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TOP OF
HER GAME
VIDYA BALAN

**SARA ALI
KHAN**
PLANS HER
BIG MOVE



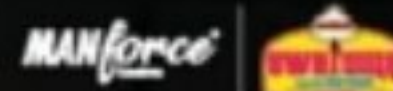
THE
CHAMP

KARTIK AARYAN
EMERGES VICTORIOUS

THE RAZZLE DAZZLE
OF RR KABEL
FILMFARE AWARDS
MARATHI 2024



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PHOTOGRAPHS: ARJUN MARK
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VICKY SALVI | HAIR: MILAN THAPA

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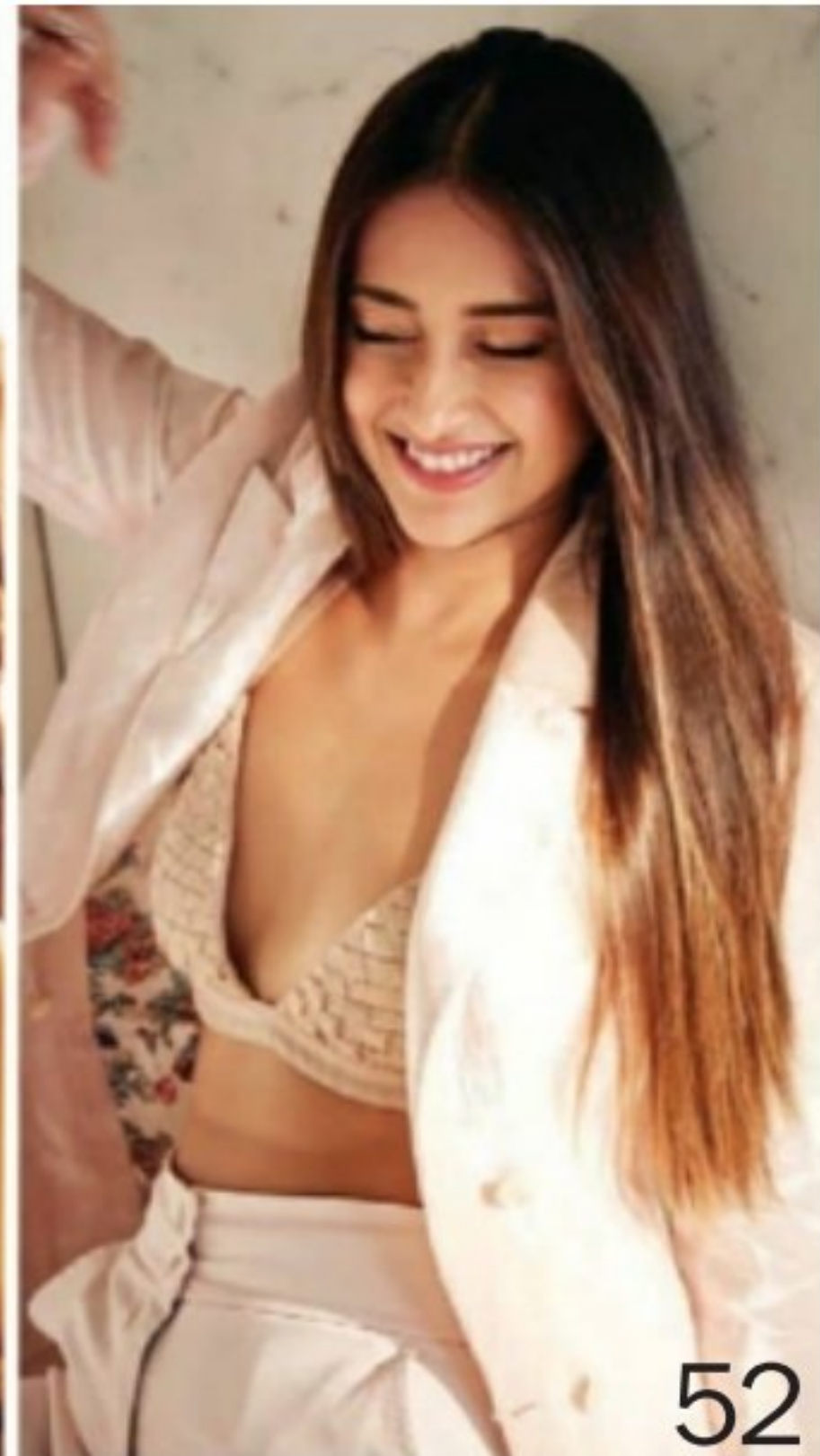
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Letter from the Editor

The contender

Born in Gwalior to a family of doctors, Kartik Aaryan epitomises the story of a complete outsider who carved a niche for himself in the highly competitive Bollywood industry without any godfather. Initially recognized for his remarkable monologue delivery in his debut film *Pyaar Ka Punchnama*, Kartik quickly became a household name. However, he has never shied away from breaking his image, taking on diverse roles that showcase his range as an actor. His performances in *Freddy*, where he played a deranged dentist and *Dhamaka*, where he was a TV reporter and anchor hungry for mileage, are testaments to his ability to evolve and tackle complex characters.

No longer just the charming actor from his early films, Kartik has matured, making smart career choices that have solidified his place in the industry. Movies like *Sonu Ke Titu Ki Sweety* and *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2*, where he replaced Akshay Kumar and succeeded, highlight his knack for selecting projects that resonate with audiences and critics alike. His latest venture, *Chandu Champion*, where he portrays a paralympian under the direction of Kabir Khan, promises to reveal yet another facet of his talent. He has worked really hard on the project and his physical transformation has to be seen to be believed. Let's hope he continues to invest in good directors, as that would certainly pave the way for a better future. He's been mixing genres and that's also a smart move indeed.

Throughout his rise to fame, Kartik has remained grounded and connected to his roots. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he contributed to society through a talk show celebrating the victories of the common man, reflecting his commitment to giving back to the community.

He's had his share of controversies as well and was branded as a Casanova, though he insists that's not the case. It's a fact that he indeed has a large fan following among women, who seem to dig his boy-next-door looks and goofy smile.

Kartik Aaryan's journey is a compelling narrative of perseverance, growth, and versatility, making him one of the most intriguing actors in contemporary Bollywood. This industry, let's not forget, was shaped by outsiders. And currently, in the mind of the masses, Kartik Aaryan has been established as the underdog who has been successfully challenging the established stars for the top spot. He's the great new hope and is revelling in the spotlight.



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

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preview

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

SPICE GIRL

SONIA RATHEE

X FACTOR: MULTITALENTED

Though hailing from the States, Sonia Rathee's personality teems with the spirited essence of Haryana, offering a tantalising blend of skill, charisma, and allure. Beyond her prowess as a trained dancer, she boasts a background in volleyball and MMA, showcasing her multifaceted abilities. Her breakthrough role in *Broken But Beautiful 3* catapulted her to fame, but Sonia Rathee refuses to be confined by a single genre. From the dramatic depths of *Tara Vs Bilal* to the comedic chills of *Kapkapiii* and an upcoming collaboration with Kunal Roy Kapur and Maniesh Paul, she fearlessly explores diverse roles, proving her versatility as an artist.

Newbies Janki Bodiwala and Nitanshi Goel acquaint us of their dreams and desires *pg 10*



FIRST THINGS FIRST

NEWBIE **JANKI BODIWALA**, WHO MADE HER PRESENCE FELT WITH *SHAITAAN*, TALKS ABOUT HER BOLLYWOOD SOJOURN WITH **TANZIM PARDIWALLA**

Great storytelling and performances have always existed in regional cinema, beyond the mainstream. These stories often inspire adaptations and remakes. It's rare to see a key cast member being retained in the remake. This happened for Janki Bodiwala, who got her first break in Krishnadev Yagnik's Gujarati-language film *Chhello Divas*. She then went on to appear in Yagnik's supernatural thriller film *Vash*. Little did she know that she would also bag a role in its Hindi-language remake, *Shaitaan*, starring big names like Ajay Devgn, Jyothika, and R Madhavan, became her Bollywood debut. But it took a while for the bubbly actress to wrap her head around

“When *Vash* was released, it was a very experimental film because it had a very dark concept. The Gujarati audience is more attracted to comedies”





“I attended the trailer launch of *Shaitaan*. That was the first time I saw the paparazzi. It was wild”

the fact that she would be reprising her role. “They approached me and I later found out that Ajay Devgn was playing the father, Jyothika was my mother and R Madhavan was the villain.” Describing her initial reaction, the actress laughs, “I was completely numb. I couldn’t say anything because I think I didn’t even believe them. But I was jumping with joy inside.”

If you thought *Shaitaan* was eerie, you’re not prepared for *Vash*, which according to Janki was a darker film that took a while to find its audience. “When *Vash* was released, it was a

very experimental film because it had a very dark concept. The Gujarati audience is more attracted to comedies. So *Vash* was a risk. The film gained attention slowly through word of mouth. People started telling each other that there was an unexpected Gujarati film in theatres.”

Janki was studying dentistry before she caught the acting bug. It was during a break that she heard about auditions for *Chhello Divas*. She says, “My father knew some people and he encouraged me to try out for a role. I did it and they simply said we can go ahead with this girl. It was a shocker for me.” Looking back

fondly on her debut film, where she was learning on the job, she says, “I was extremely blessed that the cast and crew of my first film were the sweetest, nicest people. They were all trained actors. It was the director’s first film. The crew was working with me for the very first time but they didn’t make me feel like an outsider for not having a theatre background.”

Working on *Shaitaan* didn’t just prove to be a masterclass in acting, it was also a lesson on stardom and humility. “Ajay is a kind person. He’s so sweet and caring. I still remember we were shooting in London and it was very cold. He had a heater around his area on the set. The actor who plays my younger brother and I had just stepped out. He saw that there were no heaters around us. And he immediately called someone and asked them to put heaters around us to keep us warm. That’s something he doesn’t need to do because that isn’t his job. But he did it and I saw

how caring he is for his co-stars, no matter how junior.”

Watching Ajay, Jyothika and Madhavan perform left her in awe. “They didn’t just know their own lines, they also knew their co-stars’ lines. They were all so prepared, not just with the lines but also with the emotions. They really saw the film’s broader vision. Just watching them, I learnt that you really need to do your homework before you come on set. Of course, the director will guide you, but you do your bit. Even after doing so many films, if they can do their homework then you also have to be on your toes when you’re working with them,” she reveals.

Shaitaan was also her first brush with fame and what it means to be recognised as an actor with Mumbai’s paparazzi culture. “I attended the trailer launch of *Shaitaan*. That was the first time I saw the paparazzi. It was wild. The Q&A that happened there was the first promotional thing I did for the film. It felt very nice. At the screening as well, it was fun with people talking to you and coming up to you.”

With conviction in her voice, Janki reveals that she isn’t too caught up in the glitz and glamour of Bollywood. “I would love to work across many genres. In fact, after *Shaitaan*, I did another Gujarati film that’s going to be out soon. It doesn’t matter if it’s Gujarati, Hindi or any other language. I just want to do a good film,” she concludes. ■



←
Shaitaan

Flower power

NITANSHI GOEL HAS WON HEARTS WITH HER NATURAL PERFORMANCE IN KIRAN RAO'S *LAAPATAA LADIES*. SHE CHATS WITH **SUMAN SHARMA** ABOUT HER JOURNEY SO FAR

Nitanshi Goel, a name that's swiftly becoming synonymous with talent and charm, made a sensational debut in Kiran Rao's directorial venture, *Laapataa Ladies*. The comedy-drama saw Nitanshi stepping into the shoes of Phool, a village bride, and left audiences and critics alike singing her praises. Not only did she capture hearts with her performance, but she's also smashing records as the youngest actress with a staggering 10 million followers on Instagram. Quite a feat for this multi-talented starlet who's also a trained dancer and has graced nine TV shows with her presence. Nitanshi is over the moon with the reception she's received. "I feel so loved," she says with a smile. "The compliments are pouring in, and

"I BELIEVE EVERY GIRL HAS A PHOOL INSIDE HER. WE OFTEN DOUBT OUR POTENTIAL, BUT LIKE PHOOL, WE CAN ACHIEVE ANYTHING WE SET OUR MINDS TO"



Laapataa Ladies

some people have even compared me to Shabana Azmi ji. Meeting her was a surreal experience. She said I reminded her of a younger version of herself, which was a huge compliment. We ended up praising each other endlessly.”

Landing the role of Phool was nothing short of a fairy tale for Nitanshi. “*Laapata Ladies* was almost life-changing for me,” she confesses. “Thousands of girls auditioned for Phool, and to be selected by Aamir Khan sir and Kiran Rao ma’am was unbelievable. I didn’t even know that

the hearts of many. “I was deeply moved by Phool’s story and wanted her journey to resonate with everyone. I believe every girl has a Phool inside her. We often doubt our potential, but like Phool, we can achieve anything we set our minds to. Hearing girls say they relate to Phool is incredibly rewarding.”

Meeting Aamir Khan was a dream come true for Nitanshi. “It was such a fan moment. Aamir sir is amazing in every way - his conversation, his performance, his respect for everyone. He took care of me and the team beautifully. He told me, ‘Always choose films that touch your heart and

“IF A SIMPLE GIRL LIKE ME, WITH NO ACTING BACKGROUND, CAN MAKE IT IN MUMBAI, THEN ANY GIRL CAN. WITH THE LOVE OF THE AUDIENCE, I’M SURE THERE’S MUCH MORE TO COME”

Aamir sir was producing the film when I sent my audition tape. When I got the call that I was selected, it was a dream come true. Aamir sir even invited me for lunch! From that moment, I was determined to give my all to this role.”

Transforming into Phool required dedication. “I tanned my skin for three months to achieve Phool’s authentic look. Kiran ma’am and I worked tirelessly on dialogues and did numerous workshops. Sometimes, I doubted myself, but Kiran ma’am always believed in me. Seeing her smile after a good shot made everything worthwhile.”

Phool’s journey touched

match your talent.’ That advice will stay with me forever.” Aamir Khan’s words of wisdom left a lasting impression on Nitanshi. “In Bhopal, someone asked him how he stays so happy. He shared that his mother taught him never to hurt anyone, and if he does, to apologise immediately. This resonates with me deeply.”

Despite her rising fame, Nitanshi remains grounded. “I’m from Noida, a middle-class girl with no filmy background. My father was a banker, and my mother a teacher. I’m currently a class 12 student in Mumbai. My love for the stage started

with school drama competitions. Winning Miss Noida and Miss Junior North India were stepping stones. From there, I moved to TV shows, balancing my studies with acting. Even on set, I always had my school books with me.”

Nitanshi has her eyes set on future collaborations. “I adore Kangana Ranaut’s films like *Queen* and *Manikarnika* and dream of working with Shah Rukh Khan, Kartik Aryan, and Madhuri Dixit. I’m a big fan of period films and hope to work with directors like Sanjay Leela Bhansali and Imtiaz Ali. Experimenting with different genres excites

me.” Beyond acting, Nitanshi is passionate about dancing and singing. “I love to perform and spread love. That’s what I’ve learned and what I strive to do.” Nitanshi’s journey is a testament to following one’s passion. “If a simple girl like me, with no acting background, can make it in Mumbai, then any girl can. With the love of the audience, I’m sure there’s much more to come.”

Nitanshi Goel’s story is one of talent, hard work, and the pursuit of dreams. As she continues to shine in the world of entertainment, she remains an inspiration to aspiring actors everywhere. ■



Lifestyle

fashion, fitness, food, beauty & travel

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



THE RIGHT TOUCH

Makeup ace Adrian Jacobs opens up about his favourite tricks and techniques



🔥 **BOW MANIA:** Bows bring in the perfect blend of chic and dreamy. *pg 20*



🔥 **CAPE FASHION:** Capes add a tinge of misery and drama. *pg 22*



🔥 **COLOUR ME PINK:** Glam up with hot pink in your wardrobe. *pg 23*



🔥 **PEARL TIDE:** Hop onto the pearlcore trend. *pg 24*

COMPILED BY: SRIJANI ROY CHOWDHURY

MAKEUP MARVEL

ACE MAKEUP ARTIST **ADRIAN JACOBS** SURE KNOWS HOW TO UP THE GLAM QUOTIENT, FINDS **TANISHA BHATTACHARYA**



Adrian Jacobs is a renowned makeup artist whose exceptional talent has made him a sought-after name in the Indian film industry. With nearly a decade of experience working with top actresses like Kriti Sanon, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, Sara Ali Khan, and Tamannaah Bhatia, Adrian's artistry extends beyond films to include advertisements and high-profile events. Known for his ability to enhance natural features and his versatility in adapting to different personalities and styles, Adrian's work reflects his deep understanding of beauty and his commitment to his craft. From the demanding sets of *Baahubali* to the glamour of editorial shoots, Adrian continues to inspire with his innovative techniques and passion for makeup artistry.

Kriti Sanon
in *Panipat*





Aishwarya Rai Bachchan



Sara Ali Khan in
Coolie No. 1



Kriti Sanon in *Crew*



Tamannaah Bhatia in
Baahubali The Beginning

You've been Kriti Sanon's go-to makeup artist - how did the journey begin?

I met Kriti at a time when I had just come back from filming *Baahubali* and had been busy for a long time. I remember I got a call to fill in for someone for Kriti, and that's when we got offered *Bareilly Ki Barfi*. We didn't know each other at all, and one thing led to another. We were very quiet during the first half of the film's schedule. It was on the 15th or 16th day that we broke the ice, and the rest is history. We've just connected and become best friends. Even

after the film, we continued working together. Then we started doing work on other formats, be it advertisements or events. It's been almost a decade of us working together now.

There are a lot of peachy and pink colour palettes seen in Kriti's makeup looks - what are her preferences like when it comes to her glam beauty looks?

Kriti loves pink, and sometimes I get agitated with it because she loves putting a lot of pink undertones and overtones. Even though I don't agree every time, it does look lovely on her. Peach is also

I'VE LEARNED THAT IF YOU'RE A MAKEUP ARTIST IN THE INDIAN FILM INDUSTRY, YOU CATER TO DIFFERENT PERSONALITIES, MOODS, AND FACES AND YOU CAN'T BE RESTRICTED

a favourite. You're right about that. Her face always has a pink tone with less foundation. I use a half pump, half squeeze of foundation on a day-to-day basis, and that's been our thing for the longest time now.

Tell us a little about what you've learnt about how to play with different glam looks based on the personality of the star you're working with. I've learned that if you're a makeup

artist in the Indian film industry, you cater to different personalities, moods, and faces and you can't be restricted. There are many people with many opinions around you. When you're working your magic on a star, you need to have your focus right. Once you're good at something, you slowly start building that up with your artist and creating a vibe between the two of you. That's

happened to me with Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, Kriti Sanon, Sara Ali Khan, Parineeti Chopra back in the day, and Amy Jackson. The artist has to believe in you.

To have worked with Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, who's called the most beautiful woman in the world, what was the experience of Fanny Khan like?

Aishwarya Rai truly is the most beautiful woman in the world. *Fanny Khan* came to me at a tender time, but I had already worked with her before. I've been with her for 10-12 years now. She gives a lot of comfort when she likes you

and believes in your craft. She's open to listening, and that gives you a lot of confidence.

What's your process like to curate a beauty look for the celebrity you're working with?

My idea of my work is to enhance the features that the person already has. I want to know the mood of the day, what we are shooting, and the story behind it. I take inputs from editors, directors, technicians, cameramen, and all the artists. Every artist comes with a different mood, mind space, and ideology of makeup. I do very different work between Aishwarya, Kriti, and Sara. I've done *Baahubali* with Tamannaah. They are so different from each other. That's how I work in general, comforting them with my craft but also understanding their requirements.

Is there a connection between how you curate a makeup look for promotions based on the onscreen character that the star is portraying?

What happens is that the mood of the film, rather than the character, sometimes takes precedence during promotions. One wants the character to be fully revealed.

Quick take with Adrian Jacobs

ONE MAKEUP TREND YOU WISH NEVER COMES BACK

Baking. Absolutely not for me. I don't get the logic behind it.

ONE MAKEUP TREND YOU WISH ALWAYS STAYS TRENDY

The dewy makeup trend is everlasting and an all-time favourite.

YOUR FAVOURITE MAKEUP PRODUCT

Terry for Mac, great lipstick. L'Oréal Mascara Black Magic, Blacktrack by Mac, and the Armani Foundation.

ONE MAKEUP PRODUCT YOU'RE CURRENTLY OBSESSED WITH

Mac is coming with the Teddy 2 Lip Shade and Hyphen's lip balm.

YOUR FAVOURITE EYE MAKEUP LOOK OF ALL TIME

Semi-smokey eyes leading from brown to black is an all-time killer.



With Kriti Sanon

KRITI LOVES PINK, AND SOMETIMES I GET AGITATED WITH IT BECAUSE SHE LOVES PUTTING A LOT OF PINK UNDERTONES AND OVERTONES. EVEN THOUGH I DON'T AGREE EVERY TIME, IT DOES LOOK LOVELY ON HER

We do take a big part of the character into promotions because we're trying to sell the film itself. For example, in *Panipat*, Kriti is an Indian historical character. So obviously her promotional looks were very traditional. While you won't go too modern, you will be true to the character. But having said that, it's always a change because there's always a designer on set who's very different. It's a different person,

and when you're promoting, there is a different stylist. There has to be a balance between all the ideas.

Take us back to the *Baahubali* journey - a fictional historical saga. How's the research and prep for something so big and different from commercial cinema?

Baahubali has been one of the most fulfilling but tiring experiences. SS Rajamouli is sharp, particular, and very kind. He challenges and intimidates you

because he's trying to get the best out of you. But he's also trying to get the best out of what is good for the film and the character. He gets so deep into the character that he wants you to do the same. We shot in all kinds of weather, and we were shooting for 16 hours in a day for the main song. Tamannaah's face was eventually looking oily, and there was nothing you could do; they were tricky times. Tamannaah



Janhvi Kapoor



Sara Ali Khan

I LOVE FILMS BECAUSE YOU SET YOUR PLACE IN THE BEGINNING, AND THEN YOU'RE SET FOR 40-50 DAYS. OUTDOORS EXCITE ME BECAUSE I'M MEETING SO MANY PEOPLE. EDITORIAL FOR ME IS ABOUT COMING ON BOARD TO CREATE SOMETHING THAT YOU DON'T EVEN THINK EXISTS



Madhuri Dixit Nene

is extremely fair, and he was clear about making her look like a certain tribe. She lives in the forest, and that was difficult for me because she's so fair that eventually, after every 30 minutes, the dark tone would turn fair again. Her natural colour would take over because of the heat, the rain, or just sweat. It was difficult but very fulfilling.

