



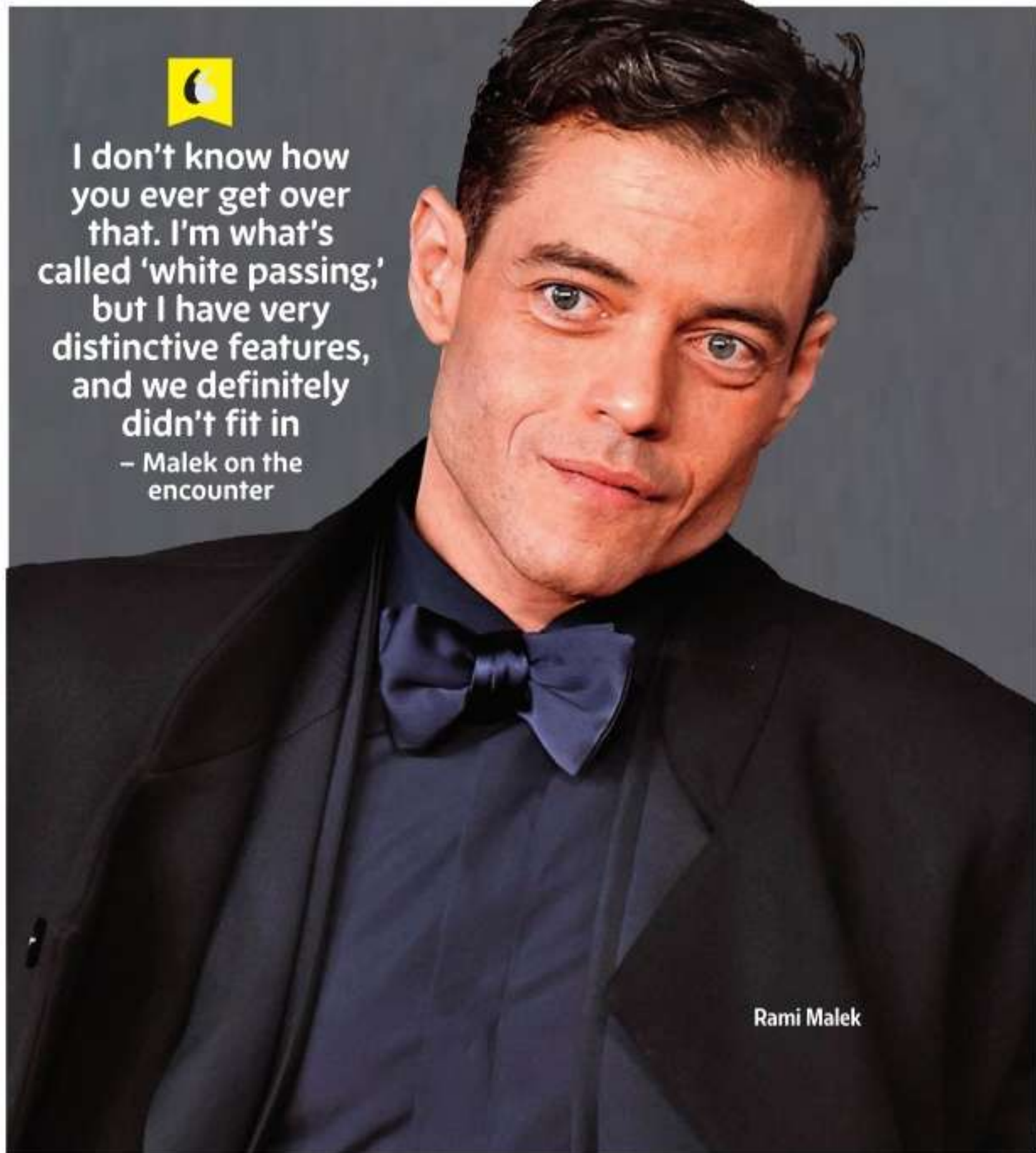
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Chennai Times

MONDAY, JANUARY 20, 2025
ADVERTORIAL, ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY
PROMOTIONAL FEATURE

K Balam Bekay

Got thrown on a car's bonnet: Rami recalls facing racism in US



I don't know how you ever get over that. I'm what's called 'white passing,' but I have very distinctive features, and we definitely didn't fit in — Malek on the encounter

Oscar-winning actor Rami Malek has opened up about experiencing racial profiling in the US, revealing he was once "thrown" onto the hood of a police car after being mistaken for a robbery suspect in California. The Egyptian-American actor, known for roles in *Bohemian Rhapsody*, *Oppenheimer* and *No Time To Die*, recounted the incident during an interview with *The Guardian*. "I got thrown on the bonnet of an LAPD

cop car because someone had robbed a liquor store and stolen a woman's bag. They said the (thief) was of Latin descent and, 'You fit the description.' I remember how hot that engine was... it was almost burning my hands," Malek said. "I remember laughing on the cop car, thinking, 'OK, this is a very precarious situation. I may well be going to jail for something I've not done,'" he added.

