKARNI (PENSION)**





BEST ACTRESS CRITICS'

SONALI KULKARNI

PENSION

Pension is a dark film about human existence. For so many middle class households, pension is the only means of sustenance. Sometimes, people go to extreme means to see that it continues. The actress plays one such desperate person who goes through extraordinary lengths to ensure that her only means of livelihood doesn't get taken away. It was a heart-wrenching performance indeed.



Pension



Deepak Deulkar hands over the trophy to Sonali Kulkarni while Ashok Shinde does the same for Neena Kulkarni

NOMINEES

- Anaya Phatak (Vegali Vaat)
- Lata Bhagwan Kare (Lata Bhagwan Kare)
- **NEENA KULKARNI (PHOTO PREM)**
- Padmini Kolhapure (Prawaas)
- **SONALI KULKARNI (PENSION)**



BEST ACTOR CRITICS'

ADITYA MODAK

THE DISCIPLE

In Indian classical tradition, you learn the art and the craft of music at your guru's feet. His word is final in everything you do. One has to stay humble and keep on learning till the guru is satisfied. It's not an easy life for sure. Aditya Modak is a classical singer himself and that surely helped him bring about a nuanced performance.



The Disciple



Resham Tipnis and Abhijit Panse hand over the trophy

N O M I N E E S

- **ADITYA MODAK (THE DISCIPLE)**
- Ashok Saraf (Prawaas)
- Ruturaj Wankhede (Jayanti)
- Siddharth Menon (June)
- Suhas Palshikar (Basta)
- Vikram Gokhale (AB Aani CD)



LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

SULOCHANA LATKAR

Known by her screen name Sulochana, she's a well-known actress who had a vast career in both Marathi and Hindi films. She is most known for her performances in Marathi films such as *Sasurvas* (1946), *Vahinichya Bangdya* (1953), *Meeth Bhakar*, *Sangte Aika* (1959) and *Dhakti Jau* (1958) in the lead roles. In Hindi films, she made a name for herself doing mother roles. She said in an interview that she loved playing mother to three actors - Sunil Dutt, Dev Anand and Rajesh Khanna. Her famous Hindi films include *Sujata* (1967), *Johnny Mera Naam* (1969), *Kati Patang* (1970), *Azaad* (1978) and many more.



Mahesh Kothare does the honours



**BEST ACTOR IN A
SUPPORTING ROLE (FEMALE)**

**GEETANJALI
KULKARNI**

KARKHANISANCHI WAARI

The actor played a crucial role in the film. It was a layered role carrying lots of nuances which unravelled as the film progressed. It was a sensitive performance which told you much about her character just through conversations and yet made us root for it. She stood apart like she always does and added to the film through her fine acting.



Karkhanisanchi Waari



Nishigandha Wad presents the award to Geetanjali Kulkarni and Dr. Anand Pednekar, Chairman, Jagannath Gangaram Pednekar Jewellers & Aasavari Anand Pednekar hand over the trophy to Sonalee Kulkarni

N O M I N E E S

- Alka Kubal (Dhurala)
- **GEETANJALI KULKARNI
(KARKHANISANCHI WAARI)**
- Kshitee Jog (Choricha Mamlu)
- Nirmity Sawant (Jhimma)
- **SONALEE KULKARNI (DHURALA)**
- Suhas Joshi (Jhimma)



.....
**BEST ACTOR IN A
SUPPORTING ROLE (FEMALE)**
.....

**SONALEE
KULKARNI**
.....

DHURALA
.....

Ambition, more often than not, does take its pound of flesh. When the younger sister-in-law decides to stand in the elections against her brother-in-law, everything gets shook up. At first it's a giddy ride and later turns into a descent into hell. Throughout it all, the actress displays a carousel of emotions that flit across her visage, describing the various emotions she's going through.



Dhurala



Dr. Anand Pednekar, Chaiman , Jagannath Gangaram Pednekar Jewellers & Aasavari Anand Pednekar hand over the trophy to Sonalee Kulkarni and Nishigandha Wad presents it to Geetanjali Kulkarni

N O M I N E E S

- Alka Kubal (Dhurala)
- **GEETANJALI KULKARNI (KARKHANISANCHI WAARI)**
- Kshitee Jog (Choricha Mamla)
- Nirmiti Sawant (Jhimma)
- **SONALEE KULKARNI (DHURALA)**
- Suhas Joshi (Jhimma)

**BEST ACTOR IN A
SUPPORTING ROLE (MALE)**

**SIDDHARTH
JADHAV**

DHURALA

The film centres around the inner turmoil within a political family. Everyone's life gets jeopardised when political ambitions get adrift. One can't remain neutral when one's wife stands opposite one's elder brother who are at opposite ends of the spectrum. It was a character that required the outpouring of conflicting emotions and the actor sailed through the role with aplomb.



Dhurala



Hemant Dhonde (Regional Head - Go Cheese) and Smita Jaykar do the honours

N O M I N E E S

- Amey Wagh (Karkhanisanchi Waari)
- Arun David (The Disciple)
- Hemant Dhonde (Choricha Mamla)
- Kushal Badrike (Pandu)
- Mangesh Kadam (Darling)
- Shripad Joshi (Bhonga)
- **SIDDHARTH JADHAV (DHURALA)**



BEST DEBUT (FEMALE)

**RESHAM
SHRIVARDHAN**

JUNE

June is a complicated film about life's choices. The actress had a small but significant role of being the protagonist's girlfriend. She tries to be reasonable and understand him but he's too screwed in his own mind to see her efforts. It's a sensitive portrayal that was noticed by the critics, who marked her for a bright future ahead.



