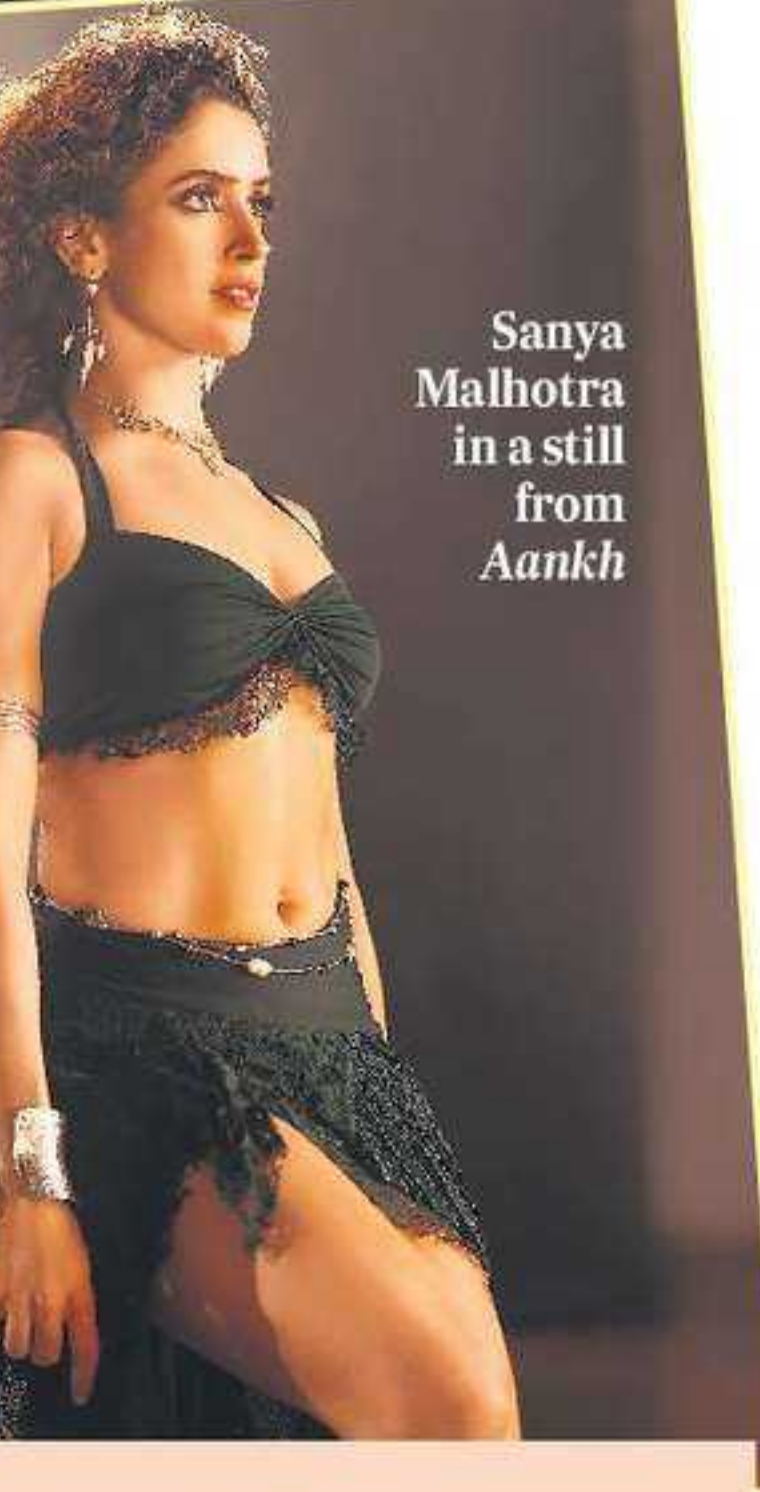
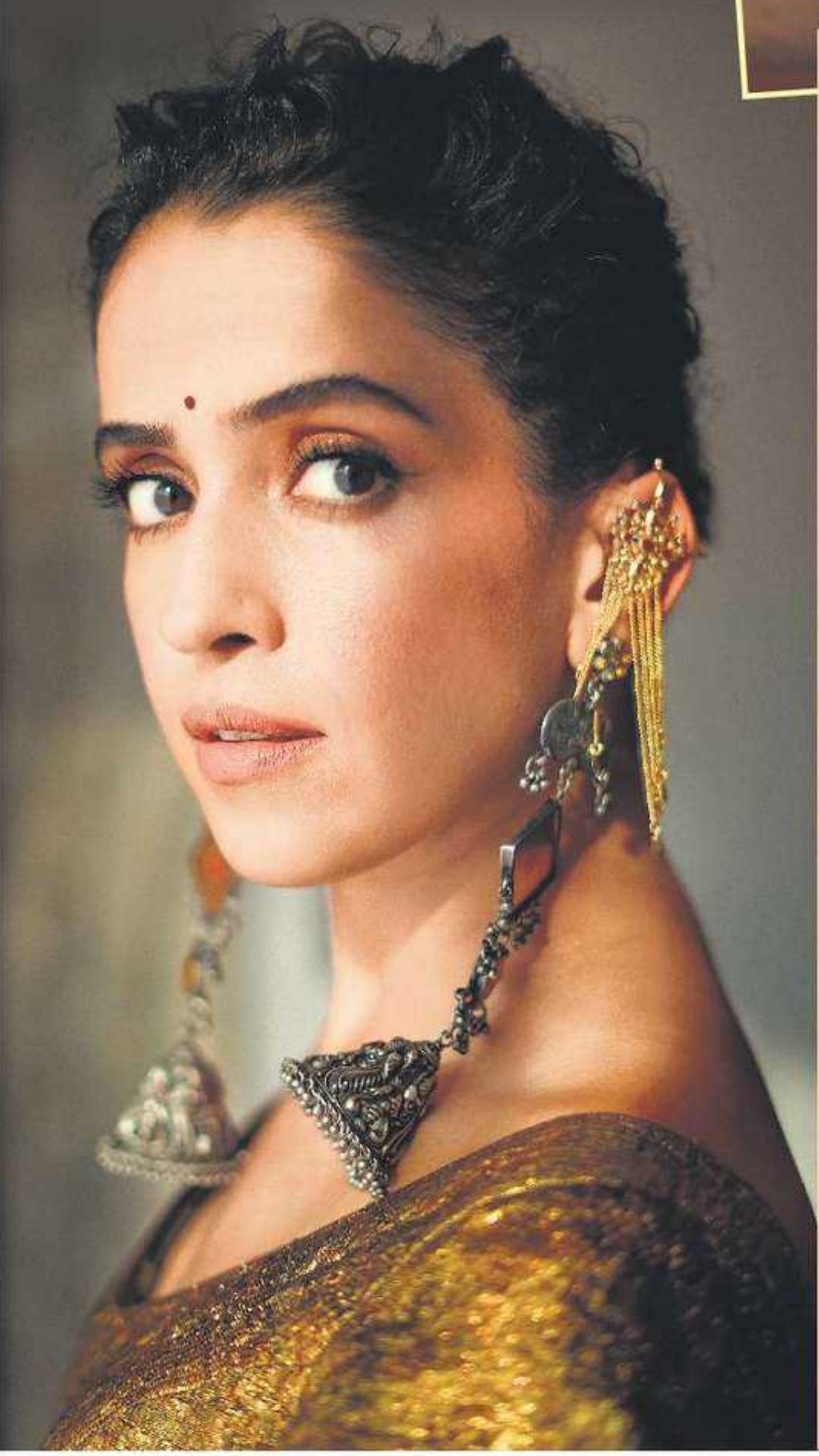




Actor-couple
Abhishek
Bachchan and
Aishwarya Rai
put separation
rumours to rest
by attending
daughter
Aaradhya's
school annual
function together
on Thursday.
Recently, they
also attended a
wedding together
and posed for
selfies.

→ More pics from the event on p02

2024 has been all about acclaim for Sanya Malhotra



Sanya Malhotra in a still from Aankh

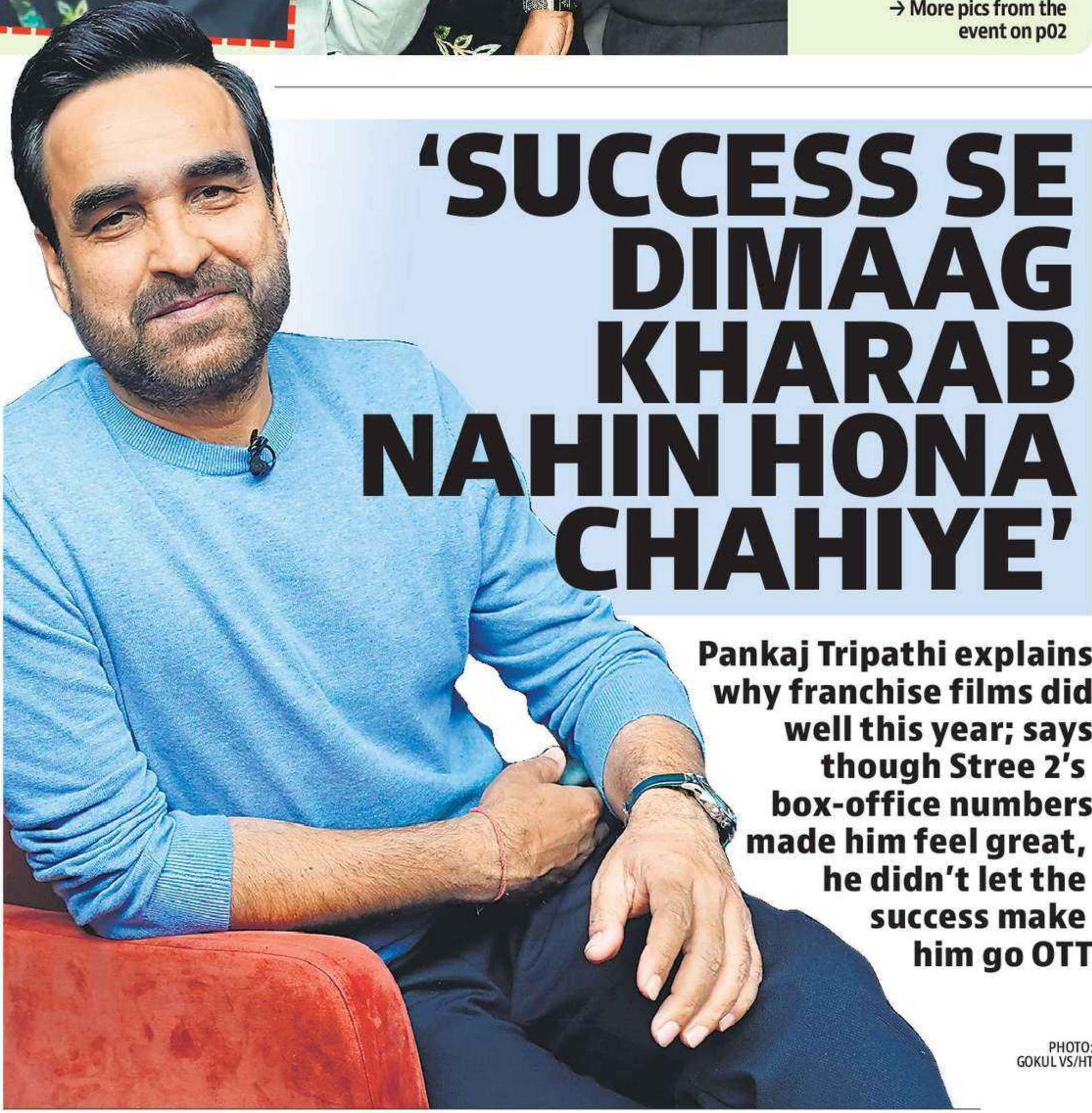
Sanya Malhotra surprised her fans with her intense avatar in the music video of the track *Aankh*, which has been sung by musician Sunidhi Chauhan. The actor, who features alongside Chauhan in the music video and is seen pulling off some electric dance moves, has left the singer in awe. "Sanya's professionalism, focus and dedication are inspiring. Her grace and class brought this song to life. She's not just a brilliant actor, but also a complete artiste," says Chauhan.