Agencies

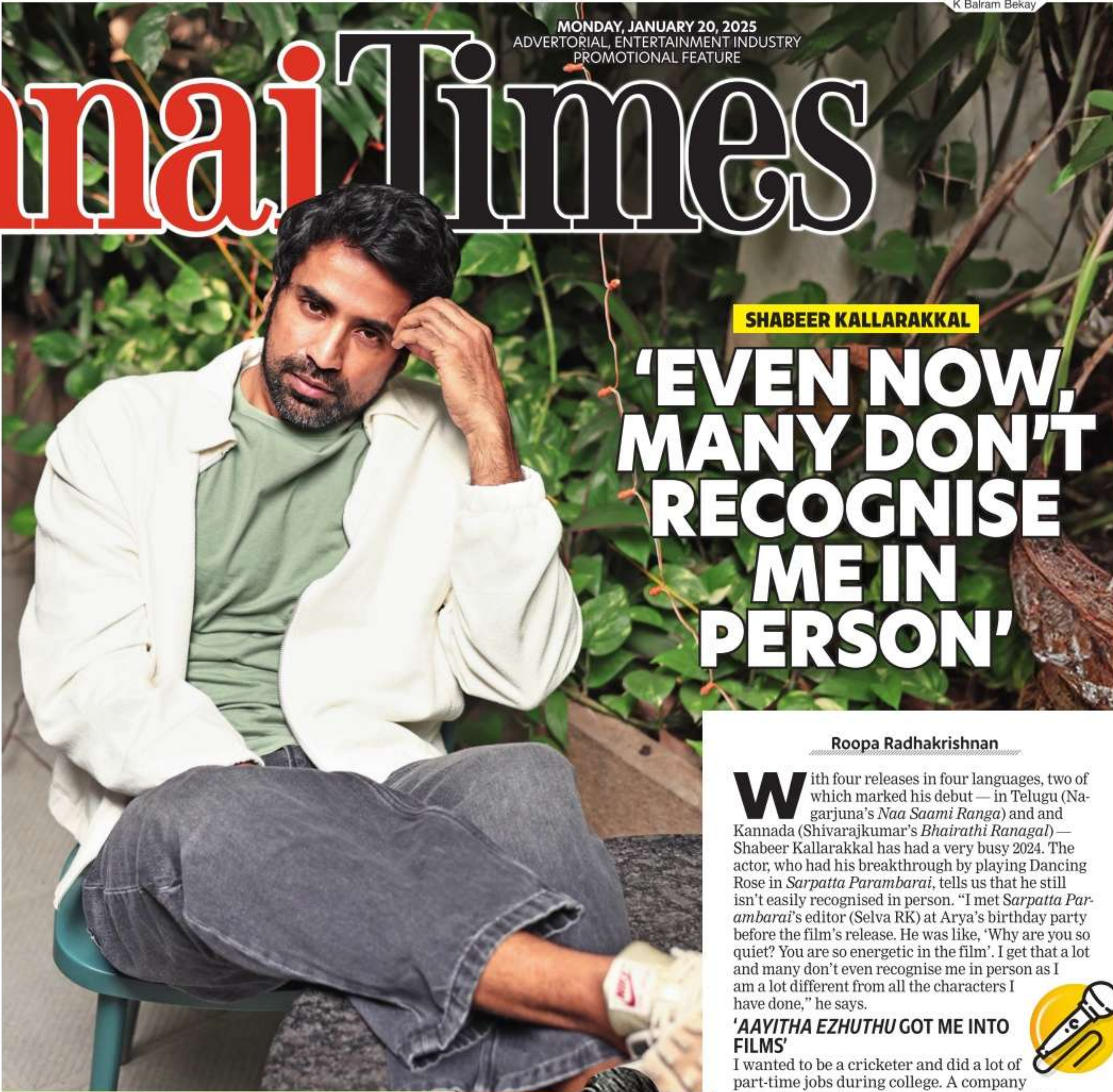


Buzzstop

HENRY WELCOMES FIRST CHILD WITH GF NATALIE

Henry Cavill, best known for his role as Superman in *Man Of Steel*, and his longtime partner Natalie Viscuso welcomed their first child. The couple was recently spotted in Australia, pushing a baby stroller during a family outing, according to People. Cavill first shared the news of their growing family back in April 2024.

Agencies



SHABEER KALLARAKKAL

'EVEN NOW, MANY DON'T RECOGNISE ME IN PERSON'

Roopa Radhakrishnan

With four releases in four languages, two of which marked his debut — in Telugu (Nagarjuna's *Naa Saami Ranga*) and Kannada (Shivarajkumar's *Bhairathi Ranagal*) — Shabeer Kallarakkal has had a very busy 2024. The actor, who had his breakthrough by playing Dancing Rose in *Sarpatta Parambarai*, tells us that he still isn't easily recognised in person. "I met *Sarpatta Parambarai*'s editor (Selva RK) at Arya's birthday party before the film's release. He was like, 'Why are you so quiet? You are so energetic in the film'. I get that a lot and many don't even recognise me in person as I am a lot different from all the characters I have done," he says.

'AAYITHA EZHUTHU GOT ME INTO FILMS'

I wanted to be a cricketer and did a lot of part-time jobs during college. A company where I worked part-time was sourcing actors for *Aayitha Ezhuthu* (2004). That's how I got into films; I shot for the film for 10-15 days. I'm also visible in one shot of that film. Many people noticed me from it and that's when I thought, 'Why not try acting?' My dad was supportive, but wasn't too confident. But I was lucky in a sense, as I didn't have to provide for my family. My struggle was in doing the extra work so that I could make it one day. There were many actors more good-looking and talented than me. Unfortunately, they had to give up and go for a 9-to-5 job due to the commitments they had. Luckily, I didn't have to do that and I eventually ended up getting my big break in *Sarpatta Parambarai*.