June



Samruddhi Porey, Abhijit Kelkar and Rupali Bhosale present the Black Lady





BEST DEBUT MALE

RUTURAJ WANKHEDE

JAYANTI

Caste politics is a sensitive subject. The film showcases a young man caught between different ideologies. How he comes across the true path and doesn't become the puppet of unscrupulous politicians forms the crux of the story. It's a hard-hitting performance where the actor has brought out the hurt and the angst of the central character remarkably well.



Jayanti



Samruddhi Porey, Abhijit Kelkar and Rupali Bhosale present the award



BEST DEBUT MALE

VIRAT MADKE

KESARI

The film revolves around wrestling. It shows how the sport is still a passion for youngsters at the grassroots level. The actor had to undergo an amazing physical transformation to look the part. But it wasn't just his physicality that endeared him to the audience. He brought out the grit and determination of a young man hell bent on becoming the best wrestler in Maharashtra.



Kesari



Samruddhi Porey, Abhijit Kelkar and Rupali Bhosale present the trophy



BEST DEBUT DIRECTOR

**AMAR BHARAT
DEOKAR**

MHORKYA

The film is a simple tale at heart. A group of students in a school have to be trained for the annual day parade. There's rivalry among them as to who will become the parade leader. The teachers and the principal want everything to be perfect in front of the visiting dignitaries and the pressure put by them affects the students, dividing them into groups.



Mhorkhya



Radhika Harshe, Kishori Shahane Vij and Vijay Patkar do the honours



BEST DEBUT DIRECTOR

**NAVEEN
DESHBOINA**

LATA BHAGWAN KARE

The film is based on true events. A middle-aged rural woman needs money for her husband's medical needs and takes part in a marathon to win the 50,000 rupees offered as the prize. It's a story full of grit and determination enacted by the same people who went through the difficulties in real life. It offers a moving homage to human endurance.



Lata Bhagwan Kare



Radhika Harshe, Kishori Shahane Vij and Vijay Patkar present the award



BEST CHILD ARTISTE

RAMAN DEOKAR

MHORKYA

It's said that children naturally feed off the camera and it's certainly true in the present case. *Mhorkya* revolves around the life of young students of a rural school competing to become the leader of the march past. The protagonist has given such a natural performance that one feels one is watching a documentary and not something rehearsed. It was a heartfelt effort alright.



Mhorkya



Radhika Harshe, Kishori Shahane Vij and Vijay Patkar do the honours

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BEST MUSIC ALBUM

AMITRAJ

JHIMMA

The film is all about a group of women out on an excursion in England and the music album reflects that. It has many colours floating in it. Colours of friendship, love, compassion and fun are juxtaposed together in the tunes. It's all about getting away from it all and enjoying life and coming to terms with your reality at the same time.



Jhimma



Anuradha Paudwal and Renuka Shahane do the honours

NOMINEES

- AMITRAJ (JHIMMA)
- AV Prafullachandra (Dhurala)
- AV Prafullachandra (Karkhansichai Waari)
- Avadhoot Gupte (Pandur)
- Chinar- Mahesh (Darling)
- Chinar- Mahesh And Swapnil- Prafull (Choricha Mamla)





BEST LYRICS

GURU THAKUR- PREETAM

KONA MAGA BHIR BHIRATA

The lyrics are indicative of the first flush of love that the character is going through. The world looks rosy when one is in love and that's the feeling captured in the song as well. Listening to it makes you feel that all's right with the world. The feel-good song evokes a feeling of contentment and happiness. It's a great love ballad alright.



Preetam



Anuradha Paudwal and Renuka Shahane hand over the trophy

NOMINEES

- Avadhoot Gupte- Pandu (Bhurum Bhurum)
- **GURU THAKUR- PREETAM (KONA MAGA BHIR BHIRATA)**
- Kshitij Patwardhan- Jhimma (Alvida)
- Mandar Cholkar- Darling (Manacha Pakharu)
- Mangesh Kangane- Basta (Phul Jhulatya Yelicha)

**BEST PLAYBACK
SINGER (MALE)**

**ADARSH SHINDE-
DHURALA**

RADA DURALA

This fast-paced song is the film in miniature. It's a clarion call about the conflict one's going to witness on screen. The film is all about grassroots politics and how relationships take a beating during a power struggle and the singer brings out the relevant emotions into focus, singing it like a high pitched marching song.



Dhurala



Darshana Shelar from L'oreal India presents the award alongwith Adinath Kothare

N O M I N E E S

- Abhay Jodhpurkar- Preetam
(Kona Maga Bhir Bhirata)
- **ADARSH SHINDE- DHURALA
(RADA DURALA)**
- Adarsh Shinde- Pandu (Janta Raja)
- Mohan Kanna- Kesari (Tu Chal Ra Mana)
- Pravin Kuwar- Basta (Basta Bandhala)





**BEST PLAYBACK
SINGER (FEMALE)**

**APEKSHA
DANDEKAR-
JHIMMA**

MAZE GAON

The song offers a nostalgic view of how life should be. It showcases a place where serenity and peace exists aplenty and love abounds. We all long to be in such a place. The singer has brought forth the feeling of longing as well as happiness in her melodious voice. Kudos to her for latching on to the nuances in such an exemplary manner.