Meanwhile, on the acting front, Malhotra is looking forward to her next film, *Mrs.*, which has done the rounds of several film festivals. In fact, it got a standing ovation at the 55th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) and the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM). *Mrs.* director Arati Kadav says, "Sanya brought a beating heart and soul to the character. I feel only she could do that. She was the hardest-working person on set." Meanwhile, Malhotra will also be seen in *Baby John*, *Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari* and filmmaker Anurag Kashyap's next, co-starring Bobby Deol.

STOP PRESS



Actor Tom Cruise
fuelled romance
rumours with
his agent
Maha Dakhil,
as the duo was
spotted at a dinner
outing together in
London. They
shared a private
booth, where
Dakhil was seen
caressing Cruise's
arm and making
him laugh.
It's the
second time
they have been
spotted together
this week.



'SUCCESS SE DIMAAG KHARAB NAHIN HONA CHAHIYE'

Pankaj Tripathi explains
why franchise films did
well this year; says
though Stree 2's
box-office numbers
made him feel great,
he didn't let the
success make
him go OTT

Akash Bhatnagar
akash.bhatnagar@partner.hindustantimes.com

Actor Pankaj Tripathi was part of the biggest Bollywood hit this year, *Stree 2*, but box-office numbers don't impact him. "It's great that a film made on such a nominal budget became a blockbuster. Par iss success se aapka dimaag kharab nahin hona chahiye. Ek thehraav rehna chahiye," he says. Tripathi insists that since the film was part of a franchise, it helped its performance: "The happiness the audience got after watching the first part played a huge role in bringing them to the theatres for the sequel in the first weekend itself. Otherwise, people wait for the weekend to get over to know the reviews, but with franchise films that isn't the case."

Having been a part of franchises that have been both hits and misses, he talks about Bollywood's obsession with sequels. "To make a franchise, a hit film isn't all you need. You need a unique film. Sometimes, a film is successful, but not unique. *Stree* fit in both these spaces."

To make a franchise, a hit film isn't all you need. You need a unique film.
PANKAJ TRIPATHI,
Actor

This year's biggest hits were sequels — *Stree 2*, *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3* and *Singham Again*. But overall, Bollywood underwhelmed at the box office. Tripathi equates that to the nature of the audience. "I don't have an expertise in the business side of films, but I feel audiences are unpredictable. They change their tastes from time to time. Woh trailer dekh kar hi apna mann bana lete hain. Baaki publicity gimmicks aur stunts se kuch nahin hota hai," the actor ends.

Talking of *Stree 2*, he shares an interesting anecdote: "During *Stree* (2018), the producers told me that if the film did well, they'd give me a bonus. That amount was crossed in four days. I didn't even know when the makers put that same clause in my contract for *Stree 2*," he ends.

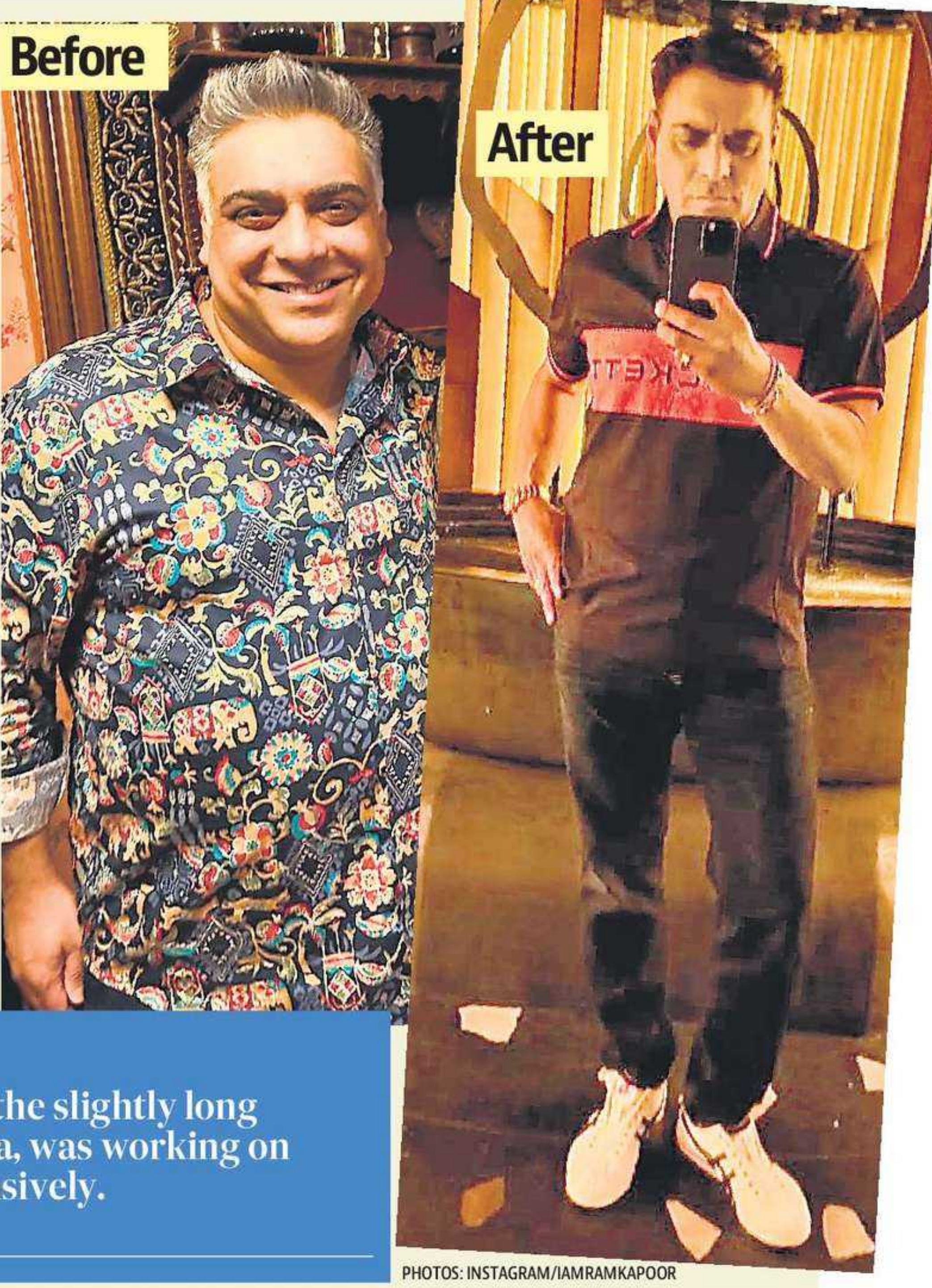
Haaye Ram! Actor stuns with drastic weight loss!

Ram Kapoor has wowed the internet with his drastic physical transformation. The actor shared a selfie on Instagram showcasing his all-new dapper look. The 51-year-old, who was on a long social-media hiatus, left everyone amazed with his sleek and cool new look. It was in April this year when he shared a photo of himself at the gym, showcasing how he was at it!

On Thursday, the actor took to Instagram to share a stylish mirror selfie and captioned it: "Hi guys, sorry for the slightly long absence from Insta, was working on myself quite extensively (sic)." The post featured him flaunting his fit, dapper look in a classic T-shirt and denim look, leaving fans in awe. He shared another pic with wife, actor Gautami Kapoor, which mentioned, "42 Kapoor", hinting at

losing 42kg. His post earned a lot of attention from the fraternity and other internet users. While actor Neena Gupta quipped, "What is that u (sic)," actor Karan Wahi dropped several heart emojis. A user wrote, "Has he done gastric bypass surgery?? (sic)," while another joked, "AI generated hai (sic)." In 2019, Kapoor had undergone a remarkable weight-loss transformation, shedding 30kg in seven months.