CONTINUED ON 4



'SKxARM is huge for me; I had a ball shooting for it'

SKxARM is huge for me, in terms of my role and also as an overall experience of working with this team. I got a call from Murugadoss sir's office to play another role in the film. When he saw me, he said that I looked nothing like Dancing Rose. At that time, I had a beard as I was in my *King Of Kotha* look. Then, he said that he had a better and bigger role for me and asked whether I could go clean-shaven. And, I said yes! I had a ball shooting for SKxARM. Murugadoss sir has worked with the biggest of stars, but still treats you with so much respect. SK has also been a darling.

As Dancing Rose in *Sarpatta Parambarai*, the actor says he is a lot different from the characters he has done



Dakota's spiritual vacation

After her visit to the Babulnath Temple in Mumbai on Friday with partner Chris Martin, Dakota Johnson made a visit to the Siddhivinayak temple. The actress was accompanied by Sonali Bendre and Gayatri Joshi (left)

The new filmmakers have got the freedom to tell their own stories: Ashutosh Gowariker

Niharika Lal

For me, film festivals are a crash course in filmmaking," shares Ashutosh Gowariker. During a recent chat, the filmmaker discussed the mark that Indian films have made for themselves at international platforms. The filmmaker also talks about why he thinks we need to make more historical films and how legal hassles will never stop him from creating more films.



Ashutosh says that *Lagaan* changed the norm that a film with songs could only be considered a commercial film



I think that the new talent has got the freedom to tell their own stories. They don't have to worry about making films in the mainstream

Ashutosh Gowariker



'A FILM WITH BOX OFFICE SUCCESS IS ALSO BEING APPRECIATED AT FEST'

Kiran Rao's *Lapataa Ladies* was not only a box office hit but was also appreciated at its screening at the Toronto film fest



In the past few months, be it Payal Kapadia's *All We Imagine As Light*, Sandhya Suri's *Santosh* or Kiran Rao's *Lapataa Ladies*, Indian films have been acknowledged at platforms like Cannes, Toronto and Sundance and have also received recognition in the form of nominations at global awards. Ashutosh says that from Chetan Anand's *Neecha Nagar*, which won at Cannes 75 years ago, to Om Puri and Shabana Azmi representing India, Indian films have made their mark at film festivals and awards over the years. "What has happened is that the focus has now come to mainstream, where a film that has box office success is also being appreciated at film festivals and at award nights. That's a big change, I feel. Earlier it was like — the moment you had songs in your film, you were categorised as — this is going to be a commercial picture. This should not even be considered for awards. It was the norm. *Lagaan* changed that. When we showed it to the Academy, we showed it with all the songs. And it did not matter to them. So, somewhere, every film of ours that has gone to Oscars or a BAFTA, has gone with songs. Because we have established that our films come with songs."

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A grand evening to celebrate Carnatic music's young talents



The audience were cheering and motivating the participants throughout the evening



The top three award recipients with TM Krishna and Harsh Dugar, Executive Director, Federal Bank (extreme right)



Violinist Akkarai S Sornalatha being felicitated by Senthilkumar Senior General Manager - Marketing, Hatsun Agro Products Ltd

Listening to TM Krishna perform was truly immersive. Our bank has been focusing on promoting music and thereby supporting talent. So, it was a wonderful experience hearing the five young artistes perform

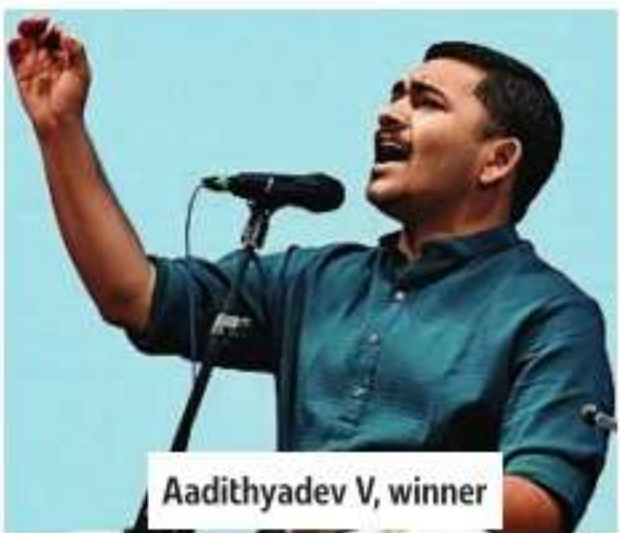
— Harsh Dugar, Executive Director, Federal Bank

This is a dream-come-true moment for me. It is an absolute honour to get awarded by TM Krishna anna

— Aadithyadev V (CRV School Of Music)



TM Krishna was accompanied by S Sunil Kumar on kanjira, Vignesh Ishwar, Vignesh Krishnamurthy and Sahana on tanpura and Akkarai S Sornalatha on violin



Aadithyadev V, winner



Ranjani Radha V, 1st runner-up



K Arun Prakash played mridangam during TM Krishna's performance

I had participated last year as well, but this time, the competition was tougher. So, I put a lot of thought into it and gave it my very best

— Rithikeshwar N (Tamil Nadu Dr J Jayalalithaa Music and Fine Arts University)