Are there any films or genres that inspired you to get more experimental with your makeup game?

I'm not someone who gets easily inspired. Maybe one person, rather than a film,

Mickey Contractor, is someone who set the bar. I feel inspired by his work because nobody does clean makeup better than him. His work in *Cocktail* with Deepika is unparalleled. I usually don't like looking at someone else's work and replicating it. I may just look at it, but I always have a mindset of my own and want to create my own.

Do celebs like Sara Ali Khan or Kriti offer suggestions for the kind of makeup looks you're planning for them?

They want to know what's going on before we start.

We'll have a little chat for 10-15 minutes before we begin the makeup. When Kriti's hair is getting done, and there is a different colour palette for that day, she will discuss what's going on. Kriti is never overbearing. She makes you believe that you're great, but she'll give inputs and be particular at the same time. I get along well with Sara's mother. So there are times when we'll click a picture, and if I think it's good work, I'll send it to Sara's mum. I get a lot of satisfaction from talking to her mum and her approval

more than Sara's. Sometimes Sara can get edgy, and we do mad work together.

Which format do you enjoy the most - films, editorial, or promotions?

All three are so different. Promotions are super hectic; you don't even know which city you're in. There are so many looks, sometimes three in a day. There's so much happening on the day the film releases because it's from two weeks ago. Actors are so stressed about how the film is going to do. They want to look good because that's the only time they're

getting away from the film character. I love films because you set your place in the beginning, and then you're set for 40-50 days. Outdoors excite me because I'm meeting so many people. Editorial for me is about coming on board to create something that you don't even think exists. And for me, it is particularly because it takes the other side, which is very deeply rooted. Here's your opportunity to get away from beauty and go all out and do things that are different. I love soft makeup. Editorial is all about being experimental. ■

Bollywood Bow-tique

Both Big and dainty bows are a hit

Bow fashion is on the rise in Bollywood, and there is no incorrect way to wear this trend. Actresses like Priyanka Chopra Jonas, Deepika Padukone, and Ananya Panday are effortlessly adorning dresses, tops, and pants with bows to add a whimsical touch to their ensembles. From oversized statement bows to subtle accents, the versatility of bow outfits allows for unlimited creativity in styling, and Bollywood's best dressed are taking full advantage of it. The celebrities are effortlessly showcasing this trend of bow fashion on red carpets and promotional events.

OUR HOT PICKS

DEEPIKA PADUKONE

PRIYANKA CHOPRA JONAS

JANHVI KAPOOR

ANANYA PANDAY

SHRADDHA KAPOOR

Alberta Ferretti

Giambattista Valli

Maison Margiela

Atu Body Couture

TOP TRENDS

Make it dramatic this season with the dreamy bow trend that's hot off the runway

SHINING BRIGHT LIKE A DIAMOND!

DANUBE PROPERTIES DUBAI LAUNCHES DIAMONDZ, A 5400 CRORE SKYSCRAPER IN THE HEART OF DUBAI, IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE BOLLYWOOD HEARTTHROB SALMAN KHAN AND HIS BEING STRONG FITNESS EQUIPMENT

Danube Properties Dubai, renowned for its innovative project launches, recently unveiled its latest venture, Diamondz. This 5400-crore skyscraper, located in the heart of Dubai, will feature a gym equipped with Salman Khan's 'Being Strong Fitness Equipment.'

This property has quickly made headlines with its latest project, owing to the plethora of amenities it offers. This reflects the company's unwavering commitment to excellence and innovation. Customer satisfaction remains their top priority, driving them to continually exceed expectations in the real estate market. Talking more about this Rizwan Sajan, Founder and Chairman of Danube Group Dubai, said, "Danube focuses on customers, and for us, their satisfaction is everything. Keeping in mind the need to maintain a healthy and balanced lifestyle, we are delighted to have associated with Salman Khan's Being Strong Equipment for its first-ever gym in our most



Rizwan Sajan with Salman Khan

luxurious project."

The grand inauguration of Diamondz featured Bollywood megastar Salman Khan alongside eminent dignitaries from the UAE.

Elated with the property for its emphasis on promoting a healthy lifestyle, Salman Khan remarked, "I am personally very happy to launch the first gym in Dubai with Being Strong equipment at the Diamondz by Danube project. This underscores the importance of quality workouts and a healthy lifestyle."

GRACIOUS ZEENAT TO HOST 'UNFOLD WITH ZEENAT'

TUNE INTO UNFOLD WITH ZEENAT, AS ICONIC HOST ZEENAT UNVEILS THE STRUGGLES AND TRIUMPHS BEHIND THE SUCCESS OF ARTISTS AND INFLUENCERS IN HER CAPTIVATING PODCAST SERIES

In the ever-evolving landscape of entertainment media, 'Unfold with Zeenat' emerges as a refreshing and nostalgic podcast, offering listeners an authentic glimpse into the real stories behind the success of artists and influencers. Hosted by the iconic Zeenat Qureshi, this series delves into the captivating journeys and struggles that have shaped the Hindi film and influencer industry.

Zeenat Qureshi, a revered figure in the Indian entertainment industry, brings her wealth of experience and charm to the



podcast, making each episode a treasure trove of memories and insights. In her latest episode, available on YouTube, she sits down with notable personalities to discuss their journeys, struggles, and triumphs, painting a vivid picture of Bollywood's rich history.

"Unfold with Zeenat" stands out for its authenticity and depth, as Zeenat's warm and engaging style invites listeners to experience the human side of Bollywood. Whether you are a longtime fan of Indian cinema or a newcomer curious about its legacy, this podcast offers a delightful blend of nostalgia and enlightenment.

Tune in to 'Unfold with Zeenat' on YouTube and join Zeenat Qureshi on a nostalgic journey through Bollywood's timeless magic.

On the cloak

Our superheroines love wearing capes

Whether slightly placed over a traditional ensemble or donned with a modern look, capes are helping fashion-forward actresses like Alia Bhatt, Sara Ali Khan, and Kriti Sanon display elegance while bringing something unique to the table. These capes also successfully add finesse to laid-back and relaxed outfits. From intricately embroidered pieces to minimalist designs, capes also offer endless creative possibilities to designers. Bollywood's fascination with capes and cloaks also exemplifies its timeless appeal as classic wear. It offers a perfect blend of tradition and modern style on the silver screen and beyond.



PRIYANKA
CHOPRA JONAS



ALIA BHATT



ANANYA PANDAY

CAPES
ZONE



POOJA HEGDE



SARA ALI KHAN

KRITI SANON



Capes have been a go-to style to add a flair of glamour to your outfits and your favourite Bollywood divas approve!



RAKUL PREET SINGH

Haute pink

Pink is the new black, alright

The hot pink saree trend rightly celebrates individuality and style and has become a symbol of charisma in Bollywood. It's become a signature statement on red carpets and in movies. These sarees often feature a plain base or one with sleek embroidery, like tiny floral motifs. If elegantly draped, they display glamour and command attention. Celebrities like Deepika Padukone, Kiara Advani, and Samantha Ruth Prabhu are making waves with their styling of these attractive pink sarees. These actresses complete the look with matching or contrasting jewelry, including golden or emerald green pieces.

Bold and beautiful has been the mantra with the hot pink colour trend topping the list



KIARA ADVANI



SAMANTHA RUTH PRABHU



JENNIFER LOPEZ

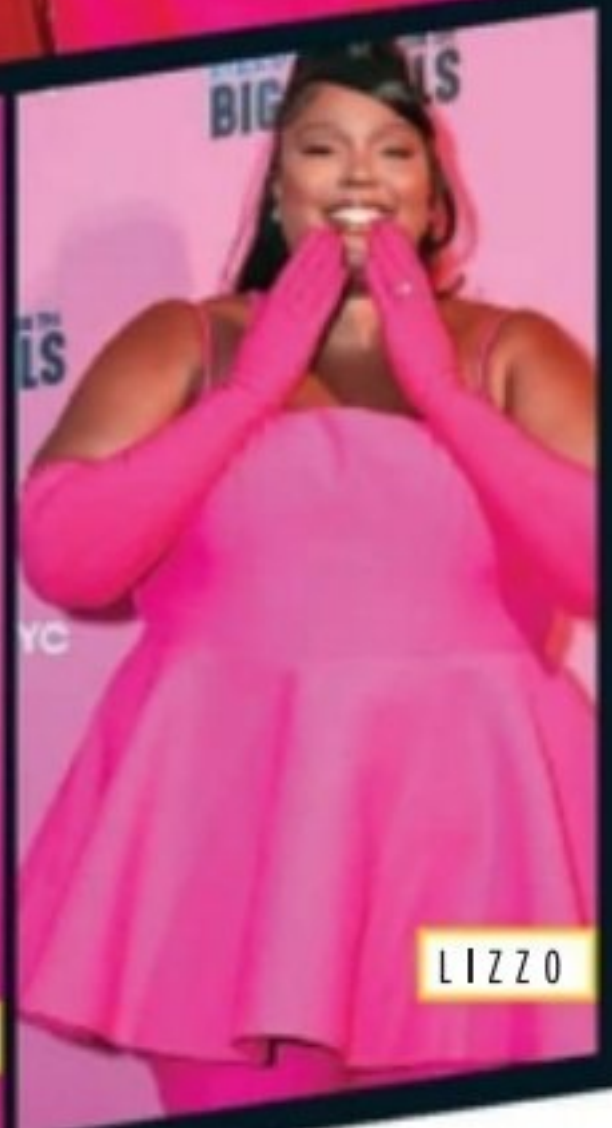


ANNE HATHAWAY

PRETTY IN PINK



ZENDAYA



LIZZO

SONAKSHI
SINHA

JANHVI
KAPOOR

PEARL
SUPREMACY

DEEPIKA
PADUKONE

NORA
FATEHI

SHARVARI WAGH

Pearl elegance

The dramatic pearl blouse trend is here to stay

Actresses including Deepika Padukone, Janhvi Kapoor, and Sonakshi Sinha are donning blouses adorned with delicate pearls and pearl-like jewels. These pearls add a tinge of drama to traditional attire like lehengas and sarees. They add a subtle yet striking detail and enhance the overall appeal of the costume. These blouses are being flaunted on and off-screen to make glamorous style statements without going overboard on accessories. From important red carpet events to personal celebrations, these pearly beauties have become the supreme choice for B-town stars who want to stand out.

Maximalist fashion right on the forefront with the exquisite pearlcore obsession reigning supreme

exclusives

what's on their mind?

BROADENING HORIZONS

This film (*Chandu Champion*) has given me a new life. I no longer feel dependent on the box office, reviews, or validation. It made me disconnect from the industry and its ways. It made me stronger mentally and made me a more positive person

Kartik Aaryan has always played smart with his movie choices. In an exclusive interview, he speaks about how his new film, *Chandu Champion*, is going to be a game changer for him.

PHOTOGRAPH:
ARJUN MARK



BREAKFAST WITH A CHAMP

KARTIK AARYAN is all grit and gumption as he takes on another challenge, playing *Chandu Champion*. JITESH PILLAI tries to unravel the process that went into the making of an unsung hero thus far

PHOTOGRAPHS: ARJUN MARK
STYLIST: VAINGLORIOUS | MAKEUP: VICKY SALVI | HAIR: MILAN THAPA

HOW DID A BOY FROM GWALIOR SHIMMY INTO THE HEARTS OF SHOWBIZ? WITHOUT GODFATHERS AND CONNECTIONS, JUST HOW DID HE PROVE THAT HE HAD WHAT IT TAKES? OF COURSE, HE RUFFLED LOADS OF FEATHERS IN SHOWBIZ, BUT THIS BIOTECH ENGINEERING GRADUATE SLALOMED TO THE TOP OF HIS GAME. WHAT MAKES KARTIK ARYAN TICK, YOU MAY ASK? Is it the *X factor*, his ability to romance women on screen, or just his sheer charm? He's got it made. From his monologue in the misogynistic *Pyaar Ka PUNCHnama* to his easy-breezy act in *Bhool Bhulaiyaa*, Aaryan has struck a chord. Is it his small-town believability in films like *Satyaprem ki Katha* and *Luka Chuppi* or his roving eye act in *Pati Patni Aur Woh*? Aaryan is your Everyman, and that makes identification easy. He's not overwhelming you with ideology; he's not consumed by being a fashion icon. He plays it straight. A certain believability in his performances has hit pay dirt. He's the quintessential nice guy, everyone will tell you. The characters speak for themselves. It's this Everyman quality that he channels in his latest outing, *Chandu Champion*, portraying Murlikant Petkar, India's first Paralympic Gold medalist. You watch frames of the reel, and he's morphed into the skin of Petkar as *Chandu Champion*. All of which adds up to the right time to meet him for a chat fest. Juhu, on a sultry summer mid-morning has an array of sounds—from cars zigzagging through the bylanes to contractors hard at work, birds twittering while busy bees dig up and repair roads. Here's a transcript of a conversation with the man of the moment, Kartik Aaryan.







WHAT HAVE YOU GIVEN TO CHANDU CHAMPION AND WHAT HAS THE FILM GIVEN TO YOU?

Chandu Champion has given me a lot. When Kabir (Khan) sir first approached me, neither of us knew it would lead to this role. But when he narrated the story of Murlikant Petkar, I was captivated. It felt unique and important. So, despite not knowing the challenges ahead, I eagerly agreed to be part of it, knowing it would be fulfilling.

THE FILM IS INSPIRED BY MURLIKANT PETKAR; HOW DID HIS STORY IMPACT YOU?

Playing such a character instils a belief in invincibility, where

willpower and hard work are paramount. Like Petkar, the determination to achieve becomes paramount. I mirrored Brad Pitt's physique from *Fight Club* as my goal, embodying the power of manifestation. The journey took dedication, but when I matched the envisioned physique, the fulfilment was unmatched. It's about cultivating a 'Champion's Mentality', feeling like a superhero in every endeavour. The relentless pursuit of excellence became my mantra, earning me the nickname 'machine' from my team as I dedicatedly pursued swimming,

gymming, boxing, and a predictable soup for dinner every night.

WHAT WAS THE ADVICE THAT MURLIKANT PETKAR GAVE YOU WHEN YOU SPOKE TO HIM?

When I met him, he was full of energy. He always used to come wearing a blazer, which had all his medals on it. I met his children and his grandchildren as well. I remember we had met right after I completed my swimming session, and he was really, really happy about how his story was being moulded by Kabir sr. He told me that I was doing a specific swimming stroke exactly like him. That was

journey, this is the toughest role of my career, and I don't think I am ever going to do a role tougher than this. It was about mental strength more than physical strength.

CAN YOU RECALL AN INCIDENT WHERE YOUR MENTAL STRENGTH WAS TESTED?

Our aim was to reach 12 per cent body fat; when I checked it for the first time, it was 41 per cent, which is obese. It was mind over matter from that day onwards.

DON'T YOU FEEL HUNGRY ON A DIET?

The thing is we are all so used to having junk that it becomes normal for us. To

the biggest thing for me and it stayed with me. Because we did not have any video of him. He's a happy man.

WHAT ARE THE THREE LESSONS YOU HAVE LEARNED FROM CHANDU CHAMPION, AND WHAT HAS IT GIVEN YOU?

This film has given me a new life. I no longer feel dependent on the box office, reviews, or validation. It made me disconnect from the industry and its ways. It made me stronger mentally and made me a more positive person. It just generated a lot of warm and positive energy in me. Lastly, it taught me to be fearless. Because it has been such an inspirational

have biscuits, snacks, and other unhealthy things. At one point, I used to have five rotis, and now I can't even have two. I feel full on days I have two. It's all about replacing unhealthy options with healthier ones and training your body. Now I can't even imagine overfeeding myself; it just makes me very uncomfortable. This way your stomach will also feel better, you'll feel lighter.

DID KABIR KHAN'S FITNESS RUB OFF ON YOU?

He is genuinely so fit and kind of an inspiration as well. He's the right person to be around for this kind of film. The way he follows his diet, the way he goes to

“CHANDU CHAMPION HAS GIVEN ME A LOT. WHEN KABIR (KHAN) SIR FIRST APPROACHED ME, NEITHER OF US KNEW IT WOULD LEAD TO THIS ROLE. BUT WHEN HE NARRATED THE STORY OF MURLIKANT PETKAR, I WAS CAPTIVATED. IT FELT UNIQUE AND IMPORTANT”



the gym, rigorously works out, and doesn't even take a day off—no matter how busy he is, wherever he is shooting or how tired he is—I have seen that myself, and that's the reason I got inspired by him. Apart from that, when we met two years back, I realised that I had never been offered a film in which I had to be bare-chested for the most part of it. Kabir sir made sure that the best teams would come to train me. My swimming coach, Virdhawal Khade, is an Olympian. My boxing trainer was Tridev Pandey. For the first time ever, I was exposed to physiotherapy. I come from a family of doctors, but I never went to a physiotherapist before I met Vaibhav. Amidst all this, I was thinking in my head, 'I'll make the body anyway, what's the big fuss around it.' But, that's when I realised I had gained a lot of fat for *Freddy*.

HOW DID YOU MANAGE TO PUT ON SO MUCH WEIGHT?

Simply by indulging in eating. I allowed myself to eat whatever I desired, particularly sweets, as I have a strong inclination towards them. Incorporating something sweet after meals became a habitual ritual for me, making it challenging to break. Consequently, I experienced withdrawal symptoms when I made the decision to cut out sugar completely, recognizing it as my adversary. This meant bidding farewell to a variety of treats like chocolates, ras malai, and cold coffee, which are commonly enjoyed by many. Initially, it

was tough, and I even succumbed to temptations and cheated on my diet. However, after about 15 days, I gradually began to appreciate the absence of sugar in my diet. I realised that I didn't need a sweet fix after every meal and that consuming sugar was detrimental to my health and well-being. This realisation wasn't just for the sake of a film role; it became a personal conviction that indulging in sugar was detrimental to my own body. Over time, my mindset shifted, and I abstained from sugar entirely for a year and a half. There was

from grated cauliflower. It wasn't rice, but it provided fibre and eliminated carbs, making meals like tofu and Cauli Rice conducive to weight management. I embraced a diet rich in salads, beans, lentils, and paneer. Adhering to a routine where I prioritised eight hours of sleep became paramount. Cutting out sugar not only aided in weight management but also improved my quality of sleep. Although daunting at first, I gradually found enjoyment in this lifestyle shift. Initially, I fretted over how to adjust my sleep schedule and bid

BESIDES THE DIETARY ADJUSTMENTS, HOW CHALLENGING WAS THE PHYSICAL TRAINING?

Swimming and boxing really pushed me. Despite being an amateur swimmer, my skills were limited to casual splashing around in the pool; I had no professional technique. However, Kabir sir ensured we had top-notch professionals alongside for scenes; for swimming sequences, we had Olympic swimmers. He emphasised, 'You need to be the best swimmer on screen,' so I trained with that goal in mind. Likewise, for boxing scenes, the boxers were

I MIRRORED BRAD PITT'S PHYSIQUE FROM FIGHT CLUB AS MY GOAL, EMBODYING THE POWER OF MANIFESTATION. THE JOURNEY TOOK DEDICATION, BUT WHEN I MATCHED THE ENVISIONED PHYSIQUE, THE FULFILMENT WAS UNMATCHED

a memorable moment captured on film when, after completing the movie, Kabir Khan offered me *Ras Malai*, marking the first time in over a year and a half that I had consumed sugar. However, even then, I found myself disliking the experience, indicating that my mindset had indeed transformed significantly.

DID YOU TAKE THE HELP OF EXPERTS TO BREAK THE HABIT?

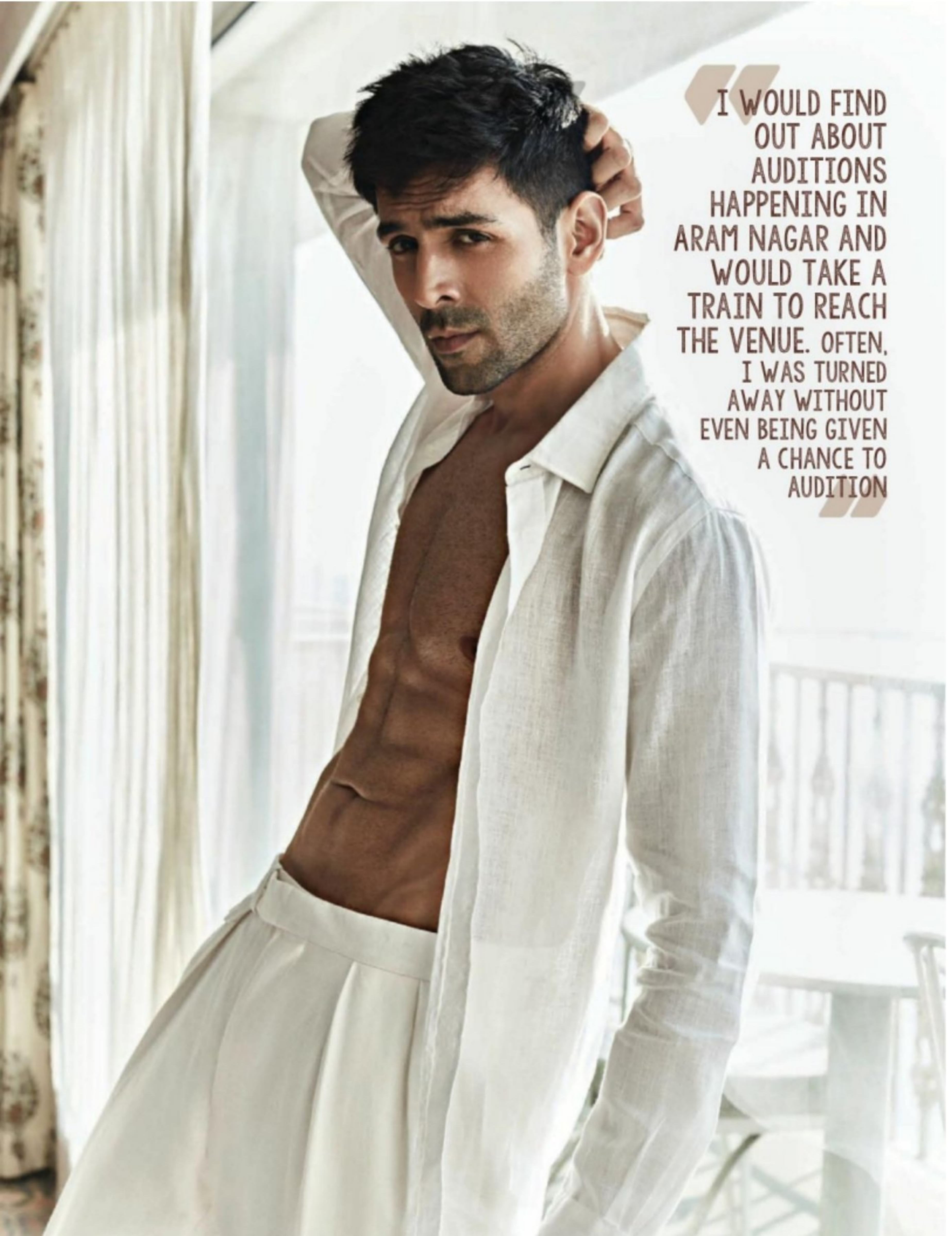
Yes, the nutrition experts stepped in, guiding me on what foods to incorporate and what to steer clear of entirely. I switched to having soup for dinner and replaced rice with Cauli Rice for lunch—a concoction made simply

farewell to sugar, as well as how to achieve my desired physique without resorting to unnatural means like steroids. I firmly believed in avoiding such substances due to their detrimental effects, and my team shared the same stance. Despite the considerable effort required, we remained committed to the natural path, understanding that achieving our goals would demand both time and unwavering patience.