Hi guys, sorry for the slightly long absence from Insta, was working on myself quite extensively.
RAM KAPOOR, Actor



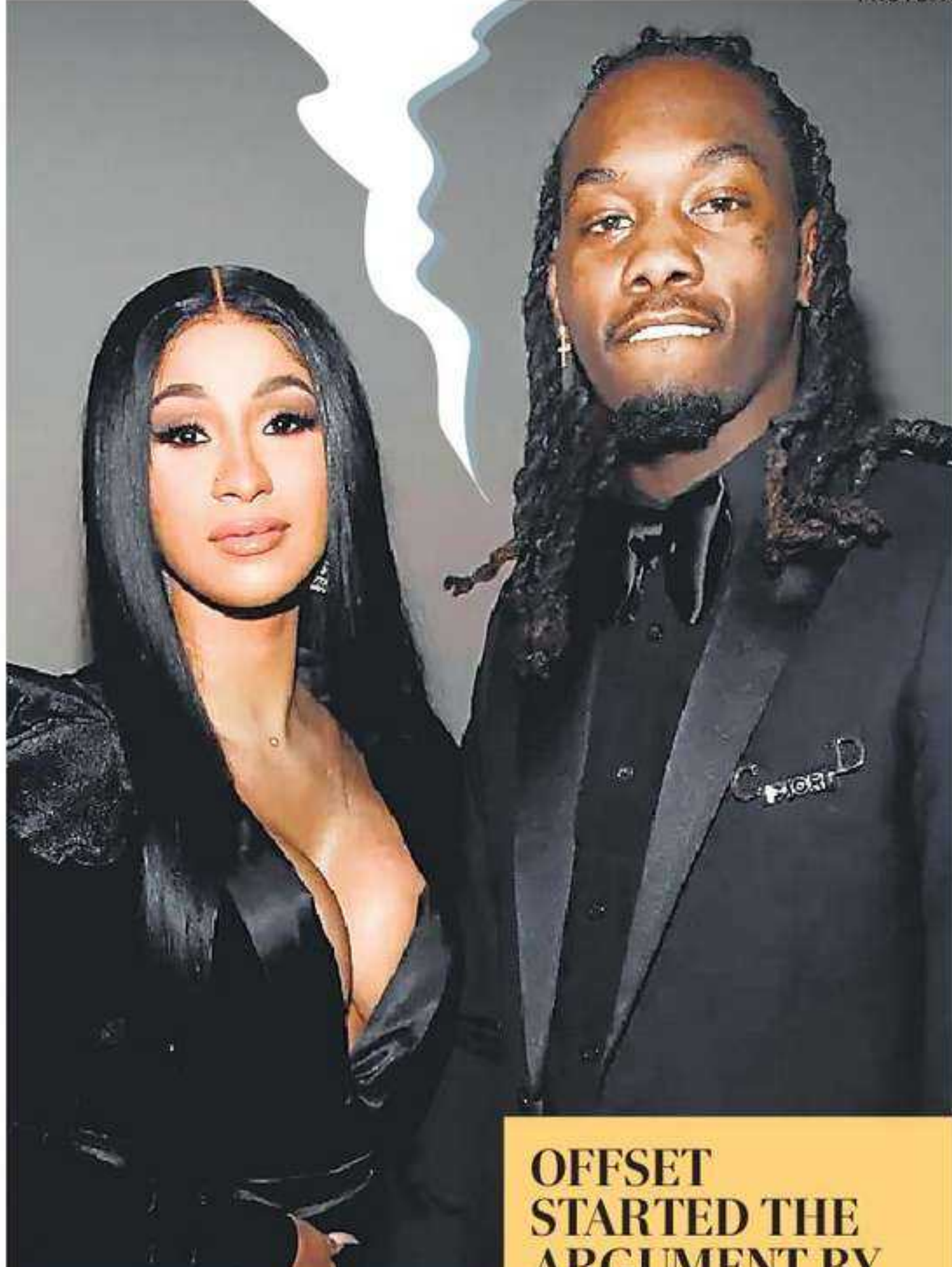
PHOTOS: INSTAGRAM/IAMRAMKAPOOR

Cardi B takes to Insta to ask Offset to sign divorce papers

The divorce drama between rapper-couple Cardi B and Offset reached a boiling point on social media on Wednesday, when Cardi B publicly urged Offset to finalise their split by signing the divorce papers. Offset started the argument by accusing Cardi B of lying to her fans in an attempt to tarnish his image.

In a few posts that have now been deleted, Offset wrote, "Nobody wins when the family fights... Drop the album and go up. It ain't the look u a fire [woman] good music but you focus on d**k and tryna make me look bad focus bra this shit is whack from us both honestly. Drop the album and go up (sic)." Cardi B didn't take the comment lightly and responded: "So dating because I'm single means I'm just worried about dk?? You sound like a dummy. Trying to be fake nice after you did what you wanted from the beginning trying to push a narrative to these people. Congratulations!! Fk off and sign the papers TODAY (sic)."

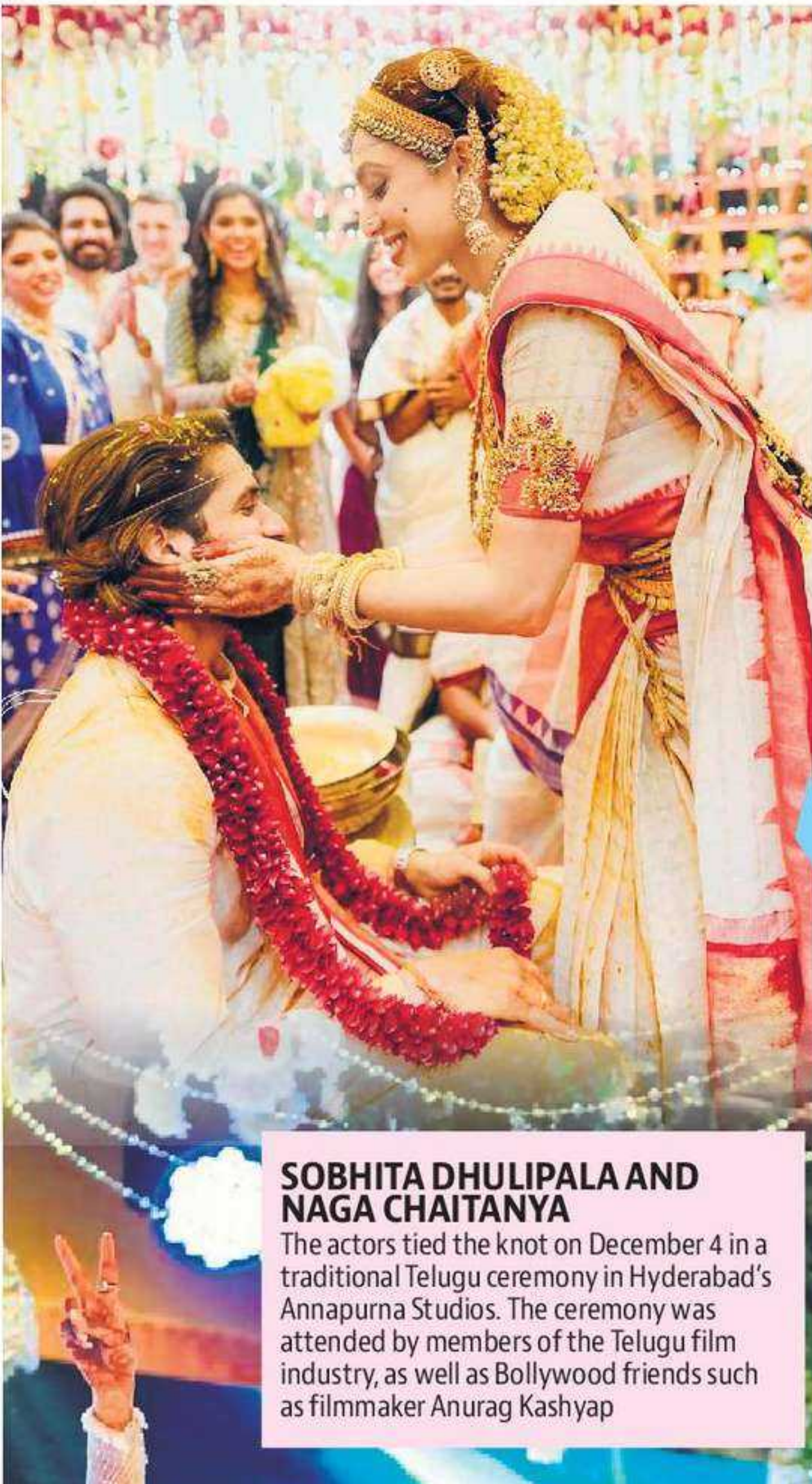
Offset hit back to the demand by asking for split custody of their three children and slammed her by calling her "single and miserable". To which, Cardi B responded, "You thought ni**as wasn't going to be on me cause in your words I got 3 kids in my



thirties. I'm miserable I don't bother none of the hs you f**k but every guy I talk to you dming and talkin shit about me like let's not (sic)."

Cardi B filed for divorce from Offset in August, a day after she announced she was expecting their third child.

OFFSET STARTED THE ARGUMENT BY ACCUSING CARDI B OF LYING TO HER FANS TO TARNISH HIS IMAGE



SOBHITA DHULIPALA AND NAGA CHAITANYA
The actors tied the knot on December 4 in a traditional Telugu ceremony in Hyderabad's Annapurna Studios. The ceremony was attended by members of the Telugu film industry, as well as Bollywood friends such as filmmaker Anurag Kashyap

A YEAR OF LOVE: ALL THE ACTORS WHO GOT HITCHED IN 2024

From Rakul Preet Singh and Jackky Bhagnani to Sobhita Dhulipala and Naga Chaitanya, love was in the air for several actors. Here's a look at the stars who tied the knot this year



RECAP 2024

Compiled by Yashika Mathur



PHOTOS: INSTAGRAM

SONAKSHI SINHA AND ZAEHEER IQBAL
After dating for seven years, the actors got married in a small ceremony in Mumbai on June 23. Their civil wedding was attended by some of their closest friends in the film industry including actors Huma Qureshi and Saqib Saleem.



