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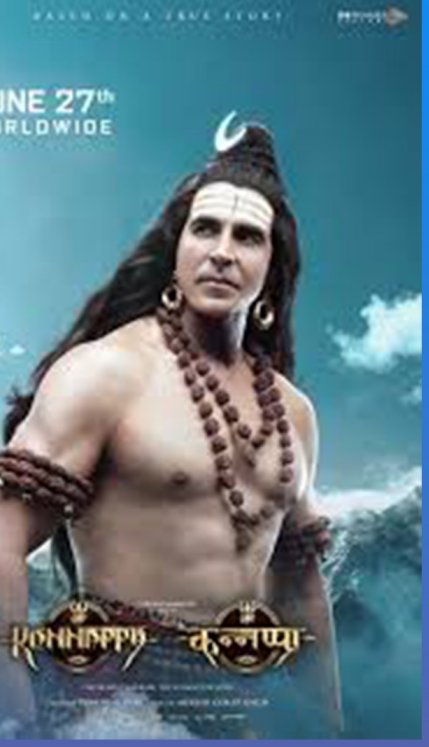


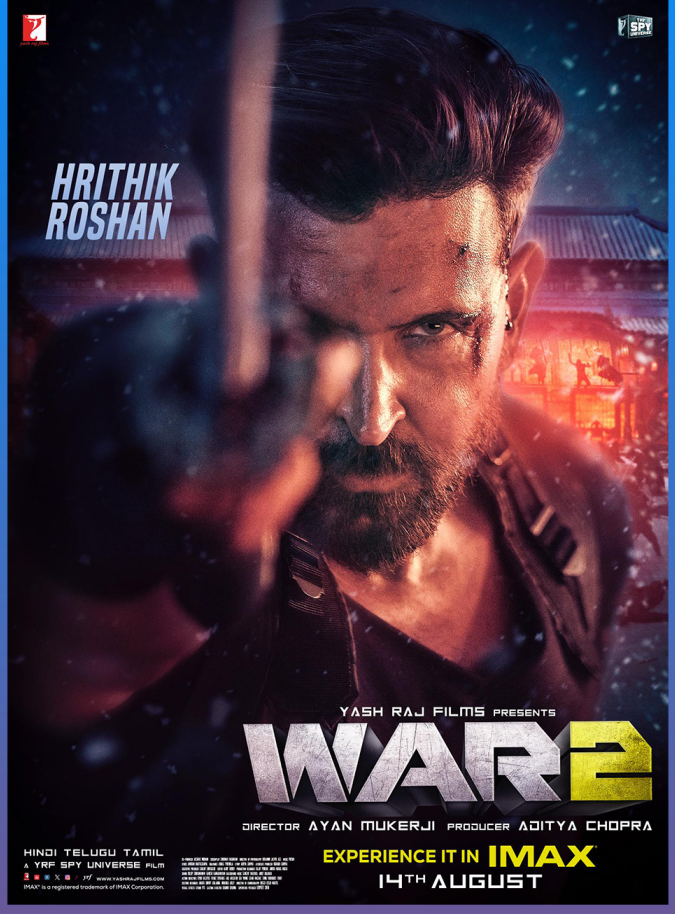
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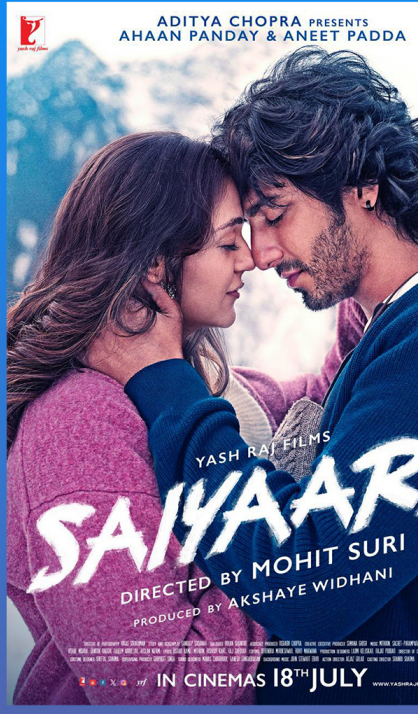
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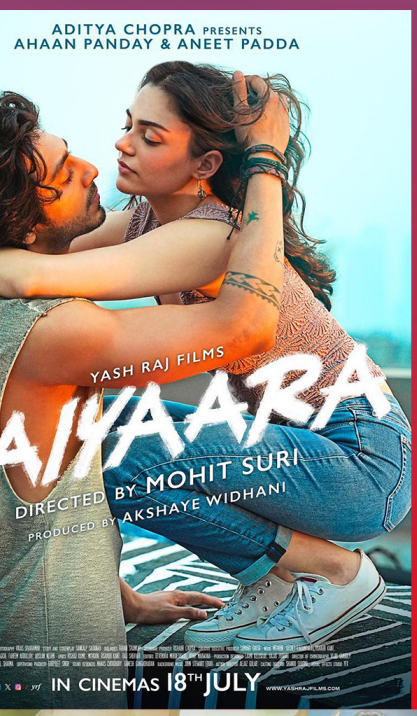




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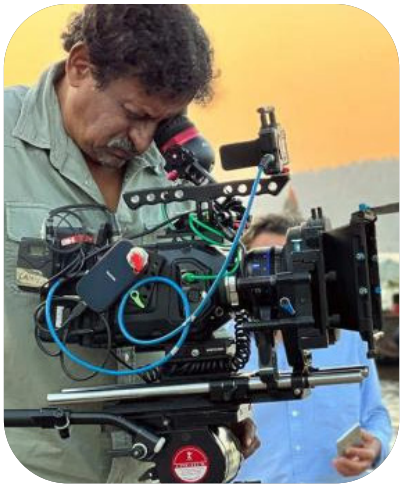


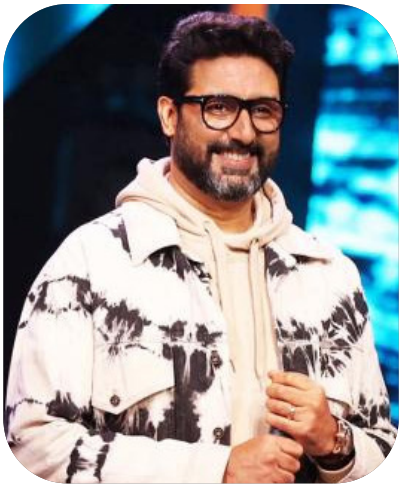


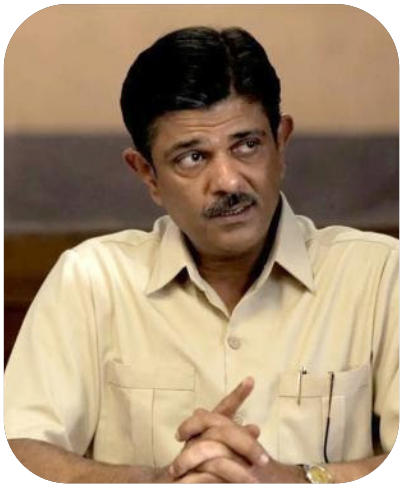




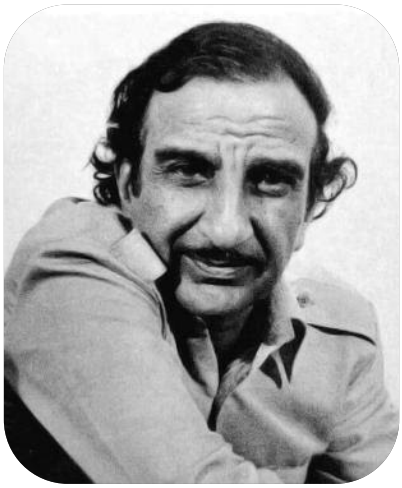


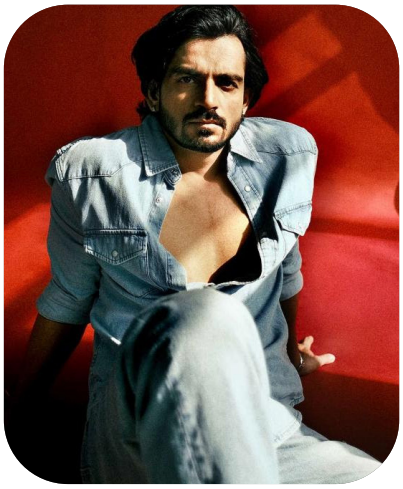














Seema Pimpley
Editor & Publisher




YASH RAJ FILMS PRESENTS
WAR 2
DIRECTOR AYAN MUKERJI PRODUCER ADITYA CHOPRA
EXPERIENCE IT IN IMAX
HINDI TELUGU TAMIL

War 2: Everything You Need To Know About Hrithik Roshan And Jr NTR's Upcoming Action Movie

Here's everything you need to know about War 2 — from release date to the star-studded cast and exciting cameo appearances.

War 2 is gearing up to be one of the most explosive Bollywood releases of 2025. This high-stakes thriller, the sixth entry in the YRF Spy Universe, is a revolutionary addition to Yash Raj Films' growing cinematic universe in addition to being a follow-up to the 2019 smash War. War 2, which is slated for release on August 14, 2025, with Kiara Advani, Jr. NTR, and Hrithik Roshan in the key roles, is being timed to take advantage of the Independence Day week.

War 2 Plot: Kabir's new mission unfolds

Returning as Major Kabir Dhaliwal, Hrithik Roshan resumes his role as the dashing yet deadly spy from the previous film. In War 2, Kabir is thrust into an even more perilous undercover mission that spans multiple continents, bringing him face-to-face with a fierce new adversary played by Jr NTR. Known for his power-packed roles in Telugu cinema, NTR makes his Hindi film debut with this role – and early glimpses from the teaser suggest an electrifying face-off between the two stars.

While the full storyline remains under wraps, what's clear is that War 2 will be a globe-trotting action thriller packed with espionage, betrayal, and jaw-dropping stunts across six international locations including Spain, Italy, Abu Dhabi, Japan, Russia, and India.

Star-studded cast of War 2

War 2 features Hrithik Roshan reprising his role as Major Kabir Dhaliwal, alongside Jr NTR in a compelling antagonist role whose name is currently under wraps. Kiara Advani plays the female lead and romantic interest. This film is being produced by Aditya Chopra and Ayan Mukherji is taking up the role of the director. The first instalment was helmed by Siddharth Anand.

War 2 budget

The production of War 2 comes with an estimated budget of 200 crore, an increase from the âÂ,¹170 crore spent on its predecessor, War. Among the cast and crew, Hrithik Roshan reportedly charged a whopping 48 crore, while Jr NTR is said to have received 30 crore, a decrease from his 45 crore for RRR. Kiara Advani's fee is reported to be 15 crore, and the director, Ayan Mukerji, has reportedly charged 32 crore as he directs the film.

Filming locations & production highlights

Shot over 150 days in six countries, War 2 promises edge-of-the-seat action sequences including mid-ocean combat, hand-to-hand duels, and high-speed chases. A musical face-off between Hrithik and Jr NTR – composed by Pritam – is slated to be filmed in June, delayed due to Hrithik's leg injury.

War 2 release date & language versions

The film will hit theatres on August 14, 2025, just ahead of Independence Day, in five languages – Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, and Kannada – targeting a truly pan-India audience.

War 2 cameo appearances: Who's joining the spy party?

War 2 is set to expand the YRF Spy Universe, speculation is rife regarding several high-profile cameos poised to excite audiences. Shah Rukh Khan is anticipated to appear as Pathaan in a post-credit scene, potentially hinting at upcoming installments such as Tiger vs Pathaan or even Pathaan 2. Furthermore, there are rumours of John Abraham reprising his role as Jim, the antagonist from Pathaan, possibly through flashbacks or alternative narrative threads.

Alia Bhatt is rumored to make a brief cameo as she gears up for her addition to the YRF Spy Universe, Alpha. While earlier buzz suggested Salman Khan's involvement, there might be a teaser cameo for the next Tiger instalment, allowing the spotlight to remain on the confrontation between Hrithik and NTR.

Bold Moves Must For Silver Screen To Sparkle Again

More screens, more films, and longer windows will convert to more people watching, assuming they know a film is releasing, points out Vanita Kohli-Khandekar.



R S Prasanna's Sitaare Zameen Par is a heartwarming film -- not just cinematically. Its success, following the decision of its producer Aamir Khan Production (AKPL), to hold back on any OTT deal till the movie has had a full run in theatres, has brought hope and cheer to the Indian film industry. With this move, actor Aamir Khan, who owns AKPL, has bucked the trend wherein most large production houses release a film only after stitching an OTT deal. This helps them recover costs -- and even make a small profit -- before the film even hits theatres. This is because of "the release window between theatre and streaming," says Yusuf Galabhaiwala, director-operations of Galalite Screens, a Mumbai-based screen-making firm.

The shorter the window, usually 2-6 weeks, the less likely it is that audiences will walk into the theatre to see a small or medium-budget film such as 12th Fail or Laapataa Ladies, which is more about the story than about star power or histrionics, a la Pushpa 2.

With Sitaare Zameen Par, which hit theatres on June 20, Aamir Khan, who has been critical of the short window between a film's theatrical and OTT release, has put his money where his mouth is. Another person who has taken it upon himself to help turn the industry's fortunes around is SVF Entertainment's cofounder Mahendra Soni.

His firm is working to revive cinema screens in West Bengal, where their count had fallen from 400 in 2000 to 140 in 2015. SVF, which has produced films like Chokher Bali, Raincoat, and Chitrangada, mapped the state's 23 districts and started building, managing, or acquiring screens. Bolpur, Purulia, Krishnanagar, Narendrapur, Baruipur, Jalpaiguri are among the 23 West Bengal towns where it now manages or owns 53 screens.

The count is expected to go up to 75 in the financial year ending March 2026. Meanwhile, the overall number of screens in the state has gone up to nearly 200. "Kolkata is multilingual, but outside of the city, only Bengali films work," says Soni. "Our collections were dipping not because the city wasn't working, but because there weren't enough theatres outside of Kolkata."

SVF Entertainment, which had a revenue of Rs 300 crore (Rs 3 billion) in FY24, has distributed over 1,500 films, of which it has made 250. Its share of the net box office collection in West Bengal has doubled from under 10 per cent to 20 per cent.

"Our screens emerged in places that had no cinemas," says Soni. In the city of Chinsurah, for instance, box office collections went up from zero to Rs 15 lakh (Rs 1.5 million) for a single film.

"This is pure additive revenue."
To expand, grow, and become profitable, Indian cinema needs three things: More screens, money to make more

movies, and better marketing. SVF's response to the declining number of screens and AKPL's to the broken cinema-going habit are part of the efforts to pull the Indian movie business out of the tough spot it finds itself in.

Bringing in money & audience

Late last year, filmmaker Karan Johar sold half his stake in Dharma Productions to Serum Institute of India's CEO Adar Poonawalla for Rs 1,000 crore (Rs 10 billion). Around the same time, the family-run Baweja Productions, the studio behind Mrs, Chaar Sahibzaade, and Diljale, went public to raise about Rs 97 crore (Rs 970 million).

"Venture capital/private equity funds look at the business differently. This mode gives us room to expand," says Harman Baweja, its chairman and managing director. From one a year, Baweja Productions is now looking at 5 to 7 projects across theatres, streaming, and television, besides dabbling in various genres, including animation, and languages. This ability to scale up, with non-strategic capital, is critical if the falling number of films hitting theatres has to be tackled. More screens, more films, and longer windows will convert to more people watching, assuming they know a film is releasing. As it stands today, for big releases, like Mission Impossible: The Final Reckoning, or small ones, like Superboys of Malegaon, promotional activities begin quite late in the day -- often, just before the first weekend.

"Marketing has become very formulaic and templatised," says Jyoti Deshpande, president, Jio Studios. "It is about releasing a trailer on YouTube and Meta, and buying views. That informs the trade, but does it help convert into actual people buying the ticket?" she asks. "People spend 10 percent of their budget on BookMyShow. But what are they doing to get the audience onto BookMyShow?" asks Soni. Jio Studios, meanwhile, is among others, like Galalite and Dolby, who are continuing to invest to expand the market. This July, City Pride in Pune will be among the first of the six theatres to have Dolby Cinema in India. It includes a bundle of products and services, from projection and Atmos screens (of which there are 1,000 in India) to the actual physical design of the seating and speakers.

"Our brand has been built on cinema; it is the first point of entry for our products in India," says Sameer Seth, director, marketing (India), Dolby Laboratories. "We need collaborations with large international companies to take our film international; the algorithm (on streaming) will not throw up Laapataa Ladies," says Deshpande. Jio Studios' focus is on bringing down the cost of production using artificial intelligence and other technologies. It is initiatives such as these, and bold decisions by a brave few, that could make the silver screen sparkle again.

Indian Cinema's Dry Run

"OTT is not a big threat. Admissions (ticket sales) are lower because of a lack of content," says Bhuvanesh Mendiratta, managing director of Miraj Cinemas.

"Why did Pushpa 2 and Stree 2 do well? People came out to watch them," he says. True enough. The real problem isn't streaming -- it's simply the lack of theatrical releases.

"The Hindi release calendar is blank. There were only three major releases in June -- Housefull 5, Maa, and Sitaare Zameen Par," says Shailesh Kapoor, CEO of Ormax Media. From 49 films in 2019, the total number of original Hindi films released on 1,000 or more screens has now dropped to 32 a year. It's a vicious circle. Fewer screens have made it harder for films to recover costs, which in turn has discouraged investment and led to fewer films being produced. Streaming platforms offered quick money and an alternative distribution outlet, putting further pressure on cinemas.

Much of this was worsened by the pandemic. The result: the main revenue engine for the Indian film industry is now in serious trouble. Of the industry's total revenue of Rs 20,000 crore (Rs 200 billion), about two-thirds -- or nearly Rs 12,000 crore (Rs 120 billion) -- came from theatres in 2024. This is the most crucial piece of the revenue pie because it determines the value that other segments, like streaming and television, can generate.

But theatres are hurting. In 2024, Indians bought 883 million movie tickets, a 6 per cent drop from 2023, according to data from Ormax Media. The 'theatre-going population' stands at 122 million -- only about 11 per cent of the country's total population. In the US and Europe, it is anywhere from 50 to 80 percent of the population.

'The biggest hits have a footfall of about 35 million people -- that's just 2 percent of our population. Where is the remaining 98 per cent watching our films? For a vast number of Indians, there's simply no local cinema to go to,' actor-producer Aamir Khan said at WAVES recently.

The world's largest film-producing country has just 6 screens per million people, compared to around 125 in the US or 30 in China. Until more tickets are sold -- meaning more people walking in, and more often -- the business cannot expand. Only when ticket sales reach 1.2 to 1.5 billion annually can the industry's scale begin to truly reflect India's size.

