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VISIBLY REDUCE 100% OF PIMPLE MARKS AND DARK SPOTS, *THE EXPERT WAY!*

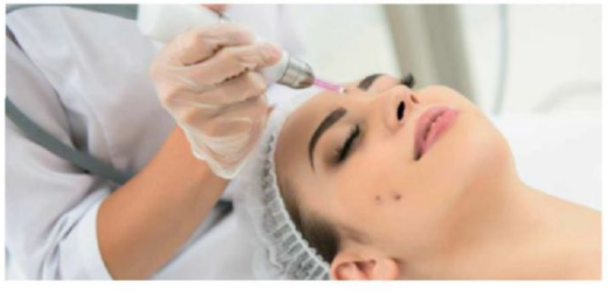
Dr Annie Heremans reveals how to get even tone, spot-less fairness.

Why are pimple marks and dark spots so difficult to treat?

Pimple/acne usually leave behind scars as they damage the skin cells, whereas dark spots occur due to accumulation of melanin. But the similarity between them is that they both are deep-rooted within the layers of skin. To solve these problems effectively, these need to be targeted right at their source and not just on the surface.

So what is the most advanced solution for treating marks?

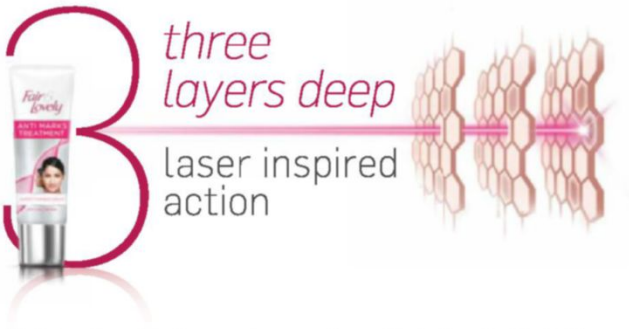
One of the most advanced treatments used by Skin doctors for this problem is Laser Treatment. Laser is a precise and concentrated beam of light that penetrates deep into the skin, targeting marks and treating them right at the source of darkening. With targeted action of Laser, marks are reduced not just from the surface, but from their very root.



Laser treatment is effective but it seems like a complicated procedure. Is there a clinically proven alternative?

I agree that laser treatment can be a complicated process but now there are some creams that can be a convenient alternative to a laser treatment.

In fact, skin experts at Fair & Lovely Research & Development Center have developed a new laser inspired solution for marks and dark spots, the new Fair & Lovely Anti Marks Treatment. It has a revolutionary mark reducing ingredient, Niacinamide, which penetrates 3 layers deep and works on marks at all 3 layers of your skin epidermis.



It targets pimple marks, spots and dullness just like skin doctor's laser treatment. Due to its laser inspired action, it has clinically proven results of visible reduction of 100% of marks, making it an effective and easy solution for marks and spots.

"I recommend Fair and Lovely Anti Marks Treatment as it has *clinically proven* results of reduction of 100% of marks"

Can such creams be trusted?

In my opinion, the credibility of any treatment should stem from its successful clinical results. I recommend Fair and Lovely Anti Marks Treatment as it has clinically proven results of reduction of 100% of marks. What adds to its credibility is also the fact that it has been approved by leading international skin health authority, Skin Health Alliance, London. It's because of these factors that it is one of my most preferred solutions for marks and dark spots.

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Fair & Lovely | ANTI MARKS TREATMENT

* Visible reduction of 100% of marks tested in clinical. Individual result may vary, apply twice a day for best effect.

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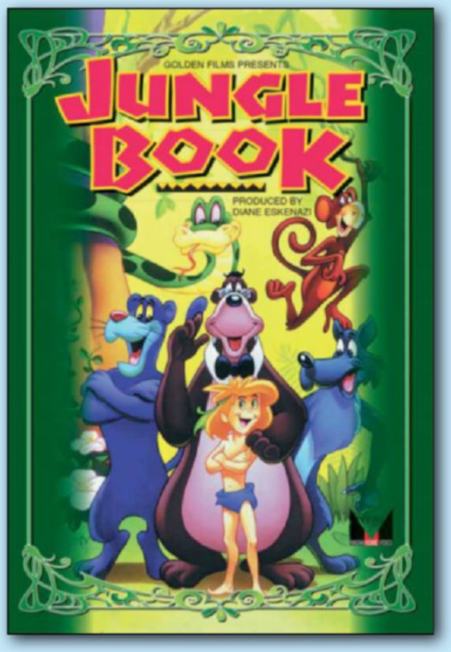
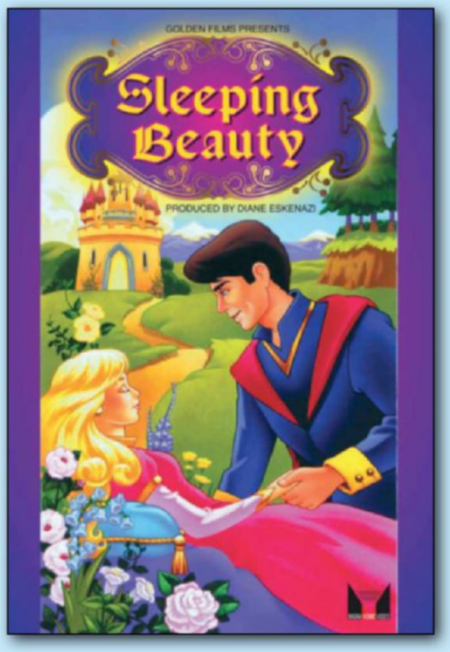
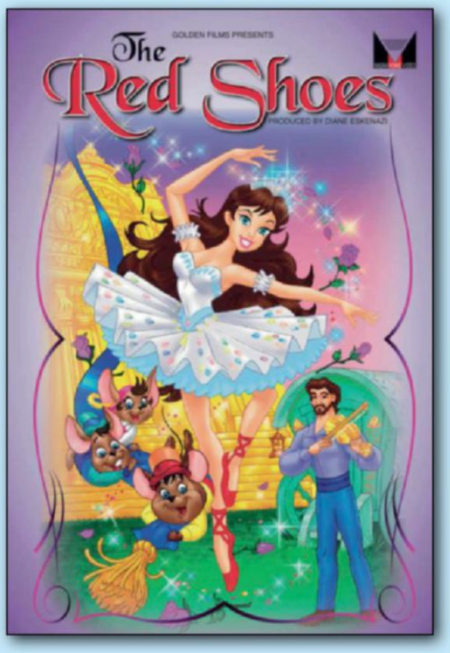
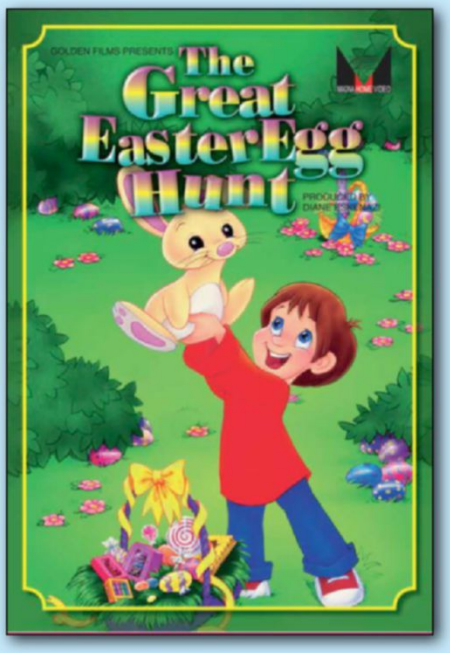




from the amazing characters in Jungle Book to the sublime romance of Sleeping Beauty & Red Shoes, whether it is The Great Easter Egg Hunt or The Secret Treasure Of Machu Picchu or The Miracle In Toyland.





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NEETA'S NATTER

February has come, 'fastly and furiously', as my little niece used to say, barely leaving us time to let the New Year sink in. The end of winter is nigh and the sunshine is just that much warmer. Things are also slowly heating up in tinsel town as the momentum of films and *filmis* is picking up after a year that left us with mixed feelings. The entertainment world, in India and around the world, lost a lot of both, stalwarts and young talent that left the party too early.

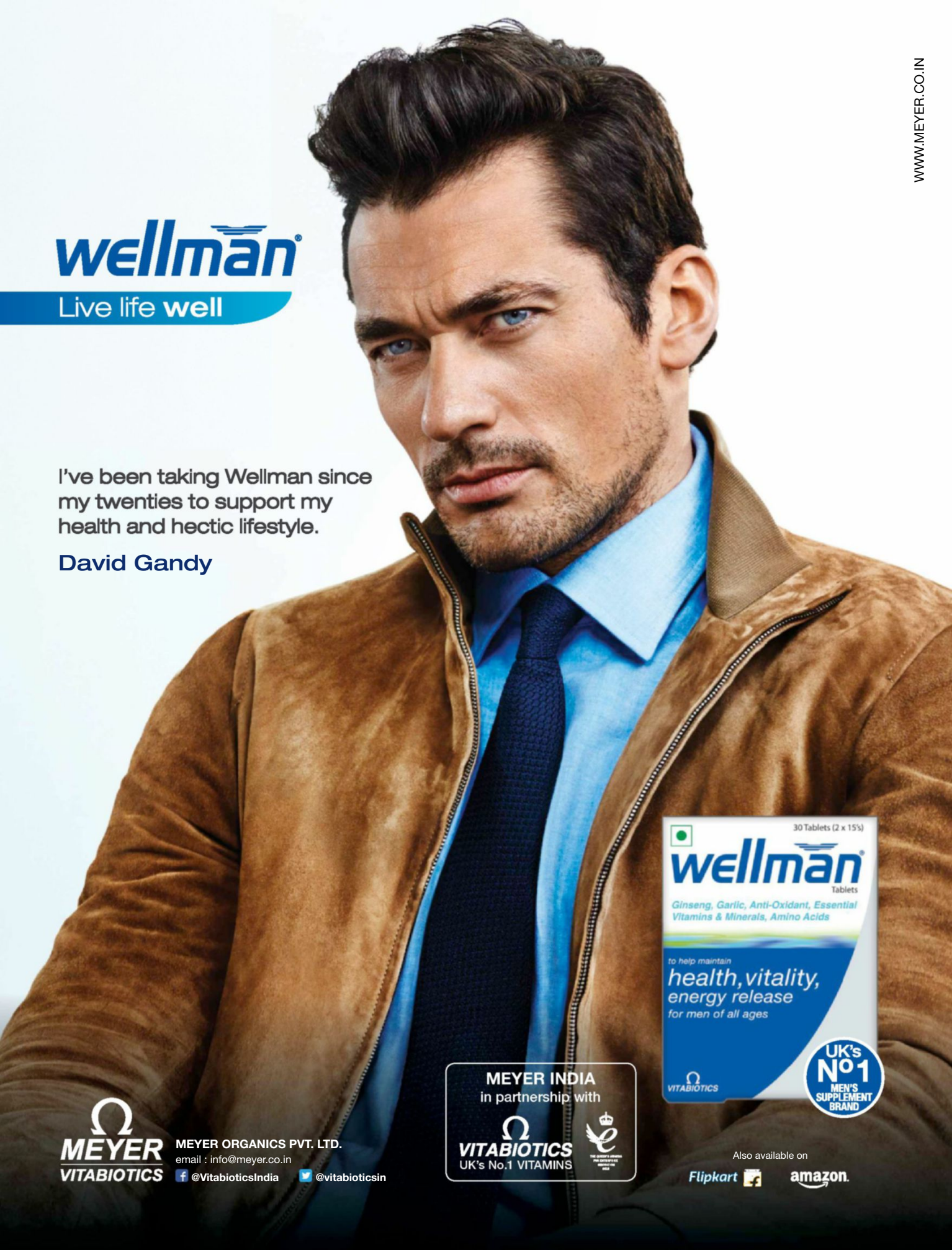
What eclipsed the Bollywood sunshine was the sudden passing of veteran actor **Om Puri,** at his Mumbai home. He was still working on more than one film, and filmdom will never see the likes of a consummate actor of his calibre. He was a Master - understated, intense and supremely skilled at his craft. Yet, the man was extremely rooted and remained warm and simple through his colourful life. You will be sorely missed Om, by people who knew you, and by a nation that knew you through your films. Rest in Peace. I hope you are in a happy heaven.

★★★★★

Late Om Puri

Ishaan and Nandita Puri at the prayer meet

PHOTOGRAPH: MANAV MANGLANI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Om's wife Nandita, son Ishaan and his industry family organised a prayer meet for him. The turnout only went to show what a popular man he was, over and above the towering actor he was known to be. **Amitabh Bachchan, Abhishek Bachchan** and **Aishwarya Rai** came to pay their respects, along with the A to Z of the industry. The dignified function was hosted by Om's old friend **Tom Alter**, who stressed that Om would have preferred a celebration, and would not want a mourning. **Anup Jalota** and **Talat Aziz** sang Bhajans and a song respectively. Three of Om's closest people talked about him – namely **Naseeruddin Shah** who, despite a brave face and words, came close to tears at one point; and industry stalwarts, directors **Govind Nihalani**, and **Shyam Benegal**, who had worked with Om Puri in some of his best films, early on in his career. Tom also read out a letter that the President of India, Mr Pranab Mukherjee had written to Om's son Ishaan. Om's co-actress of many films, the late **Smita Patil**'s son **Prateik Babbar** was also in attendance.

★★★★★

Salman and Iulia: **Love birds**

On *filmi* terra firma, award shows come and go, but the stories found backstage last a lot longer. One such was when waiting backstage at an awards event, where his lady-love was also performing, the paparazzi descended in droves at this unmissable photo opportunity; but **Salman Khan** did not want to get snapped with his girlfriend **Iulia Vantur** in the same frame. He politely asked the photographer present there to not capture that moment, which the latter obliged. Salman is not a killjoy. So whilst leaving the venue, he promised the photographer that he'd give him a better and a bigger picture soon. Such simple gestures, but they go a long way in adding to the reasons why Salman is the most loved actor in the industry.

★★★★★

Recently, entertainer **Akshay Kumar** was roped in as the brand ambassador of Tata Xenon *Yodha*. It would be for the very first time that the company didn't select their ambassador, but their customers did. They had the names of fifty celebrities written and asked each one of their clients to vote for the star they thought would be a perfect match to associate with Tata *Yodha*. It didn't come as a surprise that Akshay emerged as most of the clients' favourites for it, sweeping the polling with a massive 88 percent of the votes. Considering the kind of films he does, we think too that the association seems perfect.

Akshay Kumar: **India's fav**

★★★★★

One of the reasons for Akki's popularity is also the fact that he has an instant connect or identification factor shared with the public. We all get nostalgic when we think about all our firsts, and it was the same for *Khiladi* Akshay Kumar. When he came attended a vehicle launch, Akki shared that his first car was worth ₹ 28,000/- , which he paid in installments, after which he drove straight to the holy temple of Shirdi *Sai Baba*. Now that's something the Junta can totally identify with. Akki *apne jaisa aadmi hai yaar*!

★★★★★

Women empowerment has actually taken over the world. They are getting stronger, bolder and fearless. In our own B-town, singer **Neha Bhasin**, snapped at an auto-rickshaw driver, who she saw doing inappropriate things in public, when she had taken her puppy out for a night stroll. She gave him the right dose he needed, that most women, especially alone at night, canine accompaniment notwithstanding, would balk at doing. Just went to prove that regardless of her stature, Neha will still take a stand when needed. More power to your voice girl, literally and otherwise.

★★★★★

Neha Bhasin: **Powerpuff**

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Sonam goes strictly private

Fashionista **Sonam Kapoor** recently turned red and blue in the face when she came across pictures of her with her beau on social media. She apparently asked the website to take the pictures off, and the pictures were deleted the next morning. Why this apprehensive behaviour? Surely these two have a thing going on, and it looks like the damsel doesn't want to showcase her relationship to tinsel town and the world. Like 'kiss and don't tell?' Sonam is one articulate cat and always been an independent thinker, knowing which in the early days of her career, Daddy Kapoor used to warn her to watch her words while talking. Now, it looks like she chooses to zip her mouth when it comes to her love affair. Some feelings don't need to be articulated for the world to see and understand Sonam. No cosmetic product is responsible for that glowing face, twinkling eyes and blushing lips. After all, *pyaar kiya hai koi chori nahi.*

★★★★★

Urvashi Rautela seems to be the new party popper. A couple of months back, she was trolled for arriving at Manish Malhotra's 50th birthday party uninvited. Funnier still was the fact that she photo-bombed as many selfies of the celebs as she could. The funniest part which had us rolling on the floors, when we heard that she made **Arjun Rampal** spend a good amount of time in the restroom at the party as she chased him for a picture. Poor Arjun was only relieved when Urvashi found a new target. And then her behaviour at an awards show that we witnessed first-hand, was completely hilarious. Urvashi who was seated not in the first row, decided that she fully deserved to be there and kept inching up row after row to get ahead. Her target was to sit beside **Rishi Kapoor** and **Amitabh Bachchan** in row one. But she later settled in besides **Shabana Azmi,** while some celebs around wondered who she was, she kept trying to open conversations with them. Urvashi, just popping into parties and scouting for front seats won't get you work darling. You'd do better to get a more decent approach, and put your energies into meeting people the right way and getting the right films.

★★★★★

Urvashi Rautela: **Her social antics**

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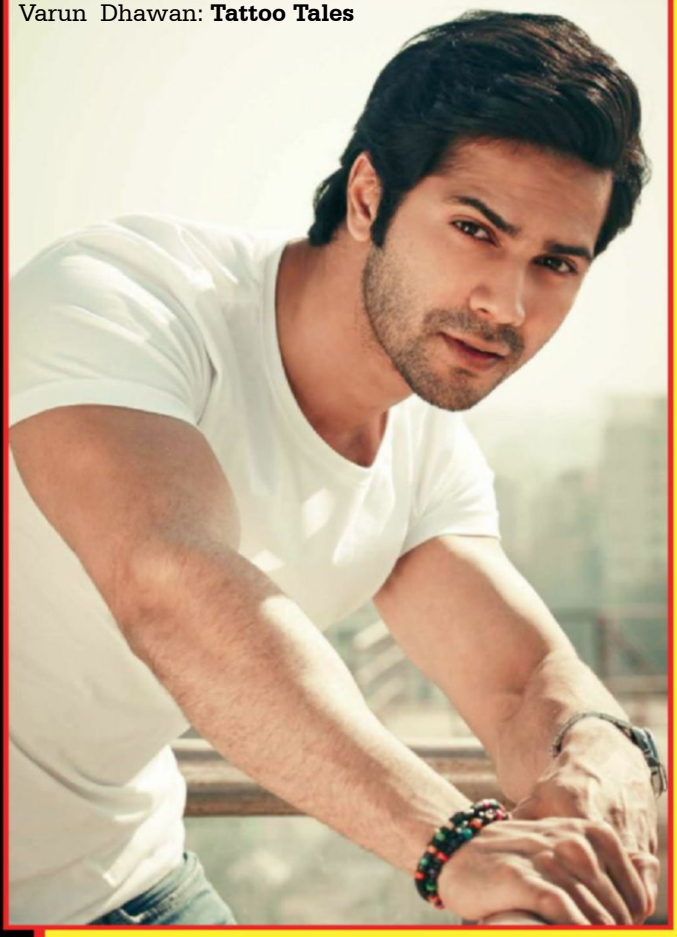
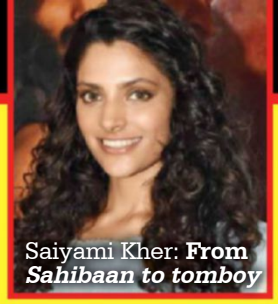
While we see actors gaining and losing weight or pushing the envelope to the edge of their physical boundaries, we know they're giving heart and soul to their characters. Think **Salman Khan, Aamir Khan, Shahid Kapoor, Randeep Hooda** et al…the latest dedicatee to such behaviour has been **Varun Dhawan,** who has got a temporary tattoo done on the backside of his palm, with Badrinath written in Hindi. And the lad happily flaunts the tattoo around, well we just hope he gets to flaunt his performance too post the release of the film *Badrinath Ki Dulhaniya*. Baby steps yet, compared to the stalwarts, but it's a big thing for Varun apparently!

Varun Dhawan: **Tattoo Tales**



★★★★★

Saiyami Kher, the new gal on the B'town block is quite humble and it was not surprising to know that the actress has never been clubbing and does not drink. She still has to pick up the Bollywood airs and behaviour. But the refreshingly lovely and simple Saiyami, loves staying indoors playing Taboo or Pictionary, and doesn't like noisy places. She is also quite the sports lover and plays cricket inside her house. Yes, she has a season ball tied to a rope hanging on one of the doors where she does her practice. And post the horse riding training in *Mirzya,* the actress has a new passion and loves to go riding, at a club in Pune. Recalling the horse riding tutorials, the actress laughs about still having *Mirzya* scars on her.



Saiyami Kher: **From *Sahibaan to tomboy***

★★★★★

The lovely **Manisha Koirala** spent a cosy time before New Year's, with friends like family. Considering her battle with the big C, Manya is looking in the pink of health and her tresses have grown back to their old splendour. She looked fresh and relaxed as she welcomed her guests, to a meal put together by her own loving hands, at her beautiful and warm home. Manisha has made some major lifestyle changes. Apart from travelling around the country giving inspirational insights and life lessons, she has turned completely vegetarian in her food and drink habits and believe me, she loves it and looks it. She's been exercising her culinary interests and skills in learning new and delicious ways of eating healthy. The meal she had put out was a case in point. The starters, the pasta, the soup and the array of juices fruit and vegetable, was enough to turn stronger souls vegetarian. The New Year also included further travel plans for Manisha, and she is looking forward to a break a couple of months down the line, when she will go with her friends on a Mediterranean cruise

Manisha: **clean living**

★★★★★

Another fitness freak **Amit Sadh**, has found a new sport apart from mountain climbing and cycling, and that is ice skiing. He likes to put in time into these activities, that he goes cycling anywhere he feels like. But what he also does is that he chats with his fans personally on a daily basis. Not just that, Amit also spends quite a lot of time at the gym, just like he does for his roles. And with the coming years being the golden period, he is all set to slay the film world. For the time, he's just hit the endorsement circuit with some Amazonian ads.

Amit Sadh: **Going places**

★★★★★

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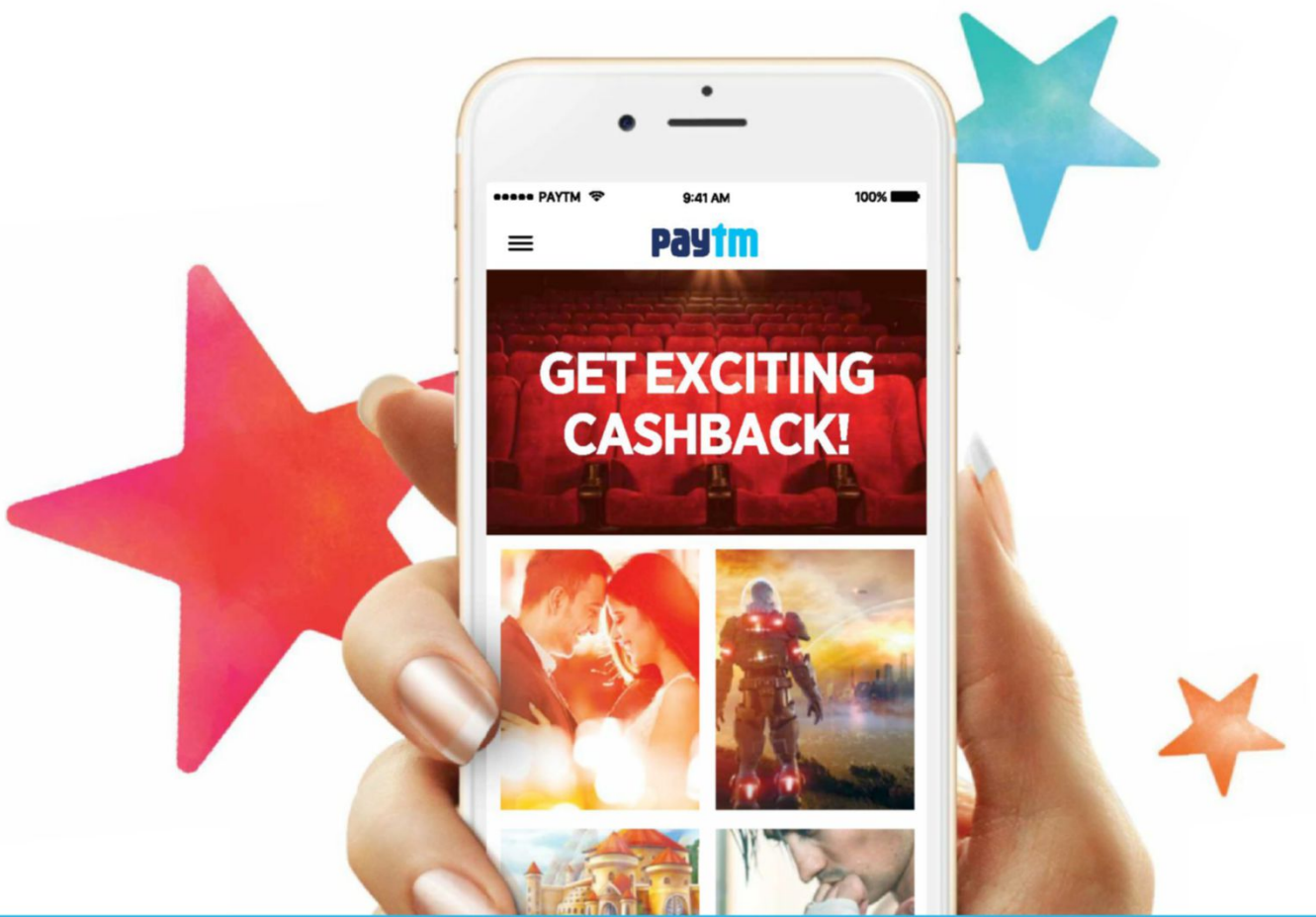

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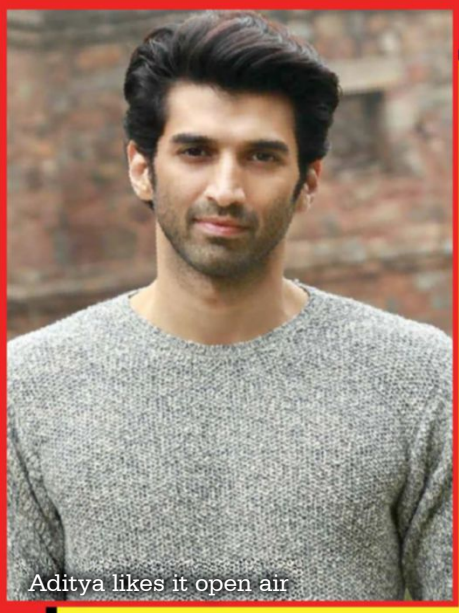

Aditya likes it open air

Tinsel town *Aashiq* **Aditya Roy Kapoor** was spotted early in the morning on Carter Road in Bandra. And no, he wasn't there for a stroll. Instead, he was getting a photo-shoot done by three young photographers. Why this venue? His usual lensmen are the high-end photographers of B-town, so busy in their fancy studios, that he had to get this one done all by himself. Maybe he doesn't like the candid paparazzi clicks either and this way gives him the chance to enjoy getting himself clicked the way he chooses too.

★★★★★

Shashi Kapoor:
Committed to stage

A true actor always remains loved as an actor regardless of his age, or the fact that he may no longer be acting. And the actor in him certainly never dies. We saw yesteryears heartthrob **Shashi Kapoor** recently at Prithvi Theatre, dressed like a king in a black shirt, black pants and a maroon shawl, sitting in the restaurant area, watching the world go by. Though he has aged, and his body and mind are ravaged by ailments, his love for theater is one experience that remains the same. It is only in these moments that his mind comes truly alive.

★★★★★

Gauahar Khan's personal life is not-so-personal because of her obsession with Snapchat, she shares anything and everything that she does on it. From outings to boring traffic jams, name it, it's all out there. What got our attention though is that we spotted her at Bistro in Bandra, with a man who she seemed overly gaga about. For a change, she didn't post her encounter with this man on Snapchat. I'm sure we will all know someday soon who this man is, if not now. But ha ha, we caught you Gauahar, red handed, before Snapchat did! .

★★★★★

Gauahar Khan's offline Date

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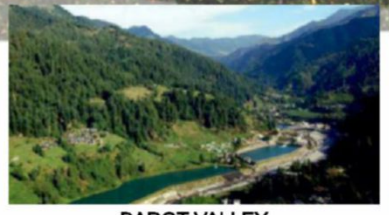

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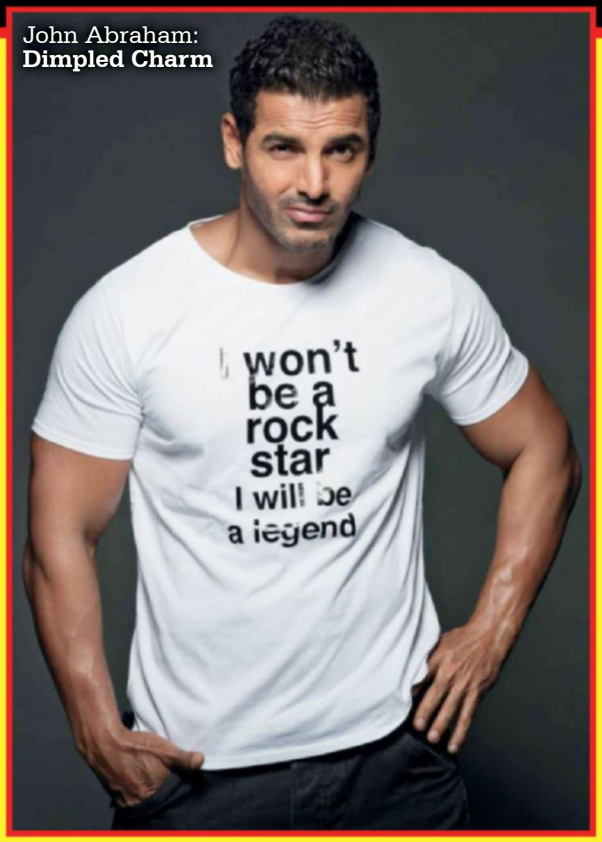
John Abraham:
Dimpled Charm



Known immensely for his action-packed performances, **John Abraham** is completely the opposite of what he looks. Considering his larger-than-life personality, forget striking up a conversation, even looking at him can be intimidating. The bloke was driving back to his Bandra residence when he was spotted towards the end of Hill Road. At first, we couldn't tell if it was him, but then he had that sincere and charming smile he carries around that changes your perception of him. How can one be so warm and sincere? Just how. Most of our icons barely remember to smile. And here is one million-dollar-smile that really flashes genuine.

★★★★★

Caught up with the perky **Tanishaa** over coffee, though she swore she was addicted to Starbucks' Hot Chocolate. The lass was recently seen at an awards event but we would like to know when we can see her on screen too. She mentioned that since good work coming her way was sadly negligible, she spent the last year travelling and broadening her horizons. She also announced her intentions of becoming a producer. She is apparently sitting on two plum scripts, work being underfoot on the same. And yes, she's doing her bit for the world- she has set up an NGO that is into increasing the green belt on planet earth. Tree planting, reducing paper usage, oh the girl knows everything is linked. She has stopped buying newspapers and even books. She sources all her reading on Kindle. Now if more people were to take similar steps, we'd soon be making a difference.

Tanishaa's green shades

★★★★★

CAT'S CROWN

This month goes to…

Cat's Crown this month goes to **Aamir Khan**. Nearly two months down the line, his film *Dangal* is still showing at theatres, and raking it in. Moreover, he has in his way, moved ahead with the second big leap of the Paani Foundation that he helped set up, towards making drought hit villages in Maharashtra self-sufficient vis-à-vis procuring, and sustaining water for their villages. Aamir's idea is in five years to change the situation completely in Maharashtra with regards to rural development via water.

From one cat to another, Meeeoow till next month!

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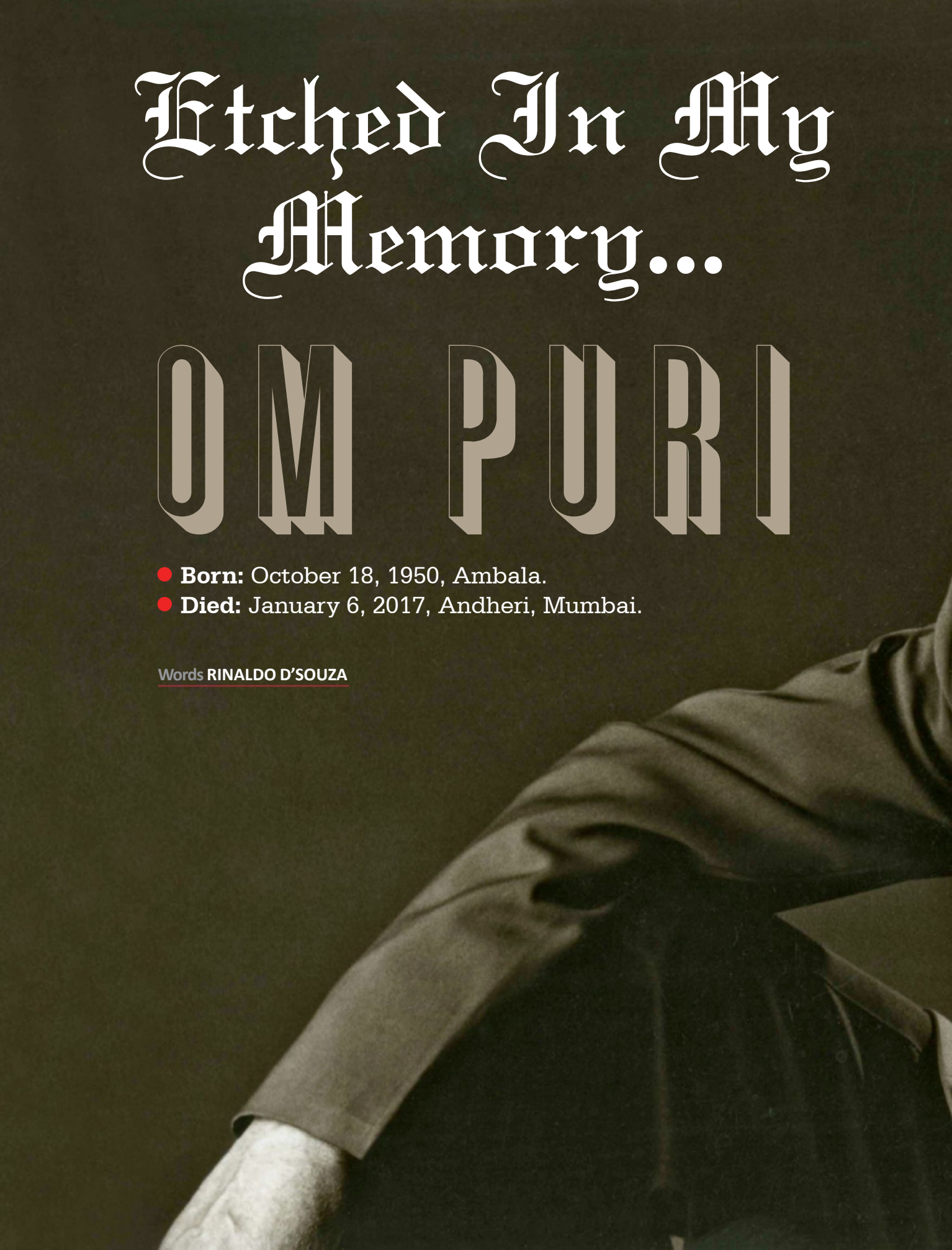
Etched In My Memory...

OM PURI

- **Born:** October 18, 1950, Ambala.
- **Died:** January 6, 2017, Andheri, Mumbai.

Words **RINALDO D'SOUZA**



What hit me hard was the possibility of being one of the few journalists he had last spoken to, maybe. We had been in touch with him for a feature in the issue, but somehow, the interview kept being pushed and rescheduled, he was very busy with his shooting schedule. I wasn't supposed to interview him in the first place, Om Puri was on my colleague's list. Somehow it came to me and excitement had kicked in. It would be my first interview with such a class actor! The interview was scheduled for the following day and I was to call Om*ji* and throw my set of questions at him and keep my ears open as he spoke. On a couple of rings, he answered and talked to me. Gentle though he was, that baritone voice I had heard in film was somehow intimidating. He said, "Child, an interview over the phone is not something I'd like to do." He anyway didn't want to do a telephonic interview. He said it didn't have the same flavour as a face-to-face interaction. He then asked me to call him a little later in the day, and I assumed that the interview would take place then. But no. I called him, and he didn't respond. I hung up but within seconds, he called back and said he wanted to see me in person, face to face and then do the interview. Considering loomimg deadlines to submit this interview, I was a bit shaken at not having still got it. But, the opportunity of meeting an actor like Om Puri in person, was not anybody in their senses would pass up. My mind was filled with what we could talk about, as opposed to the stilted telephonic conversation I nearly had. Om *ji* then told me his schedule for the week and how he had various things planned. The only available time for a proper interview was amidst his shoot in FilmCity, where he asked me to come and meet him. The interview was then scheduled for few days late, that was the 6th of January of the New Year 2017. And I never got to meet Om Puri.

The next morning, the city was chilled into a pall. Nature had frozen the city over, one of the industry's warmest and kindest actors had left us. I woke up to the news of Om Puri's demise in the wee hours of the same morning, due to a massive cardiac arrest

It was surreal at first, because I had spoken to him barely 12 hours before. I searched the virtual media and the news was true. Stunned, I realised that at worst, I was to be writing my first tribute, an obituary to the nation's finest actor - a man I had only spoken to, never met. And here it is… I can still hear his gentle voice at the back of my mind. 'Child, an interview over the phone is not something I'd like to do…"

Post 2000 was when I got familiar with what Bollywood is. Yes, that was exactly when I finally understood the meaning of the term and its definition, the use of infinite colours, use of magnanimous sets and picturesque views, and everything that went into making Bollywod what it was. Not to forget, the innumerable names from a 100 years of Indian cinema, to the current day- the actors and actresses, the stars and their mystique, their incomparable work, oh there was a lifetime of cinema that I had to catch up on. From a newbie's point of view, there were but a few older fims I had seen. There were quite a lot of actors I had seen on television as well. I remembered a few, struggling to familiarise myself with their magnificient careers over the years. So, well… these words may not be enough to do justice to this man's contribution to the industry, but right from the start of his film career, Om Puri has given the industry one true identity when it comes to a certain character or a role. There was Om Puri, and there was whatever role he became. They were so in sync, yet two disctinct identities.

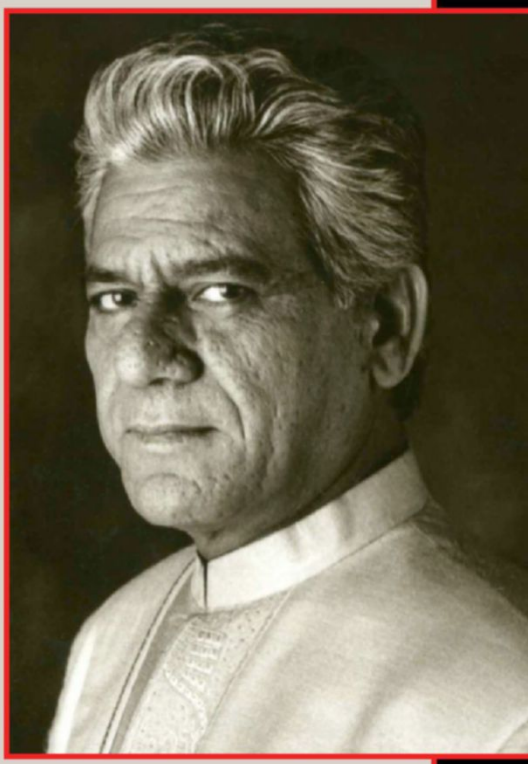
Om Puri was critically acclaimed for his performance in *Aakrosh* where he played a victimised tribal. Noteworthy were also his cop renditions in two films, *Ardh Satya* and *Gupt*. As far as Hollywood ventures are concerned,

he played a cameo in Richard Attenborough's *Gandhi*. There are many other honourable mentions that Om Puri was a part of. He has also worked with two of the most appreciated faces in Hollywood, Julia Roberts and Tom Hanks. Irrfan Khan, Priyanka Chopra and Deepika Padukone making it big in the west today is news. But well before these actors knew how to spell Hollywood, or learnt the rudiments of cinema, Om Puri had already worked with the biggies of Hollywood.

Our film industry is often biased, in that it stresses importance on the external aspects of looks and great physique et al. Talent has often been counted as a secondary weapon in an actor's arsenal. The good looking are glorified and the actors have to gut their all for the same level of recognition in a commercial market. The mandatory duo in the deadly combination was looks and a perfect physique. Talent aside. Having said that, I was caught by the fact that Om Puri had managed to win all his races. As simple as it seems, it was his extraordinary talent that made him who he was. His baritone voice which sent chills down one's spine, were what lent gravitas to Sanjay Leela Bhansali's narrative of *Bajirao Mastani*. Even in a cameo in a *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* as the *Mulla*, Om made his presence register heavily. His versatility as an actor was seen by the various roles that he has played. Reams can be spoken about his early years in the 'so-called art cinema' that he started out with, immediately earning himself a couple of National Awards. *Aakrosh* (1980), Govind Nihalani's *Ardh Satya* in 1982, *Arohan* (1982), Satyajit Ray's television film *Sadgati* way back in 1981, *Tamas* (1987). Om *Ji* straddled mainstream commercial Bollywood as well as British, American and Pakistani films, independent films and arthouse films, with equal ease and skill. For those familiar with his serious and intense roles only, his comic timing and light-hearted roles in *Jaane Bhi Do Yaaro* (1983), *Chachi 420* (1997) and the yet to be released *Actor In Law* (2017) are priceless. In 1990, Om Puri was bestowed with a Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian award of India; and in 2004, he was made an honorary Officer of the Order of the British Empire, an honour hardly any Indian can stake claim to. Om Puri swept it all on the strength of his work, and trashed the theory that superficials like looks or physique are key qualities for an actor to make his mark. With 300 films and counting, Om Puri won the National Film Award for best actor for *Ardh Satya* where he played a police inspector.

Naseeruddin Shah, another prominent 'actor' was good friends with Om Puri. He and Om Puri had known each other for more than four decades, right from their classmate connection at the National School of Drama (NSD) in 1970. The odd couple had been good friends ever since. On the Anupam Kher show for instance, Om Puri mentioned that it was his friend Naseer who was responsible for Om turning non-vegetarian. On the same show, Naseeruddin Shah praised Om and his work. While on the show, Om Puri recalled, "I did three short plays but I never thought of becoming an actor, I wanted to go in the army. When I went to college, that is when my passion for acting grew." In an interview, Naseeruddin also mentioned how Om Puri had saved his life. Jaspal, a friend of Naseeruddin jabbed a knife into Shah. Om Puri who was just an arm's length away jumped across their dinner table and had him covered, to stop the attacker from going further. He later took Naseer to the hospital and saved his life.

In the book written by Om Puri's wife Nandita, I came across



some memorable moments of his life. Two of the many instances caught me by shock. This one time, Om Puri worked at a *dhaba,* and his chores were to wash untensils every night. The day's work would take such a massive toll on him, that by the end of the day, he would hide the utensils and wash them the following day. However, one day he got busted by the owner and then was asked to leave the job. This had my eyes tearing up. The other one was a tale of innocence. At the age of just five, Om Puri would collect coal to use as fuel. Both, his friend and he, would pick up coal from the railway tracks. One day, the two found an egg, and Om's friend had mentioned to him that it was something edible. He then took it home, but his mother wouldn't let him into the house. So he cooked the egg himself as his mother provided him some oil and firewood.