WAS IT MORE DIFFICULT BECAUSE YOU'RE A VEGETARIAN?

Yes, it was, because there were fewer options. I went towards spinach and paneer for protein.

all seasoned pros, with one even fresh from the World Championship. Seeing him in action on screen made me realise I had to match up in just two weeks. This spurred me to refine my skills diligently. Swimming in a film was something I never imagined; I used to fear it immensely and doubted my abilities for a long time. The structured regimen was crucial; I'd wake up at 6:00 am, hit the gym by 7:00 am, return within an hour for my first meal, then head to boxing class. I halted all other projects for a year and a half, a stark contrast to my usual pace of juggling multiple films a year.

A full-page photograph of a man with dark hair and a light beard, wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and white trousers. He is standing on a balcony, leaning against a white railing, with his left hand behind his head. The background shows a balcony railing and some foliage. The lighting is bright and natural, suggesting daytime.

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WERE YOU FEELING ANNOYED OR ANGERED DURING THAT PERIOD?

Actually, it was quite the opposite. It felt more like a form of meditation to me. Despite many people suggesting that sticking to a strict diet might provoke a different reaction in me, it actually felt meditative. While there were moments of withdrawal where I craved certain foods but couldn't indulge, those passed relatively quickly. My focus was solely on my physical regimen, diving into boxing and swimming lessons. I remember vividly my first swimming class, where Vir bluntly told me I was terrible, leading me to question if my trainers disliked me. Their directness left no room for doubt. At times, I even questioned my ability to portray the role effectively. Ultimately, it all came down to getting into the zone, taking each step methodically. For instance, we had to film at an Olympic Aquatic stadium, with only a one-month window available in three years. I found myself surrounded by Olympians and seasoned swimmers. While we initially studied footage of athletes like Michael Phelps and Muhammad Ali, Kabir sir insisted I focus solely on mastering the required skills. It became clear he aimed for me to embody the essence of an athlete. In some scenes, I felt completely immersed in the character of Murlikant, reminiscent of my days in school or university, where I absorbed knowledge from every available source.

HOW DOES SOMEONE MAINTAIN THEIR MENTAL WELL-BEING WHILE



BACK IN GWALIOR, THE WORLD OF MOVIE STARS SEEMED DISTANT AND UNREACHABLE. I COULDN'T EVEN FATHOM BECOMING A HINDI FILM HERO.

EVEN NOW, DESPITE MY ACHIEVEMENTS, THE FEAR OF LOSING IT ALL PERSISTS

DEDICATING SO MUCH TO A FILM?

Perhaps due to my background in sports, integrating a diet into my regimen transformed me into the athlete I was striving to be. It was largely a test of mental fortitude, offering valuable insights into life and relationships. I reduced my phone usage, limited social engagements to only essential ones, and prioritised rest, often feeling ready for bed by 10:00 pm. Night shoots became increasingly difficult to endure, prompting questions about their necessity. Every moment became precious when adhering to such a structured routine, with specific time slots allocated for workouts and sleep. Despite the challenges, I experienced a newfound

sense of health and positivity. I felt better than ever before, to the extent that I would have embraced even an adversary if they had crossed my path during that time. This process granted me valuable personal time, a reprieve from the relentless work schedule, allowing me to reconnect with myself.

HAVE YOU EVER ATTENDED THERAPY?

No, I haven't. I've never felt the need for such sessions. It's commonly said to be beneficial for many issues, but perhaps I've been fortunate due to the support of my family and friends.

WHAT'S YOUR PERSPECTIVE ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

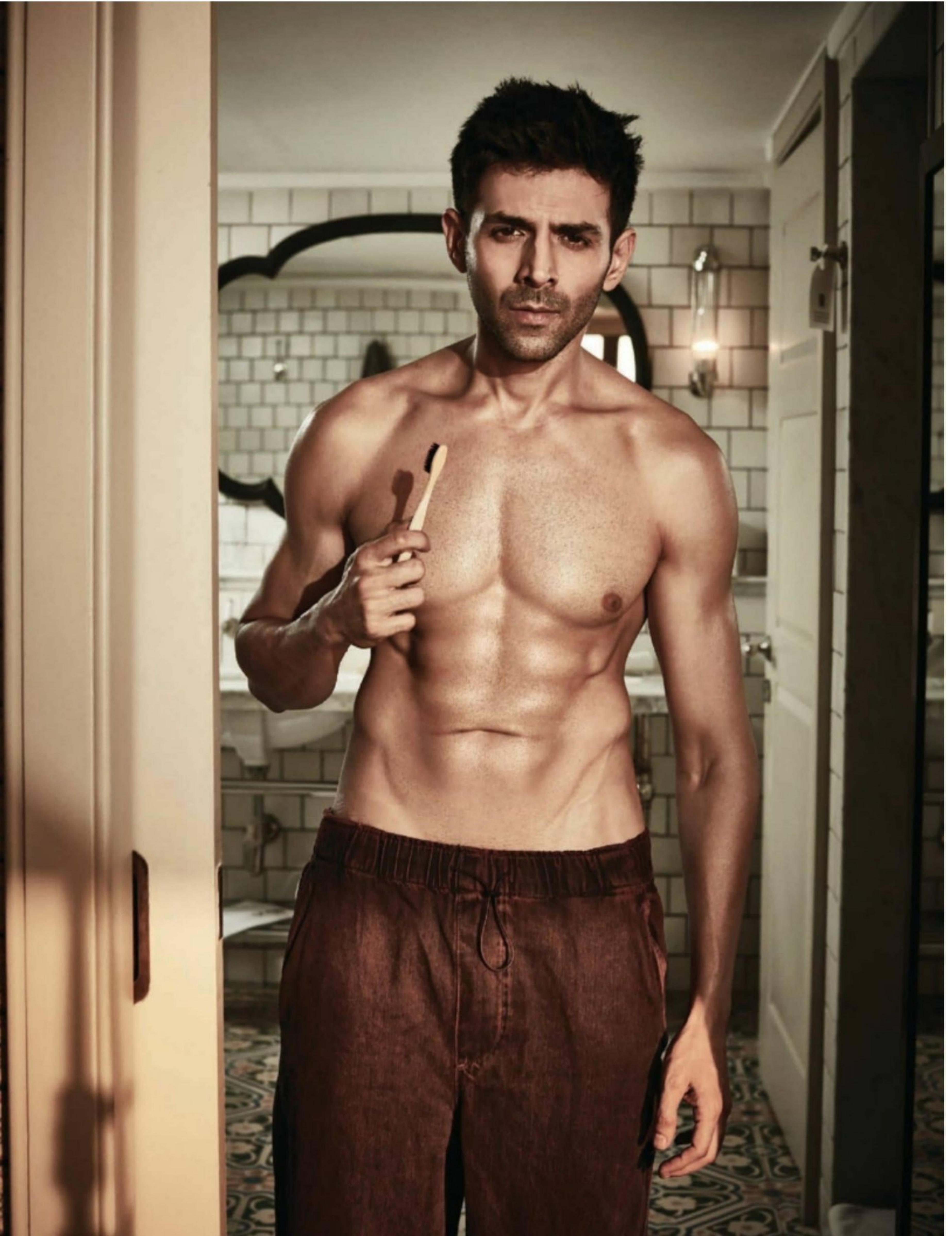
Why do contemporary

actors obsess over every piece written about them? It detracts from our purpose. In the past, media, including social media, was more limited. Nowadays, it's pervasive. Personally, I approach social media as part of my work, although it doesn't significantly impact my life. Yet, I do believe it can compromise authenticity.

HOW DOES HAVING AN ACTING CAREER INTERSECT WITH SOCIAL MEDIA?

I don't believe they're inherently linked. However, it's hard to imagine anyone completely disconnected from social media today. It's an unparalleled tool for staying informed.

DO YOU TAKE SOCIAL MEDIA





COMMENTARY SERIOUSLY?

At times, yes. Other times, no. Nonetheless, as a human, I'm affected by both praise and criticism. There are days when I feel disappointed despite my best efforts if my work isn't acknowledged.

SOME ACTORS AVOID SOCIAL MEDIA ALTOGETHER.

Many who claim to abstain from social media often maintain private accounts. Rejecting publicity can sometimes be a form of publicity itself. It's an integral aspect of our profession.

DO YOU HAVE FRIENDS WITHIN THE INDUSTRY OR OUTSIDE OF IT?

Outside of the industry. They often give me more than just a reality check.

HOW DO YOU HANDLE CRITICISM?

I don't like being ignored. I thrive on attention, positive or negative. Complete silence from the public would affect me more deeply.

ARE YOU CONTINUALLY IN SEARCH OF APPROVAL?

Not anymore. Initially, I sought validation for everything, but after spending several years in the industry, I've reached a point where I no longer feel the need for it. I've stopped taking validation so seriously. Now, I only value the validation of the audience. I've mentioned this before, but it's genuinely how I feel. Over the years, I've received a lot of love from the audience, and having them by my side makes me feel empowered.

DO YOU WORRY ABOUT BEING JUDGED?

Yes, if you put it that way,



HE (KABIR KHAN) IS GENUINELY SO FIT AND KIND OF AN INSPIRATION AS WELL. HE'S THE RIGHT PERSON TO BE AROUND FOR THIS KIND OF FILM. THE WAY HE FOLLOWS HIS DIET, THE WAY HE GOES TO THE GYM, RIGOROUSLY WORKS OUT, AND DOESN'T EVEN TAKE A DAY OFF—NO MATTER HOW BUSY HE IS, WHEREVER HE IS SHOOTING OR HOW TIRED HE IS

I do feel concerned about being judged unfairly. However, I've stopped striving to please everyone.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO A 22-YEAR-OLD KARTIK?

I'd tell him to stop seeking validation. That's genuinely what I would say. At that time, I was constantly seeking it, especially since I didn't know anyone in the industry and felt alone. I craved acceptance and opportunities. I believed in my work and worked hard, but now my focus is simply on whether I'm entertaining or not. Initially, there was a lot of self-doubt, and I felt unsure

about where I stood at parties. But now, it doesn't bother me even if I'm standing alone.

DO YOU RECALL A MOMENT WHEN YOU FAILED AN AUDITION?

I used to attend auditions directly without any connections to casting directors. I would find out about auditions happening in Aram Nagar and would take a train to reach the venue. Often, I was turned away without even being given a chance to audition. Securing an audition for a film was rare and felt like hitting the jackpot. There would be long queues, and sometimes, after hours of

waiting, I would be told that I wasn't suitable for the role. Experiences like these left a lasting impact, and I felt disheartened at times. I grew resentful, but eventually, I learned to channel that negativity. I would tell myself that it was their loss.

WHAT'S THE WORST THING THAT HAS BEEN SAID TO YOU?

"*Likh ke lelo ye Hindi film ka hero nahi ban sakte*" (Take it from me in writing that he can't become a Hindi film hero).

HAVE DIRECTORS EVER RECONSIDERED WORKING WITH YOU AFTER INITIALLY DECLINING?

Absolutely! Many have. I view it as a sort of cosmic justice. My approach isn't about confrontation; it's about dedication to my craft. Those around me know I've put in relentless effort, like a well-oiled machine. I don't take breaks, I'm not one for parties, drinking, or smoking. I don't judge those who do, but my only addiction is work. It's as if there's a higher power recognizing my sincerity towards my craft. *(Laughs)* Perhaps that's why I'm single too. My focus is always on the task at hand.

BUT YOU WERE A CASANOVA AT ONE POINT...
(Laughs) Not anymore.

WHAT ARE YOUR ASPIRATIONS?
My goals are ever-evolving; I constantly set new ones as I gradually accomplish the old ones. I believe in the power of manifestation and superstition, always envisioning success. I've faced challenges that seem unimaginable to many, but for me, it's always been about the work. I have faith that my efforts don't go unnoticed, that there's a higher force recognizing them.

HAS THE ALLURE OF MONEY, LOVE, AND FAME EVER GONE TO YOUR HEAD?
Back in Gwalior, the world of movie stars seemed distant and unreachable. I couldn't even fathom becoming a Hindi film hero. Even now, despite my achievements, the fear of losing it all persists. From my humble beginnings in Gwalior to the present day, there hasn't been a single moment when I've felt completely satisfied or that

I've reached my ultimate destination.

HOW DOES YOUR FAMILY PERCEIVE YOUR FAME? DO THEY THINK YOU'VE CHANGED?

My sister has distanced herself from the industry, but I strive to keep my parents involved in my journey. My mother, especially, has been a constant support, understanding the rigours of my commitments, like when I portrayed Murlikant Petkar. She ensured I maintained a strict routine, even regulating my sleep schedule. I'm fortunate to have such supportive parents and siblings; they're my true anchors in life.

WHAT WAS YOUR EXPERIENCE LIKE GROWING UP IN GWALIOR?

I spent my childhood in Gwalior until I completed my 11th standard there. That's where I attended school and developed a passion for watching films. It was during my 9th standard that I set my heart on becoming an actor. The idea of moving to Mumbai from Gwalior seemed like a distant aspiration at the time. In Gwalior, I lived with my parents and my sister, and life had a distinctly different rhythm there.

WAS IT CHALLENGING TO GAIN YOUR PARENTS' APPROVAL?

I didn't directly discuss my desire with them. I understood that the only feasible path from Gwalior to Mumbai involved pursuing an engineering college entrance exam. So, I enrolled in DY Patil College in Nerul. Gwalior presented financial challenges for my family;

witnessing my parents' resilience in those circumstances continues to inspire me. Their struggles, I believe, were unimaginably tough.

EVEN THOUGH THEY WERE DOCTORS, THEY FACED FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES?

Indeed. Gwalior's economic landscape was markedly different from Mumbai's. Consultation fees for doctors were nominal, barely reaching Rs. 100, let alone thousands. Consequently, sustaining a comfortable lifestyle was an uphill battle. We led a middle-



Chandu Champion

class existence, with every expense meticulously calculated, from my sister's education to mine. My parents had to take out loans to support my education. Sometimes, I wonder how different life might have been had they practised medicine in Mumbai. Consequently, disclosing my aspirations to pursue acting and relocate to Mumbai was out of the question. I lived with six people in Nerul and later with twelve here, as that was all I could afford. I never entertained

INITIALLY, I SOUGHT VALIDATION FOR EVERYTHING, BUT AFTER SPENDING SEVERAL YEARS IN THE INDUSTRY, I'VE REACHED A POINT WHERE I NO LONGER FEEL THE NEED FOR IT. I'VE STOPPED TAKING VALIDATION SO SERIOUSLY

the notion of asking for additional financial support from my family, knowing full well their limitations.

DID YOUR PARENTS EXPRESS DISAPPOINTMENT WHEN THEY DISCOVERED YOUR DESIRE TO PURSUE ACTING?

Yes, they were disappointed. By the time I received my first acting opportunity, I had already completed two years of engineering studies. Until then, my parents held onto hope that I would pursue a career in engineering.



HOW DID YOU SUCCEED IN AUDITIONING FOR YOUR FIRST FILM, *PYAAR KA PUNCHNAMA*?

I discovered the audition notice on Facebook while regularly searching for casting calls online. Despite having an exam scheduled on the same day, I chose to attend the audition instead. This decision reinforced my belief in karma. Had events unfolded differently, I might have pursued a career in engineering. It's not the best example to set, but truthfully, I skipped my exam that day to attend the

audition. Although I failed my exams initially, after the release of *Pyaar Ka Punchnama 2*, I eventually earned my degree by completing all my exams.

HOW DO YOU ADJUST TO DIFFERENT DIRECTORS' STYLES?

I consider myself a director's actor. Each director, from Kabir Khan to Anees Bazmee, brings a unique approach. Kabir sir's meticulous planning is unparalleled, while Anees sir thrives on spontaneity. With Kabir sir, scenes are executed precisely as

scheduled, whereas Anees sir often improvises and explores various options on set. While Kabir sir is known for his detailed planning, Anees sir is more open to experimentation. Thus, it's crucial for me to adapt to their respective methods. I listen attentively to the director's vision and follow their lead. However, if I sense a director needs assistance, I'm not hesitant to offer my input. While I typically avoid conflicts with directors, I'm assertive when it comes to standing

by my convictions. I'm inclined to debate when I strongly believe in something.


WHAT WAS YOUR EXPERIENCE WORKING ALONGSIDE VIDYA BALAN?

Her presence and infectious laughter uplift everyone on set. Her ability to seamlessly transition in and out of character is remarkable. I find myself in awe of her talent whenever we work together. It's truly a privilege. Following this interview, I'll be heading straight to the sets of *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3*. ■



The world at her feet

*VIDYA BALAN, WHO RECENTLY BEDAZZLED WITH HER ACTING CHOPS
IN THE RELATIONSHIP COMEDY DO AUR DO PYAAR, CHATS WITH
SUMAN SHARMA ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS AND MORE*



*“ I AM NOT A LOVE GURU, BUT
THIS IS MY UNDERSTANDING
ABOUT A RELATIONSHIP, THAT IF
YOU WANT TO LIVE TOGETHER,
STAY TOGETHER THEN MAKE IT
WORK AND YOU WILL BE ABLE
TO MAKE IT WORK ”*

Talking to Vidya Balan

has always been a delight. You feel like you are chatting with a real woman, who has lived and observed life closely.

She wants to get to know you, would enquire about your family, would ask you about your take on a show or a film and would make sure you're comfortable before starting the interview. There is an old-world charm to her that's disarming, to say the least. And her frankness, her candour, too is refreshing.

She doesn't have all the answers prepared down pat. She isn't reading from a script but is analysing your queries and answering them as truthfully as she can. Her observations are taken from life and not books and she candidly admits not knowing all the answers, hinting that we should celebrate mysteries too. Excerpts from an engaging tete-a-tete with the ace actress:

“
THE TIME IS
SUCH
THAT PEOPLE
FEEL THAT
WHY CANNOT I
HAVE A PERFECT
PERSON? IF
I FEEL THAT
YOU ARE NOT
PERFECT, THEN
I WILL REPLACE
YOU WITH
SOMEBODY ELSE
”



What attracted you to *Do Aur Do Pyaar*?

Primarily, the idea sounded attractive. It's a bizarre situation for anyone to be in. I've always wondered how people manage extra-marital affairs. It must be so confusing. Don't you fear getting caught? Then I heard this story, and I was like... "*Iss tarah ka extra-marital affair toh maine kabhi*

take on infidelity because I would find it very difficult to judge anyone in that situation. To each his own. It just happens. The characters in *Do Aur Do Pyaar*, for instance, are caught in a situation not of their own making. When you watch the film, you don't feel judgemental about them. You feel equally for all characters.

But even a one-night stand is... it's scary. I don't think that I will be okay with it.

Sometimes, an extramarital affair breaks the monotony in a marriage... Agree or disagree?

Maybe it's so but I don't subscribe to that view. I think I am being childish. But I feel that we should maintain the excitement.

very controlling, and they are unable to break free from that control but somewhere else if they are taking charge, like in their marriage, if they are maybe doing something that is forbidden and it is giving them great pleasure like an extramarital affair. They are not weak. But actually they want to rebel against



Tumhari Sulu



Shakuntala Devi

“AT THE END OF THE DAY, IT REALLY DEPENDS ON YOUR RELEVANCE IN TODAY'S TIME. ARE YOU RELEVANT BECAUSE OF YOUR TALENT? OR BECAUSE OF SOCIAL MEDIA”

sunna hi nahi hai, na filmon mein dekha hai.” So I thought it was very unique, which also makes it funny. I love the romantic comedy space and after 10 years, I am doing a romantic comedy. Because *aaj kal* love stories *aur* comedies *dono hi tarah ki filmen zyada nahi ban rahi hain*. (Nowadays, rom coms or comedies aren't that much in vogue).

What's your take on infidelity?

No, I don't have a

How difficult is it to forgive the partner in such a situation?

It will be very difficult. But I guess, some people are able to forgive and forget and move beyond. I don't know how many people will be able to do that.

So what is a deal-breaker for you, in a relationship?

Disrespect and infidelity are deal-breakers for me.

What is more dangerous – a one-night stand or a serious relationship?

Both. A serious relationship is worse.

You don't need a third wheel. But everybody is different.

Why is a forbidden fruit always enticing?

Like so many yummy foods. I think it is reverse psychology. Only if there are rules can you break them. And I feel we want to rebel but I am unable to do so many times. And that spills out in many ways like this. For example, if somebody has a problem with their parents. If anyone's father or mother is

their parents. They are rebelling in an area when the parents can't even interfere. Maybe I'm complicating it too much...

Is it possible to have an affair and still love your spouse?

I think it is absolutely possible. I know of this couple who has never consummated their marriage and so she had affairs outside. But they stayed together. *Unke beech sex ho hi nahi raha tha* (they weren't able to have sex).

So he was okay that she went outside but still they love each other and they are together. She was fulfilling her physical needs outside, I guess. I don't know how it works.

And sex is a very important part in a relationship.

Yeah, sex is very important in a relationship and it's also emotional for me. That's what I am saying, it's different strokes for different folks. No two relationships are similar.

it work and you will be able to make it work. But both have to want to make it work.

What are the things that women shouldn't tolerate in a relationship?