Singing at the Music Academy main auditorium in front of all these stalwarts is a big blessing

— Ranjani Radha V (Open Audition)

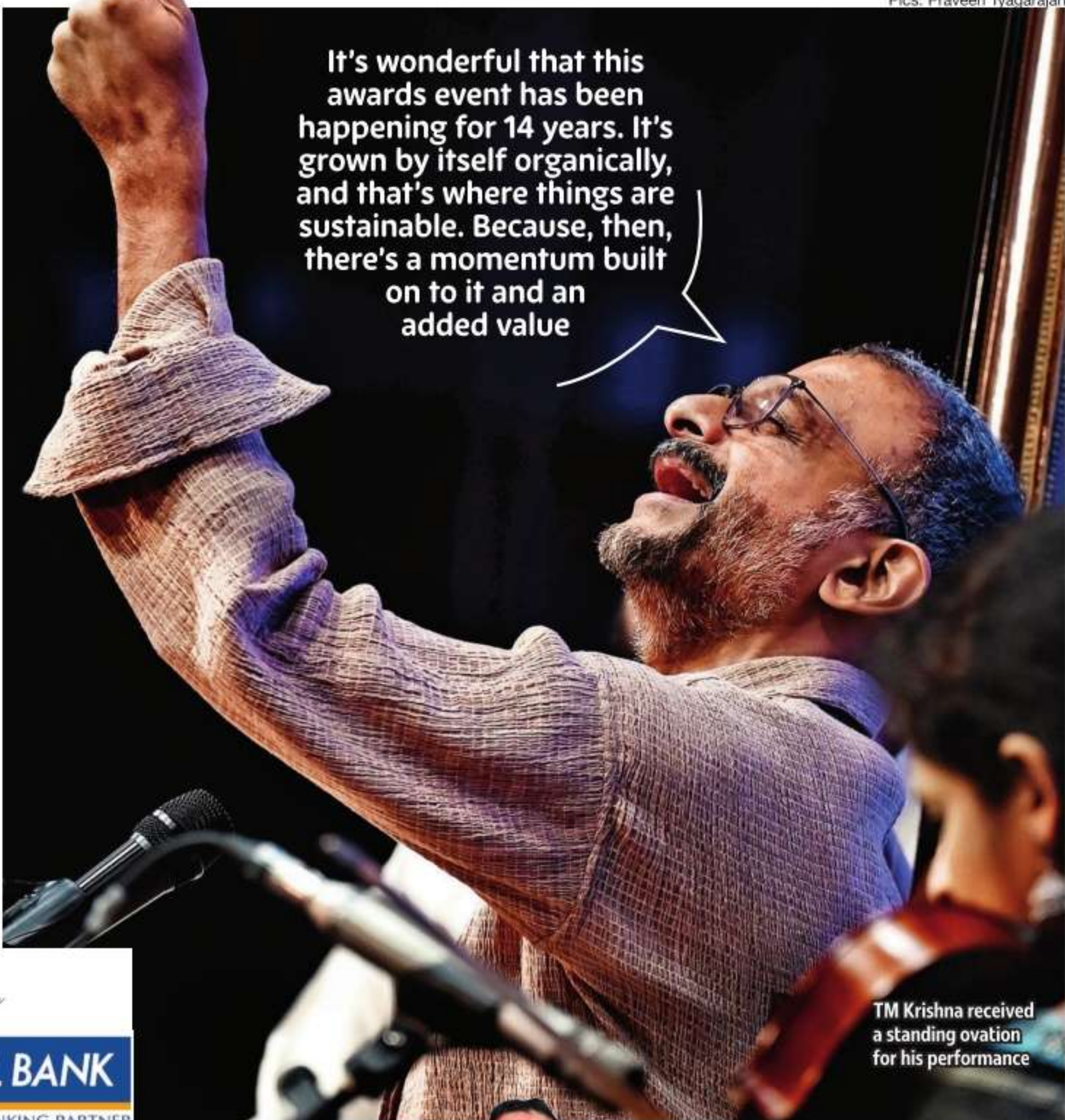
Ajay Gnanamuthu and Shimona tie the knot in intimate ceremony



Filmmaker Ajay Gnanamuthu got married to Shimona this weekend. Wishes have been pouring in for Ajay from his colleagues from the film industry, including Hiphop Tamizha Adhi and Meenakshi Govindharajan. Adhi took to Instagram to wish the director by posting two separate stories, one of which read, "So so happy Happy married life to my bro Ajay & Shimona (sic)"