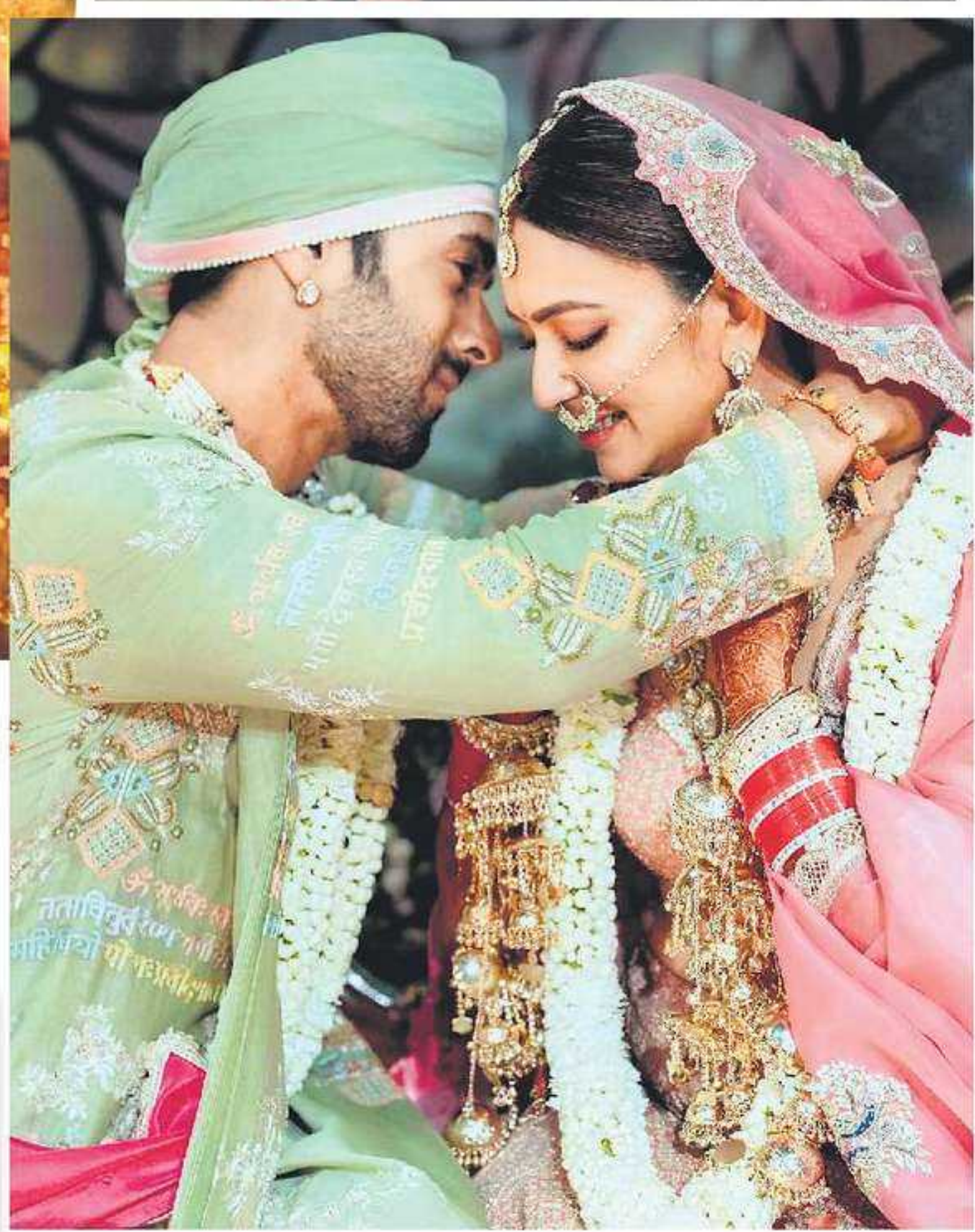
TAAPSEE PANNU AND MATHIAS BOE
Actor Taapsee Pannu married long-time boyfriend, Danish badminton player Mathias Boe in private wedding ceremony on March 23 in Udaipur. Fans found out about the nuptials when a leaked video showed Pannu, decked up as a bride, walking towards her groom. Interestingly, the actor recently revealed that she and Boe had actually gotten married in a civil ceremony in December 2023.



KEERTHY SURESH AND ANTONY THATTIL
Tamil actor Keerthy Suresh married businessman Antony Thattil on December 12. The couple, who reportedly dated for 15 years, had a Hindu ceremony, as well as Christian ceremony in Goa. Tamil superstar Vijay was among the couple's wedding guests.



ADITI RAO HYDARI AND SIDDHARTH
Amid speculation about their nuptials, the actor-couple quietly got married at a 400-year-old temple in Wanaparthy, Telangana in a traditional South Indian wedding on September 16. They later held a second wedding ceremony in Bishangarh, Rajasthan.



PULKIT SAMRAT AND KRITI KHARBANDA
The actors tied the knot on March 15. While Kharbanda wore a pastel pink lehenga, Samrat complemented her in a pastel green outfit. The couple shared pictures from their wedding in Manesar, Haryana and captioned it, "From the deep blue sky, to the morning dew. Through the low and the high, it's only you... Constantly, consistently, continually, You."

An annual affair of starry proportions

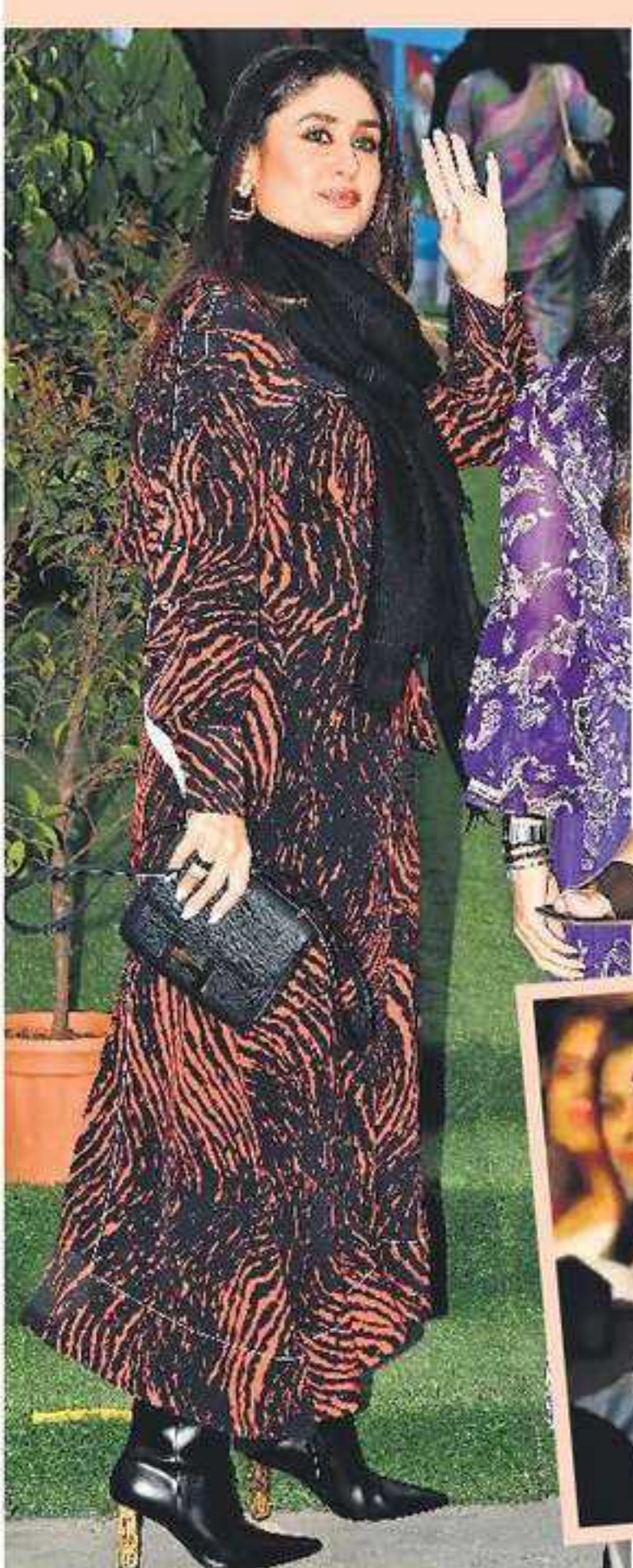
All roads led to Mumbai's Dhirubhai Ambani International School on Thursday evening, as a bevy of celebs, dressed to the nines, turned up to watch their kids perform at the school's annual day celebrations.

From actor **Kareena Kapoor Khan**, in a black and red printed wrap dress to actor **Suhana Khan** slaying in a full-length black dress, it was certainly a glitzy affair.

Also in attendance were actors **Shah Rukh Khan**, **Saif Ali Khan**, **Amitabh Bachchan**, among several others. Here's a peek at the star-studded evening.