One is disrespect in any way which should not be tolerated. And another thing is to express... what you feel to your partner. If he is not understanding then seek help. And if he still doesn't understand then I guess, the only way is out.

that people feel that why cannot I have a perfect person? If I feel that you are not perfect, then I will replace you with somebody else. Till the time I think that you are perfect then after that... but they need to understand that they are not things, they are relationships. And they are humans. And that there's no such thing called perfection in this world. When you're in love, everything sounds perfect but that's not the case. So don't lose the love.

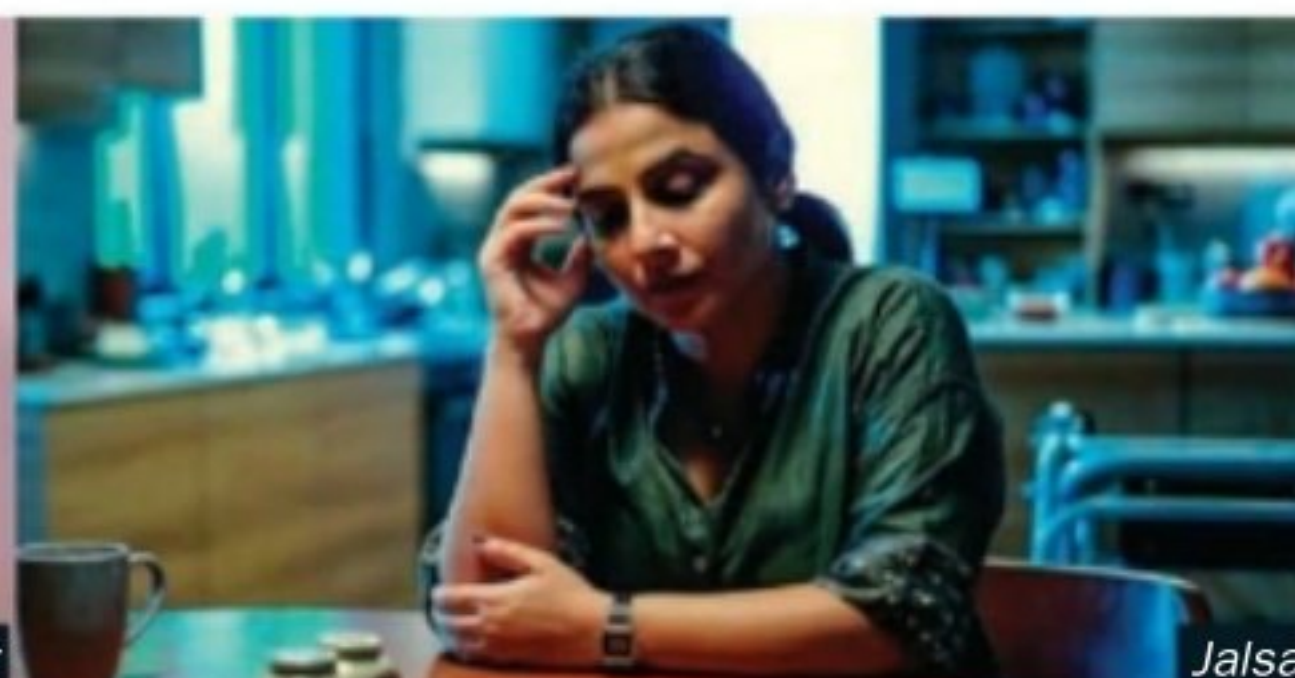
we hide things from each other, the more harmful it would be in the long run. So we nip the problem in the bud and not let it become a thorn.

You have been in the industry for 19 years. At this stage of your career, what do you look at while choosing a film? Has your criteria for choosing a film changed?

I just want to keep working. I'm someone who is very impatient, gets restless and I feel like I need something new to keep me challenged



Do Aur Do Pyaar



Jalsa

"SIDDHARTH AND I SHARE EVERYTHING. WHATEVER WE ARE FEELING, WE SHARE WITH EACH OTHER. NOT ONLY ABOUT OTHERS, BUT ALSO ABOUT EACH OTHER. IF YOU FELT BAD ABOUT SOMETHING"

What's important to maintain a relationship?

Trust, respect, honesty, integrity. But more than anything else, the intention to stay together. I think that you should feel the need to be together. That's very important. I am not a love guru, but this is my understanding about a relationship, that if you want to live together, stay together then make

Relationships are breaking a lot nowadays. What do you feel, is there a change in mindset of today's generation or do they not have patience like our parents?

Basically, we get everything sitting at home. If we order a phone and don't like it, then we can return it and order another one. Then you will have the same mentality. We cannot blame anybody. The time is such

What is the secret of your own successful marriage?

Siddharth and I share everything. Whatever we are feeling, we share with each other. Not only about others, but also about each other. If you felt bad about something, if you got angry, express it and then remove it from your system. I know it's not easy, but now we've been together for a while and we know that the more

and motivated. Right now my mood is that I should be part of happy, entertaining films. I feel that I want to smile and make people smile, entertain them. I want to do out-and-out comedy, then a negative role... actually, I'm happy to do anything. But I think that there are *hazaar* tensions in the lives of the people. Why offer them dark, intense



stories and add to the tension. Or maybe at a personal level I'm tired of doing intense films and want to do happy stuff. I want to feel happy on the sets. I want to laugh...

How important is it for an actor to stay relevant?

Being relevant is important for everyone. I think one just has to adapt to the changing times. Look at Mr. Bachchan. He has always been relevant and he inspires younger generations to do the same. God bless him.

So how do you reinvent yourself with each character, each film project?

It really depends... I think it's in the choice of the stories. So many stories are offered to select from them what I like, where I feel happy, at least as a story. And to choose to work with people who you will vibe with. That's very important. Because if you choose to work with people who you don't get along with...if the vibe is not good – because of that at times I have backed off from a project. Because to be on the same set with those people for three months and more and if you are unhappy then that reflects in the film as well. ■

Feeling *the* burn

SARA ALI KHAN TALKS ABOUT CARRYING FORWARD HER LEGACY AND STRADDLING MULTI-STARRERS IN A CHAT WITH TANISHA BHATTACHARYA



Sara Ali Khan is in a lot of pain during our interview as she had inadvertently spilled some hot coffee on herself and has to get ice pack treatment at regular intervals. She's wearing a saree, and gamely shows you the burn mark, while laughing at her clumsiness. You marvel at her tenacity; at her ability to make light of her situation. Mention it to her and she blushes and says she's been brought up to face life with fortitude. With a lineage steeped in Bollywood royalty, Sara brings a refreshing blend of tradition and modernity to the silver screen. From seeking wisdom from her iconic grandmother, Sharmila Tagore, to navigating the complexities of diverse film genres, Sara's journey is as dynamic as it is captivating.

In a conversation with your grandmother, Sharmila Tagore, she spoke about how you go to her for advice. Tell us about your bond.

My grandmother is my only living grandparent. She is the voice of reason for all of us. And I think that when things get hard, which they did in my life in 2020, a period of time that was not very good for me, my daddy was there for me, all guns blazing. And she's there for my mom and brother. Of course, she's there for my father as well. She connects me to my traditional roots. She is also the voice of modernity.

She also gives me good advice when it comes to boys, films, and social life. She's a champion.

You come from a family of powerful actors. What is the conversation like about cinema when you all get together?

The most intriguing aspect is that we all come from different periods of time. As a result, each of our approaches differs. But, most

importantly, we all take the time to express our gratitude to the universe and to one another for the opportunity to work in a profession we enjoy. This is not some 9-5 job. It helps you stay fit, active, expressive, creative, and alive.

What do you think is the perfect movie title to have your entire family in it?

(Laughs) To be honest, nothing beats *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham*. It just sums up everything, and it suits us perfectly well.



She (grandmother Sharmila Tagore) connects me to my traditional roots. She is also the voice of modernity. She also gives me good advice when it comes to boys, films, and social life



How was it like to dabble in two such diverse genres as *Murder Mubarak* and *Ae Watan Mere Watan*?

It's moments like this that force you to unlearn everything that you think you know, be totally present in that moment, and surrender to the director's vision. Both Kannan Iyer and Homi Adjanian are so astute that they know exactly what they want. They subscribe to different schools of filmmaking. Hence, there's no real scope of overlap or confusion, like even the sound design is different. On the other end, we used to have a running joke because from wearing a white *khaki* saree in *Ae Watan Mere Watan*, I went to wearing bikinis in *Murder Mubarak*. And Homi was like, where do I set the mike, because it's so easy in a saree. Jokes aside, there was no moment where I had to ask which set I was on. In *Ae Watan Mere Watan*, the world is so different. It's pre-independence, death penalty, advent of radio, celibacy, struggle, strife,

protests, Quit India Movement, Ram Manohar Lohia, *Gandhiji*—these are all larger than life. You can't imagine it, so I think you need to be fully present in that moment. Surrender totally to the director and everything you thought you knew. And just delve in and try to do justice to the sacrifices made not just by Usha Mehta but to the thousands of unknown and unsung freedom fighters. It's because of them that we can sit here and enjoy the privileges of democracy. You have to respect that to bring that sort of gravitas in your performance, as you're representing something crucial, something bigger than yourself.

Was there any particular scene from *Ae Watan Mere Watan* that you found emotionally taxing?

It was emotionally draining at times. The kind of character that I'm playing in this film is so distinct from anything that I have played before. She embodies so much confidence and self-pride. There's a sense of self-awareness. Usha Mehta was someone else indeed. To have so much courage and conviction at such a young age is so empowering. In the

midst of finding her, I found myself. She felt totally relatable. Her inner resolve, her confidence was to be admired and as the film progressed, I began to appreciate what she has done, what her sacrifice stood for. We could only mimic her actions and her circumstances and hope that we were getting everything right. One could only imagine the stress the freedom fighters worked under as even doing it for the camera was exhausting and preyed on our nerves.

Tell us a little more about that common thread you felt between Usha Mehta and you. There's a font of strength, conviction and courage within us that we seldom draw upon. That's what I learnt while essaying her. That



← With father Saif Ali Khan and brother Ibrahim Ali Khan



↑ With Ibrahim and mother Amrita Singh

Usha Mehta was someone else indeed. To have so much courage and conviction at such a young age is so empowering. In the midst of finding her, I found myself



you have to look within you and seek fortitude. Of course, I'm a mere actress and have been brought up in privilege. She was a freedom fighter who lived through the turbulent era of the Quit India Movement and did service for her country. So there's no comparison between us per se. What I can relate to is her do or die spirit. What I've learnt so far in my

career is that you have to raise the bar every time you feel low. You have to give your best every time and be a better actor, a better person, with every offering. Her inner resilience was something I could relate to. And did my utmost to uphold her ideals while essaying her on screen.

Actors find it hard to adapt to a multi-star setup but you did it seamlessly in *Murder*



What I've learnt so far in my career is that you have to raise the bar every time you feel low. You have to give your best every time and be a better actor, a better person, with every offering

Mubarak. How do the dynamics work?

If you're confident about your craft and you are doing the film for the right reason, then there's not much to worry about regarding your screen time or other stars taking away the limelight. I did *Murder Mubarak* because it's an extremely new, fresh murder mystery. It goes beyond the generic whodunit films. Homi has

created an interesting and exciting world that is different from anything you've seen before. And I've always believed that an actor's real competition is with herself. So, I didn't feel insecure at all doing the film. And as I said before, I trusted my director's vision completely. It all went smoothly and I had a whale of a time on the sets.

You've always had

social media constantly questioning everything you do. There have been a few box office failures too. What have these five years taught you about how to deal with them?

I think you have to have an inner conviction because everybody is going to try to drag you down, especially if you give them the opportunity to. First, just be grateful. Practising gratitude helps because it

could always be worse than it is. Like I just scalded my stomach the day before yesterday. And it could have been my face. So it's always about the way you look at things. Even if I'm being trolled, for instance, I tell myself that at least they're talking about me. Imagine being irrelevant. For an actor, that's death. So always look at it in such a way that you can tell yourself

it could have been worse. And always remind yourself that, ultimately, you are in charge of your life. So if you want to do better, you just have to be there and try harder.

One word of advice for Sara of Kedarnath?

You're the purest you'll ever be. Retain it and never lose out on it. It will take you further than anything that you try, and the journey is worth it. ■

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SIDDHARTH IS A HUGE FAN OF SANJAY SIR. HE SAID SOMETHING THAT MADE ME VERY EXCITED. HE SAID, “ABHI HUMARI FAMILY MAIN DO FREEDOM FIGHTERS HONGE. EK TOH BHAGAT SINGH AUR ANOTHER IS BIBBOJAAN

”



Royal touch

ADITI RAO HYDARI HAS WOWED THE AUDIENCE AS BIBBOJAAN IN THE HIT SERIES *HEERAMANDI*. SHE SHARES ANECDOTES WITH SUMAN SHARMA ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE.

Aditi Rao Hydari has long been a captivating presence in Indian cinema, known for her elegance, versatility and the emotive depth she brings to her roles. Recently, her portrayal of Bibbojaan in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Heeramandi* has garnered widespread acclaim, touching the hearts of audiences and critics alike. In an exclusive interview, Aditi opens up about the creative process behind her character, her collaboration with Bhansali and the personal and professional growth she has experienced through her illustrious career. From the challenges of balancing work in both the Hindi and South Indian film industries to the support of her fiancé Siddharth, Aditi shares insights into her journey, her inspirations and the philosophies that keep her grounded amidst the glittering world of showbiz.



Bibbojaan has won the hearts of the audience...

I am enjoying it. *Heeramandi* is being celebrated. All my co-actors are being celebrated. I am taking all of that in. The feedback has been incredible. The fact that from a very vulnerable, kind and sweet girl, her

journey goes into being such a brave hero that changes the whole freedom fighter angle—I think people are moved by it. I am very grateful to Sanjay sir for writing Bibbojaan for me and for creating her the way he has.

How did your fiancé Siddharth

compliment you?

He was very overwhelmed. He is a huge fan of Sanjay sir. But he said something that made me very excited. He said, "*Abhi humari family main do freedom fighters honge. Ek toh Bhagat Singh aur another is Bibbojaan.*" Hearing that made me very happy.

How supportive is Siddharth of your career?

He is a true artist and a multitalented, multidimensional one. He is a cinema enthusiast. He's been Mani sir's AD since he was very young, straight out of college. So, he lives, breathes and eats cinema. He is very supportive and I rely on him for feedback a lot. His heart is very genuine. It's great to have someone like that in life.

Do you think Sanjay Leela Bhansali understands women better than any other director?

There are directors who love to tell women's stories and treat their women and heroines with a lot of dignity. Sanjay sir is one of them. He is a director everybody dreams of working with. What he creates is beautiful; it's legacy. But what makes him special is his

THERE ARE DIRECTORS WHO LOVE TO TELL WOMEN'S STORIES AND TREAT THEIR WOMEN AND HEROINES WITH A LOT OF DIGNITY. SANJAY SIR IS ONE OF THEM



vision of women. His female characters, are human beings—they are layered and complex. Wherever they come from, whatever profession they are in, he treats them like queens. In his stories, there is self-respect, fire, purpose and agency. He gives women his life and that's how he sees them on screen. People talk a lot about beauty, but I think what makes them memorable is the fire and substance in them.

How did the character of Bibbojaan come about?

Honestly, I just listened to Sanjay sir and surrendered completely to his vision. He is the kind of director who gives us the best and gives the best of himself to us. He created Bibbojaan for me—every layer, every nuance. A lot of people have seen me in a very fragile, delicate space, but he said, “*Iss ladki ka jo fire hai*, I want the world to see that.”

Did you watch old movies like *Pakeezah* and *Mughal-e-Azam* to learn the acting style, grace and dialect of the actresses?

Of course, I worked on my diction and my Urdu with Munira ma'am, who was our diction



BIBBOJAAN SHOWED ME THAT YOUR PHYSICALITY HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH IT; EVERYTHING IS ABOUT THE HEART WHETHER IT IS LOVE OR FEARLESSNESS

coach, so we all worked with her. It needed to feel like I had been speaking that way since childhood, not something learnt. I practised *Kathak* with Kruti Mahesh. Since I was five, I have been doing *Bharatanatyam* with Leela Samson, so to break that into *Kathak* and authentic *Kathak* at that, I needed to work on it. The dancing required a delicate grace because we are

telling stories while dancing. Sanjay sir would catch the nuances, guide me and help me through it.

As an actor, what have you explored about yourself while playing this character?

I realised while playing Bibbojaan that her vulnerability makes her fearless and her fearlessness makes her powerful. Bibbojaan showed me that your physicality has nothing to do with it; everything is about the heart, whether it is love or fearlessness.

You've worked with Mani Ratnam as well. How are Mani Ratnam and SLB different from each other?

I don't think it's right to compare them. Both are legendary directors. Both are people I look at as my *gurus*. I love them both. They are my mentors. I am lucky and blessed to say they picked me, and I am literally living the dream. This was the dream I dreamt of when I was growing up and to have it happen is incredible. In a heartbeat, I would wish for it again and again and again.

You work extensively in the

Hindi as well as the South film industry. How difficult or easy has it been to find a balance between both industries?

I am an Indian and I am an Indian film heroine. I will do every inspiring film that comes to me from a director I love and respect. I always think that films are about making you feel something. So as an actor, I just want to sit in your heart and go home with you, whether it is Hindi, Malayalam, Kannada or Bengali. I come from a very mixed cultural background, so somewhere that balancing act is fun for me and fuels me.

What do fame and popularity mean to you?

I don't think like that. I have four brothers who always keep me grounded and rooted. They don't watch a lot of films, but they watch them for me. In my home, I am the child of the house and it's the same. All my friends are friends I have known since I was 2-3 years old, and I am still very close to them. I feel like I am myself. If people see me as a star or larger than life, I am very blessed.

Where do you

aspire to see yourself in the next five years?

That's a secret. I feel dreams have magic; when they are realised, then you can talk about them. Right now, I am thinking about the present. I don't worry about what I will do in the future. It's the present and living 100 per cent in the present. I am doing *Lioness*, an Indo-British production, which is the story of two girls. One is a British actress Paige Sandhu and the other is me. I am looking forward to that. It is directed by Kajri Babbar; it's her first film. Other than that, I am reading scripts.

You have worked with director Imtiaz Ali in *Rockstar*. When can we see you working with him again?

I would love to work with him. I love him as a filmmaker. He tells incredible stories. *Rockstar* is a special film for me. Even today, when I see my scenes with Ranbir, I feel it. It was the beginning of my journey as an actor. Even today, people like to watch it. But I feel that role was so cut down that at the time, I felt very bad. I wanted to be a heroine in one of Imtiaz Ali's films and live out the full character.

Suman Nigam

ILEANA D'CRUZ NAVIGATES MOTHERHOOD, MENTAL HEALTH
AND HER CAREER IN A CHAT WITH SUMAN SHARMA



ILEANA D'CRUZ, RENOWNED FOR HER COMPELLING PERFORMANCES, OPENS UP ABOUT HER TRANSFORMATIVE JOURNEY INTO MOTHERHOOD, HER BATTLE WITH POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION, AND THE UNWAVERING SUPPORT FROM HER HUSBAND, MICHAEL DOLAN. IN THIS CANDID INTERVIEW, SHE REFLECTS ON THE EVOLVING DEFINITION OF LOVE, THE IMPACT OF HER BLOCKBUSTER DEBUT IN *BARFI!*, AND THE HIGHS AND LOWS OF HER CAREER. WITH DEEP INSIGHTS INTO PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE, ILEANA SHARES WHAT KEEPS HER GROUNDED, THE IMPORTANCE OF RESPECTING TIME, AND WHAT TRULY MAKES A PERSON ATTRACTIVE BEYOND APPEARANCES.

MOTHERHOOD IS A MILESTONE. HOW HAS IT CHANGED YOU?

Yes, I am pretty busy with the baby. I am a completely different person in many ways. I have become calmer now. Everything changes after becoming a mother.

HOW DID YOU DEAL WITH POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION?

One thing that has helped me is being able to talk about it. Secondly, whenever I am going for my baby's appointment, the doctors also check on the mother. They give you a questionnaire to assess how you are doing mentally. They ask if you need help. So, there is always that communication, which helps immensely. If you can talk about it and share how you're feeling with somebody, there's always a way around it. But postpartum depression is alienating, and you don't talk about it enough. At least

Ileana D'Cruz with her husband Michael Dolan and their son Koa Phoenix Dolan



"HAVING SOMEBODY LOVE ME THE WAY MY HUSBAND DOES GETS ME TO LOVE MYSELF MORE. MY PERSPECTIVE ON LOVE HAS DEFINITELY CHANGED. ON DAYS WHEN I AM NOT KIND TO MYSELF, I LOOK TO MY HUSBAND TO HELP ME BE NICE TO MYSELF"

I didn't share enough about it when I was in India, so it was something I just wanted to discuss a little. Many women go through it quietly and don't understand why. For me, what helped first was to start talking about it. My husband is amazing. He's been really great, so every time I have had a low phase and am not feeling my best, he comes in, gives me some time off, and talks to me about it. He reassures me that I have dealt with it really well. Sometimes, that's all it takes.

TELL US MORE ABOUT YOUR BOND WITH YOUR LIFE PARTNER, MICHAEL DOLAN.

I have been fortunate to have a really lovely partner. It's made me feel almost like fairy-tale love, where sometimes you don't believe that someone can love even the worst parts of you. But yes, Mike has seen the worst parts of me as well, and he still loves me a lot. He still looks at me, and sometimes I look like crap, but he's just like that. It's all these little things. I can be really horrible, mean, and moody sometimes, but he's still really kind, sweet, and calm. That's what love is, you know—there are no conditions. It's like, I take you for good days and bad days.

HOW HAS THE DEFINITION OF LOVE CHANGED FOR YOU OVER THE YEARS?

It has definitely changed immensely for me. I have read about love where many people say things like, "If you can't love yourself, how do you expect somebody to love

you?" I used to believe that for a while, but I feel I am still working on self-love myself. Having somebody love me the way my husband does gets me to love myself more. My perspective on love has definitely changed. On days when I am not kind to myself, I look to my husband to help me be nice to myself. Being with him and having him love me the way he has, because he has seen so many different phases, has kind of made me love myself a little more. It helps me be kinder to myself.

WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO *DO AUR DO PYAAR?*

The story was very sweet, unusual, and quirky. It was also the pairing of all these amazing actors. We had Vidya, obviously, and getting to work with her was a really big bonus. Prateik Gandhi is such an unusual character actor himself. For me, most of the films that I do, I go with a gut feeling. If something in my gut says this feels like a good story to be a part of, I just do it.