Jhimma



Gauri Kanitkar, CEO Anuroop Wivahassanatha and Tanmay Kanitkar, Director at Anuroop Wivaha do the honours

N O M I N E E S

- **APEKSHA DANDEKAR- JHIMMA**
(MAZE GAON)
- Devaki Pandit- AB Aani CD
(Jeevanacha Sohala)
- Shreya Ghoshal- Bonus (Navasa Ishara)
- Vaishali Samant- Pandu (Bhurum Bhurum)
- Yashita Sharma- Mann Fakira
(Mann Fakiraa)



BEST STORY

ACHYUT NARAYANA

VEGALI VAAT

The film is a heart-rending story about a rural couple who want to send their daughter to a larger city for higher education. Another well-to-do family steps up to sponsor their dream. The girl, however, doesn't want to be separated from her parents and therein lies the film's conflict. How the parents convince themselves to act for the girl's greater good forms the crux of this simple yet moving tale.



Vegali Vaat



Niranjana Iyengar hands over the Black Lady

N O M I N E E S

- **ACHYUT NARAYANA (VEGALI VAAT)**
- Amar Deokar (Mhorkya)
- Chaitanya Tamhane (The Disciple)
- Hemant Dhome (Jhimma)
- Kshitij Patwardhan (Dhurala)
- Shivaji Patil (Bhonga)



BEST SCREENPLAY

CHAITANYA TAMHANE

THE DISCIPLE

A singer dedicatedly learning Hindustani classical has an arduous journey ahead of him where his guru is the North star guiding him. It's fraught with frustration and angst and perseverance, patience and humility are the tools towards achieving your goal. The screenplay highlights all this and more and showcases a disciple's quest in all its bright and dark hues.

NOMINEES

- Amar Deokar (Mhorkya)
- Arvind Jagtap (Basta)
- **CHAITANYA TAMHANE (THE DISCIPLE)**
- Irawati Karnik (Jhimma)
- Shailesh Narwade (Jayanti)
- Shivaji Patil And D Nishant (Bhonga)



The Disciple



Shrabani Deodhar and Sai Deodhar do the honours



BEST DIALOGUE

IRAWATI KARNIK

JHIMMA

The film revolves around a group of Maharashtrian women out on tour to London and surrounding areas. They come from all walks of life and each has problems aplenty. The soul of the film is their interactions with one another. Their conversations feel like something that would spring naturally among a group of women and therein lies the creative genius of the dialogue.



Jhimma



Shrabani Deodhar and Sai Deodhar hand over the award to the winner

N O M I N E E S

- Amar Deokar (Mhorkya)
- **IRAWATI KARNIK (JHIMMA)**
- **KSHITIJ PATWARDHAN (DHURALA)**
 - Nikhil Mahajan (June)
- Prasad Namjoshi (Photo Prem)
- Shailesh Narwade (Jayanti)



BEST DIALOGUE

KSHITIJ PATWARDHAN

DHURALA

The film is all about interaction between members of an influential family who turn against each other when they become involved in the local elections. Even their day-to-day conversations are now loaded with hidden meanings and nothing is what it seems. This state of anxiety, of unease has been expertly conveyed through the dialogue. It's a treat for the ears indeed.



Dhurala



Shrabani Deodhar and Sai Deodhar hand over the trophy to the winner

NOMINEES

- Amar Deokar (Mhorkya)
- **IRAWATI KARNIK (JHIMMA)**
- **KSHITIJ PATWARDHAN (DHURALA)**
- Nikhil Mahajan (June)
 - Prasad Namjoshi (Photo Prem)
- Shailesh Narwade (Jayanti)

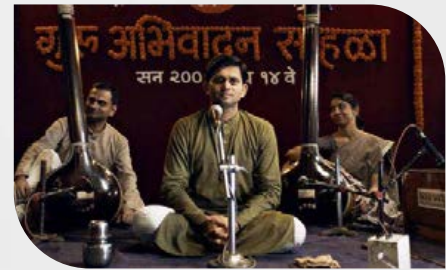


BEST PRODUCTION DESIGN

**POOJA TALREJA
AND RAVIN
D KARDE**

THE DISCIPLE

The film depicted a middle-class background with an aspiring classical singer in its midst. Everything felt like it belonged to the film, be it the used musical instruments, the lived-in rooms, the dimly-lit auditoriums. A familiar world was being created around the viewer, inviting him into an immersive experience. Nothing looked out of place. Even the smallest diary felt like it belonged to the film.



The Disciple



Rajan Bhise and Smita Shewale do the honours

N O M I N E E S

- Abhishek Redkar (Bonus)
- Atul Lokhande (Mhorkya)
- Machhindra Shinde (Bali)
 - Nilesh Wagh (Dhurala)
- **POOJA TALREJA AND RAVIN D KARDE (THE DISCIPLE)**
 - Sagar Gaikwad (Karkhanisanchi Waari)



BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY

MICHAL SOBOCINSKI

THE DISCIPLE

The mood of the film was grim and sombre and it was underlined by the documentary-like approach to cinematography. Everything looked like it was shot in natural light. The interplay of light and shadow lent a certain gravitas to the film. The colour scheme too wasn't bright but pallid, infusing the film with hues that were in sync with the film's story.