Isha Koppikar opens up about mental health and fame: 'There's constant pressure to meet expectations'



Isha Koppikar reflected on the emotional toll of fame and the importance of mental health for actors and performers. Urging the film industry to show compassion, Koppikar stressed that, 'I think more people in the industry need to hear that it's human to feel overwhelmed and that you don't have to suffer in silence' Known for her work in films such as Kya Kool Hai Hum, Krishna Cottage, Ek Vivah Aisa Bhi, Shabri and Don, actress Isha Koppikar has encouraged open conversations around self-worth, resilience, and emotional well-being.

"Fame can be a double-edged sword. On one side, you have admiration and success, but on the other, there's constant pressure to meet expectations that aren't always real," Isha said. The actress said that the industry needs to hear that it's human to feel overwhelmed.

"You're expected to smile through the stress, to keep showing up even when you're breaking inside. For a long time, I didn't know it was okay to say, 'I'm not okay.' I think more people in the industry need to hear that it's human to feel overwhelmed and that you don't have to suffer in silence," she said. The constant demand to perform, look flawless, and stay relevant can take a serious toll on mental health. However, Isha said that the "true strength isn't about having it all together."

She added: "You - just as you are - are enough. It's a simple truth that many of us forget, especially in a world where everything is filtered and curated to suit appearances.

"True strength isn't about having it all together, but about being real, being kind to yourself, and knowing that vulnerability is not weakness, but courage in its purest form."

The actress was last seen in the 2024 film "Ayalaan," a science fiction film directed by R. Ravikumar. The film stars Sivakarthikeyan and Rakul Preet Singh, alongside Sharad Kelkar, Isha Koppikar, Karunakaran, Yogi Babu, David Broughton-Davies, Bhanupriya and Bala Saravanan, with Siddharth voicing the titular role.

Language Row

'Was against the forced addition'

Amid rising tension, Renuka Shahane shares her thoughts on Hindi-Marathi language row and the violence that followed it. She believes respecting culture should be given credence rather than knowing of language. She also slams those who resorted to violenceRenuka Shahane gained immense popularity for her role in Hum Aapke Hain Koun! She is also known to be a presenter for Doordarshan. The actress never believes in mincing her words and expresses her opinions around ongoing events. She recently shared her thoughts on the ongoing language debate in Maharashtra and condemned violence.



Renuka Shahane on Hindi-Marathi language row

During a podcast with InControversial with Pooja Chaudhri, the actress shared her opinion and stated, "If you've been living in a place for a long time, it's a good thing to understand the local language, culture, and be more respectful than anything else. It's not about the speaking of it, much more than the intention of wanting to, you know, respect it. I do not like people who do not feel the necessity to be accommodating of the local language and local culture."

"I do not like violence at all, you know; I do not like the fact that people can be rude about it. Going into a place where Marathi is not spoken and just slapping two or three people – it's not going to help the language in any way. We have to find ways to get across the language to people in a way that people would find it convenient and accept it happily. Language is not something that should be forced. That is why I was against the forced addition of Hindi from a very early stage in Maharashtra. I think it should be something of a choice, which I also had growing up," Renuka added. Before Renuka, actors like R. Madhavan, Ajay Devgn, Sanjay Dutt, and Shilpa Shetty have also expressed their views. Her husband, Ashutosh Rana, also spoke about it and said, "Language is a topic of discussion and not controversy."

About language row

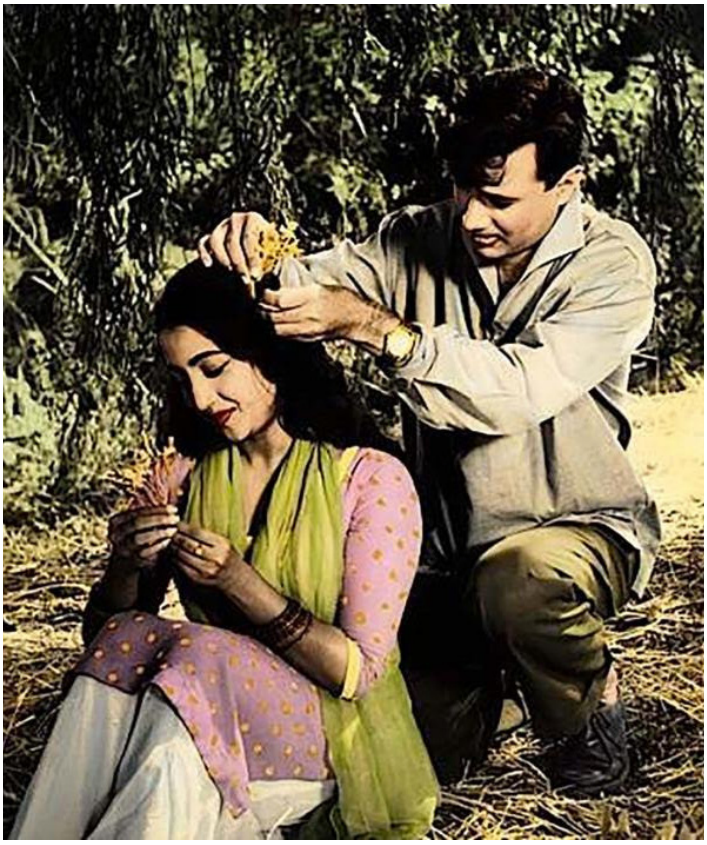
For the unversed, the language debate began when the Maharashtra government asked government primary schools to start teaching Hindi as a third language, along with Marathi and English. The situation became more tense when videos started spreading on social media, showing MNS party members allegedly targeting people who don't speak Marathi.

On the work front, Shahane recently appeared in Dupahiya, which streams on Amazon Prime. Her quirky role as a politician got her immense praise



When Suchitra Sen Got Upset With Dev Anand

'Suchitra Sen threatened to leave, with the film only 80 per cent complete.'





Raj Khosla made several blockbusters like CID (1956), Woh Kaun Thi? (1964), Mera Saaya (1966), Mera Gaon Mera Desh (1971), Dostana (1980) and Main Tulsi Tere Aangan Ki (1978).

On his birth centenary on May 31, his daughters Anita Khosla and Uma Khosla Kapur, along with writer Amborish Roychoudhury, released a book on the filmmaker, Raj Khosla: The Authorized Biography.

Presenting a fascinating excerpt from Raj Khosla: The Authorized Biography: The role of Maya, the lead heroine, was first offered to Madhubala. Raj had just worked with her on Kala Pani, and she seemed the perfect choice for the role.

Kala Pani was, after all, a grand success and there may have been that wish to replicate its success. Some early posters of Bombai Ka Babu still survive with Madhubala in them. One of them announces the upcoming attraction: 'Raj Khosla and Jal Mistry present Dev Anand, Madhubala... He lost a world but found a home...! Raj Khosla's Bombai ka Babu'

The poster shows a distressed Madhubala, with Dev Anand sprawled on a globe. Another poster features a happier Madhubala with Dev looking all menacing, wielding a stick.

But Madhubala's health was worsening every day. She had started turning down offers. One of the major projects that she had to decline was Bombai ka Babu.

'I think she had a premonition of the illness that was to interrupt her shining career,' Raj wrote. 'I was about to sign her for Bombai Ka Babu when she said, friendly as ever, but with a touch of sadness in her voice, 'I think you had better take someone else for your own good.'

In her place came Suchitra Sen, the reigning superstar of Bengali films. Bengali cinema at this time was going through a veritable golden era. In the 1950s, Uttam Kumar and Sen were the king and queen ruling benevolently over their subjects, the Bengali-speaking audience. The kind of popularity the Uttam-Suchitra duo was experiencing was unparalleled.

Even the big stars of the Hindi film industry didn't enjoy that kind of euphoria in Bengal. Having said that, Suchitra Sen was building a career quite her own, distinct from the pair.

Her first Hindi outing had been Bimal Roy's Devdas (1955), where her depiction of Paro met with acclaim from audiences, her co-stars and critics. This was followed by a role in Hrishikesh Mukherjee's debut Musafir (1957) and Nandlal Jaswantlal's Champakali (1957).

Bombai Ka Babu was Sen's fourth film in Hindi. Jal Mistry was the cinematographer for Champakali, so he may have been instrumental in her selection for the role.

Raj Khosla, like everyone else, was only too familiar with her stardom in Bengal. Also, her success in Devdas could have been a deciding factor. Suchitra Sen, one would argue, pulled off the role of Maya with aplomb.

One might consider the fact that in an era where impeccable diction in Hindustani and Urdu was not only expected but demanded, it is to her credit that she manages to seem convincing despite butchering entire words.

Besides, she dances with abandon and much verve -- despite the fact that the Bengali film industry that she was part of didn't have dance sequences at all. In fact, dance was such anathema to Bengali pop culture that one would struggle to find instances of any classic Bengali actor indulging in a dance sequence (with the rare exception when they were playing courtesans or breaking into a twist to underscore 'modernity').

Sen had never had to dance in a Bengali film till then, but as she swung to the beats of the Punjabi dholak in Dekhne Mein Bhola Hai, she didn't seem like she had two left feet.

Raj later said about her, 'She is in total command of her art, a very emotional artiste. Possibly, the secret of her success is her meticulous attention to detail.' In portraying a character she looks for the details that make a character come out as real. Yet, in this film, too, Raj locked horns on occasion with his leading lady. According to him, most of the crowd at Kullu -- where they were shooting -- gravitated towards Dev Anand, and that would unnerve Sen, who was used to being the cynosure of all eyes wherever she shot in Bengal.

What further intensified her annoyance was that Raj and his crew got into a celebratory mood when Dev Anand was to leave. The actor had finished his portion of the shoot and planned to leave for Bombay. The team decided to throw a party. The revelries went on till the dead of night, with local dholaks and musicians adding to celebrations.

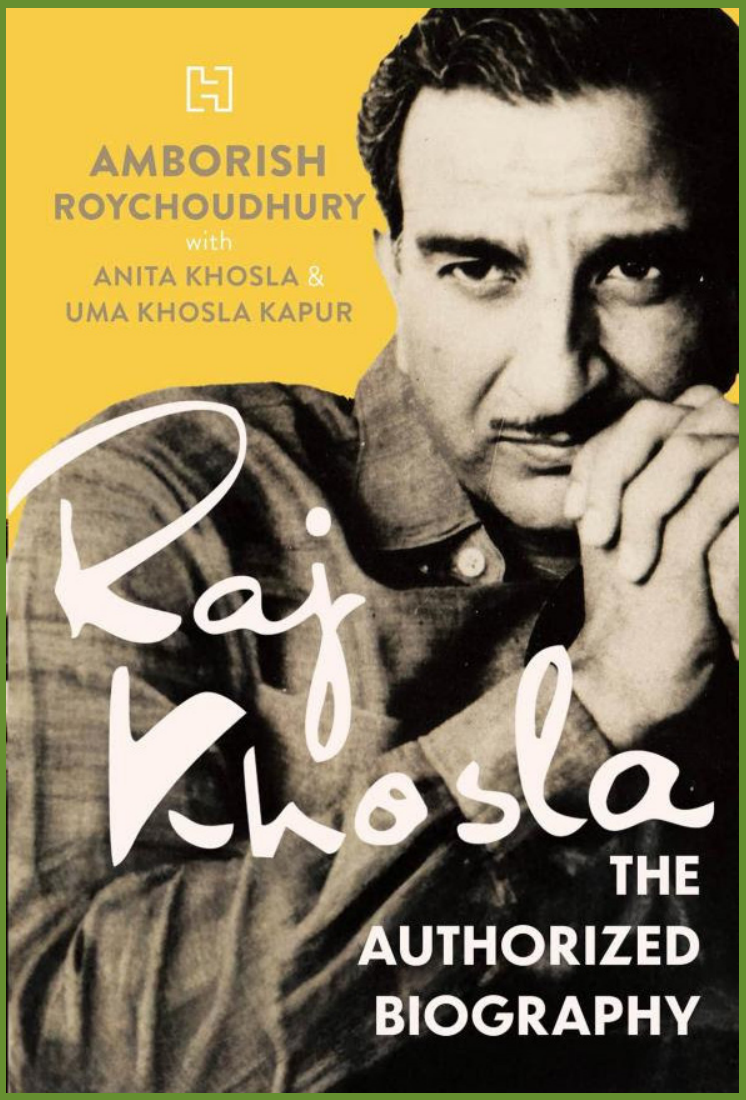
This disturbed the sleep of the Bengali superstar and her husband, who was also with her during the shoot. Her husband asked them to stop the noise. This snowballed into a big fight, and Suchitra Sen threatened to leave, with the film only 80 per cent complete.
Not one to give in, Raj Khosla said that she was free to go, but the party would continue. Sen left. The wedding portions were left to be done, so Raj Khosla decided to use a body double. Halfway through the shoot, Sen was back on the sets, and quipped, 'You think she can act better than me?' She eventually completed the shoot.

But another version of this incident exists. Actor Sanjeev Kumar had once recounted the incident differently: 'The crew of Bombai Ka Babu had gathered at a hotel to celebrate a colleague's birthday. Coincidentally, they chose the same hotel where Sen was putting up with her husband.'

The couple couldn't sleep and Suchitra Sen went straight to the manager, expecting intervention. The manager was non-committal, too scared to ruffle feathers, and the lady decided to confront the revellers herself.
Raj was there and became the target of her consternation. She may have been a little harsh in her demeanour. Offended, Raj asked her to leave. Many did their best to patch things up between the actress and the director, but neither would budge.

Things took a turn for the worse when Sen filed a case against Khosla for not clearing her pending fee and Khosla retaliated by filing a counter-complaint at the Producers' Association against Sen for leaving the project incomplete. The judgement passed was in Khosla's favour and Sen was asked to complete the movie before claiming her due amount. Sen complied and the movie was completed.





Anupam Kher opens up about what took him two decades to return to the director's chair:



As Anupam Kher returns to the director's chair after 20 years with Tanvi The Great, the actor revealed the reason for his hiatus. He said he did not have anything to share with the world and that he wanted to bring something he personally believed in.

Veteran Bollywood star Anupam Kher, who has returned to directing with „ Tanvi The Great" after over two decades, shared the reason why it took him so long to step behind the camera once again.

Anupam made his directorial debut with the 2002 film Om Jai Jagadish," a Hindi drama film. It stars Waheeda Rehman, Anil Kapoor, Fardeen Khan, Abhishek Bachchan, Mahima Chaudhry, Urmila Matondkar and Tara Sharma.

His upcoming film „Tanvi The Great" marks his return as a director after 23 years.

Asked why it took him so long to make a film, Anupam told IANS: „I didn't have anything to share with the world before. For me, making a film is about telling something I truly believe in."

He added that as an actor, he is doing well. In fact, I'm reinventing myself. I've done some amazing work over the past seven or eight years. But as a director, I wanted to tell a story that first resonated with me, and then reflected out into the world."

The septuagenarian went on to share how Tanvi The Great happened to him.

When I met Tanvi, my niece, at my brother's daughter's wedding, I asked her, ‚Tanvi, what are you looking at?" because she wasn't participating in the festivities. She replied, ‚I'm looking at my world."

That moment made me realise I wanted to make something about goodness. I believe in goodness. I believe in what my father used to say: the easiest thing in the world is to make someone happy."

He stressed that „we live in a world where we are constantly made to feel that something is not right. You turn on the television, and all you hear is bad news. Someone is always trying to tell you that someone else is doing better than you, making you feel smaller. So, where do you find the strength to live happily?"
He said that an autistic person knows nothing except how to be good.

When this story came to me, and my writers and I sat down to write it, it became a form of catharsis. It was a purging experience for the 240 people on set. And if it gives us that feeling, I believe it will give the same feeling to others. It will tap into the goodness within every human being who watches the film."
He said that everyone has the potential to be good.

And I'm not saying this as a philosopher. This belief has come at a cost-it has taken a lot of money, money we don't even have yet. But still, for some things in life, you have to go through discomfort for the sake of what you truly believe in."

Anupam added: „And my belief is that Tanvi the Great, and Tanvi herself, are here to make us feel differently, to make us feel good about life."

Tanvi The Great stars Jackie Shroff, Arvind Swami, Boman Irani, Pallavi Joshi, Karan Tacker, Nasser, with Anupam Kher and lain Glen. The film also has two Oscar winners, the music director M.M. Keeravani and sound designer Resul Pookutty. The cinematographer of the film is Keiko Nakahara from Japan.

The film follows Tanvi Raina, a 21-year-old woman on the autism spectrum, who lives with her mother Vidya and grandfather Colonel Pratap Raina. Inspired by her deceased father, Captain Samar Raina, an Indian Army officer who dreamed of saluting the flag at Siachen Glacier, Tanvi becomes determined to follow in his footsteps and join the army to fulfil his dream herself.



'I Had To Work On My Body Language'

Vaani Kapoor claimed she faced challenges while working in the upcoming OTT series, Mandala Murders.

Directed by Gopi Puthran and Manan Rawat, Mandala Murders also stars Vaibhav Raj Gupta, Surveen Chawla, Shriya Pilgaonkar, Siddhanth Kapoor, Rahul Bagga, Raghubir Yadav and Monica Choudhary.

This story is very compelling," Vaani says. Every character has been written intricately with fine detailing. While the films provide a chance to establish the character arc within a few hours, the OTT show will feature constant character development in every episode. In every episode, audiences can see the nuances and different shades of different characters."
How did Vaani prepare for her role?

There is action, so I had to undergo training. For my character, Riya, I had to work on my body language, thought process, and dilemmas. Gopi sir, Manan and I worked very hard on how to mould the character. The process was interesting, but there were also hiccups to maintain the interest level of the audience in the character," she says.

They are often perceived as strong-headed and serious individuals. But with my character, Gopi, sir wanted to explore the vulnerable side of the police officer," she says.
„There is this one scene where my character breaks down. It was not because she was feeling weak but it was a sense of relief that she felt after letting go of a huge burden from her heart. It really felt very real and hard-hitting."

Mandala Murders is set in the quaint town of Charandaspur, where two detectives unravel a conspiracy of ritualistic killings tied to a centuries-old secret society. The show is the second series from Netflix and YRF's creative partnership, following The Railway Men in 2023.

It will be released on July 25 on Netflix.



TRIPTI DIMRI : I WOULD LOVE TO PORTRAY MEENA KUMARI OR MADHUBALA IN A BIOPIC SOMEDAY!

Tripti Dimri is a rising star in Indian cinema, known for her expressive eyes, subtle performances, and strong screen presence. She made her debut with Poster Boys but gained critical acclaim with her lead role in #LailaMajnu. Her breakthrough came with #Bulbbul, a Netflix original produced by Anushka Sharma, where she received widespread praise for her powerful and nuanced portrayal. Tripti impressed audiences once again with her role in #Qala, showcasing her versatility as an actor. She became a national sensation after her appearance in #Animal, where her chemistry with Ranbir Kapoor caught viewers' attention. Known for choosing emotionally intense and layered characters, Tripti is ready with her next presentation, #Dhadak2. Our Sr Editor Keerti Kadam interacted with Tripti Dimri who freely spoke on various subjects.

How did the story of Dhadak 2 reach you?