Who had ever imagined this little boy would leave Indian cinema spellbound and teary eyed on his departure from the world. |☆|

The HOMECOMING

It's been a long while since we have had AJAY DEVGN with us. We've had our differences. We've grown- the both of us - the Star, and *Stardust*. And in an act of grace and maturity, he quelled the troubled past in a single sentence. And so it is that we're celebrating a homecoming of sorts today. Our version of *Singham Returns*. We've shared a long leg of our journey in the past, over good times and bad. So, we celebrate a reliving of those times and coming together in the future.

Ajay is an 'old-world' guy. We love it. His loyalties run deep. So photographer Jitu Savlani, who knows Ajay really well, stylist Shaahid Amir who really makes Ajay look like a clotheshorse, Ajay's long-time team of make-up artist Harish and hair stylist from Aalim Hakim, and Parag D, his friend and colleague and relationship manager, and myself, who's known Ajay since seemingly forever (we actually counted, and it was 22 years) got together to make an event of it. A suite at the airport Taj was the scene of action, procured by the good graces of Ashok D, these days my BFF. Esvee and Darius who bailed her out, were the digital crew. Nawaz was the picture of efficiency as he kept the food and other requirements rolling. Ajay was relaxed, having just returned from a Swiss holiday with Kajol and the kids. But as he strolled in, he grimaced – "I would have shifted the photo-shoot. Just after a holiday is so not the right time. I need to tone up." The man looked perfectly lean. I told him so. He looked at himself and said, "I gave up a lot of my regular food restrictions. So I've put on muscle, but also fat." But, I tell him, if not on a holiday, when then was one to indulge in these guilty pleasures? "I know, still…" he leaves it hanging. He'll be back in shape in no time. He has a two-month long shooting schedule coming up.

Ajay is Speedy Gonzalves or Action Jackson if you want to call him that. He promises that we'll chat, just let him get the shoot out of the way. We had aimed for the sky, the sun and moon. We got all. He did change after change easily, effortlessly and with no stress felt by any of us there. Shahid had nailed the looks, Jeetu the hooks (for the pics), and Nawaz the cooks (the food was all perfect). Done in a record time of three hours, including talk time- this was all too good to be true. But yes, my new year's wish was that 2017 be a year of benevolence. My first blessing was Ajay Devgn.

PHOTOGRAPHS: JITU SAVLANI; CLOTHES & STYLING: SHAAHID AMIR ANKOLKAR;
MAKE-UP: HARISH WADHONE; HAIR: MOHAMMAD ARIF (HAKIM'S AALIM) & LOCATION: TAJ SANTACRUZ

“You Know How Brash We Were And What All We Did. Marriage Just Made Me More Responsible.”

We started talking with the ease of old camaraderie. It was for Ajay, 25 years in this industry, give or take a year. Within that period, and so many films and phases, was there ever anything that he might have wanted to change in his career in the industry? Ajay has never been one for over thinking or overt emotional responses. His answer was succinct, coming after a moment's thought. "Honestly, nothing exactly." And what was the time he would call the most momentous time, a period or a phase? "I have taken no phase in my life very seriously. But when I say this to people, they don't believe me. I think I have a very short memory. I forget about things. You tell me to recollect something from ten years back, it's very tough for me to recollect." And that's the truth, as Ajay calmly says. He is possibly a master of letting go, simply because he doesn't hold anything in his memory or heart. But, one was curious. Did that work for Ajay most times, or against him? His admission was, "It works for me, because if I am in a situation, it does not bring me down. You know, if I am on a high too, it does not let me get carried away." That I will believe. Ajay won two National Awards for *Zakhm* and *The Legend of Bhyagat Singh* way back, early on in his career. Were the National Awards something to aspire for, or something that he aspired to achieve? Did it give him some kind of validation that he actively or otherwise sought? His answer is to be expected. It is all part of the same flow…. He says, "See, when you do a film, you start the film, and while you're shooting and making a film, you don't think about awards at all. You think about whether you are being honest to your work, is the character working, and stuff like that. Sometimes, when you're working on a film, you know it's like this film cannot win any award ever." And he's done films like

> "If you decide you're doing four shifts in a day, how can you take anything seriously? You are just having fun."

that? My eyebrows ascend a tad. He's nonchalant. "Of course, we all do, those typical commercial stereotype films. You do it because it's interesting, we're having fun, and the audience will love it. So it's not always about the awards." I add my two bit. Different hooks to go for different kinds of films? He grins, "Exactly, yes. And I had never thought in my life that for a *Zakhm,* I would get a National Award. That wasn't the agenda at all at that time, we didn't even think about that." Going back to the memory, he says, "In fact, I remember I was in Austria shooting. It was early morning and I was sleeping. I got a call from Kajol and she told me, 'You've got the National Award, and it's just been announced.' There is a time difference between here and there, and my reaction was 'Okay, I'm sleeping right now. I'll call you back in two hours.' He laughs as he recalls this, continuing, "Then when I woke up, I called her up and I was like 'Oh, okay.' You never thought or anticipated that, or didn't even know that it was coming your way. So that has always been the approach." But that's validation at a national level, which is different from fans validating his work. Was it not worth anything different? He demurs, "Of course, I respect that, and it gives you a nice high. You feel very nice when your work is recognised by the country's highest authorities. It's not something that you aspire for basically, it happens along the way. Because if you try to plan it and you think I want to do this film just to win a National Award, it's not going to work. They just happen, you can't plan them."

Part of Ajay Devgn's charm is the fact that he can be serious and crazily mad fun. He can be like a kid, or maddeningly mature. And all of it is fluidly him. There's nothing artificial about the man. He will endure if he can or leave that battlefield. He does not force himself into anything that is not essentially him. And he does not wear his stardom at all. He's huge, he knows it. But he is just himself all the time. No two face. In fact, wearing them can irritate him. Anyway, moving on to his story, more than 100 films makes it a four-films-a-year average, that's a huge amount of work. "150 films," he mutters. That was a very modest and conservative estimate, I muttered back. "Jeez". He smiles, "No. In fact, when we started, and you have been a part of the industry for so many years, you've seen that time, when we were doing 12 to 15 films in a year. We didn't even realise when our films were to release. Sometimes, we used to get to know one or two weeks later that our film has already released. There was no promotion, there was nothing. We never went back and checked how the film did. Hit *ho gayi toh ek hafte baad pata chal jaata tha. Agar nahin chali toh bhi ek hafte baad pata chalta tha. Shayad* Friday *ko pata bhi nahi hota tha ki is* Friday *humaari* film release *hai."* It's becoming fun, this mad conversation, that seemed like a nostalgia trip between two friends. Ajay's famously intent eyes are glinting with mischief.

Given the time demands of the profession, since Ajay started working, did he feel that he'd paid a cost for that kind of huge amount of work, simply because it takes away in terms of time? From home, from family…whatever. Doubtless, Ajay's recollections are only fun. His short–term memory is an asset here. He shrugs, "No, we were just having fun actually. Honestly, most of us, I mean the scenario for everything has changed today.

Today, you start taking things seriously. At that time, we didn't take things seriously at all. I mean if you decide you're doing four shifts in a day, how can you take anything seriously? You are just having fun. And that happened for the first 10, 12, 14 years. And then you decide, there was a point in my career where I was like, enough is enough, I can't work like this anymore, I want to chill. Eventually, the whole scenario changed. Now, you do not want to work for more than one film at a time, or may be one film in a year. So I actually haven't. In the last five, six years, I must have hardly done any films."

Yes, the pace had slowed down…Ajay's reasons for the same are part serious part jest. He agrees, "I think everybody's attitude has changed. We have started taking work a little more seriously now. You can imagine if we used to do so many films, you can imagine at that point of time how many films we used to do because the Producer's Guild or whatever you call it came up with a condition that no actor can do 11 films at one time. So imagine, if they could put a 11 films ceiling. It was crazy, but that's how we all worked. So that's why so many films." Ajay started his own production in 2000, right? I ask. "No, earlier *na*? When was *Dil Kya Kare?"* he counters. Earlier than that? No ya, I respond. His brows scrunch as he thinks back. "May be 1998 or 1999. Before that *Pyaar Toh Hona Hi Tha* was one film that we co-produced, but technically, yes I think, not 2000, but it was a little earlier." 'You were in that crazy schedule of working so many films', I defend myself. "But by that time, I had reached a point where I did cut down. I was doing three to four films a year by then." Ok. Getting back to the point, what was Ajay's agenda when he started his production house then, and what was it now? I'm surprised at this response, "I don't know. At that

"When I am on set, I am not there as a director, but as a director's actor, and I follow the director completely."

> “There are so many films which you know when you start, that you’re in a mess. And you can’t walk out of it because the producers going to be hung-up very badly.”

point of time, the first film we did was the one my dad wanted to make and he was directing. That was *Hindustan Ki Kasam,* and one was *Dil Kya Kare*. I remember that. I don’t remember which part of my body I had broken, I think it was my arm; because I’ve broken quite a few bones. (laughs) I was resting, lying down at home and Prakash Jha wanted to meet me, and he came over and narrated a script. I loved the script, it was very different. I said okay, there is one condition on which I will produce it. At that point of time, people never did those kind of films. I don’t remember any actor doing a *Takshak* or a *Zakhm* or a *Raincoat* or *Dil Kya Kare* for that matter. So I have always thought very differently in that manner. I think that was the reason I started *Dil Kya Kare* also.” So today, what was he looking at when he talked about his production house? “A great balance of good scripts, good films and commercial films, so both ways.” At least that is pretty clear. But when he debuted as a director, did he think he was ready? On hindsight? *Shivaay* was miles ahead on the chart today. Apparently he did, because he had started out as an assistant director, years before…That was even before he had started acting, right? He tells me some stuff I don’t know. Maybe not to many people do. “Yes. And in the process, I used to not act, I used to make my own films. I used to make my own films earlier too. Before I started with my own cameras and all, I made my own trollies and things like that. Today also, you ask whoever has worked with me. I mean technically, practically every department, I handle myself.” But the curse of knowledge can also be having to deal with lesser intellects. So did it sometimes come in

the way, when you know too much? He gets exactly what I'm hinting at, and grins, "No, I try to cut myself off when I am on somebody else's set. But yes, sometimes it irritates you." (laughs) Irritates you or irritates the rest, I needle. He's still grinning like a cat. "Nah, I don't interfere, so people don't realise it. But it irritates me sometimes."

Kajol and Ajay have seen 18 years plus of marriage, and that is one hell of a long journey. Different and unlikely as chalk and cheese, there are obviously reasons that have kept them together and still as alive in the relationship as two decades ago. But for the guy that Ajay was, and the person he has become today, how did marriage to Kajol change his professional life and approach? It is a big thing, and he's fully aware of how life-changing it was for him, as he talks about one of the best things that happened in his life. "I don't know about the professional approach, but personally, it made me more responsible. You know how brash we were and what all we did. Marriage just made me more responsible," he acknowledges. For sure, Ajay had sown his wild oats before he settled down. He was always sought after by the ladies, especially post *Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam*, since, he was viewed as perfect husband material. The same time that Kajol entered his life. And he walked down the aisle with her. But he chuckles, "Yes. And good we started all that when we were 15 and 16 years old…when we were young, there was no virtual reality or digital space to record and recall all of that. And apart from that, what also happens is, you know, if you start everything early, you have done everything by the time you are ready to settle down. Otherwise people settle down and start doing things, you know, later in life." He laughs. By this time then, it's been there, done that? I pose. He smiles benignly, "Yes, it's like, now you smile at people who are doing it."

> "Out of a 25 year long career, there are just two or three years I haven't given a hit."

In his chequered career, were there any lasting regrets about work not done, stuff that didn't come Ajay's way, or that came his way and that he rejected? Or even something that he wanted to really do, but couldn't? Mr Letting Go in play again. "I never regretted it. There are lots of films which I have refused, and which were done by other actors and were super-duper hits and which made them big-stars also. But I never regret them, because that was not meant for me, it was meant for somebody else. There must be a reason that I refused that film." One doesn't attribute philosophical stuff to Ajay, but sure, his state of being is nothing but a continued state of evolution in a deeply materialistic world.

Ajay's relationships with his directors has always seemed great, since a lot of them end up repeating him, like Milan Luthria, Prakash Jha, Ramgopal Varma. Ajay himself has never been sold on the PR angle. So what was it? Would Ajay define himself as a director's actor, especially since he is both, a director and an actor? He absolutely is, as he accedes, "Yes, but when I am on set, I am not there as a director but as a director's actor, and I follow the director completely. And so many times I know things are going wrong, I try to bargain with them that you know I don't think this is working. And eventually, either they agree or they want to go their way, because two people cannot make a film. It is one person who makes a film. So then I let it be but I know it is not going to work." Wise that. But also lack of ego. Rare. Because that still means that the directors end up keeping their respect for Ajay. "Yes, because that's an understanding. And if you're an easy person to work with, they know that I will only say something when I really mean it, or not say anything." And as a director, how open was he, when he was at the receiving end? He did say he was easy-going, didn't he? "You should be open to all suggestions, like I am. And all my directors have been open to suggestions too. It's not a problem." This is also something that people who've worked with Ajay vouch for. The fact that he hears everybody out who has something to say while working on his film, with a complete lack of ego. And then proceeds to do what he deems best for the film.

Ajay started out with action, and then the descriptive of 'intense' got attached to him. Especially post *Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam*. Was he comfortable with all these appendages or did he have to fight to come out of them? Ajay insists, "I never bothered about them. I think I have been very lucky that people said that I was very intense or he is an action hero. Then I did a lot of comedies which also worked. I don't think any term is associated with me anymore, or all are, which is good." Good if it is, and good if it isn't…. and his viewpoint over the years, if he had to look at it in progression, was it that of an actor or that of a director? "I think both ways, and I would say both ways. But as a director, I try to attempt films which come deep from the heart. If you recall *U Me Aur Hum*, people didn't understand Alzheimer's, but the film did well overseas. I could show you the responses of people who connected big-time with the film. But yes, Alzheimer's is something which was close to my heart. Again, it was a husband-wife love story which had a very deep thought. My father suffered it as well and that is where the thought came to me from.

When I made *Shivaay* also, people talked about technicalities, the way I shot the films, and all that. But if you see the emotions of a father and a daughter, they come from very deep down inside. So the technical part is all well,…but"… that was deep for Ajay, the emotional stoic to share. Which he did with the world. And so somewhere, he was digging into the well of life to bring out the deepest emotional aspect. He agrees vehemently, "Exactly, maybe the thought process also. If you see *Shivaay,* it is so beautiful, I can show you letters and notes from children and fathers. In my daughter's school too, one of the teacher's daughters wrote me a letter and she had a few questions about the film.
She loved the film and she said, 'I hugged my father all the time while watching the film and I was crying.' This was the kind of reaction I wanted, and this is what I got." It is obviously a proud time for Ajay, the film that he dreamed about, made and showed the world! So what was *Shivaay* a culmination of in Ajay's life? It seemed to mark the fructification of a certain period of his professional life. A milestone. Why did I feel that? Ajay is on a roll, it has been a giant leap for him, and an avalanche of a journey- the making of *Shivaay*. He admits, "I'm in the emotion of what I felt for my daughter, that's what comes

> "Today is the time when everything needs to put out there. But I'm not the kind of person who has to put everything out there."

out in *Shivaay.* And for me, it's the reaction and the way it has taken forward the quality of filmmaking in our country which people think is not possible. And that's what I've always attempted. The first CG (Computer Graphics) in the country was done by me. There are so many things which I was the one to start. I mean in animation and all, even right in the early years. I was also the first one to use Panavision."

So how does Ajay choose his films? Especially the ones he wanted to direct? Which story to tell? Does Ajay go looking for the script or did scripts come to him? He's very earnest (trying not to make it mushy) when he answers. All this talk of *Shivaay* has made him that. "I choose them from my heart, if I connect with the character, most of the times I do that. Sometimes we, the set of us, our generation, we are a little foolish, we get emotionally, I won't say carried away, but we have done a lot of films in our career which we have done for the sake of helping somebody, realising that the film will not work. But you still go out

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and do it. And now you realise that doing something like this doesn't help anybody. Not even the producer. Maybe he is a close friend and if he is in a financial crisis, help him out in a different way; because you spoil your career and you are also damaging the person who you are doing the film for. Out of 100 of my films, there must be about 50-60 odd films at least that I have done just for relationships, without asking what the script is. But now, no more. And when I direct, I don't go looking for stories. It's always the thought, the emotion behind it, and then you weave it maybe, into a story. Like in *Shivaay,* it was the father-daughter relation that was the driving emotion. To what extent can a parent go to protect his or her child? That was the emotion I picked up and wove a script around."

I enjoyed Ajay's previous film a great deal. That was also my favourite genre. So I tell him that *Drishyam* was a fabulous film. And it raised two thoughts in my head. a) What was Ajay's takeaway from that film? And b) I could totally see him directing a film like that. Hadn't he thought of that?. I've finally shown good taste. Ajay beams as he admits, "I loved that script too. My thought with that film when I did it was, I hope it works. Which it did. No, but my concern and my problem was that the image you carry sometimes, other than getting beaten up, is difficult for the public to accept sometimes. When I would shoot for films, a lot of people on the sets would say, *isse ek thapad marvado*, *isse kuch* action *karvado* and stuff like that. And in *Drishyam*, we decided not to do that." I thought the unexpressed violence in the film was more heart pounding than any action play-out.

Kajol and Ajay keep their professional lives separate. Had there ever been an overlap of opinions and disharmony in the work that each one did, from the other? "No. And if there has been also, you know the best part is that we never discuss work…we never at all discuss work at home." Didn't work become their dinner-table conversation?. When they said,'How was your day?', *toh aap kya karte ho?,* I asked. "*Aisa kabhi hua hi nahi…aur* generally *kabhi kuch* interesting *hua hota hai, toh hum baat kar lete hai…* We don't ever talk about what is happening. She doesn't even know that right now I'm doing a photo-shoot or interview…she just called me some time back asking, are you home? I said no, I'm out. In the evening I'll tell her that I was at a photo-shoot." I'd dearly love to be a fly on the wall when this couple talks!!

Kajol is also a part of Ajay's production house. But Ajay's production house in that sense,

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stayed very low key, like he did too. He didn't think today, the time was when everything needs to be put out there? He's sporting a half-sardonic smile at my choice of words. "Yeah, but I'm not the kind of person who has to put out there. People will know. If I give you a list, there are so many technical things I've introduced to this industry, and I don't want any degree for it. It's just because I'm a part of this industry, and why not? I just also wanted to be true to myself, I can't understand why we keep looking up at Hollywood. We can do things ourselves. The only thing that you need is to put in some hard work."

What he was saying, again made me think of two things, like Ajay as an actor and a creative person, speaking in two different spaces. And all these kinds of thoughts actually seemed to run quite fluidly. "It comes very comfortably…" he concedes, "I really feel that you give me anything, and I can show to you that anything is possible" So one side of his persona didn't intrude in the creative space of the other. I meant, all the inner stuff that he was talking about, that production space came very naturally. That persona didn't interfere in his acting space at all? "No, it doesn't at all. As I said earlier, sometimes, I get a little irritated, but I keep it to myself." That's as far as his professional life went. As a father, an actor, whose children were getting older…how much of Ajay's work and his profession did they understand? "My son has just started understanding that I'm an actor. I make films." And was he a hands-on parent? "Yes.

> "What being a director fulfils in me that being an actor doesn't, is that I can say what I want to, the way I want."

I am, and I would like it to be that way. I technically work for eight hours, no work on Sundays." But did Ajay feel at any point, that because he was working so much, he had missed out on any part of their childhood? They've just had a New Year holiday together, but he says, "During the two years of making *Shivaay,* I did. But the best compliment I got from my daughter was after that. She's entered her teens already. She kept telling me 'You were never there in these two years. Earlier you were always there, and you're always so busy.' But when she saw the film…She came up to me after seeing the film, hugged me and she said, 'Now I know what you were doing for two years, and I'm very proud of you."

Nysa certainly sounds like a kid quite likely to follow in her pa's footsteps. A very mature understanding. But Ajay jas promises to keep and miles to go yet, if his own path has to be followed. As the stakes get bigger in the commercial market, is it not easier to make smaller films, like his production *Parched.* His preoccupation will be his production house for some time now. "No. Right now actually, we are doing a lot of films. Our production house is targeting and has locked around eight to nine films which we've been working on over the scripts, in the last three years. They'll be going on floors soon. Nearly four or five films will go on floors this year. There are two Marathi film units also. So there are small films, there are big films, there are actors from outside. There's a film which I am also doing. I'm working on the script of my next

directorial which is not immediately this year, but for later." He reveals. And will Ajay be directing other actors in his films? "Maybe in the future, yes. If I get a script which I would enjoy more directing another actor, I guess I will do it." And was there a wish list at this stage in Ajay's career yet? Were there directors that he wanted to work with still? "No really. I don't think like this." And if some crazy fabulous director came his way, then?" Of course, I will work."

In all this, Ajay came across as someone who enjoyed directing more. Was that true? He beams, "I told you, it comes like sleep-walking to me. I can." And what did that aspect (being a director) fulfil in Ajay that being an actor didn't? He's always taciturn and this makes me smile, "I can say what I want to the way I want…Nice way." When Ajay came in, he was a *lambi* race *ka ghoda*. Talking now, sitting back in his producer's chair, who's the talent that he appreciated in the current date? Did he see them 25 years down the line? Was that even possible for today's kids? He says quite admiringly, "From the new generation? I do, because I really feel that today's kids are prepared. We came in unprepared because as you know, we didn't take our career seriously. These kids don't get those kinds of chances. But the people who have come in now, they are all way more prepared. They know every aspect of filmmaking. They give it so much. They give it 100 per cent. We never gave it a 100 per cent. We are actually learning from them. You had a blast on the sets also. We are changing because of them I guess… So I think they are all talented. And common sense is very important in any specific talent of standard. I think it is very important for a performer…acting is not rocket science, where you feel that you have to understand things. So the most important thing is common sense, and today's generation I think because they are more educated and with things like these, they have so much exposure. I think they are all very well prepared."

The year gone by seemed definitely jinxed for celebrity couples as many called the curtains on their relationships. And in these numbers, Farhan's split from Adhuna Bhabani, his wife of 16 years came as a tremor. Apparently, the beautiful and now-at-the-peak-of-her-career doll Shraddha Kapoor, is speculated to be the reason behind the former couple's relationship going sour. Farhan and Shraddha came together in 2016 for their film *Rock On 2,* and ever since, rumours of their alleged torrid relationship started doing the rounds.

Insights of the events which occurred in the recent past reveal undeniably the fact that these two love birds have been soaking in each other's love. Post his separation from his estranged wife Adhuna, the *Milkha* of Bollywood survived unaccompanied in his huge Carter Road, Bandra nest.

SURELY UNSURE!

In Bollywood, relationships are very fragile and one has to handle them with extreme precaution. It becomes almost unmanageable to escape the snooping eyes of the media and paparazzi, especially when you are a Bollywood figure. This interval, the *Rock On 2* pair SHRADDHA KAPOOR and FARHAN AKHTAR have been the central couple the polaroid flashes have been shone upon. They are rumoured to be in a deep relationship for some time now. We try and scrutinise and analyse this clear, yet blurred tale about their alleged affair.

Words **GAYATRI NIRMAL**

However, this unaccompanied charmer soon had a regular visitor in the form of a companion, maybe more than that. The mate as we all know, was none other than Shraddha Kapoor. Apparently, the damsel was spotted entering Farhan's house late one midnight, only to make an exit at the crack of dawn the next day. Despite, the media glare and stories of their relationship being the *chatpata* topic over *chai* or coffee, Farhan and Shraddha have always pretended to be barely affected by it. They probably have a great time together, reason enough for them not to pay heed to the grist mills.

While the entire nation and Bollywood brought in the first dawn of the New Year with friends and family partying together, this alleged couple spent the New Year's Eve beside each other at Farhan's love-nest. Shraddha Kapoor checked in around late evening to celebrate the ringing in of the New Year. The duo was spotted getting cosy too that night, revealed a source.

The actress, in an earlier interview to a daily, had said, "I am a demanding girlfriend because I will want to keep talking to that person, keep messaging him, and I will want to keep meeting him." Possibly, this is the reason we keep spotting her at Farhan's residence almost every day.

Prior to the New Year's incident, the internet was flooded with reports of Shraddha migrating to Farhan's house for a live-in. Post which, reportedly, the famous on-screen antagonist, daddy Shakti Kapoor, stormed to Farhan's and rescued his darling daughter from Farhan's attention, with just a glance, quelling all the fight in the obedient daughter, who followed her daddy home like a lamb. Daddy dearest was rumouredly accompanied by *maasi* Padmini Kolhapure. These reports spread like wildfire. On the other hand, one round of reports read that Shakti Kapoor came to his princess' rescue, and rubbished these baseless rumours, joking that they had a loud laugh reading these gossipy tales, which had no head or toe on their own standing. He further revealed that his daughter wasn't comfortable sleeping over at other people's homes. Speaking to a daily, he asserted, "She has three houses, one of which has been gifted by me. She is a home bird; I don't really remember Shraddha sleeping out, even if it

was late night or early morning. She always comes back home. She is not comfortable sleeping in other people's homes."

He further clarified that Shraddha was not dating Farhan, and respected him as an individual and an actor. "I don't think she is in a relationship with Farhan. Shraddha tells me everything, and has never told me anything about this. She respects Farhan a lot."

Papa Kapoor has to realise that we have stepped into 2017, and however much transparency the parents and kids share, there is something called an individual's privacy, where the children do not allow their parents to invade their private territory. They might assume that everything is shared, but in reality, parents discover only too late that they barely know their children. Though Shraddha does not come into the category of a child (as in a young un), the fact that she shares nearly everything with her parents, is a sign of an obedient child.

However, reacting to the same reports, the *Ok Jaanu* actress said to a daily, "I got a message from someone telling me about this article, and initially, I was amused. While it doesn't make a difference to me because I know it's not true, it's sad that these false stories go so far that people forget we are human too. Of course, we are actors and there will always be people who want to read gossip about us. But when it involves my father, my aunt and my co-star, it's taking it too far."

She went about her defense adding, "Well, I was even linked with Aditya Roy Kapur for a while! Like I say, actors are linked all the time. But when family members are dragged into it, it's taking it to another extreme." Talking about whether she'd enter into a live-in

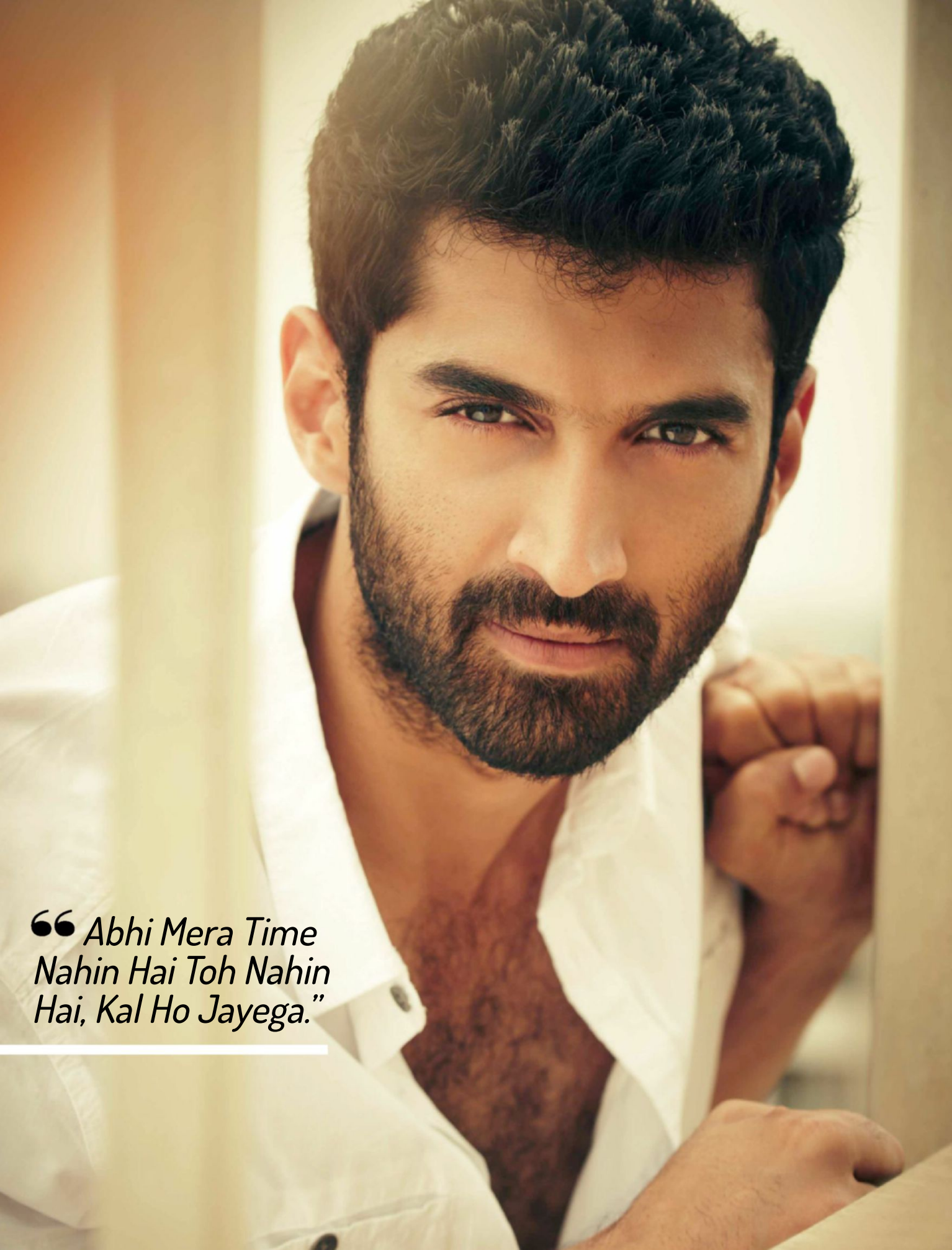
relationship, she said, "I was born and brought up in this (her parents') house. It's a joke within the family that I will bring my husband home. It's because I'm so happy living with my family. I have a house of my own where I have my meetings and keep my extra stuff. I have no intention of moving out of my parents' home and moving into my own apartment, let alone someone else's! About live-in relationships in general, I believe in live and let live. If it suits somebody and someone is happy, it's totally fine. To each his own."

While Shraddha has publicly spoken about her and Farhan's alleged relationship, Farhan has always adopted denial mode, to make any comment on it. However, he did once say that he didn't want to give such people more fodder. His words, "They can write what they want to, my life is going on the way it's going. You end up taking such things in your stride and don't worry about taking such battles to their logical conclusions."

Nonetheless, adding fuel to fire, and supporting the aforementioned episodes was the fact that Shraddha and Farhan were spotted dirty-dancing on the dance floor at the *Baaghi* success bash, soon after Shraddha's family left the venue, as reported by a daily newspaper.

Well, there are many such instances that were not just smoke without fire. The Coldplay concert in the city a couple of months back, saw the couple stick together all through the concert, and their off-screen chemistry grabbed some attention at the venue. After the concert, the two arrived at Shah Rukh Khan's Mannat for an after-party.

By the way, not many people remember that in her first *Koffee with Karan* interview, Shraddha mentioned that she would like to go on a romantic date with Farhan Akhtar if she got a chance. So what are they waiting for? Shraddha and Farhan make a cute couple. Whether they admit to them being in a relationship, or not, we say *Pyaar kiya toh darna kya!* Or else if you can't stand the fire, don't get into the kitchen.



“Abhi Mera Time Nahin Hai Toh Nahin Hai, Kal Ho Jayega.”

A Gem IN DISGUISE

It's time for this lad to grow a stubble and pop the bubble. ADITYA ROY KAPUR should certainly opt for a gray role instead of playing the hero who's romancing his lady-love while singing in the rains. He is passionate about his work, but he also tends to get very choosy, which doesn't always work in his favour. His cinematic outings may not have been praised, but we all know what a promising actor he is. A hit or a flop doesn't make or break an actor's career, his acting abilities do. Look at your clock..., his time is coming soon.

Words **NAZIFA CHARANIA**

When a film doesn't do well at the Box-Office, how much does that failure take a toll on an actor? How do you wake up on a Saturday then, when you get to know if the film is doing well or not?

Sometimes, you're in denial till Monday. Sometimes, films pick-up after several days, the strangest of things happen. You go through a phase of introspection and try to wonder what it is that went wrong There are so many processes that go into making a film, sometimes you don't find the answer, but it's important to introspect. It's not that a film doesn't do well because of one reason and does do well because of another. As an actor, you can be truthful to yourself and know where you have gone wrong. It's also important you don't beat yourself up about it, maybe other people have had a part to play in it. Sometimes you play with your sense of belief. For an actor, it's an insecure profession by nature, because you don't know where your next job is coming from. You have to be called up by someone to be employed. It can sometimes play with your sense of self-confidence, but it is important to have this belief in yourself, and if you know you've given your best, then that's all that you can do. Right now, we have done all that we could do, now it's out of our hands, the film has done how it had to. But it does hurt eventually.

Your on-screen chemistry with Shraddha in *Aashiqui 2* was great, which has set an image in the minds of audiences. What was different about your roles in *Ok Jaanu*?

I think by virtue of what kind of film it was, *Ok Jaanu* was very different from *Aashiqui 2,* and that was very exciting, and one of the reasons for both of us to do the film. We felt like we won't be repeating ourselves. Shraddha and I have always shared a good camaraderie off-screen, we share a good sense of humour. We felt it was nice film to explore that side of our equation. Just by what the subject is, it's a very different kind of film. It's a love-story, but it's not dealing with the deeper or darker side of love. It deals with different shades of love. We didn't have to think in terms of doing things differently, the script demanded that it happen differently or organically.

Don't you think all films use the same promotion strategies?

I can write a book on promotions, I think we can be more creative in the way we promote our films. It has become a template of sorts, and I think it can get monotonous for us and for people as well. I believe it needs a bit of a rethinking and finding out how effective it is.

PHOTOGRAPHS: ROHAN SHRESTHA

It of course, builds awareness, but we have to be able to realise what really makes a difference and promote different films differently. I would rather be promoting right now, otherwise, honestly, when I'm at home, I will think about what I am doing, or that I'm not doing enough for my film. But the effectiveness of it is up for debate.

You have always been seen playing the *aashiq* in all your films? Will we see you playing a gray role?
I would love to experiment with different genres. I would love to do an action film, I have grown-up watching action films. I would love to pick-up a gun and shoot the bad guys and take the girl. I would love to do an out-and-out comedy. I don't want to restrict myself and think I am a romantic hero right now, and not experiment. I am at this stage in my career where I should experiment as an actor, I would like to do different stuff. But I still do believe that this role for me is actually, something I have never done before. The last three films that I have done have been very particular and different types of characters. In the capacity of a leading man, I have never done a light-hearted romantic film. I feel this might be something new.

You were brilliant in *Dawat-e-Ishq* and *Action Replay*? Do you think you are not in a better position now, compared to Tiger Shroff or Ranveer Singh?
Absolutely. The last couple of films I did, haven't worked at the Box Office. You just have to hang in there, a lot of stuff changes every Friday. I started with three films that didn't do well because two biggest hits released in the same month, and then a couple of them didn't work. It's tough. You have to hang in there and believe in yourself and keep going. You also have to have wisdom to know, *abhi mera time nahin hai toh nahin hai, kal ho jayega*. I think patience is important.

> "Shraddha and I have always shared a good camaraderie off screen."

We don't see you much on-screen, why are you coming out with just one film a year?
I also want to see myself more on screen. Honestly, I would like to work more because I am the happiest when I am on a film set. That's when life takes care of itself for me. But I think I need to start liking more scripts, maybe I am too choosy. Maybe I tend to jump into it, to make something out of it, even if it's 60 per cent there. You can't find the perfect thing every time.

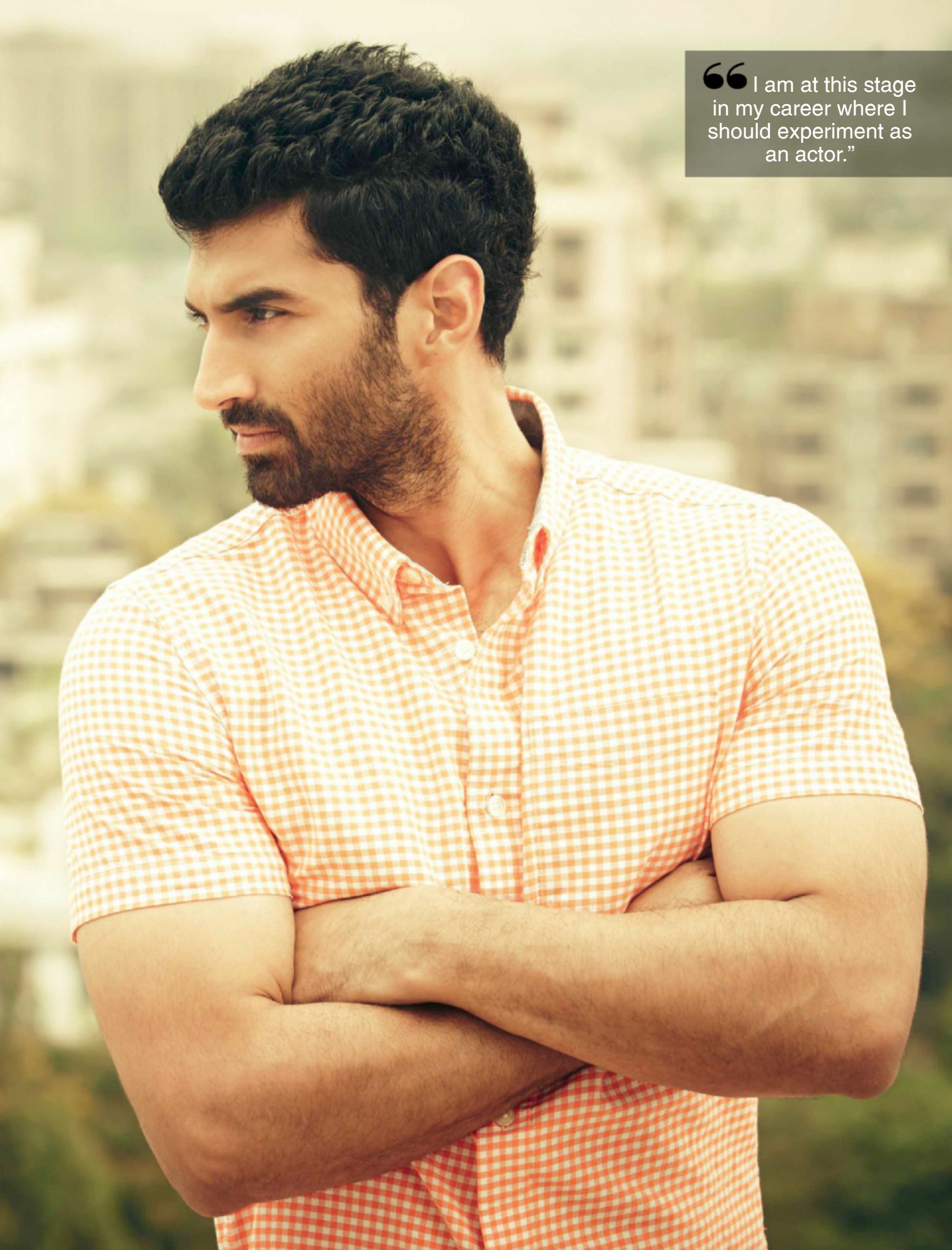
Are you also exploring music?
I play the Guitar and write songs.

Was your pairing with Shraddha in *OK Jaanu* planned in terms of getting the super-hit *jodi* back? Or was it co-incidence?
Firstly, it happened because Shaad Ali (the director) felt that he saw both of us in those roles. Then I think maybe it was an added attraction because we had a hit film before. Whenever you have a couple that has worked on-screen, it adds value. The way Shaad thinks that he spoke of, when the film was in early stages of culmination, he spoke more about how he felt we were right for the roles.

Did you two get an offer of coming together again on-screen post *Aashiqui 2*?
We did, but it didn't feel the same as it felt for this film. This was the right one.

How was your experience working with Naseeruddin Shah? He himself is a school of acting.
When we used to go on sets, we used to feel we are going to school (laughs). He would come on sets absolutely prepared, he had completely done his work. Just by the things he would say, we would be like, 'Oh God, he knows everything that's going on and what the scene is about.' Also, he was aware that as younger actors, we are in reverence and might be intimidated by him, which might work against the film or the scene. So he would try and make us comfortable and just get us to ease up because he felt like that would affect the scene. He would make us feel relaxed and talk to us. He helped us out and that was great.

Do you have dancing feet or did Vaibhavi Merchant train you a lot for the super-hit *Humma Humma* track?
Luckily, I had gone for the Dream Team world tour to America, I had done a lot of dancing for that. That was my first stage performance, I was very nervous. I rehearsed a lot for it and that was a big opening for me. If I am going to be an actor in the industry, I have to make peace with it and enjoy every aspect, so it was very good for me. And I came from there into this song. I was already warmed up in a way, so when I got this I went into it faster than I would have earlier.


“I am at this stage in my career where I should experiment as an actor.”

What's Cooking,

When success and fame come your way, what remains is the decision to settle down in life. So it is with Bollywood's best fashionista, SONAM KAPOOR, who has allegedly found the love of her life, but is hesitant to narrate her tale. Are they just dating or is she going to tie the knot with her beau? Nazifa Charania wears the Sherlock hat and investigates.

Good Looking?

Our *Khubsoorat* actress is undeniably on a roller coaster ride with hard-won success finally along her side, and whose company she is enjoying in all its glory. Sonam Kapoor started her journey into tinsel town with the best director, but in a film that didn't make a mark at the Box-Office. However, Ms.Kapoor certainly overwhelmed the audience in her very first appearance on the silver-screen. She proved that she wasn't just a star-kid with a glamorous face, but also one of the brightest talents to look out for in the years to come. Last year, after giving an outstanding performance in her block-buster hit *Neerja,* she has proven her strengths and versatility, and slayed her detractors with the fact that she isn't just, adornment in a frame. Give her any role

you want, and she will take the projection of her character to a level that's unreachable.

Not just in Bollywood, but this diva has also made her name in the world of fashion across the globe. Known for her extravagant and impeccable style statement, she is taking over the industry in vogue. Over the years, she has garnered immense acknowledgement for her performances, but has never had a director who could bring out her fount of passion and skill to effect. Ram Madhvani did. And the rest, as they say, is history. Sonam Kapoor has had a fabulous year, and has been in the news for her excellent work in Neerja, a role that brought her indifferent career to a soaring crescendo. Sonam was the flavour of the awards season, sweeping them all, and justifiably so. She got all the more lucky as the fairy of fortune kissed her feet last year. It seems like the halo of love is shining as bright as the glitter in her twinkly eyes. Sonam's personal life also grabbed eyeballs last year, as she has given her heart in the hands of her apparently rumoured beau Anand Ahuja, a successful businessman who owns a fashion label called 'Bhane', whose outfits this lady flaunts proudly at events and elsewhere. The law of attraction states that opposites attract. But in this case, they have broken the law in the most modish manner, as a fashion diva gets attracted to the owner of a fashion label. Together they can undoubtedly be the most in-vogue couple in the industry.

Sonam has stated that if asked about her love life outright, she wouldn't like to reveal any details. She has been in the industry for almost a decade now, and prefers to keep the books of her personal life closed for the outside world. There was also a point where this glam-doll denied everything, calling them rumours. But her pictures on social media

spilled out all the flavoured beans of her love life. And that radiant smile that comes through as she holds Anand's hand, cannot go unnoticed. The two have been spotted at various private parties, events and also found holidaying together. As per online reports, Anand Ahuja was also a part of Daddy Anil Kapoor's 60th birthday celebrations in London, just before Christmas. When families are involved, it definitely is more than just dating. Need one say more? Love is an expression that can't be hidden. And if attempted, comes out as a sometimes naughty, sometimes moony smile and sparkle in the eyes, that one cannot lie about, like is the case with Sonam. She has now become a tad open about her relationship, but certainly hasn't entered into the acceptance zone for the public as yet. We think what this diva is doing is absolutely right, as for an actor, his/her first priority is for their work to be noticed and be the talk of the town, regardless of the highs and lows of their personal lives.