The Disciple



Shiv Thakare, Deepali Sayyad and Pankaj Vishnu hand over the trophy

N O M I N E E S

- Akash Agarwal (Dhurala)
- Archana Borhade (Karkhanisanchi Waari)
- Girish Jambhalikar (Mhorkya)
- Kedar Phadke (Photo Prem)
- **MICHAL SOBOCINSKI (THE DISCIPLE)**
- Shakil Khan (Vegali Vaat)

BEST SOUND DESIGN

**ANITA KUSHWAHA
AND NAREN
CHANDAVARKAR**

(THE DISCIPLE)

The film is all about a student of Hindustani classical music trying to reach the next step – that of a solo singer in his own right. The household of such a person holds a certain soundscape. His very existence is surrounded by a cocoon of music. The sound design expertly captures that and helps make the film a totally submersive experience.



The Disciple



Smita Shewale and Rajan Bhise
do the honours

N O M I N E E S

- Abhijit Kende (Choricha Mamla)
- **ANITA KUSHWAHA AND NAREN CHANDAVARKAR (THE DISCIPLE)**
- Atul Lanjudkar And Ajinkya Jumale(Mhorkya)
- Avinash Sonawane (Dhurala)
- Debraj (Vegali Vaat)
- Dinesh Uchhil And Shantanu Akerkar (Bhonga)



BEST BACKGROUND SCORE

AV PRAFULLA CHANDRA

DHURALA

The film depicts the conflicts that emerge when the members of a dynastic family ruling a village get embroiled into power politics. The background score underlines the maelstrom of emotions surging through the film. It's dramatic and yet subtle, making the hidden hostilities come alive through clever use of pace and rhythm.



Dhurala



Shiv Thakare, Deepali Sayyad and Pankaj Vishnu do the honours

N O M I N E E S

- AV PRAFULLACHANDRA (DHURALA)
- Aditya Bedekar (Jhimma)
- Aditya Bedekar And Rohit Nagbhide (Mhorkya)
- Honey Satamkar (Bhonga)
- Ranjan Patnaik And Brianca Bora (Bali)
- Sarang Kulkarni (Karkanisachi Waari)





BEST EDITING

ABHIJIT DESHPANDE AND SOURABH PRABHUDESAI

BALI

Editing literally makes or breaks a horror film. An editor builds up the atmosphere by keeping the proceedings on an uneven pace, never letting the viewers settle in. He should know where and when to place the jump cuts and should also keep a grip on their number. Thankfully, the textbook has been followed diligently in the present film, turning it into a spine-chilling treat for the horror buffs.



Bali



Shiv Thakare, Deepali Sayyad and Pankaj Vishnu hand over the award

NOMINEES

- **ABHIJIT DESHPANDE AND SOURABH PRABHUDESAI (BALI)**
- Chaitanya Tamhane (The Disciple)
- Devendra Murdeshwar (Bonus)
- Faisal Imran (Dhurala)
- Nilesh Meena Rasal And Saumitra Dharasurkar (Mhorhya)
- Suchitra Sathe (Karakanisanchi Waari)

HERE COME THE SHOWSTOPPERS!

THE PERFORMANCES AT THE RECENTLY HELD **PLANET MARATHI PRESENTS FILMFARE AWARDS MARATHI 2021** WERE SCINTILLATING INDEED. **DEVESH SHARMA** PROVIDES THE HIGHLIGHTS

Apart from the camaraderie of the winners and the nominees, what stood out at the Planet Marathi Presents Filmfare Awards Marathi 2021 were the performances. The A listers of the Marathi film industry clapped enthusiastically as their colleagues like Sonalee Kulkarni, Amruta Khanvilkar, Pushkar Jog and Mrunmayee Deshpande, Pooja Sawant, Manasi Naik and Vaibhav Tatwawadi took to the stage and literally set it on fire with their memorable song and dance routines. Have a look at some of the pictures from the same...



AMRUTA KHANVILKAR

DESI MAGIC

Lavani is the traditional folk art of Maharashtra that has survived the onslaught of radio, TV and films and has flourished in the wake of the competition. No wonder it's seen with such reverence by the artistes. Amruta Khanvilkar, who played a lavani artiste in her latest release *Chandramukhi*, brought its title song to life in her mesmerising performance. Her feet were like lightning as she traipsed on the stage, her face a whirlwind of expression as she executed the intricate steps. The spellbound audience were left awestruck and kept asking for more.



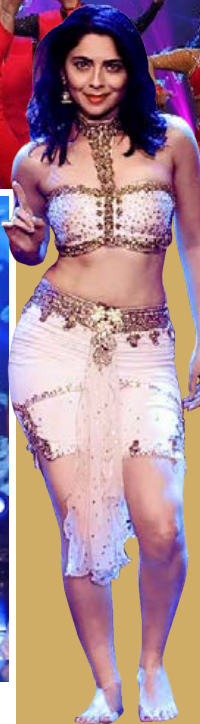


**SONALEE
KULKARNI**

SENSUOUS SENSATION

That she's one of our most gorgeous actresses is a fact beyond dispute.

Sonalee Kulkarni is a captivating dancer as well and is known to sway the audience to her beats. Needless to say, there were calls for encore for her act as she shimmered to a medley of such hits as *Ya chandrala ya*, *Man chimb*, *Shaharlya manat malmali*, *Hum dil de chuke sanam*, *Na nako na re* and *Roshni se bhare bhare*.