I got a call from Karan Sir, who told me about a very interesting filmmaker, Shazia Iqbal, who had made a short film called Bebaak. He said it was a beautiful film and suggested I watch it if I hadn't already. He also mentioned that she wanted to narrate a story to me and that I should meet her. I watched Bebaak, loved it, and then met Shazia and Rahul. The narration was fun and engaging, and even after it ended, we stayed back discussing the film and the character. I didn't feel the need to say, "I'll get back to you in two days." It was an instinctive yes. Shazia had a strong vision as a director, and she proved it with this film.

What were your inputs into the character in terms of improvisation, intensity, and spontaneity?

It was a collaborative process, and every day on set felt unique. We would rehearse a scene once or twice, and then just play it out. A lot of spontaneous moments came from reacting to co-actors – and Siddhant is such a wonderful actor. His reactions often brought out something unplanned in me. Acting is all about reacting. Since we were working together daily, our expressions and emotions started coming naturally. I feel lucky to have worked with such brilliant co-actors. What also helped was that Shazia was open to inputs. She wasn't rigid about how a scene should be delivered and welcomed new ideas, which gave us the freedom to express ourselves fully.

Would you be comfortable doing a negative role?

Absolutely! I'd love to do a role like Kajol Ma'am did in Gupt – she was phenomenal. But today, negative roles are not seen the way they used to be. Earlier, a villain was a completely separate character. Now, negative roles are more complex and layered. For instance, the actor playing the negative role in our film is actually very sweet and shy in real life – and that contrast is what makes it so impressive. I'd love to explore such roles. It would be a learning experience for me. I'm a huge admirer of Meena Kumari Ma'am and Madhubala Ma'am. I would love to portray Meena Kumari or Madhubala in a biopic someday.

What made you say yes to this role, and how did you prepare to match your chemistry with Siddhant?

As I said earlier, watching Shazia Ma'am's short film made me realize she has a powerful voice. During the narration, I felt her deep desire to tell this story with honesty. It wasn't about getting a big opportunity with Dharma Productions – she genuinely wanted to do justice to Vidhi, Nilesh, and the story itself. That sincerity inspired me. We did workshops together, but

interestingly, we didn't rehearse actual film scenes. Instead, we played games and spent time getting to know each other – just like college friends. We shared our struggles, weaknesses, likes, and dislikes. That built a strong comfort zone, so by the time we were on set, it felt like working with an old friend.

Since you're playing a college student, did anything during the shoot remind you of your own college days?

Yes, definitely! Shooting in classrooms brought back so many memories. As you can see in the trailer, we were playing games like "Name, Place, Animal, Thing," just like we used to in school and college. The energy on set felt just like a college gang. While there were serious scenes, behind the scenes, it was all fun and laughter.

What do you enjoy doing apart from acting?

I love to travel. Whenever I get a break, I explore new places. Traveling helps me learn about people and cultures – and as an actor, it's very enriching. For instance, if you go to Uttarakhand, you notice how people live, eat, walk, sit, and take care of each other. It's very different from the pace of life in Bombay or Delhi. You learn so much and even end up picking up interesting character traits from people.

Have you ever witnessed a Dhadak-like situation in your personal life, family, or neighborhood?

Not directly, but I've heard many such stories since childhood. We often assume that these things only happened in villages years ago, but that's not true. They still happen – in cities, in educated households, sometimes subtly and sometimes in extreme ways. People may ignore it or normalize it, but for the person going through it, it's very painful. Earlier, people wouldn't attend inter-caste weddings, and it was accepted. Now, people are starting to question it, which is a good sign. It shows that change is coming, even if slowly.

Do you think films can bring about change in society?

Yes, films can definitely make a difference. They are a form of emotional education. But whether someone chooses to learn or change – that's up to the individual. For example, someone might watch Bhaag Milkha Bhaag and feel motivated to start running (laughs), while another person may feel nothing. So it really depends. Films introduce us to new ideas, emotions, and perspectives – but what you take from it is your choice. There's no pressure to change, only the opportunity to.





Randeep Hooda:I am currently in the stage where I have to choose

The 'Jaat' star recently opened up about his upcoming projects, giving subtle hints about the films in the pipeline

Bollywood actor Randeep Hooda wishes to do films that can spark a "fire" in himself, something to drive his urge for more work.

The 'Jaat' star recently opened up about his upcoming projects, giving subtle hints about the films in the pipeline.Randeep Hooda has been on a busy slate lately, including 'Operation Khukri', which is based on the real-life events of 2000, when 233 Indian Army soldiers were taken hostage by rebel forces in Sierra Leone, West Africa. It was followed by a subsequent high-risk mission.



Hooda will be seen in the role of Major General Pal Punia, then Company Commander of the 14th Mechanised Infantry, who played a key role in navigating the tense standoff and the rescue operation of the soldiers. Earlier this year, Randeep Hooda Films and Rahul Mittra Films acquired the exclusive film rights to the operation.

The actor will also reunite with his 'Extraction' director Sam Hargrave for the upcoming action-thriller 'Matchbox' alongside John Cena.



Based on the iconic Matchbox car line, the film will show the story of a group of childhood friends who come together to stop a global disaster.

Meanwhile, on Wednesday, Randeep Hooda was present at the launch event of Blenders Pride Four Elements. Held at The Leela Ambience, Gurugram, the event saw the actor taking to the ramp, showcasing his charismatic presence and stellar looks.

He was dressed in a complete black ensemble, featuring a black suit with intricate work on the shoulders and chest. "My inspiration for outfits comes from the designer, and I think it looks fabulous. They have done fine work on the jacket," he added.

Karan Johar recalls getting ragged and facing isolation in childhood, says 'I was not boy enough or man enough'

Karan Johar opened up about his emotional struggles during childhood, particularly feeling isolated and different due to being labelled as "feminine", he even shared about being ragged at schoolKaran Johar, who is presently promoting 'Dhadak 2,' recently opened up about his childhood and the emotional struggles he had as he was labelled as 'feminine'. Johar admitted that he often felt different from other children and struggled to achieve acceptance among his peers. In a candid conversation with Jay Shetty, Karan detailed his childhood.

Karan opens up on feeling isolated and wanting to belong

Karan Johar opens up about his childhood and wanting to feel included, "The first thing I wanted to do was just be. I wanted to belong. That's the first thing I want to do. I just felt very different from all the other boys my age, all the other kids my age. I think I was just in those days back in the 80s, I didn't know how to describe my headspace because I didn't understand what I was. I felt I was different. I felt I was different from the others, and I wasn't able to kind of articulate it to myself, and those were not days that you know we could get any kind of counselling, any kind of you know visit to somebody who could guide you, help you nurture you in that way. Even your parents were giving you all the love, like I was the only child, so I got a lot of love, but I knew I was very different. I was told I was, you know, more feminine than I should be.
I walked differently. I ran differently. I spoke differently. My choices in life, my hobbies in life, were different."

Karan got candid about his inclination towards Hindi Cinema and music, "I liked to watch a lot of Hindi movies. There are a lot of kids in my neighbourhood. We grew up in an elite neighbourhood called Malabar Hill. And like nobody really watched Hindi cinema at that time, Indian cinema. I was watching all those movies and dancing to those songs in my room. And boys and girls my age liked listening to their parents' favourites, like Abba, or they were getting to like Wham, George Michael Madonna. It was a breakthrough of like you know, western pop artists, and you know I was not really getting into it. I was listening to Lata Mangeshkar and Kishor Kumar and Asha Bhosle and Mohammed Rafi, and everything about me was different.

Karan revealed how he wanted to belong but was left in isolation, "So whenever I went down, you know we lived in like apartment blocks, and when you went down, it was the thing that all the kids in the apartment block would come down and play in the evenings, and I wanted to belong. I wanted to be part of the football team. I wanted to play cricket with the boys. But nobody chose me because I wasn't good enough. You know, I wasn't sporty enough. I was not boy enough or man enough. So when you ask me what I wanted to be, the first thing at that age was that I wanted to belong."

Karan spoke about being ragged in school

He further shared, "The very first part of my formative years, my teenage years, was just to belong. And no one told me then that you don't have to. You can be your own person. That guidance, that nurturing, that philosophy of life wasn't given to me at that point in time. And I remember the particular moment when my mother sat me down, and I was 12, because I was going through a really rough time. I wanted to change schools. I wanted to because I felt I was being ragged in and around. And I still went back to the same school. I didn't change schools."

Karan concluded by sharing his mother's advice, "And she told me, she says, 'Look, I want you to be an achiever no matter what you do. I want you to be good at something. Just hold on to what you think you're good at because I feel like you're not nurturing, you know, what you're good at.' And I was good at like elocution and debate and drama and that's the first time I took my mom's advice and I walked into the interact club and I got very first year you know I started representing my school at debates and executions and there the confidence started building so it was something that happened organically you know I think my chat with my mother was very defining and I don't think she realizes how defining that chat was to me it made such a big impact."

STAR OF THE MONTH





"Rising Star: Shikha Kumari Shines Bright"

Meet Shikha Kumari the talented new female artist taking the art world by storm. With a unique style and captivating vision, she's quickly gaining attention and acclaim.

SHIKHA AS A TALENT

Shikha Kumari isn't just a name, she's a multifaceted powerhouse who embodies confidence, elegance, and versatility. With her roots in performing arts and her heart set on constant evolution, Shikha has carved her own path in the world of entertainment. From the stage to the screen, she brings raw energy, grace, and emotional depth to every performance.

Poise. Presence. Precision.

SHIKHA AS A MODEL

Shikha redefines beauty and elegance on the runway and in front of the camera.
Her modeling portfolio ranges from high-fashion editorial spreads and bridal couture to commercial campaigns and digital ads. With a face that speaks volumes and the confidence to match, She is a favorite among designers, stylists, and photographers.
Shikha has worked for renowned projects like Lakme Fashion Week, Bridal Asia Showcase Featured in Cosmopolitan & Grazia India in the course of her career as a Model.

SHIKHA AS A DANCER

Dance is where Shikha's journey began, and her rhythm has only gotten bolder. Styles mastered: Bharatanatyam, Contemporary, Bollywood freestyle, Urban & Afro fusion

Highlights:

- Performed at India Dance Festival 2024
- Lead performer in Zee TV Awards Opening Act
- Viral reel with 4.1M views: "Dance in the Monsoon" (Instagram, July 2024)

Shikha is all set to shine in a lineup of exciting projects that reflect her diverse artistic persona:

- Web Series: Lead role in a romantic thriller (Releasing Oct 2025)
- Short Film: "Unheard themes of resilience & silence
- exploring
- Brand Ambassador: A beauty campaign for a major skincare brand (NDA in place, announcement pending)
- Dance Tour 2025: Multi-city live performances featuring classical-contemporary fusion



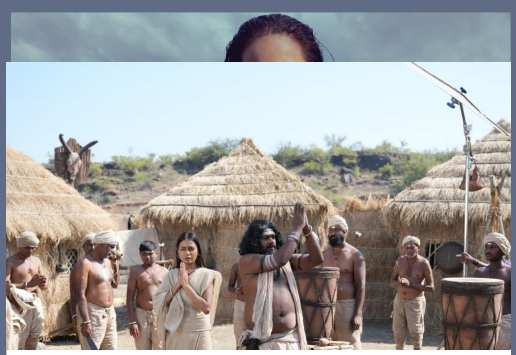








Huge Crush on Tegi Pannu punjabi singer wanna work with him



Ready to release very soon Anirvan based on Ravan

‘Shefali Was Content Being The Kaanta Laga Girl’

‘We wanted a girl who looked like a doll.’





Vinay Sapru and Radhika Rao were the ones who discovered Shefali Jariwala and introduced her to showbiz more than two decades ago.

The directors of her breakout song, Kaanta Laga, which released in 2002, they had discovered the then college-going girl on Linking Road, northwest Mumbai.

Vinay Sapru goes back in time and tells “From an engineering student to the nation’s heart-throb, it was an amazing journey.”

Shefali Jariwala’s sudden death has shocked the entertainment industry.

She was our closest and dearest protege. Her death has saddened the industry and I can see the reaction everywhere. We switch on (television) channels, newspapers, Web sites, and it’s ‘Kaanta Laga Girl, Kaanta Laga Girl’ everywhere.

How did you get to know of her death?

Divya Khosla messaged me at 1.30 am.She was the first to convey the

sad news. From there on, it's been a floodgate of memories, which is so tough to cope up with.



Tell us about your association with Shefali Jariwala.

We wanted a girl who looked like a doll. We discovered her at 19, and have been in touch since the last two decades.

Doesn't her death expose the difficult side of showbiz?

Yes. Maybe this happens in other people's life but Shefali was never like that. From the time we spotted her on Linking Road till now, she was a bundle of energy and a bundle of dreams and hope.

She was never a victim of a circumstance. What happens when death is so sudden and so young, one always tries to see this part of the life, that maybe the person was a victim. But it was never like that.

She was a positive person, always dreaming about the future. Every time we met her, she was always so well turned up and well groomed.

I believe she was religious.

Apne ghar mein Ganpatiji rakhti thi, Nauratre ki deviyan rakhti thi aur bulaati thi. She was happy with everything that she got.

She was very content with being the Kaanta Laga girl.She became the heartthrob of the nation. She took it on and lived it to the fullest.

How much was your version of Kaanta Laga influenced from Lata Mangeshkar's original rendition?

When you're recreating a song, you can always tamper with the rendition of the vocals. But our brief was that, don't tamper with the rendition of the vocal because that was sung by the Goddess herself.

I said, yes, we are recreating the song, but there cannot be anyone who can render it better. So you will see that the arrangement has changed, the music instruments have changed, but the vocals have been kept the way Lataji immortalised them. Lataji has been an inspiration.



But Shefali was not able to make much headway after Kaanta Laga.

See, I'll tell you what, when you have such a big success and such a big iconic thing. When we designed the DJ Doll album and made the Kaanta Laga song, we mentored Shefali, groomed her and prepared her for something that was close to our heart.

She worked hard, the rehearsals went on for almost three-and-a-half months. Then the result was for everyone to see. Shefali was the face of Kaanta Laga. I still remember the Bombay Times cover. She was featured as the girl who was breaking all records with this song.

She came to our office with some 10 copies of Bombay Times and was saying, 'Sir, I'm on the Bombay Times cover!' Full of life, full of positivity, full of dreams in her eyes. It's not that she didn't do more work in all these years, or didn't do anything else. But this was the one iconic thing she did.

Was she happy with what she had?

Yes. She used to do shows all over the world. She used to drop in at our office, happy and prosperous. From an engineering student to the nation's heart-throb, it was an amazing journey.



'Cinema's Greatest Challenge Is Reels'



Goutam Ghose is one of India's most celebrated contemporary film-makers. He has bagged multiple National Film Awards, along with the Golden Peacock for Best Film (Moner Manush) at the 41st International Film Festival of India.

He is also the proud recipient of the Vittorio De Sica Award in Italy, 1997, and in 2006, was awarded the Knighthood of the Star of the Italian Solidarity. Ghose, who turns 75 on July 24, is still chasing cinematic adventures.

In a two-part interview. "This year, at the first Asian Art Film Award in Macau, my son and I won the Best Cinematography Award jointly. I don't know about world cinema, but I don't think there's a precedent in Indian cinema for a father-son duo winning an award jointly."

How does it feel to bring in a milestone birthday?

I don't count the years I have lived. As long as my spirit is alive, I'm fine.

(Smiles) I have no outstanding debts, I don't pay EMIs. That gives me peace of mind, the freedom to chase adventures and yes, write haikus too.

What is the greatest challenge film-makers are facing today?

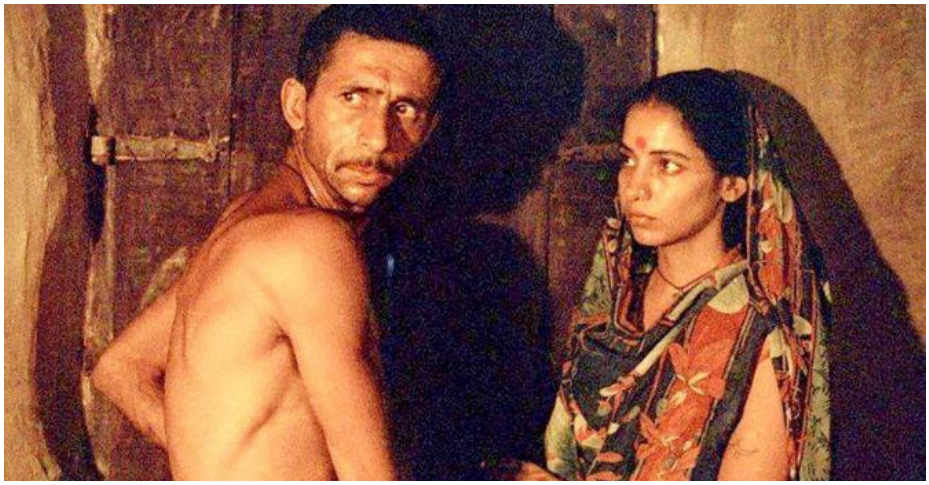
Their **greatest** challenge is how to separate cinema from Reels. Today, we usually shoot from just two angles; we either click a picture or take a selfie. Honestly, I don't know how long cinema will survive. Maybe in the future, it will become like opera, playing to a select audience. But all is not lost yet because the small, digital camera has really benefited indie film-makers, making film-making easier and cheaper. Shooting on celluloid was very expensive. Your script and pre-production had to be watertight to ensure that no raw stock was wasted. I still follow the discipline instilled by celluloid.

When I shot Raahgir: The Wayfarers, which is finally releasing after five years, my actors, Tillotoma Shome, Neeraj Kabi and Adil Hussain, were surprised I didn't want to take the shot from different angles as is common today. I told them that for me, every shot is a master shot because while working in the celluloid era, particularly in Bengal with a stringent budget, we mostly followed a 3:1 ratio and could go for a maximum of three takes.

In the digital age, young film-makers like my son Ishaan can work far more freely even within a tight budget.

Jhilli, the first feature film Ishaan directed, was shot in a dhapa (garbage ground) in Kolkata with characters drawn from that area. He used a small Sony camera, Sony A7, Canon 16-35mm lens and a hand-held stabiliser, recreating the sound completely during post-production.

I remember during Paar, I also shot with Shabana (Azmi) and Naseer (Naseeruddin Shah) on the busy streets of Kolkata, but I was wielding a heavier, more conspicuous camera, and we managed to pull off the shoot only because my stars were completely unrecognisable thanks to their costumes and make-up.



Paar won three National Awards, along with the UNESCO Award at the Venice International Film Festival in 1985, with Naseer winning the Volpi Cup for Best Actor.

It was also the recipient of the FIPRESCI Award and the Red Cross Award at the Verna Film Festival and even after four decades, you are still remembered for this 1984 Bengali film about two Dalit fugitives.

Many still remember Satyajit Ray for Pather Panchali, his first film as a director, and Shyam Benegal would sigh that he will always be known for his debut directorial Ankur. So, not just me, this happens with a lot of other film-makers as well.