PHOTOS: YOGEN SHAH



Kareena Kapoor Khan



Shahid Kapoor and Kareena Kapoor Khan



Shah Rukh Khan



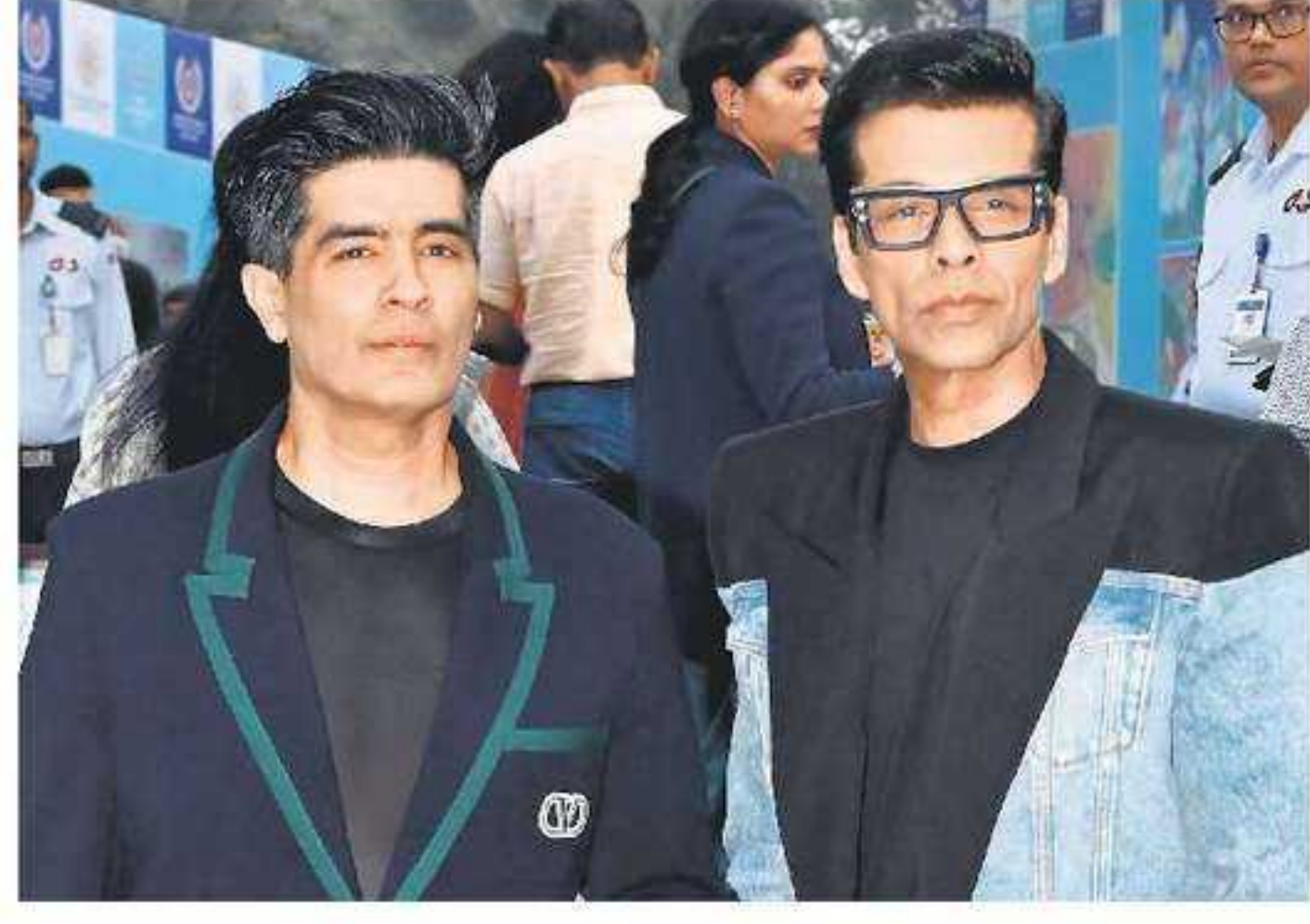
Amitabh Bachchan



Karisma Kapoor



Saif Ali Khan



Manish Malhotra and Karan Johar



{ DAILY HOROSCOPE }

Saturday, December 21, 2024

Dr Prem Kumar Sharma (Astrologer and Vaastu expert) can be contacted at: Delhi: 011-47033152, 40532026 (Sat to Mon); Panchkula: 91-172-2562832, 2572874 (Tues to Thurs); Mumbai: 09716145644 (Last week of every month)

PREMASTROLOGER

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ASKPREMASTROLOGER

ARIES

MAR 21-APR 20



Avoid taking avoidable risks when it comes to your well-being. You are likely to spot fantastic chances to boost your income. A journey could bring a dream closer to reality.

LOVE FOCUS: Postpone romantic pursuits for the time being.
LUCKY NUMBER: 8 **LUCKY COLOUR:** Yellow

LEO

JUL 23-AUG 23



Applying for a home loan may be on your agenda. You might help mediate a dispute successfully. Staying focused on a key task will be manageable. Home improvements may commence.

LOVE FOCUS: Romantic hopes may come true for the love-struck.
LUCKY NUMBER: 2 **LUCKY COLOUR:** Light Blue

SAGITTARIUS

NOV 23-DEC 21



You may seriously think about starting a workout routine. Lending money could result in a loss, so hold off. Keeping your current job might become essential. A safe road trip is on the cards. Academic performance will remain steady.

LOVE FOCUS: A shared understanding will ease relationship differences.
LUCKY NUMBER: 11 **LUCKY COLOUR:** Pink

TAURUS

APR 21-MAY 20



Health-wise, you may feel energetic. A steady income will keep your finances in check. Researchers and scientists may face performance pressure.

LOVE FOCUS: Romance thrives as you receive positive feedback from someone you admire.
LUCKY NUMBER: 5 **LUCKY COLOUR:** Purple

VIRGO

AUG 24-SEP 23



You may likely stay a step ahead in avoiding illness. Financial stability will keep your spirits high. Busy home responsibilities won't bother you much. Ensure safety in a long journey.

LOVE FOCUS: Love life may require some nurturing.
LUCKY NUMBER: 6 **LUCKY COLOUR:** Saffron

CAPRICORN

DEC 22-JAN 21



You will feel robust and ready to face challenges. Budgeting remains necessary for financial stability. Expanding your network can be advantageous. Family might deny a request you're eager about.

LOVE FOCUS: A sweet surprise awaits from your partner.
LUCKY NUMBER: 9 **LUCKY COLOUR:** Maroon

GEMINI

MAY 21-JUN 21



You are likely to commit to a fitness routine to stay in shape. Financially, there could be fluctuations to manage. Colleagues will help you complete a workplace task. A clash with a parent or elder may arise.

LOVE FOCUS: You may actively pursue love and find success.
LUCKY NUMBER: 17 **LUCKY COLOUR:** Grey

LIBRA

SEP 24-OCT 23



Maintaining a balanced diet and an active lifestyle will aid your health. Good profits are expected for those on commission. Routine tasks at work may feel tiresome.

LOVE FOCUS: Positive romantic developments are likely to bring joy.
LUCKY NUMBER: 22 **LUCKY COLOUR:** White

AQUARIUS

JAN 22-FEB 19



Taking health precautions will benefit you greatly. Financially, positive news is expected. Today will be favourable for property dealings.

LOVE FOCUS: Your idea of spending the day may not be in sync with what the lover wants.
LUCKY NUMBER: 5 **LUCKY COLOUR:** Cream

CANCER

JUN 22-JUL 22



Your fitness efforts are expected to show results. Adjusting your lifestyle could help save money. Retailers might consider launching additional outlets. Travel plans are likely to go smoothly.

LOVE FOCUS: Your partner's plans may not excite you.
LUCKY NUMBER: 1 **LUCKY COLOUR:** Dark Red

SCORPIO

OCT 24-NOV 22



You might commit to fitness and even join a gym. Trust issues could strain your relationship. A carefully planned trip promises enjoyment. A property purchase may be on the horizon.

LOVE FOCUS: Those seeking love may find positive outcomes.
LUCKY NUMBER: 4 **LUCKY COLOUR:** Orange

PISCES

FEB 20-MAR 20



Spending extra may be worthwhile for something valuable. Healthy choices will be a priority. You may receive appreciation at work. Home plans will gain approval from family. A household purchase seems likely.

LOVE FOCUS: An old flame may reappear in your life.
LUCKY NUMBER: 7 **LUCKY COLOUR:** Magenta

PHOTOS: HTCS



(From L-R) Mohammed Meraj from TTK Prestige; Avinash Mudaliar, Co-founder and CEO, HT Labs; Chef Harpal Singh Sokhi; Puja Bansal and J Justin Anthony, Head - Media, PR & Brand Communication, TTK Prestige



Great Indian Cookout season 3 winner Puja Bansal was awarded a ₹50,000 voucher from TTK Prestige

SLURRP GREAT INDIAN COOKOUT: A FINALE PACKED WITH FLAVOURS



PUJA BANSAL, WINNER

"Through this contest, I explored Maharashtra cuisine beyond the usual vada pav and pav bhaji, discovering the incredible diversity Mumbai has to offer. Slurrp is doing remarkable work by bringing together home chefs from different regions. It's amazing to see how we can share, innovate, and learn from each other's culinary traditions. Whether it's a recipe from West Bengal or Kerala, this exchange enriches everyone."

Home chefs from Mumbai and Delhi battle it out in the kitchen to cook up a storm

The third season of the Great Indian Cookout (GIC) happened over two days in Delhi, with a grand finale in Mumbai. This was GIC's debut in the city, with renowned chefs Harpal Singh Sokhi and Mohena Ahluwalia in attendance. With a theme of Delhi vs Mumbai, this edition of GIC brought together chefs and

home chefs from both cities in a one-of-its-kind celebration of flavours.

The grand finale of the cookout delivered a thrilling culinary face-off, with Delhi's Puja Bansal taking home the top honours. Her standout creation — cauliflower and peas tikki chaat, with spinach, crisp amaranth, tomato saunth,

and spicy coriander and spinach chutney — impressed both judges and audience alike, with its creativity and flavour.

Bansal's victory earned her a voucher worth ₹50,000 from TTK Prestige, along with gift hampers from Goldiee Masale and Vikram Tea. The awards were presented by Avinash Mudaliar, CEO and Co-founder of HT Labs, and chef Sokhi, who applauded her innovative approach and culinary finesse.

HTC



Home chefs Alka Bhandari and Neelam Gupta cooked their versions of Paneer Makhani at the GIC finale in Mumbai



Slurrp community members enjoying a snack at the Goldiee Masale stall

CHEF VARUN INAMDAR

"For me, Mumbai is bread and butter, and Delhi is jam and Nutella. Mumbai is extremely close to my heart. Of course, this is the place where I was born and raised. I can travel the world, but Mumbai is what brings me home. The Slurrp Cookout has amazing warmth. I hope we expand it beyond Mumbai and Delhi, to cities like New York, Dubai and Singapore, to connect with the global community."