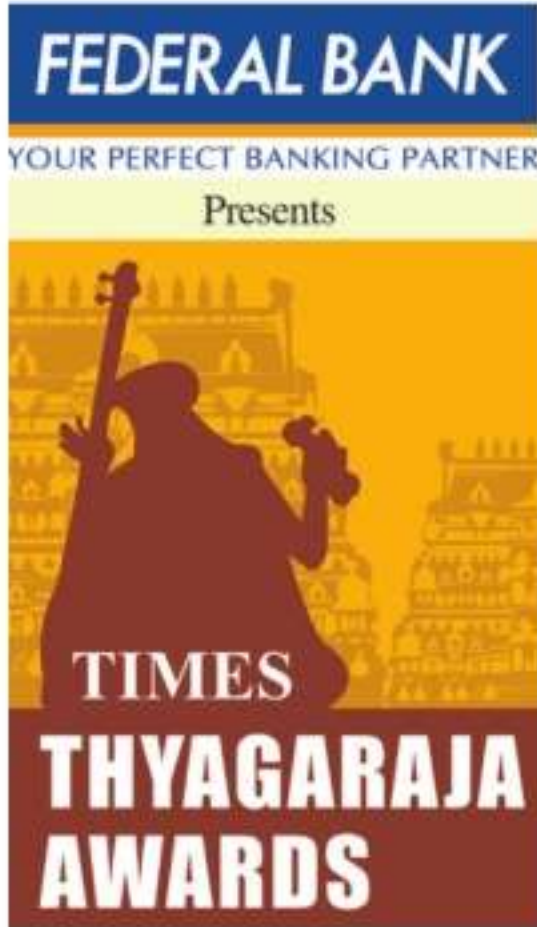
On the work front, Ajay's *Demonte Colony 2*, the sequel to his 2015 horror film, hit the screens in 2024. He has also directed Vikram's *Cobra* and Nayanthara's *Imaikkaa Nodigal*.

TNN



It's wonderful that this awards event has been happening for 14 years. It's grown by itself organically, and that's where things are sustainable. Because, then, there's a momentum built on to it and an added value

TM Krishna received a standing ovation for his performance



Vimesh Nair - Senior Vice President, Casagrand felicitating Radhika and Uma of Chinmayi Sisters, who were part of the jury along with panel Gayathri Girish (centre) and Subhashini Parthasarathy (right)

All Carnatic music students wait for December not only for Margazhi concerts, but also for the Times Thyagaraja Awards. The process is so well thought out

— Gayathri Girish, one of the judges



Niranjan Krishna, partner Gopuram Kumkum & Turmeric and Mrs. Harika felicitate judge Subhashini Parthasarathy

We have been part of the Times Thyagaraja jury panel for many years. We wish we had these opportunities when we started out

— Uma of Chinmayi Sisters, part of the judging team

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Rashmika Mandanna was conferred the Times Fresh Face title in 2014. Since then, it has only been onwards and upwards for the actress, who quickly became a popular face in the South Film Industry. She's now a Pan-Indian star, winning hearts across the nation.

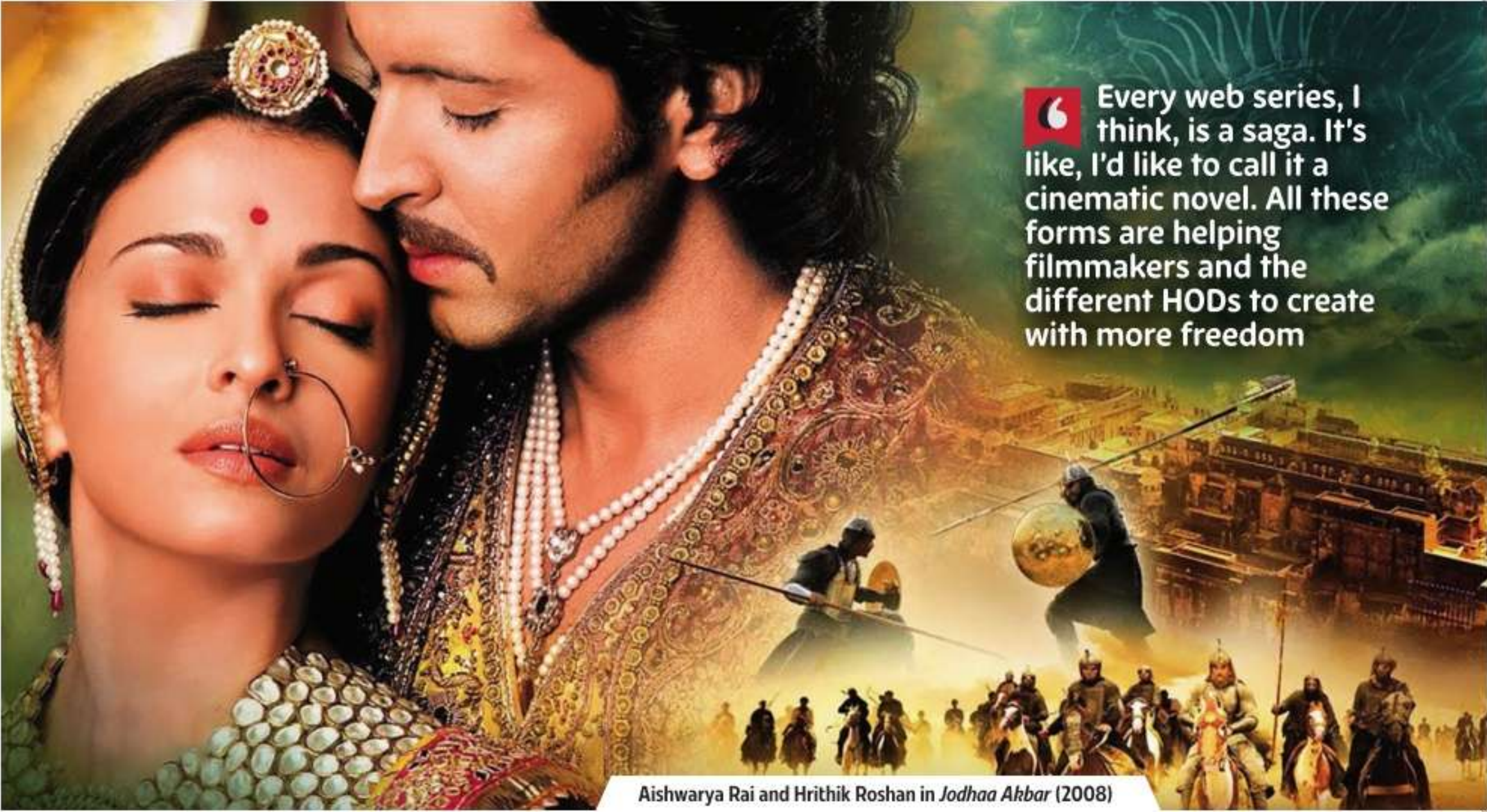
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‘Objections to my films bother me, but they don’t stop me from creating’