We don't know what turn this love story will take in the future, but from what is to be seen, looks like the two should certainly be seen tying the knot. According to reports, these fashion lovers have been together since a year now. On an aside, Anand Ahuja must be quite something, because Sonam is an actress of extreme grace as well as intimidating intelligence, and can make lesser men quake. We wish well for the duo and hope that Sonam Kapoor's personal life blooms as beautifully as her professional life. But *cherie*, when Cupid's bow strikes, the arrows are not meant to hurt. Why hide love? Sonam certainly hasn't fallen, but is rising in love.

A STAR IS BORN

Every success has a story and hers will soon be one, for she is not here to fit in, but rather to stand out. She has a filmy background, no backing, after her grandmother Usha Kiran bid farewell to the silver screen. SAIYAMI KHER was in awe with starry dreams coursing through her veins. And to accomplish them, she has set en route in the flamboyant by-lanes of B'town. Mind you, she is not just a pretty face, but a sports person, and an accomplished actor. Nawaz Kochra brings to you Saiyami verbatim, about films, the future and the fancies of film town.

As I sit to pen this article, I wonder how much the subject of this interview is different. She is not the quintessential urban girl, but someone who has led a rudimentary life in Nasik, amidst the beauty of nature, far away from the materialistic winds of Mumbai. But 2016 couldn't keep this *gaon ki gori* away from her destiny, and she had her dream launch at the movies. Saiyami Kher is the girl who, not just me, but everyone in the industry is talking about. Yes, she is beautiful and her eyes are captivating, but her talent is overpowering. As we sit down to chat at her cosy residence, I don't feel I am at an actress's place. There is no Man Friday, and it's Saiyami who serves me water, before I ask her how her life has changed post *Mirzya*. And with a pleasant smile she replies, "Life post *Mirzya* has been great. Pre *Mirzya* also it was great, but now, it is a little different, in the sense that I am stopped and recognised now, when I go to run in the mornings. Besides that, nothing has been drastically different." Not that the glamour world has been complete Latin and Greek to the girl. She was a model for Kingfisher Calender, but the dynamics of being and actress and a model are different and she continues, "There are very small changes, nothing big. Finally, when I come back home, I am the same person. But this whole awards season is a very new thing to me, so gearing up for that and dressing up, is something I have never experienced before." I must add that when she walked into the *Sansui Colors Stardust Awards*, she stunned everyone with her beauty and freshness. Seated in the second row, the crowds craned their necks to look at her, cheer for her, and the cameras constantly panned on her. Saiyami continues to speak on her new life as an actress, "Otherwise it is all the same, my friends treat me just as badly and my family treats me like they did earlier", she said. Her last statement made for a good reason to laugh.

Her simple roots never made her attend a proper academy to learn her craft, but she trained with Adil Hussain and his mentor Dilip Shankar, who have the rich background of the National School of Drama (NSD). While she shares

“I Get Very Entertained Hearing Rumours About Me.”

> “Very rarely does a girl get to do anything in a film, very rarely are scripts written for a girl.”

this I ask her if, hailing from an upper-middle-class family, weren’t they sceptical about her entering showbiz? Moving forward, she corrects me, “No, I hail from a very middle-class family and I have grown up in Nasik.” I proceed to complete my question, since the profession demands huge investments and has no guaranteed returns, did her family support her career? And she says, “No returns, 100 per cent (laughs). I was not sceptical because my parents have been very supportive. Fortunately, I am not doing this to pay my bills, I have been lucky on that front. I really look up to girls who come from small towns, because even I come from a small town. They fend for themselves, pay rents and I really give them huge credit, because it is not as glamorous as it looks.” And she sat through the answering end in a red sweater and denim shorts, candid and truthful, unadulterated from the glamorous dust of Bollywood…

What advise does your family give you?
To keep at it, there is no substitute to hard work, so you keep working hard at what you are doing and keep improving yourself. That is your job, irrespective of things happening or not, so I keep getting lectured about this.

As you said, you come from a small town. But actors from small towns have become success stories in the past, it is just a matter of time. What do you think?
Is it so? I haven’t given that too much thought. I just feel very blessed that both, my sister and I were brought up in a small town, because we see much more to life. Our life doesn’t revolve around materialistic things, we have grown up amidst mountains and lakes, we have actually seen what a village is. Our house doesn’t have electricity for four hours in the day even today. So things like these, Mumbai kids don’t know. I feel, they are unaware of nature. And all that, somewhere, might help.

Saiyami was the child who helped her father at his restaurant since the age of 10, and the kid in her till date aspires to have a restaurant of her own, as she reveals, "I am a big foodie, so I would love to get rich someday and have a restaurant of my own. That has always been a dream. Rakeysh (Mehra) Sir and I always joked about it because he is also a big foodie." And we continue…

Today, we see a new talent entering Bollywood every other day. But the actual struggle begins after your debut is done in the industry. Do you agree?
There is a big struggle even before the debut (laughs). It is all a struggle and Ronnie Screwvala has written a very good book in which he said, 'At every point, there is always somebody struggling somewhere.' So I feel before the debut, the struggle is obviously different. After having such a dream launch, the whole packaging being so great, unfortunately, the film didn't do as well as we wanted it to. The struggle post this is different.

Are you getting offers left, right and centre?
I am getting quite a few offers, but I think the Box Office success of a film really depends on what kind of films you get offered. So, have I gotten offered a lot of films? Yes, I have. Have I loved them? Not really, which is why I haven't signed anything as yet. I am still waiting it out.

Are you concentrating more on quality, because it is only the second film that will say if you are a force to reckon with in the industry. Many newcomers end up choosing quantity over quality in the initial days.
Obviously, I will want to wait for something better, and which is why I feel that my first film has really spoilt me. It is just that there was a

> "I think the Box Office success of a film really depends on what kind of films you get offered."

lot to do. Very rarely does a girl get to do anything in a film, very rarely are scripts written for a girl. In the last three years, it has changed big time, but then the top 15 actresses are all vying for the same thing. Ideally, I feel there is a lot of work for everyone out there, which is also a good thing. But because my first film has spoilt me so much, I want to wait it out.

How far have you reached with the networking part?
That is something I really need to be better at, the whole digital media and PR machinery is so important. You need to constantly be out there. But somewhere, people fighting to sit in the first row at awards, is something I find very entertaining. I wondered if they seriously believed that you can get a film if you are seen sitting in the first row of an awards show. But maybe I need to improve on that.

Star kids are somewhere privileged. They do not have to struggle with making contacts. But as far as non-star kids are concerned, the actual struggle for them is to meet people in order to get a second film, right?
Fortunately for me, it's been easy because of Rakeysh Sir. He has got such a good reputation in the industry that if there is any filmmaker I want to get in touch

> “I wish I was on signing spree of films.”

with, or who I am very fond of and I want to meet, Rakeysh Sir has been there.

Were you disappointed with *Mirzya* not faring well?
Obviously, you want your film to make a lot of money because now everything is dependent on the money your film makes. But honestly, we made a film, and like you said that you already knew what the end was. But the truth is that when we went out to make the film, we knew this is what it is. So it is not like we failed in an attempt from what we had set out to make. I will always be proud of the film. Some films click while some don't, so *kya kare*?

You might find yourself at the losing end, since you have no connections or strong backing in the industry yet. And that could lead to some scepticism amongst industry people approaching you for work.
This is realistic, unfortunately. Each film has its flaws and advantages. Some films which are really bad go on to make a lot of money. Some films have their flaws, but then they don't do well, you pass it off. Box Office success will always determine you getting the next film. If you are not a star kid, it will be tougher, which I agree. But this is how it is. So then you work even harder, and if you feel that you are good enough, you will get work, like Kangana (Ranaut), just look at her career graph. She comes from nowhere, with no Godfather. She just kept at it, and today, she is the best in the country.

How was it working with Rakeysh Om Prakash Mehra, since he is known to be a hard taskmaster? In a sense, he must have also strengthened you to deal with the rest of the industry.
Oh yes, he actually has a reputation of being a taskmaster, but he has just spoiled Harsh (Harshvardhan Kapoor) and me rotten. And we keep talking about this. The impression people have of him is that he is very strict and unapproachable, but that is not at all the case. He is the opposite. On sets, he was constantly doing *masti*, and he doesn't look the sort but he has a really good sense of humour. He's very relaxed and he really pampers his actors. As an actor, it is your job, and so certain things you have to do. So in certain aspects, since it is your job, he is very straight-forward.

Even though we are making films on women's empowerment et al., as an insider, do you think Bollywood is liberated as far as the women are concerned or is it a male-chauvinistic industry?
It is 100 per cent getting better. But I'd say we are 10 per cent there, and still have 90 per cent to go, because it is still very male-dominated. That I have no qualms about saying. But it's getting better because we see films like *Neerja*, *Dangal*, *Dear Zindagi*, and *Pink* , which are more about the girls, which was unheard of 10 years ago.

You are very pretty and also talented, it looks like we have someone new to look up to, after Alia Bhatt. What do you say?
I am a big fan of Alia Bhatt. For me, there was this one filmmaker who I really like, we met and he narrated a script to me. I really want to work with him. But after hearing the script, I told him that he must wait for Alia's dates because she fits the part perfectly. So he said 'Are you crazy, why are you coming to me and telling me this?' I like Alia that much. I think I haven't liked anyone as much as her in a long time. She is where she is purely based on her acting skills, so I hope what you say is true in the future.

Who is your favourite director?
There is not just one filmmaker, there are too many - Imtiaz (Ali) Sir, Zoya (Akhtar), Sriram (Raghavan) Sir, Aanand (Rai) Sir, Ritesh Batra…, Rakeysh (Mehra) Sir was one of the many.

And amongst the actors?
I am huge fan of Mr Amitabh Bachchan, everyone in the country is. But it will be a dream to just

> The industry is still very male dominated."

be anything with him in the frame. He is an institution in himself and teaches you so much. And in the younger space, Ranbir (Kapoor) is someone I feel is phenomenal.

As a newcomer how do you react to rumours about yourself?
I get very entertained hearing rumours about me.

We heard you have replaced Alia Bhatt for a film. True?
This rumour and another one which I have heard. I wish I was on signing spree of films.

There was another rumour that you replaced Kriti Sanon for a film, and you were later replaced by Diana Penty. True?
Every morning I used to wake up to these things. I am generally anti-social, so I found it very entertaining. But it wasn't true at all. Now it is a job, so you go and meet producers and directors. But everyone you meet, you're not doing their film *na*. So in that sense, I have met Aanand Sir, Zoya and everyone, but that does not mean I am doing everyone's film. I wonder why it was written that I am doing Aanand sir's next film. I had long meetings with other directors as well, but unfortunately it is not true.

Tell us something more about your next film with Farhan Akhtar?
I haven't signed that film. Again, it was one of those rumours because I was seen in their office. But I am not doing that film, unfortunately.

Well, sooner or later things will roll out in the girl's favour, because her time is just about to begin. And before she tastes the fruit of success, she is carefully weaving the actor in her, into the cocoon. Dare we say, "Move over Alia Bhatt, make space, for Saiyami Kher is here!" |☆|

“Vanity Vans Do Not Excite Me, My Co-Actors Do.”

Little MISS. ALL-ROUNDER

Pushing the envelope is her hobby. While diversity of roles in her career makes her happy, she is one artist who has a little of Shakespeare and a little bit of Shah Rukh Khan in her. At the same time, she claims to be a die-hard Ranbir Kapoor fan, and expresses it with her emotions and expressions to the fullest "*screen par vo rota hai, ohoo, dil mera toota hai yaar!*". Shweta Tripathi is as quirky as her social media handle— *battatawada.* There is no way one cannot fall in love with this cutie-patootie. She is the tiny one with not-so-tiny dreams. Read on to know her adventurous tale.

Words **NAZIFA CHARANIA**

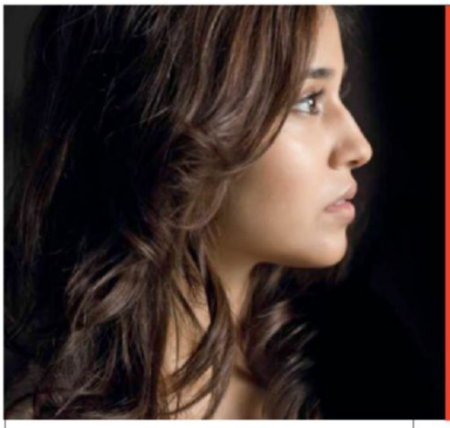
It was a breezy evening, as I headed to Juhu to see a very talented artist's performance in a kids' play at Prithvi Theatre. I stepped inside and luckily managed to grab a seat in the top-most row to get the best view ever. As the play began, my eyes were eager to see her on stage. In a fraction of seconds, the audience started clapping and the little ones were giggling, as this cute little *Sardar* made his entry saying '*Oh yaar ki kar raha hai*?' wearing a yellow *Kurta* and an orange *Pagdi*, Shweta Tripathi, could you get any cuter? *Paaji* truly was the high-point of the play. She was a bright mini-visual treat on stage. The play was an absolute delight to watch. After the show ended, all the happy little feet ran onto the stage to meet *Sooraj* (Shweta Tripathi) and also got clicked with her. I had to wait at the Prithvi Café while she chatted with every kid who approached her. Then she comes walking towards me and there is no single table for us to sit at, for everybody was enjoying their pizzas and shakes after the show. We decided to go to a café nearby, to follow through with my discovery of this petite actress. Knowing that she had worked at a magazine before, and was now doing movies, I was curious to know how her journey from a photo editor to a rising star panned out. "I really think that whatever happens, happens for a reason. There is so much I learnt when I was at the magazine. For an actor, it's very important to know how to behave in front of the camera, but it's also very important to know behind the camera *kya hota hai,* because of the things that go into the making. You start respecting and appreciating different departments, which I learnt when I was in the magazine. I used to co-ordinate for shoots and talk to photographers. I still remember my first fashion story as an intern, 'Silver is the latest trend'. I had called up Sophie Chaudhry, Priyanka Chopra and Preity Zinta. Preity was my favourite actress, so I was extremely excited to call her. I messaged them saying that silver is the colour of the season, and how do you think we should wear it. I took my job very seriously. But somewhere, my heart was always into acting, since I was a child. I just never accepted that this could also be a career option, because my father is an IAS

> As An Artist I Want To Be Everywhere, I Want To Explore Every Medium, Every Platform Possible."

officer and my mother is a teacher. *Toh kabhi socha hi nahi tha ki yeh bhi ek* option *ho sakta hai*. Nothing makes me happier than acting. I am so glad I'm doing theatre, web-shows, and my movie is going to release as well. As an artist, I want to be everywhere. I want to explore every medium, every platform possible."

She truly is a born actor, but at times, taking a very high-jump when it comes to changing your profession, can make one break into a sweat out of nervousness. Did she experience the same or was it exciting for her? "I didn't know how this industry works. All of us have heard stories, but I took one step at a time, and thankfully I have never had a sleazy or dirty experience. Yes, I have had a lot of frustrating days because I am very choosy about my work, and that requires a lot of patience. Even after *Masaan,* there were days where scripts were coming, but I don't want to settle for anything. I want to do a character that excites me. I want to wake up at four o'clock in the morning and shoot. So, I don't want to treat it as a job. I guess more than nervous, it was a hope that I get the projects I want to do. I like to mix it up so that it's good."

As I found out, she is a performer who loves to have multiple characters on her plate. I asked her what she enjoyed more, doing theatre or being in front of the camera, to which she smiled and said, "I really enjoy doing theatre, but I love being in front of



> *Agar Aap* Nawazuddin Siddiqui *Ke Saath Ek* Frame *Meh Ho Sakte Ho, Toh Aap Kisi Ke Saath Bhi Ho Sakte Ho."*

the camera, because the camera captures the moment. Even if I move my eyes, they will say a lot. In theatre, there is distance between the audience and you. But on camera, it depends upon the magnification. I think you can say much more through the camera, and this is a personal opinion. I'm sure a lot of people love theatre, but I just love being in front of the camera."
An artist who keeps switching his/her boots, gets varied responses because theatre and films are extremely different. So what responses seem fulfilling for her? "Theatre is live, you feel it and you can hear the laughter. *Masaan ki* screening *ke liye, hum baithte the sunne keliye, kya hua? Kaisa laga?* With theatre, it is spot-on. We had a show a few hours ago as well, so we were aware of which punches were working and which ones weren't. In theatre, you really grow with the same performance and same characters. In films, as you shoot, you keep getting deeper into it. Once the film is done, you break up with the character because then you won't be living that character ever again, and I want to keep that balance alive. I don't want to let go of anything, I am very selfish like that."

Coming to her latest project *Haraamkhor*, was she apprehensive before signing the film, as it revolves around sexual abuse? "Not at all. The story appealed to me, and I thought this was a very challenging role because the character was far away from me. It's younger than my age. Also, working with Nawazuddin Siddiqui, he is one of the most fabulous human beings I have ever met. It's about a 15-year-old girl who falls in love with a married teacher, and when you're 15, practicality and logic is not what you're thinking about. Nawazuddin Siddiqui has played the role of the married teacher. This girl has been neglected all her life, and finally when a man gives her attention, she feels special. And that is what draws her towards this person. In the bargain, if this is what she has to do, she gives in. So, sexual abuse for an outsider, I really hope people think like that. But in her head, it's not like that. She doesn't even know anything. We do things without realising what the implications are, she is in that phase."

Having bagged the opportunity to work alongside one of the finest actors of our industry, did she get any training from him on sets? "Nawazuddin Siddiqui made me feel superior, that's the reason I respect him so much. Never once did he make me feel I am in anyway inferior to him. All that made me more confident as an actor, because *agar aap* Nawazuddin Siddiqui *ke saath ek* frame *me ho sakte ho, toh aap kisi ke saath ho sakte ho*."

There is a difference in being an actor and a star. What does she aim to become in life? And the truth gets revealed "Being an actor, vanity vans do not excite me, my co-actors do. Even when I started, my goal wasn't to become a star, I always wanted to be an actor. I want to travel to all the International Film Festivals of the world and I want people to know me for my work. *Masaan* and *Haramkhor* travel to all the film festivals and people across the globe. People know me and know of my work, and that is creatively very satisfying. But people in the industry should definitely know me, that's my goal."

This actress is 31 years old, yes she is! She certainly does not look her age, so she's always found doing roles of 15 to 20-year-olds, not older. As an actress, is that a boon, or a curse - not looking her age? "Of course, I am very grateful for not looking my age, I swear. Because if I looked my age, *pata nahi kya* roles *mil rahe hote*."

She is a woman in her 30's slaying the roles of teens, open to explore and test her versatility to the fullest. All her movies have done well, some extremely so, as she is choosy, yet, very wise when it comes to taking up roles. She claims that she is waiting for a commercial pot-boiler and I believe that is the only project she needs now. She is all set to rock and roll and become one of the biggest names in the industry. It is indeed rare to see newcomers choosing quality over quantity, and with this approach, this power-house of talent stuffed in a small package is going places for sure. |☆|

I Want To Send A Post-Card Of My Complaints To Bollywood."

Quintessentially

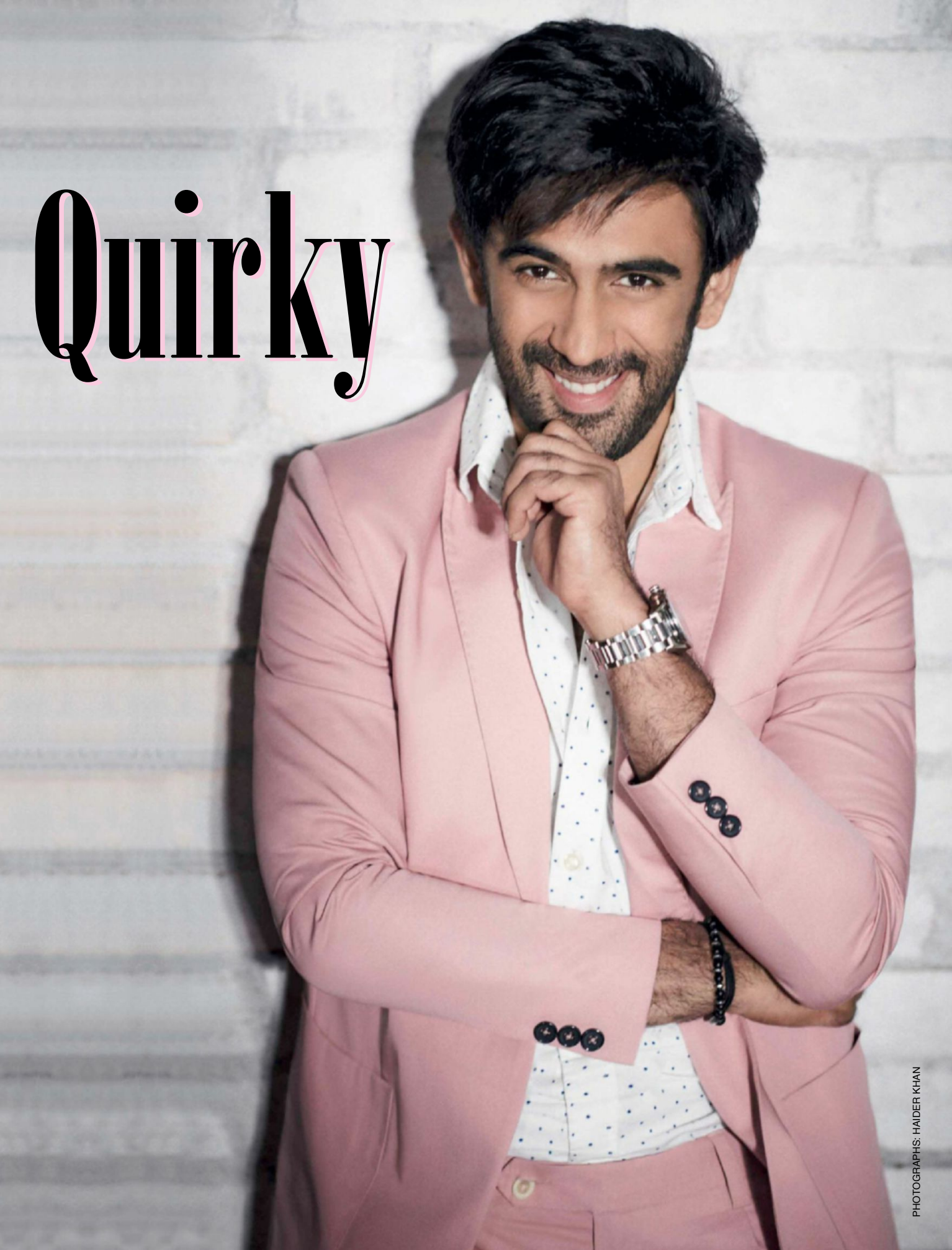
The Universe always has something in store for all its beings, like it did for AMIT SADH, who without any roots in Bollywood, came into showbiz, worked hard and is today reaping its fruit. I say this because of the impressive line-up the man had and still has, success for him is to be continued. It was an unusual day, two draining interviews in one day, but with Amit it was more than an interview. Our dinner that was jinxed for a good many months last year, had finally found itself a table under his roof, where we sat and talked about everything that evening. From his life post *Sultan*, to his aspirations, to the misunderstood him and a lot more…

Words **NAWAZ KOCHRA**

The world has called Amit arrogant and cocky, but those are just a few thin layers to his colourful personality. The man deep down is quite a gem, who if understood, can change the world with just his words. Sure, he isn't someone using tacky tactics to get famous, but he has proved his mettle with his work, to all those who belittled him. And when I thought that as an actor, he would have a strong aim to achieve, he said, "My aim is to continue working every day. I want to shoot every day, and that will give me everything. But there is no such aim, I am here to be an actor and I want to act. I want to get bigger and more challenging parts. I am very happy with what I have, people have been very generous, loving and supporting. I just hope I keep getting work, if that goes away I will die." And while he said that, he also mentioned how his friends called him philosophical. His aforesaid statement, made me agree with his friends, "Working everyday will give me stardom and stardust (laughs). There is not much difference between stardust and stardom, dust is ashes, you always rise from the ashes, and when a star is in the ashes, you don't see it. I am already a star, I am just in the ashes, and I will work each day to rise from it. Like the Phoenix always rises from there," he quipped. When I remarked on how arrogant his statement sounded, he said that I always made him say arrogant things, but cleared the air stating, "I am not an arrogant guy."

Amit Sadh is not arrogant. He is different; just like his outlook on life is. Not just his words, even the way he had done up his house said that. One of the walls in his guest room had a globe painted with wooden men climbing it with ropes. Two of them had bulbs and lit up, while the other two didn't. His explanation was that we all are climbing a mountain in life, which on one side has brightness, while the other side has darkness. The wall opposite had some pictures with hashtags, and his living room had pipes with bulbs and a huge wooden piece with boxer Mohammed Ali drawn on it. The passion that he had done up his den with, was an indication of how much he loved his life, which post *Sultan,* had changed quite a lot, "Life did change, it's a Salman Khan film *yaar*, the world saw it, more people got to know me, and my Facebook fan page got more followers. I painted my car. I decorated my house, so there has been a lot of change, physical, spiritual. I met more directors and I got more parts. I love this change," he said. And now with his few upcoming films, life was expected to change more for the good. Year 2017 started for Amit

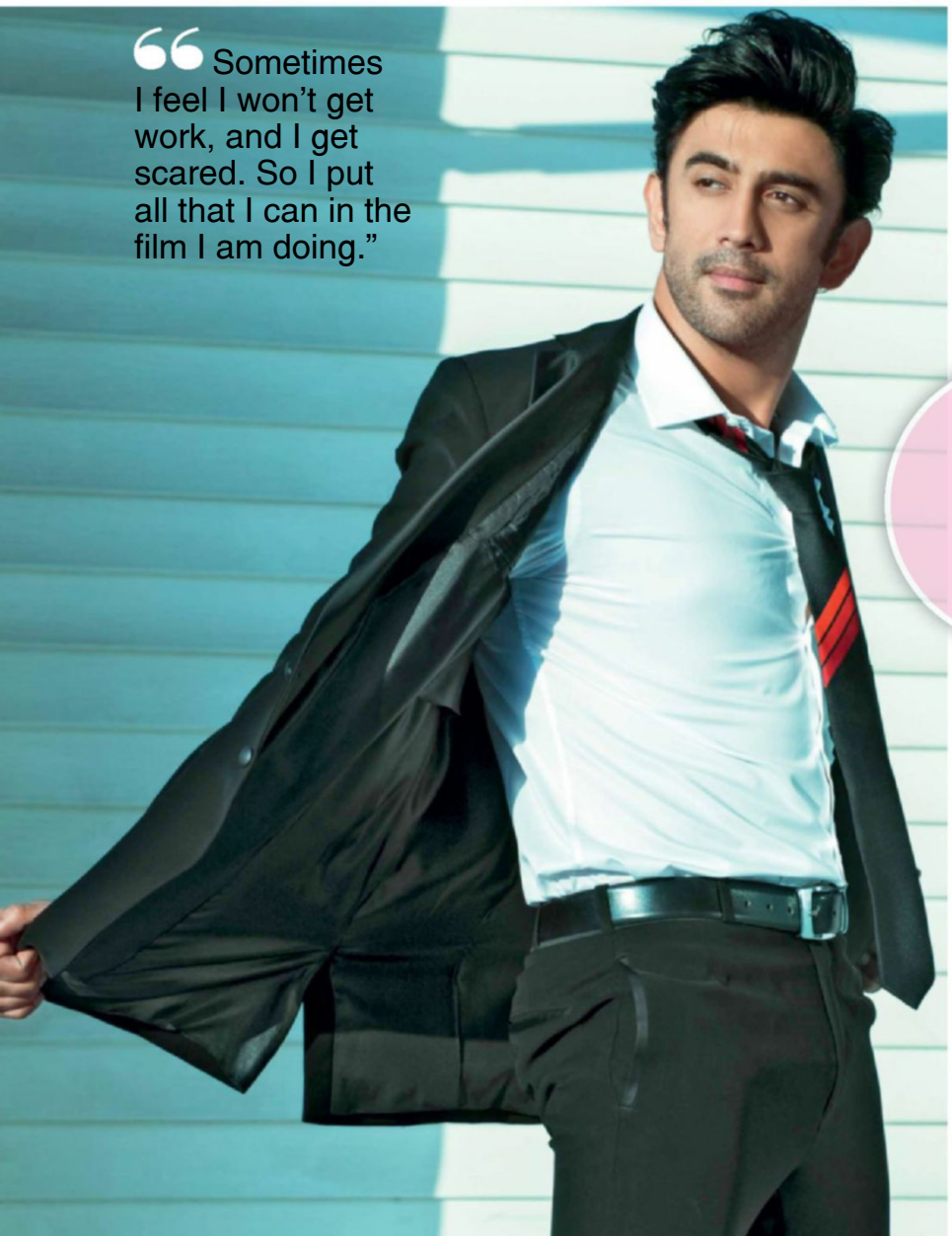
Quirky



PHOTOGRAPHS: HAIDER KHAN

on a good note, since his film that was stalled for three-four years will finally hit the screens this month. Content about the same, he replied how special that film was for him "*Running Shaadi. Com* is special because it was my first film after *Kai Po Che*, the first time I had a leading lady with me. The romance is very different, it is very young, juvenile and immature. May be, three to four years back, when I shot this film, it must have had an extension of me. And I think Bharose (his character) still has my soul, which seeks love, not just to get, but also to give." He continued with his revelation, "My soul is very psychotic. If I don't get to love anyone, I get perplexed. Form doesn't matter, the man-woman anatomy is a different thing. But I have a psychotic nature that I have to love and get loved, which is very difficult sometimes."

We proceeded talking, about him working in *Sarkar 3* with Amitabh Bachchan, which is every actor's dream that Amit had lived. He happily shared those moments, "I think it is beyond a dream, I had just met him once at Mehboob studios, where Shoojit Sircar was shooting and we just had a small interaction. Then, cut to *Sarkar 3*, I am in the same frame, breathing the same air as the legend, doing a scene and rehearsing with him. I don't know,



"Sometimes I feel I won't get work, and I get scared. So I put all that I can in the film I am doing."

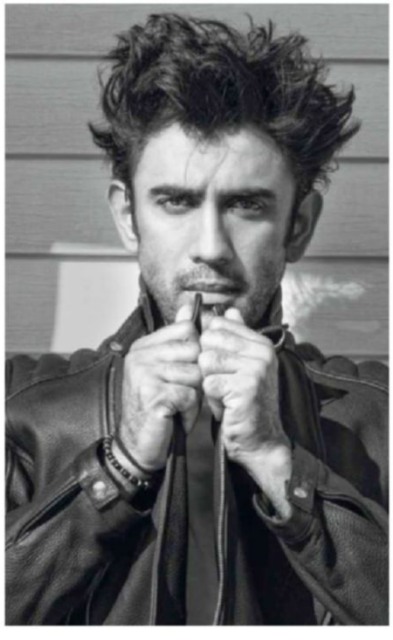
"My soul is very psychotic. If I don't get to love anyone, I get perplexed."

I am just blessed. Let's not go on about what I learned or observed, because that will take 10 more interviews to sum up what this man stands for, his exuberance, his excitement for his craft. It was just very inspiring for me to see him act." Amit is blessed, for his world is surrounded by very few and dear people, one of them is Imran *Bhai*, someone Amit highly regards. In fact, Amit says that Imran *Bhai* has done for Amit what his parents didn't do. And Amit wants to be reborn as Imran *Bhai*'s son in the next life. But first, he has to live this life to the fullest, while he explores various roles. Talking about one such role in *Yaara*, where he plays an older character and had to gain oodles of weight for it, Amit says, "I have no qualms about anything in life. But I will give you a very honest answer. When the decision was made and the process started, some well-wisher from the industry told me that my career was just started and so I shouldn't grow fat or else I won't get work. I was told that anyway, I am not counted as a hero." Almost convinced, Amit thought of giving up, but his conscience pricked him and he went ahead, "Imran *bhai* is my reflection so I told him that I am going to gain weight and may be this would be the last film of my life, so let's enjoy. And I ate for the entire population of China. When you see the film, you won't be able to recognise me. But I think the film has more than me gaining weight or not. That day, as an actor, I felt some strength in me", he explained. And continued, "On the last day of the film I had

> “I am already a star, I am just in the ashes, and I will work each day to rise from it.”

gained weight and I told Tishu (Tigmanshu Dhulia) Sir that I was scared, since I had become huge. He hugged me and thanked me for what I had done. I thanked him for the opportunity because I will never be able to feel like a fat man, understand his life or that part of the human body. And then of course, there was depression after that, and a lot of people started laughing, assuming that I didn't have work and because of that I had gained weight and underwent depression. Nobody knew that I did it for a film, but these things don't hurt me anymore, I like them. I am somewhere going through the journey of Charlie Chaplin. I like when people mock me and humiliate me. I like those people genuinely. I enjoy when people misinterpret and misunderstand, I think it is funny. It just helps pass your day, laughing and inspiring. I hope the film releases, it is a story of friendship, it is a good film and I believe in it. Everybody has done a great job in it, so we are just living in a lot of hope."

While he spoke about hope, I asked him how hopeful was he with his career, and Amit shed some pearls of wisdom, “Why would I limit myself, I can do anything? I want to be versatile. People kept telling me for last three years that I don't have a perception, but I think it's a blessing. Why have a perception?" But then was he satisfied with the career that he had up till now, did he have complains, if he did, why didn't he ever say? Amit replied, “No, I want to do more. In fact I have complained. I want to send a post-card of my complaints to



Bollywood. I think Bollywood should have a post-box where actors like me can complain. I want to complain, that I want more challenging roles, I want to do more, please give me a chance. It is my genuine request to producers, studios and casting directors. I want more challenges, I am not stopping here. I have more in me, I just hope I get the chance. Sometimes, I feel I won't get work and I get scared. So I put all that I can in the film I am doing. But then the character should also have that much worth to put one's efforts into."

He is also exploring the new fad of web-series, as he shares details about his first web-series, “It's called *Breathe*, and it's on Amazon. Abhijeet Deshpande is the writer and Mayank is directing it. It is a great team coming together. I and R.Madhavan are in this together. We are just hoping to make something path-breaking, because it will be premiered in a lot of countries. We started filming it from mid-last month. Yes, the character I'm playing is in a little dark zone for me.” His character may be in a dark zone, but Amit is seeing the brighter side of life. Does he dream? Yes, he does. But not like we all do, yet his dreams do come true, “I keep dreaming bizarre, unattainable things and they all keep coming true and it has started scaring me. Imran *Bhai* said an amazing thing that I should say and ask the right thing, because my words are blessed", he reveals.

The clock was ticking, dinner was done and so was the conversation. What got me thinking was his parting statement, “Till the time you are enjoying what you are doing, and you show something on the monitor that the director or the audience likes, and which has a certain effect, I think you're functioning. The day that stops, the questions will start.” I don't know what questions he was talking about and what the answers to those were. I don't know what to call him, an actor, a star or just a simple human being with big dreams and a never-say-die spirit. One thing is certain though. Amit Sadh has climbed mount Bollywood, with his share of landslides, and he's now standing on a cliff, with full-grown wings, eager for his flight to take off and soar the skies….

Easy-Breezy Bumblebee

With an incredible chemistry and performance, SHRADDHA KAPOOR proved herself in the industry with *Aashiqui 2*. Her filmy endeavours ever since her debut have worked, but haven't garnered the acclaim this lady is capable of achieving. Having worked with brilliant actors in her as yet short career, she is all set to do *Haseena*, a woman-centric film, playing an alpha female. Rinaldo D'souza sits across her and watches her get as candid as one can. She talks about films and much more.

> "I Am Nervous And Excited Before Every Film."

What were your expectations from *OK Jaanu*?
Closer to the release, I had mixed feelings. I was both, confident, and nervous. But then it is not just for *OK Jaanu*. I am nervous and excited before every film, so no, it is not because of that.

Both, Aditya Roy Kapur and you, have not worked together since *Aashiqui 2*?
You know, I just realised that before *Aashiqui 2,* both of our last releases had not done well. And now again, we have a second release before which both our films have not done well. What I mean is, in both cases, both of our last releases have not done well, and this is exactly what happened before *Aashiqui 2*.

What goes on in your mind when a film tanks at the Box Office? How do you handle it all emotionally?
When your film doesn't do well, you go into the spiral of thoughts where you wonder if you're making the right choices, or if you're doing the right things. You tend to ask yourself many questions. But then there is a part of you that tells you that it's okay, and don't give up hope and don't stop trying. In my case, two of my first films didn't do well. Those films not doing well, I didn't take it that well at all, at first. But now, I think I've learnt something from there and I think I am a little stronger now.

According to you, what was so different about this film (*OK Jaanu*)?
I think that largely the banter and the conversations in the film were very real. If you have seen *O Kadhal Kanmani,* which is a Tamil romantic drama, it's really beautiful, like you think I can relate to it. That is Mani (Ratnam) Sir's touch. I think the kind of conversations and scenes were something new and different from anything that I had ever done in my previous work. I think Shaad Ali is himself such a big fan of Mani Sir, that I can imagine he must've been excited to do this film.

What do you think about the actors' performance in the Tamil version of the film?
Both of them were really great in the movie. I think only they could have done it the way they did. It is their interpretation, they did full justice to it, and I think I have also tried to put my interpretation into it and Shaad Ali saw the character. It also makes sense for him to mould me into the way he wanted the role to shape.

Didn't you want to sing any of the songs in the film, considering you've ventured into singing as well?
Yes, but there were no opportunities as such. There was one classical song, which could only be sung by someone who is exceptionally trained.

You've worked with many actors, but Aditya Roy Kapoor is someone you share a great rapport and on-screen chemistry with, right from the success of *Aashiqui 2*. What do you think of his acting skills?
If you see our country's biggest superstar, Mr Amitabh Bachchan, how

PHOTOGRAPHS: VICKKY IDNAANI

> “Aditya is one of the best actors that we have.”

many strings of flops did he give in the start of his career? And you remember most of those films. Why? Because he was brilliant in them, and because the movies were good. *Andaz Apna Apna* didn't play on the second day from its release, but it's become a cult film. I know Aditya is brilliant and everyone thinks that. I think he is one of the best actors we have. I feel that good work is remembered, no matter what happens to the fate of the film. Hits and flops happen, but it is what you do and how memorable your work is, which actually matters.

Do you have a practising schedule for music?
Of late, I don't. But I enjoy music very much. You also have to get those opportunities to sing.

What do you seek in a film before you sign the dotted line?
I just feel like doing a movie, sometimes it is just a feeling from your heart. And it might not be logical but it just happens, and you think this feels correct. There is nothing like...I don't think I have, like some people tell me after two successive hits that I have a very good script sense and I choose movies that will do well at the Box Office. However, I think I don't have a good sense of script or anything. I just think that if I like the story

> “Both, Aditya’s, and my last releases had not done well and this is exactly what happened before *Aashiqui 2*.”

and if I feel very happy every morning for those 40 –100 days going om the set for 15 – 20 hours each day, then I’ll want to be a part of that film. It gives you that high to be on set every day.

Would you be a part of *Rock On 2* if there was a prequel to it being made?
See, I feel that as an actor-director, you do whatever best you can, and then you leave the rest to the people who go and watch your film. I am very proud to be a part of *Rock On 2.* If you ask me, I would love to be a part of it again and start shooting for it also. I can’t say I’d want to change anything if I’d go back.

What is the next thing you’re ready to sink your teeth into?
I am actually quite excited and really scared to play *Haseena*. It’s my first grey shaded character. Just thinking about it is intimidating.

What was working with Naseeruddin Shah like?
What I like the most is that he is so effortless. When you talk to people, the minuscule things he’d bring into his performance. The nuance he adds when he acts, is so effortless that makes it real. And that was amazing to see.

“Failure Gave Me More Focus.”

CALCULATIVE COMBATANT

The world may see KUNAL KAPOOR as the carefully carved beefcake and the made-for-romance good guy, but the man has various shades to his personality. While he plays a warrior in his next, *Veeram*, and a soldier in his later release *Raagdesh*, he hasn't sat with his hands folded either, but has tried to make things work his way. He has explored, but is yet unexplored, as Nawaz Kochra discovers, in a Court Martial with the actor.

There is this aura about you that girls go crazy for you. Even Alia Bhatt said in an interview that girls find you very sexy.
It feels great. I think, to any person, whether a guy or a girl, it's really important that you get attention and appreciation. I think it's really cool, and I enjoy that.

Has a girl come up to you and said this out right? How do you react to such statements and attention?
Well, a lot of times. And this is not only after I became an actor, it's something I've heard even before that. It has happened a lot of times, and not only women, but men have too. For anybody, what is really important is to be desirable. It's a great thing that people think I am desirable.

Did you imagine things would change so much for you, when you look back in time now?
Yes, it was a dream for me. Before I got into the movies, I was trying a lot of different stuff. I dabbled in lots of different businesses, then once I went to a movie set, I was like, this is where I want to be. At that point of time, I wasn't sure whether I wanted to be a director or an actor, because both of them were equally exciting for me. But a movie set was magical. I felt this is what I want to do for the rest of my life. When I started my training as an actor, obviously my dream was that I would be in a place where I'd be doing movies with people I have admired. I have been writing since I was 12 years old. Everybody has a natural flair for something, and writing was something that came to me most easily. Now, I am in a place where I'm co-writing a number of stories and scripts. So I will be in a place where I will be able to act in the films that I find exciting. This is something that I dreamt of and it's great that it's coming true.

Are you creatively satisfied with your career?
Creatively satisfied is a really big term, I don't think I am anywhere close to being creatively satisfied. But I am very excited in the place that I find myself in now. Honestly, when I was doing my first couple of films, the only thing I was interested in was being creatively satisfied, and then I had an over-night phenomenal success with *Rang De Basanti*. Suddenly, what happens is because you've got success, you also get afraid of losing that success. So a lot of your choices become based on trying to retain the success as opposed to what is really creatively satisfying for you. A couple of years back, I introspected. I took some time off to look at what I really want to do and why I joined the movies in the first place and the only reason for me to do the work I have started doing, is that I find it creatively satisfying. It started with *Luv Shuv Tey Chicken Khurana*. Sameer (Sharma) is a friend of mine who'd been wanting to direct and write for years. So we sat down and

Court
Martial

decided, what is the sort of film that we would like to make? And we started writing and wrote the first structure of *Luv Shuv Tey Chicken Khurana.* For me, that was creatively satisfying because I was involved in the film right from its inception, right from the writing, to getting it used on board and obviously acting in it too. I am in a place where I'm excited about the future. Last year was very exciting for me because I got a chance to do three completely diverse characters. I had a chance to do *Dear Zindagi,* which is an urban millennial film. Then I had a chance to do *Veeram,* which was a 16th century warrior, my first action film and first anti- hero film. Then I had a chance to work with Tigmanshu

> "It's a great thing that people think I am desirable."