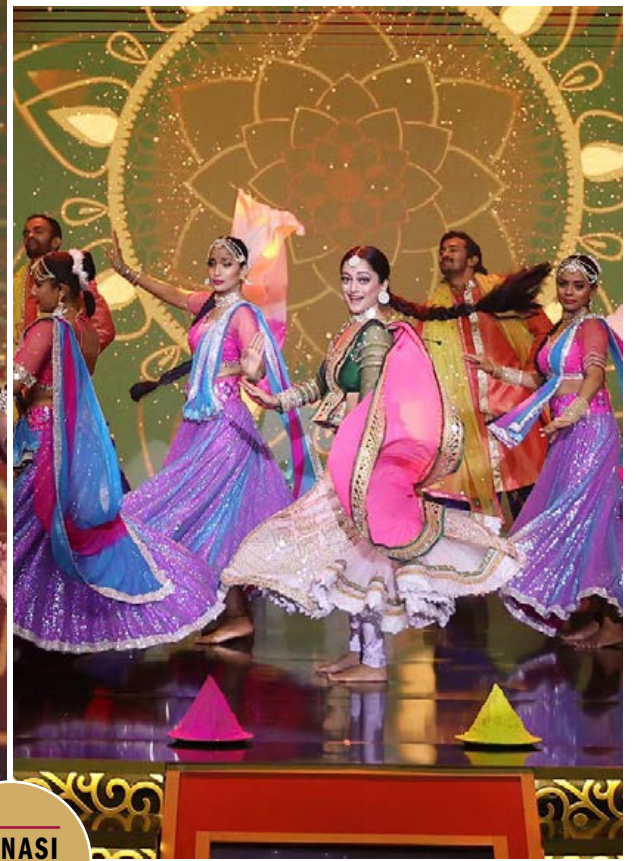


ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

Pooja Sawant and Manasi Naik are two of our most expressive actresses around and it was no wonder they were chosen to dance on some of Lata Mangeshkar's evergreen numbers to pay tribute to the legendary playback singer, who passed away recently. The duo brought back memories of the golden age of Hindi cinema as they offered their interpretations of such gems like *Pyar kiya to darna kya*, *Bichua*, *Piya tose naina lage re*, *Main chali main chali*, *Salam-e-ishq meri jaan*, *Morni*, *Are re are yeh kya hua*, *Jiya jale jaan jale* and *Naam gum jayega*. Their act got a thundering applause.

POOJA
SAWANT





MANASI
NAIK





**VAIBHAV
TATWAWADI**

WARRIOR PRINCE

Macho actor Vaibhav Tatwawadi is known for his action movies. He chose war as the theme for his act. His performance was full of josh and vigour and kept the audience enthralled. He danced to high on energy songs like *Ghamand kar*, *May bhawani*, *Shivba aamcha malhari*, *Raj aala* and *Shankara shankara*. His act sent a spark through the audience, who praised him sky high.

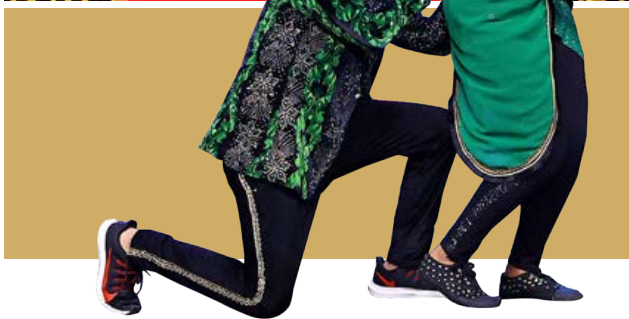




**PUSHKAR
JOG &
MRUNMAYEE
DESHPANDE**

DHAMAL JODI

Pushkar Jog and Mrunmayee Deshpande hit the ball out of the park with their act which was synchronised to perfection. They had eyes only for each other as their feet synced in rhythm, reminding us of the hallowed combination of Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire. They grooved to such old and new hits as *Bala o bala*, *Burrrum burum*, *Nakamuka*, *Aai chya gavat*, *Ghanta vajavto* and the famous punch dialogue of the cult hit *Pushpa: The Rise* and brought the house down



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



@aliaabhata: The Mehendi was like something out of a dream. It was a day full of love, family, our beautiful best friends, a LOT of French fries, a surprise performance by the ladkewalas, Ayan playing DJ, a BIG surprise organised by Mr. Kapoor (my favourite artist performed my favourite songs), all followed by some happy tears and quiet, blissful moments with the love of my life. There are days... and then there are days like these! ❤️🥰

This picture from Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor's wedding is giving us major made-for-each-other vibes. Fairytale romance indeed.

@neetu54: Mehendi masti 🥰👩🏻

Fam jam! Ranbir Kapoor and Neetu Kapoor and other family members danced like no one was looking at the mehendi ceremony. That's what Punjabi weddings are all about.



@sonamkapoor: Kaftan life with my 🥰 #everydayphenomenal 🥰👩🏻

Sonam Kapoor Ahuja looks like an earth goddess in these photos. Pregnancy sure has added a certain glow to her.

@priyankachopra: Happy Easter from us. 🐰❤️👩🏻

Priyanka Chopra Jonas and Nick Jonas know how to celebrate in style. We're so looking forward to pictures of their baby girl.