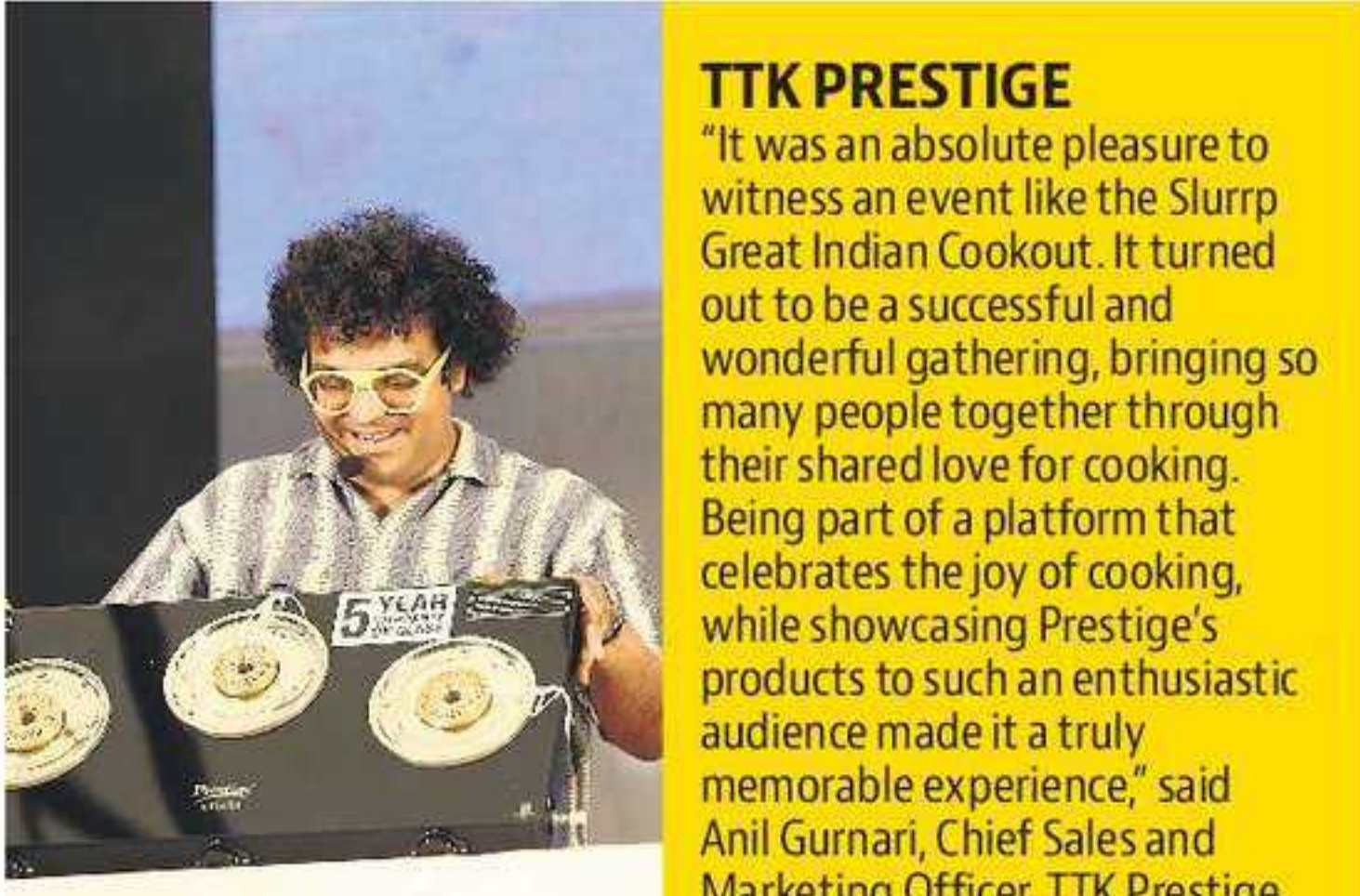


Mumbai-based home chef Neelam Gupta was the runner-up at the GIC grand finale



CHEF HARPAL SINGH SOKHI

"I enjoy being a part of Slurrp's Great Indian Cookout every time because the enthusiasm of the home chefs and foodies is incredible to witness. I am particularly happy that GIC has come to Mumbai, my city, for the first time, and I hope it continues to be held here as well."



TTK PRESTIGE

"It was an absolute pleasure to witness an event like the Slurrp Great Indian Cookout. It turned out to be a successful and wonderful gathering, bringing so many people together through their shared love for cooking. Being part of a platform that celebrates the joy of cooking, while showcasing Prestige's products to such an enthusiastic audience made it a truly memorable experience," said Anil Gurnari, Chief Sales and Marketing Officer, TTK Prestige.

Chef Varun Inamdar launched the Efficia Gas Stove and the new Cook Centre by TTK Prestige



CHEF MOHENA ALHUWALIA

"Mumbai has a lot of variety in food and every time I come here, there is something new to try. However, between the two cities, it is Delhi for me. I like the vada pav from Mumbai and chole bhature from Delhi."

Chef Mohena Ahluwalia bakes a whole wheat and jaggery plum cake with Vikram Tea's Tea Tantra



Diljit Dosanjh at the gig

Diljit's Lalkaara gets lauded by Mumbai!

Singer Diljit Dosanjh performed a stellar show in Mumbai on Thursday night, leaving his fans in awe. He belted out some of his biggest hits, called fans on stage, showered the audience with gifts and spoke about

being a fearless artiste, also joking about the advisories that have been issued against him. Some of the chartbusters he sang included Naina, Lover, Kinni Kinna, Lalkaara, G.O.A.T., Ik Kudi, Do You Know and Hass Hass.

HTC

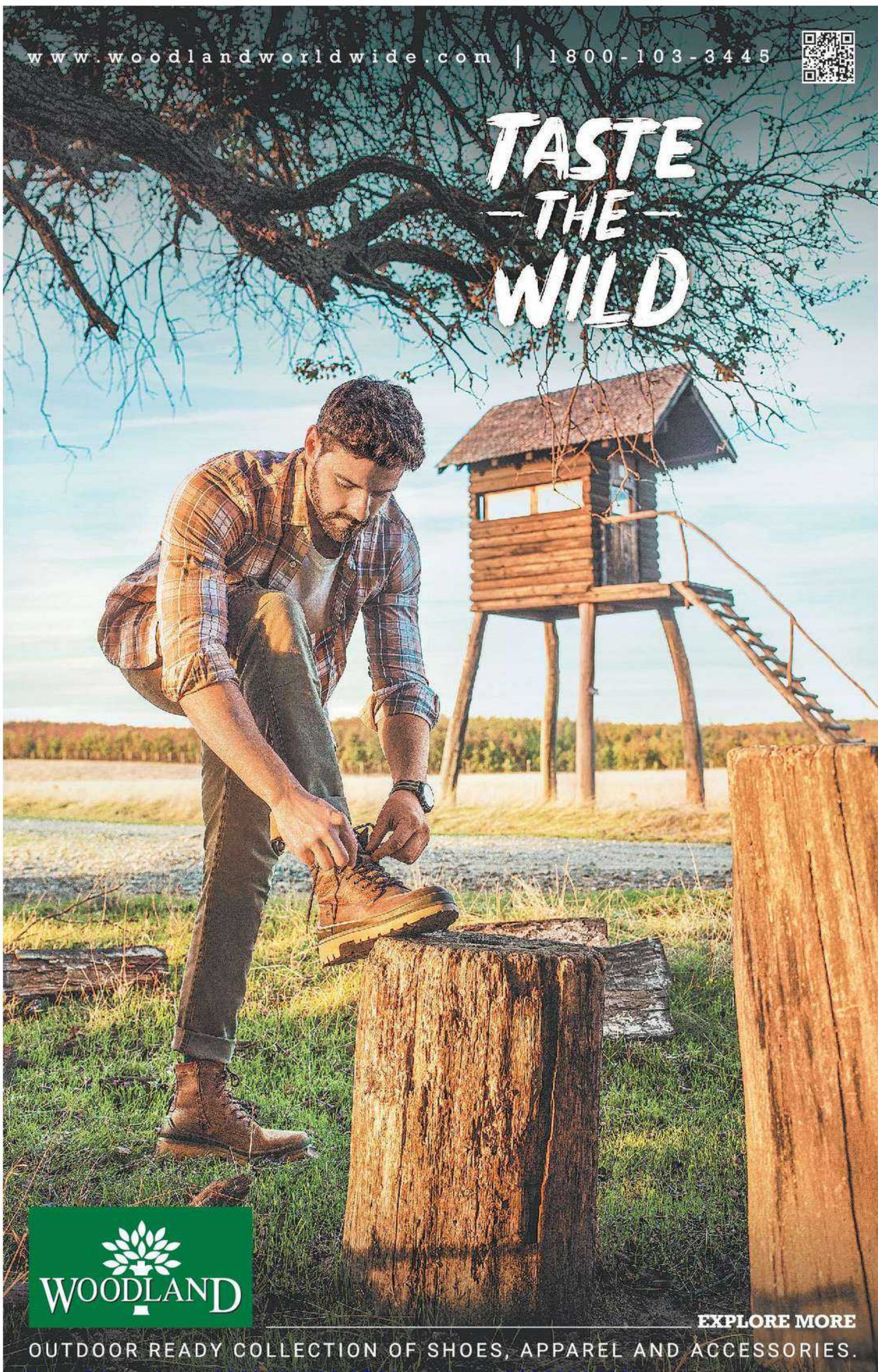
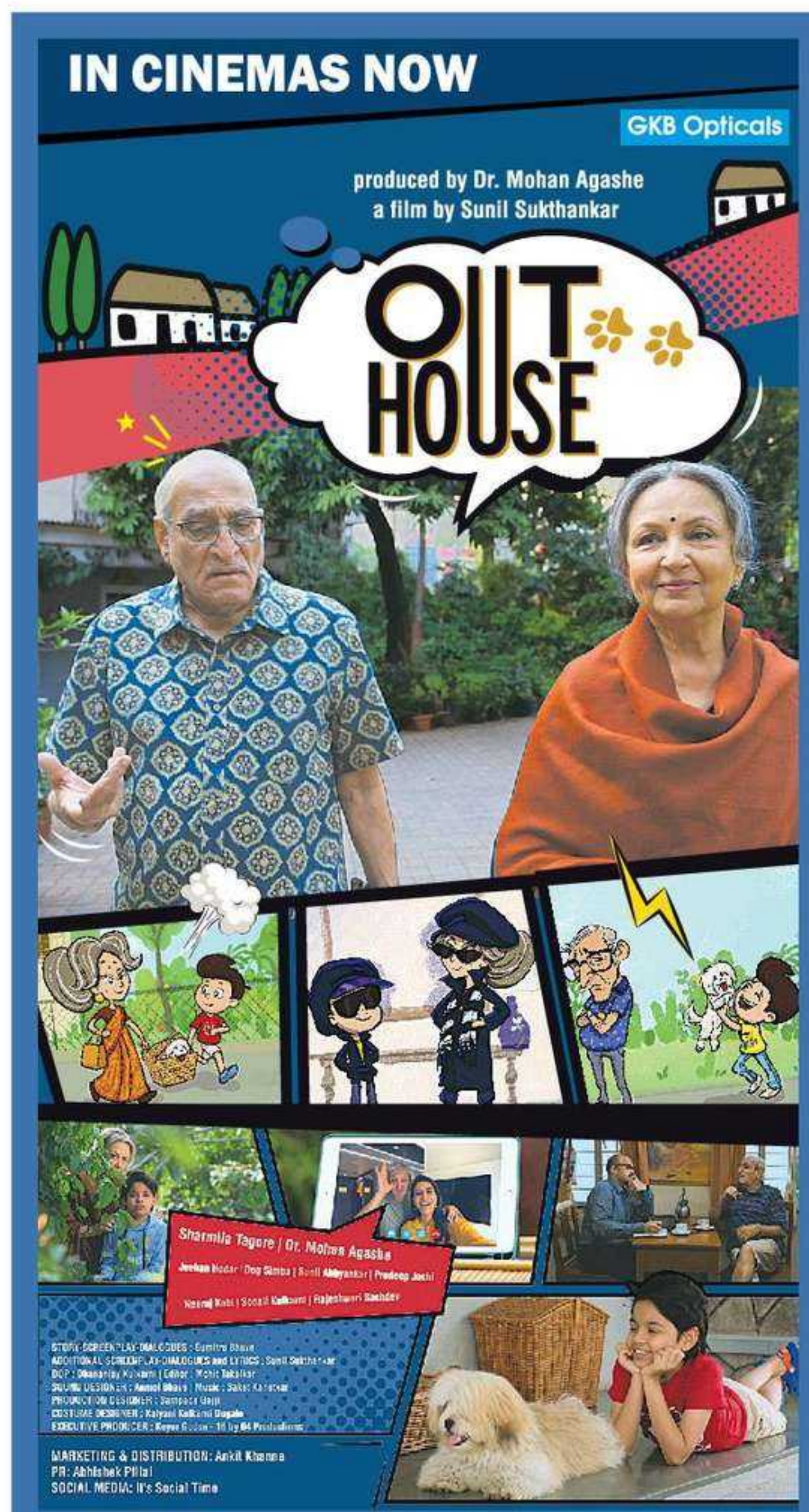
#culturecapsule