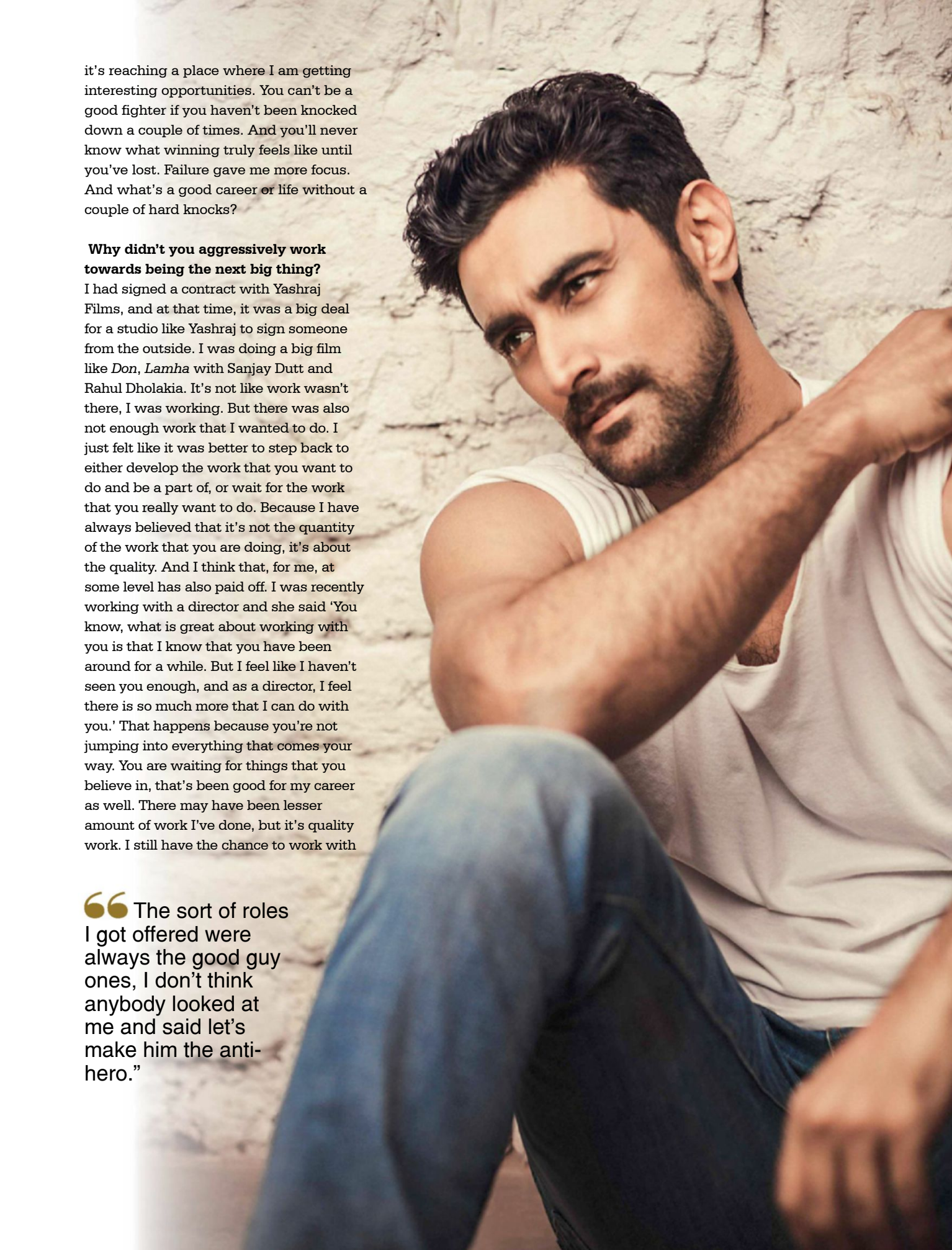
(Dhulia) who I have wanted to work with for a long time, and play a 40's era soldier. So I pretty much felt like I was travelling through time, that was really satisfying for me. Also, now the work that's being offered and the work that I am developing is what I have been wanting to do for a really long time. I am finally finding myself in a place where there is no fear, there is no thought of will this work or not, and will this be successful or not. It's really driven from the instinct and our creative desire, and that is the best place to be in.

You told a daily once that post *Rang De Basanti*, people saw you as the next big thing. Then all of a sudden, what happened?

It's very difficult to look back at things and say what happened during that phase. There are a bunch of things that happened. One, I was supposed to start with two really big films but those didn't fall into place, so I lost out on that time. Two, I was doing work but it wasn't work that I was necessarily and completely satisfied with. Also, I think everybody goes through a patch in their career which is a low phase, no matter how big a star you are. Two things are really important, which can be a part of that phase. One is that you get completely demoralised, and second is, you use that phase to grow and get better at what you do and introspect what you really want to do; and that's what I have done. I have used that time really well, I did plays and workshops and also developed scripts that I wanted to act in. I have set-up Asia's largest crowd-funding platform, it's a tech company that I had. I had a chance to pursue my hobbies of flying and racing. Acting is about your experiences in life that tie into each other. The more you experience outside acting, the more you can bring to acting, and that is the ability that I have now. It is really important to constantly keep growing and keep experiencing new things. Nobody cares about whether you're talented or not, the only thing that matters is success. And success of a film depends on so many things that are out of your control. I've been part of some wonderful films, but they did not get the success they should have. You know, shit happens. The only thing in your hands is to keep going, adapting, and making the choices you believe in. That's what I have done. I did work that I believe in. And now finally, I feel like

it's reaching a place where I am getting interesting opportunities. You can't be a good fighter if you haven't been knocked down a couple of times. And you'll never know what winning truly feels like until you've lost. Failure gave me more focus. And what's a good career or life without a couple of hard knocks?

Why didn't you aggressively work towards being the next big thing?
I had signed a contract with Yashraj Films, and at that time, it was a big deal for a studio like Yashraj to sign someone from the outside. I was doing a big film like *Don*, *Lamha* with Sanjay Dutt and Rahul Dholakia. It's not like work wasn't there, I was working. But there was also not enough work that I wanted to do. I just felt like it was better to step back to either develop the work that you want to do and be a part of, or wait for the work that you really want to do. Because I have always believed that it's not the quantity of the work that you are doing, it's about the quality. And I think that, for me, at some level has also paid off. I was recently working with a director and she said 'You know, what is great about working with you is that I know that you have been around for a while. But I feel like I haven't seen you enough, and as a director, I feel there is so much more that I can do with you.' That happens because you're not jumping into everything that comes your way. You are waiting for things that you believe in, that's been good for my career as well. There may have been lesser amount of work I've done, but it's quality work. I still have the chance to work with



> "The sort of roles I got offered were always the good guy ones, I don't think anybody looked at me and said let's make him the anti-hero."

a director like Jayaraj who is a National Award winner; Tigmanshu, who is somebody I respect a lot, also Gauri Shinde. All are very exciting directors approaching you for roles which are completely different from each other.

We saw you playing a good role in *Dear Zindagi*, but it wasn't meaty enough. Were you satisfied with the character?
I have also done a *Bachna Ae Haseeno* which was just three scenes, and I had so many people calling me saying they loved me in the film. Even with *Dear Zindagi*, the amount of people that have approached me with parts has gone up substantially after the film, even though it was a small

> “Nobody cares about whether you're talented or not, the only thing that matters is success.”

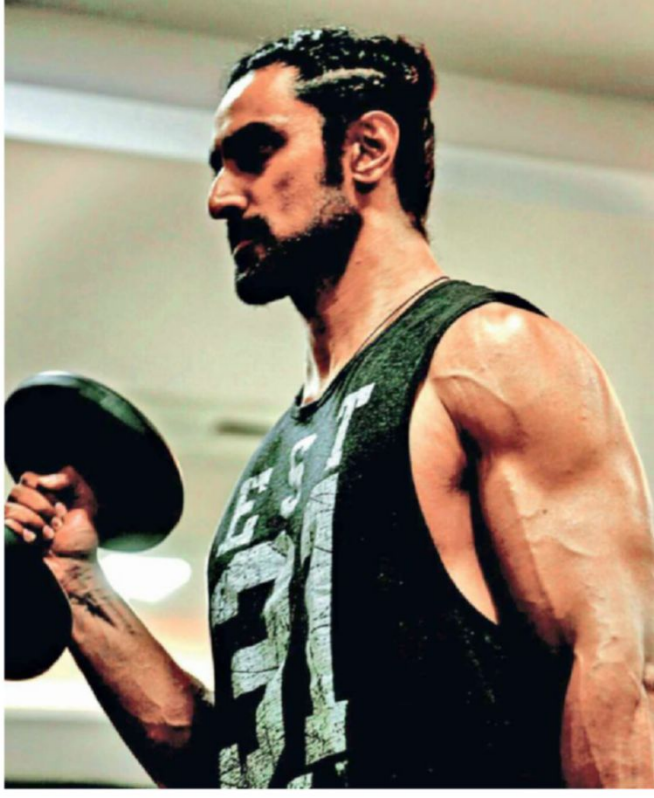
part. I really don't think it's about the size of the part. I feel like it's a big orchestra and everybody is playing instruments in it, and some instruments play for a longer time and some play for a shorter time. It's not the duration that matters. The important thing is being a part of a lovely melody or a lovely song, and that's how I've always looked at things. It's not about how long or short the role is, it's about what sort of impact the role can have and how important is it in the scheme of things. *Dear Zindagi* wasn't a long role, but it was very important in the whole film. It was a role that would make an impact, and I was right in there.

***Veeram* is your next solo lead film and after that is *Raagdesh*, tell us something about *Raagdesh*?**
That is based on the Indian national army. It's Subhash Chandra Bose's army and I am playing a soldier in the 40's in Rangoon, Burma and Singapore. That is a very different role.

Negative roles are being appreciated since a while now. Why did you chose to play one so late?
I have never had the chance to. The sort of roles I got offered were always the good guy ones, I don't think anybody looked at me and said let's make him the anti-hero. Until Jayaraj Sir came along and met me and said I was right for this part. I was so happy and excited that somebody looked at me in a completely different light. As an actor, that's the thing that makes you most happy. I grew up on a lot of graphic novels and comic books. I was always drawn to the anti-heroes because they are far more exciting to play than the typical hero, the good guy. They come from places that are far darker and complex. As an actor it's very exciting to play an anti-hero. So, it was the first time I had a chance to play the anti-hero. It's the first time I have done an action film, a period drama. We shot the film in three languages, so we had to shoot every scene in three languages. It has been a film of many firsts.

You've done some great films so far, yet you have never met the kind of Stardom you should have had. Why do you think Bollywood is holding out on you?
Holding out? I don't think anybody has that sort of grouse against me that they would hold out on me. This is something I really don't

> I was always drawn to the anti-heroes because they are far more exciting to play than the typical hero, the good guy."



have an answer for, because it has changed a lot in the last two years. I have been offered a lot of interesting work, but before that, work wasn't coming. It was very strange, because everywhere I went, every director I met at parties and meetings would tell me I was such a talented actor and had everything going for me, and then they wouldn't offer me the part that I wanted (laughs). You almost start feeling like the 12th man in a cricket team, where everyone is constantly telling you how talented you are and how you should be playing in the team. But you don't get a chance to play in the team, so you're sitting as a 12th man and watching all the other people play, and you're like, when is my chance going to come. Obviously, that in film terms is getting the right sort of script. The work that was being offered was the same thing over and over again. If you have done one *Rang De Basanti* or one *Lamha*, then every time someone wants to do a film where they're looking for a character that is either a terrorist or a poet, you're the one they think of. It's not exciting as an actor to do the same thing over and over again. I would rather do a play that I enjoy, where I get a chance to do something completely new, or develop the scripts that I want to do. So, I don't know if Bollywood has held out on me, but I think there is tendency to stereotype you.

Do you feel you haven't met the kind of stardom you should have?
That's not something that I can say. As an actor, there is so much that goes into a film, it's really not only about the actor. It's about whether the music is a hit or not, whether the film is marketed and about how the film is projected. I feel the actor is the most helpless piece of the puzzle because the only thing you can do is choose the film you want to do, and how you want to approach your role. How it turns out is really not in your hands. There is the editor, background music, director and then comes the music which is promoted or not promoted. It also depends on the producer, whether he releases the film or doesn't. As an actor, you don't have control over that. Your stardom, whether it happens to you or not, is a combination of so many factors that you have no control over. Someone said to Salman Khan, *aapki har* picture *chal rahi hai,* and he said *meri* picture *nahi chal rahi, mera waqt chal raha hai.* I found it really interesting. Which means that there are so many other factors that need to come together to give you the sort of stardom that somebody like him has.

Is it just a matter of time then?
Of course, it is. I already see a huge shift in the last year, where I had a chance to do completely diverse characters. In the last year, the scripts I have developed, I've reached out to people they have really liked them and wanted to produce them. It is really a matter of time before I get the work I think I should be getting, or be a part of the films I should be doing. Success and failure is all part of it, you have no control over it. But what's exciting is the sort of people offering you work. I don't think it's a matter of time, the time has already changed.

Do you think you gave your best shot when it came to looking for work? Do you reach out to directors even today?
A lot of work comes to me. But if I find that there is a director I want to work with, casting for a new film, I have absolutely no shame in reaching out and saying that I would love to be a part of their film. If there is a role out there, you've got to chase it, there is no shame in that.

Has the Bachchan connection helped you in getting work?
Not really, that's not something I have dwelt on.

What's next on your plate?
There are three scripts that I'm reading, to decide whether I want to be a part of them or not. Besides that, I am developing some work, three films that I'm writing, films that will go into production as well. I am now off to Mussoorie to shoot for a really small film. It's a part that I have never played, that of a teacher in a boarding school. It's a whole new character and a whole new world for me. It's being directed by Dibakar Banerjee's assistant, and that's going to be exciting.

Bunty aur Bubbly?

Not all celebrities tend to keep secrets safe, but SONAKSHI SINHA knows exactly how to keep it low when it comes to her relationships and affairs. Her rumoured beau, Bunty Sachdeva and her, according to a few sources, are soon to tie the knot. Read on to know more…

Will Wedding Bells Toll For Sonakshi And Bunty Sachdeva?

Firstly, let's take things in reverse, to the good old days and recall their relationship. Bunty Sachdeva, Seema Khan's brother, is the owner of the Cornerstone, the agency that manages India's top cricketers. Bunty's reputation preceded him, he seems to have a chequered past with the ladies all lining up in a row, vying for his attention. In the past, Bunty has dated Dia Mirza, and their relationship went haywire when Bunty Sachdeva was rumoured to have a pairing with someone from the south. Bunty is a divorcee, and after four long years, his spouse Ambika Chauhan and he decided to part ways for reasons unknown.

Sonakshi on the other hand, hailing from a filmy background herself, from the beginning of her career, stole hearts when she starred alongside the *dabangg* Salman Khan. Post that, she also hung out a lot with Arjun Kapoor, thereby leaving another love tale undiscovered, which everyone had hints of. Moving further, Sonakshi was supposedly dating Bunty Sachdeva in 2012. According to reports, the relationship didn't last long due to the interference of Sonakshi's parents, who thought that the age gap between Bunty and Sonakshi was significantly large. Also, Bunty's divorce with Ambika Chauhan was a matter of concern for them.

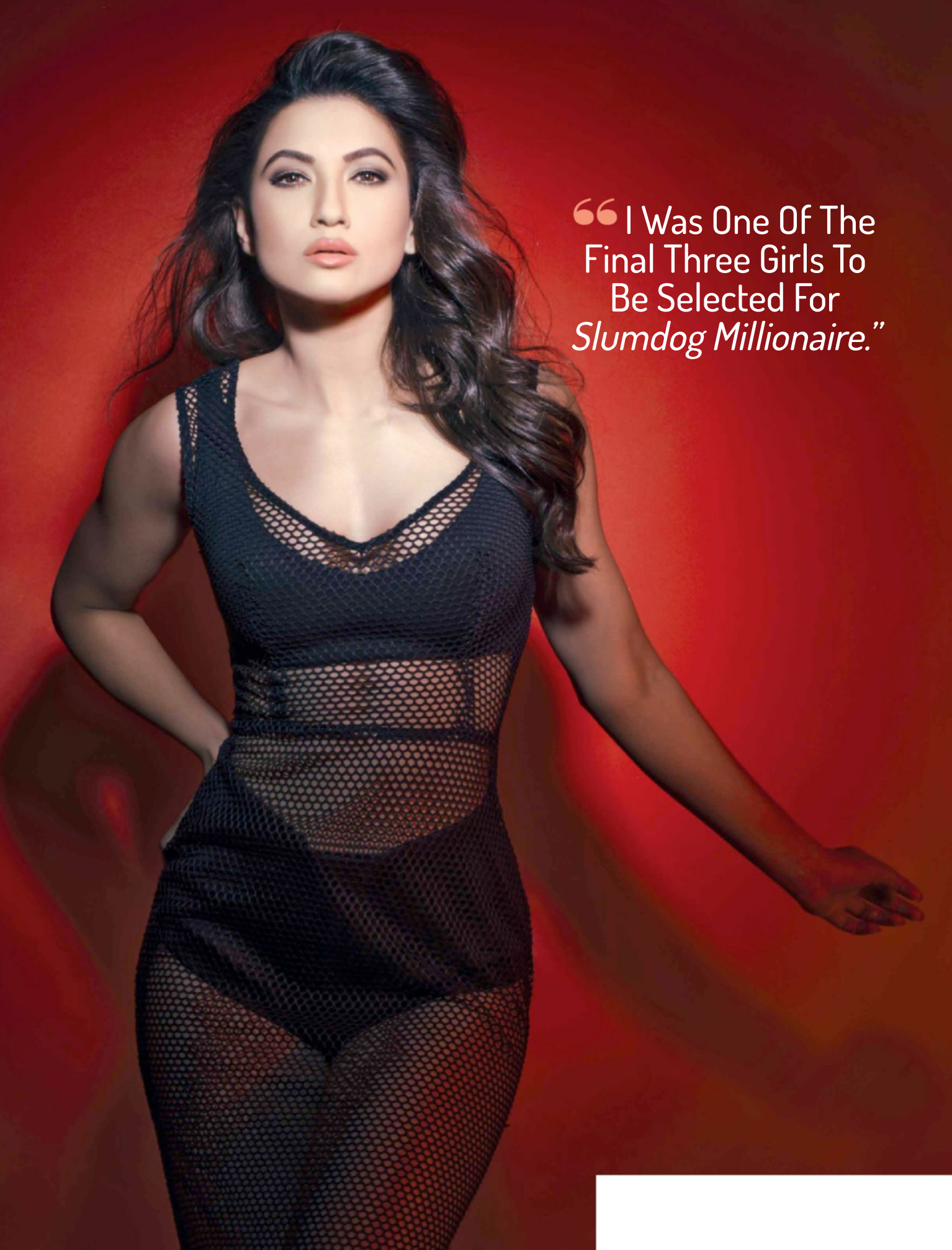
Like every other relationship, they've had their ups and downs. But eventually, the two have come back and sewed up and mended the patch, and are once again making headlines with their public appearances at various events. The recent news of Sonakshi spending some time with one of her exes, had everyone by their toes. Mistaken for Arjun Kapoor, this little tale sank without a trace. The truth is that this big fish was none other than Bunty Sachdeva. They were spotted at Asilo, a plush hotel in South Bombay, enjoying some fine dining. Not just this, they also met at a restaurant in Bandra and left separately. All these instances leave us with a niggling doubt-turning-to-confirmation that this love-sick *jodi* has revived their relationship and started seeing each other again.

Aneez Bazmee is shooting for his film *Mubarakan,* and Sonakshi was supposedly offered a role in the film. However, there were reports that she didn't take it up because she would have to work with her 'rumoured' ex-boyfriend Arjun Kapoor. Then again, it may be because Bunty had a problem with that, just saying. Getting

to the point now, Sonakshi in a recent interview, was asked about her relationship with Bunty. In a straightforward manner, the lass replied that if there was anything to these stories, where was the rock on her finger? Well, that's what we want to know. So, Asli Sona, give us the *asli* story.

The relationship status, the constant meetings and dinner dates may say a lot. But the big question is, are they planning to tie the knot? With the New year, are they making of new beginnings? According to a recent news tidbit that caught us all by surprise, the couple is supposedly going to be engaged in February. We shall wait to verify that one though! Time will tell.

PHOTOGRAPH: ABHEET GIDWANI


“I Was One Of The Final Three Girls To Be Selected For *Slumdog Millionaire.*”

A DIAMOND *In The Rough*

She is proud of herself and likes to keep her chin-up, and walk tall. At the same time, she believes in touching the skies while keeping her feet on the ground. She is quirky enough to say that the *nautanki* in her inspired her to become an actress, and believes that *Begum Jaan* will change things for her. GAUAHAR KHAN is a gem whose funda in life is "Be good, and leave the rest to God." When you're someone whose soul is so clean, sooner or later success comes your way. If you don't know how talented she is, picture *abhi baaki hai mere dost.*

Words **NAZIFA CHARANIA**

On a bright and beautiful Saturday afternoon, I headed to a lavish café in the suburbs to meet this charming lady. Traffic had me running late but she was sweet enough to understand the situation. As soon as I went up to the table she was sitting at, she greeted me with a warm hug and her evergreen smile. I absolutely loved the swanky denim jacket she had donned that afternoon. It was a grilled chicken salad for me and an Omlette with veggies and some bread for her, over which we got candid about her journey into the world of the arc-lights. Enjoying our healthy yet delicious meal, we kick-started the conversation and got the dice rolling. Gauahar Khan is a face you see in all mediums, be it television, theatre or films. She likes to have a little bit of all on her plate, regardless of whether it's a success or a failure. With a presence in all three mediums, I was curious to know what she enjoyed the most. "In three years, I have done 1200 shows with *Zangoora*. I feel I am a very lucky person and I am blessed because I have been accepted in all mediums really well. So be it theatre, television or films, *mujhe sab jagah se pyaar milta hai.* I am very happy that I can dabble in all, achieve things and keep doing what I want to do without any fear of being categorised." As someone who likes switch her boots when it comes to work, she must certainly have come across sleazy experiences, but she claims to have none, and says *Alhumdullilah* for the same. But it's not the same all the time.

Usually, celebrities like to keep their privacy unexposed, and prefer not to reveal details of their personal lives, unlike Gauahar, whose life is all-over social media. That undoubtedly must be leading to unpleasant experiences. She agreed "Of course, I have had unpleasant experiences. Because I am so open with my fans, some of them take it for granted. Some of them find my address and send me stuff. It gets a little intrusive after that, and that's when I feel like this is scary, maybe I am not drawing the line enough. But also, I am very clever about what I put up on social media. I don't put up locations or who I am with, if it doesn't need to be shared." Regardless of whether she has had unpleasant experiences or not, she claims that the media loves writing about her or rather cooking-up stories, and says with a smirk on her face, "Even if I don't meet people or see them, even if I am not super-thick friends with somebody, I get written about. So I am confused as to why my life is so interesting for the media to cook-up stories. The latest cooked up story was that Harshvardhan Rane and I are dating. Before that, I hadn't even met him for coffee, so I actually tweeted saying 'Shouldn't I at least be going for a coffee with a person I am dating. We just laughed about it."

In that case, one should be glad that they are written about every

> “I have been told *tumhaare liye kaunsa* Subhash Ghai welcome *karne ke liye baitha hai.*”

other day in the newspapers or magazines, because publicity, good or bad, is always good, right? She may not have been so important for the media or the world to write or read about before, but the clock of fortune struck its hour after she came out as a winner in the reality show *Bigg Boss*. “*Bigg Boss* has changed my life 360 degrees and I am so glad I did it. *Agar mein* 50 pictures *bhi karti na, phir bhi mujhe utni* appreciation *ya pyaar nahi milta jitna mujhe Big Boss ke vajah se mila hai*. I used to picture myself in the last two days of the contest, that my hand would go up and Salman Khan would announce Gauahar Khan as the winner. And as it happened, I actually went to his left side, and he actually held up my right hand.” It seems like God said to her ‘Your wish is my command.’ Not many people’s dreams come true, and that too so precisely, could she have asked for more? She undeniably is a child of fortune. But as they say fortune and success is led by hard work. As is the case with Ms. Khan, whose journey was not as fancy as her vanities “I have to tell you, it has not been easy. I was told at a very early age *aap picturein kyun kar rahi ho?* You’re not that material, I have been told *tumhare liye kaunsa* Subhash Ghai welcome *karne ke liye baitha hai*. I have gone with my gut. I was told not to do *Rocket Singh* as my first film because *aap* hero *ke* opposite *nahi ho*. All these industry norms really drive you crazy. It wasn’t easy. But I do feel I am God’s special child.” Now it was time from going candid to raw, her last film *Fever* was a flop, what was the reason? “That film was shot two years before it released. You don’t keep your expectations that high anyway, because you know it’s taken its time. Probably the look of the film has changed or the buzz hasn’t been so much. Although, I felt it was a good film, *ab chala, nahin chala* always has different reasons. Reasons for a film for not doing well, could be many. I didn’t have that many expectations with *Fever*, but when it doesn’t do well, of course it hurts. But I didn’t let it play on my mind so much.”

She was one of the lucky few to have been offered *Parched*, and she rejected a super-hit film. Are a million regrets taking a toll over her mind? “No, not at all, I loved the film, it’s my dream to work with Leena Yadav, not just since *Parched,* but from the time she made *Shabd*. But I don’t want to do something that I am not absolutely convinced about. I have to be completely convinced about it. I wasn’t completely convinced about being naked on-screen, for me it wasn’t something I would do.” How can a celebrity never have any regrets? Especially when a film you reject becomes a hit, I asked her the same question again, hoping she would open up, and the truth gets revealed. “The only time I felt it was when I was one

> *Agar mein* 50 pictures *karti na, phir bhi mujhe utni* appreciation *ya pyaar nahi milta jitna mujhe Big Boss ke vajah se mila hai*."

of the final three girls to be selected for *Slumdog Millionaire.* It was between me, another girl and Freida Pinto. Danny Boyle looked at me and said. 'You're such an amazing actor. Looking at you, I am just wondering how can I place you in a slum? He said he had to match the ages because it was childhood, then teens, then adult, so the look of the person has to be the same. So out of all the casting, it wouldn't have justified me being an older version of the girl. That's the one thing I felt like I should have done, I could have looked the part."

Since there have been times she has rejected good films, which role or film does she think will change her career graph as an actor? "*Begum Jaan.*" And how did that come her way "For *Begum Jaan*, they were auditioning a lot of girls for this role. But right at the time of writing the script, Shoojit Sircar wanted me as *Rubina.* Due to some miscommunication, he was told that I was too expensive for the film. As luck would have it, I was in Umrah and I got a message from Vidya Balan saying we are doing this film and I feel you would be perfect for this role. Would you like to come and meet Shoojit? I said Yayy! All my dramatics happened. I spoke to Shoojit Sir and he said I wanted you and wrote Rubina as you, and you're here now."

As she believes that the character of Rubina will be her sacred stepping stone to success. We wish the same for her. She is one of the most humble celebrities I have sat across the table with. She doesn't believe in having any regrets, as she states "If *Allah* has to give me success he will. I believe in doing good work, *phir Allah Mallik*." You mustn't worry Gauahar, God definitely looks after his favourite children. And as you say, you are God's special child. *Rubina* should reveal the true jewel that Gauahar is in reel, as well as real life.

Wild
Encounter

“Yes, I have been caught with my pants down.”

Liberal is one adjective I would give GULSHAN DEVAIAH, for his ideologies about sex and its charm, are something the world should learn from. Secondly, his openness on the topic is something that made me admire him, not in a wrong way though. In Wild Encounters, celebrities generally tend to wear a mask of diplomacy, but this man was as candid as he could get, making the conversation range from sexy, to sexier, to sexiest. Read on…

Words **NAWAZ KOCHRA**

Would you strip naked in front of an entire unit if the role demanded it, or would you ask for a bare minimum crew to be present?
I had been offered such a role but I didn't end up doing the film. I would say that definitely if in the script I have to be naked, I would consider doing it, if I am absolutely comfortable with the director and the cast. Once you've made up your mind that you have to be naked, then you overcome a lot of barriers and it doesn't matter. But it really depends on the project and who I am working with. I would do it if the director and I are absolutely clear that we have a transparent communication about it.

Considering your profession, which is flooded with so many good-looking people of the opposite sex, do you feel like succumbing to temptation?
All the time (laughs). I've been married for five years now, but I tell you, it is hard. I am doing a good job keeping my zip closed (laughs). You get a lot of attention and it's a vague industry. My wife too gets an equal share of attention. But we are very committed to each other and we love each other. But there are times when you go, 'Damn, that one is hot!'

What did the word sex mean to you when you were 14, 18 and now?
14: It was everything. It was all in my head. I was a very shy kid. When you're 13-14, you experience certain sensations and feelings. It was very new, fun and enjoyable, but also kind of scary because I grew up alone. Since I was the only child, there was no one to guide or help me. And your peers always take advantage of that. So there is a lot of misinformation floating then. It was confusing, but once you come to terms with it, then it is really exciting.
18: When you're 18, you realise sex is like cocaine. It was a whole lot of fun, something you could never get tired of. There is no such thing as too much sex when you're

18, till you don't get any. I didn't get shit. I was so shy that I never capitalised on booty.
Now: I think it is a bit overrated. As you grow up, you get over these childish ideas you have about sex. It changes the way you physically, mentally and emotionally connect with a person. So it is different. It is more personal now. There is more passion and intimacy now.

What is your take on one-night stands?
I am not doing it. Unless my wife and I are doing some role-play, maybe then. I think it is okay. If people's lives are not ruined in the process, if marriages don't break, and people are not hurt, it is fine.

Do you think pre-marital sex is very important for a man to feel manly?
Trust me, the more experience you have, the better it is. You don't want to, on your first night with your wife, have no idea of what to do. And she tells you, do this, put it here, touch me there. So it is a little embarrassing. Sometimes, we care about the performance. Every man wants to be the best when he is having sex with a woman or a man, whatever works for people. The more experience you have, the more confident and relaxed you are, and the more fun you have. So if you get a chance to get some experience before marriage, I think one should.

Do you think sex is the most important ingredient that completes a long-standing relationship?
Yes, I do think so. But also I think a lot of people give it too much importance to it. I don't think it is everything. I see people talk about sex and what they expect out of it sometimes. I wouldn't give it so much importance. It is definitely important in a long-standing relationship, but it's not the most important thing. And people confuse it as the most important thing. I can go on for months without having sex and still be intimate and compassionate about the person. I am losing a lot of fans after this (laughs).

> "I am doing a good job keeping my zip closed."

In an interview, someone once said that the first thing he notices in a woman is her breasts. What is the first thing you notice when you meet or see a woman?
It really depends on the woman. If you don't know somebody and you're sitting at a restaurant and notice someone, I would definitely see her physical beauty. Sometimes when you get a little time, you look beyond physical beauty, like the attitude, and the way they speak. A woman can be sensual in million different ways. So it's very difficult to point out one thing that grabs my attention. Women are beautiful in their own way.

> There is no such thing as too much sex when you're 18, till you don't get any."

What is it about a woman that draws your attention, beauty or brains?
Both. Why should we choose one besides the other? There are a lot of beautiful women who are intelligent, like Kalki Koechlin.

What in a woman turns you on then?
It could be the way her little finger moves. It could be the outfit she wears, it could be the way she speaks. I love to hear my wife's voice on the phone. She has a great voice. Sometimes when we're at home, I am like 'call me, I want to listen to your voice on the phone.' I can't pick one, it is unfair to other women.

Is a woman dressing provocatively, reason enough for a man to think derogatorily of her?
I think one should have a sense of propriety, we do live in a society where some things have to be considered. Generally if a woman is wearing shorts or a tank-top, that is considered vulgar. People say she dresses like that, that is why rapes happen, this is all nonsense. People just make up shitty excuses to put people down. To put them in a submissive position, that's bollocks. I think woman is free to dress the way she wants to. But if I am meeting them in their office and if they happened to be in a bikini, I would find it inappropriate, considering the situation. I don't mind it. But I hope that explains it.

Men get into locker-room conversations about their conquests and women's assets. Do you do the same with your friends?
Never, I keep it under that. Nobody knows shit about my sex life. Nobody, just my wife.

What if you were the only male contestant in *Bigg Boss* House? Which actresses or female contestants would you want to be locked in with?
Firstly, I don't think I would enter *Bigg Boss*. Frankly and bluntly, I hate reality shows. It has killed television. I know it is consumed as a form of entertainment, and is really popular, but I despise it. See, I grew up in the 90's watching television and TV meant

> "When you're 18, you realize sex is like cocaine."

concept of open relationships. Do you believe that to be true?
I think it is fine if it works for people. Whatever works for people and makes people happy. Having said that, I must tell you that a lot of my married friends have broken up. Both, me and my wife, are in the entertainment business, and They are also impulsive in getting married and breaking up. We need to persist. I am sure there are a lot of relationships that could've lasted if they were patient or they had worked it out, and it is very stressful. It is hard, but people should try and be patient. A lot of my friends including Kalki have broken marriages, it is not pretty at all. And we've seen them suffer. It could happen to us, but we are also conscious that we don't want it to happen. You work this shit

something to me, because it influenced me. My love for films is through TV because I didn't watch much cinema. There is no chance in hell of me being in *Bigg Boss,* but if if I am, hypothetically, then, Deepika Padukone.

People have stopped investing in relationships, which has probably given way to the

it is stressful. There are times where it is hard. Love has nothing to do with marriage, marriage is a different ball game altogether. You get married because you're in love, that's it. Then you have to work on it, there are various other aspects. Love and marriage are two different things, don't confuse them. I think people are less patient in their relationships, that's why marriages are breaking apart.

out. You do whatever you have to, be patient, you persist with it, you go with it. I would really urge people to do that. Firstly, don't just get married. But if you're married, then give it your best.

If you were at a night club and a sexy babe asked you, 'Can I buy you a drink?', what would your reaction be?
Thanks for the drink. Free drinks,

I'll take the drink, casually flirt with her. Flirting is okay, it is allowed.

Where is the strangest place you've had made out?
I have made out inside an empty water tank.

Have you ever cheated in a relationship?
No, I haven't.

When was the last time you chased a girl?
Literally chased a girl, when I was working on *Hunterrr,* because it was my job then. In life, long time ago.

When was the last time you watched Porn?
Yesterday. I was missing my wife (laughs).

> "A woman can be sensual in million different ways."

Have any of your family members ever caught you watching Porn?
Yes, I was caught once by my dad. I was in my early 20's and he used to work in a public-sector company. I was at home. He usually comes at a certain time, and that day, he came early. So, I had the VCR on and I was like (hand gestures). He had the keys and he opened the door and he just didn't say anything. He had come to pick something up. He had lunch and he left. Before leaving he said, 'When you are done, just pack everything up and keep it where it belongs.' I was shitting in my pants. I immediately got rid of it. It was pretty embarrassing. He didn't say anything, though.

Have you ever been hit upon by a man?
Yes, many times.

What was the situation like?
This gets a little odd. The first time it happened, I was at a bar. I was 22 or 23-years old and you can tell when a man is being a little affectionate by the way they look at you. It was a little difficult at that time because I wasn't grossed out or anything. It had never happened to me. Maybe when I was younger it had happened, but then you're a kid, and you don't know. A creepy old man rubbing on your thighs, that's also happened. I was wondering why this was happening and I told my aunt, he's rubbing my thighs and she goes like 'What! He's rubbing your thighs? Never let him do that again'. So, that has happened, but it wasn't sexual, from my side at least. Then you get used to and get comfortable with sexuality and you learn about what being gay is. Then you have friends who are gay. So, when you get comfortable with it, now it's flattering, I get flattered when women hit on me, men hit on me, dogs and cats hit on me.

> "Sometimes the sexual attention gets a little creepy…"

So what kind of attention do you find difficult or awkward to deal with?
Sometimes the sexual attention gets a little creepy, like I have had people send me pictures of themselves on Facebook. They say, 'I think you're so cute, you're hot, and I really love you'. But then slowly, they want more and more. They start sending you pictures, this is my pink, this is my dress, and what do you think? Do you like them? Stuff like that. This is on Facebook, but this sometimes happens in real life too. I had once gone for a film festival, there was a whole bunch of people, and one person got really aggressive with her affection towards me, and there was free champagne. Another time, we were having a party at a restaurant in the suburbs and some actress, I really don't know who it was, removed her boots and I don't what she was on. She just came on to me and was grabbing me everywhere. It gets really awkward when you're dancing on the dance-floor and somebody comes and does this. People haven't seen her enter, people see you and her dancing, and they are like, what the fuck is going on? So, it gets really awkward because

they are all my friends. They are like, Whoa, what's happening? I immediately pinned her off and said 'Hey, I think you've had too much to drink, let me help you sit down.' She didn't want to sit down, she was so blown, and she didn't know what she was doing. Then she started doing it with somebody else and I think that guy was pretty okay with it. This kind of slightly crossing the line is tough. So far with men, they haven't. I know when they're hitting on me, but they have never crossed the line. With a few women, I really don't know what to do. I suddenly become this little boy and I am like 'Aaaahhhh'.

Have you ever been caught with your pants down?
Yes, a couple of times, but they didn't know that my pants were down (laughs). I quickly got into bed. I was seeing this girl at that time and we didn't get time the whole day, and then in the evening we were initiating and undressed, and suddenly someone walked into the room quickly. I was like oh f**k, I am busted. He knows we were doing something. He didn't figure it out luckily.

Would you be taken aback if a woman makes the first move?
Not at all. I am too shy, I always expect women to make the first move.

Have you been in a relationship which has been purely physical?
Yes, for a short time. These things never last long. By short time, I don't mean 30 seconds (laughs).

Given a choice which of these would you want to be; boy-next-door, sex icon or a power-packed performer?
Right now, sex icon. I am contradicting myself here

"I Can Go On For Months Without Having Sex And Still Be Intimate And Compassionate About The Person."

because at some point, I don't think I can be a sex icon. So that looks really attractive right now.

Woody Allen once said 'Most men have sex, most of the time on their minds, which is, unfortunately, the wrong place to have it.' Do you think he's right?
Yes, I would tend to agree with what he is saying. We do, I don't know about women though. I am sure they have sex in their head, but with men, yes, it's all the time. Even when they are flirting, they are wondering how it would look if I was with this person. It's healthy, it's fine, and that's how the mind is.

What kind of a lover are you? Hard and sleazy, soft and surprising or wild and funny?
I can be all, depends on the situation. I can do all of these.

"I am fiercely private about certain things in my life."

Have you ever lied saying good friends, when you were more than that?
Never. It's always the woman who's said we're good friends, and I go, 'Hey, what was last night about?' (Laughs)

Which director would you not mind doing an intimate scene for?
I guess it would totally depend on the project. I could do it for any director, but if you want me to name just one director I would do that for, if Pooja Bhatt is directing a film, I suppose I would work with her.

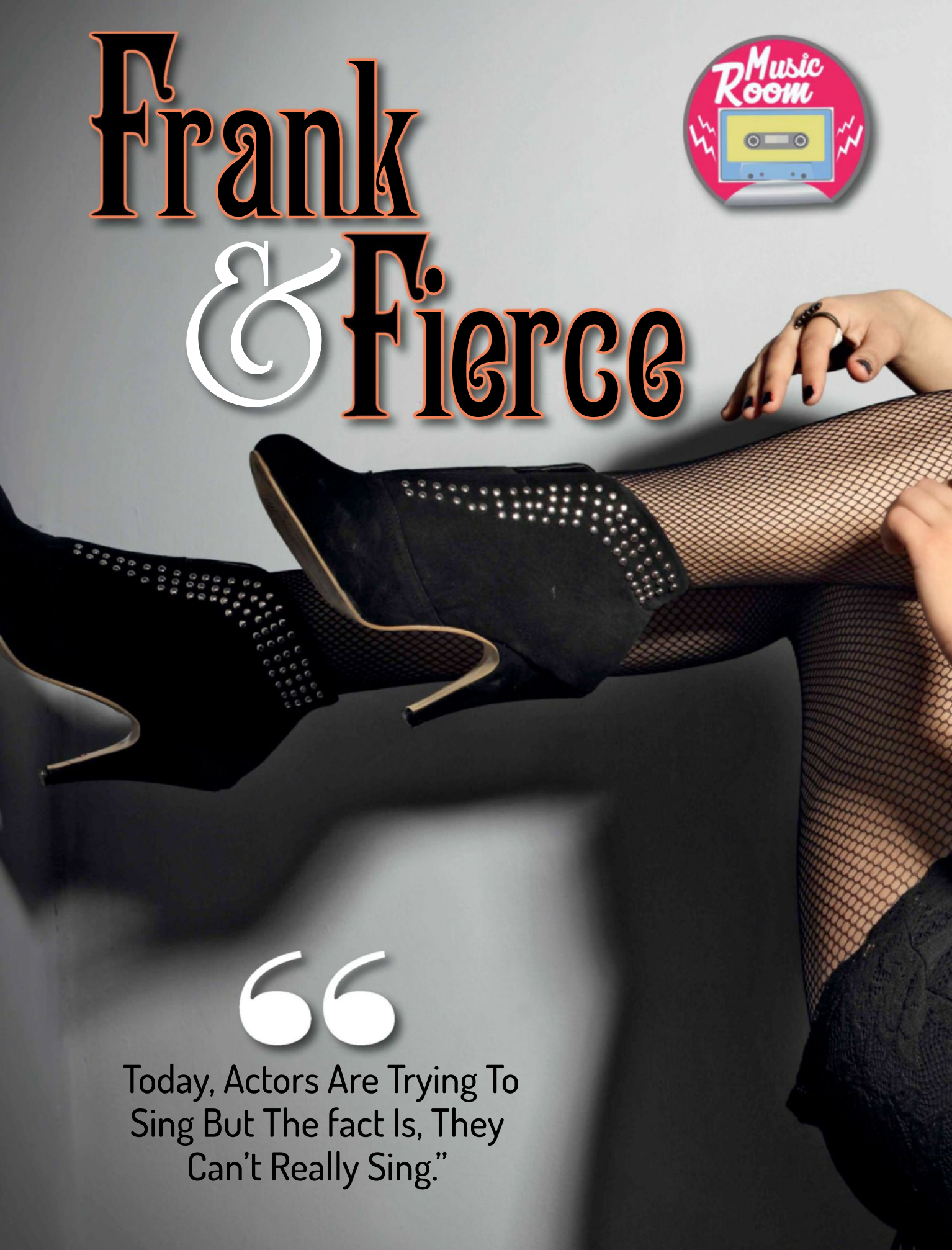
Have you ever been a victim of the casting couch?
I don't think so. I have somehow managed to evade this phenomenon in the industry.

Does Gulshan have a wild side?
Maybe. Well, it depends. What do you want to know exactly? Yes, there is a wild side.

Do we see the wild side on-screen?
Sometimes yes, I am fiercely private about certain things in my life. I think it comes from having grown up by myself. There are things that I wouldn't even share with my wife. They are very personal things. They are mine. I don't mean to disrespect her, nor am I saying that I don't trust her. In a way, I do live out my fantasies on screen, I wouldn't tell you what. One would assume they are sexual in nature, but not necessarily. I fantasise about a lot of things. I am an actor because I like to be somebody else from time to time and explore. Maybe certain aspects that are there hidden inside me. So it is definitely a fantasy. I do use that as a flavour in my work.

Frank & Fierce

Music Room



“Today, Actors Are Trying To Sing But The fact Is, They Can’t Really Sing.”

Singer NEHA BHASIN has a vibrant personality. She is rebellious, honest, and lives life on her own terms, even in this hard-to-survive canvas called Bollywood. The naive nightingale lives in her own delightful world, but like many others she has paid the price of being a fighter in this music industry and talks about it in this free-wheeling chat. Beginning by cementing *Stardust* as the most credible award show and thankful for getting the award for *Jag Ghoomey*a. She kick-starts the conversation, while I bury myself on the soft couch of her sea-facing apartment, as she reveals the insights of her tragic, yet, trendy life

Words **GAYATRI NIRMAL**

PHOTOGRAPH: MUNNA S

What was your feeling after receiving the award?
Firstly, thank you so much for giving me the Best Playback Singer Award. That's the best part, when I win an award, and I know it's a true award. I'm never in the news, but if there's something I feel, I'll speak from my heart. I miss those days when singers grabbed headlines and were on covers.

Did you ever think while recording the song (*Jag Ghoomeya*) or post it, that you would be acknowledged for it phenomenally?
Everybody else said it when the song was out, but I don't focus on awards because awards are based on a lot more things than just talent, and that's something I've learned in the past 14 years. So I try to detach myself from the monetary outcome and the rewards, and just focus on the impact that is going to happen for me.