@tarasutaria: Here's a peak into the first photoshoot for #Heropanti2 🐱 *Fast and furious anybody? Tara Sutaria looks smoking hot in this photo.*

Readers send in their feedback pg 82

Shatrughan Sinha's racy rejoinders pg 84



IN THE MAIL

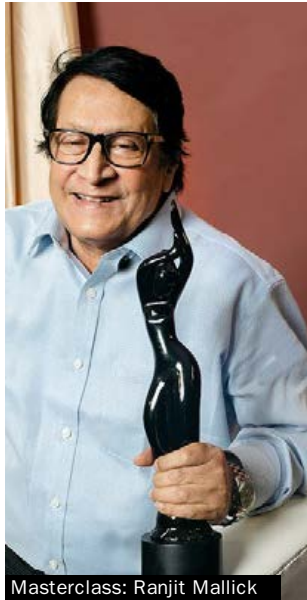
READERS WRITE AND BITE BACK... WITH LOVE AND AFFECTION

1st Prize
₹1500

CONTRIBUTIONS OF A LIFETIME

Ranjit Mallick is an icon in the world of Bengali Cinema. His filmography shows such a stellar rise of him as an artist. He has worked with giants like Satyajit Ray and Mrinal Sen on one hand and has also made his name doing commercial films on the other. I'm so happy that *Filmfare* decided to give him the Lifetime Achievement Award this year. Truly memorable and a moment of utmost pride for all his fans.

Rupa Lahiri, Guwahati



Masterclass: Ranjit Mallick



Numero uno: Prosenjit

BUMBA-STIC PERFORMANCE

Bappi Lahiri has left his lasting impression in the world of music. He is iconic and it was so entertaining to see a star like Prosenjit Chatterjee give such a heartfelt tribute to him by dancing to his songs at the Filmfare Bangla Awards. Loved it.

Bikramjit Ghosh, Burdwan

DEV'S FABULOUS PERFORMANCE

Dev is one of the most loved actors in Tollywood. His massive fan-following is proof. His performance this year at the Filmfare Bangla Awards was an absolute show-stealing moment. As always, he was entertaining through and through. I loved seeing all the visuals in the latest issue of *Filmfare* (April), which was dedicated to the Bangla Awards.

Shreyas Patra, Kolkata

2nd Prize
₹1000

HER MOTHER'S DAUGHTER

I was a huge fan of Sridevi. I loved how she was an all-rounder. From her dancing skills to her onscreen presence - her filmography was a constant inspiration for me ever since I started watching her films. Janhvi Kapoor too has a knack for all these creative talents. Not only is her choice of films very versatile, but she dances well and is one of the most fashionable stars in the current generation. Loved reading her interview in your last issue (April). I'm looking forward to her forthcoming releases like *Mili* and *Good Luck Jerry*.

Ratikant Basu, Howrah

MILLENNIAL STAR JANHVI

Janhvi Kapoor is the ultimate style diva. To me, she is my favourite youth icon, not only for the exceptional scripts she chooses but also for her chic wardrobe picks. I was excited to see her on *Filmfare's* cover in your last issue (April). Her interview was a refreshing read and I'm sure she's going to scale new heights in the years to come.

Sunil Bahri, New Delhi

EXCELLENT EMCEES

So much fun to see my favourite trio - Anirban Bhattacharya, Sohini Sarkar, and Abir Chatterjee host the Joy Filmfare Bangla Awards 2021. They were entertaining through and through and never allowed for a dull moment. Yet another successful year of the most respected entertainment awards function. I loved how your last issue (April) provided a recap of all the fun.

Sukesh Jha, Patna



WEDDING OF THE YEAR

Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt are individually such powerful performers. I had been waiting for this moment forever. Been obsessed with everything regarding their wedding. I loved the way *Filmfare* covered their wedding on their website as well as over their social media pages. Kudos to the whole team on a job well done.

Tarannum Sheikh, Pune



Wedded bliss: Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor

SUMMER WEDDING BELLS

Ranbir and Alia made an Indian summer wedding look right out of a fairytale. The unconventional bridal trousseau, the gorgeous decor, and the lovely couple. So glad *Filmfare* featured snaps from the wedding of the year in their website and social media pages. It deserved a mention as the biggest celeb wedding of the year.

Arun Seth, Vapi

DREAM WEDDING

The Ranbir-Alia wedding was truly a moment of exquisite beauty. I still can't get over how ethereal Alia looked in her beautiful ivory and golden saree - the happy pictures were a delight to breeze through on your website. Keep up the good work, guys.

Mahima Saxena, Delhi

A FAIRYTALE ROMANCE

It still feels so surreal to see Alia Bhatt have that bridal glow! She is an inspiration in many ways and the way she manifested her fairytale love story with Ranbir Kapoor is amazing. No wonder everyone's talking about the wedding of the year, and I am no exception! Thanks, *Filmfare* for the beautiful display of images on your website.

Aakanksha Jain, Gwalior

CORRIGENDUM

We goofed up. In the section profiling the winners of the Joy Filmfare Awards Bangla 2021, we made a mistake in the Best Film Critics' section. The award was won by *Binisutoy* but instead of a short write-up about the film, a profile of *Borunbabur Bondhu* was carried instead. The error is deeply regretted. We offer our sincerest apologies about it.