When I made Paar, I didn't have the advantage of visual effects. Shabana and Naseer, along with the rest of the crew, actually risked their lives, the latter almost drowning twice, crossing the gushing Hooghly river with a herd of pigs and that crossing remains unforgettable.

Whether it is Paar, Antarjali Yatra, Padma Nadir Majhi or your most recent film Parikrama, the river has been a leitmotif in your narratives.

Yes. One reason for this could be that my family, during Partition, came as refugees from Faridpur in East Bengal (now Bangladesh). It is located on the banks of the river Padma and I've heard stories of the river from my grandmother and father.

I was born in Kolkata and West Bengal is perhaps the only state to be bordered by lofty mountains in the North and the Bay of Bengal in the South, the meandering valleys in between bound by water bodies. I grew up playing football, hockey and cricket by the Hooghly, also known as the Kali-Ganga and Bhagirathi-Hooghly river.

I would sit by the river and remember that it was this waterway which had brought the Portuguese, French, Dutch and finally, the English to India. Also, from the time we are conceived to our birth, we are swimming in our mother's womb, so the river is embedded in my subconscious. (Laughs) Govind Nihalani would jokingly say that given my obsession with the river, I must have been a fish in my previous birth.



One understands your fascination with Padma and the Hooghly. But how did you come to helm an Indo-Italian co-production revolving around the river Narmada?

Parikrama is based on a children's novella, The Story of Lala, written by my Italian producer-friend Sergio Scapagnini. He gave me the manuscript to read, beautifully illustrated by his three daughters, and it touched my heart.

In 1999, the Italian edition won the prestigious Elsa Morante-Isola di Arturo Award and thereafter, Sergio wanted to come out with an English translation. I recommended the novella to my friend V K Karthika who was agreeable to Red Panda, Westland Books, publishing it in English, provided they could carry a blurb on the book cover stating that it would soon be filmed by Gautam Ghose.

As I had told Sergio almost two decades ago, I could see a film in this inspiring story of an 11-year-old boy from Raipur, who runs away to Mumbai hoping to make enough money to buy a piece of land so his tenant farmer father does not have to beg in front of the tax collector when crops fail. But I wanted to give the story a larger, more layered context.

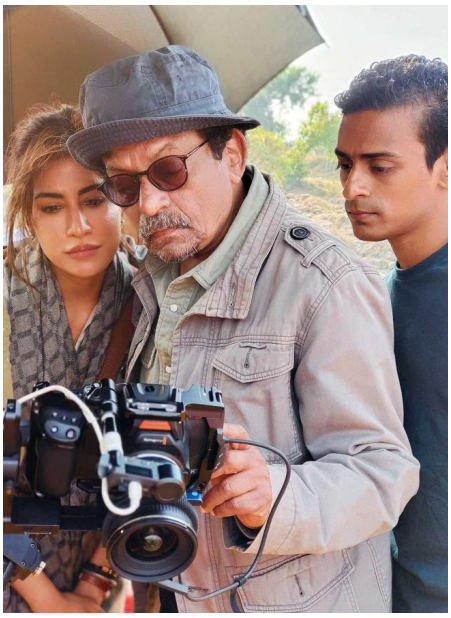
So, you brought in the Narmada?

Yes. In the postscript, Sergio had written that he met Lala in Mumbai, while walking on Juhu beach. I decided to orchestrate their meeting in the Narmada Valley after reading Amrit Lal Vegad's book Narmada: River of Beauty, which describes his parikrama (pilgrimage) around India's oldest river.

Legend has it that if you look at the Narmada even once, it can bring you salvation. My film begins in Italy, with a documentary film-maker, Alexander (played by Marco Leonardi of Cinema Paradiso and Maradona, Hand of God fame) as he prepares for his trip to India to shoot a documentary on the annual Narmada parikrama.

Alexander, the second protagonist I created, meets Lala, the first, at Amarkantak, the source of the Narmada. He learns that the young hawker boy's (played by Aayan Badkul) home and village were submerged by the reservoir project and decides to draw him into his documentary.

Life when juxtaposed with death is ironic and Alexander's son Francesco has lost his mother while Lala, who is around the same age, has been distanced from both, his birth mother and his metaphorical mother, the Narmada. While following the river, the film follows their lives too.



Didn't Sergio object to changes in his original story?

No. He respects me as a film-maker and told me that I could adapt his book freely. (Laughs) I had met him at the Venice film festival where after

a screening of Paar, he chased me, shouting, 'Mr Ghose, I've seen your film, could I speak to you?'

We subsequently became good friends. What I loved about his story is that young Lala, despite all his trials and tribulations, does not lose hope or courage, as he migrates to the city and makes a success of his life.

Sergio introduced me to this wealthy guy who dealt in diamonds and had offices in Europe and Rajasthan. I later learnt that the man was Lala and he had not lost his humour or humility. (Smiles) The kids I met in the Narmada Valley during my recce for Parikrama had the same cheeky humour.

in Indian cinema for a father-son duo winning an award jointly.

Ishaan actually went to the US to study music, but he was soon fascinated by the camera I had given him, and on his return, he joined my film unit.

(Laughs) We are the Filmwallahs.
My wife Nilanjana has been working with me since 1978, when I flagged off my first film Maa Bhoomi; she does the costumes.

My daughter Anandi was also involved with my films, but now works independently in Mumbai, making ad films. My son-in-law is a sound designer.

We still have intelligent and illustrious people on the jury, but might need to review the selection process to make the awards attractive.

Aren't film festivals losing their shine, increasingly becoming promotional platforms and money-making endeavors?

I have attended many festivals when they were a place for film lovers.

I was at the Cannes film festival this year and was encouraged to see that they have managed to seamlessly combine art and commerce. Venice is also trying, but many of the others have become more business-oriented.



Your son and you worked together on Parikrama, right?

(Beams proudly) Yes, Ishaan had shot one of my films earlier. This one we did together, as father and son. This year, at the first Asian Art Film Award in Macau, we won the Best Cinematography Award jointly.

I don't know about world cinema, but I don't think there's a precedent

You have won several National Awards. Of late, there has been the occasional controversy over the national honours. How do you react to that?

I remember the Golden Lotus I won for Dakhal adjudged Best Feature Film. The chairman of the jury that year was Ashok Kumar, and on the panel with him were B R Chopra, Bhupen Hazarika and Salil Chaudhury.

I was the founder chairperson of the Kolkata International Film Festival and in 2024, at the request of the West Bengal chief minister (Mamata Banerjee), I agreed to return as the chairperson of KIFF in its 30th year.

I have agreed to come back as the chairperson this year too and hope to screen many more interesting films from across the world.

‘Abhishek Has Gone Through A Lot’

‘It’s a tremendous accomplishment to have a father like Amitabh Bachchan and still be so sorted, to not taste the kind of success that he should have and yet be so balanced.’



Like **Kareena Kapoor**, Abhishek Bachchan celebrates his 25th year in showbiz too. Writer-film-maker **R Balki** has worked both father and son in Paa, directed Amitabh Bachchan in Shamitabh and Abhishek in Ghoomer, all three films co-produced by Junior Bachchan. The director rewinds to their first meeting and explains why he wanted to reverse the equation on screen.

“I always wanted to see Amitabh Bachchan as a child because he is one. At 82, he is a sometimes sulky, sometimes funny child, always endearing, who for all his gravitas, always makes me smile and laugh. Abhishek is an adult in a lot of ways,” he says.

Let’s flashback to your first meeting with Abhishek.

During the Cheeni Kum (his 2007 directorial debut) promotions, I met Amitabh Bachchan, who was having a conversation with Abhishek. Abhishek was saying something serious and Amitji was pulling his leg.

Looking at them, I wondered who was the dad and who was the young one. It was at that moment that I decided that whenever I made a film with them, I would need to find a way to reverse the conventional father-son equation. Maybe the idea of doing a film on progeria came from that thought.

A rare genetic condition, it makes a 12-year-old child look five times older, and I could project Amitji as a brat with Abhishek as Auro’s mature dad. That’s how I saw them during that first interaction and the impression hasn’t changed.

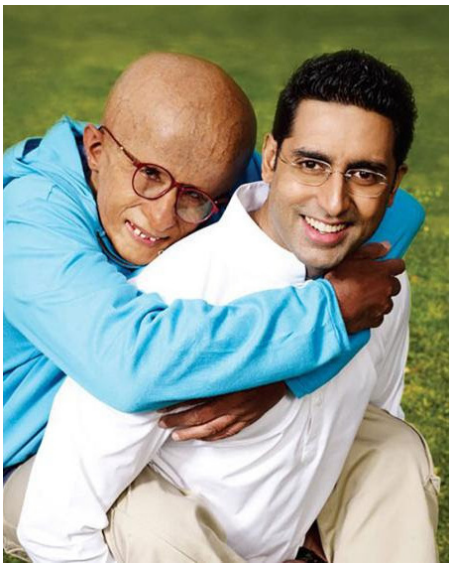
Abhishek not only acted in Paa, but was also one of the film’s producers. What’s he like as a producer?

He is not an interfering producer or one plotting on how to make money from the film. Both of us are fools in a lot of ways. Would you believe that someone wanted to buy Paa, but Abhishek refused the offer, saying we would distribute the film in our way?

He could have made a lot of money had he sold the film, but that’s the way he is. When he supports something, he does it from the heart. Interestingly, while Abhishek always believed in Paa as a producer, he didn’t want to act in the film with his dad.

(Chuckles) I don’t think Amitabh Bachchan has ever chased an actor the way he chased Abhishek Bachchan for Paa. I too have never chased an actor as much as Abhishek.

For six months, we tried to convince him to play Amol Arte, but Abhishek kept saying no.



So how did you get him on board?

One day I just told him, ‘Listen, forget that it is a complex and challenging role, just do the film for my sake.’ I added that I was not asking him for his dates, simply asking him 20 days from your life. He was taken aback and didn’t know what to say. It was because of that unusual request that he gave in and did the film.

Given your long association with them, do you notice any similarities between the two Bachchans?

None. Abhishek Bachchan is a completely different actor from Amitabh Bachchan. Even as a person, they are very different. Both are very caring in a lot of ways. But Abhishek has gone through a lot and that has made him richer, both as a person and an actor.



Paa was a journey unlike any we had seen in Hindi cinema before. It's obvious that you believed in the film, but weren't you apprehensive about taking on more than you could chew?

If I had thought along those lines, I would have never made the film. The moment you start strategizing what will work, what the masses want, doubts start creeping in.

I don't understand myself, so how can I pretend to understand the audience?

We went into Paa without any thought even on how we were going to execute what was on paper. Amitabh Bachchan also didn't ask any questions, he just went with the project on pure belief, maybe not even that. In retrospect, I realise that if P C Sriram (cinematographer) had not used a wide-angle lens during a test shoot with Amitji, we would never have been able to shoot the film because there were no visual effects back then.

Even for Auro's look, we just had some references of people with progeria. Dominie Till and Christian Tinsley came from Los Angele and made the look happen.

Paa picked up four National Film Awards, for Best Actor (Amitabh Bachchan), Best Supporting Actress (Arundathi Nag), Best Make-up (Dominie Till and Christien Tinsley) and Best Feature Film in Hindi.

That must have been high given the challenges of the project?

I don't believe in any award; I was just glad that we had managed to pull it off. I always wanted to see Amitabh Bachchan as a child because he is one.

At 82, he is a sometimes sulky, sometimes funny child, always endearing, who for all his gravitas, always makes me smile and laugh. Abhishek is the adult in a lot of ways.



Before Paa, you directed Abhishek in a few ads too..

Yes, we collaborated on the first Maruti Versa ad, followed by the Idea campaign. At that point, Abhishek was one of those rare celebrities in advertising who endorsed just one brand.

There may have been a few other ads, but nothing really significant. He chose Idea and remained its brand ambassador for years. That says a lot for the person he is.

As a professional, he possibly has one of the finest minds in the film industry, with a superb sense of cinema and an understanding of the bigness of advertising. Always curious, there is so much that interests him and right from the briefing, we jammed a lot.

Abhishek loves new ideas, is eager to learn and knows a lot. I'm not talking of just knowledge here, but an emotional maturity of a different order.

Can you elaborate on that?

Well, it's a tremendous accomplishment to have a father like Amitabh Bachchan and still be so sorted, to not taste the kind of success that he should have and yet be so balanced.

More than just a gifted actor, Abhishek is also a gifted human being. I love Amitabh Bachchan; I'm a huge fan. And I respect Abhishek Bachchan. I'm fond of him, and I also look up to him.



After Paa, Abhishek also produced Shamitabh and Ghoomer. Did he contribute to the creative process in these films too?

Shamitabh started out as an ode to Amitabh Bachchan's voice. Abhishek was not a part of the cast, so he was hardly involved. But in Paa, he contributed a lot; the idea for his costumes came from him.

He decided to model his look on his politician friend Sachin Pilot. I wrote the dialogue in Ghoomer, 'Loser kya feel hota mujhe pata hai' after jamming with him.

Everybody knows how a winner feels, but for a loser, there's no logic, it's just the magic which is not happening. Abhishek is extremely sensitive and Ghoomer came from the depths of that sensitivity.

From Paa to Ghoomer, have you noticed any changes in him as an actor and a person?

For me, he's not any different from the Abhishek I met that first day. Maybe there is a little less leg pulling now, though he still rags people. At the same time, he is always so mature, sensitive and caring.

A lot of sensitive people think only about themselves, they don't exhibit the same sensitivity towards others, but the reverse is true for Abhishek. He knew Saiyami (Kher) had a really difficult role.

She plays Anina Dixit aka Ani, a batting prodigy who loses her right

hand in a freak accident and now, the only way she can make it to the Indian women's cricket team is to become a bowler and adopt the unconventional technique of spin bowling Abhishek's Padam Singh Sodhi aka Paddy, a failed cricketer and now her coach, is forcing on her. The kind of support Abhishek gave her was unbelievable. He treated her like a younger sister.



Is he a good cricketer in real life too?

I would say he is a better footballer, but he loves cricket. He loves all sport and can do anything for any sport.

Apart from films and sport, what are his other passions?

He loves food though now he doesn't indulge in it. (Laughs) I keep telling him, 'Why do you want to sacrifice passion for vanity?' Apart from food, he enjoys stimulating conversation, watching different things and reading.

How would you evaluate him as an actor?

I love Abhishek as an actor, I think he is one of the most contemporary actors we have. Unfortunately, while we celebrate them in Hollywood, back home, we don't write scripts for actors who stand apart from the rest.

Our cinema is so different that sometimes talents like Abhishek don't get their due recognition because the kind of roles they need to shine are not available to them. I keep telling him that he should do films with urban themes.

There is a huge audience for them today and there are not too many better actors than Abhishek, who is so modern in his thinking and approach. He can say so much with one little expression.

Which are some of the performances that have stayed with you over these 25 years?



I can't believe it has been 25 years since Abhishek started acting. To me, he is still the same boy. He has given some really wonderful performances.

From my own films, I would pick Paa and Ghoomer. Mani Ratnam's Yuva is beautiful. His hired goon, Lallan Singh, is so raw and edgy.

I like the assassin of Bob Biswas very much. Manmarziyaan and Kabhi Alvida Naa Kehna are very nice.

He is so cool in Delhi 6. Ram Gopal Varma's Sarkar and even the first 20 mins of his Naach absolutely blew my mind. After that, the film went somewhere else but Abhishek, in a role which was not so well-defined, was understated and captured the nuances of his character, Abhinav, also an actor, so beautifully.

It's interesting that you should pick Naach. After over two decades, not too many people remember that film.

There are many more films and performances. Abhishek has superb comic timing in films like Dostana, Bunty Aur Babli and Bol Bachchan.

I love him in Rohan Sippy's crime comedy, Bluffmaster. More recently, I liked him in Anurag Basu's Ludo and Shoojit Sircar's film, I Want To Talk, which is an interesting experiment.

If you were to make a film with Abhishek today, what would it be?

It will have to be something really special that comes from deep in the heart.

(After a thoughtful pause) Maybe I will make an out-and-out comedy with him now. Ghoomer in many ways was a satirical comedy.

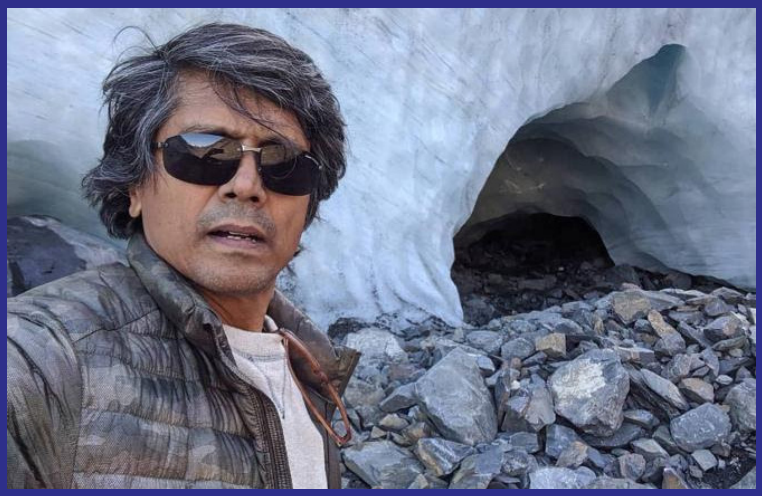
Finally, in his silver jubilee year, what would you like to say about him?

Abhishek Bachchan's time is coming.

‘Before Rajiv Gandhi’s Murder, No One Knew Suicide Bombers’



Nagesh Kukunoor is no stranger to reinvention.



The indie darling behind films like Hyderabad Blues and Iqbal, and his more recent ventures like the series City of Dreams, has given us a new series **The Hunt: The Rajiv Gandhi Assassination Case.** Kukunoor addresses the perception of having ‘disappeared’ and defends his steady stream of work over the past seven years. “Over 27 years, 15 feature films, almost seven shows, I’m continuously working. I’ll never take away the joy of writing and directing. My God, direction is so much fun. Acting is not fun at all,” he says.

Before watching The Hunt, I wondered where Nagesh Kukunoor’s magic touch had gone. After watching it, Ifeel it’s still very much there.

Why, you didn’t like City of Dreams? Or did you never watch it?

No. But I couldn’t help but wonder where you went.

I never really went anywhere. In the last seven years, I have been working like a maniac. The only difference is that I made only one feature film, which was in Telugu. I made three seasons of City of Dreams. I did Modern Love Hyderabad for Amazon Prime Video.

There was another series I almost started shooting but didn’t. So I have been working non-stop. But I think a lot of people, even those who watched and liked City of Dreams, didn’t know it was me.

So to answer your question, I never went anywhere. I’ve been doing my own thing. But as I’ve learned in my career, there are some things which strike a chord with the audience. Have I worked really hard? Do I think I’ve done something very different from my usual safety zone? Yes, in The Hunt. But you never know what lands with an audience.

When you made Hyderabad Blues, it was for NRI audiences, but people in India loved it.