After delivering successful numbers like *Kuch khaas Hai* from *Fashion*, *Dhunki* from *Mere Brother ki Dulhan* and *Jag Ghoomeya* from *Sultan*, how happy are you? Which other genres are you keen to explore?
I don't think I'm vocally still ready for it, but I'd love to explore the *Sufi* genre some time, . More than *Sufi*, I'd love to sing a lot more

> "I miss those days when singers grabbed headlines and were on covers."

ballads in the industry, because I think my voice is meant for ballads and I enjoy singing them. Even now, when I sing *Kuch khaas hai* or *Jag ghoomeya* on stage, the response is very different from the response I get when I do dance numbers. That's also a good response, but this is more soulful. It's like people are connecting with my heart, not just with the outdoor personality.

So you feel more content after singing ballads?
Yes! I do. I felt very confused for the longest time because I grew up being groomed as a pop-star, which requires dancing on stage and looking presentable. But I had this soulful voice and I write songs which are meaningful. So there was a clash between the two, which led to confusion as to which way should I go. I felt if I could do both, I might as well.

You were a part of a pop band before making your singing debut in Bollywood. With EDM and rock music flourishing heavily, do you miss being a part of it yet?
No. It's not easy to survive in a band. It's like being in a very difficult marriage, I'm guessing.
I've not been in a difficult marriage. Living with five women, being under a very strict management is not easy. That was the most difficult part of my life.

You've tried your luck at anchoring, acting, dancing and singing. All these qualities fit you into the actor's slot. Where actors are singing, why don't you try your luck at full-fledged acting too?
I have no idea why not. I have acted in one film. But that's not my aspiration; acting is not something I aspire to do. Though, I want to do a musical at one point in time on stage, and be a part of Broadway, something like New York's Broadway, and do a film like *Chicago*, which is never going to be made in India. I'm not sure if Bollywood is for me, though it will make my life much easier. I'll get more endorsements to do and I'll get more money. I'd love to do a song in a film where I can act in the song.

Do you aspire to move to the West in terms of singing?
I always wanted to go those ways.

Is there something shaping up on that aspect in the West then?
I decide that every year, but… I have written a lot of songs. I had a band called *Cinnamon Gully,* and used to perform pop-rock songs. At some point, I need to take a big chunk of my life and time and record that album. But it definitely cannot be an Indian release because India *mein log* English music *sunte nahin hai*. (People don't listen to English music in India). So this has to happen either from London or the United States, which means I'll have to take a year off and focus on that. Hopefully, 2017 should be it.

“It’s not easy to survive in a band. It’s like being in a very difficult marriage.”

Since singles and rap music have taken over the entire nation, would you try your hand doing singles and rapping?
It depends on the song. I feel with some songs, it sounds really good, and with some songs, it sounds very forced. Like, I’m releasing a song next month which is a single, which also has rap. I wrote that song as a rap song, where rap had to be equally important as my vocals. So, I like it. I’m a big fan of Kendrick Lamar, Jay Z - I’d watched him in Beyoncé Live. But in India, many things are done just for the heck of it. For instance, if there’s a trend of auto-tune, we’ll auto-tune everyone’s voice. India has a herd mentality, I don’t believe in it. But some songs are really nice.

Did it ever happen that you’ve been signed for a song and then been told you’re out of the project?
Yes, it did happen, and it happens multiple times. I’ve buried those memories.

How do you cope with it? Because things like these hurt a lot and leave scars behind.
It used to hurt a lot. Now nothing hurts me so much anymore. It’s okay, disappointment is a part of life. It teaches you to be brave, strong and a more courageous person. I had been to Chennai once and sat for 10 hours. Later, Harris Jairaj (music composer) called me and the song was not in my key. I wasn’t told whether I would be the singing the song or not, and they asked me to come the next morning and sing half the song. The other half of it was sung by someone else. I was very disappointed and I felt insulted. But that day changed my life, and I decided that

PHOTOGRAPH: MUNNA S

till somebody tells me the key of the song, henceforth I will never go for recordings. Now, the music directors call me and check the key of my song and only then do I go. If it's in my key, I'll go, or else I won't. Disappointments teach you to take yourself a little more seriously and not let people exploit you.

If you had to travel back in time, which singer would you want to share songs with and which songs would they be?
I would have loved to sing with Mukesh Sir and Kishore Kumar Sir. It would be *Hamein tumse pyar kitna* and *Aansu bhari hai, yeh jeevan ki raahein*. I've already done my version of the latter song.

The trend of music keeps changing every year in Bollywood; every season has its flavour. Of those, what flavours of music do you like the most?
I think the 1960's and 70's or even a little earlier, of the Suraiya and Geeta Dutt phase. The music production of that time was far purer than it is today. In terms of song writing, it has to be *Jhanak jhanak payal baaje*. I'm an old-school girl and I was blown over when I saw this song, and in those days, they were singers, actors, and dancers, the way it is today in Hollywood. So, if you think about it, Bollywood was ahead of its time back then. Today, actors are trying to sing but the fact is they can't really sing. Those guys could sing. Then the 70's phase of R.D Burman mixed with Asha*ji* and Gulzar *saab;* their combination was amazing. A little bit of the 80's too, like *Mera kuch saamaan* and *Tujhse naaraz nahin zindagi*, songs like these give you goose-bumps even today. When I was really young I used to listen to more English music, and if anyone asked me my favourite song, I used to name some English songs and they would say, 'Why do you listen to such sad songs and music? You're so young.' Whereas I like the poetry in it, there's nothing sad.

How did you get your singing break in Bollywood?
I first sang in 2005. Unfortunately, it was an Anand Raj Anand song and he didn't give me credit, so I had to fight in court for it. I had a very tragic past. I've always been a very rebellious person. If somebody tells me I'm wrong when I'm not, then I have to fight for my rights. So in 2005, I sang the song *Ek look ek look* from the film *Aryan* which did really well, but I didn't get the desired credit for it, and got backing vocal credit. When I asked him and tried to talk to him, he told my manager something inappropriate, which forced me to fight him in court for it. So, that was my first break. (laughs) My second break was in a film called *Hari Puttar* which the late Aadesh Srivastava had done, and my third big break was with *Kuch khaas hai* from *Fashion*, which got me more recognition and gave me credit too.

Considering all the hardships you went through, do you think it essential to have a strong backing in this industry, to be recognised and acknowledged?
No. It's important to be very strong in this industry. When you have a strong backing, it comes with a big price as well. So, I feel it's better that you pay your own price instead of paying somebody else's. You need to have a heart of gold and balls of steel to survive in this industry. You've got be a man in this industry. It's very important to be fearless and find your own crowd. Eventually, nobody can deny your talent. If you're talented and persistent, I think you're here to stay.

You've sung for regional films and Bollywood. How is it, recording songs in multiple languages? In which language do you enjoy singing the most?
Of course English, but in Indian languages, it's a strange combination of Tamil and Punjabi.

A song which is very close to your heart?
Man in the Mirror by Michael Jackson.

How did *Jag Ghoomeya* happen?
There's no big story behind it. I've known Ali Abbas Zafar (the director) since college and I've been a part of all his films. I knew he was doing *Sultan* but didn't receive any call from him, which made me assume that I do not have any song in this film. But he called one day and said Vishal-Shekhar are going to call you for a song, and asked Sameer and me to be in the studios to do a female version of *Jag ghoomeya* in our own style: stripped down, unplugged and very raw. That's how it happened. I am so connected to Ali that he always gives me the best song in his album. The day I did my recording, I had a massive sinus problem, and I haven't had it in years. So that's probably why I sounded really heavy in the song. Vishal said. 'With sinus, you'll sound even better, and we just have two days to release the audio.' So, that's how it shaped up.

But the song sounded brilliant. You've got to thank that day.
True. I'll have to thank that day. In reality, I was having a really bad day in my life. There were a lot of terrible things happening, including to my health. And when you're having a really bad day, you should surrender. Once I entered the studio, I told myself that this was a good thing happening to me on a bad day, so just sing, because that's what you're best at. Switch off your phone, switch off your mind and sing; and that's what I did. In one hour, I was out, and Vishal told me this song is going to do really well.

An actress you think your voice suits the best?
Priyanka Chopra always sounds good in my voice. I've done three songs for her.

If music could be a flower, which flower would you want it to be?
Lilies, and I think every song is a different flower.

> "When you have strong backing in this industry, it comes with a big price."

A singer you think is a tough and healthy competitor to you?
All of them, I think. Don't you? I really don't think about competition because I think it doesn't exist anymore. It's so tough to stay in this industry now that everybody is thinking of themselves. Gone are the days when there were only Shreya Ghoshal and Sunidhi Chauhan or Lata*ji* and Asha*ji*. Today, there are so many singers, when I go for awards, I don't even know who these people are. I don't know the singers or the actors because I don't even have a television in my house. Maybe it's good when you don't know who your competition is, that makes you just focus on yourself.

Remix is the current trend. Popular peppy tracks are revised and as a norm are included in almost every film. What do you have to say about it?
I told you Indians have a herd mentality. I love Indians, but we are like sheep. I just like good songs. There are people who have done great versions of old songs and I never knew those songs, because probably I wasn't born then. For instance *Aansu bhari hai, yeh jeevan ki*, I had heard the song in Lata Mangeshkar's voice from an album called *Shraddhanjali* which Mukesh*ji* had sung in the black and white era. *Power of love* by Celine Dion was sung by Air Supply. But when she sang it in the 90's, I heard it for the first time and it connected me with the original singers. But if you're going to massacre a song, kill it, murder it, squish it and take all the juice out of it, obviously I'm not going to like it. You keep the soul of the song intact and give it a new colour. Having said all that, I messaged Richa Sharma that I loved her *Maahi ve,* that's it. I did not try and take a pot-shot at another singer because it's not the singer's fault. It's also sometimes the record label, who tells the singer do it in a particular manner. And every singer here has to retain their job. If they deny, they'll get another singer on board. No singer is important for them, no music director is important; it's the song which is important. I understand that, and I have 100 per cent compassion for all the singers and music producers. But I have no compassion for the record labels. They are the ones who are exploiting the song. So, because I don't know her personally, I only messaged Richa Sharma on Twitter, saying that I really miss you. I used to be scared of her *Maahi ve,* because I never thought I would ever be able to sing like that. Her clarity of vocals is at another level. She is a singer who's done a lot of practice, you can make out each note that comes out of her throat. It hurts me when I hear such songs getting massacred. That is it; It's an artistic call. I have nothing against anybody who made that song. Richa was very happy after receiving my message. I would be happy if somebody messaged me after 10 years saying that somebody massacred your *Jag ghoomeya,* but you were the best.

What are your upcoming projects?
I've sung for a film which will be releasing next month possibly, and my own single will be released soon, which I'm banking all my hopes on. I will continue doing folk this year. I'm just taking a short break because I did four videos last year, and hopefully, I'll do six more this year. I have to get enough money from other people to pay for. |☆|

IT'S SHOWTIME!

> *Neerja* Has Put Me On The Map."

It takes some time for the audience to recollect the name of any newbie, but that is not the case with JIM SARBH. His portrayal of the evil terrorist in *Neerja* got the world talking about him, and next in *Padmavati* in a meaty role, proves that the show is not over yet. Now on the map, looks like he intends to own the map. His personality is hard to decode and so is his outlook, the more you think you know him, the less you really do. In a free-flowing conversation Jim gets candid about his career to Nawaz Kochra.

How did you enter the world of showbiz?
I have been auditioning for about four years. People have had problems with different things, like some people say that my face is not typically Indian. Some people were sceptical if I could learn Hindi. I wasn't getting cast. The casting directors had all seen me in theatrical plays. I had auditioned and have very good relationships with them. I met them all, it is just that I didn't get cast. Now people having seen *Neerja*, feel that I can do it. Kanika Berry had cast me for the role in *Neerja*. They didn't know if it would work or not. They didn't know if a theatre actor could pull it off, they didn't know if he could learn a foreign language and sound convincing in it. Now they do, so it's good.

How has life been post *Neerja*?
I am no longer doing much theatre because it takes commitment. And I have been booked more or less since the release with films. I did this film called *Raabta* directed by Dinesh Vijan, who is usually a producer (*Agent Vinod*, *Happy Ending*, *Being Cyrus*). He was with Illuminati before, but is now with Maddock Films. *Raabta* was a long schedule and took some prep-work also. So that, and then now people follow me on Instagram I guess, so I did things.

But *Neerja* has made you famous.
Neerja has put me on the map, let's put it that way.

Yes, but after that why are you looking to just play the bad boy, don't you want to explore other roles?
I am not looking to just play the bad boy, I get cast as a bad boy. And I happily take it on because I just want to act in movies, that's it. So if someone casts me as the good boy, I will be happy to be the good

boy. I mean, not too good though, that is a little boring.

So you feel good is boring?
Just plain good, just honourable is boring, then it has to be written really well. And the story has to be really solid.

How about the romantic sorts? Would you be up for romantic roles?
Some romantic films are amazing, it just depends on the film. I would be happy to play a romantic part, but people think I am scary. Now what to do?

You don't seem to have any inhibitions, in and industry that can sometimes be quite conservative, don't you fear being judged?
Judged for what? I have inhibitions.

But it doesn't look like, with the way you go around at any gathering wearing your own quirky style, someone who doesn't think too much.
I think about everything. I am happy to be acting and be in things. Also why pretend to be any older than I am?

You are not the conventional sorts, as you said, people get scared of you, which makes you the odd one out. Don't you feel sceptical about being different?
No, not at all.

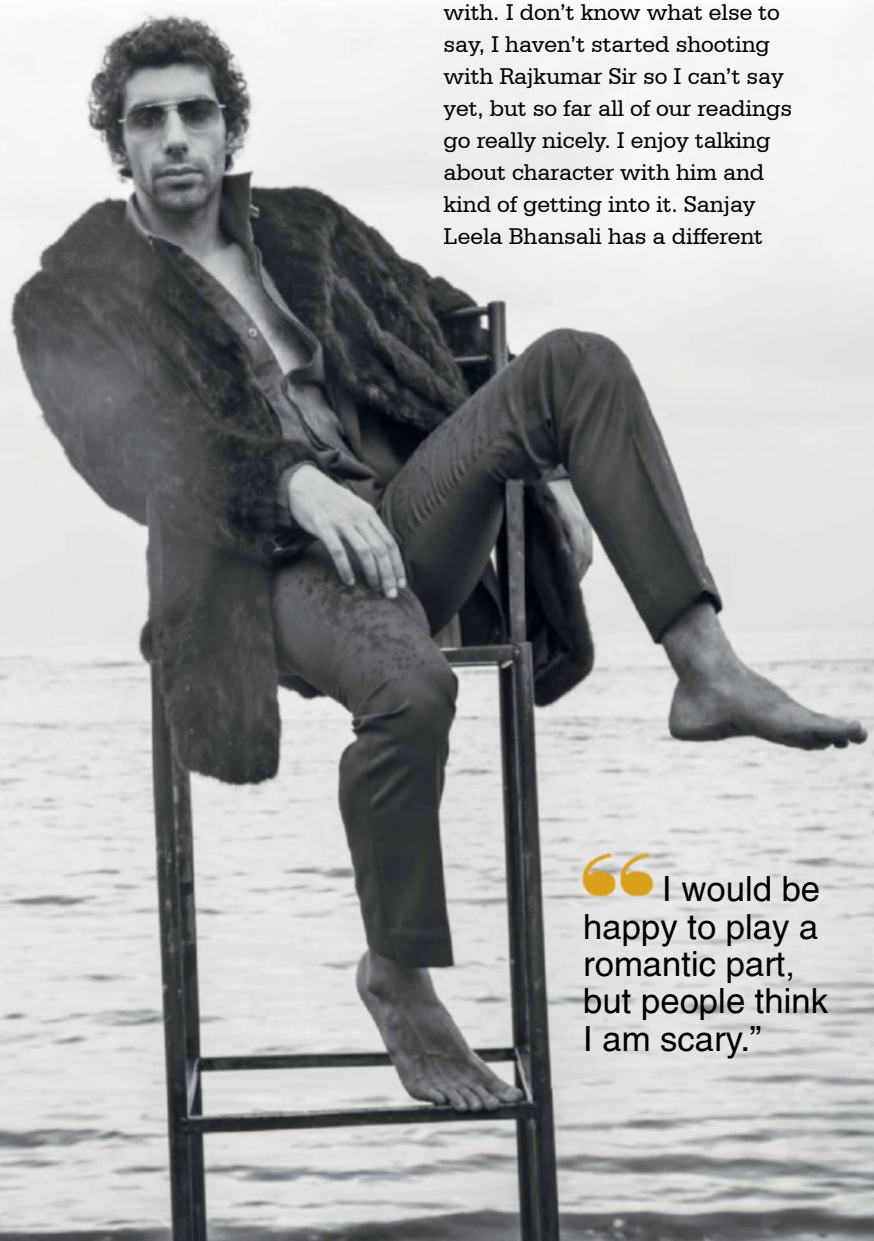
How was *Death in the Gunj* to be a part of?
I have a tiny role in that, I was like a sweet guy who gets bullied by other people. There is not much to say about my role really. It is just a flavour in the mix, but the plot is driven by other people.

The film was stalled for quite some time, and now finally it has released, as a newcomer wasn't that disheartening, since the second film for any one debutant actually proves if he is here to stay or not?
I don't consider this to be that. *Death in The Gunj* was a film that I agreed to do even before *Neerja* had released.

> "I am not looking to just play the bad boy, I get cast as a bad boy."

With the impressive line-up it is obvious that, you are not going out of the Bollywood radar anytime soon. Do you agree?
I don't know. So far it has been going well. May be they will see me in the second film and think that good God we have made a horrible mistake, he is only good at being a psycho-terrorist, he sucks at everything else! Let's see when the film releases. May be I can be like that flash in the pan, and people would say, 'oh remember that guy from *Neerja*, ever since then what is he doing, he can only be an Arabian terrorist. As long as we don't understand the language he is speaking, then he is damn good (laughs).'

You are working with Sanjay Leela Bhansali and Rajkumar Hirani now, and both are perfectionists, you must be under immense pressure?
They both are just great to work with. I don't know what else to say, I haven't started shooting with Rajkumar Sir so I can't say yet, but so far all of our readings go really nicely. I enjoy talking about character with him and kind of getting into it. Sanjay Leela Bhansali has a different



> "I would be happy to play a romantic part, but people think I am scary."

technique, we never talked about the character at all, and I just showed up on the first day with my lines learnt. And then they changed all the lines and I was like Aaaaaaaaahhhhh! But he has a different approach, you learn with him on set, which is nice. We figure it out together while shooting.

It is everybody's dream to be a part of a Bhansali film, and you are actually a part of *Padmavati*, how would you sum up the experience?
If someone told me five years ago that I would be in an Sanjay Leela Bhansali film, I would be like 'No Way'!

But five years ago acting was on cards?
Yes, but I was just acting in theatre, I had never imagined that I would be a part of a big Hindi mainstream film.

So when did you realise that you wanted to be an actor?
I had always been acting, I don't know when I wanted to be an actor but I always did act. All through college I acted, as soon as I got out of college I started doing theatre and acting in Atlanta. I came back to Mumbai and had a brief stint working with Mumbai Mantra (production company). But I was still acting on the side, as soon as I got a better acting job, I quit.

Did you join any academy to learn the craft?
No, I studied psychology.

Are you now receiving more and more offers? Are you rejecting them or are they far and few?
No, there are offers, but it's just that it becomes about time. So it is just now the Sanjay Dutt biopic and *Padmavati*, plus *Smoke*, the web-series. These three have excited me the most. Including the fact that two of them are attached

"May be I can be like that flash in the pan, and people would say, 'oh remember that guy from *Neerja*, ever since then what is he doing, he can only be an Arabic terrorist."

with such huge banners, I liked all three characters. I really like the web-series, I think it is very cool and if it is executed well, it will be great. I am so booked with all of these just now, that there is no real time for anything immediately. But people keep contacting me and sometimes I have to reject the offer just because of dates.

Tell us about the web-series you are doing?
I can just say it is called *Smoke*, and nothing more about it. I think it will be out this year.

This year seems to be the year for Jim Sarbh then.
It's a cool year, *Padmavati*, *Raabta*, the Sanjay Dutt Biopic. *Raabta* was going to release on February 14, but now it's not, now it will be sometime in March, and *Padmavati* is supposed to release in November, I have been told, but these things change.

Your face profile resemble Ranbir Kapoor, and your attitude somewhere have reflections of Ranveer Singh, do you have plans to also adapt some traits from these two stars?
I prefer just being Jim Sarbh. I will always be happy to change parts about myself, but I like myself. The part I like also is that I change.

Is there a role that seems challenging for you to play?
So far all the ones that I have been given have been pretty hard. It is not like they come super-easily to me, they all require learning a dialect, having to keep all those lines in my head, trying to maintain the character. They all are going to be lots of work, so far, none of them have been easy.

Do these characters sometime take a toll on your mind?
Yes, during shooting I prefer not to meet other people. I prefer to just come home, eat, may be do a little workout, watch something and sleep.

Are you then choosing quality over quantity or vice versa?
These are the offers that I have got, and they occupy my time currently. So this is what I am doing.

Are you seeking work also from your end?
Seeking work? No, not really because just now my time is booked already, so what's the point of meeting anybody and then say, 'Sorry! See you next year.' There is no point in doing that. If you ask whether I have a dream list, then no I haven't actually sat down and made a dream list. But I am quite okay with doing what is coming to me and move forward like that.

Hyphenated, Without Pause

Interviewing RISHI KAPOOR was a thrilling experience, which left an indelible memory in my heart. He has name, fame, and wealth, but suffers from the fact that the filmy world has never truly acknowledged his determination and his voluminous contribution to Bollywood on the whole. In a bright mood Chintu *ji* sat down for a candid conversation with Gayatri Nirmal, talking about his autobiography and more, with each emotion literally being felt through his words. Generally perceived as a tough personality, he's got soft layers that he reveals.

PHOTOGRAPH: VICKKY IDNAANI

> "I wanted to correct the people who said that Rishi Kapoor was born with a silver spoon."

After 3 years of your autobiography in the making, the book is finally releasing. Is the emotion the same that you undergo prior to a film's release?
I am numb to it because this is not an exercise that I'm trying to indulge my ego. I thought to myself that if one feels that I've had a satisfactory journey; it should get documented. I feel it's the appropriate age for me now to release my autobiography. Though, I always feel that the journey has just begun. My journey, emotions, experiences and mistakes might be a lesson for future aspirants. So, that's all been documented in three years. I'm sharing different facets of my life with people, which I'm not ashamed to.

Knowing how candid you are, do you think the industry people should be on high alert considering the arrival of Rishi Kapoor- The Uncensored?
Don't expect any sensationalism or any scandals in it. I've not intentionally tried to hurt anybody. I've expressed myself where I was hurt by the other person, and then I've resented it. I feel we should let bygones be bygones and not cry over spilt milk. It's just my experience and my journey in the book. I didn't have a scandalous or sensational life; rather it was a fulfilling one.

Forty-five years in the industry, the journey is too huge to be summed up in one book. Would we need another book to complete the story of Rishi Kapoor?
One cannot encapsulate one's whole life in a book. *Phir dekhenge,* if there's any life left.

We know this is your autobiography, but how much does this book talk about your family?
It's not only about my family, it's about everybody. I am exclusively only sharing with *Stardust* that we extended this book to another first of its kind. I enacted this autobiography live on stage titled Rishi Kapoor- *Khullam Khulla,* whose cover is shot by Vicky Idnani. There were certain moments which required me to express them. You'll enjoy it, and will also be saddened by certain events. I did the show for a limited audience. I had a moderator, followed by audio-visuals. This stage activity gave me butterflies in my stomach. It's your state of mind on that day because you're not enacting a script, you're enacting something impromptu.

What was that one part of the book that you really liked?
I can't pick up one aspect. There are things that haven't been said and autobiographies are all about discovering the unsaid. If we didn't talk about our shortcomings, how you were let down or how you've let down people, then what would you write about? It's a funny read, also catty at moments; it's all about family and people connected to my life. It also dwells upon my trysts with a lot of people and a little bit of introspection.

Your twitter bio says, "Son of a famous Father-Father of a famous Son. I am the hyphen in between." The hyphen required a whole book. But the hyphen is not just a hyphen; it's your whole contribution and hard-work.
(Laughs) It's just playing with words.

Being an industry stalwart for 45 years, you're the Bible of Bollywood, so how did you keep a tab on 'from where to begin and where to end?'
It was a task for writer Meena Iyer to create those verticals. There are incidents which I remember now and feel they should have been a part of it. I'm told that this is the first autobiography by any Kapoor. Someone asked me did you undergo any grooming to become an actor? I said, "What better university can you be in, than the practical Kapoor university? I've always had one grudge in my life - I wanted to correct the people who said that Rishi Kapoor was born with a silver spoon. Yes, I was born with a silver spoon and a silver bucket in my head, which was my crown. After *Bobby,* there was only failure and I lived in choppy waters, battling the angry young man and action hero images. I was the only romantic hero who was surviving these monsters. Again came the romantic period in *Chandni*, but I ceased to be a leading star. I have always been at the wrong place at the right time. I've had the biggest trembles in my life, which people don't realise. The liberty of being a Raj Kapoor son is only till your first film. Thereafter, you're on your own. This is the point I want to drive home to all the people who have the wrong impression of star sons. |☆|

“I’m Not Sure If I’m Equipped Enough To Make Formula Commercial Films.”

Dearest DELIGHT

She is honest to herself and her craft, that's the only mantra GAURI SHINDE invests in, the finest of her energies on 70mm to impress the viewers. Her journey from an ad-film director to a filmmaker clearly embodies the phrase 'One Woman Show'. In this opinionated chat with Gayatri Nirmal, the director speaks about her equation with her renowned husband and filmmaker R Balki, and her zeal for narrating interesting stories. It is impressive to watch this illusionist carve a niche for herself.

From an ad-film director to feature film director, how was the journey?
My journey has shaped up very well. I owe everything to advertising because without that, I don't think I would have been a filmmaker at all. All my learning and craft is from there.

Are you open to directing films written by others, or will you stick to directing only your stories?
I doubt it very much. My joy comes in what I want to express. I make a film because I really want to say something. I don't make films as projects, they are my babies. I get completely engrossed in the procedure of making a film with an intense love for it. So that's why I doubt I would ever be directing someone else's story. Unless, there's someone who thinks like me and has a story, then I don't know.

Would you ever make a formula commercial film?
I've learned to say 'never say never'. I'm not sure if I'm equipped enough to make such formula commercial films.

Do you watch and enjoy them?
Absolutely! I like all kinds of cinema. I'm not a snob who thinks that any kind of cinema is superior to another. I think it's very hard to earn those bucks to entertain the entire nation. So, I have absolute respect for all kind of good cinema, and all kinds of genres come under good cinema.

Do you consult your husband R Balki before or whilst helming your projects?
Of course, we're like friends. We talk about it, don't call it a consultation, it sounds very normal (laughs). You consult a therapist, not your husband.

Are your professional conversations good or bad for the home scene?
I don't know, because that is our life. We don't look at films thinking, don't bring such conversations home. Then what are we supposed to bring home, vegetables? We have to talk about it because we love it and live it. I drag him and force him to hear my stories and give his opinion.

What is your pressure area when you're making a film?
The only pressure I have is to make a damn good film and raise my own standard of making films.

There is a universal definition of something good in certain parameters that are demanded in the field of cinema, but primarily, it's what you construe as good.
Absolutely. The only pressure is to come up with original ideas, brilliant stories and get a good team to make the film.

There's been a long gap between your films, *English Vinglish* (2012) and *Dear Zindagi* (2016)?
Yes, the gap had to be, because I want to tell something worthy. There are already beautiful subjects and art out there. I just don't want to add one more number in the whole gamut of things. While making a film, you're spending so much time, it's hard labour. However, you just don't want to put in so much effort for something that you don't feel is up to the mark or totally worth it.

Do you feel the daily living of your life takes your time so much, that you have to cut yourself away to be able to sit and work on the germination of an idea?
I'd consciously gotten away from my usual space and environment to work on both my films, *English Vinglish* and *Dear Zindagi*. I'm quite a loner actually. I don't specifically go out to write a film, but just to be by myself, lost in my own world of thoughts.

Are you and Balki competitive?
No. I don't compete with anyone.

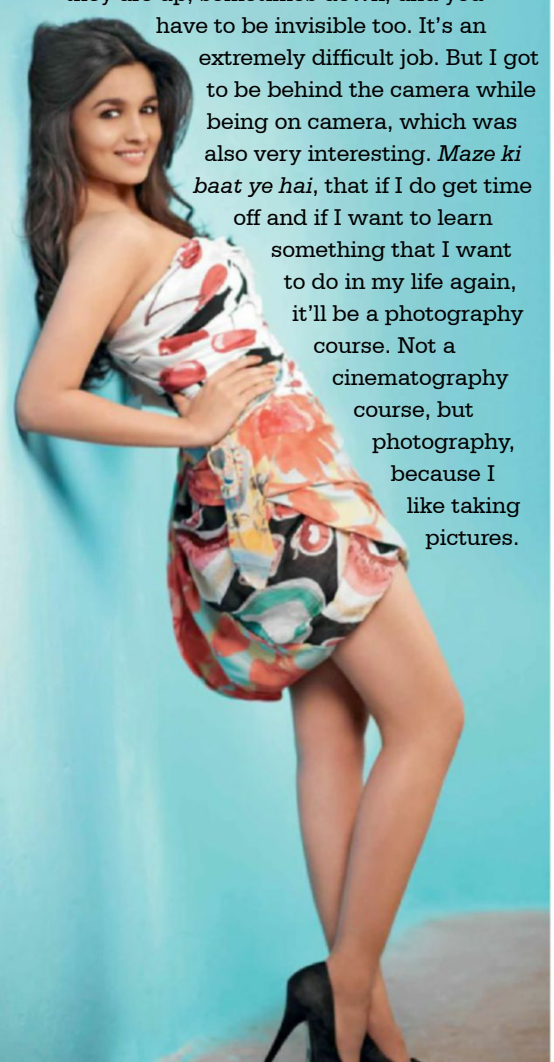
rumours & rejoinders

Dear ALIA

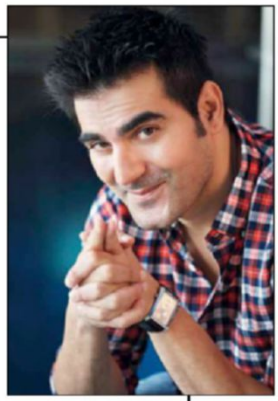
I really loved *Dear Zindagi*. You were very good in the film, and you have always been someone I look up to. I want to be a cinematographer someday and I am also doing a course for it. I want to know if after essaying the role of a cinematographer in the film, have you felt like trying your hand at it in real life?

Indira Bhist (Gujarat)

ALIA BHATT: Thank you so much, I am glad you liked the film. Honestly, being a cinematographer is not an easy job. This is what we already know, because we have seen them doing lighting, lift their cameras on their shoulders, sometimes they are up, sometimes down, and you have to be invisible too. It's an extremely difficult job. But I got to be behind the camera while being on camera, which was also very interesting. *Maze ki baat ye hai*, that if I do get time off and if I want to learn something that I want to do in my life again, it'll be a photography course. Not a cinematography course, but photography, because I like taking pictures.



Dear ARBAAZ BHAI



I have been a great fan of all the Khans from the film industry, but you and Salman *bhai* are my favourites. Last year was great for you, we saw you experiment with comedy. But don't you feel serious and intense roles suit you more?

Adil Kapadia (Mumbai)

ARBAAZ KHAN: I have done enough intense and serious roles. That is why the lighter roles are working with me now, whether it was *Kis Kis Ko Pyaar Karu, Malamaal Weekly* or *Freaky Ali*. No matter what image is being portrayed on screen, in personal life, I am a very light-hearted, funny guy. I've got friends who are really funny and we enjoy cracking jokes and have a lot of fun. It's not that I am a serious person, and a no-nonsense guy in personal life. I like to have fun and crack stupid jokes. And I would want some of that personality of mine to show on screen. So, when I get those opportunities, I do those films and feel good because I know they work. People thought I was not bad with Maqsood's character in *Freaky Ali*. It went down well with the audience.

Dear IULIA

Salman is always known to have squabbles with the Indian press. Did he give you any advice before facing the media here?

Monica Lalani (Mumbai)

IULIA VANTUR: No. Salman doesn't hate the Indian media at all. Before my first interaction with the press here, he advised me to be natural and to be myself, which I think is the most important thing to do when you meet someone. The meeting with the press turned out to be a very pleasant one for me.

Dear readers,

Stardust provides you a platform to ask any one question to your favourite celebrity. We will act as your messenger, and make sure that you get a response from your favourite star. Kindly post your questions at **@StardustIndia** on . You can also email us at **stardusteditor@gmail.com**

Dear TAHIR

Many actors have set this trend, so if you had an opportunity, would you get into film production?

Karan Dabade (Pune)

TAHIR BHASIN: No. I think after just two films, it is too short a time for me to be thinking of becoming a producer. I really respect actors who are doing that. Like what Anushka Sharma is doing at the moment with her production house. She has done *NH10*. The same with John Abraham, he's produced *Madras Café*, he was also part-producer of *Force 2*. So, for sure, once an actor is established, may be 10 to 15 films down the line, I might think about it. One would want to creatively be a part of stories that they would like to tell. But right now, it's too soon to be thinking of getting into production.

Dear SUJOY

I have loved all the films that you have made, and most of them have been thematically different, whether or not they were block-buster hits. But as a filmmaker, you must be facing issues with the Censor Board. What according to you are the challenges that Indian filmmakers face?

Rajendra Rao (Bangalore)

SUJOY GHOSH: We shouldn't think like that, we should just go ahead and make our films, that's what I would do anyway. You have to accept, whether within your house or outside your house that there are certain systems in place. Even today, when I am 50 years old and my mother wants me to come back at a certain time, I have to come back, I can't say no to her, even though I may not agree with it. *Abhi maa hai, main kya bolun?* These are very subjective things and I don't think they should apply in everyone's case. I am okay with the system, I am willing to fight it out. If I believe in something, I will go ahead and make it. If there is an objection to it and issues with it, I will tackle them but I will cross that bridge when I get to it. Like I said, I can't think of *Kahaani* and make *Kahaani 2*, I won't do that. I know there are restrictions and challenges, but I will deal with them when I get to it. I can't afford to think like that, otherwise, I won't be able to make a film or do anything in life. If I start preventing problems, I won't be able to move forward. I'd rather tackle it when it hits.

Dear KIARA

Seeing the increase in biopics in India, if you are given an opportunity to enact a biographical character, which character would it be?

Sirimoyee Gangooly (Kolkata)

KIARA ADVANI: I would love to do a biopic on somebody who is very famous, about who I don't know much. Perhaps, by doing the film, I might get to know more about the person. For instance, someone like a Madhubala, if it's ever reprised.

movie mail bag

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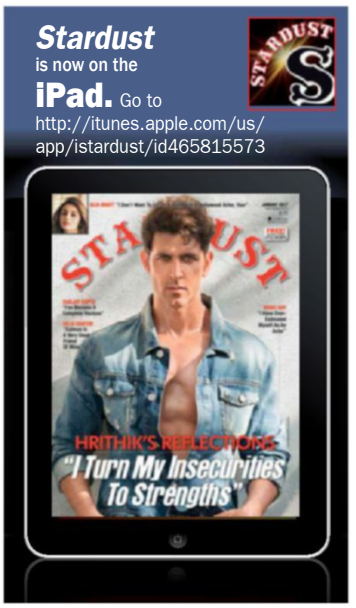


ALIA BHATT

THE BABY OF B-TOWN

How can someone look so adorable? Well, *Zindagi* is truly being very dear to Alia Bhatt in every possible way. Her interview in the January issue was so much fun to read as her cuteness reflects through her words. She is honest

enough to say that she is very hyper and would want to change that thing about her. But at the same time she is as cute as a little baby to confess that she's so creative at cooking stories that she gets caught immediately. She gave a fabulous performance in *Udta Punjab* and managed to be at the same pace in *Dear Zindagi*. Can't wait for her next release. Lots of love to you.

Ayesha Khan
(Pune)

SWARA BHASKAR

MISS. *PATAKA*

Goob job team *Stardust*! Such interviews make me fall in love with the magazine all the more with every issue that's out. I am so proud and happy to see Swara Bhaskar in your January issue. These are the true performers, who do not hail from any filmy background, there is no godfather to back them up, and they are here all by themselves.

THE THICK HRITHIK

Your January 2017 issue with the cover boy Hrithik Roshan - a talented actor, incredible dancer, style icon, and one of the fittest actors of the Indian film industry was really sizzling. Could there be anything hotter than Hrithik Roshan? He rightly says "I turn my insecurities to strengths". Everything seems to be going great for this actor who is a perfectionist and extremely meticulous about all his characters. His role in films like *Kaho Naa... Pyaar Hai, Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham, Koi Mil Gaya, Krrish, Dhoom 2, Jodhaa Akbar, Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara, Agneepath, Bang Bang,* etc have been different and acclaimed and it reveals the fact that his never-give-up attitude has made him one of the top actors of Bollywood. No one can match Hrithik when it comes to looks, acting and dancing. His work ethic, his incredible commitment, passion and his brave acceptance of struggle and fear, his identity as one of the most stylish actors in Bollywood has made him reach to the top. In fact, he personally likes to keep his outfits simple and usually likes to wear a lot of active wear. With his brand image , he want to create a platform to inspire, to share with the world and give back what he has learnt through the journey and there is no doubt that he can definitely be given the title of an all-in-one star.

Vinod.C.Dixit
(Ahmedabad)

This woman is one of those artists who has made her mark in the industry by her thorough dedication and hard-work. She gave a splendid performance in *Nil Battey Sannata* and proved her acting abilities. She doesn't need a hero in the story as she is the hero of the story herself. As I was reading I came across a quote where she claims that an actor's career does slope down after marriage, yes up to an extent that is true. But for an artist like her, nothing ever can drop her career down. Go ahead darling, do your thing. Nothing anytime soon is going to create a hindrance in your career. She undoubtedly is going places.

Ananya Kaur
(Patiala)

SAKSHI TANWAR

FROM THE SMALL SCREEN TO 70 MM

Sakshi Tanwar, a name that is very big in the Indian television series has now done a film alongside Aamir Khan, which is yet a dream for many. She clearly states in her interview that she

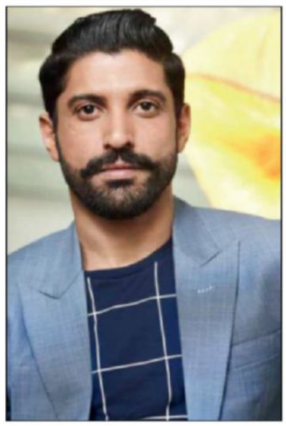
was missing from the small-screen for three years but that wasn't bothersome for her. Kudos for that because this proves that she is a secure actor, regardless of her break from work, she's confident enough that the day she keeps her foot again she is going to make a mark. The dialect she has adapted in the film is worth a million praises, as she claims to have spent three hours of training every day to be able to portray the character at its best. Waiting to see her work alongside the rest of the Khans in the industry.

Rahul Kiyaani
(Hyderabad)

FARHAN AKHTAR

HARD ROCKER

Post *Rock On* which was Farhan Akhtar's debut, I was blown away by this blokes personality, thereby making me a fan. His choice of films have been great, although the expectations for *Rock On 2* were really high, I thought maybe the film could've won laurels, but didn't. His *MARD* (Men Against Rape and Discrimination) initiative is a brilliant one and kudos! to the interviewer for her research that it is inactive now. But was good to know that Farhan Akhtar visits colleges and personally undergoes various programmes. His recent link up with Shraddha Kapoor also is an interesting tale, I'd



love it if *Stardust* could somehow investigate and find out what is really on between the two.

Prabhu Narayan
(Kerela)

PRIYANKA CHOPRA

ROCKING THE BAY

Priyanka Chopra-Global Icon, Gorgeous Gal – Simply spectacular "in Style Stardust January 2017 is welcome. It is a readers' and her fans delight. She is in the pages of Stardust on more than one time but always with new of her achievements and different news and views. She respected her father a lot (was afraid as she –like a darning Indian daughter-

used to hide her bold photographs in Press from him). Also once truly she spoke in the press that she needs some private moments to enjoy –like wearing a bikini in a beach and enjoy water splash. Now in Hollywood Baywatch movie-as per trailer released- she is appearing in a bold costume –revealing a quiet of her figure for public show. She is going commercially in her profession nothing wrong in it. She is hot and stunning beautiful. Best wishes to her.

M Kumar
(New Delhi)

KIARA KUKREJA:
Hotness overloaded!

TANIA ARORA:
This cover is to die for! ☺

GAURI SHARMA:
OMG! What a sexy cover! Good one *Stardust*

JASPREET SINGH:
Hot!! Hot!! Hot!!

MADHURI BHATIA:
A charmer! ☺

JENNIFER FERNANDES:
Thanks *Stardust* for such an amazing cover with an amazing person

YASMIN KOHATI:
Look at him! No wonder he's one of the sexiest Asian man.

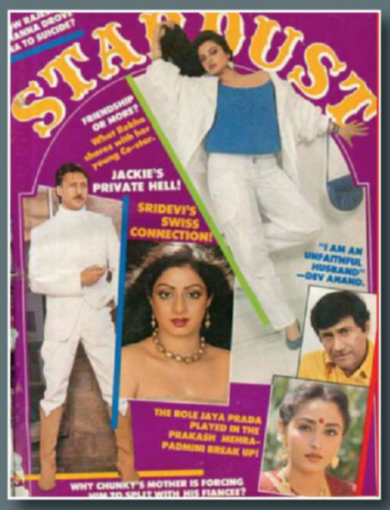
GAYLE D'CRUZ:
Lights and his shadow ♥

JANHAVI SAWANT: One of the best covers of Hrithik Roshan. Love ♥

Blast
from the
Past

star wars

Words **MADHURIKA**



STARDUST
JULY 1988

Do famous couples settle their differences the same way you do? Their every move, their every word is publicised, scrutinised, and analysed. When you're a star-couple, the most minor spats are sensationalised, as if every battle were a step towards divorce. But behind closed doors conjugal combat in India's Hollywood is not very different from the nit-picking that goes on in your home. *'Stardust'* asked the rich and famous star-couples how they resolve their differences.

Marriage isn't an eight-letter word that promises honey on the matrimonial bed. When I stepped into tinsel-town, my nice, decent ideas and notions all came tumbling down. Stars, I realised love passionately, but they hate with the same intensity too. Good luck, if they are only lovers, one bad fight and they can always find a new partner. But what if the two are bound by that eternally sacred knot? What can a poor Amitabh do if Jaya's nagging drives him up the wall? There's nothing Hema can do if Dharam loves the bottle more than her.

I interview some (chauvinistic) heroes and their (near complacent) wives. It was a long, arduous journey, tracking them down, ticking their minds, asking, probing, delving into the psyche of star-marriages. The tiffs, the make-ups, the eternal see-saw. When normal couples fight, it is a mere battle. When screen-lovers do, it becomes STAR WARS!

PADMINI KOLHAPURE & TUTU SHARMA

"We have cold wars."