FOR SOMEONE AS TALENTED AS YOU, WAS IT EVEN MORE EXCITING WORKING WITH VIDYA BALAN, A SUPERB ACTOR?

Yes, I adore Vidya. I think she's a fabulous actor. I first met Vidya after I did *Barfi!*. I remember she sent me an email after *Barfi!* released, saying how much she liked my performance in the film. I met her at award shows after that, along with Sid, who was producing *Barfi!*. So, there was an instant bond with her right from the beginning. When I met her for the film, it was like no time had passed. We just hung out in each other's van, and she has such lovely energy around her. I still remember the first day we shot together. I was not feeling great and had a weird anxiety attack. She came over

to see me, and we just sat and talked about random stuff. After 15-20 minutes, I felt amazing. She has such beautiful energy and is a gifted actress. She's great to watch and perform with.

WHAT ARE YOUR VIEWS ON INFIDELITY?

It's a completely unrelated thing to say. I think infidelity is very subjective. Many people consider infidelity to be



either physical or emotional. I feel like infidelity is very subjective. Personally, I don't feel a relationship can continue if there is infidelity. It is very hard to go back to a relationship if you know you have been unfaithful. It's a very grey zone.

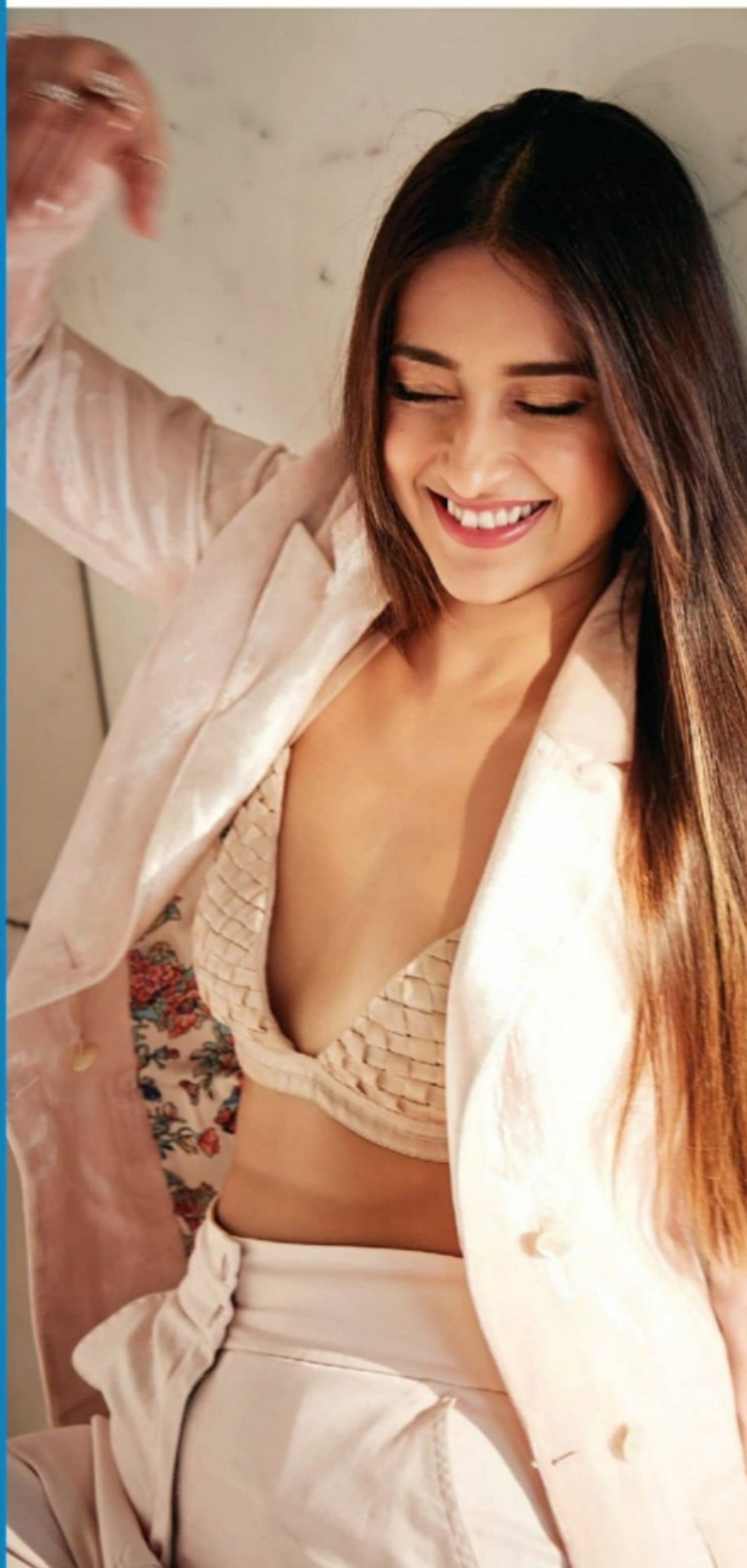
IT'S HARD TO FORGIVE YOUR PARTNER IN THAT CASE.

It's definitely hard. I feel there are reasons people do what they do. I would like to know the reason why it happened. I am not somebody who just cuts off someone immediately. I would like to know the why and the what, and because of what, why it happened.

YOUR FIRST HINDI FILM, *BARFI!*, WAS A BLOCKBUSTER MOVIE, AND THEN THERE WERE UPS AND DOWNS IN YOUR CAREER. HOW DID YOU DEAL WITH IT?

It is a part of my profession. You have to go up and down. I

“EVERY TIME I MEET RANBIR KAPOOR, THERE'S ALWAYS WARMTH AND GENUINE FONDNESS. WE ARE VERY CORDIAL BECAUSE WE HAVE A GREAT WORKING RELATIONSHIP”



feel doubt comes in when you have certain convictions about a film and it goes completely the opposite way. That doubt starts creeping in. Most of the films that I did, I had an idea of how they would do. I don't feel like there were many downs—probably one or two low phases. At that time, I wasn't happy with the offers coming my way. But as far as the movies are concerned, I still stand by the decision that

Experiencing success for the first time in life and not really understanding it. Probably doing *Barfi!* was another very big defining moment. Going to an international film festival to see the film on an international level was another defining moment because it changed my life entirely. These moments helped me change who I am as a person and moulded me into the person that I am today.

WHAT ARE THE MISTAKES YOU'LL NEVER COMMIT AS A PROFESSIONAL?

Disrespecting anybody's time. That's one thing I realised very early on in my life: time is money. There was probably a time in my career when I was young and had no idea what I was doing. I didn't understand any of it and was still like a kid. I didn't understand the seriousness of my job, but once I realised how serious our work is, I developed a respect for it immediately. I will never take it for granted.

WHAT KEEPS YOU GOING AS AN ACTOR?

The love for my job. I just love being an actor. It's the thing that makes me feel most alive. I can be as tired as anybody, but if I am on a set and in front of a camera, doing what I love, playing a character, breathing life into something that a person has taken hours and days to write, it's a beautiful, powerful moment.

WHAT MAKES A WOMAN HIGHLY ATTRACTIVE BESIDES HER LOOKS?

What makes you attractive has nothing to do with how you look. It's purely energy more than anything. I believe it's a person's energy, how you are as a person, how you treat other people, and how you come across to everybody. A kind person is incredibly attractive for sure. ■



Do Aur Do Pyaar

“I ADORE VIDYA. I FIRST MET VIDYA AFTER I DID *BARFI!* I REMEMBER SHE SENT ME AN EMAIL AFTER *BARFI!* RELEASED, SAYING HOW MUCH SHE LIKED MY PERFORMANCE IN THE FILM”

I did a good job. Sometimes, it turns out to be a great film; sometimes, it doesn't. I am like, it is what it is, and such is life.

ARE YOU IN TOUCH WITH YOUR CO-ACTORS FROM *BARFI!*?

Friendship doesn't happen with everyone. They have all been my co-actors, my colleagues, my acquaintances—people I have worked with. Every time I meet Ranbir Kapoor, there's always warmth and genuine fondness. We are very cordial because we have a great working relationship. I have very few friends in the industry, and those people have remained my friends. Arshad Warsi, Maria, and I are still friends and call each other every now and then. I have actually made more friends with the people I worked with, not the actors.

WHAT WAS THE DEFINING MOMENT OF YOUR LIFE?



Limitless!

After making her mark down South, **PRIYAMANI** is all set to conquer North. **SUMAN SHARMA** chats with the talented actress who doesn't believe in boundaries

Priyamani is an acclaimed Indian actress known for her versatile performances across multiple film industries, including Hindi, Tamil, Telugu and Kannada cinema. She gained widespread recognition for her roles in blockbuster films such as *Chennai Express* and *Jawan*, as well as the critically acclaimed series *The Family Man*. With a career spanning over a decade, Priyamani has consistently demonstrated her commitment to quality and authenticity in her acting, earning her a dedicated fanbase and numerous accolades. Despite the challenges of working in a male-dominated industry, she continues to make her mark with powerful, female-centric roles. Excerpts from an interview with the fiery actress:



Article 370

You were seen in 2013 in *Chennai Express* and now in *Jawan* and *Maidaan*. Why such a long gap?

I was waiting for something right, something correct to come my way. Just because this is the Hindi industry or Bollywood, I didn't want to jump and say, "Okay, I will do this." I wanted to do something right, something nice. I didn't mind if it took time; I didn't mind waiting. Maybe that's why it took such a long time.

Your performance was very much appreciated in *Article 370*. Was your character Rajeshwari Swaminathan based on an actual individual?

I was representing the PMO. I don't know whether my character Rajeshwari was one person or ten people. Obviously, for security reasons, they will not reveal that. The makers have done so much research. A lot of people loved the fact that something like this really happened, which not

“I wanted to do something right, something nice. I didn't mind if it took time; I didn't mind waiting”

many people knew about. What India went through and our Honourable PM and HM did to see to it that the Article was abrogated. And this was a secretive mission which was successfully carried out. And the best part was generally, if such missions are carried out, there are a lot of chances

for casualties. Not even a single life was lost. It's the actual fact. So, when you hear such a thing, you feel so happy and proud that you were part of such a film which created history and is doing really well now.

Yami and you carried the film on your

shoulders. It is rare to come by such roles. Whom would you give the credit for this - writers or filmmakers?

Definitely, the credit goes to them. If they wanted, they could have done it with male actors. But I think somewhere they felt they wanted to do it with ladies. The character played by Yami was an actual female agent. So, for a female agent, they wanted a female actor.

You are a very natural actor.

I try to make it as convincing and as real as possible, as much as I can. I don't like overdramatisation. From the time I started, I was fortunate enough that whatever movies I did, whichever directors I worked with, their approach has always been very natural and very organic, not very dramatised and not very put-on kind of acting.

Coming from the South, working in Bollywood would be very different for you in terms of working styles?

One thing I can say is the Hindi industry is a little quieter than the South. If you go in the South, you will have 15,000 people screaming on a set. There is noise for sure. Here, each department has its own walkies. Most of the movies I have done here are all sync sound. *Bahut kam dubbing hain yahan pe*. Whereas the South is predominantly all dubbing.

You have done *Chennai Express* with Shah



Maidaan



Jawan

“ He (Shah Rukh Khan) is very humble, down-to-earth, and very sweet. Unka jo woh natural charisma and charm hain, just blows you over ”

Rukh, then you did *Jawan*. Has he changed over the years or is he the same person?

I think he has become sweeter than what he was. What I love about him is the respect that he gives. And he never forgets you. Even if he saw you 10-15 years ago, he'll say, “*Aap kaise ho beta.*” Whatever. The way he eases you into the atmosphere, *aapko aisa lagega hi nahi ki*, you met him 10 years back. He will just casually get you into the conversation and then you'll just go with the flow. He is very humble, down-to-earth and very sweet. *Unka jo woh natural*

charisma and charm hain, just blows you over, and I don't think there is anybody who can hate that man.

How was it working with Ajay Devgn in *Maidaan*?

Ajay sir is a brilliant co-star. He is a very effortless actor. He is quite jovial. I like how he gets into the character and the way he delivers his dialogues. In *Maidaan*, in many scenes, he doesn't have to say much and I am the one who's talking. He is only giving expressions and just smiling. But his expressions, the light in

his eyes speak volumes, so that itself was more than enough. Basically, he is also a director's actor.

Shah Rukh and Ajay both are superstars in the industry. Do you feel the superstar vibe when you work with them?

Not at all. They made me feel so comfortable on the set, so I didn't feel that I was working





with such big superstars, especially Shah Rukh, because *Jawan* was my second film with him. So with sir, it was like a picnic. We were talking, laughing, joking; we had get-togethers, we had dinners together, we used to have jam sessions, we used to sing. In *Maidaan*, the *mahol* was a little more serious because we had to finish the shoot on time and there were very

emotional scenes with Ajay sir.

Tell us about your experience working with Manoj Bajpayee in *The Family Man*.

I can't wait to get back to work with Manoj sir. Yes, he is a brilliant actor and co-star. I could have never asked for a better Srikant Tiwari. Whatever he brings to Srikant, what I've seen, it's so organic, so natural,

and half the lines you've seen are improvised; they're not scripted. So when he improvises, we also have to improvise; we always have to be on our toes when we are working with an actor like Manoj Bajpayee. Because he does one thing in rehearsal and another in a take, so you always have to be very alert. He's too good.

Any other actors you want to work with?

I'd love to work with Ayushmann Khurrana. He is a brilliant actor. He chooses the right scripts, and the right scripts come to him. Like in *Andhadhun*, he underplayed that character. He did *Article*

a lull period where I was just sitting at home for a bit and not getting movies, or I didn't take them up because I wasn't convinced enough about the project. Then after *Chennai Express*, I got a lot of offers. I was working a lot in the South. Then again, after *The Family Man*, I think it took a rise. If you ask me, I am quite happy where I am, and I am just taking my time. I know they say, make hay while the sun shines. *Jo bhi aata hai karo*, but I don't want to do that. I'm in no sort of rush.

How tough or easy is it to survive in a male-dominated industry?

It has always been male-dominated. Now we

“*I try to make it as convincing and as real as possible, as much as I can. I don't like overdramatisation*”

15. It was really good, and he is also one actor who can mould himself for a movie like *Bala* or *Vicky Donor*. He just moulds himself so brilliantly. That's why I would like to work with him.

You have seen ups and downs in your career...

I am still struggling now to get the right scripts and to choose the right ones because I have always believed in quality. Earlier, it was that *jo bhi* movie *karti thi usko release hone main time lagta tha*. But after 2006, there was no looking back, so I kept on doing movies back to back. I have done so many movies. Some worked, some didn't. There was

cannot change that. *Pahle* male-centric films *zyada banti thi*. Then *Seeta Aur Geeta* came, *Chaalbaaz* came, where it was run by females. Then, yes, very few female-centric films came, but now a lot more female-centric films are coming out in the Hindi film industry as well as in the South. The females are also getting an equal opportunity to showcase their talent in female-centric films. So I think that should continue. It should open up doors also. Because I guess long gone are the days when heroines are cast only to romance the heroes. Other than the romance and the songs, they also have something to contribute. ■



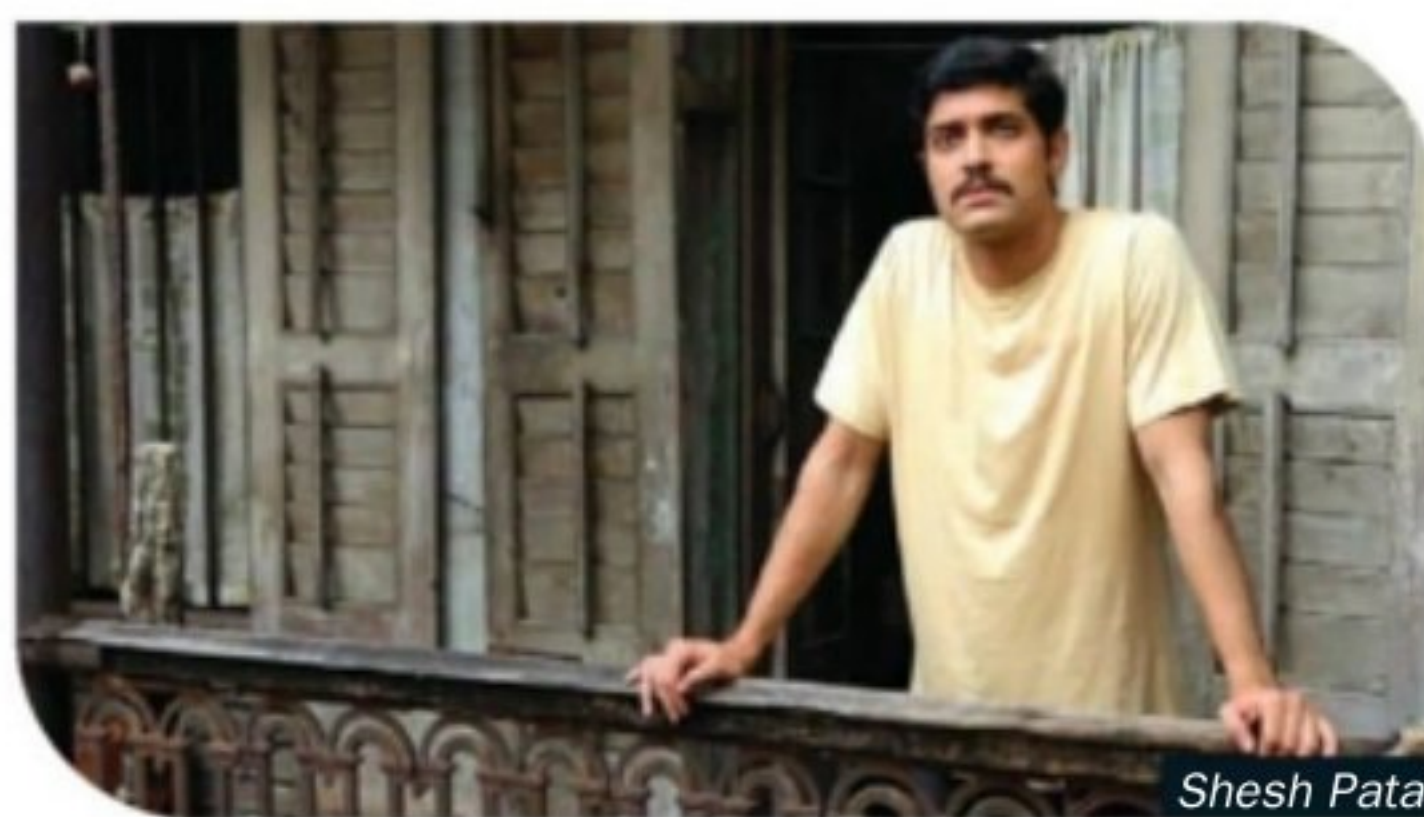
Beyond *boundaries*

BENGALI ACTOR **VIKRAM CHATTERJEE** WILL SOON BE SEEN IN A HINDI FILM, **MEMORY X**. **TANISHA BHATTACHARYA** SOUNDS HIM OUT

Vikram Chatterjee is a renowned Bengali actor known for his versatility and depth in portraying a wide range of characters on screen. With a career shaped by his impactful performances in television and cinema, Vikram has garnered acclaim for his ability to evoke raw emotions and immerse himself fully into each role. Now, poised to make his mark in Hindi cinema with his upcoming film Memory X, Vikram brings his captivating presence and nuanced talent to a wider audience. As he ventures into new territories, his dedication to craft and commitment to storytelling promise an unforgettable cinematic experience. Excerpts from an engaging interview with the actor:

What differences did you notice between the Hindi and Bengali film industry?

Apart from the language, it's pretty similar because the director of the film is a Kolkata-based director Tathagata Mukherjee, and the film *Pariah* has been directed by him as well, which was my last release. So I knew exactly how he would want me to prepare for my Hindi debut *Memory X*. I knew what was expected of me for the film. We didn't dub for the film, so while shooting the film, I was sure that I had



to be on point with my Hindi, and that was the only thing that I had to prepare for. The preparation was the same as any other film wherein I would create a character skeleton, the performance had to be a certain way as per the director's vision. We had a lot of these video conference

workshops. I speak clear Hindi by God's grace.

Was *Memory X* the first Hindi movie that was offered to you?

The offers that came to me before *Memory X* were great offers nonetheless, but they were not what I was looking for. I was never looking for a

Hindi film just for the sake of doing it. I wasn't just looking at wanting to work in Mumbai and that's the reason the few that came to me, I could never convince myself to do them. It has to help me build from where you know I stand today. It has to help my career in a certain way. Then I would be

more than happy to give it all the time.

So you're not in the rat race to transition into another film industry.

Actors transition into other languages, so in the past, whatever the number of years when it comes to male actors post Mithun Da, not

“When the makers or the audience attach a tag to any actor, that means that they have done justice to that genre”

too many very prominent names were there when it came to Hindi cinema. So I'm extremely happy that people like Bumba da and Jisshu da are doing it. It gives me a lot of confidence.

You seem to have earned the title of a romantic hero amongst the Bengali audience.

I have never had a problem with me getting typecast. I take a lot of pride in it. When the makers or the audience attach a tag to any actor, that means that they have done justice to that genre. That's the reason there is a certain amount of acceptability. And when there is acceptability, it's a success.

Does romance come easy to you onscreen?

I'm a horrible romantic when it comes to my real life. I'm not romantic at all. I'm sure whoever has spent some time with me in my life would agree to it and would vouch for the fact. That Vikram is not romantic. But somehow on screen, the conviction I have, the character and the subject that's given to me, I have to fall in love with the love story. If I believe in it, then it becomes easy for me to be able to convince myself and

automatically that shows on screen.

Which cinematic universe do you see yourself fit in perfectly based on your offscreen personality?

I honestly belong to Farhan Akhtar's world of men. I love my friends to bits. My male friends are my life. I can give my life for them at the same time, I will also ensure that they get into horrible situations because of me and make fun of them. I would like to go out with my friends and have a blast. I will probably get beaten up because of the person that I fall in love with. The closest character that I can think of when it comes to the real-life me is Aamir Khan from *Dil Chahta Hai*.

Your filmography has a pattern with a minimum of three releases a year.