Correct. I’m not even an NRI. I thought I would take it to ‘international audiences’. The Indian Diaspora at that time watching Indian films was small -- we’re talking in 1997. So I thought I’ll take it to regular festivals. Then I was blown away by the fact that Indian audiences -- in India, not the Diaspora outside -- loved it. So it’s like that. No film-maker knows what they’ve done till it actually finds a large audience.

Before I watched The Hunt, I felt I knew everything about Rajiv Gandhi’s assassination.

But after watching it, I realised I didn't know anything about it.

Did you feel the same way when you read Anirudhya Mitra's book on which the show is based?

100 percent! That's precisely why I wanted to do it. I always wanted to dabble in the space of true crime, and it's something I did not get the perfect vehicle for. Anirudhya's book literally reads like that. There are so many jaw-dropping moments, so many twists and turns.

As a regular Joe, who knew nothing about the assassination other than the broad strokes reported in the media -- at least you're a journalist, you would have known a few more layers -- I knew nothing. So when I read it, I was like, 'Oh my God, this could make for a terrific show.'

The questions are still there. Like why didn't they get Sivarasan (the LTTE terrorist who masterminded the Rajiv Gandhi assassination) on the same day? Why was there a delay of two days?

One genuinely doesn't know the answer. You can do your research, go online, there are hundreds of theories floating around. And I am not one to delve into conspiracy theories.

What I made sure in episode seven is that I would physically take the audience, the viewer, to Konanakunte (a suburb of Bengaluru) and have them experience that frustration for 35 minutes -- what the SIT felt, what Captain Ravindran felt.

I wanted you to feel that frustration. Other than relating all the events that went down in those 36 hours, there were no answers. What I presented is exactly what happened the way it happened.

Why wasn't Sivarasan caught alive? Any guesses? Like they got to Sivasaran on a day, which was Rajiv Gandhi's birthday. Was that deliberate?

That's the way the events played out. My co-writers and I couldn't believe that the day, the dawn on which it (the encounter) was conducted was actually Rajiv Gandhi's birthday. That is like the mother of all coincidences.



Did you feel any sympathy for Rajiv Gandhi while directing The Hunt? Or was it just a good story to tell?

I just wanted to tell a good story. It is as simple as that, because the story is the investigation, not how his life was cut short so brutally. Yes, it's unfortunate that he had to die so early -- no one deserves that -- but I had already left India by 1988.

I was working at my first job when I heard about the assassination.

It didn't have the emotional impact that hit a lot of Indians. Shock, yeah.

The first episode starts slowly. Was that intentionally for people who don't know about Rajiv Gandhi's assassination?

There is so much stuff, so many characters introduced. Even then, people watching the show have to go back to see, 'Arrey, who is this character? Where was this?'

There's so much stuff going on. Like, the whole investigation and how they crack it. Now, it's second-hand knowledge.

You say 'suicide bomber' and the whole world knows what that means. But pre-1991, no one knew what a suicide bomber was.

They had a couple of cases where people drove trucks laden with explosives, but the individual suicide bomber carrying a bomb on himself -- certainly not herself -- that had never happened. The LTTE were the pioneers of that, so to set up that world requires time.

The effects of that world are felt as you watch the subsequent episodes. But the setup in episode one is a

must, especially for Gen Z, who has absolutely no clue about Rajiv Gandhi's assassination.

How did you get such brilliant actors?

The credit goes to Casting Bay. What casting directors do is sift through hundreds to first find the lookalikes. Then once you nail that, you get them to audition and see if they can act. It's a long, complicated process. Eventually, those auditions reach me, and I see how they visually match up, how they work as actors. But the initial mind-numbing work has to be done by good casting directors.

As a director, how did you get them to immerse into the soul of those characters?

That's what I'm paid for. The story was so convincing. You tell them, 'Boss, read this book, read this character, you have to put this.'

When you're directing actors, the prep they do, how they immerse, is secondary to me. There is no right process to prepare for a role.

Most of the cast read 90 Days. They understood what the space was, and did their individual research. What I did as a director is that I made sure they were in the right mental and physical space because they're mimicking people who lived. After that, we tackle each scene as it comes, and I have to find the right line for them to toe. That's the joy of directing.

Two actors really stood out for me: Amit Sial, who played SIT chief D R Karthikeyan, and Shafeeq Mustafa, who played Sivarasan.

I was talking to a lot of actors, visually trying to match them up. It was a suggestion by Sameer Nair of Applause Entertainment, who casually mentioned if I had thought of Amit Sial. At that moment, I was like, 'Oh, I don't know Amit Sial.'

He said he was a terrific actor. So I quickly did my research. He's done Maharani, Jamtara, and a bunch of stuff. The beauty was that Amit, with his body type and face, matched Karthikeyan. I met him, got a sense of the kind of person he was, trusted my gut and cast him. And it was proven in spades.



And Shafeeq Mustafa?

Shafeeq came from Casting Bay. They found this Malayali actor, who visually matched. What I loved was his body type. He's a very small guy, and Sivarasan was also small.

Shafeeq's body language, even in the audition, had a kind of nervous energy. I thought, 'Oh my God, this is the guy.'

What about the actor in you? Do you still feel that urge to act? Because you starred in Pataal Lok.

That plays third fiddle to the writer and director. It's not something I get excited about. Acting is a skill set I have to work very hard at.

When I agreed to do it, I was terrified. I don't take that lightly. If an opportunity comes and I'm not doing anything, I'll do it. I enjoy it, but it's not a top priority.

The urge to act destroyed Vijay Anand's direction. Do you fear that?

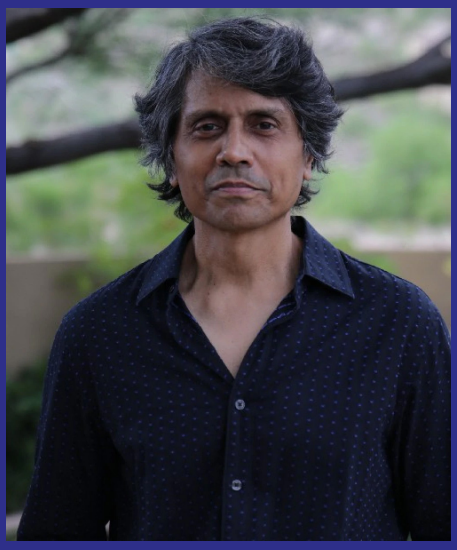
No. The director in me is too strong. Over 27 years, 15 feature films, almost seven shows, I'm continuously working.

I'll never take away the joy of writing and directing. My God, direction is so much fun. Acting is not fun at all.

I was happy you didn't play the SIT chief in The Hunt!

Oh, there is no way I would have done it. I did the photoshoot because we were desperate, getting close to the shoot. But the shoot was so complicated. I was directing in two languages.

I know my limitations as an actor, I have no delusions. I'm an average actor. There are thousands, maybe lakhs, of good actors in India. When you have the luxury of a good actor, why wouldn't you use them?



Why Aamir Picked Basketball For Sitaare Zameen Par

'I have typically worked with neurotypical actors. This was the first time that I was working with neuro-divergent actors.'
'The experience was mind-blowing.'
'Because they don't have egos.'



Aamir Khan's Sitaare Zameen Par is among the most-watched films of the year so far, thanks to its heart-warming underdog story. And reveals why he chose to set the film against basketball.

"Basketball is a game where you have to bounce the ball and put it in a basket. It's a fairly simple requirement," he says.

When you converted the Spanish film Champions into a Hindi film, why did you choose basketball? Basketball is not such a popular game in India.

Yes, yes, you're right. Well, the original had basketball. We did an experiment with a couple of choices. We thought because we are showing that it's a team of neuro-divergent players, if the game is very complex, then neuro-divergent people would usually not enter that space. Basketball is a game where you have to bounce the ball and put it in a basket. It's a fairly simple requirement. We had thought of one alternative.

Football?



No. Kabaddi, because that's a very Indian game. But they are specially-abled people, so playing Kabaddi would have been a little difficult. Also, Kabaddi is a body contact sport and a lot of them are averse to pushing and shoving and pulling the leg. It doesn't come naturally to them. So we dropped that idea.

Have you ever played Kabaddi?

Well, I have school. It's considered as a national sport.



Was there a bond beyond the camera with these neuro-challenged heroes?

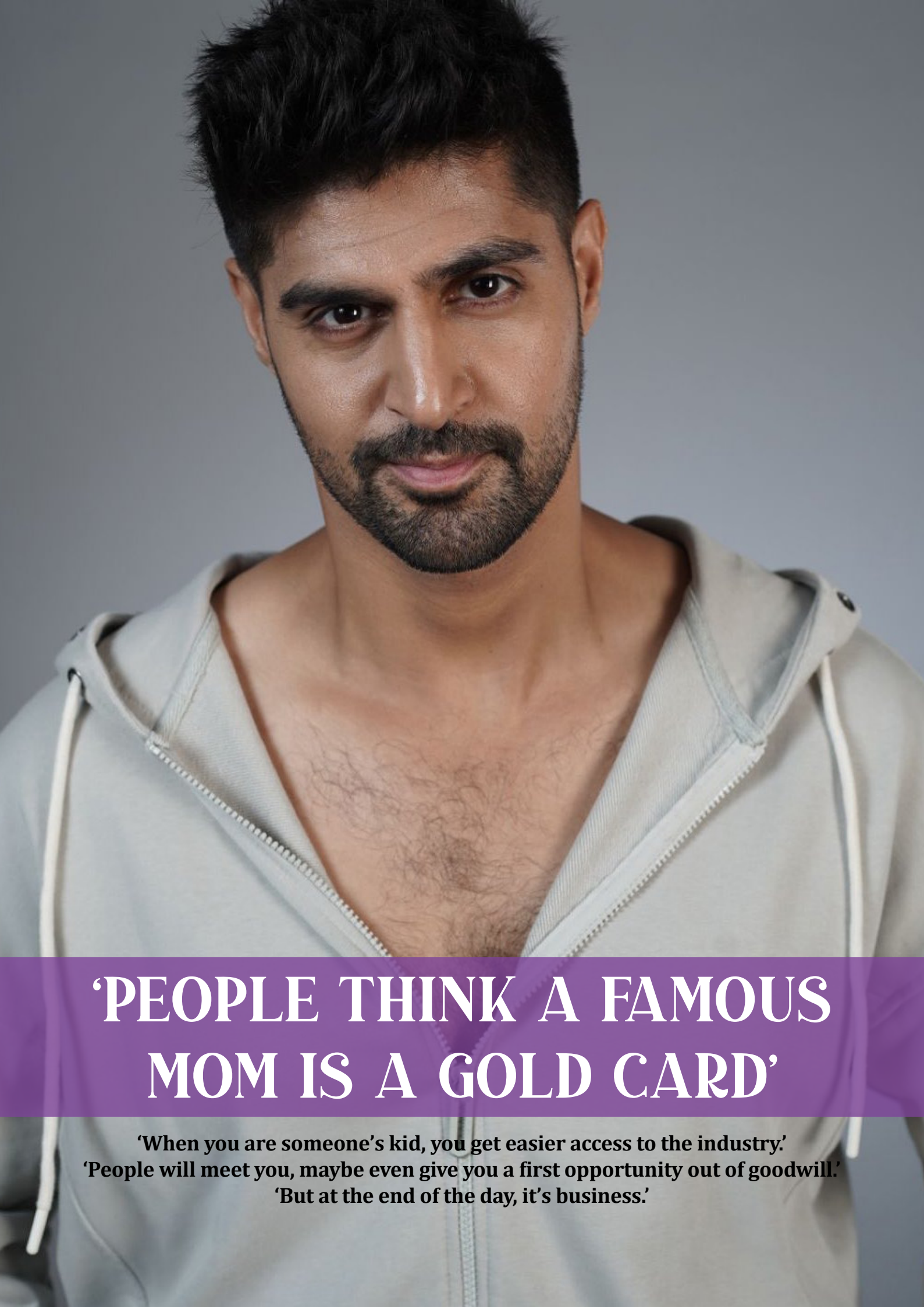
I'm very close to all of them, all 10 of them. I had a great working relationship with them.

Having worked for 35 years now, I have typically worked with neurotypical actors. This was the first time that I was working with neuro-divergent actors. I have to say the experience was mind-blowing.



Why is that?

Because they don't have egos.
They don't come with any preconceived heart, it's pure heart. They're joyful. They're happy to be on set. They're happy to be working on a film. Their energy is infectious.



‘PEOPLE THINK A FAMOUS MOM IS A GOLD CARD’

‘When you are someone’s kid, you get easier access to the industry.’
‘People will meet you, maybe even give you a first opportunity out of goodwill.’
‘But at the end of the day, it’s business.’



OTT actor **Tanuj Virwani**, last seen in Rana Naidu, lives in a sprawling penthouse in Worli. Son of yesteryear actor Rati Agnihotri, Tanuj remains grounded and friendly.

"I have never used my mom's name. Since a young age, I've tried to be financially independent. Now, at 38, I want to contribute towards the home," he says.

Since when have you been living in this beautiful home?

The land this building stands on has a deep significance to our family. My dadaji was in the real estate business.

He was in the midst of constructing a building which looked similar to the Nehru Planetarium but it was demolished. My father took over and built it in its current form.

I have been living here since 2007; I convinced my parents to let me stay here alone. I was giving my college exams then, and I barely scraped through because we were just partying.

Whenever I have a release, I have a screening here with the cast and crew.

But now, I'm married with a child, so not many parties. My mom would say this used to be a frat house and after the birth of my daughter Navya, it's turned into a home.

What is your favourite corner in the house?

There are quite a few, actually. There's one on the terrace. I don't have a manager; I usually crack my own deals, be it for film, for shows or anything. There is this one spot, whatever I sign or close a deal, it usually goes well.

I call that my lucky spot. Inside Edge, Code M, Splitvilla happened there. I got the news of me doing my first Dharma film, Yodha, there. I also spent a lot of time there during the lockdown.

Which is your mother's favourite area of the house?

She prays a lot. My aunt lives in Poland, so there's a lot of Christian influence, a lot of Jesus and Mother Mary statues. We are Sai Baba bhakts so there is a life-size Sai Baba. It's a place of Zen.

When I enter her living quarters, I have to remove my footwear. During the pandemic, my mom was stuck in Poland because my aunt was making some changes in her restaurant. My mom could not return because her dog was not allowed to fly back. I was not married then. It was like a bachelor's pad then, just my father and me. Even the staff were all men. Now, there's an overwhelming female presence -- my mom, my wife Tanya, my daughter, her nanny...

Did you ever get any career privileges because your mother was an actress?

No, I got bullied because of that. In school, the kids were very mean. I was an introvert and had confidence issues. My mom was not actively working at that time. She made her comeback when I was 16, in Standard 10. There was no social media back then. I knew my mom was something big and would feel it more when we would travel abroad, where people would come for autographs.

I'd seen very few films of hers, only when they would come on cable TV. They didn't allow me to watch films like Ek Duje Ke Liye because she dies at the end, and that would really upset me. When she made a comeback, I would be allowed to go on the sets sometimes. When she would promote them, she would be on news channels. That's when I would be like, 'Oh my God, she's big.' A lot of people think that a famous mom is a gold card but it's nothing like that.

Which film sets did you visit?

I have been on the sets of Yaadein. They were shooting in Khandala. I remember Subhash Ghai would come to our room after packing up and he wanted to understand my take. He

wanted to know what the youth felt because he was in tune with the times. In the film, my mom's character is dead but Jackie Shroff's character keeps seeing her. Just before that, Mohabatein had come out and he was concerned about the similarities. I told him that it was the same role as Mohabatein. Later, when we went for the film screening, my mom's role was much shorter than we anticipated. She was pretty bummed out about it.

How much did you have to struggle in your career?

Everyone struggles.
I get a lot of inspiration from Shah Rukh Khan. He was struggling up until two years back. He's probably the biggest star we have had in our country for over 30 years.

When you are someone's kid, you get easier access to the industry. People will meet you, maybe even give you a first opportunity out of goodwill. But at the end of the day, it's business. It's a film industry. If the producers and directors think you have what it takes and the audience keeps coming back for more, you'll get work. Otherwise, you'll just be sitting at home.

I don't let it get me down. There are days where the phone is not ringing and others when it's ringing excessively.

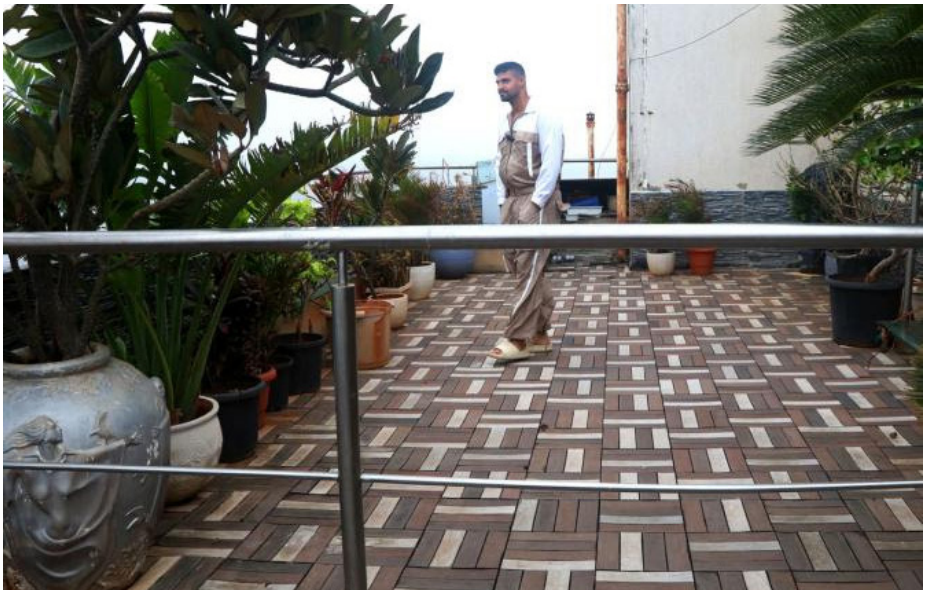
How has fatherhood changed you?

My entire day revolves around what time Navya wakes up. She has started going to play school. The way you start viewing the world, situations and people, everything changes. I always tell everyone that I was more ready to be a dad than I was a husband. It's beautiful watching her milestones.

Inside Edge was the most popular show you did. But somehow, the other shows have not been as popular. Being in the industry for almost 10 years now, does it make you insecure that things are not working out?

When I started my career, I only wanted to be a film actor. But as time went by and I saw both failure and success, you have to become the Jack of all trades.

You have to be open to all possibilities. That's how OTT happened, character roles in movies happened, hosting reality television like Splitsvilla happened. Weirdly for me, the easiest phase of my career was during the pandemic. I was bombarded with work during that phase. In 2021, I had six releases. Some actors were not comfortable working in those times, so the roles came to me.



How expensive is it to maintain this lifestyle?

A lot of people have this misconception that because his parents are well off -- his mom was a star and his dad is in real estate -- it's easy. Yes, the family has wealth, but I also pride myself in being self-made. I have never used my mom's name. I don't use her surname. Since a young age, I've tried to be financially independent. Now, at 38, I want to contribute towards the home.