Soak in the festive spirit



Celebrate Christmas with a festive four-course dinner on Christmas eve (December 24) with live music. This gourmet meal will blend traditional flavours with modern culinary artistry. On Christmas Day (December 25), indulge in a special brunch that features a lavish spread, live interactive stations and entertainment for kids.

What: Christmas Eve dinner and Christmas Day Brunch
Where: Opus at Four Seasons Hotel, Worli
When: December 24 and 25
Timing: 7pm to 9pm and 9.30pm to 11.30pm; 12.30pm to 4pm
Cost: ₹5,000 (plus taxes)



WOODLAND

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OUTDOOR READY COLLECTION OF SHOES, APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES.

OTTplay recommends top 5 list

5 films on OTT for some vacay inspo!



A BOY CALLED CHRISTMAS
This is story of a boy named Nikolas who embarks on an adventure in search of his father, who went missing looking for the mythical village of the elves. Nikolas goes into the snowy North with a headstrong reindeer and a loyal pet mouse.
Platform: Netflix
Language: English
OTTplay rating: 7.1

KLAUS

This Sergio Pablos directorial is about a young postman sent to a frozen town in the North by his father in hopes of learning discipline. There, he meets a toymaker, Klaus. When a selfish postman and a reclusive toymaker turn friends, their gifts melt an old feud and provide a sleigh full of holiday traditions.
Platform: Netflix
Language: English
OTTplay rating: 8.3



MICKEY'S ONCE UPON A CHRISTMAS

The animated Christmas anthology comedy fantasy film features Mickey, Minnie, and their friends Goofy, Donald, Daisy, and Pluto, who get together for the holiday and share their best memories with each other, including the stories of past Christmases.
Platform: Disney+ Hotstar
Language: English
OTTplay rating: 7.6

THE GRINCH

This old classic based on Dr. Seuss' The Grinch revolves around the revenge-seeking Grinch, who lives on the outskirts of Whoville. The grumpy Grinch, whose heart is "two sizes too small," goes on a mission to ruin everyone's Christmas with the help of his dogs, only to have his heart changed by a young girl's warm holiday spirit.
Platform: JioCinema
Language: English
OTTplay rating: 6.2



THE POLAR EXPRESS

Directed by Robert Zemeckis, The Polar Express follows a young boy who boards a train to embark on an extraordinary journey to the North Pole to meet Santa Claus. His life takes a turn after he meets special people that make his journey of self-discovery memorable.
Platform: JioCinema
Language: English
OTTplay rating: 7

#newsinbrief



Telugu crime thriller Zebra releases

Telugu crime thriller Zebra, which features Satyadev, has found its OTT release date. The film, which released in theatres on November 22, has started streaming on the Telugu OTT platform Aha. Directed by Eashvar Karthic, the film follows a bank employee caught in a financial scam. The ensemble cast includes Daali Dhananjaya in a significant role, along with Sathyaraj, Priya Bhavani Shankar, Sunil, Sathya Akala, Jeniffer Piccinato and Amrutha Iyengar.

The Penguin Season 2 confirmed

Following the positive reception for The Penguin, producer Matt Reeves has confirmed they are in talks to lock the second season. As per Comic Book Movie, Reeves confirmed discussions with showrunner Lauren LeFranc: "These characters don't belong to me; they belong to the world. It comes down to whether you can approach them in a way that expresses something personal." The first season stars Collin Ferral and Cristin Milioti in the lead.

OTTplay.com
on Saturday

Scan here to visit OTTPlay



Pallotty 90s Kids brings nostalgia to OTT

Pallotty 90s Kids has brought the magic of the '90s to OTT. Helmed by debutant Jithin Raj, it won three awards at the 53rd Kerala State Film Awards. Capturing the essence of growing up in simpler yet vibrant times, the film is streaming on Manorama Max.



Teaser of Black Warrant drops

Netflix has dropped the teaser of what it claims to be a one-of-its kind prison drama, Black Warrant. The series will drop on January 10. Set against the backdrop of Tihar jail, the story is told from the point of view of a rookie. It stars Zahan Kapoor, Rahul Bhat, Paramvir Singh Cheema, Anurag Thakur and Sidhant Gupta.

WEi's Kim Yo Han confirmed for new college romance K-drama

K-pop idol-turned-actor Kim Yo Han has been confirmed to take on the lead role in a new Korean drama, where he'll slip into the role of a college student exploring the halls of an engineering department. The upcoming drama, titled 4th Love Revolution, is slated to be directed by Yoon Sung Ho. The drama is set to air in 2025; however, the female casting for the same has not been revealed yet.



PHOTO: INSTAGRAM/Y_HAA.N



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK

Centre blocks 18 OTT platforms

The Central government has blocked 18 OTT platforms this year for publishing obscene and vulgar content, Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting L Murugan told the Lok Sabha on Wednesday. In a reply to a question by Shiv Sena-UBT member Anil Desai, Murugan said IT Rules of 2021 cast specific due diligence obligations on intermediaries to make reasonable efforts by themselves against displaying or spreading obscene content.