In the Bengali film industry, we don't have budgets as big as, let's say, Tamil, Telugu, or Hindi film industries. So till the time we can achieve that as an industry, it will become difficult for any actor in Bengali cinema to just do one film in a year. Because, at the end of the day, we all also have expenses to take care of. Considering the amount of money

that we earn from one film. I don't think it is enough for any of the heroes to become financially secure on just what we earn from just one film. Of course, at the same time, if it's only one film in a year, the audience also in today's world tends to lose focus on the actors. For me as an actor, I'm not the guy who would be very visible on social media and I envy the people who are. So to remain relevant in this extremely busy world where the

audience forgets or tends to forget about some film that was released in January or February, I would want to come back around June, July, and August with my second film. So I would like at least two releases every year.

How versatile are the multiple releases that you have coming up?

Last year, first I had *Shesh Pata* which was a different film from Atanu Ghosh. I was playing this guy

who is a recovery agent, a very low middle-class guy, absolutely beaten and bruised by life, who has to work as a recovery agent to just survive, to run his expenses. And there are two different sides to him. Then I did *Shohorer Ushnotomo Din E* which was one of the biggest hits of Bengali cinema last year - a true-blue love story. Then *Pariah* became an out-and-out action film. I had to bulk



Shohorer Ushnotomo Din E

“What keeps me sane while doing emotionally heavy films is the amount of love that I keep getting from my friends and family”



Pariah Volume 1: Every Street Dog Has a Name



“My male friends are my life. I can give my life for them at the same time, I will also ensure that they get into horrible situations because of me and make fun of them”

What advice would you give to your younger self?

Patience is key in an industry like ours, where things, of course, take time. Good things take even more time. When I was comparatively younger, I could not foresee. Now when I look at a crisis, my first way of looking at it is, would this make a difference to me or my life five years down the line? If not, then you don't need to lose your cool about it.

So you've become a lot calmer now.

I've stopped reacting completely. I try to understand where the other person is speaking from and what exactly is his or her point of view as well. I've always been a passionate person. Still am. But when you're extremely passionate about things, you're primarily looking at things from your perspective. With all the passion, you forget that there's a different perspective

that might also be correct. Time and experiences have taught me that my passion is important to me. It will drive me. It will make me do things that a lot of other people would not relate to or are not capable of.

You became such a household name with your work on television. Would you go back to that format now?

I'm grateful to TV. My whole career took shape because of it. The whole platform that was given to me as an actor was primarily because of the love that I was getting from television. I grew up during the '90s. I've watched these big-screen stars on screen and what drives me the most is a theatrical release. If I do a TV show, they will expect me to dedicatedly give at least one year of my life to it, and given the current scenario when the films are doing so well, it won't be possible for me to do that. ■

up and go seven shades darker than what I am. Grow my hair and my beard. The love from the audience has been immense. After this, I have an intense love story. And then the other one is a rom-com with Sohini Sarkar and I love the film. There is *Durgapur Junction*, which is a murder mystery wherein I play a cop and Swastika Mukherjee plays a senior journalist.

You were praised for your role in *Shesh Pata*, which is said to be an emotionally exhausting film.

See for an actor in general, be it *Shesh Pata* and *Pariah Volume 1: Every Street Dog Has a Name*, I would discuss both as the latter was extremely emotionally draining. I have grown up in a family of caregivers for dogs. My mother and my sister have

both been doing that for the longest time. I have seen their struggles up close and hence I started connecting to it. *Shesh Pata* again was extremely challenging emotionally because of the journey that this boy was going through. But at the same time, what keeps me sane while doing emotionally heavy films is the amount of love that I keep getting from my friends and family.



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Prajakta Mali shakes a leg with our emcees Amey Wagh and Siddharth Chandekar



LIGHTS, CAMERA, MEMORIES...

Devesh Sharma encapsulates the madness and mayhem of the recently held RR Kabel Filmfare Awards Marathi 2024

The RR Kabel Filmfare Awards Marathi 2024 unfolded with much fanfare at the Mahakavi Kalidas Natya Mandir in Mumbai on April 18. This unforgettable evening was hosted by the charismatic duo of **Amey Wagh** and **Siddharth Chandekar**, who elevated the entertainment quotient a notch higher with their playful banter, quirky antics, and hilarious quips. As we celebrated the achievements of Marathi cinema, the red carpet simultaneously came alive with industry figures showcasing their unique style statements. Among the many glamorous faces present were Suhas Joshi, Ankush Choudhary, Rinku Rajguru, Gauri Nalawade, Adityanath Kothari, Tejasswi Prakash, Sonali Kulkarni, Deesha Katkar, Kishori Shahane, Hardik Joshi, amongst others, each adding their own spark to the event's dazzling ambiance.

← Amruta Subhash



Rinku Rajguru, Nirmitee Sawant, Hemant Dhome, Kshitee Jog and Sayali Sanjeev pose with the LTA winner Suhas Joshi



Sharib Hashmi, Nawazuddin Siddiqui and Jitendra Joshi are all smiles



Shashank Shende and Sonali Kulkarni grin ear-to-ear



Varsha Usgaonkar and Ankush Choudhary happily smile



Legendary theatre and cine actress **Suhas Joshi** was the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award. The award was presented to her by her *Jhimma* co-stars, **Sayali Sanjeev, Rinku Rajguru, Kshitee Jog, Nirmitee Sawant**, all of whom spoke highly of the veteran. They pointed out how the actor insisted on being addressed just as Suhas and scolded them if they used an honorific. Being around her taught them things like discipline and punctuality, and they mentioned that they were bowled over by her passion for her craft, which hasn't dimmed over the passage of time. The actress herself reflected that when she began acting, she was lucky enough to work with several stalwarts of stage and cinema, who shaped her into what she is today. She added that one passes on what one has learnt and that's how a tradition gets moulded.

Shashank Shende was the winner of the Best Actor In A Leading Role (Male) trophy for *Baaplyok*. His joy was palpable when he came on stage. The actor mentioned that

**LEGENDARY
THEATRE AND
CINE ACTRESS
SUHAS JOSHI WAS
THE RECIPIENT
OF THE LIFETIME
ACHIEVEMENT
AWARD**



Mahesh Manjrekar, Addinath Kothare, Aanand L Rai and Samruddhi Porey enjoying the proceedings



← Prajakta Mali

winning the Black Lady was one of the rare dream come true moments. He never expected to win it as a leading man and feels like pinching himself on stage. Best Actor (Critics') winner **Ankush Chaudhary**, who got the Black Lady for his role in *Maharashtra Shaheer*. In his speech, he reflected that it was his privilege to play his ideal, **Shahir Sable** on screen. He has always looked up to the revolutionary poet and he was glad the film helped enlarge Sable's reach. Best Director and Best Original Story winner for *Aatmapamphlet*, **Ashish Avinash Bende**, thanked his mentor **Paresh Mokashi**, who wrote a cracking screenplay and dialogue for his film. He was missing Mokashi,

Gauri Nalawade →



Shubhangi Gokhale, Sakhi Gokhale and Jitendra Joshi pose together



Naal 2 director Sudhakar Reddy Yakkanti poses with his child stars Shrinivas Pokale and Treeshia Thosar

Daisy Shah →



Best Film trophy winners, team *Aatmapamphlet* and team *Baipan Bhaari Deva* pose together



Nishigandha Wad



Sonali Kulkarni

SHASHANK SHENDE WAS THE WINNER OF THE BEST ACTOR IN A LEADING ROLE (MALE) TROPHY FOR *BAAPLYOK*



↑
Deepali Sayyed

who was unable to come this year due to circumstances. The Best Actor In A Leading Role (Female) winner **Gauri Deshpande**, said she was apprehensive at first playing the titular role in the remake of such an iconic film as *Shyamchi Aai* but thanks to her director **Sujay Dahake**, she was able to do justice to the role.

The Best Film (Critics') trophy was shared by **Sudhakar ReddyYakkanti** for *Naal 2* and **Makarand Mane** for *Baaplyok*. Sudhakar said he was sure Makarand, who was absent, was feeling as delighted as he was and added he didn't mind sharing the award



Suhas Joshi and Swati Chitnis are all smiles



←
Ravi Jadhav

←
Devdatta Nage

← Addinath Kothare



Amitraj



Anuradha Paudwal enjoys the proceedings



Guru Thakur converses with Shashak Shende

← Kishori Shahane

THE BEST FILM (CRITICS') TROPHY WAS SHARED BY SUDHAKAR REDDYAKKANTI FOR *NAAL 2* AND MAKARAND MANE FOR *BAPPLYOK*

← Smita Gondkar

← Sandeep Pathak



for such a wholesome film as *Baaplyok*. The same sentiments were emulated by the Best Actor In A Supporting Role (Female) winners **Anita Date** and **Nirmiti Sawant**, who won it for *Vaalvi* and *Jhimma 2* respectively. Nirmiti added that she actually felt she had come on an all-girl's picnic while on the sets of her film and

said her award belonged to her colleagues as well. Best Actor In A Supporting Role (Male) too was shared by **Jitendra Joshi** and **Vitthal Nagnath Kale** for *Naal 2* and *Baaplyok* respectively. The duo had a mutual admiration society going and praised each other's performance and films to the hilt.

Best Playback Singer (Male) **Jayesh Khare** and **Mayur Sukal** for *Gau nako kiswa* from *Maharashtra Shaheer*. Jayesh is a child prodigy and Mayur Sukale praised

← Gauri Deshpande



Nikhil Sane looks engrossed



Deesha Katkar



Bhagyashree Milind



Rituraj Wankhede



Smita Tambe and Rinku Rajguru pose together



Abhijeet Khandekar enjoying the proceedings



← Shubhankar Tawde



← Asawari Joshi

→ Hardeek Joshi



him, saying listening to Jayesh hitting high notes without a hiccup was a wonder indeed. The duo sang a few lines of their songs, to cries of encore. **Sanju Rathod**, whose Marathi single, *Gulabi sadi*, went hugely viral, called up celebs like Priyadarshini Indalkar, Gauri Nalawade, Rinku Rajguru, Sayali Sanjeev on stage to jive on the live rendition of his song, much to the joy of the audience. Prarthana Behere, Shruti Marathe, Prajakta Mali and Vaibhav Tatwawadi too set the stage on fire with their scintillating performances.

All-in-all, the RR Kabel Filmfare Awards Marathi 2024 proved to be a night full of camaraderie and bonhomie, culminating in the winners, nominees and the audience going back home with fond memories and a promise of another scintillating year ahead for the Marathi industry.

RR KABEL FILMFARE AWARDS MARATHI 2024

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FIRST AMONG EQUALS

DEVESH SHARMA CHRONICLES
A SHORT PROFILE OF ALL THE
WINNERS FROM THE RECENTLY
HELD RR KABEL FILMFARE AWARDS
MARATHI 2024

The RR Kabel Filmfare Awards Marathi 2024 was a night to remember, dazzling with pivotal wins and keeping the audience on the edge of their seats. The atmosphere was electric, especially as the announcement of the Best Film winner brought an unforgettable moment of triumph for the highly acclaimed films, *Aatmapamphlet* and *Baipan Bhaari Deva*. Celebrating outstanding cinematic talent, the event honoured Ashish Avinash Bende with the Best Director award for his brilliant work on *Aatmapamphlet*. In the acting categories, Shashank Shende's gripping performance in *Baaplyok* earned him the Best Actor In A Leading Role (Male) award, while the versatile Gauri Deshpande won the Best Actor in a Leading Role (Female) accolade for *Shyamchi Aai*. Ankush Chaudhary received the Best Actor (Critics') award for *Maharashtra Shaheer*, and Rohini Hattangadi was recognized as the Best Actress (Critics') for her role in *Baipan Bhaari Deva*. Moreover, the Critics' Award for Best Film celebrated the exceptional artistry of *Naal 2* and *Baaplyok*, rounding off an evening that highlighted the best of Marathi cinema. Here's looking at all the winners from the event...

(From L-R)
Best Actor In A Leading Role (Female) **Gauri Deshpande**
Best Actor (Critics') **Ankush Chaudhari**
Best Actor In A Leading Role (Male) **Shashank Shende**
Best Debut Male **Ashitosh Gaikwad**
Best Debut Female **Priyadarshini Indalkar**

PHOTOGRAPHS: AJAY KADAM

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Mr. Joy Chatterjee, AVP, Sales & Marketing, Mankind Pharma Limited, Ms. Gunjan Virmani, Manager - Marketing, Mankind Pharma Limited and with Gashmeer Mahajani give away the trophies to the winners Jayesh Khare and Mayur Sukale



Gauri Deshpande

Priyadarshini Indalkar

Prajakta Mali

Gauri Nalawade

Ankush Choudhary



Nawazuddin Siddiqui



Mahesh Manjrekar



Ravi Jadhav



Asawari Joshi



Varsha Usgaonkar



Meera Joshi



Deesha Katkar



Ashish Patil



Hardeek Joshi



Bhagyashree Milind



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Hemal Ingle



Smita Gondkar



Kishori Shahane



Sayali Sanjeev



Rinku Rajguru

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LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

SUHAS JOSHI

Suhas Joshi's journey into the world of acting is a testament to her passion and dedication. From her college days, where she first discovered her love for the craft, to honing her skills at the prestigious National School of Drama under the guidance of renowned director Ebrahim Alkazi, Joshi's commitment to her artistry shines through. Her debut in 1972 with the Marathi play *Barrister* marked the beginning of a remarkable career. Throughout her career, she graced the stage with memorable performances in plays such as Sai Paranjpye's *Sakkhe Shejari* and Vijay Tendulkar's *Kanyadaan*, leaving a lasting impression on audiences. Joshi's talent transcends the stage, as evidenced by her captivating presence in Marathi cinema. From *Reshmigaathi* to *Jhimma*, she has effortlessly portrayed a diverse range of characters, leaving an indelible mark with each role. Her contribution to the world of theatre and cinema is invaluable, inspiring generations of actors and leaving an enduring legacy.



Sayali Sanjeev, Rinku Rajguru, Kshitee Jog, Nirmitee Sawant and Hemant Dhome do the honours

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FIVE STAR RATED FAN





BEST ACTOR IN A
LEADING ROLE
(MALE)

SHASHANK
SHENDE

BAAPLYOK

In *Baaplyok*, Shashank Shende delivers a standout performance. The actor masterfully balances the character's sharp tongue and quick retorts with a profound underlying care for his son. His portrayal brings depth and nuance to the father-son dynamic, capturing the complexity of their relationship. Shende's ability to convey both humour and heartfelt concern ensures that his character resonates with the audience, making the father's role both memorable and impactful in this heartfelt village drama.



Baaplyok



Sonali Kulkarni hands over the trophy

NOMINEES

- Amey Wagh (*Jaggu Ani Juliet*)
- Ankush Chaudhari (*Maharashtra Shaheer*)
- Onkar Bhojane (*Sarla Ek Koti*)
- **SHASHANK SHENDE** (**BAAPLYOK**)
- Swrapnil Joshi (*Vaakvi*)

BEST ACTOR IN A
LEADING ROLE
(FEMALE)

GAURI DESHPANDE

SHYAMCHI AAI

It's said that a mother is the child's first teacher and nurtures the goodness in him. The movie follows the path of young Shyam (Sharva Gadgil) as he transforms into Sane Guruji, delving into the profound impact of his virtuous mother Yashoda (Gauri Deshpande). Although comparisons to Vanmala, who portrayed the mother in the 1953 film, are bound to arise, Gauri's performance distinctly shines through in this contemporary retelling of the classic.



Shyamchi Aai



Ms Kirti Kabra, Director, RR Global and Jitendra Joshi hand over the trophy

NOMINEES

- **GAURI DESHPANDE**
(*SHYAMCHI AAI*)
- *Isha Keskar (Sarla Ek Koti)*
- *Priyadarshini Indalkar (Phulrani)*
- *Rohini Hattangadi*
(*Baipan Bhaari Deva*)
- *Vandana Gupte (Baipan Bhaari Deva)*

DARE TO DAZZLE

DAZZLER - THE ASSOCIATE SPONSOR ADDED TO THE GLAMOUR FOR THE EVENING AT THE **RR KABEL FILMFARE AWARDS MARATHI 2024** WHERE THE CELEBS POSED FOR THE CAMERA WITH THEIR PERFECT POUTS AND SMILES

Drawing from the distinguished legacy of the House of Eyetex since 1938, Dazler Cosmetics exemplifies decades of excellence in beauty products. With a mission to empower women and a dedication to clean beauty, Dazler offers a diverse range of high-quality, innovative, and safe cosmetics. Proudly produced in India, the brand emphasises local talent, indigenous ingredients, and Indian beauty traditions. Created by women for women, all products are 100% vegan and cruelty-free. From their iconic eyeliners to vibrant lip shades, every Dazler product blends heritage with modernity, providing beauty solutions that inspire confidence and self-expression. Dazler - Boundless Expressions was vividly showcased as celebrities joyfully posed with their beautiful smiles and pouts!





Asawari Joshi



Savani Ravindra



Smita Gondkar



Deesha Katkar



Bhagyashree Millind



Priyadarshini Indalkar



Hemal Ingle



Deepali Sayed



Rinku Rajguru

Dazler



RR KABEL
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MARATHI
2024



BEST ACTOR
(CRITICS')

ANKUSH
CHAUDHARI

MAHARASHTRA SHAHEER

Ankush Chaudhari's portrayal in *Maharashtra Shaheer* marks a pivotal moment in his career, showcasing a depth and versatility that solidifies his status as a powerhouse performer. Through his nuanced portrayal, Chaudhari transcends the confines of the screen, breathing life into his character with remarkable authenticity and conviction. The actor immerses himself completely in the role, utilising not only his dialogue delivery but also his body language to convey the intricacies of his character's emotions and struggles.



Maharashtra Shaheer



Varsha Usgaonka gives away the Black Lady

NOMINEES

- *Ajay Purkar (Subhedar)*
- **ANKUSH CHAUDHARI**
(MAHARASHTRA SHAHEER)
- *Ashitosh Gaikwad (Unaad)*
- *Nagaraj Popatrao Manjule (Ghar Banduk Biryani)*
- *Om Bhutkar (Shyamchi Aai)*
- *Shashank Shende (Baaphyok)*



BEST ACTRESS
(CRITICS')

ROHINI HATTANGADI

BAIPAN BHAARI DEVA

Rohini Hattangadi's performance in *Baipan Bhaari Deva* is truly remarkable. She embodies the role of a nurturing mother figure to her younger sisters with an understated grace and strength. Her portrayal is characterised by a quiet resilience and deep compassion, subtly influencing the well-being of her siblings through her thoughtful actions. The veteran has given us another acting masterclass with the film.



Baipan Bhaari Deva



Mr Deepak Parashar, Head Branding, Parakh Agro Industries Ltd and Aanand L Rai do the honours

NOMINEES

- Gauri Deshpande (*Shyamchi Aai*)
- Madhura Velankar (*Butterfly*)
- **ROHINI HATTANGADI (BAIPAN BHAARI DEVA)**
- Sonali Kulkarni (*Sshort And Ssweet*)



BEST DIRECTOR

ASHISH
AVINASH
BENDE

AATMAPAMPHLET

The film marks the directorial debut of Ashish Bende. The director has skillfully portrayed the socio-economic disparities and rigid caste hierarchies that define the period. The meticulous attention to historical and cultural details transports viewers to the heart of Maharashtra during the '80s and '90s, immersing them in the vibrant yet tumultuous world that its protagonist, Ashish navigates.



Aatmapamphlet



Ms Kirti Kabra, Director, RR Global and Samruddhi Porey hand over the award

NOMINEES

- Aditya Sarpotdar (*Unaad*)
- **ASHISH AVINASH BENDE** (*AATMAPAMPHLET*)
- Hemant Dhome (*Jhimma 2*)
- Kedar Shinde (*Baipan Bhaari Deva*)
- Makarand Shashimadhu Mane (*Baaphyok*)
- Paresh Mokashi (*Vaakvi*)



BEST FILM

AATMAPAMPHLET

The film masterfully depicts momentous occasions in the life of Ashish, a so-called “lower caste” boy from the Dalit community in 1980s and 1990s Maharashtra, who falls in love with his classmate from the so-called “upper caste” community. It captures the intricacies and challenges of inter-caste love in a deeply divided society, offering a poignant exploration of societal norms and personal resilience.



Aatmapamphlet



Ms. Sushma Rajesh – Cluster Head: Marathi, Kannada & Tamil Viacom18, Om Raut and Kishore Shahane Vij hand over the Black Lady

NOMINEES

- AATMAPAMPHLET
- Baaphyok
- BAIPAN BHAARI DEVA
- Jhimma 2
- Unaad
- Vaakvi



BEST FILM

BAIPAN BHAARI DEVA

This film is a poignant exploration of the lives of six sisters now between the ages of 40 and 60. Each sister grapples with personal battles—strained relationships, the challenges of menopause and the inevitable trials of aging. The film masterfully portrays their struggles to reconcile their unfulfilled dreams with the sacrifices they make for others, offering a deeply moving narrative about resilience, family bonds and the enduring quest for self-identity.



Baipan Bhaari Deva



Ms. Sushma Rajesh – Cluster Head: Marathi, Kannada & Tamil Viacom18, Om Raut & Kishore Shahane Vij give away the trophy

NOMINEES

- *AATMAPAMPHLET*
- *Baaphyok*
- *BAIPAN BHAARI DEVA*
- *Jhimma 2*
- *Unaad*
- *Vaakvi*



BEST FILM (CRITICS')

MAKARAND MANE

BAAPLYOK

Baaplyok is set in a remote village in Maharashtra. The story starts when Sagar (Vitthal Nagnath Kale) gets engaged to a girl (Payal Jadhav). Although their relationship is arranged by their respective parents, there is immense love between the two. The only problem in Sagar's life is his father (Shashank Shende). The two can't see eye-to-eye. How they reconcile their differences during a journey forms the crux of this father-son comedy.



Baaplyok



Mr Pushkar Gokhale, Exec. Vice President & Business Head - Godrej Security Solutions and Addinath Kothari do the honours

NOMINEES

- *Aatmapamphlet* (Ashish Avinash Bende)
- *BAAPLYOK* (MAKARAND MANE)
- *NAAL 2* (SUDHAKAR REDDY YAKKANTI)
- *Shyamchi Aai* (Sujay Dahake)
- *Unaad* (Aditya Sarpotdar)



BEST FILM (CRITICS')

SUDHAKAR REDDY YAKKANTI

NAAL 2

In 2018, the first part of the movie explored Chaitu's reaction to the knowledge that he has been adopted. Chaitu's yearning to meet his birth mother Parvati (Deepti Devi) disturbs his equation with his adoptive mother Suman (Devika Daftardar). The second part concentrates on his interactions with his siblings Chimi (Trisha Thosar) and Mani (Bhargav Jagtap), who has learning issues. The film sensitively portrays the sudden turmoil brought into their lives and how it changes equations all around.