When I joined the industry, there was just films and television. Now, you've got films, television, OTT, reality shows, social media, events, collaborations, there are many more avenues. At the same time, you don't want to be desperate and overexpose yourself.

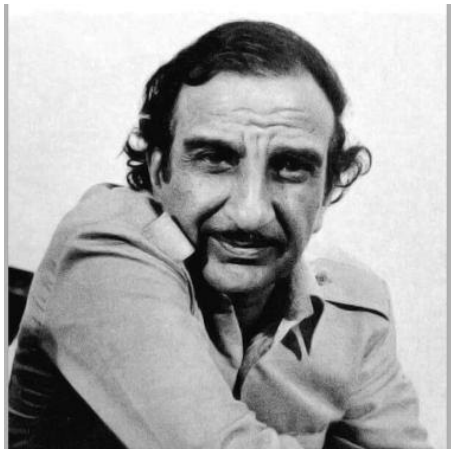
How do rumours affect you?

I used to get affected at the start of my career. It's not just about link-ups. My parents were going through some issues in their marriage and people put so much mirchi in it. They presented it in a bad way and it affects you.

Your films are not doing well, people are writing negative stuff about your family, it's not a good feeling. But I'm happy that happened early on because it gave me that mental muscle. It doesn't make it your reality unless you let it.

Meet The Man Behind Bollywood Classics

'The moment a movie was declared a hit, he would immediately start planning his next.'



In his long career, Raj Khosla directed classics like CID (1956), Woh Kaun Thi (1964), Mera Saaya (1966), Do Raaste (1969), Mera Gaon Mera Desh (1971) and Dostana (1980).

On his birth centenary on May 31, his daughters **Anita Khosla** and Uma Khosla Kapur released Raj Khosla: The Authorised Biography, co-written by Amborish Roychoudhury. It has many unknown facts about the film-maker that we don't know. For example, did you know that he choreographed the song Bindiya Chamkegi from Do Raaste?

Or that his Suchitra Sen-Dev Anand-starrer almost got into trouble for **this reason?**

"Dev Anand, Sunil Dutt and my dad belonged to a different generation. They did not seem to be from the Hindi industry, they spoke English so well."

Would Raj Khosla sing at home?

Yes. He would play the piano or the harmonium and sing.

What were the dinner conversations like at home?

He would talk about Shakespeare and encourage us to listen to different kinds of music. His favourites were K L Saigal, Hemant Kumar, Jagjit Singh and Laxmikant-Pyarelal.



While writing this book and revisiting your father's memories, what did you discover about him?

It was quite a revelation. I never knew he had choreographed the song Bindiya Chamkegi in Do Raaste. He used to emote the songs with gestures and expressions. When Amborish found out that he choreographed that song, it made sense. I found out he used to pay salaries to his crew even when the film was not on the floor.

Would actors visit your home?

Dev Anand was very close to him. At that time, I was in college in Chandigarh, so I missed many events, like the weddings of Dev Anand and Sunil Dutt's daughters. He always spoke about Dev Anand, and I eventually met him at Mehboob Studios when I was working for Take 2 magazine. He was so different, very polite and impeccable. Dev Anand, Sunil Dutt and my dad belonged to a different generation. They did not seem to be from the Hindi industry, they spoke English so well.

Raj Khosla had an obsession with horses. Tell us more about that.

In Gurdaspur, his cousin and he would go riding often when they were young. In Bombay, he was a member of the Turf Club. Every winter, we would go to the races. My father would let us bet Rs 100. Once, we won triple the amount and it thrilled us. That was his winter ritual.



How would he celebrate the success of his movies?

The moment a movie was declared a hit, he would immediately start planning his next. He'd get busy choosing the title. Everyone admired his knack for great titles and he worked his story around the titles. He did not throw success parties; he did not enjoy parties. He preferred to go to Mumbai's Otter's Club or go to the races, playing chess and reading.

Do you recall your father's relationship with Mahesh Bhatt?

My dad once told me that Mahesh Bhatt was the only assistant director who left him in a year. The others stayed on. Mahesh had the confidence and talent to go out on his own.

As a child, did you visit your father's film sets?

Not really. We weren't allowed on his sets until his film, Sunny (1984). Once, during college, we visited Mehboob Studio while he was shooting Do Premee. My cousin wanted to be in a scene, so he told us to walk across casually.

We had fun. During Sunny, I visited the sets as a part of my journalism studies and photography training.

The shooting was at Sadhana's bungalow in Santa Cruz (northwest Mumbai). I spent the day with Sharmilaji (Tagore) and we spoke about astrology.

You chose journalism instead of the movies. Why is that?

I was a bit of a rebel.
After graduation, my father wanted me to do a master's degree in literature and study abroad. But I found Bombay magical. When I joined Sophia College for a mass media course, he was furious. He didn't want us to get into film-making. He believed a woman should be a good wife and mother. I didn't agree. I followed my heart and chose this path.

What are your favourite Raj Khosla films?

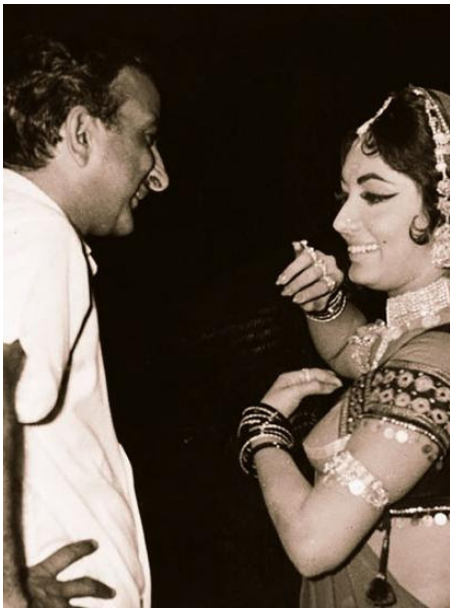
Woh Kaun Thi is perfect. My daughter and I watched it recently, and it still feels fresh. Manoj Kumar and Sadhana's performance, music by Madan Mohan, lyrics by Raja Mehdi Ali Khan and Lata Mangeshkar's songs all come together beautifully.

They shot it in Shimla, which was foggy and eerie. It's his best film. Another favourite is Kala Pani, with Madhubala and Dev Anand. It is light, romantic, and highlights friendship, which my father always emphasised.

Tell us about your father's final days.

His films weren't doing well. The producers did not blame him but he became very quiet. He felt bad. He took refuge in chess, and would play for hours. Hrishikesh Mukherjee often came to play with him. We enjoyed seeing him at home.

Earlier, he was always out on shoots. Then he had a cycle accident and needed leg surgery. That slowed him down and deeply depressed him. He used to be agile, so using a walker was hard on him. The day he died, on June 9, 1991, it was raining heavily. Bombay had almost come to a standstill.



‘PEOPLE MATTER ABOVE EVERYTHING ELSE’

‘I look at the people, yes. Co-actors, the makers, the crew.’
‘Then I look at how it’s different from what I’ve done before.’



After getting good reviews, the Malayalam police procedural film Ronth, written and directed by Shahi Kabir, has started streaming on JioHotstar. Roshan Mathew is thrilled about the response the film is getting, and tells **Subhash K Jha**, “It’s one of the most special projects I’ve been a part of. It’s right up there with Moothon.”

Are you surprised by the overwhelming response to Ronth?

It’s not a complete surprise. An honest, original film that comes together has always found its audience in Malayalam. I was hoping that the work we had all done comes together well. Happy to know it has.

How did you approach your character of a rookie cop?

I saw him as a sponge, ready to be coloured by every experience he was going to have. He’s finished training, but there’S so much learning to be done on the job that in a way, his learning has just begun. Each experience is going to change him.

Your co-star was the incredible Dileesh Pothan.

I love working with him. He has such a brilliant mind, and is an absolute gem of a co-actor. His conviction has anchored me multiple times. His perspective and understanding of the audience has helped the film at multiple points.

You played very different characters in Ronth and the OTT series Kankhajura. Both projects happened with quite a bit of a gap between them.

I had enough time to prepare and prepare myself in the way I deemed appropriate for both.

It is rare for any actor to be offered so much variety at such a young age.

Absolutely. Even as a screenplay, Ronth offers something rare. The emotional graph of the story is dependent on the calls these patrolling cops get. It’s so random and unpredictable. So is the kind of work coming from Malayalam. We’ll always keep hoping for more, but I am really grateful for the experiments film-makers are willing to try with me.

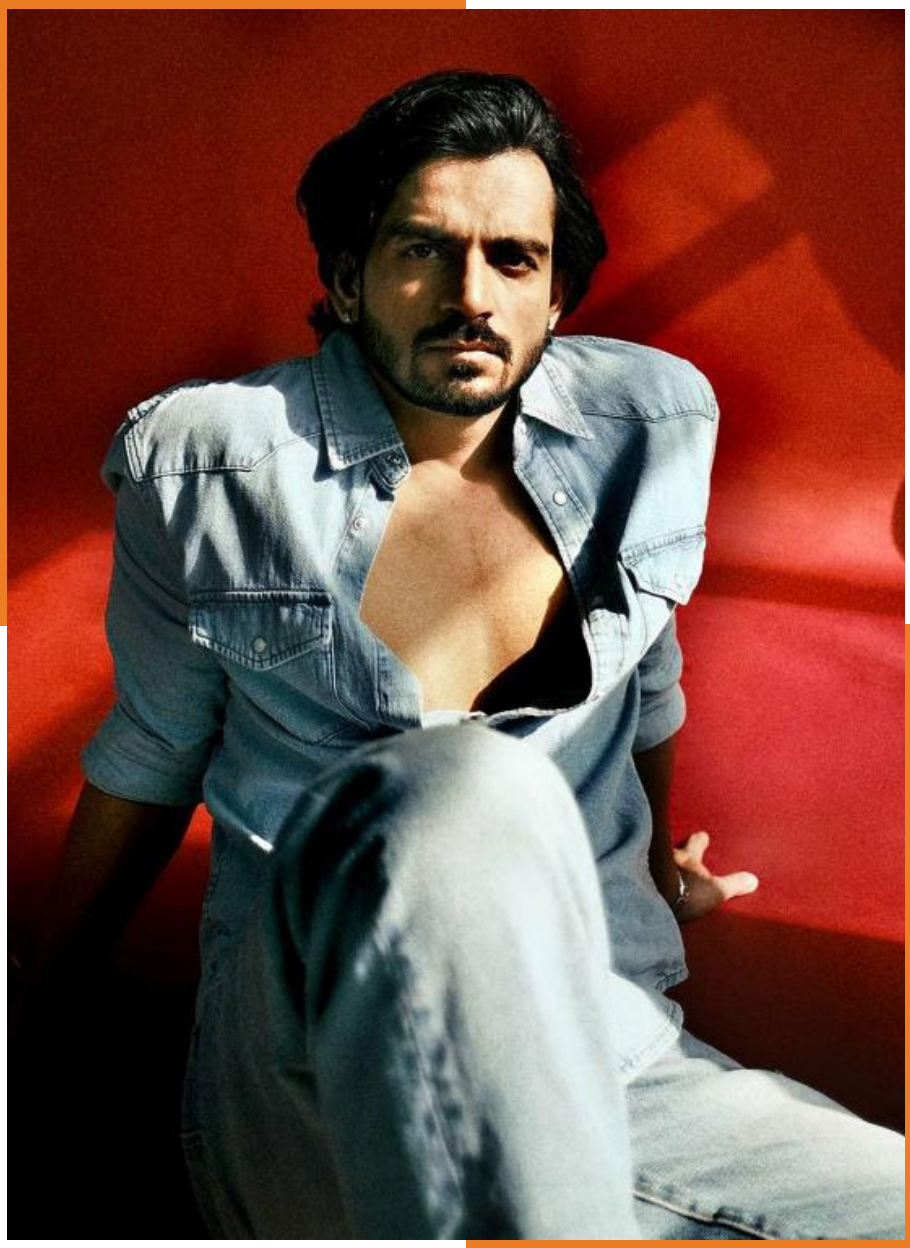
How do you rate your performance in Ronth?

It’s one of the most special projects I’ve been a part of. It’s right up there with Moothon.

What is your criteria for accepting a film?

I do look at the people, yes. Co-actors, the makers, the crew. People matter above everything else. Then I look at how it’s different from what I’ve done before.

‘The Big Stars Are Feeling The Heat’



Anshumaan Pushkar had come to Mumbai with a simple plan. The Bihar boy enrolled for an MBA degree, while simultaneously trying out his luck in films. The MBA was a safety net in case films did not work out for him.

He got a breakthrough with Jamtara: Sabka Number Ayega, the 2020 Netflix series that was praised for its ensemble cast.

The actor became popular through his work in shows like Kathmandu Connection and Grahan that led to his first mainstream outing, 12th Fail. Anshumaan’s second theatrical release is Maalik, in which he plays Rajkummar Rao’s aide. “The industry is harsh, but everyone’s life has struggles. You have to keep going on. A friend said something beautiful to me: ‘Hona hain toh hoga, agar tu nahin karega toh pakka nahin hoga’,”

‘The money crunch will be there for people who are used to having a certain kind of remuneration.’ ‘Work opportunities are less, even for technicians who work in the industry.’



What have the last few days been like since Maalik released?

Audiences are liking the film, that is the ultimate goal for an actor.As an actor, you aspire to do these things. The good comments help. I’m feeling satisfied that audiences are liking it.

What’s your favourite memory from the sets of Maalik?

The first reading. That’s the first time you’re reading the character, understanding the nuances of it, and understanding the overall characteristics.



It is very intriguing for me. When I went for the first reading, (Director) Pulkit sir narrated the whole story. He was already sure that I am going to be this character. This was the first time anybody had cast me like this. Also, the fact that I got to work alongside Rajbhai (Rajkummar Rao), whom I admire as an actor. I got to learn so much from him during the shoot.

In one of your podcasts, you spoke about the importance of hard work and luck. Patience is a key element too because yours wasn't an overnight success. How did you make it work?

You have to have patience because only then can you be truthful to your craft. When I was doing theatre, somebody came to me and said I was outstanding in my character. Comments like that made me reach here because that gave me the courage to keep going. The industry is harsh, but everyone's life has struggles. A friend said something beautiful to me, 'Hona hain toh hoga, agar tu nahin karega toh pakka nahin hoga.' You come from a small place, you see a dream and then go through a journey to reach your destination. In that journey, you achieve beautiful things as you also overcome hurdles. That is when you call your life special. I don't call it struggle.

You came to Mumbai to do an MBA, but you eventually got into acting. What gave you confidence to make this switch?

I wanted to come to Mumbai, that's why I opted for MBA.

It was a side option in case things did not work out for me in Bollywood. I completed my MBA, and there was a job offer. It was a period when I had nothing. I was struggling to pay my rent. My MBA friends were earning salary in lakhs. But the acting world was always interesting for me. My family supported me a lot and even sheltered me from vicious comments from people.

Your IMDb page says you come from a family of 'film enthusiasts'. Did you grow up watching a lot of movies?

I come from a rural, humble background. Cinema is a part of the weekend happiness for them. Recently, I got to know that one of my uncles, who has passed away, performed before President Rajendra Prasad in his house back in the day. Everybody at home loves cinema. My brother watches more films than me. I have to match his expectations. He is my biggest critic.

We have some fantastic actors hailing from Bihar, like Manoj Bajpayee, Sanjay Mishra, Pankaj Tripathi. Have you ever met them?

I have met Manoj sir twice. Once at some awards show, and later in Goa at IFFI. There was an instant Bihari connection there, but we had a short conversation. Someday, I want to sit with him and learn more about this craft. I have worked with Sanjay Mishra sir. During the shoot, there was a gap and I was going to Bihar. He asked me to bring sattu (roasted chickpea flour) from there. Somehow, you find such connections and it is beautiful.



Who are your mentors in the industry?

My brother is my mentor.
Then, there's Nadira ma'am (Babbar, of the Ekjute theatre group) my teacher from the theatre days. Amit Sial is very dear to me; I have worked with him in three projects. He gave me good insights on the industry because he is a senior and has an understanding. The same goes for Rajbhai (Rajkummar Rao) during Maalik. Whenever you do a project with senior actors, you get to learn so much.



Bollywood is going through rough phase right now. The A-listers stay afloat, but the small actors have to face the brunt, be it with money or opportunities. What has been your experience?

Everyone is facing this problem. There is definitely a struggle. Yes, apart from the A-listers, everybody gets affected. But even the big stars are feeling the heat. The money crunch will be there for people who are used to having a certain kind of remuneration. Work opportunities are less, even formtechnicians who work in the industry.

‘Hopefully, One Day, I’ll Be On The Big Screen’

‘I don’t know when, but I definitely want to see myself there -- maybe doing some action sequences.’



Behind **Sanvikaa’s** effortless smile lies a journey marked by grit, quiet rebellion and an unshakable spirit. In the second part of her candid conversation with the Panchayat actor takes us back to her uncertain early days in Mumbai, when six girls shared a one-bedroom apartment and had to sleep on the floor, and how she survived the city’s crushing costs.

Unburdened by overthinking, Sanvikaa says she plunged into acting auditions without the fear of rejection, a naivete she now considers her biggest blessing.

Now, with a growing fan base and ambitious dreams of leading women-centric films, she stands as proof that small-town girls with big-city courage can turn quiet gambles into life-changing victories. “I’m always cautious because anything can happen, so I didn’t allow myself to get too excited.”

‘People Love Me As Panchayat’s Rinki But...’

Was the move to Mumbai easy?

I tried very hard to move to Bombay but nothing was working out. Looking back, I think it was just a matter of timing. My parents were actually ready to send me to Bombay then, though not for acting -- it was for a design course. But somehow, things kept falling through. We tried multiple times to catch a train from the station, but every train to Bombay ended up getting cancelled!

We thought of taking a bus instead but then my sister called and asked, ‘Why do you want to do this? You already have a good career in engineering, stick with that.’ I got very angry after that conversation.

I just wanted to get out, so I made an excuse to my parents, telling them that I was thinking of taking up a job in Bangalore. They agreed. So I went to Bangalore, fully aware that I wasn’t going there to work.

You actually went to Bengaluru in search of a job?

It wasn’t about finding a job, that was just an excuse. I stayed in Bangalore for three or four months. After that, without telling my parents, I moved to Bombay. My parents, especially my mother, tend to overthink a lot. I didn’t want to trouble her unnecessarily, so I managed everything on my own. Two months later, I told her I was in Bombay.

I asked her not to tell Papa because I thought he wouldn’t agree with my decision. But to my surprise, he was very supportive. Though he would still send me news about job vacancies, reminding me this line (a career in the Hindi film industry as an actor) is uncertain and suggesting I keep my options open, both of them supported me in every way they could.

Did it never cross your mind that what if it does not work out in the film industry? Did you have a plan B?