Compiled by Yashika Mathur

Didn't attach any political flavour: Arif on playing Jinnah

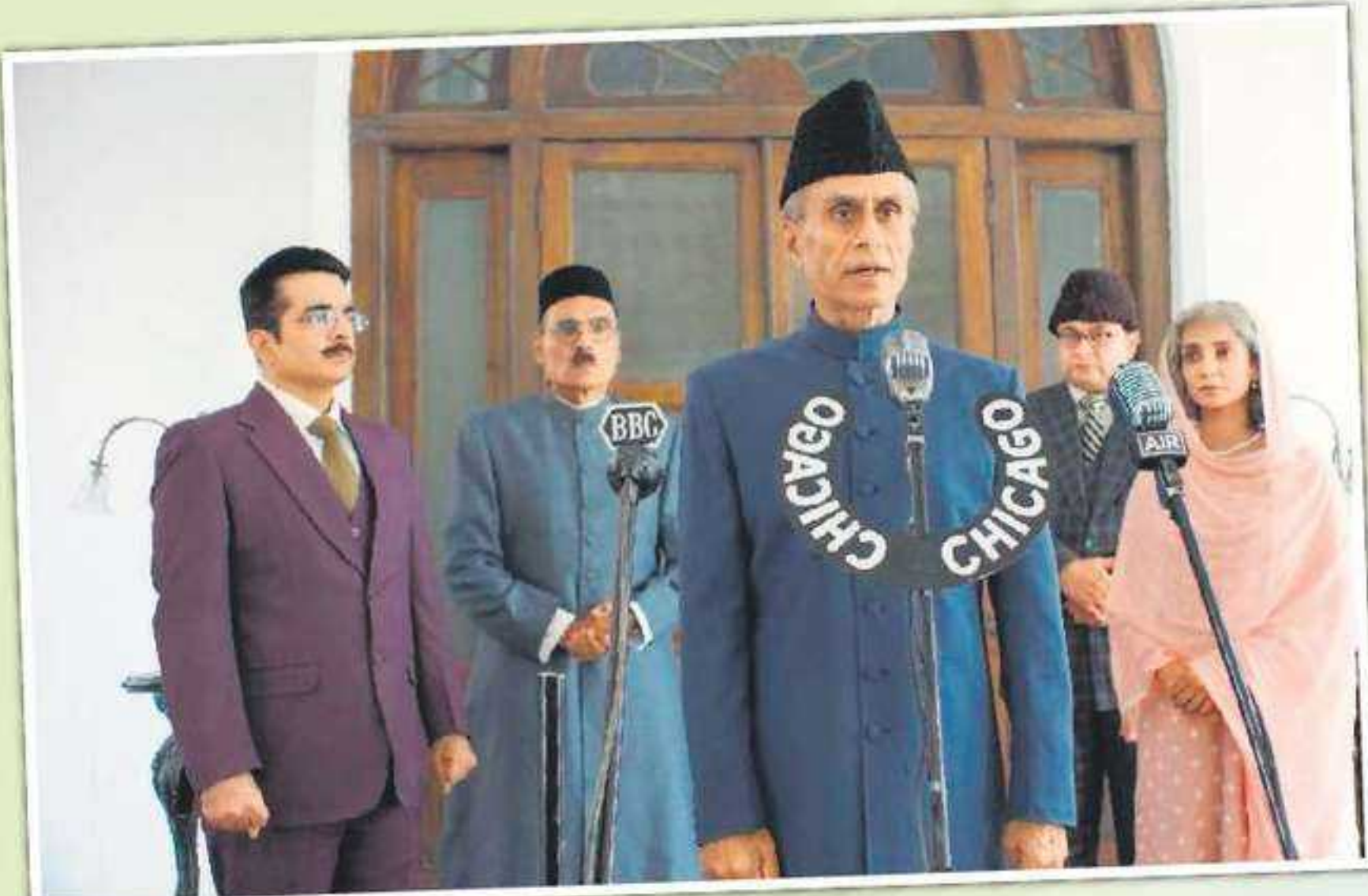
Mugdha Kapoor

mugdha.kapoor@hindustantimes.com

Actor Arif Zakaria has been receiving appreciation for his nuanced approach to portraying the character of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Pakistan's first governor-general, in web show *Freedom at Midnight*. The show is based on Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre's 1975 novel of the same name.

"I didn't attach any political flavour to the role. I treated him like an antagonist or anti-hero and worked within the confines of the script," the 58-year-old tells us.

Zakaria doesn't feel daunted by the burden of a character's historical weight. "If tomorrow I get a chance to play Dr BR Ambedkar, I'd take it as another opportunity to perform to the best of my abilities," says the actor, who has earlier played Pakistan General Riaz Ahmed in *Shoorveer* (2022) and former Indian Prime Minister



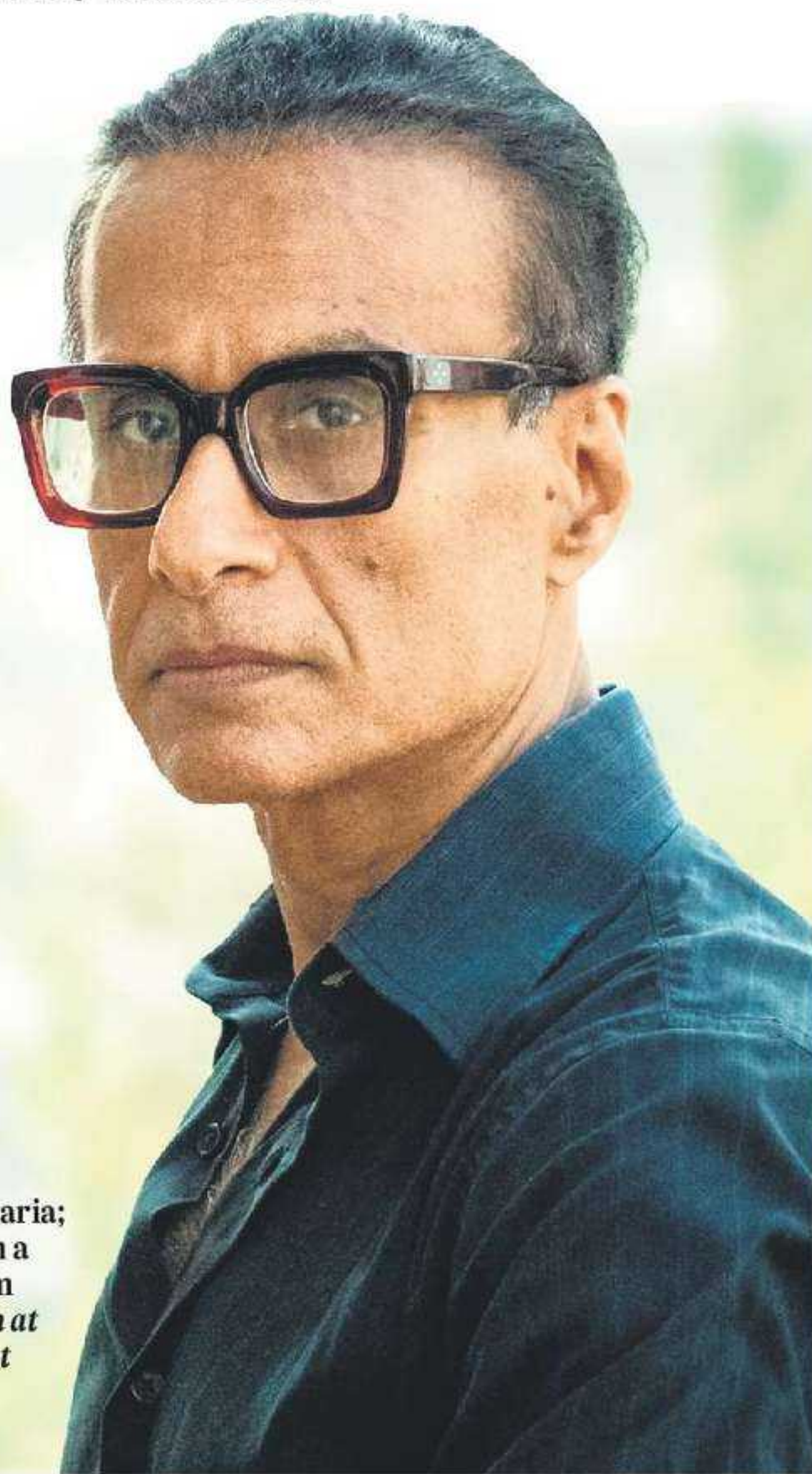
Jawaharlal Nehru in 1962: *The War in the Hills* (2021).

But was he anxious about any controversies arising? "Not at all," he says, adding, "In this case, the writing was very strong. The book has been popular for decades, so we

adapted it faithfully."

Noting the rise of history-based web shows, he adds, "India has so many untold stories — heroes, survivors, revolutionaries. OTT offers the space to explore these stories in depth, which theatrical releases can't accommodate."

Arif Zakaria; (inset) in a still from *Freedom at Midnight*



{ NO RATING MOVIE REVIEW }



YO YO HONEY SINGH: FAMOUS
Direction: Mozez Singh
Cast: Yo Yo Honey Singh

The documentary on the life of rapper-singer Yo Yo Honey Singh's life had made the tall claims of being a 'tell-all' in its teaser. Unfortunately, the teaser remains the sole intriguing element.

It had great potential, from director Mozez Singh (who helmed the series *Human*), producer Guneet Monga Kapoor (known for backing off-beat content), and the story of Yo Yo.

The docu starts off with footage of the singer-rapper's teen days,

establishing a promising note instantly. It has all the makings of a good underdog story — a Delhi boy with humble beginnings who goes on to leave an indelible mark on the Indian music scene.

However, everything feels tilted in Singh's favour. The line of questioning seems like something straight out

Not as edgy as the rapper, Honey Singh's docu has nothing new to offer

of a typical masala film. The biggest controversies Honey found himself in, including being credited for the expletive-laden song *Ch**t Vol. 1* are touched upon and immediately done away with as Singh says, "I didn't make it." Same goes for the rumour about actor Shah Rukh Khan allegedly slapping Singh during a concert tour. Both Singh and his sister say, "Unhone nahi maara tha." He has said the same thing in countless interviews in the past.

As for his bipolar diagnosis, Singh says, "Aaj tak kisi ko nahi bataya kya hua tha." Except that he has been open about it for all these years, and kudos to

him for that. But there's nothing revelatory about *Yo Yo Honey Singh: Famous*. One doesn't come away with anything new or surprising about the him.

Yes, his family's appearance does make it more human. Singh breaking down as he recalls being at home, jobless, does tug at one's heart. So does the family's helplessness as they grappled with his deteriorating mental health at one point.

But random sequences like a "super fan" suddenly meeting the rapper on the roads at night and crying as he serenades her feels staged, further bringing

down the docu's credibility. When asked about his controversial divorce from Shalini, Singh simply says "We have signed a MoU, so I can't talk about it." What then is point of this docu, apart from merely being a compilation of things the singer has already revealed in the past.

Overall, *Yo Yo Honey Singh: Famous* could have been so much more. But it's reduced to being a whitewashing attempt, much like *Sanju* (2018), which only serves to glorify the subject, rather than offering a fresh or objective take.

Rishabh Suri

Emily Watson calls Tabu a 'true treasure'

Sugandha Rawal

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Actor Tabu has forayed into international waters and she will be seen in the *Dune* universe through the web series, *Dune: Prophecy*. Actor Emily Watson who also features in the show, called working with Tabu (53) a "beautiful experience".

"She is a true treasure. She is such a beautiful, generous person and an amazing actress," Emily said, adding that the two bonded over the similarities and differences of their respective industries over dinners together.

The 57-year-old also reflected on interacting with the Indian diaspora in Budapest, where the series was shot: "The Indian community in Budapest were sort of just transported by the fact that she was just there. It was wonderful to witness this."

In the series, Watson portrays Valya Harkonnen, the leader of the religious order the Sisterhood



Emily Watson and (inset) Tabu in stills from *Dune: Prophecy*

while Tabu plays Sister Francesca.

For Emily, the show reflects a change in Hollywood: "Probably in our 30s, we would have looked each other in the eye and said this is a game of diminishing returns... Now, we are leading a TV show. Something has changed, not so much in Hollywood. But in long-form television, there is space not for just one, but two leading ladies in their 50s in a sci-fi show."