Naal 2



Mr Pushkar Gokhale, Exec. Vice President & Business Head - Godrej Security Solutions and Addinath Kothari do the honours

NOMINEES

- *Aatmapamphlet* (Ashish Avinash Bende)
- *BAAPLYOK* (MAKARAND MANE)
- *NAAL 2* (SUDHAKAR REDDY YAKKANTI)
- *Shyamchi Aai* (Sujay Dahake)
- *Unaad* (Aditya Sarpotdar)



BEST DEBUT
DIRECTOR

DEVENDRA
GAIKWAD

CHOWK

Devendra Gaikwad delves deep into the complex themes of politics, youth involvement in crime, and its impact on families in his directorial debut *Chowk*. Gaikwad's sincere portrayal of the perpetrators and victims of crime, coupled with his attention to detail and precision in storytelling, deserves appreciation. Overall, Gaikwad's direction in the film demonstrates his skill in capturing the intricacies of society with authenticity and depth.



Chowk



Mr Nikhil Pitale, Associate Vice President, Luker and Ravi Jadhav hand over the trophy



BEST DEBUT
MALE

ASHITOSH
GAIKWAD

UNAAD

In a narrative that serves as a crucial guide for young adults and a beacon of insight for their parents, Ashitosh Gaikwad brings an authentic and compelling portrayal to the screen. His nuanced acting beautifully captures the complexities of youth on the brink of adulthood, making his character resonate deeply with the audience. His debut is a promising start to what is sure to be an illustrious career.



Unaad



Smita Tambe and Mr Amar Pore, Supply chain Head, Hell energy drink present the award



BEST DEBUT FEMALE

PRIYADARSHINI INDALKAR

PHULRANI

Priyadarshini Indalkar's performance in *Phulrani* is both layered and nuanced. She captures the essence of her character Shevanta with sincerity and depth. Her portrayal of the character's journey, with its highs and lows, reflects her talent and potential as an actress. It's commendable that in her debut lead role, she shines and leaves a lasting impression. She's definitely an actress to keep an eye on in the future.



Phulrani



Rinku Rajguru and Amit Dhadiwal, Managing Partner, Hridaan Realty present the award



BEST CHILD ACTOR

SHRINIVAS POKALE & TREESHA THOSAR

NAAL 2

In *Naal 2*, Shreenivas Pokale exhibits a captivating absence of self-consciousness, enhancing the authenticity of his performance and the believability of his character's experiences. His uninhibited portrayal allows viewers to connect deeply with the narratives unfolding on screen. Treasha Thosar's portrayal adds an extra layer of charm to the film. Despite occasional instances of exaggerated precocity, Thosar's delightful presence on screen captivates audiences and brings a sense of lightness to the narrative.



Naal 2



Nawazuddin Siddique hands over the trophy

BEST ACTOR IN A
SUPPORTING ROLE
(MALE)

JITENDRA
JOSHI

NAAL 2

In his portrayal of Ajinath, Jitendra Joshi delves deep into the complexities of fatherhood. As Ajinath, he embodies the essence of paternal concern, grappling with the unexpected return of the son he once relinquished to adoption. This reunion triggers a flood of conflicting emotions within Ajinath, stirring up a potent mixture of love, guilt and uncertainty. The juxtaposition of the two sons ignites a sense of comparison within Ajinath, adding to the emotional turbulence.



Naal 2



Ms Sheetal Agashe, Managing Director, Greenleaf by Brihans Natural products and Hemant Dhome hand over the award

NOMINEES

- **JITENDRA JOSHI (NAAL 2)**
- **Pravin Dalimkar**
(Ghar Banduk Biryani)
- **Sandeep Pathak (Shyamchi Aai)**
- **Sayaji Shinde (Ghar Banduk Biryani)**
- **Subodh Bhawe (Vaakvi)**
- **VITTHAL NAGNATH KALE**
(BAAPLYOK)



BEST ACTOR IN A
SUPPORTING ROLE
(MALE)

VITTHAL
NAGNATH
KALE

BAAPLYOK

Vitthal Nagnath Kale shines in his role as Sagar in *Baaplyok*, embodying a son perpetually at odds with his father. Kale captures the tension and friction of their frequent clashes with authenticity, bringing a palpable energy to their confrontations. Yet, beneath the surface of their disputes, Kale skillfully reveals the deep, unspoken bond that ties father and son together. His nuanced performance highlights the complexity of their relationship.



Baaplyok



Ms Sheetal Agashe, Managing Director,
Greenleaf by Brihans Natural products and
Hemant Dhome present the trophy

NOMINEES

- **JITENDRA JOSHI (NAAL 2)**
- **Pravin Dalimkar**
(*Ghar Banduk Biryani*)
- **Sandeep Pathak (Shyamchi Aai)**
- **Sayaji Shinde (Ghar Banduk Biryani)**
- **Subodh Bhavé (Vaakvi)**
- **VITTHAL NAGNATH KALE**
(*BAAPLYOK*)

BEST ACTOR IN A
SUPPORTING ROLE
(FEMALE)

ANITA
DATE

VAALVI

Anita Date, known for her dynamic acting skills, truly shines in the mystery thriller *Vaalvi*. Despite having a relatively brief role, her presence is undeniably magnetic, capturing the audience's attention every time she appears on screen. Her performance is characterised by a blend of intensity and nuance, perfectly complementing the film's suspenseful atmosphere. Her ability to convey a wide range of emotions effortlessly enhances the mystery element of the film.



Vaalvi



Mr Tanmay Kanitkar, Director, Anuroop Wihaha and Rama Kuknur, established Bharatnatyam dancer do the honours

NOMINEES

- ANITA DATE (*VAALVI*)
- Deepti Devi (*Naal 2*)
- NIRMITI SAWANT (*JHIMMA 2*)
- Shilpa Navalkar (*Baipan Bhaari Deva*)
- Suhas Joshi (*Jhimma 2*)
- Sukanya Kulkarni Mone (*Baipan Bhaari Deva*)



BEST ACTOR IN A
SUPPORTING ROLE
(FEMALE)

NIRMITI
SAWANT

JHIMMA 2

Nirmiti Sawant is the standout performer of *Jhimma 2*. Her portrayal of an outgoing mother-in-law who feels slightly possessive of her gang when her daughter-in-law joins as its newest member is both nuanced and compelling. The actor brings depth and authenticity to the role, effortlessly balancing humour with emotional complexity. Her dynamic presence and skillful depiction of the character's layered personality make her performance truly memorable and a highlight of the film.



Jhimma 2



Mr Tanmay Kanitkar, Director, Anuroop Wiwaha and Rama Kuknur, established Bharatnatyam dancer present the Black Lady

NOMINEES

- ANITA DATE (VAALVI)
- Deepti Devi (Naal 2)
- NIRMITI SAWANT (JHIMMA 2)
- Shilpa Navalkar (Baipan Bhaari Deva)
- Suhas Joshi (Jhimma 2)
- Sukanya Kulkarni Mone (Baipan Bhaari Deva)



BEST MUSIC ALBUM

AJAY ATUL

MAHARASHTRA SHAHEER

Ajay-Atul's music transcends mere auditory pleasure; it becomes a narrative element, seamlessly intertwining with the cinematic storytelling. The inclusion of Sable's popular songs, reimagined for the film, adds a layer of vintage charm and familiarity. These melodies, steeped in nostalgia, evoke a sense of warmth and belonging, connecting the audience to the film's narrative on a deeper, more personal level.



Maharashtra Shaheer



Nishigandha Wad and Girish Joshi give away the trophy

NOMINEES

- *Baipan Bhaari Deva* (Sai-Piyush)
- *Ghar Banduk Biryani* (AV Prafullachandra)
- *Jhimma 2* (Amitraj)
- **MAHARASHTRA SHAHEER** (AJAY-ATUL)
- *Naal 2* (AV Prafullachandra)
- *Unaad* (Gulraj Singh)



BEST LYRICS

GURU THAKUR

**KSHAN KAALCHE
(UNAAD)**

The lyrics by Guru Thakur delve deeply into the meaning of life, exploring profound themes of self-discovery and personal growth. These lyrics are intricately woven into the film's narrative, reinforcing the central theme of finding oneself. They serve not just as musical accompaniment but as a vital narrative tool that helps to convey the internal journeys of the characters.



Unaad



Mr Pushkar Gokhale, Exec. Vice President & Business Head - Godrej Security Solutions, Niranjana Iyengar and Amruta Subhash hand over the trophy

NOMINEES

- Aditi Dravid- Mangalagaur (Baipan Bhaari Deva)
- GURUTHAKUR- KSHAN KAALCHE (UNAAD)
- Guru Thakur- Umagaya Baap Ra (Baapylak)
- Kshitij Patwardhan- Rang Jarasa Ola (Jhimma 2)
- Vaibhav Deshmukh- Aaha Hero (Ghar Banduk Biryani)
- Valay Mulgund- Baipan Bhari Deva (Baipan Bhari Deva)



BEST PLAYBACK SINGER
(MALE)

JAYESH KHARE & MAYUR SUKALE

**GAU NAKO KISNA
(MAHARASHTRA SHAHEER)**

Jayesh Khare and Mayur Sukale have masterfully brought the essence of Lord Krishna's playful and loving nature to life through their singing. Their emotive voices and expressive delivery beautifully capture the mischievous spirit of Krishna and his deep affection for Radha. Their performance is a delightful blend of devotion and artistry, resonating with the timeless nature of Krishna's tales.



Maharashtra Shaheer



Mr Joy Chatterjee, Associate Vice President - Sales & Marketing, Mankind Pharma Limited and Ms Gunjan Virmani, Manager - Marketing, Mankind Pharma Limited and Gashmeer Mahajani hand over the trophy

NOMINEES

- Adarsh Shinde- Marathi Pori (Jhimma 2)
- Ajay Gogavale- Jay Jay Maharashtra Majha (Maharashtra Shaheer)
- Ajay Gogavale- Umagaya Baap Ra (Baapyllok)
- Gulraj Singh, Divya Kumar- Hori Jayee Re (Unaad)
- Jayesh Khare & Master Avan- Darav Darav (Naal 2)
- **JAYESH KHARE & MAYUR SUKALE - GAU NAKO KISNA (MAHARASHTRA SHAHEER)**



BEST PLAYBACK SINGER (FEMALE)

NANDINI SRIKAR

KSHAN KAALCHE (UNAAD)

The lyrics mirror the characters' struggles and triumphs. The song thereby becomes a minuscule version of the film's exploration of life's purpose and the pursuit of self-fulfilment. Nandini Srikar has done a wonderful job of capturing the nuances contained in the lyrics in her mellucious voice. Her rendition adds another dimension to the magic contained in the words.



Unaad



Mr Vikram Kudva, Head Supply Chain & Operations, Yardley London, Nikhil Mahajan and Milind Ingle hand over the Black Lady

NOMINEES

- *Kadubai Kharat- Bhingori (Naal 2)*
- **NANDINI SRIKAR- KSHAN KAALCHE (UNAAD)**
- *Savaniee Ravindra- Mangalagaur (Baipan Bhaari Deva)*
- *Shreya Ghoshal- Baharla Ha Madhumas (Maharashtra Shaheer)*
- *Shreya Ghoshal- Rang Jarasa Ols (Jhimma 2)*
- *Vaishali Samant & Mugdha Karhade- Marathi Pori (Jhimma 2)*



BEST SCREENPLAY

MADHUGANDHA KULKARNI & PARESH MOKASHI

VAALVI

Madhugandha Kulkarni and Paresh Mokashi have truly outdone themselves with the screenplay of *Vaalvi*. Their remarkable ability to blend situational humour with thriller elements has resulted in a film that is both gripping and delightfully entertaining. Their sharp, witty writing ensures that the humour never undermines the tension, but rather enhances it, creating a unique cinematic experience. The screenplay stands out for its cleverness, originality and perfect balance of laughs and thrills.



Vaalvi



Tejasswi Prakash, Kanchan Adhikari and Vivek Pawar, director of Vivz fashion school hand over the award

NOMINEES

- Aditya Sarpotdar & Saurabh Bhav (Unaad)
- **MADHUGANDHA KULKARNI & PARESH MOKASHI (VAALVI)**
- Makarand Shashimadhu Mane & Vitthal Nagnath Kale (Baaphyok)
- Paresh Mokashi (Aatmapamphlet)
- Sudhakar Reddy Yakkanti (Naal 2)
- Vaishali Naik (Baipan Bhaari Deva)



BEST DIALOGUE

PARESH
MOKASHI

AATMAPAMPHLET

The film is a remarkable achievement that not only tells a compelling and heartfelt story but also serves as a poignant commentary on the enduring issues of caste and social inequality. Humour is the strong suit of this coming of age film. Paresch Mokashi has used dialogue creatively to satirise the issues involved without getting preachy. The witty lines make you laugh and think at the same time.



Aatmapamphlet



Swati Chitnis and Rhythm Wagholikar, Author & Social Activist along with his father Mr Sudhir Wagholikar, real estate tycoon do the honours

NOMINEES

- Digpal Lanjekar (Subhedar)
- Irawati Karnik (Jhimma 2)
- Makarand Shashimadhu Mane & Vitthal Nagnath Kale (Baaphyok)
- **PARESH MOKASHI (AATMAPAMPHLET)**
- Vaishali Naik (Baipan Bhaari Deva)



BEST
CINEMATOGRAPHY

LAWRENCE
D'CUNHA

UNAAD

Lawrence D'Cunha's cinematography is nothing short of breathtaking. The shots of the ocean are mesmerising, conveying both its vastness and its serene beauty. His camera work depicting the forts and trees brings out their historical and natural grandeur, making them characters in their own right. The top view of the chasing sequence during the boating scenes is particularly impressive, offering a dynamic and thrilling perspective that enhances the narrative.



Unaad



Bhagyashree Milind presents the trophy

NOMINEES

- **LAWRENCE DCUNHA (UNAAD)**
- Satyajeet Shobha Shreeram (*Aatmapamphlet*)
- Satyajeet Shobha Shreeram (*Vaakvi*)
- Sudhakar Reddy Yakkanti (*Naal 2*)
- Vasudev Rane (*Maharashtra Shaheer*)
- Vijay Mishra (*Shyamchi Aai*)

BEST EDITING

FAISAL MAHADIK & IMRAN MAHADIK

AATMAPAMPHLET

Aatmapamphlet is a biographical film and needed deft handling to bring out its different strands. The editing by Faisal Mahadik and Imran Mahadik remains exemplary. Their work stands out for its seamless transitions, precise pacing and impeccable continuity, all of which contribute to the narrative's flow and overall storytelling. They exhibit a keen eye for detail and a profound understanding of the film's rhythm, ensuring that each scene aligns perfectly with the director's vision.



Aatmapamphlet



Amita Khopkar and Rohini Ninave present the trophy

NOMINEES

- *Abhijeet Deshpande & Saurabh Prabhudesai (Vaalavi)*
- *B. Mahanteshwar (Shyamchi Aai)*
- **FAISAL MAHADIK & IMRAN MAHADIK (AATMAPAMPHLET)**
- *Faisal Mahadik & Imran Mahadik (Unaad)*
- *Kutub Inamdar (Ghar Banduk Biryani)*
- *Mayur Hardas (Chowk)*





BEST PRODUCTION DESIGN

AMEYA BHALERAO

SHYAMCHI AAI

In crafting the evocative visual landscape of the film, production designer Amey Bhalerao has masterfully brought to life the historical period that shapes the story of young Shyam and his transformation into Sane Guruji. Bhalerao's attention to detail is evident in every frame, from the meticulously recreated domestic interiors to the broader communal settings, all reflecting the era's cultural and social milieu.



Shyamchi Aai



Ruturaj Wankhede and Asawari Joshi hand over the trophy

NOMINEES

- AMEYA BHALERAO (SHYAMCHI AAI)
- Baban Adagale (Aatmapamphlet)
- Eknath Kadam (Maharashtra Shaheer)
- Mahesh Kudalkar (Baipan Bhaari Deva)
- Mahesh Kudalkar (Unaad)
- Pratik Redij (Subhedar)

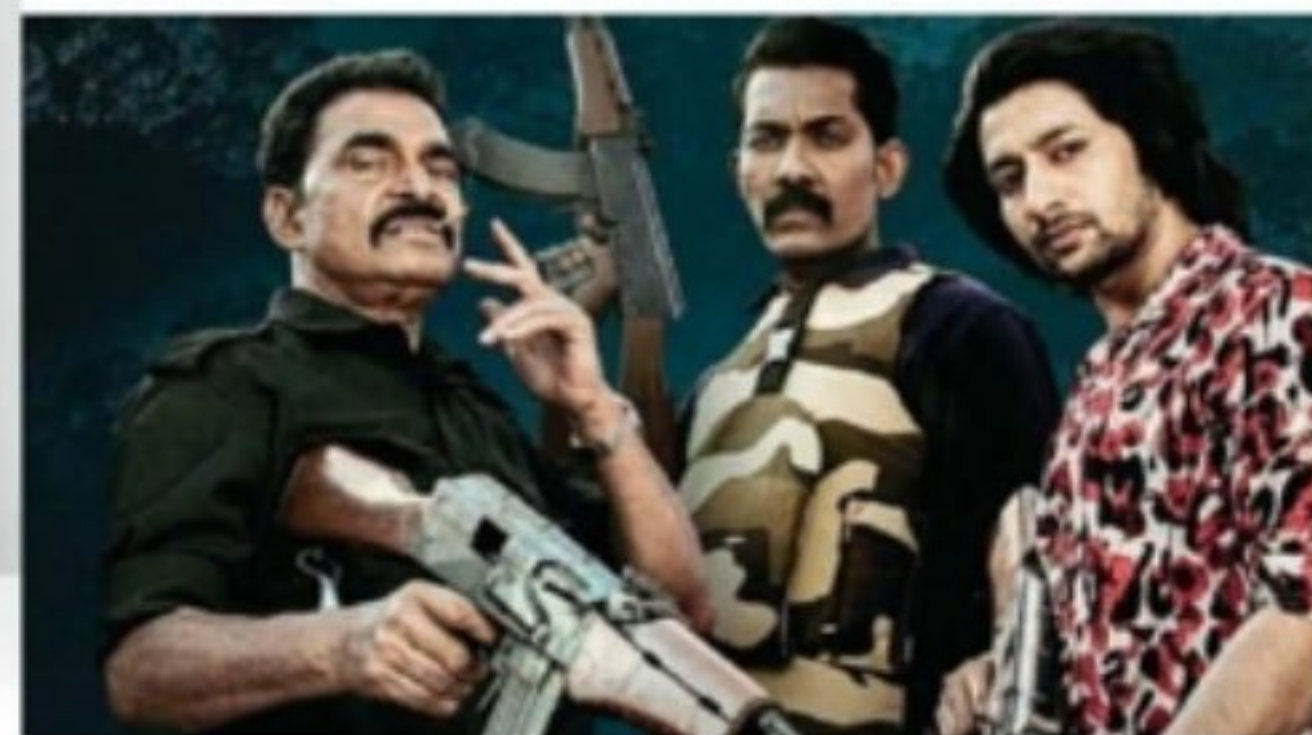


BEST SOUND DESIGN

ANMOL BHAVE

GHAR BANDUK BIRYANI

Anmol Bhavé's sound design for the film is masterful, seamlessly enhancing the narrative's tension and emotional depth. The piercing sounds of gunfire are juxtaposed with sombre undertones during the film's emotional scenes. Overall, the sound design offers a mirror to the lives of film's characters, emphasising their personal stakes and loss.



Ghar Banduk Biryani



Ruturaj Wankhede and Asawari Joshi do the honours

NOMINEES

- **ANMOL BHAVE** (*GHAR BANDUK BIRYANI*)
- *Anthony Ruban* (*Naal 2*)
- *Atul Deshpande* (*Baipan Bhaari Deva*)
- *Pranam Pansare* (*Unaad*)
- *Shantamu Akerkar & Dinesh Uchil* (*Jhimma 2*)
- *Shishir Chousalkar* (*Vaakvi*)



BEST BACKGROUND SCORE

GULRAJ SINGH

UNAAD

Gulraj Singh's background score in Aditya Sarpotdar's coming of age drama *Unaad* weaves emotion and depth into every scene, and elevates the storytelling to new heights. With his masterful use of instrumentation, Singh creates a sonic landscape that captivates the audience from start to finish. It helps that he has also given the music for the film and has used the tunes from the songs evocatively.



Unaad



Amita Khopkar and Rohini Ninave present the award

NOMINEES

- Aditya Bedekar (*Jhimma 2*)
- Advait Nemalekar (*Naal 2*)
- **GULRAJ SINGH (UNAAD)**
- Saket Kanetkar (*Aatmapamphlet*)
- Saket Kanetkar & Abha Soumitra (*Shyamchi Aai*)
- Vijay Narayn Gavande (*Baaphyok*)



BEST COSTUME
DESIGN

NAMDEO WAGHMARE

SHYAMCHI AAI

Namdeo Waghmare's costume design is not just about clothing the characters; it's about weaving their stories into the fabric of the film, enhancing the historical context and emotional depth. His work allows audiences to step back in time, experiencing the world as Shyam and his mother did, thus bringing the narrative of Sane Guruji's transformation to life with authenticity and grace.



Shyamchi Aai



Shubhangi Gokhale does the honours

NOMINEES

- Kalyani Gugle (Unaad)
- **NAMDEO WAGHMARE**
(SHYAMCHI AAI)
- Sachin Lovalekar (Aatmapamphlet)
- Tanaji Jadhav (Subhedar)
- Yugesha Omkar (Maharashtra Shaheer)



RR KABEL
FILMFARE
AWARDS
MARATHI
2024



IT'S RAINING ENTERTAINMENT!

All the performances at the recently held **RR Kabel Filmfare Awards Marathi 2024** were worth a watch, finds **Devesh Sharma**



SIZZLING HOT

Prajakta Mali is a multi talented actress, who can not only give the perfect expressions but also perform the perfect dance move as well. She danced to a composite of hit songs like *Baiga*, *Raghu pinjryat aala*, *Cham cham*, *Email kaal*, *Katta kirr* and *Chandra*, making the audience roar for an encore.



PRAJAKTA MALI



DASHING HUNK

There's no doubt that he's one of the most handsome of actors from the Marathi industry. Vaibhav Tatwawadi is a good dancer to boot and showcased his skills through his performance on a compilation of songs like *O kaka*, *Manat shirali*, *Chand mathyavari*, *Bhavdya*, *Gavran kombda*, *Awaj wadhav dj* and *Dhanak dhanak*. The viewers were surely for a treat indeed.