Aishwarya Rai and Hrithik Roshan in *Jodhaa Akbar* (2008)

Every web series, I think, is a saga. It's like, I'd like to call it a cinematic novel. All these forms are helping filmmakers and the different HODs to create with more freedom

CONTINUED FROM R 1

‘WE HAVEN’T EVEN FINISHED TELLING 10% OF OUR HISTORICAL STORIES’

Ashutosh Gowariker made *Jodhaa Akbar* (2008) 15 years ago. In recent years, there has been a spate of historical and period films. Talking about their emergence, he says, “I think it’s fantastic. We’re able to tell so many stories. There is so much history in every state in the country. All the states have got their heroes, kings, and saints. And every story is important. All those stories are being told in some form or the other — whether it’s TV, web or cinema.”

Ashutosh notes that in the 50s-60s, the genre was quite strong. “You had *Mughal-e-Azam*, *Anarkali* — some massive films which were historicals. But after a long gap, Akbar Khan *sahab* made *Taj Mahal: An Eternal Love Story* (2005), and then *Jodhaa Akbar*. It restarted that whole phase of historical movies. And so, we now have a spate of not only historical films but even period films. Actually, we have not even finished 10% of telling our stories.”

‘WHEN YOU WATCH A FILM, YOU ARE TRANSPORTED INTO THAT WORLD’

Whenever a historical film is released, there are always questions about authenticity. “You have to be as authentic as possible,”

Revisiting some classics is always a good thing.

Certain nuances of certain films are lost when you watch them at that time because the age is different. There is a time gap of five-six years from when I made *Lagaan* and when I made *Jodhaa Akbar*. I’ve changed as a person, I’ve evolved. I’ve become mature

Gowariker says. He adds, “Filmmakers are not historians. If they were historians, they would not have made a film; they would have written a book, an account. As filmmakers, when we tell a story, we are already making our own accounts. We are drifting away from history. *Gandhiji* did not look like Ben Kingsley, and Akbar did not look like Hrithik Roshan. It’s a fact. But when you watch a film, you are being transported into that world, and a filmmaker is making every attempt to use all his expertise and various departments to create the ambience for you to believe the story. So, be as authentic as possible, and take certain liberties where you feel that



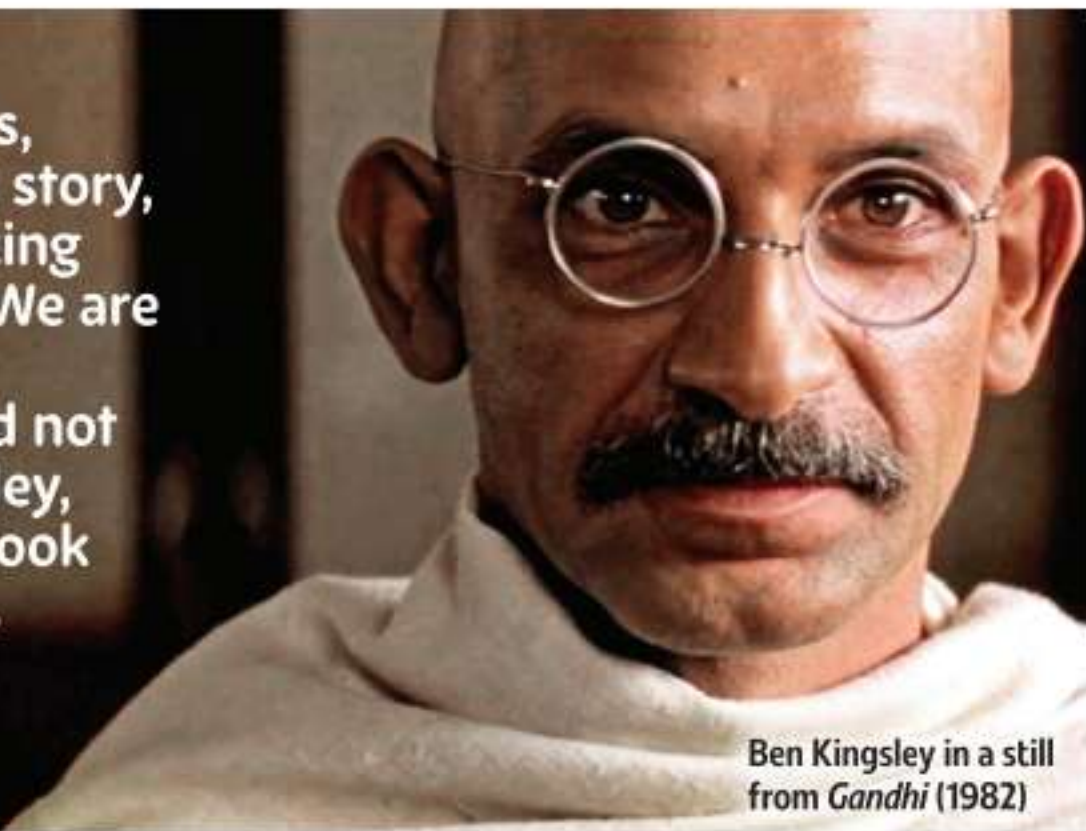
Ashutosh Gowariker

you need to take the liberty. Try and check on historical details as much as possible.”