The Li'l Nymphet and her hubby aren't all that mild and meek, both are solid individuals with over-bearing egos. And not-so-surprisingly, their marriage comes as a strong case of Siamese twins in love. When asked if they fight and how they made-up, their answers were identical. They started by saying in chorus that they didn't ever fight. "That's because I'm so tolerant," reveals Padmini. "No," insists Tutu , "It's because I'm so tolerant." And

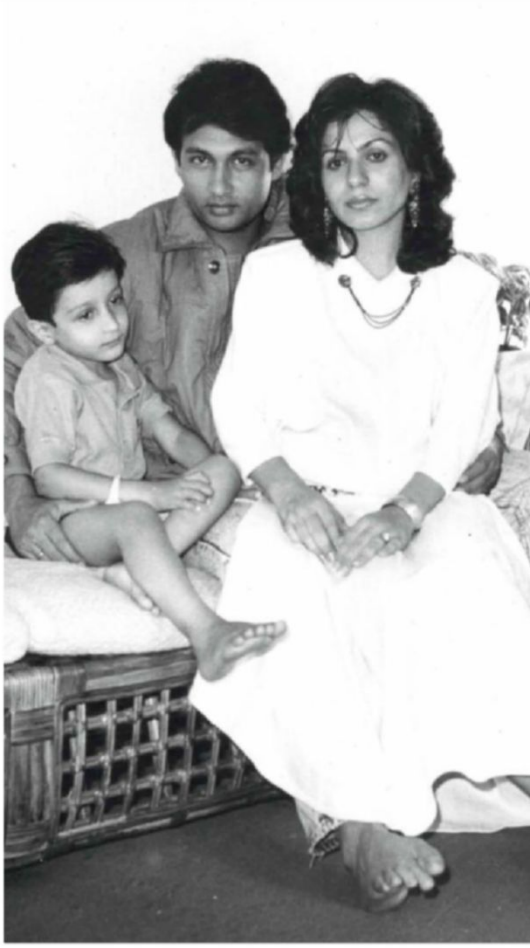
Padmini would argue and squeal, "No, it's because I'm so cool that we don't have fights." And Tutu would counter-argue and say, "No, it's because I'm so cool." I had to literally yell and tell them, they were having a fight right in front of me.

"Our fights," says Tutu, breaking away from the monotonous argument, "are like cold wars." "True," says Padmini. "No verbal fights, just plain ignoring." Everything it seems, goes on in the house, except the kootchie-cooing of the newly-weds. "We make-up by tickling each other." But it wasn't so easy with their first fight. "We were in the midst of doing up our flat before our marriage," explains Tutu. "And Pandi (Padmini) thought I was seeing another girl in the house. She confronted me and naturally, I denied it. But Pandi was awfully upset." "I felt so terrible," says Padmini, thinking about that fateful day. "I thought everything was over between Tutu and me. I confronted him once again after a few days and he honestly cleared all my doubts." Apparently that's how they kissed n' made-up and had a run-a-way *shaadi*.

● ANIL KAPOOR & SUNITA BHAMBANI

"I don't believe in flings, only in relationships."

Anil Kapoor, the self-confessed emotional butterfly, loves to flit around the place. But the moment he's spotted, he blushes, feigns ignorance and pleads not guilty. His great problems are his involvements, though he of course, prefers to wonder who Madhuri Dixit and Vijayashanti are. But what about Sunita? Surely, in-between her workouts and her designing and feeding the baby, she takes time off to tick off her erring husband. "*Nahin yaar*," drawls Anil with characteristic non-candour. "There's no question of it, because I don't have any *lafdas*. So where's the question of Sunita fighting with me? But yes, what bugs Sunita the most is my work." Why work? Didn't she want her hubby to bring home her bread and jam? "*Yaar*, she likes my work, but hates the hours I keep. I always end up not keeping prior appointments and that really bugs her a hell of a lot." He grins and continues. "She fights with me and calls me a social recluse and a workaholic." Not an infidel? "Oh no, where do I have affairs? I am not that type. I don't have flings, only relationships!" And don't those 'beautiful, meaningful relationships' get him into trouble? He winks and concludes, saying, "I've been very careful." Do what you want, but don't get caught is the Kapoor's belief. Advocated, I presume, by none other than Sunita.



● SHEKHAR SUMAN & ALKA

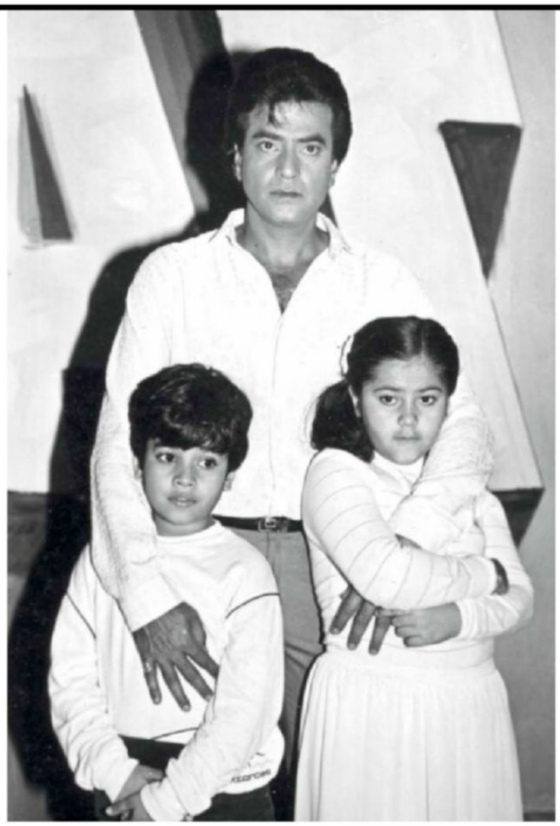
"Even in the sex act, a man is always on top of the woman simply because he's superior."

Shekhar and Alka Suman should touch wood quickly, because despite the Supriya Pathaks and Simple Kapadias, their marriage has crossed the seven-year itch and leaped into the eighth anniversary. But there is and has been only one factor that could make tremble the perfect harmony. No it's not another 36-24-36 apparition slinking into Shekhar's bed, but an emotion that clings to Alka. Jealousy! Or, let's call it possessiveness. Says a befuddled Shekhar. "Alka is fanatically possessive about me. She understands the profession I'm in, where I'm forced into close proximity with other women. Nevertheless, it's absolutely taboo

for me to even praise another woman." But can't the eternal admirer in him stop singing songs of praise for women other than the one who has his ring round her finger? "Come on," he argues. "Man needs freedom. He needs air to breathe. He has been promiscuous through the ages. Even in the act of sex, a man is always on top of the woman simply because he's superior." Did that mean there wasn't any love left after legality? "Love is there," he reasons out, "Very much so. Somewhere in the backseat of your car or under your sofa." Shekhar said that if she continues to nag like she does, then theirs too could be a Dimple-walking-out-on-Rajesh Khanna-affair-with substituted roles, of course.

I wondered if they had ever resorted to barbarianism to resolve their fights. "Like clawing each other's eyes out?" joked, Shekhar. "No, but I can make out when Alka is angry. She normally sulks and becomes very moody. And if I ask her to pass me a glass of water, she'll do it in a manner that three-fourths of it splashes on my hands, my shirt and the floor." And how does the *bechara* Majnu make-up? "I make funny faces, create comical situations, act retarded and juvenile, and she automatically bursts into laughter."

"I understand the career he has chosen," says Alka seriously, "but his only weakness is girls. And my only weakness is my jealousy and possessiveness. I don't know where it will lead me. But I can't change myself now." So how does she make-up with her *miya* after a bursting-bout of a *patni*'s possessiveness? She smiled shyly and confessed, "I press his body and he likes it." Small wonder then that Shekhar does what he does. He fights, just so that he can make-up!



● JEETENDRA & SHOBHA KAPOOR

"A one-night stand, may be! But I think he's past having affairs."

For Jeetu-Shobha, marriage is almost as prosaic as paper and as old as the hills. What with courtship, loving and fighting for 12 years before tying the knot and 13 years after, of living and loving.

According to wifey Shobha there's one thing in bringing up their daughter Ekta, that both of them differ on. "He loves to pamper his daughter," I thought it was most natural. But Shobha, feels, "He goes overboard with his pampering. I know all fathers are like that. But he is excessively protective towards her, and I fear this will not be very healthy for her in the future." And what about her son? "He doesn't like to be pampered. He is easy-going and quite mature." What else do they disagree on? "Like, just last night, I had a fight over the phone. He wanted me to carry out some work in his absence, but I was so busy with the house-work and looking after the kids, I told him I couldn't find the time to do his work. And he flared up. So, I too told him that I wasn't his secretary. I was his wife!" Once the fuse has blown, how do they cool down? "After we fight, we tend to sleep over it and in the morning, all is forgotten." But how does she react to Jeetu's affairs? "If he has affairs, I'm not the kind who walks out of the house. I'll do no such thing. I'll put my foot down. I'm quite dominating that way, and I'll get my way (a true libber at last!) Besides, I think Jeetu has passed the age for having affairs. Maybe a one-night stand, but definitely not an affair. It's alright when you're young, to have fun and games. But now, he has a family to look after. The kids are grown up. And I think it's time 'we' watch them instead of them watching us." How true, Shobha! But does Jeetu feel the way you do too?

● ZEENAT AMAN & MAZHAR KHAN

"We're watching a video, and suddenly we discover we're holding hands."

Both, the sex-symbol, and the T.V. hero are most casual about their outlook. Mazhar claims vehemently, "We rarely ever fight" and Zeenat says, "That's right, we may have arguments, but we never fight in the real sense of the word." Okay, so what do they argue about? Mazhar

takes over, "Most of our 'fights' are over squash. I love squash. You see it's my only passion in life, after films. When I'm not at home or at work, I'm at the squash course, and I get irritated when Zeenat keeps calling me up at the Sea Rock Hotel and reminding me of all that I have to do. Like, "Mazhar, you are going to be late for the party," or "Mazhar, you haven't done this…" What annoys Zeenat no end is, "that he allows himself to be taken for a ride. There are so many people who owe him money, yet he doesn't even try to claim it." And Mazhar wholeheartedly agrees with her, "Yeah, there are so many producers who have yet to pay me for the work I've done. I've got at least ₹ 18 lakhs due to me." Describing one of their fights, Zeenat says, "When we quarrel, we don't lash out at each other. It's mostly sulking that we do. We don't talk to each other for some time." Mazhar continues, "And things get sorted out by themselves. Nobody in particular makes the effort to make-up. It just happens." Sounds simple. "Like both of us might be sitting in front of the video watching a movie, and suddenly we discover we're holding hands. And, then the quarrel is all over! Or I tell her, okay, so you don't want to talk to me, let's play Scrabble together silently. And of course, we never bring up old grievances while fighting. We are not petty. Nor do I ever get physical!" Now that's hard to believe, considering the *Shaan* Khan's favourite line is that he is a hot-blooded Pathan who believes in bashing up whoever crosses his path!

● ZARINA WAHAB & ADITYA PANCHOLI

"If I ask her to get me one shirt, she goes out and gets me 10."

After 15 days of courtship, Aditya and Zarina tied the nuptial knot aspiring for bliss. But everything was not hunky-dory after they spent their *suhaag raat*. "The first six months of married life were terrible." Aditya reveals. "They were full of fights over the most trifling things. I would fight over the colour of the shoes she wore or the way she dressed." Now of course, they fight for different reasons. "What I don't like about Zarina is that she gets over-excited about everything. If I ask her to buy me one shirt, she goes out and buys me 10! When I ask her why, she says I can make my choice from 10! She usually goes overboard like this." It's obvious that she likes to pamper her young *miya*. "Sometimes it's quite irritating. If a producer calls home, she gets wild with happiness. Mind you, he may not necessarily be offering me a film. But all the same, she is thrilled to bits. Now I've stopped telling her anything because that's her nature. Zarina's very ambitious for me." Incidentally, what infuriates Zarina about her Casanova husband is not his womanizing, but his nagging! "I get irritated only when he nags me every time I eat rice," puts in Zarina. "I eat rice every day and heaps of it too! He keeps saying. 'You will get fat.' And that bugs me no end. I just scream, shout and leave the house. I let off steam by going for a long drive. And he makes up by buying me roses. But after that, he expects me to say sorry, even if he is in the wrong." Now what is it they say about the husband never being in the wrong?

● ANUPAM & KIRAN KHER

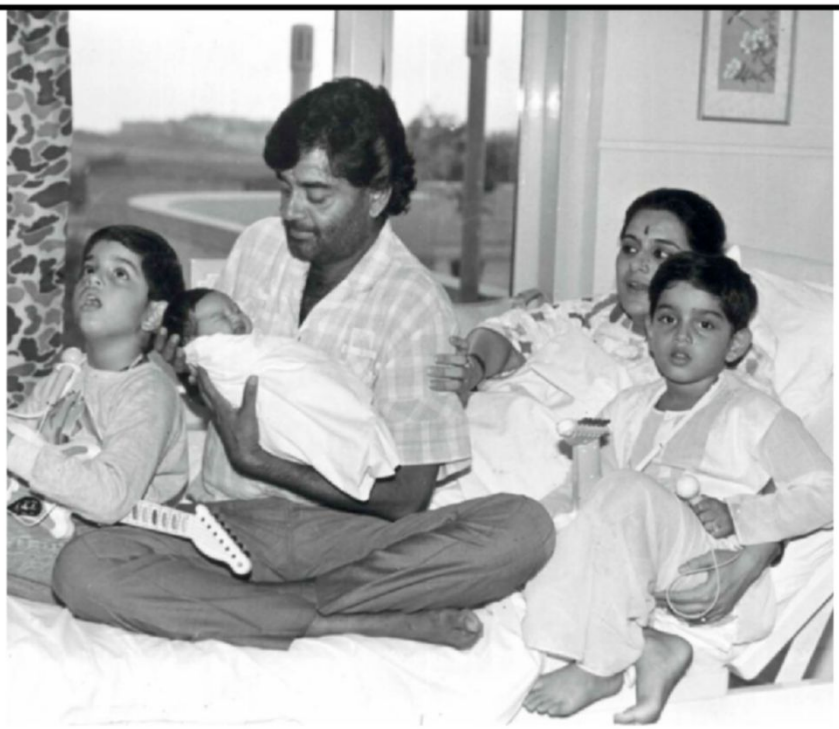
"Kiran is too outspoken!"

Even the most compatible couples fight. Be it over burnt toast or the wrong tie. Yet Anupam and Kiran Kher tried to convince me that theirs was a smooth marriage. I said, marriages are meant to be imperfect. Surely there's some chord that disrupts the harmony. Kiran's big mouth, that's what sets Anupam on fire, admits the bald actor. "I had just modelled with Kiran for Milton flasks. In one of the shots, I had to wear a wig. Kiran thought I looked absolutely terrible in that get-up. A few days later, we happened to meet actor Bharat Kapoor when I remembered my wig get-up, and told him that I looked just like him in the photographs I did for Milton flasks. And Kiran blurted out in front of him saying, "But you looked horrible then!" – It was difficult to tell who blanched more at the faux pas – Anupam or Bharat. Kiran however shyly adds, "Actually, I've learnt to be more diplomatic now. But, you know, even Anupam has some weaknesses. He is inefficient, careless and a shirker, but still one can't tell him anything, and this irritates me. He's also very lazy. Just look at his shelf." I look back at a dangerously balanced pile of books, manuscripts, papers, ready to topple over at the slightest tremor. Kiran goes on, "There's this other aspect of Anupam that I'm quite surprised at, considering the lean days he had to face. He has little or no value for things." Anupam nods gravely without commenting. "This man must have at one time, craved to possess a camera, a television or whatever little item in his life. And now that he has the money to buy them, he has scant regard for them. Like, I had bought him a beautiful pair of sunglasses from London. I paid quite a packet, but what does he do? He goes and loses it." Anupam at this juncture, tries to interrupt but Kiran continues with her complaints. "The same happened to our camera. It was hardly a day old and he forgot it in a cab," she cribs. But she concedes, "He makes up quite simply. He makes me laugh about something, tells me something real funny, till a smile breaks my face! But I get even more annoyed with that, because I want him to understand the seriousness of the situation and not make light of it."

● SHATRUGHAN & POONAM SINHA

"I've decided I'd rather have my affairs with Poonam around, than without her!"

Shatru started off by praising his wife to the skies. But there was a motive behind that. "My wife is a great human being, a great person and a great wife. She's great because," here comes the snag, "she's very patient, very tolerant, very understanding, very loving, very forgiving and all that, in spite of regular misunderstandings at regular intervals. So she's great not by choice, but by compulsion." Talking about the early beginnings of his marriage to Poonam, he narrates, "One astrologer told Poonam that in the first two years of her marriage, she'll have a terrible time, after which she will get used to it." How true indeed. "So if anyone is to be blamed, it is the *Pandit*. In the beginning, I tried to defy astrology by trying to make it a happy ideal marriage, and I would get very dejected with every new misunderstanding that cropped up. To sort out problems at home, I took advice from the best talents in the industry, like Sanjeev Kumar, who never got married, and Vinod Mehra, who was the head of the committee. I could have included Rekha too in the committee, only, whenever our meetings took place, either she was out of town or out of country (Dubai, Paris, Switzerland, or the USA) working on prospects for her marriage. Eventually, call it my wife's



"Actually, we have taken a policy decision to avoid any kind of fights that may have risen otherwise. When we're together, all minor decisions are taken by me and major ones by her. Minor ones like houses, bungalows, investments, what to do and what not to do, who's to do and not do are all decided by me. Major decisions like if V.P. Singh is going to win the elections this year or not, or whether Maharashtra's progressive policies are working or not, even whether Rajiv Gandhi will cake-walk in the next elections, or will he be left holding the cake in his hand, are all her decisions!" Shatrughan quips chauvinistically. So much for sweet charity!

dedication, determination or whatever, the fact is, we're still together despite my wanderings. I think Poonam has decided she'd rather be miserable with me than without me, and I've decided I'd rather have my affairs with her around than without her."

As for making up after a fight, Shatru has a wonky theory. "It is based on simple arithmatics. I commit a mistake, she has to say sorry (new maths) and I forgive her. If I'm caught red-handed, she simply has to say, 'I'll never do it again'. What she means is she'll never catch me red-handed again. I'm a kind hearted person, I melt very easily. I forgive her every time she catches me. I order her in a very beseeching manner to forget everything, and she very obediently forgets. I tell her you are cho-chweet, I love you, and that's enough for her. In fact, my wife always says that usually when the cat is away, the mouse will play. 'But you must be the only mouse who manages to play even while the cat is around'!

FAST FORWARD

- **Padmini Kolhapure and Tutu Sharma** still remain married, settled in comfortable domesticity.
- **Anil Kapoor and Sunita Kapoor** are as blissful still as newly-weds.
- **Shekhar Suman and Alka** have weathered many a storm including the loss of a child, and are still strong, with Alka still as possessive about Shekhar, even today!
- **Jeetendra and Shobha Kapoor** still rock the couples game, each one snug in their own distinct identities. Their kids are successful professionals, and they are now grandparents to a grandson called Laksshya (Tusshar choosing to be a single parent).
- **Zeenat Aman and Mazhar Khan**'s story came to an end with Mazhar's death of pancreatitis in 1998 Zeenat stayed with him, fighting his battle till the bitter end. She has now moved on in life.
- **Zarina Wahab and Aditya Pancholi** still remain together, and much the same. Their kids are now industry entrants.
- **Anupam and Kiran Kher** are still going strong, each scaling new heights even today professionally.
- **Shatrughan and Poonam Sinha** are still as in love with each other as the day they got married, everything notwithstanding.

Suffice to say it's heartening to know, that the percentage of long-lasting marriages in the industry is certainly higher than the quotient of the same outside. All these couple squabbles, affairs and all, have truly taken their marriage vows seriously, ennobling it many notches higher than maybe it even deserves. All of them are happily-ever-after stories. Like they say, it feels like a fairy tale.

(Contributed by Suguna Sundaram)

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis with Aamir Khan

Straight Talk

Aamir Khan

Ajay, Kiran Rao, Atul and Aamir Khan

AAMIR KHAN'S *PAANI* PROMISE

Running high on the success of *Dangal*, Superstar Aamir Khan with Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis launched the second edition of *Paani* Foundation's *Satyamev Jayate* Water Cup. The event was held on 3 January 2017, in Mumbai.

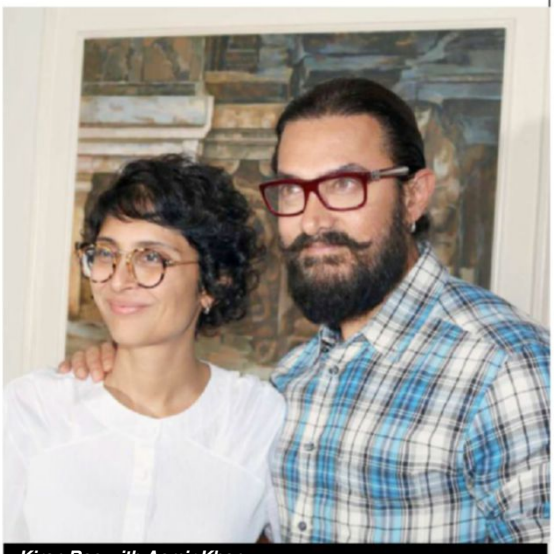
The event was witnessed by prominent personalities from the Hindi and the Marathi film industry.

The major highlight of the event was the anthem song unveiled by Aamir Khan, composed by leading music directors Ajay-Atul and sung by the *Paani* Foundation's co-founder Kiran Rao.

The Paani Foundation had started off with 3 districts in 2016 and now 30 districts have been included and targeted for the cause.

The *Satyamev Jayate* Water Cup is essentially a competition between different villages to see who can do the maximum for the watershed and water conservation.

The *Satyamev Jayate* Water Cup 2017 competition will take place between 8th April and 22nd May 2017.



Kiran Rao with Aamir Khan

The Grand Unveiling

Babul Supriyo with Nari Hira

Mahaveer Jain

SUCCESS HONOURING

The winners of the *Society Icon Awards* were social worker Gunjan Choudhry, lawyer Namita Chadha, designer and entrepreneur Priya Jain, businesswoman and philanthropist Nowhera Shaikh, educationist Mahaveer Jain, businessman Parmanand Jhamtani, social worker and politician Uma Shanker Singh

Ashok Dhamankar with Alpana and Sunil Tandon

Late Roop Karnani with wife Usha Karnani

Surekha Sadana with husband

Seema Goswami, Nari Hira and Vir Sanghvi present the plaque to Babul Supriyo

Rakesh Chahar with wife

Parmanand Jhamtani with wife

Akshay Dhoot

Iqrar Hussain, Shaikh Noorullah, Babul Supriyo and Abdul Majid Aziz

Ramola Bachchan

Amar Singh, Suneet Varma and Priya Jain with a friend

Sonali Gupta

Straight Talk

and artist Surekha Sadana.

Apart from the icons, *Society* also honoured some super icons, who have reached great heights in their chosen fields. Felicitated for their immense contribution were Anjolie Ela Menon in the field of art, Bhupendra Chaubey for being a media doyen, Babul Supriyo for his stellar role in the field of music and politics, Suneet Varma for being a designer par excellence and Rahul Gautam, the head honcho of Sleepwell, for changing the way India sleeps.

That was not all! Akshay Dhoot, the scion of the Videocon Group, was felicitated as the Budding Entrepreneur for taking his company's technology wing to new heights, as was Manasi Kirloskar, the gen-next of the Kirloskar family for infusing a breath of fresh air and innovative ideas to take the Kirloskar Group forward.

Asma Gulzar and Rosy Ahluwalia too were felicitated for their contribution to the field of fashion and for their immense support in making the event a grand success.

Team Magna

Meeta Mishra, Vir Sanghvi, Seema Goswami and Suchitra Iyer

Suparna Trikha

Vir Sanghvi and Suneet Varma give away the award to Namita Chadha

Prabhu Chawla and Nari Hira present the award to Suneet Varma

Babul Supriyo gives away the award to Parmanand Jhamtani

Babul Supriyo and Tulsi Kumar present the award to Priya Jain

Rakesh Chahar accepts the award on behalf of Rahul Gautam from Nari Hira and Amar Singh

Manish Tewari and Prabhu Chawla give away the award to Akshay Dhoot

Usha Karnani receives the award on behalf of Manasi Kirloskar from Prabhu Chawla and Manish Tewari

Sunil Tandon and Nari Hira present the award to Bhupendra Chaubey

Seema Goswami, Nari Hira and Vir Sanghvi present the award to Anjolie Ela Menon

Babul Supriyo and wife Rachna with Neelam Pratap Rudy

Madhu Jain

Shahnaaz Husain

As a grand finale to a fine evening, the icons, along with Nari Hira, Chairman, Magna Publishing Co Ltd, Suchitra Iyer, Editor, *Society* magazine, Ashok Dhamankar, Director and Meeta Mishra, Resident Editor, Delhi, unveiled the special issue, *Celebrating True Icons*, dedicated to the awardees.

Our host for the evening Sonali Gupta indulged the powerful guests in a jovial chat on the topic of the hour, demonetisation, which

Shaikh Noorullah collects the award from Tulsi Kumar and Babul Supriyo on behalf of Nowhera Shaikh

Vikram Baidyanath

Meghna Singh Deo and Nandini Singh

Anjolie Ela Menon and Shahnawaz Hussain felicitate Asma Gulzar

Priya Jain

Shahnawaz Hussain and Prabhu Chawla present the award to Uma Shankar Singh

Neelam Pratap Rudy and Amar Singh present the award to Gunjan Choudhry

Meghna Singh Deo and Babul Supriyo give away the award to Mahaveer Jain

induced quite a few laughs and some serious talk.

The event was attended by the who's who of the capital. Amar Singh and Syed Shahnawaz Hussain were seated next to each other and were seen engrossed in a serious discussion. It was an honour to have Manish Tewari too, who joined us for a while. Neelam Pratap Rudy looked graceful in her red sari and shared pleasantries with everyone from the political circuit as she walked into the hall. Vir Sanghvi was seen having a good time with Bhupendra Chaubey and was accompanied by his lovely wife Seema Goswami.

While Tulsi Kumar dazzled in her white shirt teamed with a checkered black knee-length skirt, Ramola Bachchan looked startling in her black attire and boots. Best known for her herbal cosmetics, particularly skin care products, Shahnaz Husain stood out in her long red outfit.

As the evening progressed, Minister of State for Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises, Babul Supriyo, sang one of his all-time favourites, *Sanson Ko Sanson Mein*, from the movie *Hum Tum*, which won him all the applause from the audience. Also present at the event were other eminent personalities like Vikram Baidyanath, Prabhu Chawla, Madhu Jain, royalty Nandini Singh and Meghna Singh Deo, Amar and Meera Bakhru, Garima Nagpal, Suparna Trikha, Leila Erfan and Monica and Rajeev Malik.

The glittering awards ceremony was followed by cocktails and dinner, which saw Amar Singh, Bhupendra Chaubey, Shahnawaz Hussain and other heavyweights indulging in some friendly banter, while Nari Hira played the perfect host.

All in all, a super successful show. Hope to have many more of these…

The Proud Winners of the Johnson Society Interiors Honours 2016

Debashree Roy, Dr Shashi Panja, Joydeep Mukherjee and Nari Hira

Anoop Sreekumar, Nari Hira and Ravi Mohan Ojha

Mamata Shankar, Swati Balgi and Sanjay Jhunjhunwala

OF DESIGN AND STYLE

The Johnson Society Interiors Honours 2016 was held at Taj Bengal in style. It saw a stellar gathering of Kolkata's biggest stalwarts in architecture, interior design and real estate

When two giants meet, there is bound to be magic - as there was when India's premiere design magazine came together with India's premiere tiles major.

Society Interiors magazine, along with H&R Johnson, the most trusted name in building materials, felicitated visionaries and super achievers in the various fields for their invaluable contribution to the design industry.

The H&R Johnson *Society Interiors Honours* 2016 aimed at recognising the credible work done in architecture, interior design and real estate. The event was attended by the most eminent builders, architects and interior designers of the east, apart from Kolkata's elite. The Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, Women Development and Social Welfare and Child Development, Government of West Bengal, Dr Shashi Panja, was the Chief Guest. She came with her beautiful daughter Pooja.

The evening started with the lighting of the inaugural lamp by Nari Hira, Chairman of Magna Publishing Co Ltd, Dr. Shashi Panja, Mr. Joydeep Mukherji, CEO, H&R Johnson, and the very gorgeous National Award winning actress and MLA, Debashree Roy. Soon after, the minister said a few inspiring words of encouragement.

Welcoming everybody to Kolkata, the City of Joy and the City of Saint Teresa, Dr Shashi Panja said, "I feel greatly honoured to be able to honour creativity, creativity which has no boundaries. This is an evening we will all cherish."

The event was attended by a glittering array of celebs, including Nilanjana and Arjun Chakraborty, Arindam Sil and Shukla, Rituparna Sengupta, Rachana Banerjee, Mamata Shankar, Sanjay Budhia, Agnimitra Paul, Alokananda Roy, Moubani and Mumtaz Sorcar, Ushashie Sengupta, Shuvaprassanna and Shipra Bhattacharya, Wasim Kapoor and Sujoy Prasad Chatterjee.

There were several posts by the celebrities, with Agnimitra Paul, Ushashie Sengupta and Nilanjana and Arjun Chakraborty expressing their joy of having been a part of the event.

Architects Dulal Mukherjee and Partha Ranjan Das received the Honour for Outstanding Contribution to Architecture. Harsh Neotia, CMD of Ambuja Neotia, received the award for Outstanding Contribution in Real Estate and Infrastructure. Neotia cut short his trip from a FICCI meet in Bangkok and came directly from the airport to receive the honour.

The next honour went to Jay Prakash Agrawal for Design Excellence in IT Park. The Outstanding Contribution in Restoration & Heritage Architecture Honour went to Manish Chakraborty. The eco-friendly architect Anjan Mitra bagged the Outstanding Contribution in Sustainable Architecture Honour. The Creative Excellence Honour in Architecture & Interior design went to two ace architects, Abin Chaudhuri and Vivek Rathore. The Creative Excellence Honour in Interior Design went to Amit Jain and Devika Banerjee. Veteran interior designer Ajit Jain came to cheer for his son, Amit.

The Creative Excellence in Real Estate and Infrastructure Development Honour went to Shrachi Group's dynamic MDs, Ravi and Rahul Todi. The Excellence in Commercial Construction Honour went to none other than the stalwart, Pradeep Sureka of the Sureka group.

Rahul Saraf (Forum Group) was awarded the Creative Excellence in Mixed-use Development Honour for Atmosphere. Paul Richie, the Project Director of Atmosphere, received the honour on his behalf. Sanjay Jhunjhunwala of Mani Group also won Creative Excellence in Mixed-use development Honour for 42 Chowringhee.

The Excellence in Luxury Housing Honour went to Nandu Belani of the Belani Group. Since he got delayed in Bangkok, his son Gaurav Belani came to receive the award. Innovation in Design & Construction Honour went to Merlin Group's Sushil Mohta. Ravi Kumar Dugar of the PS Group received the Excellence in Construction Honour. Also honoured in the same category was Harsh Patodia of the Unimark Group and Apurva Salarpuria of the Salarpuria Group. The Emerging Developer Honour went to Ajay Kumar Shroff of Alcove Realty. His son Yashaswi Shroff received the Honour on his behalf.

After the award ceremony, the august gathering of the prominent personalities were seen mingling with one another. And, a sumptuous dinner followed. Everyone raised a toast to *Society Interiors* and H&R Johnson.

AKSHAY KUMAR- THE REAL *YODHA*

Tata Motors launched its first product of the year, the new Tata Xenon Yodha, in the presence of its newly appointed brand ambassador, Akshay Kumar. Setting new benchmarks in the pick-up segment, the new machine is suitable for a wide range of commercial applications – a rugged, comfortable, safe and stylish work horse, characterised by everyday practicality, high levels of performance and lowest operating cost.

Akshay who was present at the event recalled his initial days of buying a car and how he still remembers the memory of driving it straight to the Shirdi temple. Akshay also shared his mother's happiness on hearing him being roped as the brand ambassador of Tata. He said he could see the pride in her eyes of her son being associated with this brand. Talking about being the *yodha,* he says, "I'm glad that the Indian citizens consider me as a warrior but at home Twinkle takes charge."

Akshay Kumar with Ravi Pisharody

NEHA DHUPIA'S DAY OUT AT AN NBA GAME!

Bollywood actor Neha Dhupia attended an NBA game between New York Knicks and Orlando Magic at Madison Square Garden. Being a true fan girl, Dhupia was cheering for the Knicks and shared her excitement on her social media. She also posted a fun video of her practicing her basketball skills.

She was the perfect fan and made the most of the NBA experience as she took to the stands cheering for her favourite team. Neha was also seen practicing some moves with the Knicks' dance team, the Knicks City Dancers.

Neha Dhupia with Hollywood star Cate Blanchett at an NBA game

Neha Dhupia at an NBA game

Neha Dhupia with the Knicks Dance Squad

Neha Dhupia strikes a pose at an NBA game

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Pooja Bedi

Raveena Tandon with Poonam Soni

Zarine Khan and Poonam Soni with Bina Aziz

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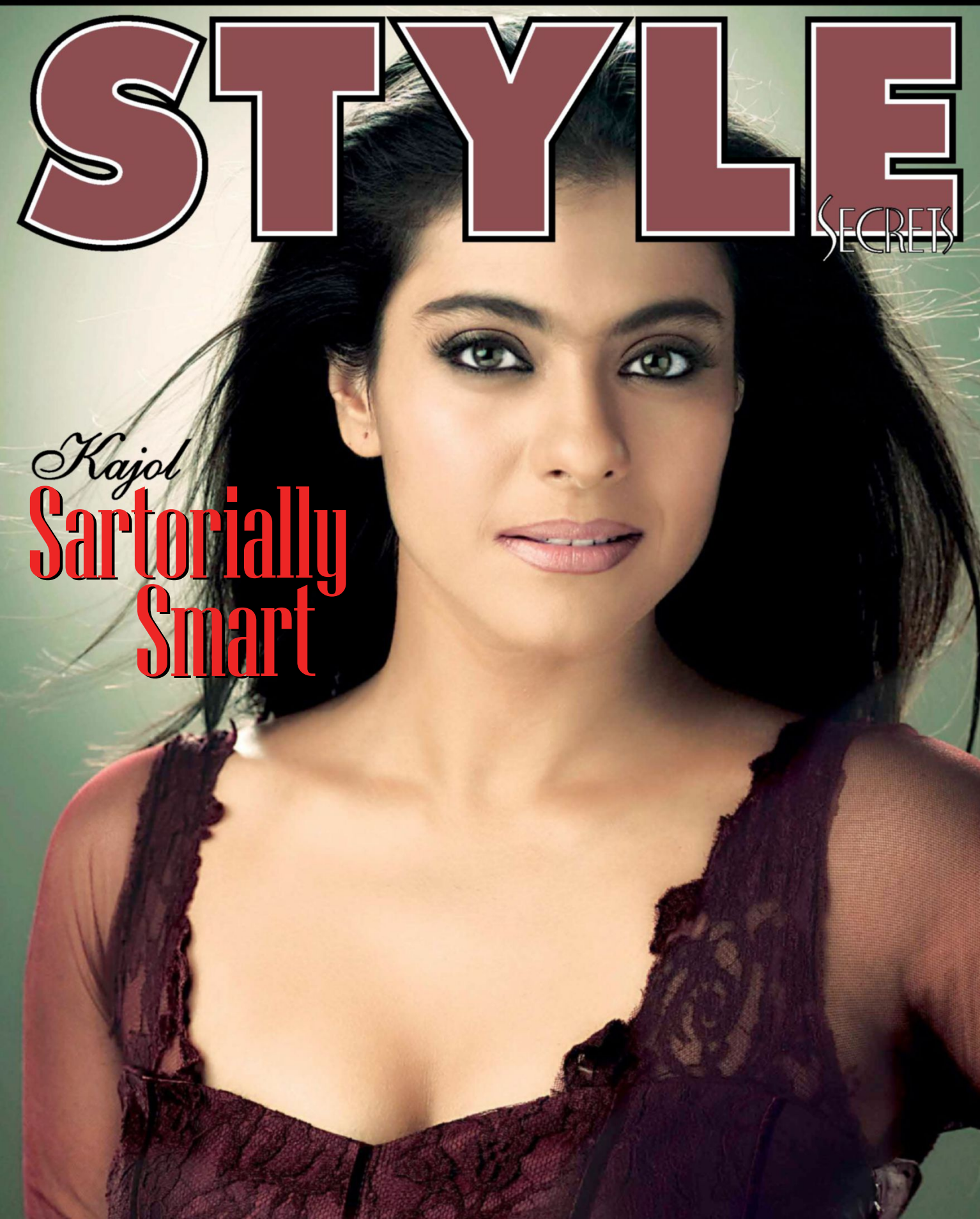

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INTRODUCTION

WORDS **SUGUNA SUNDARAM**

KAJOL is an actress so subtle and natural, that she warms her way into your heart before you and her, both, even know or recognise it. She is never one for excesses of any kind, especially the mushy, sloppy kind that most Bollywood romances tend to veer towards. But passion and intensity, without going over the top, Kajol walks a fine balance that yet touches a chord in people.

What is refreshingly different about the girl is that she refuses to be a conformist. Especially when it comes to fashion and stuff like that, both, for her films and her personal life. Nobody dictates what to wear and how to wear it to Kajol. At best, maybe good designer friends might be able to cajole Kajol into something that they want her to wear, without her throwing a fit about it. That is not to say that she's troublesome when it comes to costumes. She wears mostly what the directors suggest, but stuff like this is secondary to an artiste like Kajol. The accoutrements are really not that important, she's more concerned about being the character and being inside that character's head. Which is why she is such a hit with her histrionics.

But when ace lensmen like the late Gautam Rajadhyaksha and make-up mavens like Mickey Contractor call her their muse, there is obviously something that is exclusively Kajol's that lights up her persona. For the rest, she does the odd red-carpet entries with or without husband Ajay Devgn, and co-stars. Mostly, she prefers casual, which make her look like a kid yet. But she does look gorgeous clad in sarees and salwar kameez as she has done in the past. From *Bekhudi* to *Dilwale*, has been an eventful journey, close to 25 years, and Kajol has moved from raw talent to groomed grace, and still strikes a goal with every cinematic outing of hers. She does endorsements based purely on her convictions, and is invariably 'just right' for those she does.

Kajol never was, isn't and never will be called a fashionista because of her sartorial choices. But you know what? Frankly, my dear, she doesn't give a damn!

PHOTOGRAPH: SAMEER BELVALKAR

PHOTOGRAPH: YOGEN SHAH

EFFORTLESSLY EXQUISITE

KAJOL scores more hits than misses at the red carpet. After all, her million-dollar radiance and ever-so-gorgeous smile adds a glam-quotient to her personality, regardless of the attire she dons. She doesn't need to go all-bling to look glamorous. Subtle yet elegant is the way she carries herself, while hitting a 10 at the same time. Nazifa Charania reveals her red carpet wardrobe.

The actress opts for a deep pink sleeveless gown. The graceful up-do, peep-toed sandals and clutch in gold look fabulous. She finishes the look with minimal make-up and accessories that accentuate her attire.

The actress opts for an embroidered dull-green full-sleeve Anarkali. Minimal accessories and minimal make-up, make her look all the more natural. How can we forget that smile?

Kajol looks oh-so-gorgeous in a black coloumn-fit gown, with gothic make-up and a sleek hair up-do. Those black lips steal the show.

PHOTOGRAPHS: YOGEN SHAH

The diva graced the red carpet in a peach gown with dull-gold embroidery, an off-shouldered gown with a pleated train, a messy swept up hair up-do. The bottle-green danglers, studded clutch and those smoky eyes look breathtaking.

A plain black sleeveless blouse for a black and gold heavily worked sheer saree, scrubbed clean of make-up, and no jewellery, save a pair of studded gold bangles, Kajol looks stunningly beautiful. The oyster clutch goes well with the attire.

The sheer simplicity of this long dress, with straps and a silver jacket and chunky bracelet complimenting the gray, sets off Kajol's roses-and-milk complexion. She breaks the rule and opts for bronze make-up and hair falling in loose waves - she's nailed it to a tee. The tangerine nail-enamel looks gorgeous with her skin-tone.

Kajol, looks classy in a formal-full-sleeve nude coloured gown. She keeps her make-up minimal and opts for long danglers. The clutch and shimmer peep-toes complete her attire.

Black lace-sleeves on a stark, clean high-waisted gown, an oversized black ring, pale lips and smokey eyes, Kajol, walked the red carpet even with a walking aid, but managed to look great even so.

PHOTOGRAPHS: YOGEN SHAH

Seems like nude is this diva's favourite colour. Once again spotted in a nude side-slit gown, with nude nails, nude lips and smoky eyes. The high top-knot bun with minimal accessories look very classy.

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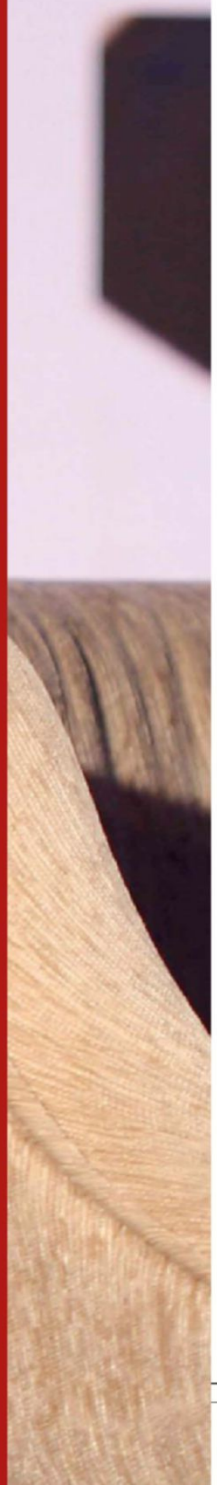


We see actresses pushing themselves really hard in the fashion game of 'Dress to Impress' quite often, but same is not the case for the docile dame, KAJOL. She dresses for convenience, and makes sure to keep her elegance and poise intact. She makes her own rules and defines her own style statement, standing out from the rest. The actress always bears her charm and striking personality. An entertainer at heart, and an actress from the soul, is exactly what defines Kajol. Nawaz Kochra takes a keen look at the add-ons the actress uses to deck up.

PHOTOGRAPH: YOGEN SHAH

Kajol lights up her surrounding by donning a multi-colour sleeveless jacket, on the car-print jumpsuit. We like the pairing of ash coloured hobo bag and the white frame aviators.

The actress wear shaded brown aviator glares, with a long beaded neck accessory. We like how the white wrist watch, structured hand bag and the flip-flops, are contrasting, but yet in sync.

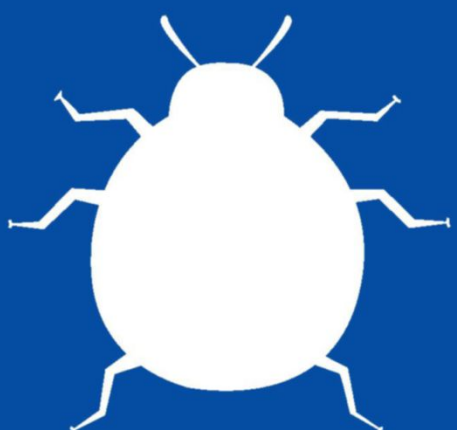
PHOTOGRAPHS: YOGEN SHAH

Kajol goes ethnic with her chunky emerald neck piece which greatly complements the colour block sari she is wearing.

Kajol sports black shaded catty frames on the casual attire. We love the rock on her finger, but the tote bag and the flip flops could have been better to enhance the look.

Kajol is at her adorned best in this look. We love the combination of blue and dark brown. A big thumbs up to the oversized cardigan, nude-beige tote and the white catty frames. The brown boots are the highlight of the attire.

It is amazing how Kajol makes the boring white and blue attire interesting, the grey cardigan is on point. Brownie points for the brown wayfarers, the heart shape ring and the copper watch. The nude-beige tote and sandals are a good add-on.



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WHEN TIME STOOD STILL...

Not just a fantastic actor but a charmer too. All her roles, from a tomboy college girl, to the fancy elegant diva. She may not have been out there as far as social appearances are concerned, but her filmy appearances have always been to the 'T'. Nawaz Kochra and Rinaldo D'souza dig deep into the versatility of her film looks.