I didn't think too much. I just made the decision (to move to Mumbai). If I had stopped to consider everything, I probably wouldn't have done it at all. Honestly, I'm glad I didn't know much about the industry back then. I didn't realise how long it takes to meet the right people, give countless auditions, and wait for things to actually work out. It all felt like an adventure, and I enjoyed the whole process.

Your real name is Pooja Singh. Why did you switch to Sanvikaa? Watch the video to hear the answer.



How financially tough is it to survive in the early years of acting? How much rent were you paying?

When I first moved to Bombay in 2016, I was paying Rs 6,000 as my share of the rent. We were six girls sharing a one BHK apartment with absolutely no furniture. We had our own chadars, and would sleep side by side with our bags kept neatly next to us. We lived like that for a long time, managing the bills the same way -- everything was divided.

Bombay is an expensive city, but it's also a place that fills you with hope. The key is to meet the right people and steer clear of negativity. I've always kept my circle very positive and supportive. That's why my flat-mates from back then are still some of my closest friends. We still hang out together.

How did Panchayat happen? How did you progress from a small role to a full-fledged character?

It happened quite by chance.
I gave the audition, but it was really a stroke of luck that I even met the casting person -- he just happened to see me and asked me to audition. I went in without any baggage or expectation of being selected because honestly, I had already self-rejected in my mind.

You self-rejected yourself...

Yeah, the moment he said it was for TVF (the production house The Viral Fever) and that I'd be acting opposite him (Jitendra Kumar), I was like, 'Oh my God!'

I've been following TVF since my college days and absolutely love their content. So I had no baggage at all because I had already self-rejected myself in my head.

My audition went well, but I didn't expect a callback. A few days later, when I got the confirmation call, I was shocked. Still, I didn't celebrate, because I thought, 'It's just production calling.

I only have a one-week contract.' For me, it was 50-50. It could either turn into a big role, or there was a chance I might not be in the show at all, since my part came right at the end and could easily have been edited out.

I'm always cautious because anything can happen, so I didn't allow myself to get too excited. But since the character was introduced with a hook at the end, there was also a possibility it could grow in the later seasons.

Honestly, I didn't think too much about it then. My only thought was, 'I'll earn some money and pay my rent. That's it. My one month's rent is sorted.'

What are you working on now?



I'm the kind of person who doesn't like to reveal too much. I believe that until your project is out, it's better not to talk about it. I'm always a little afraid of the editing table -- you never know if your part will even make it.

I've seen friends who've worked for 40, 50 days on something, completely excited that it would change their lives, only to find out later that it didn't even make the final cut.
Even my mother advises me not to share too much about what I'm doing or what I'm planning next. When the time is right, that's when I'll speak about it.

Right now, I'm working on two projects, maybe more. But I'll definitely talk about them when the moment is right.

If you could design the dream role in any genre, what would it look like?

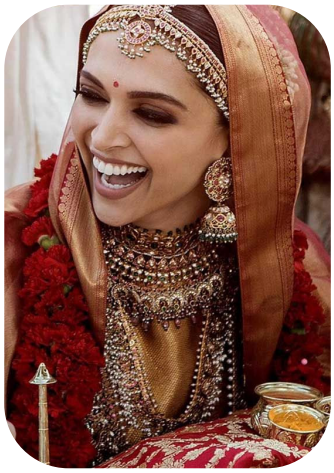
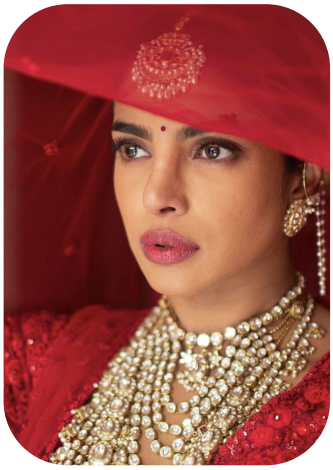
I want to do women-centric films. Hopefully, one day, I'll be on the big screen. I don't know when, but I definitely want to see myself there -- maybe doing some action sequences.

A life-changing moment for me was when I watched NH 10, Anushka Sharma's film. I thought it was brilliant, and it left a deep impact on me.

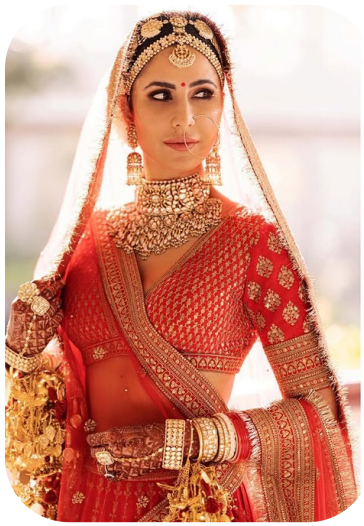
At the time, I was in college and doing theatre, so I watched it with a different perspective, not just as an audience member, but as someone observing the acting, the story, the graph of the character.

The way Anushka Sharma performed, the strength of the character, that's the kind of zone I'd love to explore.




Top 10 Iconic Celebrity Wedding Jewellery Inspirations for Your Big Day

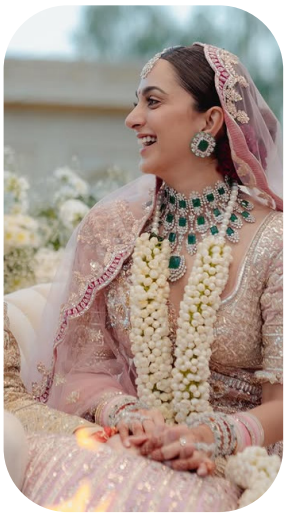
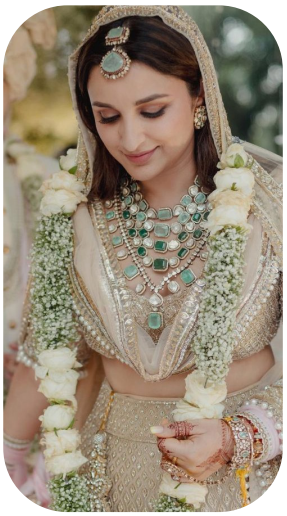
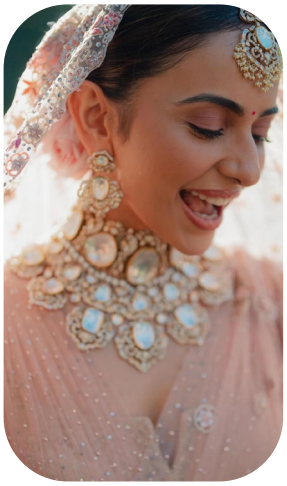
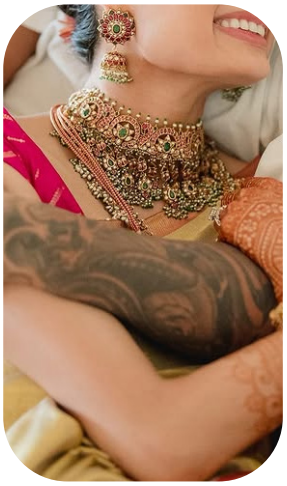



Overview of Bollywood Bridal Jewellery Trends

Bollywood brides have always raised the bar for wedding fashion, displaying a combination of timeless grace and contemporary flair. From Anushka Sharma's stunning traditional jewels to Athiya Shetty's stylish polki jewellery, each bride has made her own style statement. These celebrity wedding jewellery trends provide a wealth of inspiration for brides-to-be, mothers, sisters, and guests alike. Whether it's Deepika Padukone's beautiful blend of Konkani and Sindhi traditions, Priyanka Chopra's classic Indian bridal look, or Katrina Kaif's modern yet traditional ensemble, these Bollywood actresses' jewellery choices are a wonderful fusion of tradition and modernity. At Zaveri Bros., we celebrate these classic styles by presenting a wide range of items inspired by celebrity bridal jewellery and Bollywood actress wedding jewellery, which helps you achieve a stunning, star-inspired ensemble on your special day. Soak up the inspiration and jazz up your wedding look with show-stopping jewellery items as unique and gorgeous as these Bollywood brides.

Significance of Jewellery in Indian Weddings

Jewellery plays an important role for any bride and represents cultural and traditional values. For example, a nath or nose ring symbolises marriage and fertility, while each item of bridal jewellery has its own importance. The range of jewellery pieces worn across India's various cultures is vast, reflecting regional and religious traditions. Bollywood bride wedding jewellery frequently embodies these traditions, but with a dash of flair. For a full reference to essential bridal jewellery pieces, see our previous blog, "10 Types of Bridal Jewellery Every Indian Bride Should Have on Her List: A Guide to Indian Bridal Jewellery." This ensures that every bride can choose a collection that combines tradition and modern elegance.

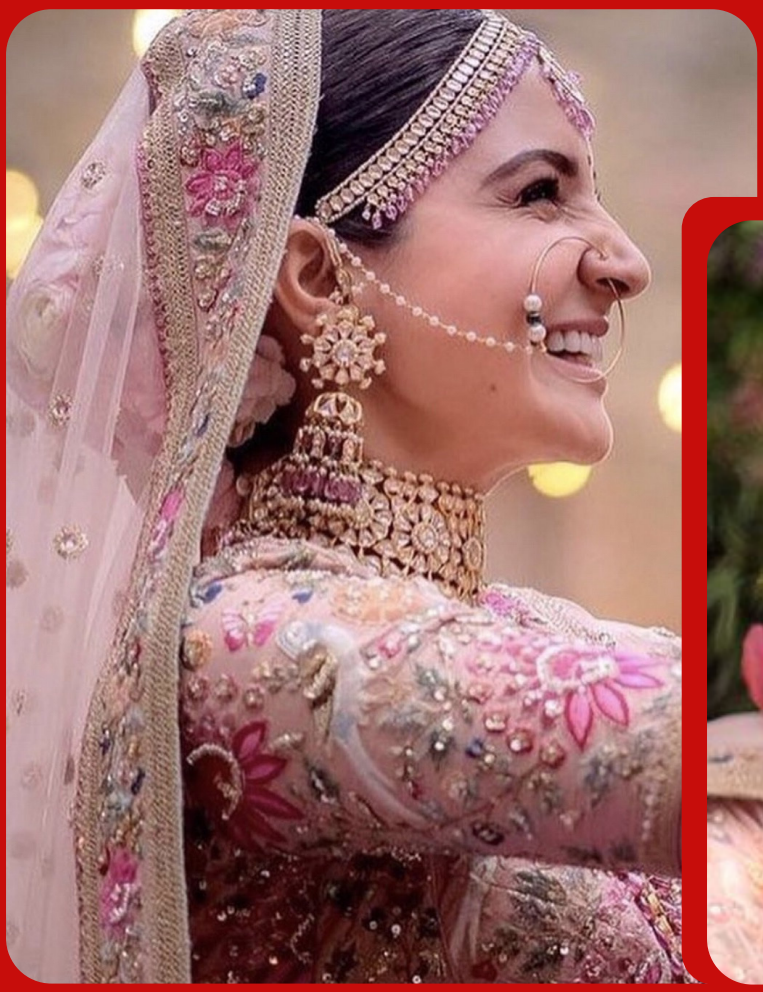





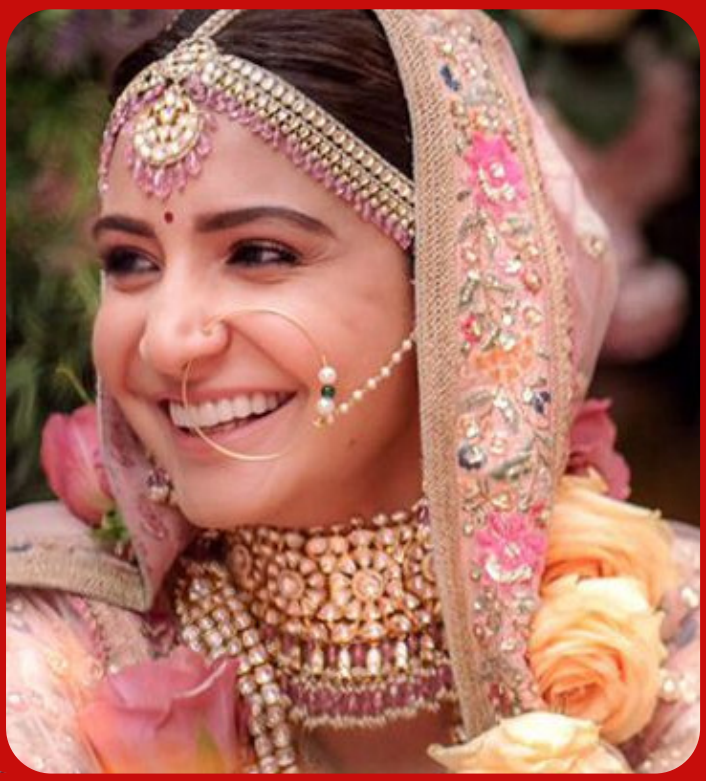
10 Gorgeous Bridal Jewellery of Bollywood Brides

Discover the lovely Bollywood bride wedding jewellery and bridal jewellery that these stunning Bollywood brides wore on their special day. Get inspired by their glamour and find the ideal pieces to make your wedding look one-of-a-kind.

01 Anushka Sharma: The traditional yet statement bride

Starting with Anushka Sharma's popular wedding to Virat Kohli, which established everlasting wedding fashion trends, she wore breathtaking traditional jewels. Her look featured a mathapatti, layered necklaces, and jhumkas embellished with jadau, pearls, and pink spinel. These statement pieces inspired major jewellery envy.

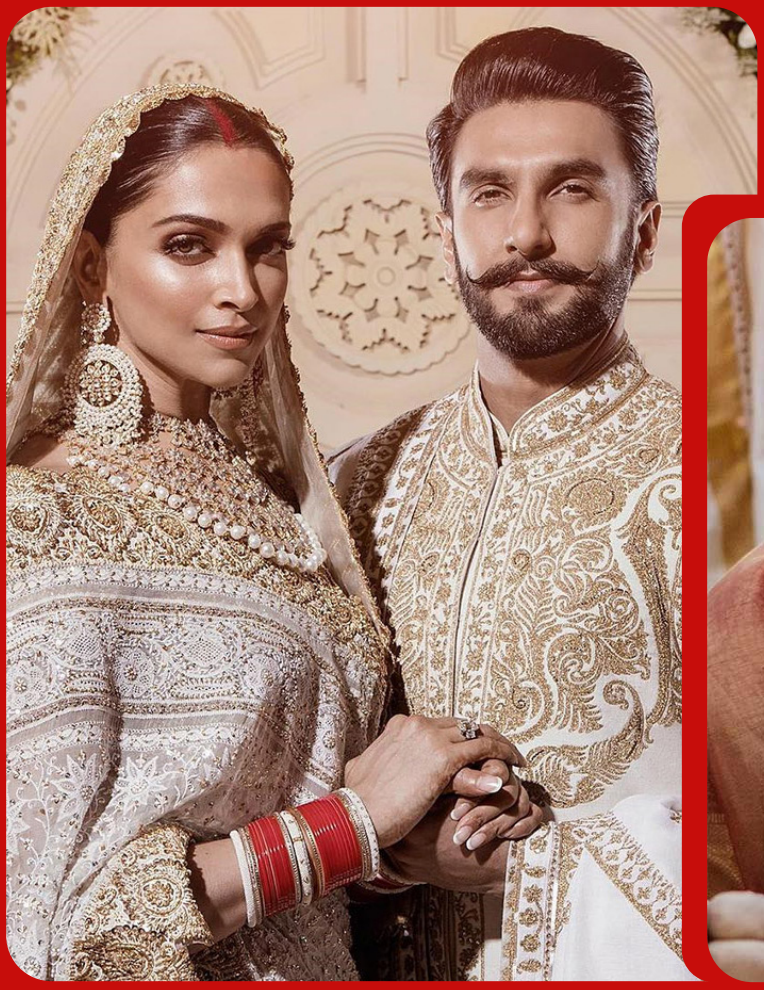




02 Deepika Padukone: Two States Bride

Deepika Padukone's wedding featured a gorgeous blend of jewellery for her Konkani and Sindhi bridal looks. For the Konkani ceremony, she wore a gold Kanjivaram saree with an antique-finish temple jewellery bib necklace stacked with rani-haar and jhumki earrings. Her accessories featured a polki mathapatti, studded kadas, statement rings with rubies and diamonds, and a paunchi on her wrists to match her mogra-adorned bridal hairdo.

Deepika looked stunning in red and gold attire with a double dupatta drape, complete with a polki maang tikka, a spectacular bib-style choker necklace, and earrings. Her ensemble was finished with a pearl-strung nath, stacked polki kadas, and studded rings. This pairing could be great for a bride wishing to include the classic red colour into her ensemble or opting for a traditional south or north Indian style.