‘OBJECTIONS BOTHER ME, BUT THEY DON’T STOP ME FROM CREATING’

Every other historical film gets into legal hassles, court cases, objections but Ashutosh says that it doesn’t stop him from creating. “It bothers me, but it doesn’t stop me from creating. It bothers you because you feel, ‘Oh man, I have done all this.’ I am very open if a person has any objection. If I am right, I will try to convince him about it, prove it to him, show him my book references, which I did during *Jodhaa Akbar*. And when the court case was filed against me, I won it on the basis of that. But if I’m proven that I’ve done injustice or shown something wrong, I don’t mind changing it. Because I don’t want to hurt any community, any religion, any descendant of any family who feels that there is some injustice done to the depiction of that person on screen. If it’s in my capacity, I’ll make that change.”

As filmmakers, when we tell a story, we are already making our own accounts. We are drifting away from history. *Gandhiji* did not look like Ben Kingsley, and Akbar did not look like Hrithik Roshan. It’s a fact



Ben Kingsley in a still from *Gandhi* (1982)

Amar Deep

SHANKAR MAHADEVAN’S PERFORMANCE AT MAHA KUMBH MELA 2025



Ankita Bharti

Grammy-winning composer and singer Shankar Mahadevan performed at the Maha Kumbh Mela 2025 in Prayagraj on Thursday evening.

The performance marked Mahadevan’s first-ever visit to the Kumbh Mela, which began on January 13. Reflecting on the significance of the event, Shankar said, “I feel blessed

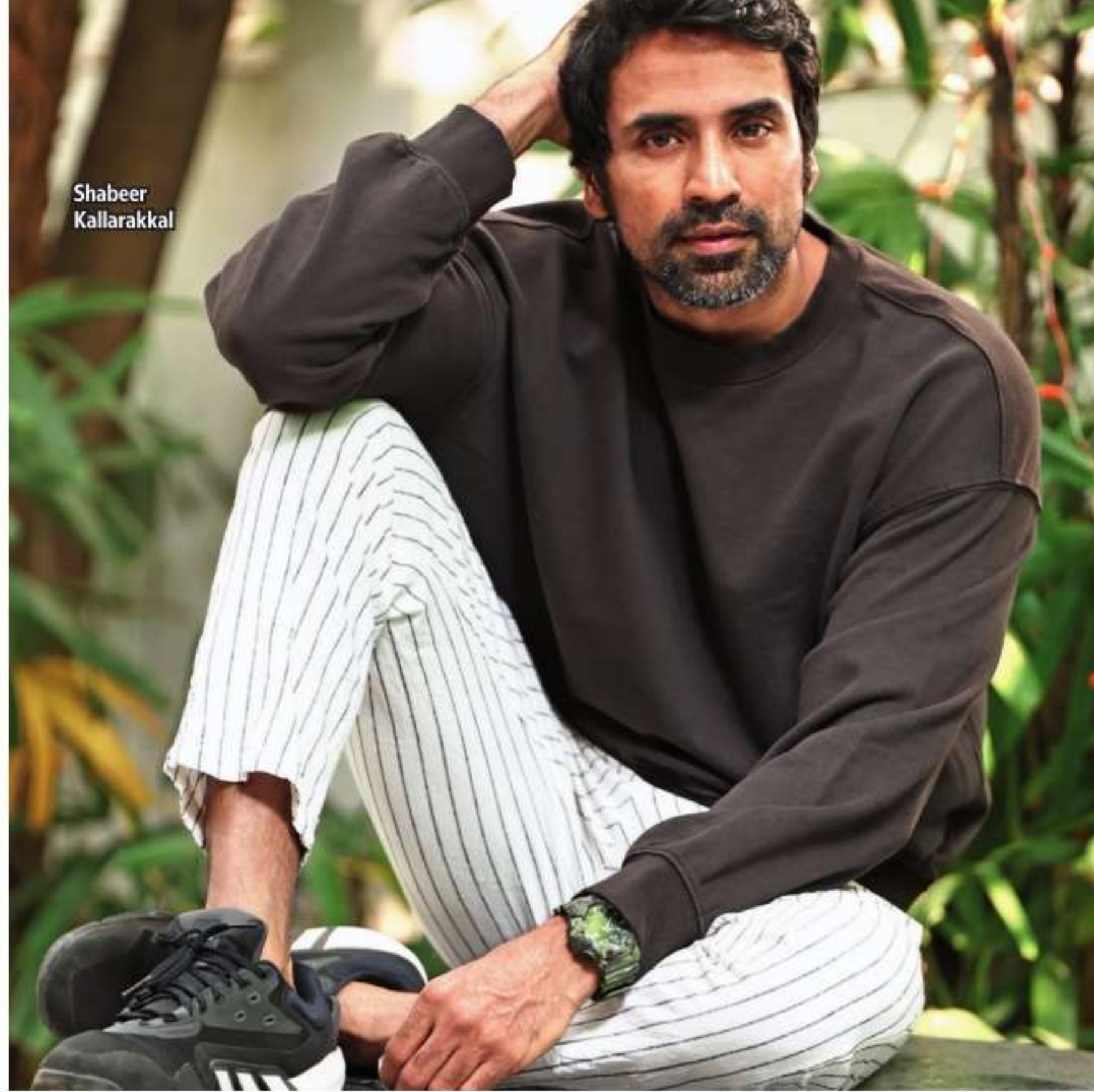
and happy to do my music *seva*. This is the *punya* of my 30-35 years of musical journey, and it is my biggest earning. This is my first time attending the Maha Kumbh and a sacred moment for me. I’ve always wished to perform at the Kumbh, but the timing never aligned. Now, I’m looking forward to taking a holy dip at the Triveni Sangam, too.”