AWESOME TWOsome

The energy rang high as powerhouse performers Prathana Behere and Shruti Marathe brought their A-game to town and danced to a medley of popular numbers like *Dadla*, *Aika dajiba*, *Aai chya gavat* and *Nach ga ghuma*. Needless to say, their fast-paced act kept the crowd engrossed.



PRATHANA BEHERE & SHRUTI MARATHE



We thank our judges



NEENA KULKARNI
Actor



NIKHIL MAHAJAN
Filmmaker



NIPUN DHARMADHIKARI
Writer & Director



NIRANJANA IYENGAR
Writer



NISHIGANDHA WAD
Actor



PUSHKAR SHROTRI
Actor



RENUKA SHAHANE
Actor



SAMRUDDHI POREY
Actor



SHAILESH NARWADE
Director



SHRABANI DEODHAR
Writer & Director



TRUSHANT INGLE
Actor & director



VIJU MANE
Filmmaker



VIKRAM PHADNIS
Designer & Filmmaker



your say

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

INSTA LIKE

Medley of moments

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



@janhvikapoor: Mr and Mrs Mahi have done their bit, have you done yours? #votenow *Rajkumar Rao and Janhvi Kapoor sure make a strong point. Yes, it's our duty to vote and we hope every Filmfare reader went ahead and exercised his right.*

@rashmika_mandanna: I truly had manifested for a song where I could get the whole country grooving again.. and HERE it is.. !! 🎉❤️🔥
Rashmika Mandanna and Allu Arjun look too cool for school in this photo.



@aishwaryarai-bachchan_arb:

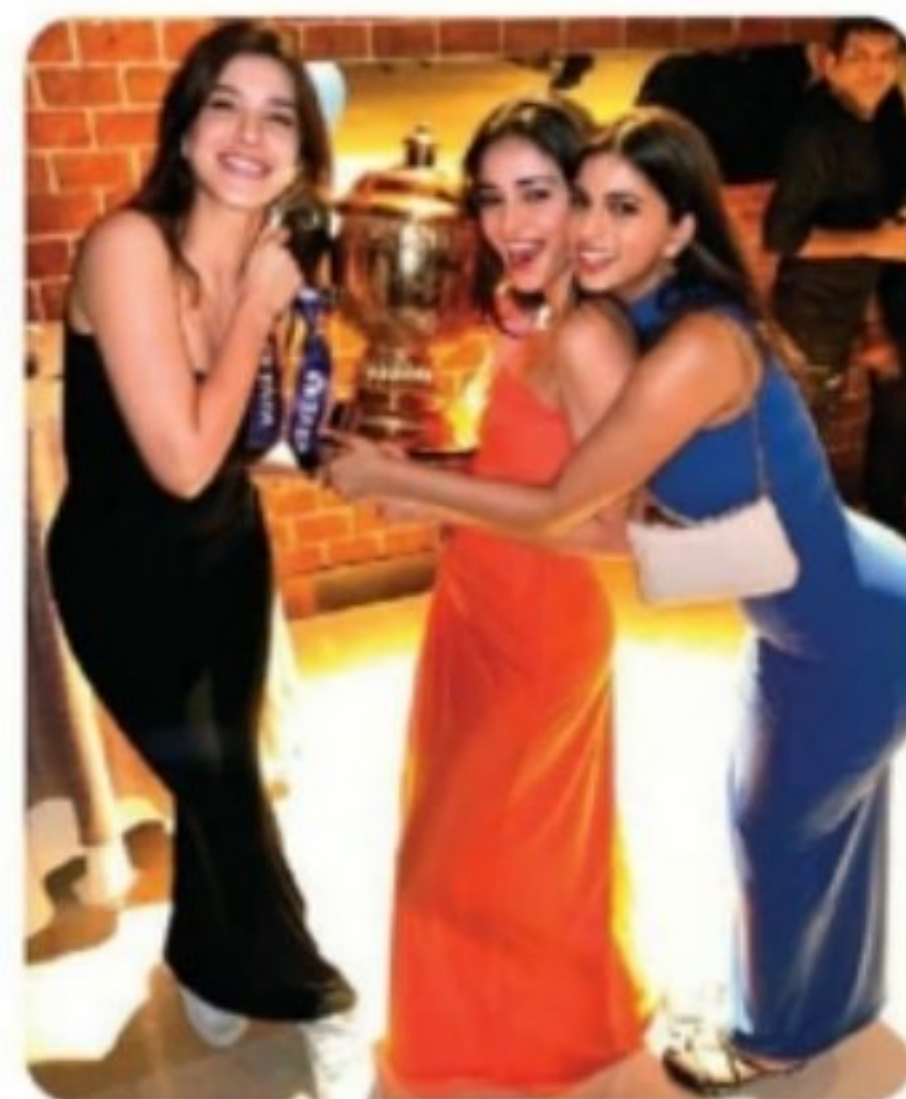
❤️😍🌟

It's a treat to watch Aishwarya Rai Bachchan getting ready to slay.

@ananyapanday:

We won 🏆💜🔴

Ananya Panday, Shanaya Kapoor and Suhana Khan look more excited than the KKR players with the IPL trophy



@dianapenty: The month so far 🌟

Diana Penty looks dishy even behind a mask. What say you?

Readers write in their rants and raves pg 118

Shatrughan Sinha's racy rejoinders pg 120





IN THE MAIL

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



1st Prize
₹1500

The winners of the Filmfare Awards Bangla

SONAR BANGLA

I Had a blast reading about the winners of Filmfare Awards Bangla in your last issue (May). As a Bengali, I feel proud and happy that *Filmfare* is continuing to recognize the talents in our film industry.

Sudeshna Sengupta, Kolkata

ASSAM AHOY!

I loved the awards coverage. I have lived in Assam almost all my life and have been a huge fan of Aimee Baruah. I feel really proud seeing her win big in your Assamese awards edition.

Aarna Borah, Guwahati

2nd Prize
₹1000

BUMBADA ROCKS

I enjoyed reading about the Bangla Filmfare Awards In your last issue (May). I'm extremely happy about Prosenjit's win for *Shesh Pata*. His portrayal of Balmiki in the movie was incredible.

Ruchira Dasgupta, Kolkata



Churni Ganguly

CONGRATS CHURNI

Churni Ganguly is one of my favourite actresses. I have been following her work since her debut movie *Waarish*. She looks enigmatic on screen and portrays each role with finesse. Congratulations to her on her Filmfare win.

Pratima Chatterjee, Dombivli

MITHUN' CLASS ACT

Mithun Chakraborty is my all-time favourite actor. His portrayal of the Kabuliwala was exceptional. I keep watching the movie again and again. I agree with your take on his portrayal of the character. It's poignant yet vulnerable.

Shreya Singh, Delhi



Prosenjit Chatterjee



Rima Das

MULTI-TALENTED RIMA

Rima Das has become my favourite director. I loved *Tora's Husband* and how she captured the way COVID-19 affected people's lives. Kudos to her for winning the Best Director award at the Filmfare Assam awards.

Megha Jha, Patna

I HEART AIMEE

Aimee Baruah simply shined in *Rongatapu* 1982. I agree with you that her portrayal of Morom was detailed and amazing. I am very happy that she won the award for Best Actor in a Leading Role (Female) at Filmfare Awards Assam.

Reetika Das, Guwahati

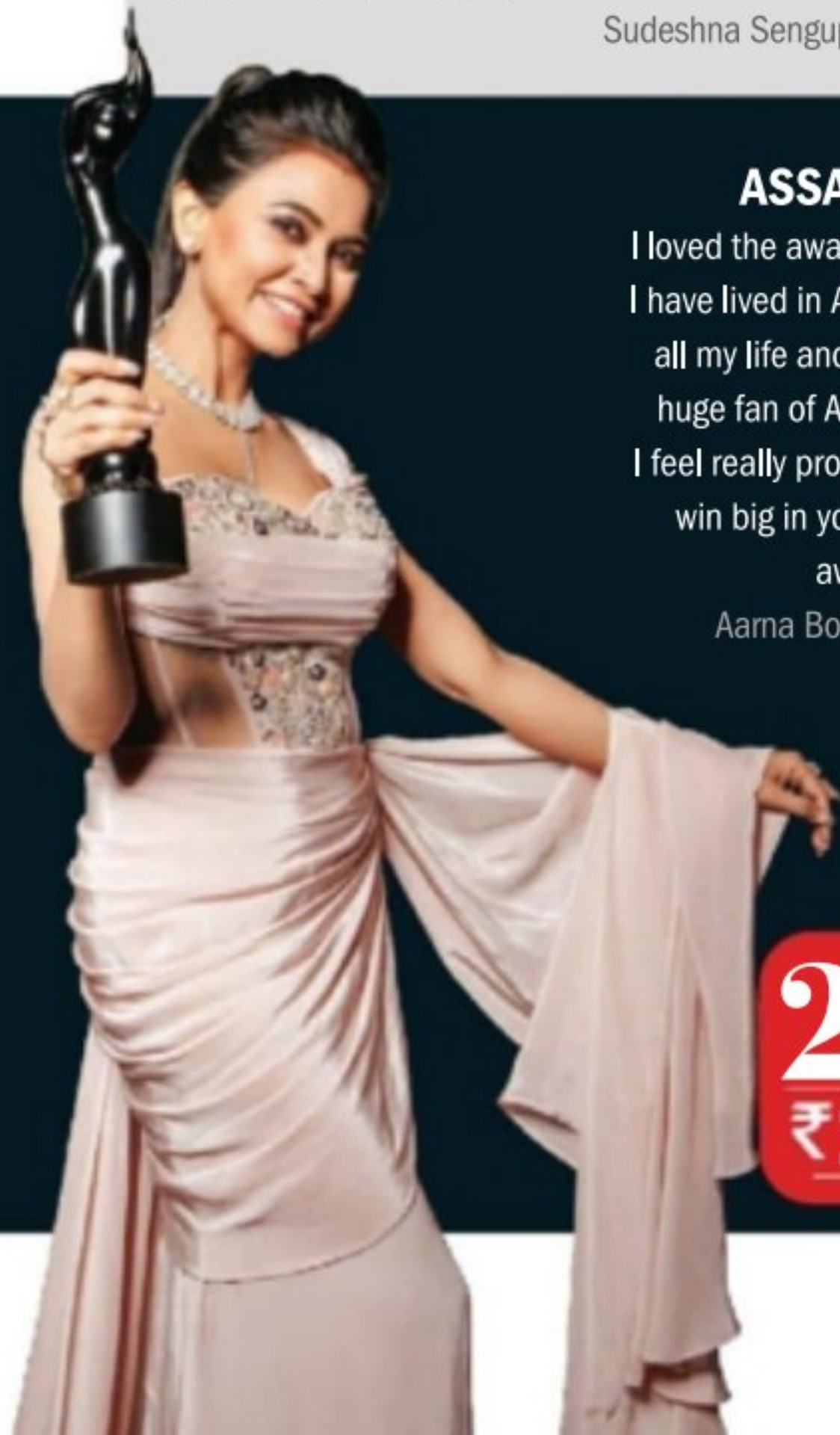
VICTORIOUS JAYA

I loved Jaya Ahsan as Meghna Mustafi in *Ardhangini*. I was actually rooting for her to win a Filmfare award this year and she did! Kudos to her.

Aalo Roy, Malda



Jaya Ahsan



THE WRITE WAY

Atanu Ghosh truly deserved the award for Best Dialogue. His writing in *Shesh Pata* struck a chord and two. I enjoyed all the scenes, from the intense to the light-hearted, due to his amazing dialogues.

Kirtika Ghosh, Kolkata



Atanu Ghosh

KUDOS PRATHIBA

Pratibha Ranta is my favourite actress. I loved her in *Laapataa Ladies* and *Heeramandi*. The interview with her in your last issue (May) was amazing. I like that she has a never-give-up attitude which eventually made her star in such promising projects. Well done, Pratibha!

Kanishka Kapoor, Mumbai



Pratibha Ranta



Iman Chakraborty

FABULOUS IMAN

Iman Chakraborty is my favourite singer. I am thankful that she bagged the Best Playback Singer (Female) award. I always listen to her song *Alada alada* on loop. Her soulful vocals resonate deeply with me.

Asha Dey, Kolkata

EMERGING ACTRESS

Pratibha Ranta has become one of my favourite actors. She impresses me with her versatility. She delivers strong performances and her characters feel authentic and genuine. Her charisma and presence always command my attention and make it hard to look away whenever she's on screen.

Rahul Agarwal, Haryana



Laapataa Ladies

ON POINT

Your take on *Laapataa Ladies* was on-point. I like how you have pinpointed the movie's satirical tones. Kiran Rao truly aced as the director and gave us a compelling narrative to ponder upon.

Simran Sachdeva, Punjab

ONWARDS AND UPWARDS

Sahil Mehta was truly great in *Tabbar* and *Farrey*. He consistently delivers strong performances in his projects. I like that his roles leave a lasting impact. I feel that he has a knack for bringing realism to his roles and makes the characters feel like real people.

Anamika Duggal, Ghaziabad



Sahil Mehta

SENSATIONAL SAHIL

Your interview with Sahil Mehta in your last issue (May) was a great read. I like how he opened up about playing grey characters. Also, his journey as an actor seems very inspiring. He is truly coming into his own now, which is so heartwarming to see.

Srishti Varna, Meerut

Just one Point



Aparshakti Khurana

Aparshakti Khurana's photos in your last issue (May) were spectacular.

I loved all his outfits, especially the black-and-white aesthetic coat.

Kirti Patel, Gujarat

I always look forward to Shatrughan Sinha's rapid-fire session. His answers never disappoint.

Surjit Singh, Patiala

I am a fan of Assamese movies. I loved your awards coverage in your last issue (May). *Tora's Husband* is a well-deserved winner.

Baidehi Chatterjee, Guwahati

The detailed profiles of the winner in your last issue (May) are a joy to read. I am so happy that the Lifetime Achievement Award went to Prabhat Roy.

Sanjeev Bose, Kolkata

Prosenjit Chatterjee is the well-deserved winner of the Best Actor in the Leading Role (Male) category. I am beyond proud of him.

Meghna Niyogi, Baruaipur

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PHOTOGRAPH: MEETESH TANEJA

Best of Shatrughan Sinha's Rapid fire

What is the root cause of divorce?

Mrs. Vinita Bali, on email MARRIAGE!

What do you think has been the best thing that has ever happened to you in life?

R. Lester Makang, Imphal
Besides quitting tobacco, I still preach and practice, go for the anti-tobacco campaign and always say no to drugs. I'm so thankful

to God that I've got the best family, which includes my most beautiful wife and wonderful children.

What are the most important skills for success in life?

Puneet Chadha, Yamuna Nagar
Perseverance, persistence, and patience. Never give up, never surrender, no matter how difficult the situation is; have a positive attitude with determination.

Why is the Hindi film industry obsessed with using stereotypical names? The rich family is Oberoi or Singhania. The hero is Vijay/Raja, villain is Teja/Rakha, the vamp is named Mona/Dolly/Lily, the housemaid is named Mary/Rozy, the *bai* is Kantabai, and the helper or *mali* is always the poor Ramu kaka?

Mehernosh M Nazir, Mumbai
Well, your point is well taken. But how else would you be entertained if you didn't relate to the characters or names?

I understand they're mostly exaggerated versions of people we see around us. To make it relatable, these stock names are used. It should all be taken with a pinch of salt.

Why do Indian parents spend more on their daughter's wedding than on her education?

JP Singh Kaka, Bhopal
We always seem to be only modern, broadminded, and educated in thought but not in action. We're far more progressive now, but the mindset remains the same. The higher education of girls, *beti padhao*, *beti bachao*, etc, is limited to slogans only. Eventually, she has to get married and look after her home, which is the sad reality.

What makes an actor or an actress successful in their film careers?

Srividya, Bangalore
If you want the answer in one word, it's passion.

Besides, of course, confidence, conviction, and commitment. And, of course, the so-called luck or X factor.

I am confused. Where did Lord Ram go? Who brought him back to Ayodhya? Will we celebrate two Diwalis every year now? Please clarify.

Rita Sharma, Noida
Don't be confused. Lord Ram's story is ingrained in our culture. Recent events, including the construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya, signify his enduring significance in our lives. Don't forget that the judiciary and the government ordered the construction of this temple, which at the time of writing this, still remains under construction. As for double Diwali – well, if the opposition comes to power in the 2024 elections, that would be a cause for celebration for sure.

Our politicians are



Amitabh Bachchan as Vijay in *Deewaar*



Paresh Rawal as Teja in *Andaz Apna Apna*

squandering millions and millions of taxpayers' money by erecting statues and constructing memorials in memory of leaders who are no longer with us. Can't they allocate these funds for useful purposes like building free hospitals, schools, etc.? What's your opinion?

R Srikanthan, Chennai

I completely agree with your opinion. Taxpayer money should unquestionably be utilised wisely for the growth and development of the country as a top priority. The government's approach should be more positive and constructive, with other matters following suit. Hopefully, the 2024 elections may usher in a new era. Fingers crossed.

Can we trust luck?

R Geetha, Aluva

Luck and destiny are predetermined in our lives, leaving us with little choice. Especially in today's times, when government agencies pursue their own agendas supported by powerful interests, relying solely on luck seems inadequate. This doesn't mean that I don't believe in fair and honest elections, of course.

We have been taught since

childhood that we all should become good human beings, all religions are equal, success is not achieved by shortcuts, but by hard work. Then what is the reason that in today's time there is no value in these things? Why does it feel like all these things have been done just by reciting bookish lines?

Sahiba Tandon, New Delhi

Not only bookish lines, it seems to be quite foolish. The new generation neither believes in the older generation's philosophy nor the books of the era, so let's not speak of all things that needed to be done and valued. Times have changed, my dear, so have our mindsets. Nothing is remembered nor valued... unfortunately.

Every successful man has a woman's hand behind him. But what will happen if there are two women behind him?

J P Singh Kaka, Bhopal

If you allow me to rephrase the whole thing or your question, then the answer would be—or could be—that behind every successful man, there is a woman, but at the same time, behind every successful man's fall or failure, there is generally speaking, a second woman. I hope it answers your original question.

In effect, India's women have stormed every bastion except politics. Is politics such a big deal for them?

Jyotiranjana Biswal, Durgapur

What makes you say that? I've been a supporter and admirer of women. I wholeheartedly disagree; women have stomped politics as well, many times. Right from the biggest star politician India ever had, the late and great Mrs. Indira Gandhi, to the all-time-remembered Sushma Swaraj, to the great actor-turned-politician J Jayalalitha and let's not forget, the pride of Bengal, Mamta Banerjee.

What is the bravest thing you have ever seen someone do?

Pankaj Goyal, Ambala

Unfortunately, the real brave, unsung heroes in life who do so much go unnoticed. Recently, several brave men did their best to rescue the 41 workers when the Silkyara-Dandalgaon under-construction tunnel in Uttarakhand collapsed. The entire country was praying for their rescue.

The way our Indian state governors are behaving, do you think they are the puppets of a ruling party?

R Ramakrishnan, Dombivli

Hmm...I don't know what to say. Please don't insult puppets. That's my only insight in this regard. The rest is better left unsaid.

Do you feel that one gets what he or she is destined for and the labour one puts in too is due to destiny?

Binu Chandran

Haven't you read or heard these famous lines from The Geeta : *Karmanyevadhikaraste, ma phaleshou kada chana* — You have the right to perform your actions, but you are not entitled to the fruits of the actions. *Ma karma phala hetur bhurmatey sangostva akarmani* — Do not let the fruit be the purpose of your actions and therefore you won't be attached to not doing your duty. Lord Krishna's immortal words, have in essence, said it all. So be a *karmayogi* and don't let your mind wander from the right path by having unnecessary doubts.

(Feature co-ordinated by DEVESH SHARMA)

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

Win!
CASH PRIZES

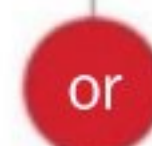
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YOUR QUESTIONS WILL BE FORWARDED TO: Shatrughan Sinha, who insists his answers do not reflect his political and social views.

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JAI MAHARASHTRA!

Marathi cinema stands as a beacon of authenticity, seamlessly weaving earthy narratives that resonate with audiences on a profound level. It embodies the essence of simplicity yet captivates with its depth, offering a glimpse into the rich cultural tapestry of Maharashtra. From its heartfelt storytelling to its soul-stirring performances, it celebrates the nuances of everyday life, making it relatable and endearing to viewers across the globe. The recently held RR Kabel Filmfare Awards Marathi offered me a sampler of the best of Marathi cinema from last year. I was bowled over by the content, to say the least. Some films stood out in memory and later proved to be award winners.

Aatmapamphlet intricately delves into the significant moments of Ashish's life, a young man from the Dalit community in 1980s and 1990s Maharashtra, who embarks on a forbidden love journey with a classmate from the Brahmin community. This poignant narrative skillfully navigates the complexities of inter-



caste love amidst a deeply divided society, shedding light on societal norms and personal resilience. *Baipan Bhaari Deva* offers a poignant glimpse into the lives of six sisters, now in their middle age, as they confront personal struggles including strained relationships, menopausal challenges, and the inevitable trials of ageing. Through their individual journeys, the film eloquently explores themes of resilience, familial bonds and the enduring quest for self-identity. *Baaplyok* unfolds in a remote Maharashtra village, where Sagar finds himself engaged to a girl chosen by his parents. Despite the arranged match, profound

love blooms between them. However, Sagar's relationship with his father poses a significant challenge, leading to a journey of reconciliation that forms the heart of this father-son comedy.

Naal 2 sensitively depicts Chaitu's emotional turmoil upon discovering his adoption, disrupting his relationship dynamics with both his adoptive and birth mothers. The film intricately weaves the complexities of familial bonds, particularly with his siblings, amidst unexpected revelations, reshaping their lives in profound ways. *Vaalvi* masterfully blends comedy and black

humour to unravel an intricate mother mystery, captivating audiences with its unique narrative. *Maharashtra Shaheer* introduces viewers to the charismatic poet and social reformer Shahir Sable, complemented by enchanting music by Ajay-Atul. Meanwhile, *Shyamchi Aai* offers a delightful retelling of the beloved tale surrounding Sane Guruji, providing fresh insights into his formative years.

These films stand as testament to the diverse storytelling prowess of Marathi cinema, captivating audiences with their authenticity and depth of content.

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