Binisutoy



All smiles: Aparajita Adhya

ADORABLE APARAJITA

Aparajita Adhya is a true artist. I have always been a fan of how natural she makes her performance look onscreen. *Cheeni* was a lovely film with such beautiful layered characters and a heart-touching storyline. Her comic timing is my personal favourite - a glimpse of which we saw onstage at the Joy Filmfare Bangla Awards too this year. She's someone we all look forward to watching on screen and we're sure she's going to give many more powerful performances in the years to come.

Ronita Gupta, Bangalore



Binisutoy

Just one Point



Enchanting: Janhvi Kapoor

Janhvi Kapoor is a Millennial youth icon - she has the perfect blend of glamour and talent. Loved her photos featured in the last *Filmfare* issue (April). Her style is effortlessly chic.

Seema Sarang, Ratlam

A summertime fairytale romance of Ranbir and Alia was just what us Bollywood buffs needed. We wish the newlyweds all the best in the world.

Sameer Potnis, Panjim

Ranbir and Alia's wedding was the talk of the town, and rightfully so. Alia made for the most beautiful bride.

And Ranbir made for a dapper bridegroom.

Ameen Ahmed, Hyderabad

Prosenjit Chatterjee is a true star. What an entertaining tribute to Bappi Lahiri! For me it was the highlight of the Bangla Awards this year.

Devjani Barua, Rourkela

There's no doubt why Dev is so celebrated in the Bengali film industry. Loved his performance at *Filmfare's* Bangla Awards this year.

Bikram Chattopadhyay, Kolkata

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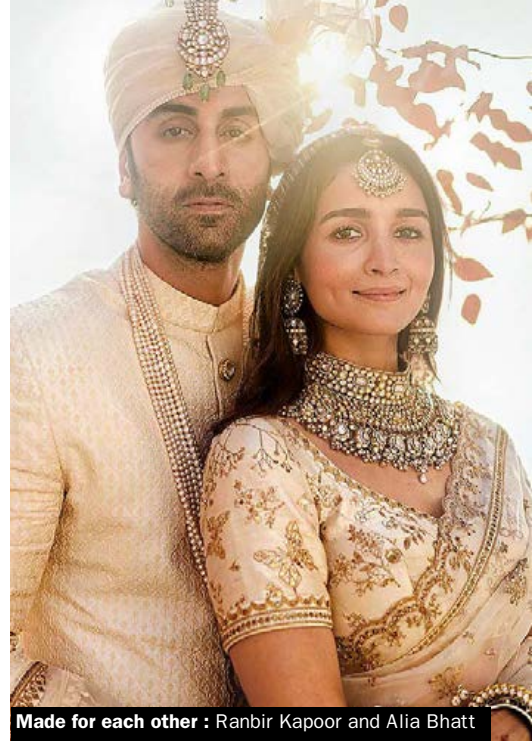


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PHOTOGRAPH: MEETESH TANEJA

Shatrughan Sinha's Rapid fire



Made for each other : Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt

It is the victory, not the ideology that matters the most in modern day politics. Your comments.

Manoj Somai

It's very true. These days we tend to adopt any means to achieve a victorious end. After all, we all desire power, which seems to be of utmost importance in today's time.

Why should there be tickets for temples?

Tulsi Tankha, Ratlam

I do agree. There shouldn't be any tickets for temples. They should be open and free without any fuss, ifs and buts.

A cricketer can prove himself by bowling or batting, an actor can prove

by his acting. How can a politician prove himself?

Atul Tankha, Ratlam

By winning the election with maximum or recording breaking votes as in the case of yours truly recently in Asansol, and then by taking care of the people afterwards sincerely.

Films from South like KGF 2 or RRR are doing very good business on Hindi film screens and are outperforming Hindi films. Comment.

Atul Tankha, Ratlam

They are doing very well. Outperforming? In terms of money they could be but in content they are in parallel with movies of the North. We are one country and we are all doing very well.

How do you classify our Indian democracy, vibrant or good?

Dr C Janardhan Singh, Hyderabad

Ours is the largest democracy and good people make it vibrant undoubtedly.

We see film stars keeping branded foreign breeds of dogs as pets? Why can't they adopt Indian street dogs instead and tend to their welfare?

Tulsi Tankha, Ratlam

Isn't that true of everything else as well these days? People hanker after foreign brands instead of taking pride in Indian products. Many celebrities do contribute to the welfare of street dogs but seldom adopt them as pets.

What's the one thing you can't live without?

Neeraj Sabharwal, Chandigarh
Roti, kapda, makaan and my loved ones. And laughter.

Why is this world so messed up?

Puneet Chadha, Yamuna Nagar
All are crazy running after money. Our *sanskars* seem to have no value but money does. In other words, greed, jealousy, power and more have taken over our priorities in life.

The Alia Bhatt-Ranbir Kapoor wedding has gripped the nation's attention. Kindly comment.

Amit Jain, New Delhi

Like any other celebrity wedding it did generate much media hype. They make a wonderful couple. May God bless them. This marriage is icing on the cake. Ranbir Kapoor being the grandson of the greatest showman Raj Kapoor makes it even more captivating.



Southern spice: KGF 2

1st Prize

Is Mamta Didi a better candidate for the PM's post than others?

Dr Devki Yadav, Ratlam

The iron lady Mamta Banerjee could be a great game changer in 2024 elections since she has political capacity, capable leadership quality and great track record as a leader who cares for the grassroots and is someone who enjoys tons of popularity even outside West Bengal.