DILWALE

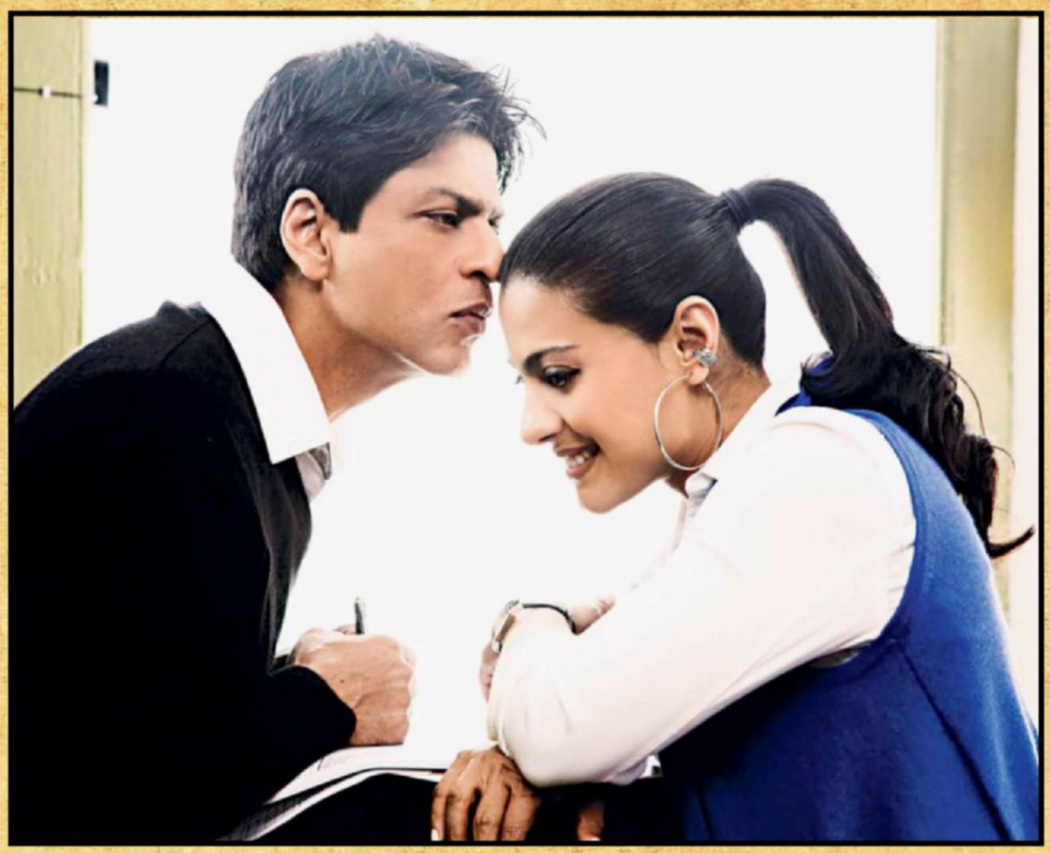
In 2015, Kajol struck gold at the silver screen after her long sabbatical. And the return became even more special because it had the magical pairing of Shah Rukh Khan and Kajol after 25 years of *DDLJ*. *Dilwale* was a modern day love saga between two people who are the children of rival gangsters, who part ways due to a misunderstanding, their story coming full circle when their siblings fall for each other. Even though she stayed away from the arc lights for a good amount of time, Kajol's charm was not lost. In fact, she looked her best in the film. Playing Mira, she appeared younger and prettier than even her last film. Whether she was wearing casuals or clad in a sari, it was difficult to take one's eyes off her. The layered hairstyle and the exquisite attire she wore through the film, made her look extraordinarily beautiful.
It wasn't just the materialistic value that added to her character, but also the villainous twist her character had. After the film, she can no longer be limited to being described as just a bubbly or vivacious heroine.

FANAA

Another time and another story would be the most befitting line for Kajol, when she played Zooni in *Fanaa*, a blind Kashmiri girl who fell in love with a terrorist (played by Aamir Khan) disguised as a tour guide. In the end, Kajol emerged as a strong girl in the film, when she killed Aamir, rather than let him go. *Fanaa* was indeed special for Kajol since she returned to 70 mm five years after enjoying motherhood. Playing the almost ethereal blind girl in the film not only won her critical acclaim, but also bagged her some awards. In the film, her looks were like the girl-next-door types. But Kajol carried a certain luminescence in this role, adding innocence to her character. And since the second half of the film was set in Kashmir, she was seen carrying the ethnicity of Kashmir in her style and attire with the pherans and headscarf and minimal jewelry. We would define her looks as classic in *Fanaa*.

MY NAME IS KHAN

Though Kajol has not been very experimental with her looks, she has definitely varied in her skills. *My Name is Khan* is an obvious example of this. In the film, Kajol plays Mandira, a single Hindu mom and a hair-stylist, who falls in love with an autistic Muslim boy (Shah Rukh Khan), in the US of A, and how situations shape up after the 9/11 scenario, leading to a friction in their love life. Kajol brings out Mandira's grittiness without ever losing her warmth and humour. She adds an emotional depth to her character which adds to her performance. Keeping her look as simple as it could be, Kajol wore smart casuals with chunky neck pieces or scarfs as add-ons to her look.



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U, ME AUR HUM

Looking at Kajol's filmography, it's obvious the actress likes challenges. In 2008, when Ajay Devgn decided to make his directorial debut, like a true *pativrata patni*, Kajol stood by him through the film. And that also marked Kajol's toughest role in her career. Based on the Hollywood film *The Notebook*, the story begins as a narration by Ajay Devgn on how they met. Kajol plays Piya, a waitress on a cruise, the story tells how they fall in love and get married. And how Kajol later suffers from Alzheimer's, she begins to forget all that matters in her life. By far, this movie has been Kajol's career best, and it bought her rave reviews and critical acclaim. In the film, Kajol is very casually dressed, though in the first half, she is seen in mostly the waitress' uniform. At the very beginning, on the brink of old age, Kajol is seen in a sari and diamond necklace. She sported a comfortably casual look throughout the film.

BAAZIGAR

The Abbas-Mastaan thriller saw the magical pair, Kajol and Shah Rukh Khan together for the first time on screen. The film, though not known for the chemistry between the pair, was one of its kind, for it was unusual for a hero to take up an anti-hero role. Shilpa Shetty played on-screen sister to Kajol, and it was Shilpa's death that led to the unfolding of various mysteries in the film. Kajol in *Baazigar*, was seen donning the best of high fashion couture. Kajol wore skirts, full-length gowns, crop-tops and pants, and salwaar-kameez for the scenes post-cremation, to portray the grieving sister. Dressed in a white and pink wedding gown, she accessorised it with a pink and white floral hair band, setting wedding goals for many brides-to-be.

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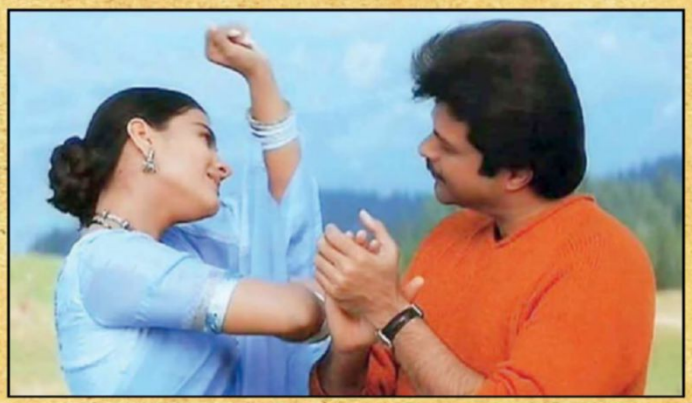
Trying to fit into all moulds, this film can be counted as another endearing Kajol act. The very simple yet, heartwarming story has Kajol playing Maya, an ideal wife and the perfect mom, opposite Arjun Rampal. A challenging script about this emotional tug-of-war had Kajol at her candid best as far as looks were concerned. She wore simple tops and pants, some traditional wear, and was just a typical housewife in the film. Her understated histrionics won her more laudatory reviews than even Susan Sarandon in the original Hollywood story, *Stepmom*. Some originality the actress brought, that had everyone wow her work!

HUM AAPKE DIL MAIN REHTE HAIN

From playing bubbly and young urban characters, to playing mature and demure roles, Kajol gave her acting chops a remarkable transition. Playing Megha, a strong housewife, opposite Anil Kapoor, she broke various clichés of being devoted, long-suffering and ever-sacrificing, attached to the image of a typical Indian housewife. In the film, Kajol is seen sporting a baby bump and traditional attire, with saris or salwar-kameez, and all the 'marriage' accessories that a traditional Indian wife wears.



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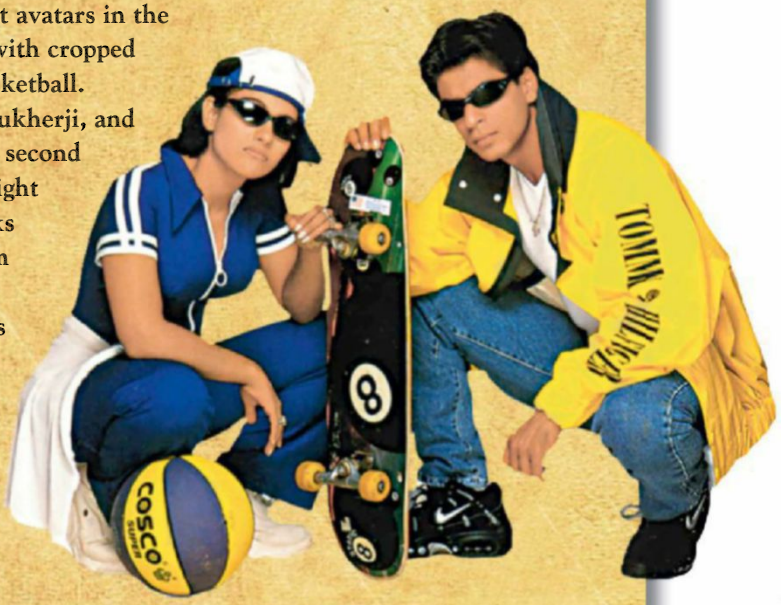
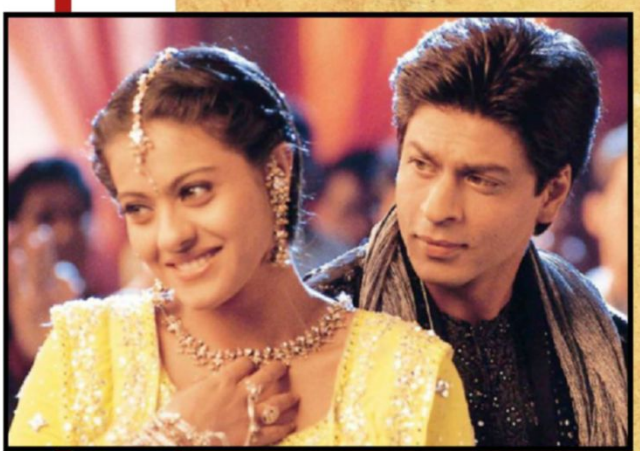
KUCH KUCH HOTA HAI

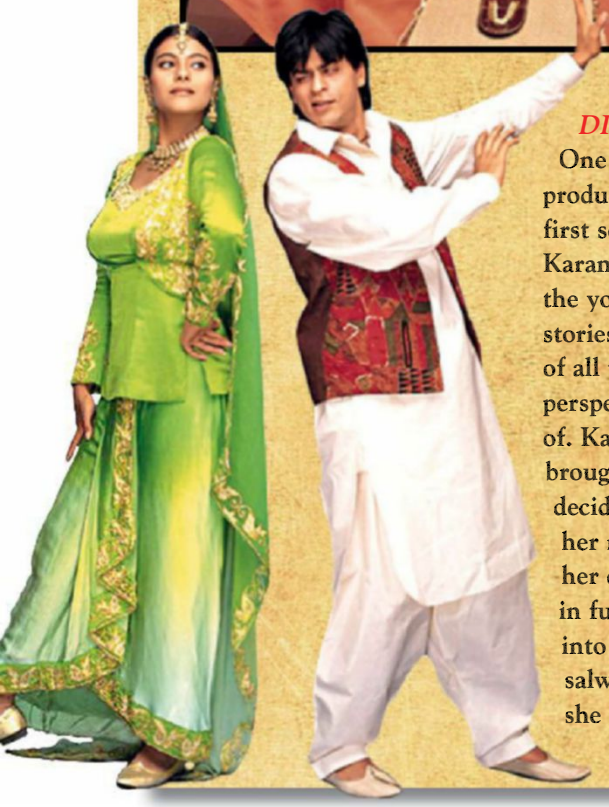
The film marked Karan Johar's directorial debut, and he did best what he came to be known for, portraying the complexities of relationships in their simplest form. And since then, people have believed in the saying – *pyaar dosti hain*. The film revolved around two best friends – Rahul (Shah Rukh Khan) and Anjali (Kajol). Kajol dons two distinct avatars in the film. First, that of a not-so-fashionable tomboy with cropped hair, and the one who could beat the boys in basketball. Rahul falls in love with Tina, played by Rani Mukherji, and Anjali moves out and is left heartbroken. In the second half, the film takes you through time travel of eight years. When Rahul and Anjali meet again, sparks fly instantly. Kajol, in the second half of the film surprisingly becomes the hurt-in-love saree clad, svelte young long-haired lover girl. What follows is a predictable love incidence between Rahul and Anjali, Rahul finally winning her hand in marriage. In both the avatars that Kajol donned, she was the character completely. The tomboy-look with cropped hair and colourful bands became a trend amongst the young girls and she totally stole the show with her oh-so-girly saree clad Indian nari look in the second half.





KABHI KHUSHI KABHE GHAM

Playing Anjali again for Karan Johar, Kajol looked perfect as a girl from Delhi's Chandni Chowk. Her Punjabi dialect was authentic and praiseworthy. This film is also a personal favorite of the actress, as she believes this film was a perfect canvas for her to play a romantic woman rather than a mini-skirted, love-smitten nymphet. Through the film, she donned Indian attire and looked beautiful in sarees, lehengas and salwar-kameez. Her sarees in the song *Suraj Hua Madham* lent a rare sensitivity to the pair's romance on screen. Kajol managed to pull off yet another girl-next-door look with refinement and panache.



DILWALE DULHANIYA LE JAYENGE (DDLJ)

One of the most iconic love stories that Yash Raj Films has ever produced in *DDLJ*. Though Kajol and Shah Rukh Khan were first seen as a pair in *Baazigar*, then followed by their pairing in Karan Arjun, it was *DDLJ* that made this pair a sensation amongst the youth. This film has become the mother of all romantic stories, across generations and decades. *DDLJ* was the pioneer of all the following love stories that brought a change in societal perspective, in a time when love marriages were rare or unheard of. Kajol played a simple NRI girl, Simran, living in London, but brought up with strong Indian values. Her father, Amrish Puri decided her marriage to his friend's son, back in Punjab. Before her marriage, Simran decided to go on a Europe tour to live her dreams. During her Europe tour, she was mostly seen clad in full-length gowns or skirts. And then, she metamorphoses into this Punjabi kudi, clad mostly in typically Northern flared salwaar and fitting kameez style, or lehngas and sarees, when she assumed the bride-to-be role.

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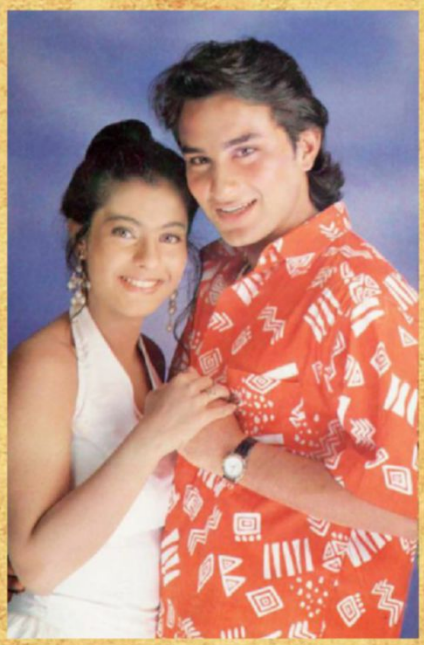

YEH DILLAGI

Playing a typical small-town girl, Sapna, Kajol was seen in two different personalities – the girl-next-door, and a sexy, high-society model. Yeh Dillagi was her first film with the Yash Raj banner, and the story was a romantic triangle drama with Saif Ali Khan playing the rich brat, and Akshay Kumar playing the perfect Hindi-serial-like brother. A simpleton, Sapna is left heartbroken by Vicky (Saif), and in a turn of events, she leaves her small town to make it big in the city. This film saw her experiment with different styles as she dressed her sexiest best to fit the role of a model. Dressed in short, as well as full-length dresses, she also donned derby hats to get her look right.

DUSHMAN

It was not just in Kuch Kuch Hota Hai that Kajol was known for her tomboy looks in a film. Her performance in Dushman got her much appreciation for playing a double-role of inseparable twin sisters, flitting well between a tomboyish Sonia, and a shy and fragile, but mentally strong Naina. This film got Kajol an entry in the league of great performers, winning her appreciation and accolades. The film revolved around Naina, boiling with vengeance against the villainous Ashutosh Rana, who raped and killed her sister Sonia. The delicate Naina decided to take revenge at all costs, and alone, though she procured the help of a blind out-of-service army man, played by Sanjay Dutt. The director of the film sang praises about the actress' conviction in her portrayals. Kajol brought a strong emotional core to the roles of the twins, and she made both the characters look different from each other, and yet, very believable and real.

OFF-THE-CUFF APPEARANCES

Keeping it casual might sound casual, but it takes one to wear the hat of an expert to wear the easy-breezy comfortable attires to look stunning for their casual outings. Gayatri Nirmal deciphers the bong beauty Kajol's hits and misses in the fashion parade.

PHOTOGRAPH: YOGEN SHAH

Kajol looks incredibly cute in the loose maroon velvet pants, paired with an off-white crochet poncho. The sequenced bag and strappy gold sandals added drama to her attire.

In red toe-length silk chikankari work kurta and comfy flats, she looked as cheerful as ever with her million dollar smile.

PHOTOGRAPHS: YOGEN SHAH

The semi-formal attire didn't add any oomph factor to Kajol's personality. The top gathered at the waist looks clumpsy which ruined the look.

Plain denims with white shirt can never go out of fashion. However Kajol could have kept it simple by ditching the heavy buckle belt.

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We loved the way how Kajol chose to look cool in her black and white striped non-fussy sleek top. The red glares perched on her head, offered a colour break.

PHOTOGRAPHS: YOGEN SHAH

The bong beauty was seen repeating the silk chikankari work kurta, but this time a yellow one. The outfit was an artless one. She should have given the geeky white frames a miss.

Kajol throws a casual goal with her bohemian strappy long black dress with uneven edges. She paired this abstract print with casual black slippers.

Wearing Seventies Halston/Farah Fawcett jumpsuit very evocatively, Kajol reminded us of the seventies styling. With wavy hair and gold-tone earrings, the sparkling actress carried it off pretty well and looked good....

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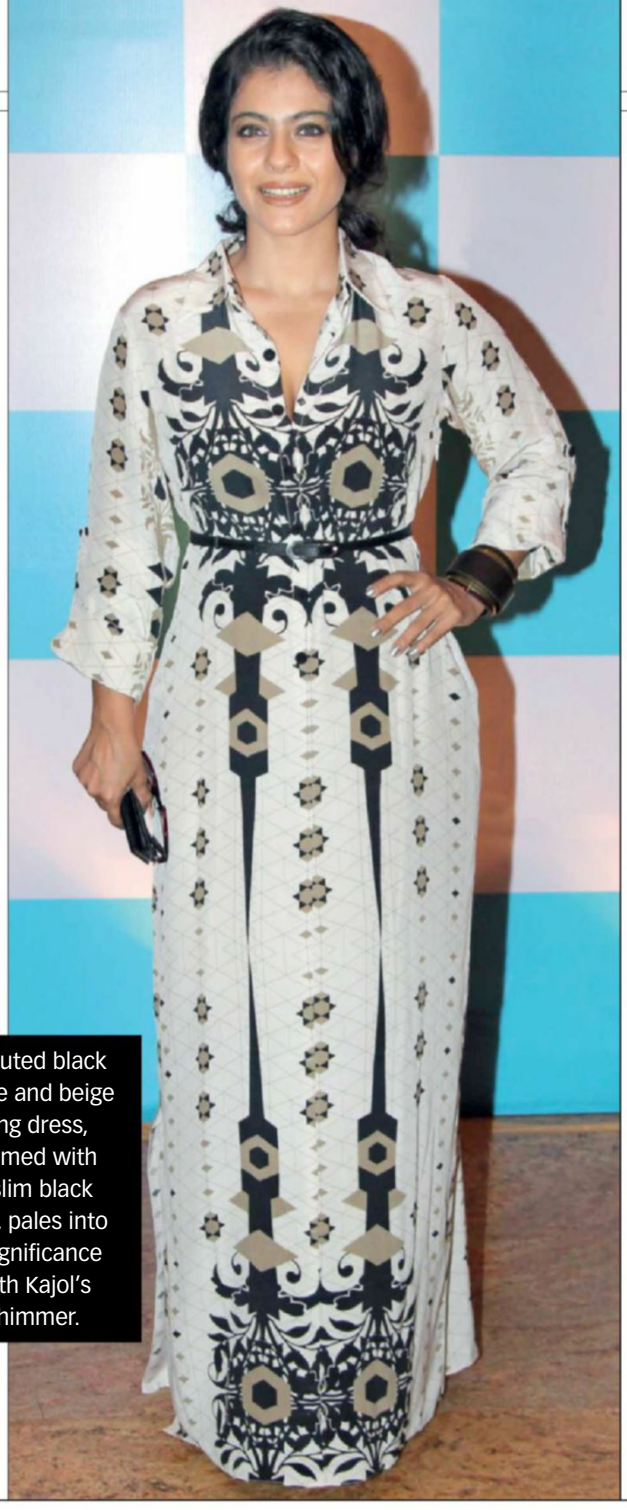
When in doubt, sport an all-black look, which hardly goes wrong. The too exhausted Kajol played smart by opting a black track and tee with a black pack. The dark pink canvas popped as the bright light. The cattys frames are to die for.

The knee length butterscotch yellow dress with beige pumps and a casual ponytail, are offset by the fire in Kajol's eyes and her smashing smile.

PHOTOGRAPHS: YOGEN SHAH



A muted black white and beige long dress, teamed with a slim black belt, pales into insignificance with Kajol's shimmer.

Dressed in a lovely satin green high-low dress, Kajol carried off this casual chic look with elan. The nude make-up enhanced her beauty. Too good girl!

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MANNIQUEEN

Dynamic yet elegant in her personal sense of fashion, designer Niharika Bhasin has been slaying it in the industry with her style statement in end no. films. She has also been awarded for her work and for the extravagant drama that she adds in the characters of the films through the costumes. Now Niharika decodes Kajol's stle quotient for us.

Designer Niharika Bhasin Khan

How would you define Kajol's personal style?
It's casual and comfortable.

What are the changes you have seen in her fashion sensibilities over the years?
She has brought in a sense of elegance and maturity to her style, which is refreshing not to be stuck in an age.

Do you think Kajol experiments with her looks? How experimental is she with her wardrobe?
Kajol at work has always been able to fit into a character and makes it work. I think personally, she is not very experimental. However, over the years, she has found an ease in her own personal clothing.

Which colours, cuts and fabrics do you feel suit her best?
Difficult to say, as I have not worked with her. I do feel she epitomises grace, elegance and a confidence that she has not experimented with. She encompasses strength.

According to you, what attire would suit the actress - Indian, Western, or a combination of both?
Both. But not a combination.

Which of her on-screen characters have you liked the most as far as her look is concerned? What was so different about that look?
I enjoyed her on-screen character in *Dilwale*. It gave her the freedom to step out and try a few new styles. I also think she was true to the Indian Punjabi character in *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* and her naivety showed through.

In which film do you think she could have been styled better?
I don't really know. Besides her styling, you get sucked into her energy and her good looks, so you forget her styling.

Do you remember any particular look of hers from her films that has set a trend?

Her chiffon saris and her hairstyle in *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai*.

If you have to design a red-carpet outfit for her, what would you dress her up in?
Either a sari, very Indian; or an open neck, floor-length gown- simple, with not too much work, very western.

When was the last time you saw Kajol putting the fashion police on the back seat?
Whenever she is dressed in traditional Indian attire

Do you think the actress has been an inspiration to youngsters, and in what way?
She has been awe-inspiring in her ability to play the tomboy and the girl every boy wants to take home to their parents. Her work with the United Nations and her work as an actress inspire youngsters that you can do anything. ☆

PHOTOGRAPHS: YOGEN SHAH

EFFORTLESS BEAUTY

Fitness actually means being fit and not skinny for this evergreen diva. KAJOL is one actress who doesn't succumb to any pressures of being sleek, instead, shre prefers to be curvy. She undoubtedly looks gorgeous and feels extremely comfortable in her skin. Those figure-fit coloumn gowns and beautiful *Anarkali*'s look all the more beautiful when she dons them. She is blessed with a body to pull off any look with glory at its peak. Stardust's attempts to decode the fitness *fundas* of this actress.

Kajol took the audience by storm in the promos of *Dilwale*, and stunned the fashion police with her new svelte and sexy look. A mother of two, Kajol, like every other woman had put on oodles of post-pregnancy weight, which almost refused to go. But it was after her second child's (son Yug) birth that Kajol decided to work on her body and bring it back in shape. From the very beginning of her career, Kajol never had weight issues, nor had she ever received flak for her body image. More than anything, it was because she was, and seemed completely confident and comfortable in her body. She was not in the news for her weight losses and gains and related issues. It was never fashion that Kajol was known for, her acting did the talking. But apart from acting skills, she is highly spoken about for the natural beauty she possesses. Intelligent mind apart, Kajol has been innately blessed with a roses-and-cream complexion, thick dark tresses, honey gold eyes, and a naturally healthy form complementing her flawless skin.

She took her first break from the industry in 2001 which lasted up to 2006, during which, she had her daughter Nysa in 2003. Then she did *Fanaa*. In between, she was seen in a cameo in *Kal Ho Na Ho*, and her public appearances

PHOTOGRAPHS: YOGEN SHAH

were rare. Motherhood kept her busy and Kajol seemed to have almost forgotten the industry. She took out time to enjoy motherhood and concentrated all her skills in giving the best to her daughter. Kajol still didn't seem to be keen on doing films and was very selective about the projects she took up. Though *Fanaa* marked her comeback on the silver screen, it took her another two years to star in *U, Me Aur Hum,* her husband Ajay Devgn's directorial debut, and in itself, a difficult role for Kajol. The film made the public nostalgic as it brought back Ajay and Kajol together, after almost eight years.

In 2010, the birth of her second baby meant her having to go through the process once again. But she had two releases that year, and it was felt that Kajol was still ruling the roost where sheer histrionics were concerned. But this time round, Kajol had put on weight and was required to work hard to lose it. Kajol is one of the most strategically correct actresses in Bollywood. On becoming a mommy, she made sure the roles she took, suited her looks and situation in life, and only took up endorsements related to home and kids' health-care. For a time, she was careful in choosing what she wore on screen, and mostly stuck to loose-fitted clothes that didn't accentuate her post pregnancy form, or make her body weight obvious to the viewers. Having said that, Kajol never took a back seat with regard to her health, and went through a hardcore six months training to lose her mommy fat.

DIET

Kajol is particular about her diet regime and puts in extreme hard work at maintaining it. Her diet is rich in proteins, and she makes sure to consume adequate amount of water through the day. She is not one who indulges in or is tempted by junk foods. She might not be very concerned about her looks in her public appearances, but the actress believes in inner fitness and health. She consumes food in small quantities and does not starve herself, to achieve fine fettle. Whatever the lady puts in is obviously working. Because, even as the years go by, Kajol's radiance and luminosity remain undimmed. If anything, they seem heightened, and she is a walking endorsement for good health and spirit.

EXERCISE

Kajol never received flak for flaunting her post-pregnancy mommy fat, like many other actresses have had to face. She didn't put on extreme weight because of which, it was easier for her to get back into shape just six months after giving birth. She lost almost 18 kilos in a span of five months, setting fitness goals for many struggling to lose weight. She doesn't give exercise a miss, and makes sure to at least spend 90 minutes everyday on her workout. Her workout is intensive and Kajol focuses on strength and endurance. She is not at all a fitness freak, but works on her health in a holistic manner. She does weight training, yoga, and cardio as part of her fitness regime. She also includes a lot of stretches post workout, to ease her muscles, and aerobics to keep up to her dance routine.

THE GLAM TOUCH

KAJOL is someone who has a radiant skin tone. Her complexion is such that putting on make-up will just be a spoiler to her natural beauty. Keeping that in mind, whoever styles her in films makes sure to keep her as simple as they can. Breaking the not-so-complex looks of the actress to *Stardust*, Sejal Chhutani (Deputy Manager, Inglot) reveals how girls can get the looks the actress had in some movies, aided by Inglot products.

PHOTOGRAPH: YOGEN SHAH

DILWALE

In *Dilwale,* Kajol had simple urban looks, and whether she sported casuals or saris, the make-up used was minimal. That is what bought out her beauty in the film. You too can get her looks from the film using the following method:

Prep the face with a light-weight moisturizer. Use under make-up base, apply High Definition foundation for smooth and even coverage. Use a pro-blending sponge to blend the foundation. Conceal dark circles or blemishes with cream concealer, use your ring finger to pat and blend the concealer in areas where needed, to get maximum coverage. Once the base looks flawless, set it with translucent loose powder. Use a matte-toned brown blush or contour shade on a blush brush, to sculpt the cheekbones, using the same blush and contour colour, blend the shade onto the cheeks to add more depth and warmth. Use highlighting powder on the highest points of the cheeks with a blush brush to add some glow to the face. Brush the brow with the brow groomer and fill in the brows, using eyebrow pencil in dark brown shades, create small, light feather strokes on the inner corners and gradually darken the brows from the arch to the end. Brush through the brows again. This will give you the natural brows without looking overdone. Prime the eyelids with eye make-up base. Use a pencil liner (black or gray looks best) to trace your top lash line from the inner corner to the outer. Then, use the same pencil to dot between your lower lashes. Smudge both lash lines with a cotton swab or an eyeliner brush. Sweep powder shadow

(brown, gray and dark green all work with black or gray liner) over your lid and into your crease, blending the color up and outward TIP: To prevent color from fading and give your lids a more shimmery finish, pat a cream shadow over the concealer on your lid first, wait five minutes, then top with a matching powder shadow. Dust a lighter, neutral eye shadow (such as ivory) over just your brow bone. Curl the mascara using a professional eye lash curler and finish with two coats of black mascara. Line the lips with a brown based nude lip liner, apply a coat of light nude coral lipstick to the Centre of the lips and blend it into the liner for a natural look.

DUSHMAN

In the film, Kajol had a double role; one of a simpleton, and the other, a tomboy. Both the looks required minimal make-up and it was done to the tee. If you have a similar look, this is how you can prep it up:

Massage a dime sized amount of tinted moisturiser into your skin with your fingers to even out your skin tone. Using your hands instead of a brush or sponge will help to make skin look plump, while allowing you to blend with ease.

Dot face and body illuminator or under eye corrective illuminator under your eyes and over any dark or red spots. Pat it in gently using your ring finger to blend.

Apply translucent loose powder to your entire face using a large powder brush to set your base.

Sweep a pale pink blush over the apples of your cheeks using a blush brush. Work the blush up toward your temples for natural looking definition.

Apply a neutral-toned cream shadow from your lid up to your brow bone using an eye shadow brush. Beige rose gold and taupe work well for most skin tones. Pat it on for even coverage and to neutralise any darkness.

Dip an angled brush into the same shadow, and sweep it underneath your lower lashes to help open up your eyes.

Apply long and curly mascara to both, your upper and lower lashes. Wiggle the mascara into the root for five seconds before pulling it through your lashes and coating the ends.

Apply a pale pink tinted lip gloss to your lips. One coat will provide a sheer wash of color, while more adds drama and dimension.

PYAAR KIYA TOH DARNA KYA

In this film, Kajol was seen sporting the girl-next-door looks. Yet, if you wish to become the desirable girl-next-door, do this:

Using fingers, apply a light layer of cream foundation all over moisturized skin, starting in the center of the face and working out. I like the way that fingers warm up the product and help it glide on smoothly. Make sure that it's thoroughly blended, especially around the hairline, jawline, and nostrils where product tends to pool.

Apply an eye shadow in a peachy-nude shade to even out the eyelid, blending from lash line up to brow bone that won't crease.

If you need a little coverage under the eyes, use fingers to dab a small amount of under eye concealer on lower lid. The key here is to use as little as possible to cover dark circles without feeling cakey or heavy.

Swirl a large fluffy brush in powder, then tap against the side of the pressed powder so that any excess falls off. Swipe powder along the t-zone and swirl a little on cheeks and chin, just to eliminate shine and set the rest of your makeup. Then swirl brush in bronzing powder and apply to apples of cheeks, across nose, and forehead for a sun kissed look.

Using an eye pencil with a very sharp point, trace the thinnest line possible into the outer corner of the upper lash line. The key here is that you're going for the "no eyeliner" look, so you want to actually draw the line into the lashes so it just makes your lash line look naturally thicker. Focusing just on the outer edges makes eyes look larger and more

awake. Finish with one coat of long and curly black mascara; wiggle wand through lashes from root to tip to make lashes look naturally full, but not clumpy.

Use a brow pencil to fill in any gaps in brows, then use a brow brush to groom hairs up and into place. This does more than anything else to make your "natural" look feel polished!

Finally: using a moisturising lipstick in a bright pink shade glide over lips. You want to capture that French girl imperfect look, so don't worry if the edges are soft. Use a tissue to blot excess color off, slick on one more layer of lipstick and gently blot.

U ME AUR HUM

Kajol had the most challenging looks in this film. Initially, there was some amount of make-up, but later in the film she had a no make-up look. You too can do so:

Prep your skin by applying a moisturiser or a hydrating serum to ensure your skin is supple.

Start by using under eye concealer to cover your under eye dark circles. Also, add it to the areas you want to highlight like the centre of your nose blending upward slightly onto your forehead, on the chin and around the sides of your mouth. Pat it on with your fingers for a smooth finish.

Then apply HD perfect cover-up Foundation in a shade that suits your complexion all over your face and neck. Blend in for the perfect base.

To make sure your concealer and foundation stay in place, pat some translucent loose powder on after. Blend it with the help of a powder brush and your face makeup is ready.

Highlight your eyes with a pear collection eye shadow. Apply it onto the inner corner of eyes for a frosty look and spread it on your lids for some shimmer.

Define your eyes further with kohl pencil. Apply it on your waterline, deepening the color as you apply. Follow this up with the Eyeliner Gel and apply a thin line on the upper lash line with an extended flick for a hint of drama. Add a final touch by applying false lash effect mascara on your upper and lower lids in an outward direction.

Add a pop of colour with face blush. Pat the colored blush onto the apples of your cheeks and make broad upward strokes along the length of your cheekbones.

For your pout, use a lip liner in natural pink. It's a great night-about-town option. Fill them in with matte lipstick in nude pink with the help of a lip brush. A quick tip to make lips pop further is to dab a lighter shade of eye shadow from the palette into the middle of your lower lip.

PHOTOGRAPH: YOGEN SHAH

FIERCELY CLEVER

Kajol is one actor who believes in straight and honest conversations. She doesn't mince words. Her guileless and witty attitude is what separates her from the rest. An acting maestro, who continues stealing the hearts of many, is yet rocking the actresses chair. Gayatri Nirmal digs out some striking speeches and noteworthy statements, the actress gave to *Stardust*.

"I would give Ajay (Devgn) the Best Dad Award. He deserves it."

"Ideally, I would love to do even less than one film a year."

"I did not take permission from Ajay before I did the romantic sequence in *Fanaa*."

"As an actor, I think people over-estimate our feelings in a romantic scene."

"I turned Kabhi Alvida Naa Kehna down for Fanaa."

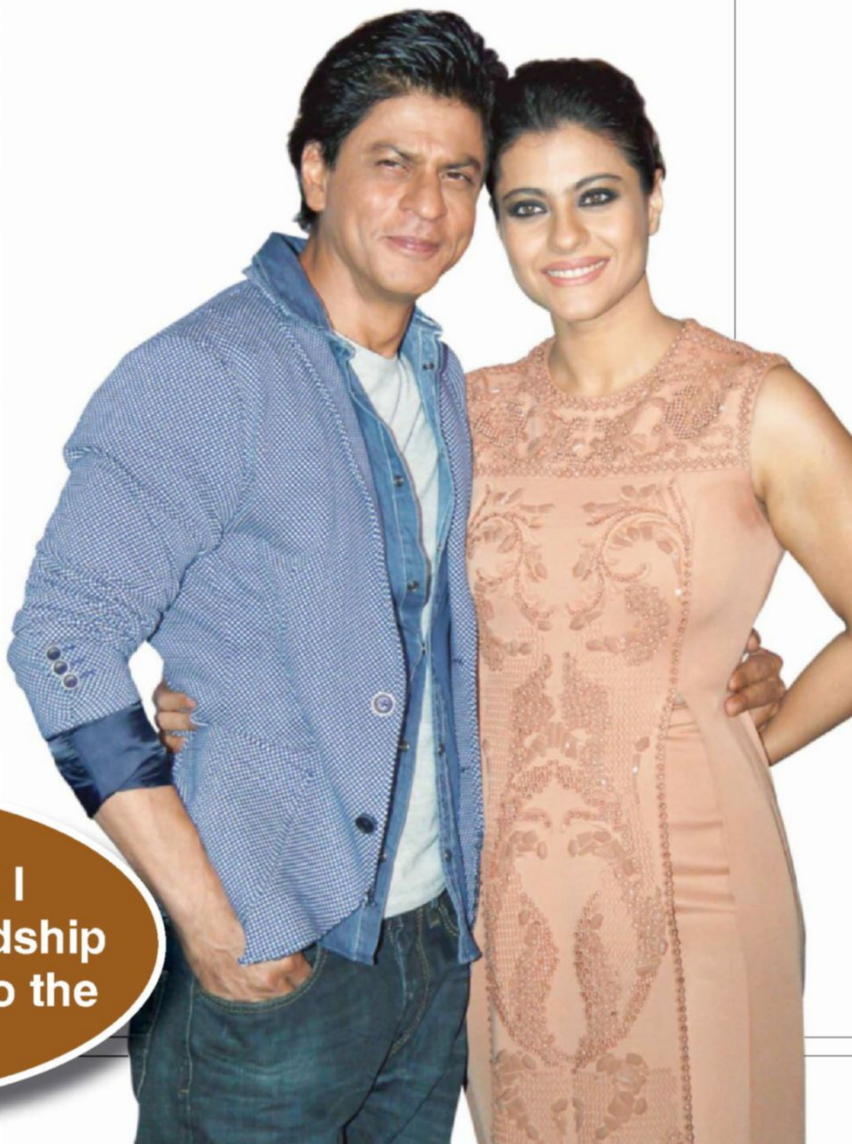
"Mothers can do anything for their children. They do not think twice."

PHOTOGRAPHS: YOGEN SHAH

U, Me Aur Hum, was better than all the other films I had heard, or I would not have agreed to do it."

"I did not have apprehensions about Aamir Khan before Fanaa began."

"I think the Ajay Devgn and Shah Rukh Khan brouhaha is completely media frenzy."



"Shah Rukh Khan and I share a close friendship that translates onto the screen."

"I don't think I am in the rat-race. I feel there is enough work for everyone to go around."

"I like the fact that I am looking much better than I was earlier, body wise."

"It does make a difference as to who you are married to. The influence in marriage works both ways."

"I think awards are great, but they make you feel great only temporarily."

"I can't brag about an award I had won 15 years ago....not even 15 minutes ago."

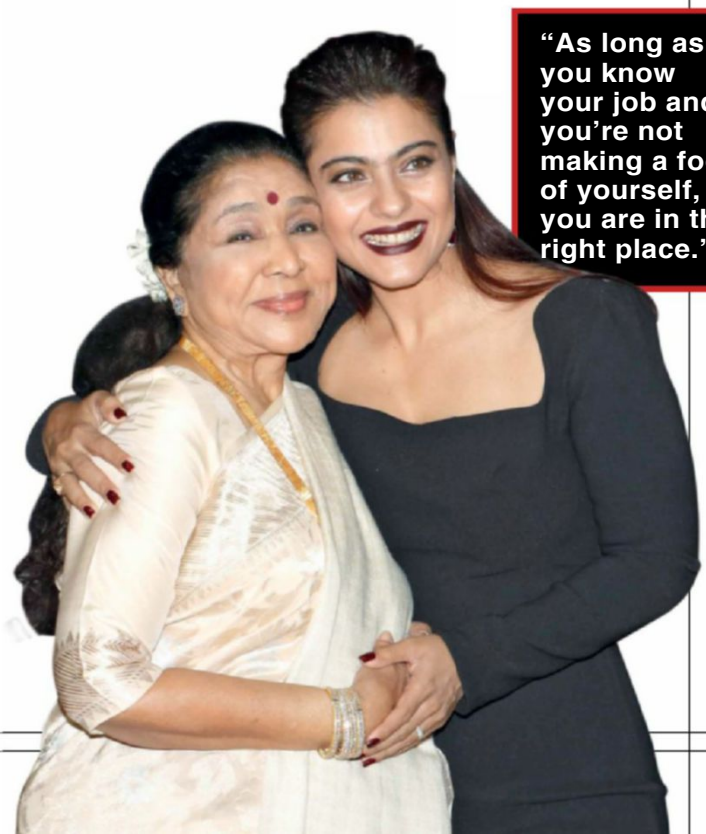
PHOTOGRAPHS: YOGEN SHAH

"I am very clear about the fact that I don't want my daughter involved in any publicity, etc."

"Being a part-time actress and a full-time mom is not easy, but is possible, and definitely not impossible."

"I do think that this angle of heroines making a comeback thing has been over-hyped, at least, I think so."

"Nothing can distract you from being pregnant. It is 24 x 7."



"As long as you know your job and you're not making a fool of yourself, you are in the right place."

ROADRUNNER

As far as her choice of wheels is concerned, Kajol fancies the Audi Q7, it comes as a no shocker why. Well, the vehicle is an amalgamation of both class and elegance. Read on to know why this particular one out of the many.

WORDS **RINALDO D'SOUZA**

PHOTOGRAPH: YOGEN SHAH

Audi Q7

Super looks, suave style and comfort define the Audi Q7. It is a roomy, three-row crossover that originally comes powered by a strong, yet thirsty 350-horsepower, 4.2-liter V-8 engine. An air suspension that provides comfort in handling. Two engines offer varying degrees of power and economy: A supercharged V-6 offers 333 HP, while the turbo diesel V-6 makes 272 HP and 443 lb-ft. An eight-speed automatic is standard with both engines, as is the all-wheel drive. During extensive trips, the Audi Q7 provides exceptional ease to its occupants. With luxurious interiors, a 23-speaker audio system, we all know why Kajol opts for this dynamic beast.