Mahadevan, who is known for his soul-stirring renditions of *bhajans* and devotional songs, was especially excited to perform the song *Chalo Kumbh Chalein*, the anthem of the previous Kumbh Mela, written by lyricist Prasoon Joshi and others. Mahadevan’s repertoire also included popular renditions of *bhajans*, all of which enthralled the large crowd gathered at the Ganga Pandal set up at the Kumbh Mela area.

‘I’m at a place where I am confident that I can pull off anything’

K Balram Bekay



Shabeer Kallarakkal

CONTINUED FROM R 1

‘I KNEW THAT I WASN’T GOOD ENOUGH BACK THEN’

I don’t want to be an option anymore because I have been one for 15-20 years. I have always been given reasons for not being cast in films, but at the end of the day, I knew that I wasn’t good enough back then. I had to put in the work to get better. That’s the reason I started learning different skills. I have learnt silambam, kalari, kickboxing, and horse riding. Now, even if I miss a movie, I don’t think of it as a loss and don’t dwell upon it.

‘SHIVANNA AND NAGARJUNA SIR STILL WANT TO LEARN AND HONE THEIR CRAFT’

I have worked with many big stars, like Rajini sir, Nagarjuna sir, Shivan, SK and DQ. All of them stick to their roots even after success and make an effort to not get carried away. For instance, Shivan is a huge star and I grew up watching Nagarjuna sir’s movies. So, to know that they are so down to earth and still want to learn and hone their craft was a major take-away for me. When I see them being so humble even after being such big stars, it is also a lesson for me to remain the same and not change.

‘I WAS ABLE TO BE A BOXER INSTEAD OF TRYING TO BE ONE IN SARPATTA PARAMBARAI’

My first two films, *Nerungi Vaa Muthamidathe* and *54321*, had me playing the protagonist. They didn’t do well commercially, because of which I was a bit sceptical about playing a hero again. It took me some time to understand that I could also be the hero in a film. Right now, I’m at a place where I am confident that I can pull off anything. Initially, I thought I should do a

‘Karthi anna was the first person to call me after Sarpatta Parambarai’

I look up to Karthi anna as an actor. He was an assistant director in *Aayutha Ezhuthu*. I remember telling him I wanted to become an actor and he shared a photographer’s number and said that person takes pictures of his *annan* (Suriya) as well. I remember Ranjith sir asking me how I knew Karthi because anna told him that he and I started our journey at the same time. In fact, Karthi anna was the first person who called me after *Sarpatta Parambarai*.



@actorshabeer

...with Shivarajkumar on the sets of his debut Kannada film *Bhairathi Ranagal*

role better than Dancing Rose, but if I chase after such a role, nothing is going to happen. If something is destined for me, it is going to come my way. But, as an actor, I have to be prepared for it. I came on board for *Sarpatta Parambarai* just two weeks before the shoot. But as I know about kickboxing, I was able to be a boxer in the film

instead of trying to be one.

‘I ALWAYS BELIEVE THAT EVERYTHING HAPPENS FOR THE BETTER’

After *Sarpatta Parambarai* was released, a friend of mine, who once did a movie as a hero but has now left acting, called me after 14 years. He started crying and didn’t say anything for five minutes. He told me that this felt like his success and said, ‘Don’t give up *macha*!’ These small moments keep me going and make me think that everything will make sense one day. Time always gives you answers. When I signed *King Of Kotha*, I missed doing one Tamil and two Malayalam films, which turned out to be blockbusters. But I always believe that everything happens for the better.

Kim hints at new romance

Kim Kardashian hinted at a new romance in the trailer of her reality show. She revealed that things are so serious with her new mystery man that she was even considering building extra closet space for him. In the clip, she was seen measuring out the area and saying, “To here, I make a whole ‘his’ closet.” Her mother, Kris, replied, “You must really like him. He’ll be happy.” Later, she said, “I had the intention of staying single. I was fully lying to you guys. Me not dating, and not wanting love and attention? I don’t think you know me.”

Kim’s last romance was with NFL star Odell Beckham Jr., but they split eight months ago. Before that, she dated SNL star Pete Davidson. She shares four children with former husband Kanye West.



Kim Kardashian

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