2nd Prize

What do you have to say about your Bong connection?

Jaideep Sarkar, Kolkata

Well, I started off in Bengal, being selected in Kolkata for the FTII by great filmmaker Mrinal Sen. I had the opportunity to work with another stalwart Goutam Ghose in *Antarjali Yatra*, one of the best films of my career. And recently, when I fought elections from Asansol, people gave me a landslide victory. I'd always be grateful for their love and support.



Gifted politician: Mamta Banerjee

Pan-Indian films seem to be the order of the day...

Amit Jain, New Delhi

Yes it's a better method of getting across a larger audience. We'd been watching Hindi dubbed versions of South films on TV for quite some time. Now, they're getting released in theatres as well. And anything that comes on OTT has always been pan-Indian content.

My wife doesn't want to marry me in the next birth. What should I do?

JP Singh Kaka, Bhopal

No, my wife wants to marry me in all seven lives and she says this is

the first birth-cycle. God save me.

Why do politicians turn to religion while seeking votes?

MD Arif Khan, Kolkata

Religion unfortunately has been and continues to be misused by our politicians for their own political means.

Can success be measured?

MD Arif Khan, Kolkata

You can only gauge success with humility, grace and being level headed. Unfortunately, even a small amount of success has the effect of eroding such qualities in most people. Hence,

it's indeed difficult to measure success.

Is it true that middle age is the age where people grow in the middle?

JP Singh Kaka, Bhopal

I believe that with age, you grow in all spheres, so even the middle is taken care of.

What were your ambitions in life when you were a child?

Vijayalakshmi Vijay, Mumbai

My parents wanted to become a doctor or scientist like my other brothers but I was naughty and had a great sense of

humour. My heart was into acting. The rest is history.

Will a day come when our country will be free of corruption and dirty politics?

Vijayalakshmi Vijay, Mumbai

Yes, why not. *Modi hai to mumkin hai* is the mantra these days. So anything is possible, even corruption free politics.

(Feature co-ordinated by DEVESH SHARMA)

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

Win!
CASH PRIZES

1st prize

₹3000

2nd prize

₹2000

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

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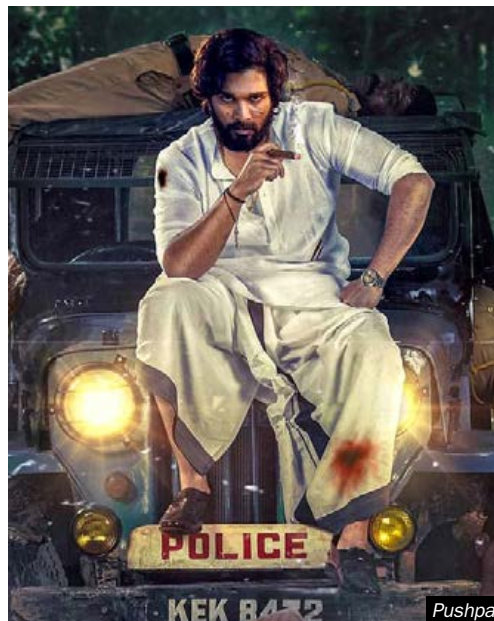
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Pan-Indian films and all that jazz

The South Indian industry has been on a tremendous rise these days. The back-to-back success of Telugu films like *Pushpa* and *RRR*, followed by that of the Kannada film *KGF2* in theatres across India, has breathed life into the cash-strapped distribution and exhibition segments. The cash registers are ringing again, and the theatre owners are happy. Money has no language, or rather, it has a language of its own. So as long as the moolah keeps coming, everyone goes home happy. It doesn't bother anyone where it's coming from.

If you give an ear to the online debates, you'll get to hear that Bollywood is dead. A certain section of the audience doesn't believe in Hindi films and the Hindi film stars any more. Given the fact that only a miniscule number of Indians are active on social media platforms, that might not be that much of a worrying sign. The masses haven't boycotted Bollywood by any means. They've discovered two excellent alternatives: South films and OTT.

The popularity of South films or South



stars shouldn't come as a surprise. Ram Charan wasn't mobbed in Punjab just because of the success of *RRR*. Viewers have been lapping up his dubbed movies for so many years. Not only him, stars such as Vijay, Mahesh Babu, Ajith, Allu Arjun, Dhanush and many more have got dedicated followers up North as well, thanks to their dubbed films being shown on TV channels since the last decade. And now, with the advent of OTT, this penetration has increased more so. The commercial South films are more about showcasing the heroism of the lead star than anything else. And

offer a grand visual splendour as well. It's escapist fare at its best, and maybe because of the coronavirus and its aftermath, people really need that kind of distraction. An escape from reality, as the films of the South have proven to be so adept at providing.

Another argument is that the core entertainment experience has also changed. The various OTT channels bring the best the world has to offer on your screens. You don't need to watch everything on the family TV, but watch it privately as and when you want on your laptops and smartphones. This ease

of comfort means viewers would only be compelled to go to a theatre if you had something really unusual to offer. And so far, the South cinema has come up with the right answers. Right now, the buzz among Bollywood producers is to successfully copy a *KGF* or a *RRR*. Original ideas are being rejected, and copy paste is in the driving seat. Would that be enough to entice the Hindi audience back in? Or are we actually witnessing the birth of a pan-Indian era where only the best will rule the country? Only time will tell...

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