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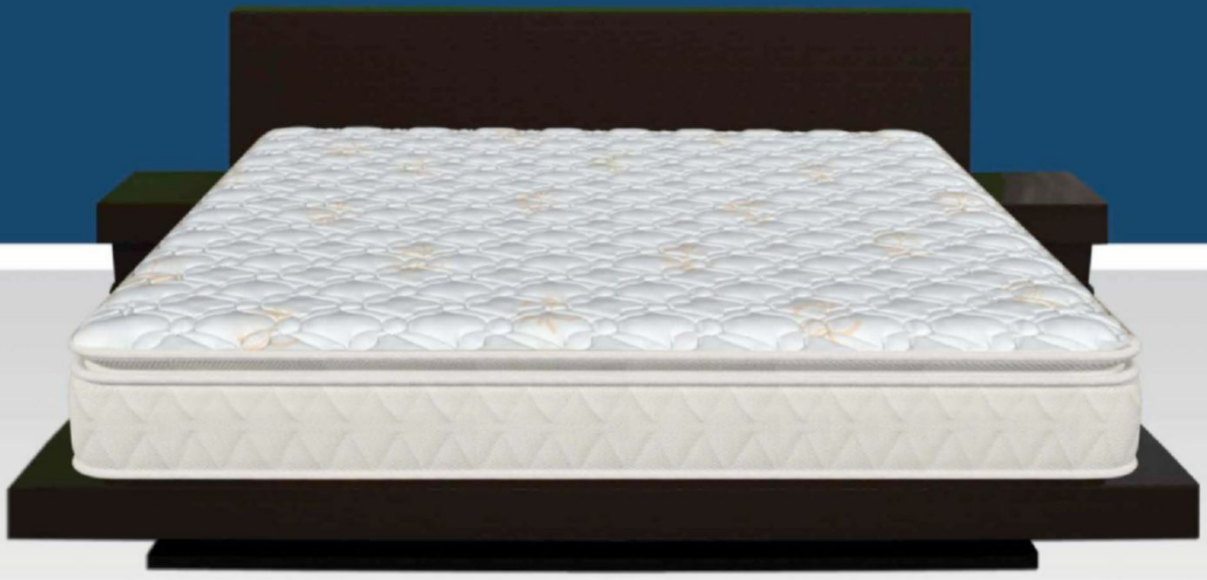

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STARDUST

TEATIME

SPECIAL

stars & their tea tales

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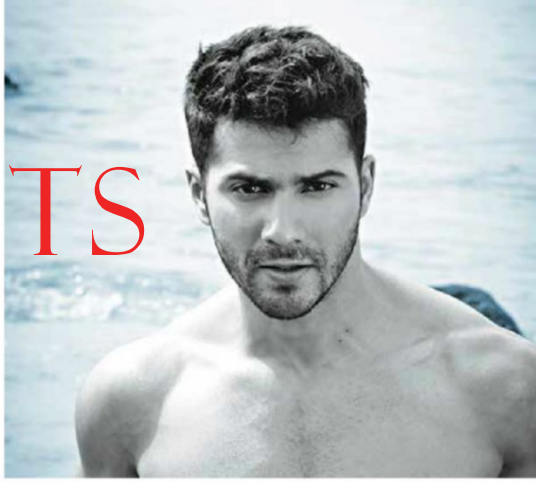

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Teatime Special

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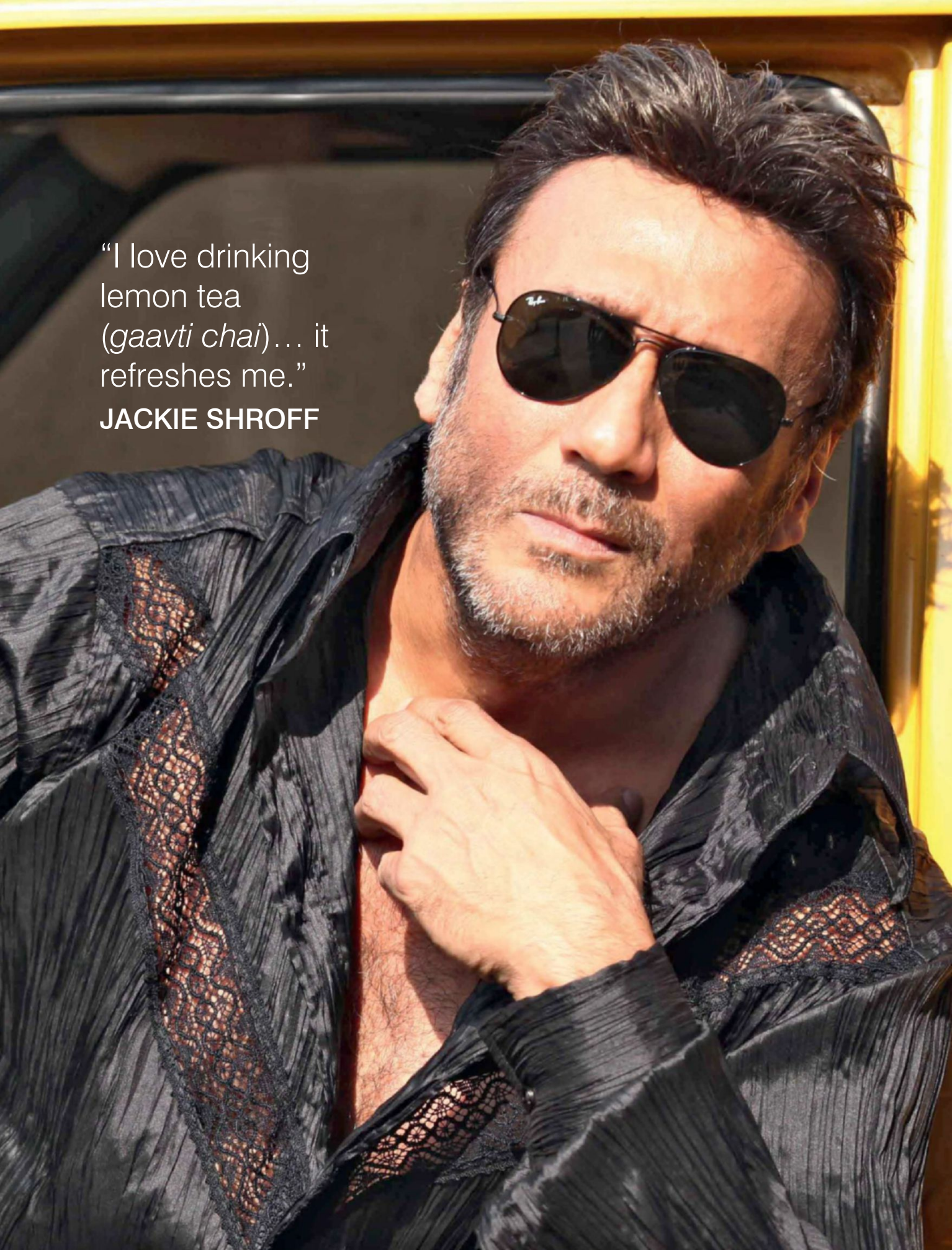
Tealicious

Take a peek at what's brewing in your favourite star's cup.

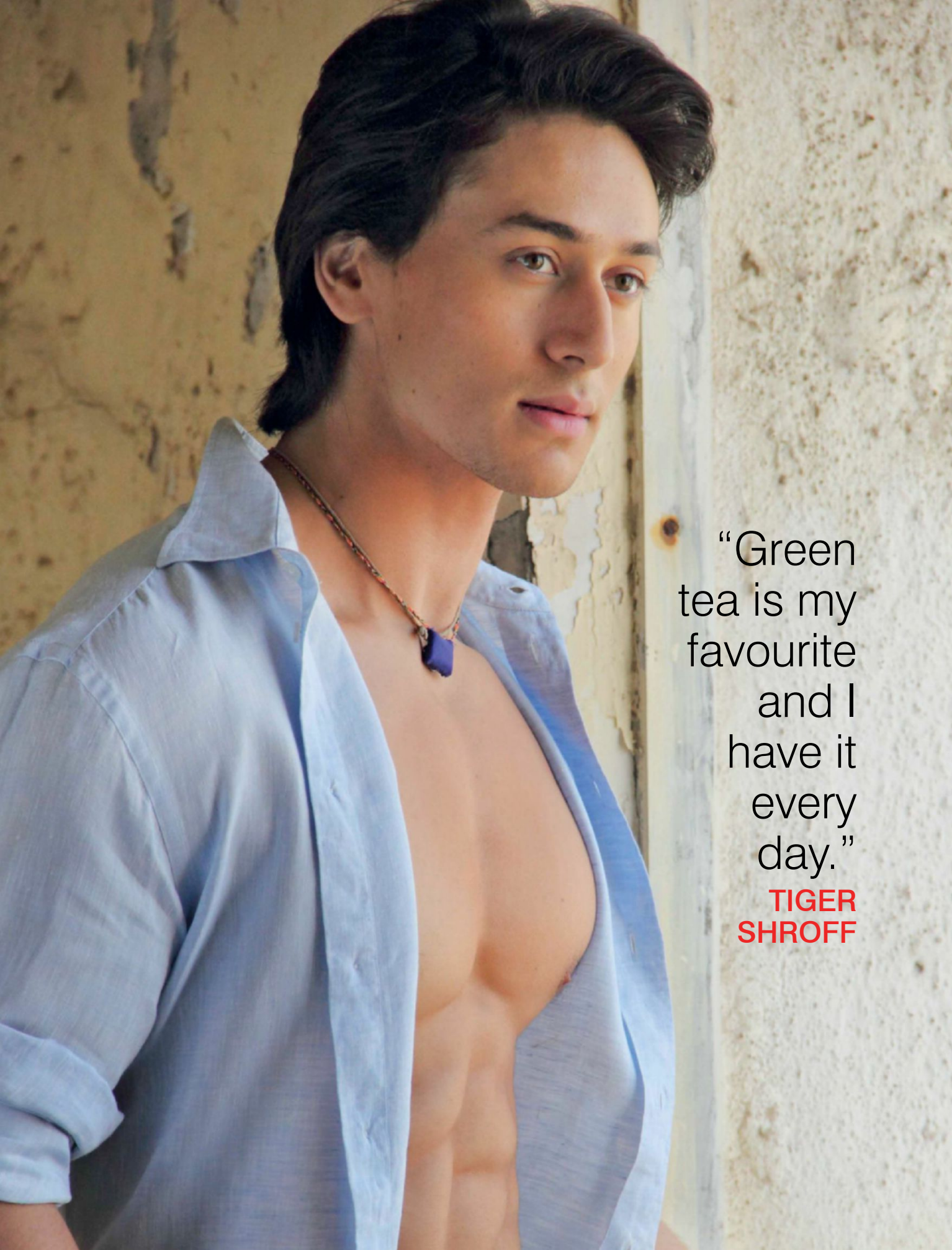
When it comes to tea, the possibilities are endless. You can choose from a variety of green, black, white and more. Try a fancy flavoured tea or stick to a classic; have it hot or cold - it never gets old. And the Bollywood brigade agrees... Let's take a look at your favourite stars and their favourite brews.


“I love drinking lemon tea (*gaavti chai*)… it refreshes me.”
JACKIE SHROFF

“I love peppermint tea.” **SONAM KAPOOR**

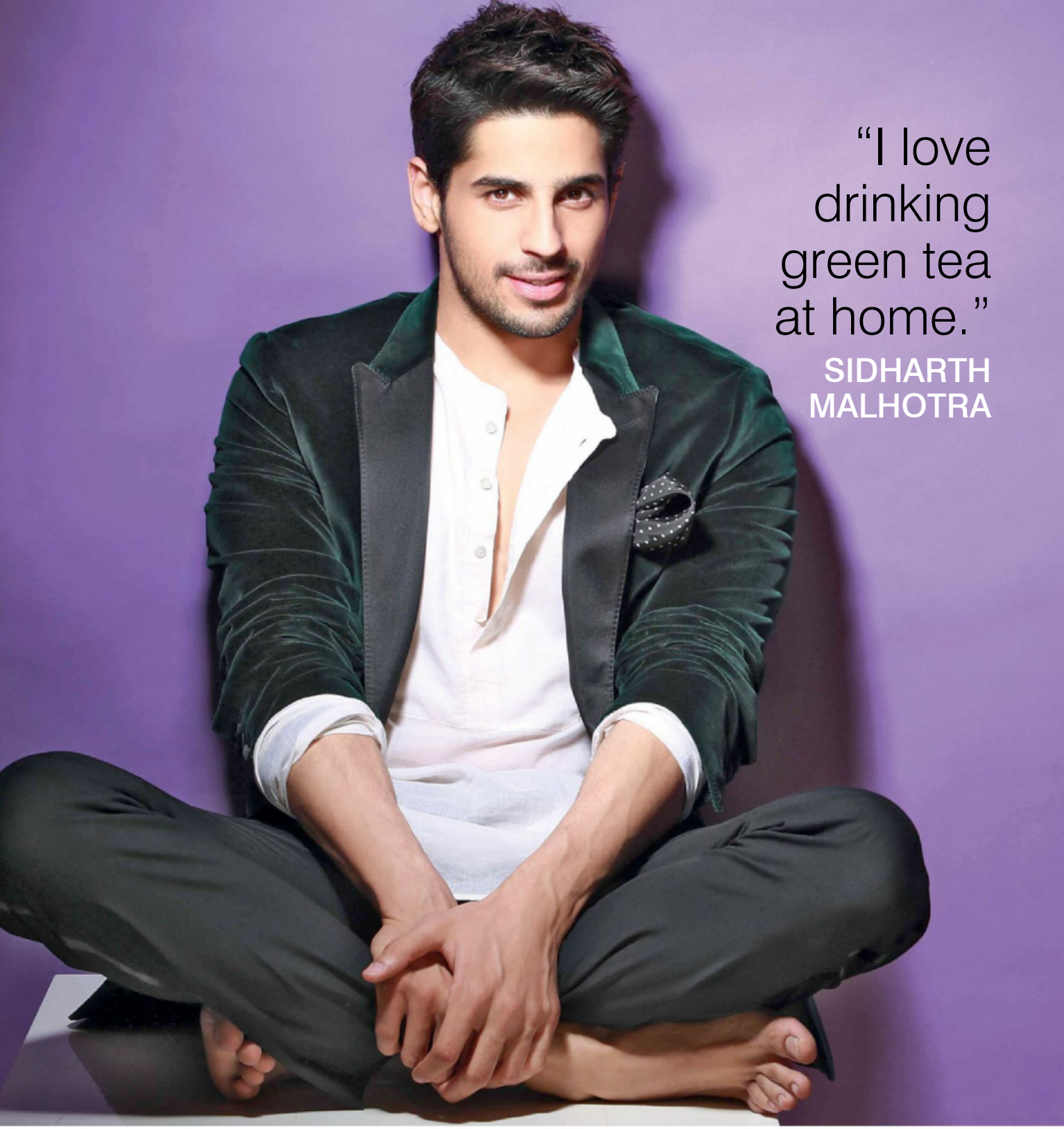
"I love drinking *masala* tea. It's made to my specifications at home and a few other people's houses too."

VIDYA BALAN



"Green tea is my favourite and I have it every day."

TIGER SHROFF



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Business Wellne

ABHINANDAN DHOKE
CEO, ORGANIC INDIA

The ORGANIC INDIA herbal teas have been fulfilling the promise of 'A cup full of health' with wide range of other flavors for over two decades now. And the herbal supplements, packaged foods are fast gaining a special place in consumers' hearts for their healing and nourishing qualities. The basic goodness of nature has found its way back to you, thanks to ORGANIC INDIA, a true holistic wellness company...

It all began when ORGANIC INDIA's visionary founders Mr Bharat Mitra and Mrs Bhavani Lev, inspired by the lifetime service to society of their guru Sri HWL Poonja, felt a compelling need that they too should contribute to the good of society. Mr Bharat Mitra, Founder and President of ORGANIC INDIA, decided to start a company which would nourish every life form it touches – planet earth, farmers who grow the basic produce, the employees who work with them as well as the final consumer of the product.

Back in the early 1990s in Lucknow, ORGANIC INDIA began modestly with eight farmers who agreed to grow tulsi commercially. The farms were closely monitored by our field staff for quality control. We also had to educate and train the farmers in organic and biodynamic agricultural practices, and most importantly, motivate them to change their way of working. The produce was used for our famous tulsi teas, which aim to heal and nourish, while keeping health problems at bay. The properties of tulsi, the wonder herb, are well known – for its rich in antioxidants, stress reliving properties, adaptogen and even helps build immunity. And today, we work with around 2,500 + farmers on 10,000 + acres of certified organic land. Our products are appreciated and admired by people in over 40 countries.

Our vision is – To be a Vehicle of Consciousness in the global market by creating a holistic sustainable business modality, which inspires, promotes and supports True Wellness and respect for all Beings and for Mother Nature.. "ORGANIC INDIA believes in a holistic approach. What we are doing is going back to our ancient roots… reviving our ancient wisdom on healing and coupling that with modern science. We have positioned ourselves as a holistic, sustainable, Healthy conscious living provider across the society, populations and geographic settings, to create a scenario for a better, healthier lifestyle through our range of products," explains Mr Abhinandan Dhoke, CEO, ORGANIC INDIA.

For this, we put in a variety of efforts including supporting the small and marginal farmers. Getting the farmers to trust their efforts was another challenge, which we conquered over time. There also came an unexpected additional challenge.

We would like to be trustworthy and innovative global leader by providing genuine organic true wellness products and solutions for healthy conscious living.

- ABHINANDAN DHOKE, CEO, Organic India

Over so many years, ORGANIC INDIA has built up a reputation of being trustworthy and reliable. "Our Tulsi Green Tea is doing exceptionally well, as is our Tulsi Green Tea Lemon Ginger. Our supplements are getting huge response as they are unique combination of whole herbs. Our organic cow ghee is doing very well as it has all the goodness of healthy fats which are also essential for the body. There are no chemicals, pesticides or other impurities to take away from their natural goodness," says Mr Dhoke. The fact that consumers' lifestyles are moving towards the health platform is only helping us establish ourselves more firmly in the market.

While our teas have always been highly popular, the growth in the popularity of our herbal supplements such as Brahmi, LKC, Amalaki, Ashwagandha and Flaxseed Oil has also peaked. These 100 per cent vegetarian capsules are made from plant cellulose and have benefitted people suffering from all kinds of ailments. "Our supplements are made up of whole herbs, we do not do extraction from herbs, so they are available in the purest form," affirms Mr Dhoke.

Our products are now available in more than 25,000 outlets across India, present in all formats & channels. Apart from our 25 signature stores across the country, we have also partnered with FabIndia to increase and improve our market presence.

We also have our own subsidiary company in the US. ORGANIC INDIA products are sold in 40 other countries, including Europe, Middle East and Australia, and "international business is a big focus for us in the future," says Mr Dhoke. We see ourselves as the leaders in a bigger market for organic products with a strong user community 10 years from now. Education and awareness will be the twin engines which will drive this growth. The more people will experience it the more they will be convinced and the organic products market will expand," Mr Dhoke predicts.

Tea For TWO

A cuppa *chai* is best enjoyed with a pal. Here's who the stars enjoy sipping their tea with...

"My tea pal would definitely be my 'xXx – Return Of Xander Cage' colleague, co-actor and friend Vin Diesel. I will introduce him to Indian teas."

DEEPIKA PADUKONE

"I would love to go on a tea date with Donald Trump because I would like to know how from bankruptcy, he became a billionaire! Also why we connect the most is because he doesn't drink alcohol, like me, so I think he would be my perfect 'Tea Date'."

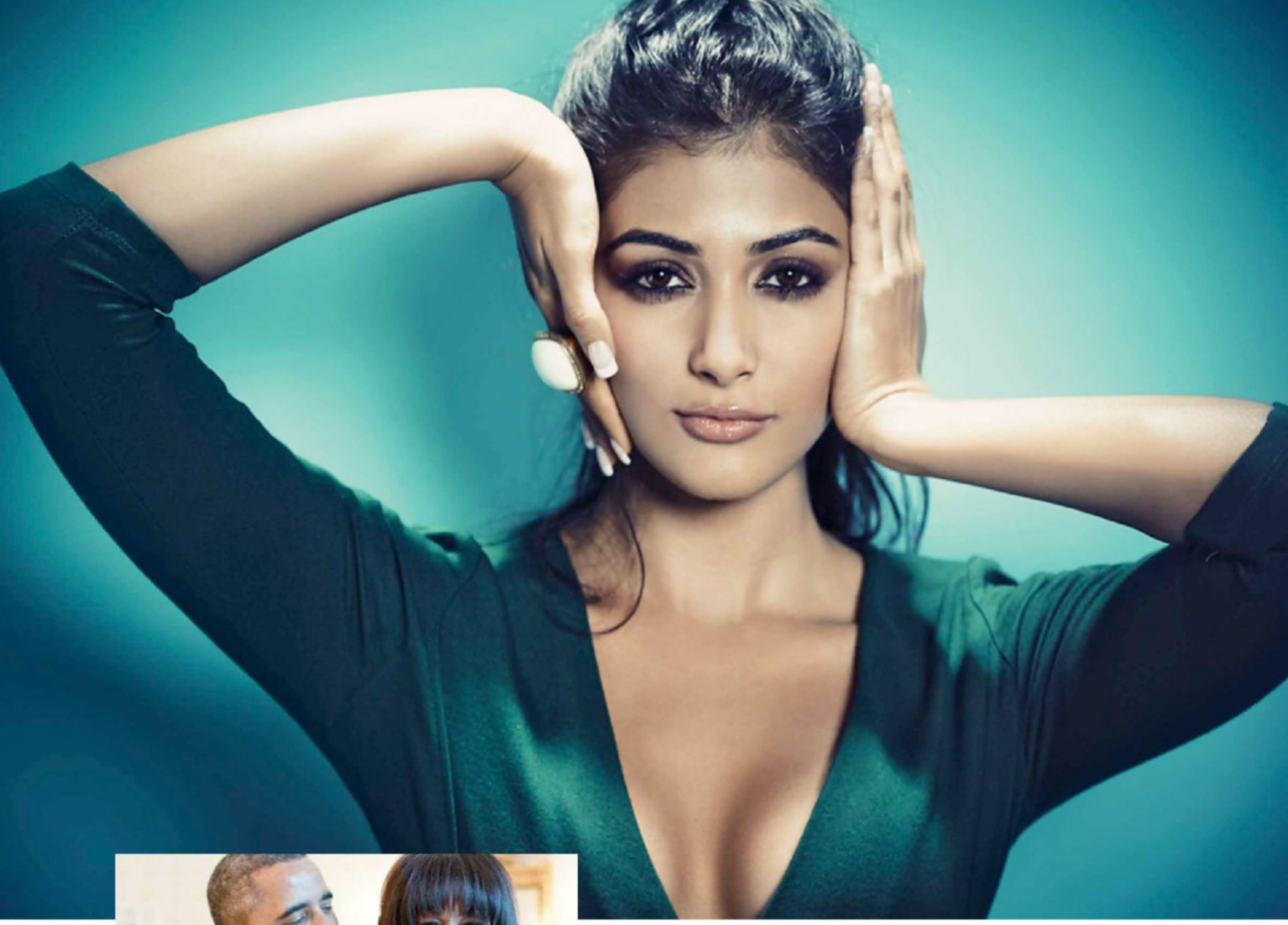
URVASHI RAUTELA

“My tea pal would be Daniel, as I don’t really share special moments with anyone else.”

SUNNY LEONE

“I can never forget the day I got the opportunity to sit and discuss world cinema at length with the living legend, Jackie Chan. I remember that evening when we were shooting for ‘Kung Fu Yoga’ in China. It was not a very busy day on the sets and I started the conversation about all the cult films that Jackie Chan has been part of, and all the mind-blowing action scenes he has executed himself, over a cup of green tea. Looking forward to such an amazing opportunity again.”

SONU SOOD



"I would love to sit and chat with the Obamas and find out if they are for real and know more about them! Barack and Michelle Obama are so inspirational and seem to be relating on many aspects. Such cool and loving people. And since they have left the White House, maybe they'd have the time for tea now anyway! Ha! Ha!"

POOJA HEGDE

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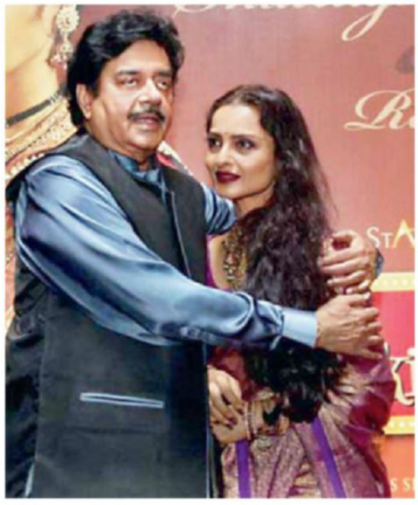


I'd like to go on a 'tea date' with…

a) "Rekha: Because she doesn't drink tea as she says it will make her 'dark'… as if she's not dark already!"

b) "Nari Hira: Because I'd have an interesting conversation over tea with him."

c) Wife: But the question arises… with whose wife should I have tea with?! Ha! Ha!"

SHATRUGHAN SINHA

Tea TRAIL

Tracing the history of our most beloved cuppa.

Everybody loves drinking their refreshing cuppa tea every morning. But did you know that tea was first introduced to the Portuguese priests and merchants in China during the 16th century? Drinking tea then became popular in Britain during the 17th century. In fact, it became a fad and all the Lords and Ladies in England would have many a pleasant conversation over tea in front of a cosy fireplace.

INDIA CALLING

Historical records indicate the prevalence of tea drinking in India since 750 BC. In the 16th century, a vegetable dish was also being prepared using tea leaves with garlic and oil. However, the credit for rediscovering tea and cultivating it at a commercial level goes to the British.

The Chinese varieties of tea were first introduced in India by the British, in an attempt to break the Chinese monopoly on tea. The British, using Chinese seeds, plus Chinese planting and cultivating techniques, launched a tea industry by offering land in Assam to any European who agreed to cultivate tea for export.

TEA DATES

- In early 1774, Warren Hastings, then Governor-General of Bengal, sent a few select samples of tea seeds from China to his British emissary in Bhutan – George Bogle – for planting.
- Noted English botanist Sir John Banks, who was asked to make notes on tea in 1776, concluded that the British must undertake tea cultivation in India.

- Colonel Robert Kyd from the Army Regiment of the British East India Company also tried to cultivate Chinese seeds at the botanical garden that he founded (now named Indian Botanical Garden at Howrah in Kolkata) in 1780.
- In 1823, Scottish explorer Robert Bruce discovered a native tea plant that was growing in the Upper Brahmaputra Valley and being brewed by the local Singhpho tribe. Assamese nobleman Maniram Dutta Barbhandari Baruah gave this vital information to Robert and his brother. Maniram went on to become the first Indian to undertake private tea cultivation in Assam.
- Although Robert Bruce died before he could get the plant officially classified, his brother Charles Alexander Bruce dispatched the tea samples to the Botanical Garden at Calcutta on Christmas Eve of 1834. On closer analysis, these were officially classified as a variation of the Chinese tea plant.

SOME UNKNOWN FACTS ABOUT TEA

- Legend has it that tea was discovered roughly 5,000 years ago by the Chinese Emperor Shen Nung when a single leaf blew into his pot of boiling water. Not only did the leaf improve the taste of the water, it also appeared to have a stimulative effect on the body.
- Korean monk Choui Uisun wrote a set of poems called 'The Hymns To Korean Tea' in 1837. This and his 'Tea Spirit Message' created seven years earlier encouraged a tea revival in Korea, a country where the first historical records documenting the use of tea date back many centuries to 661 AD.

- The trains in India are a phenomenon in their own right, with the comfort level changing radically depending on which class you're travelling in. But their most significant feature perhaps is the young man or boy walking through the crowded passage selling *chai*. This seller carries his *chai* in a large container from which he pours the tea out, while a small heater at the bottom keeps the drink toasty warm.
- The Portuguese navigators were the first Europeans to visit China and bring back tea to their country. By 1662, tea received the royal approval of the Portuguese Princess Catherine of Braganza, who is believed to have included tea in her dowry when she married Charles II.

Stories IN A CUP

Stars cue us into their best moments shared over a cup of tea.

"If you are cold, tea will warm you;
If you are too heated, it will cool you;
If you are depressed, it will cheer you;
If you are excited, it will calm you."

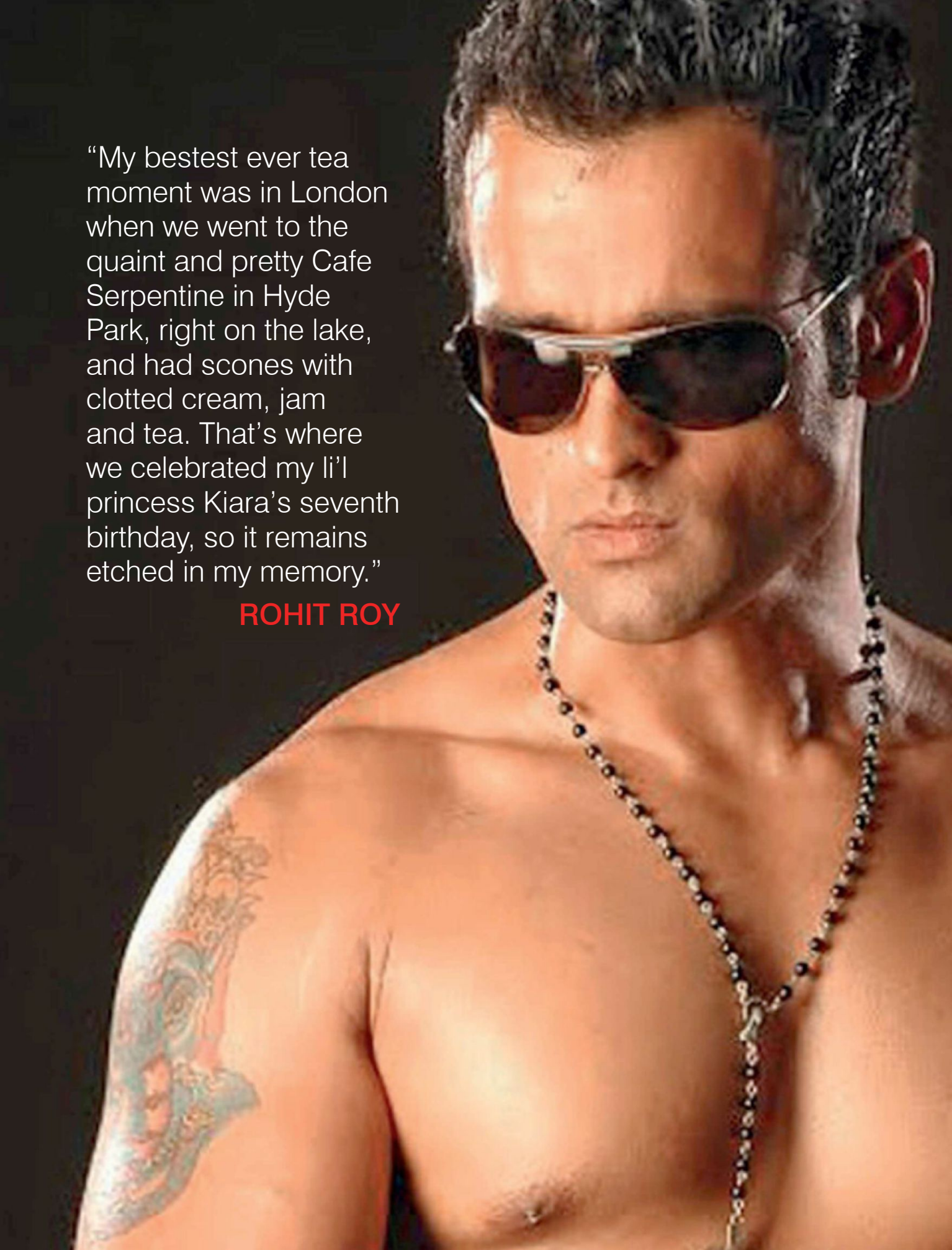
William Ewart Gladstone, late politician

Tea is a great companion, no matter the weather or time of day. It's seen us through the low times and been right there for some of our happiest moments. Tune into some of Bollywood's brightest as they share some of their best moments over their favourite *chai*.

“I love
drinking tea.
I think so many
of my best
conversations
happened over
a cup of tea.”
MADHURI DIXIT NENE

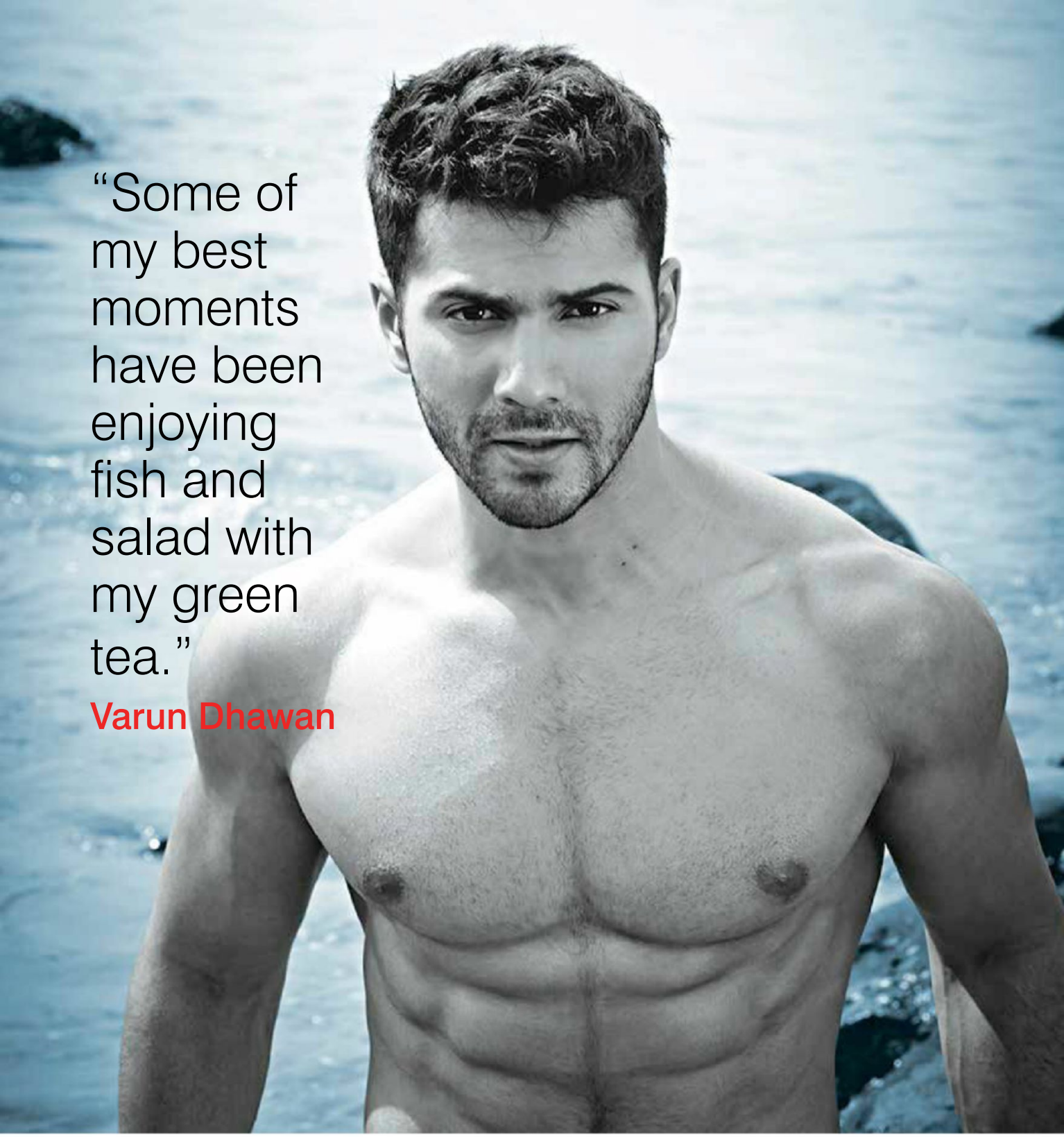
"I've had such fun times over tea - sometimes it's been intimate family matters being discussed over tea, other times, my friends and I have had great fun gossiping, laughing and exchanging fashion notes over tea."

DAISY SHAH



"My bestest ever tea moment was in London when we went to the quaint and pretty Cafe Serpentine in Hyde Park, right on the lake, and had scones with clotted cream, jam and tea. That's where we celebrated my li'l princess Kiara's seventh birthday, so it remains etched in my memory."

ROHIT ROY



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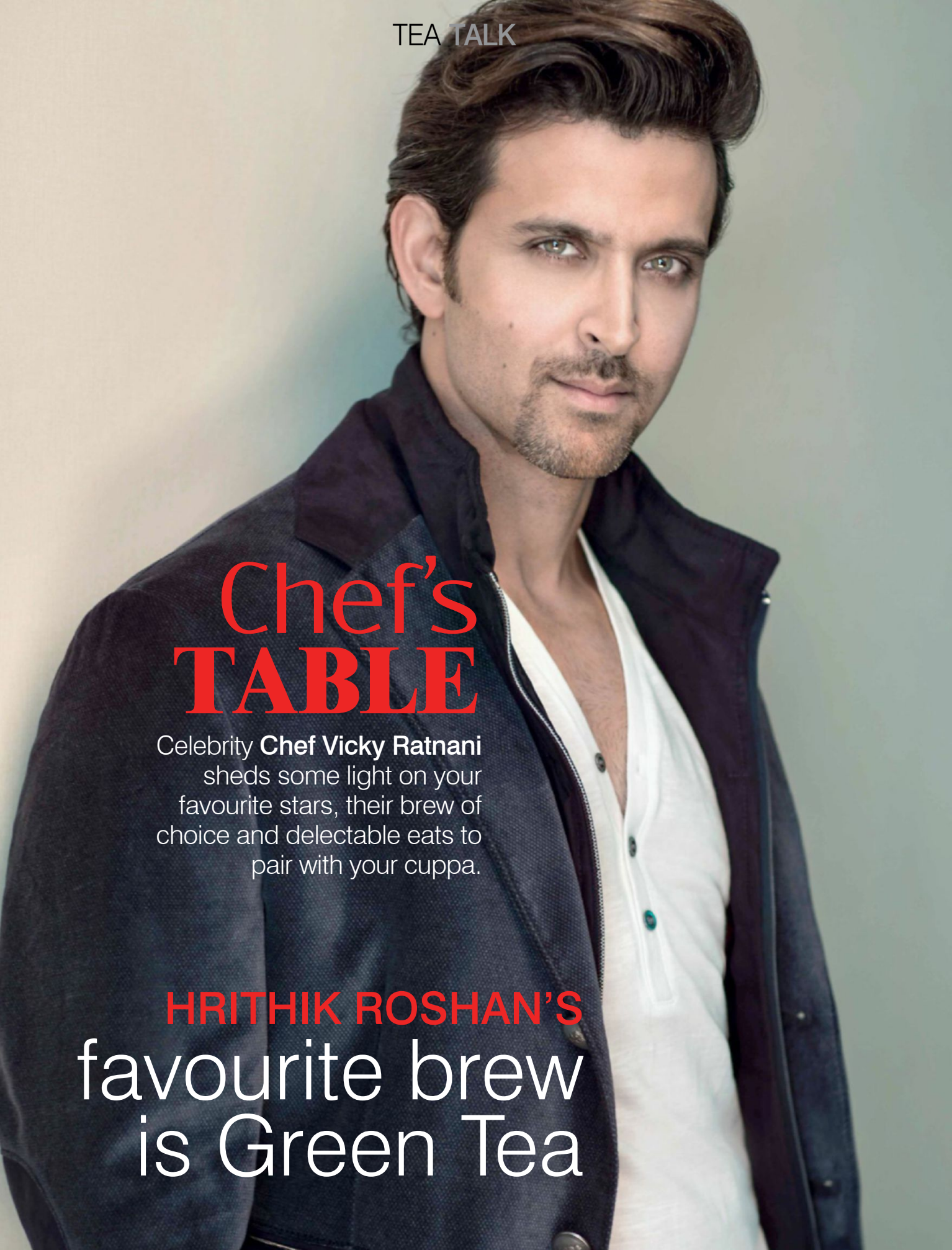
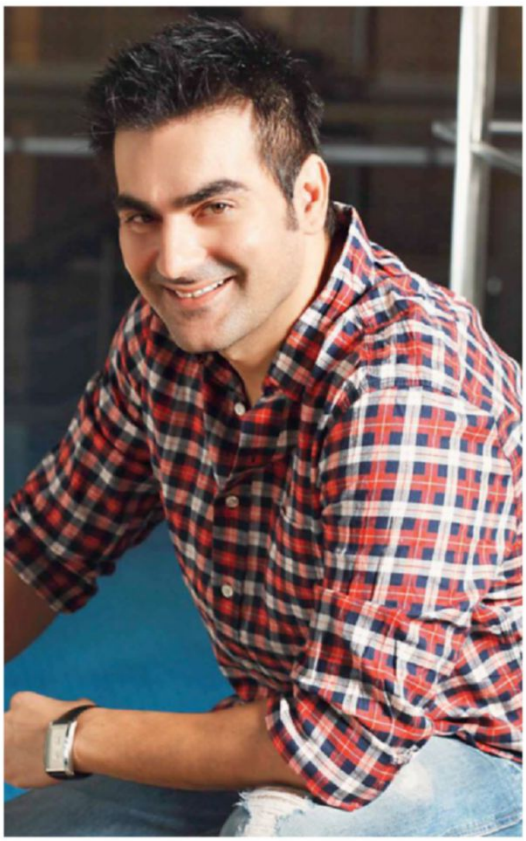


Chef's TABLE

Celebrity **Chef Vicky Ratnani** sheds some light on your favourite stars, their brew of choice and delectable eats to pair with your cuppa.

HRITHIK ROSHAN'S favourite brew is Green Tea

ARBAAZ KHAN
prefers Lemon Ginger Tea



Food and tea have a delicate relationship and when paired well, can enhance your dining experience and leave your taste buds tingling with joy. Chef Vicky Ratnani gives us a chef's eye view of celebs and their favourite teas.

PREETI ZINTA
opts for Earl Grey

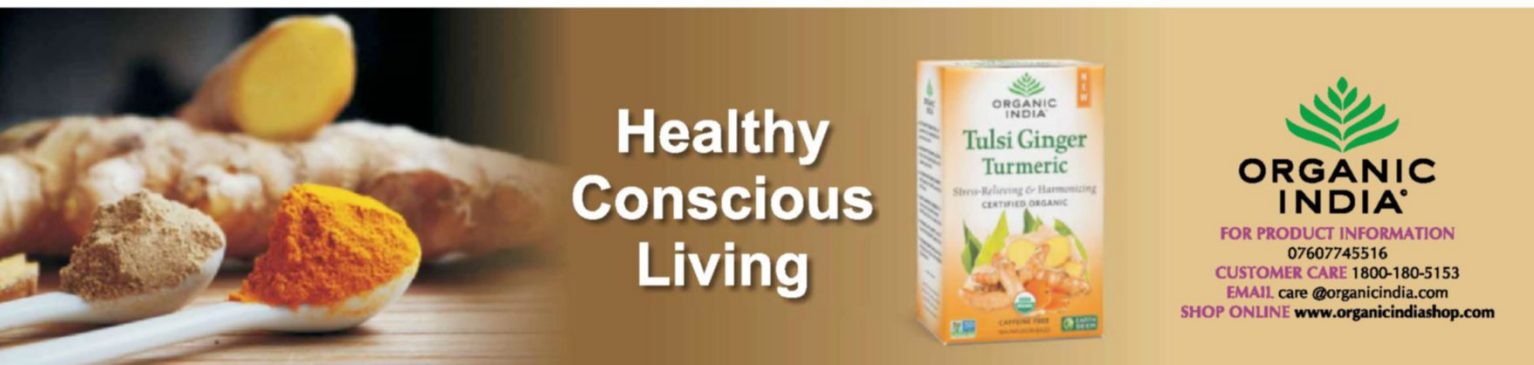
POOJA BHATT'S
favourite
is English
Breakfast
SHILPA SHETTY
likes her
Green Tea

CHEF'S SELECTIONS

- Strong, smoky and earthy black teas like Assam tea pairs well with a robust chocolate dessert.
- Light teas like green tea and white tea work well with lightly poached seafood and stir-fried vegetables.
- *Masala chai* pairs excellently with *khari* biscuits or something salty and fried like *pakodas* and Indian *chaats*. A grilled chicken sandwhich with blue cheese works great too.
- Oolong tea is a great accompaniment to grilled food, meats and salmon.

KARAN JOHAR is a Green Tea fan

ARJUN RAMPAL sips on Lemon Ginger Tea



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