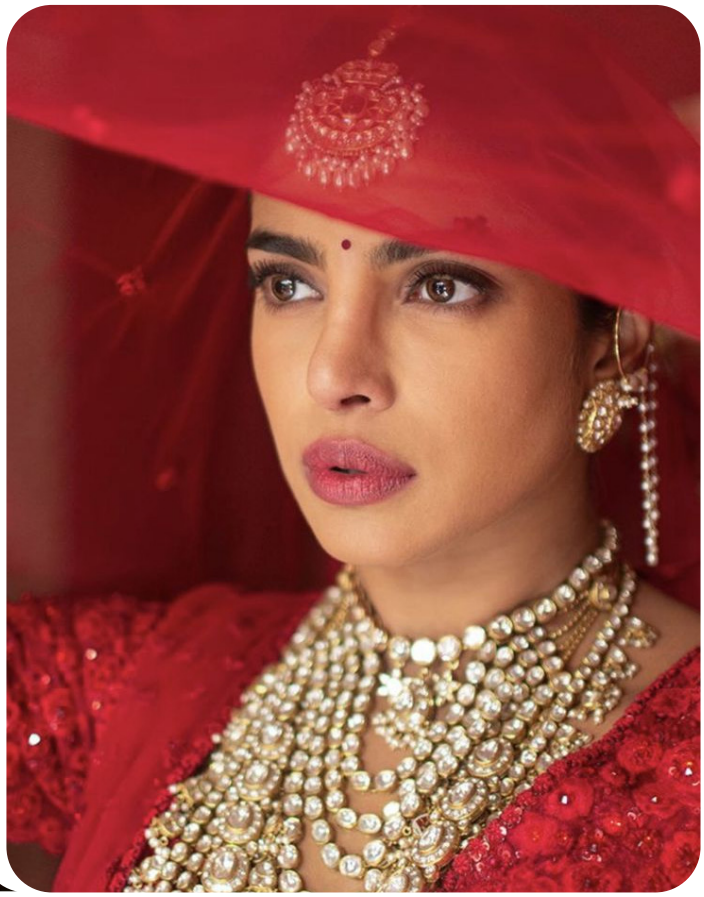




03 Priyanka Chopra: The Global Bride

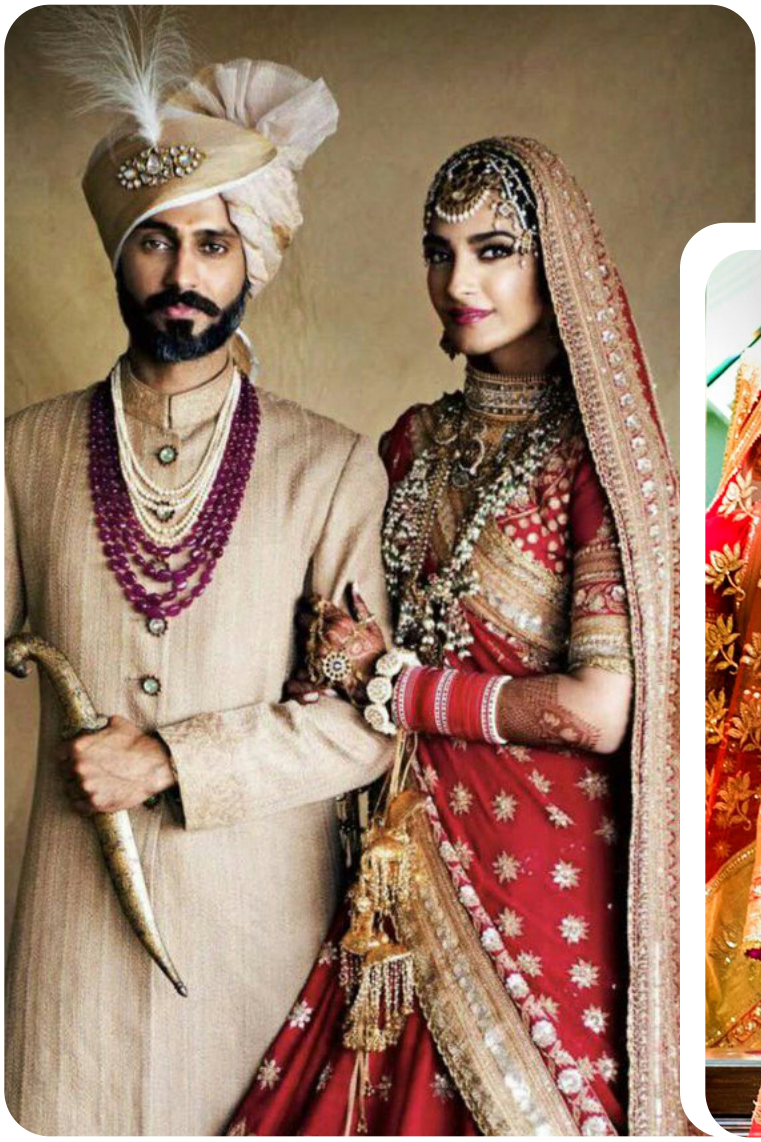
Priyanka Chopra looked absolutely stunning and like a true Indian bride, dressed head to toe in red. She paired her gorgeous lehenga with traditional gold jewellery, including a matha patti, nath, and chura, as well as an exquisite necklace with pear-shaped diamonds set in ethical white gold.





04 Sonam Kapoor: The Fashionista Bride

Sonam Kapoor's wedding outfit was a lovely example of timeless elegance, as she wore a traditional red lehenga with her own original twist. She completed her magnificent red and gold lehenga with beautiful temple jewellery, customised kaleeras, and simple, elegant makeup for a flawless bridal look. She wore a choker, a guttapusalu (long necklace), and a multi-stranded maang tikka.





05 Alia Bhatt: The Millennial Bride

Alia Bhatt, the epitome of the Millennial Bride, looked fabulous in a custom-made organza ivory saree complemented with diamond and pearl-studded jewellery that accentuated her glowing appearance. She wore an incredible choker studded with uncut diamonds and hand-strung pearls, which was beautifully matched by a mathapatti, jhumkas, and multiple diamond bangles. offers a variety of spectacular pieces to complement ivory wedding attire, creating an enchanting bridal ensemble.

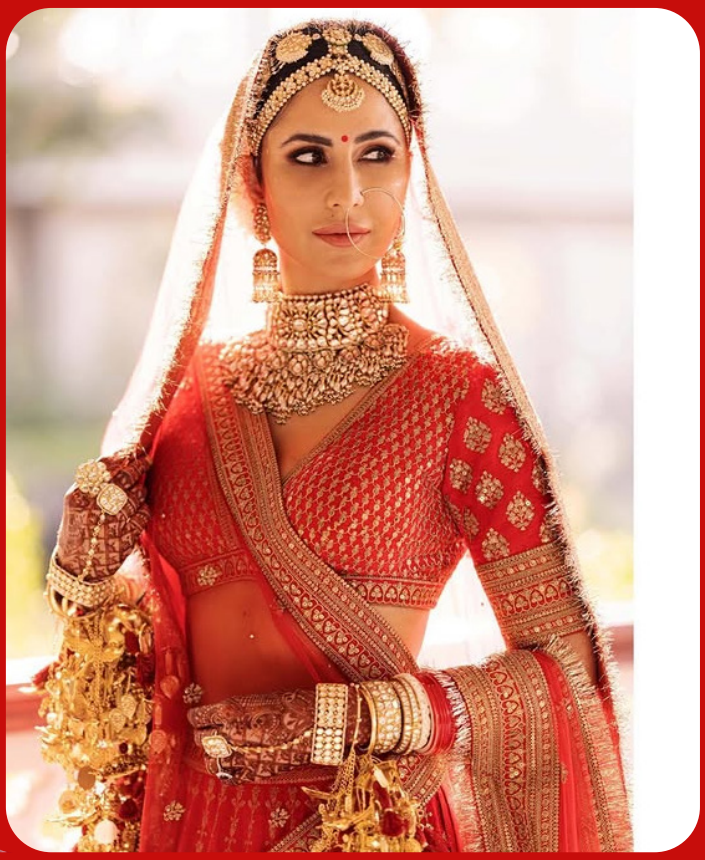




06 Katrina Kaif: The Contemporary Bride

Katrina Kaif, the contemporary bride, paired her traditional red lehenga with luxurious bridal jewellery with uncut diamonds set in gold and delicately decorated with hand-strung pearls. Her regal appearance was further emphasised with a double-strapped matha patti, magnificent jewellery, and kadas. She dressed traditionally, wearing a nath to honour Devi Parvati, the Hindu goddess of marriage. Katrina's jewellery, which blended classic craftsmanship with modern elegance, exemplified her beautiful bridal taste.

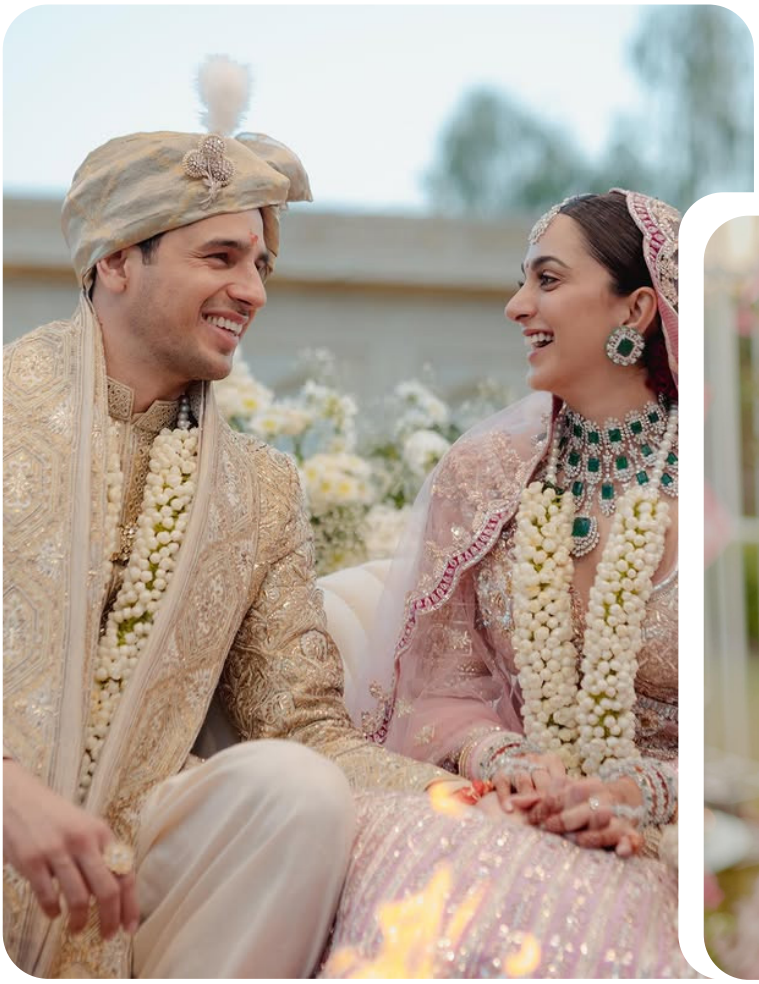


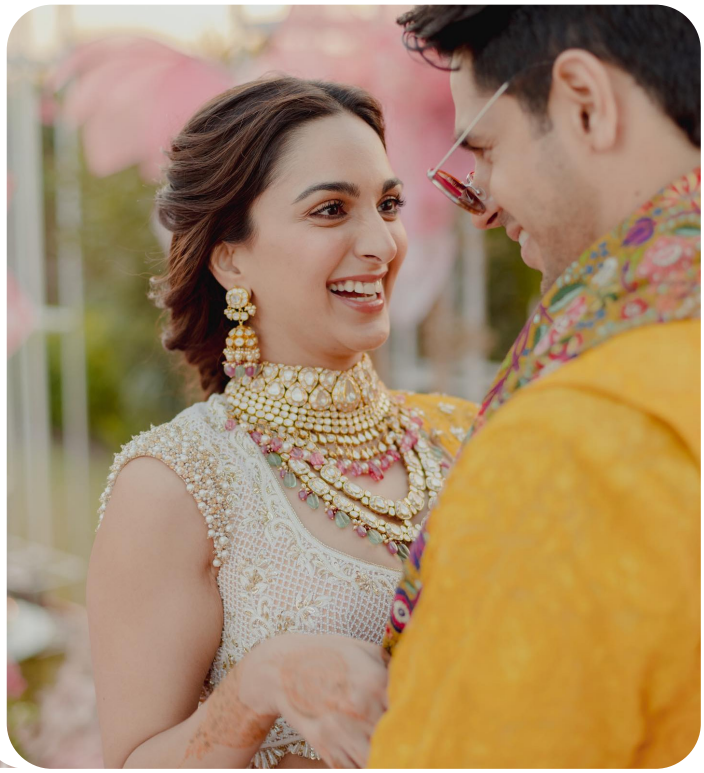


07 Kiara Advani: The Timeless Beauty

Kiara Advani, the Timeless Beauty, endorsed the delicate characteristics of a modern bride while remaining true to traditional wedding practices. Her ensemble, which included an old-rose lehenga and elaborate embroidery inspired by Roman buildings, was embellished with real Swarovski crystals. Her soft pink makeup and little mehendi matched the traditional flower updo and red bindi. Kiara's jewellery was a breathtaking combination of ultra-fine hand-cut diamonds and rare Zambian emeralds, resulting in an elegant and stylish ensemble.

If you wish to skip the polki jewellery for your special day and instead go with emerald or ruby diamonds, we offer a lovely range of diamond necklaces, diamond earrings & more to help you achieve a blend of tradition and modern elegance.



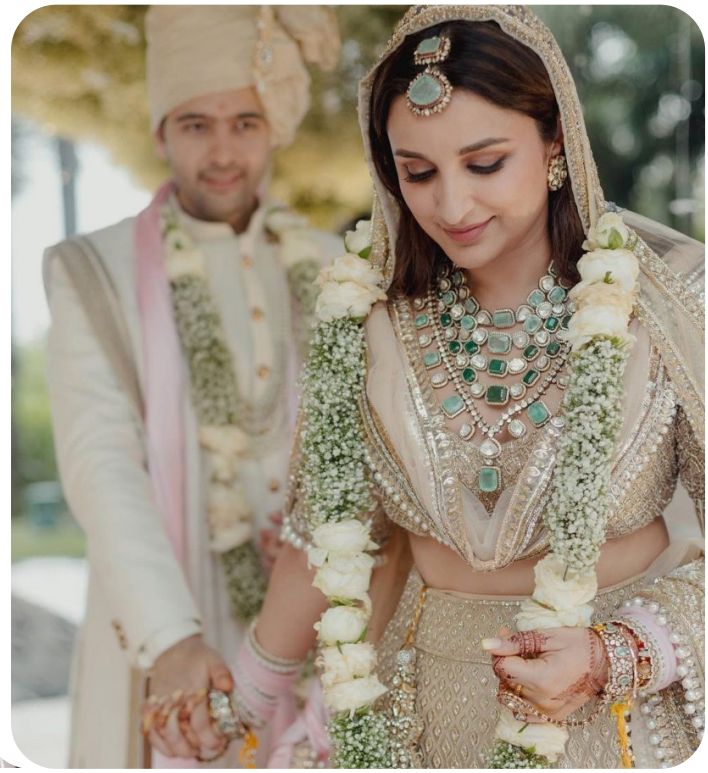


08 Parineeti Chopra: The Glamorous Bride

The Glamorous Bride, Parineeti Chopra, radiated grandeur in her magnificent emerald and diamond jewels. Her jewellery set was the focal point of her muted gold lehenga, which was meticulously hand-embroidered with Nakshi work and metal sequins. She wore a multi-tiered, uncut necklace with Russian and Zambian emeralds, matching ear studs, and a Russian emerald maang tikka encrusted with Mozambique rubies. Her look featured a hathphool studded with uncut diamonds and Russian emeralds.

If you are looking for muted-colour attire for your wedding day and want to add colour with jewellery pieces, We have a wide selection of lovely jewellery pieces, ranging from rubies to emeralds and navratnas, to help you create a glamorous bridal ensemble for your special day.



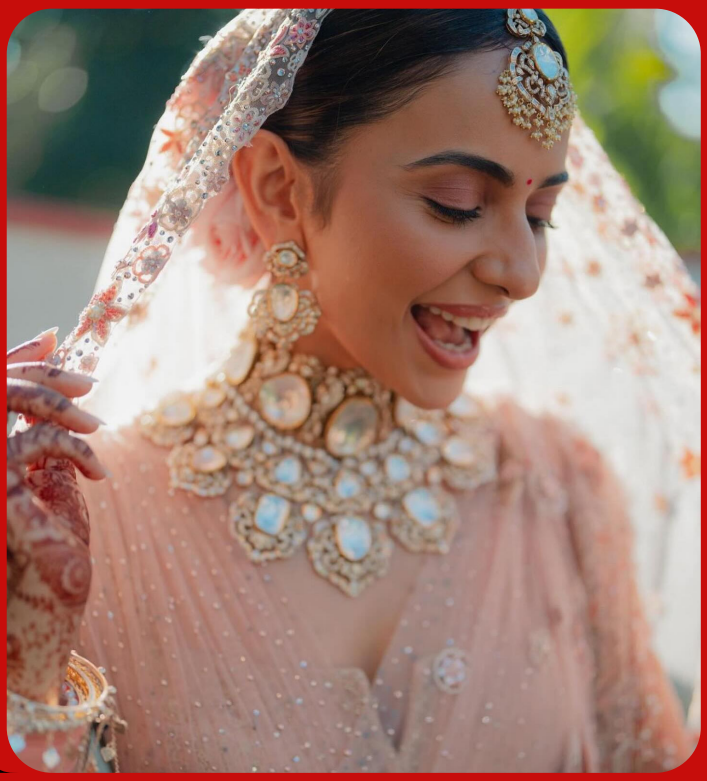


09 Rakul Preet: A Dreamy Bride

Rakul Preet mesmerised in a custom-made pastel pink lehenga with delicate floral designs accented with pearls, beads, and glitter. We call her the dreamy bride because of her delicate pastel pink gown, beautiful floral embellishments that provided a fairy-tale vibe, and stunning jewellery that complimented her romantic look wonderfully. Instead of long necklaces, Rakul chose a glorious choker studded with enormous, sparkling stones, as well as medium and small jewels, pearls, and beads. She wore bold earrings and a maangtika to complete her look. Notably, her engagement diamond ring elevated her bridal look, transforming her into a vision of beauty and grace.

If you, too, wish to achieve a dreamlike look by complementing a soft floral gown with one-of-a-kind jewellery pieces for your wedding day.



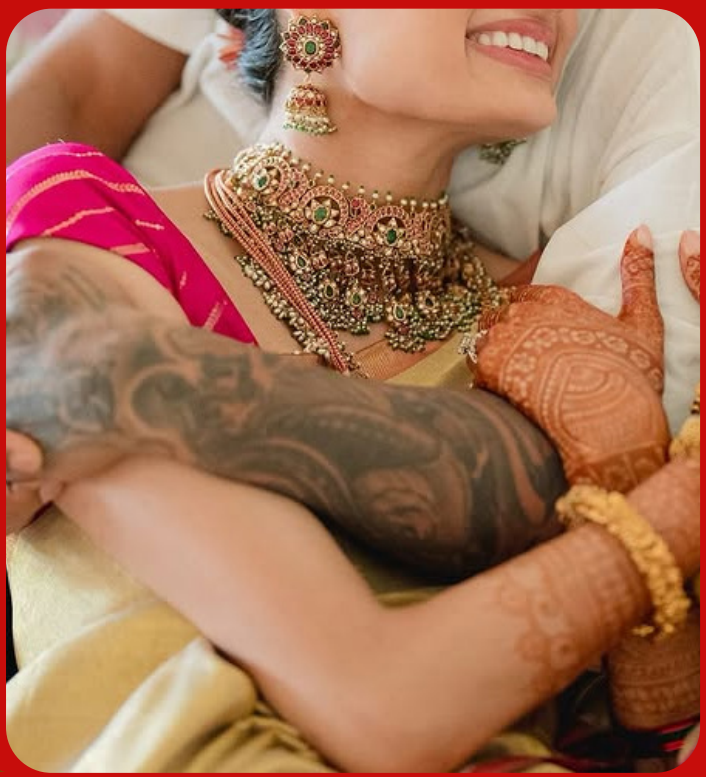


10 Athiya Shetty: The Gorgeous Bride

Athiya Shetty envisioned a stylish yet subtle bridal design that complemented her natural personality. Her clothing and jewellery enhanced her innate beauty, making her a wonderfully gorgeous bride. She chose a beautiful baby pink lehenga embellished with elaborate chikankari work in gold and ivory to represent elegance and artistry. Her choice of polki jewellery with huge stones and a simple, statement design reflected her refined taste. The necklace, which had tiny rubies behind the polki stones, provided depth and acted as the focal point of her outfit.

We believe every bride should feel like a star on her wedding day. We offer a wonderful collection that blends tradition and modern elegance, inspired by the magnificent celebrity wedding jewellery worn by Bollywood actresses. Our pieces inspired by celebrity bridal jewellery ensure that you can match the sophistication and beauty of these iconic brides of India. Whether you choose timeless pieces or contemporary designs, our collection of Bollywood actress wedding jewellery is designed to make you sparkle. Allow us to be a part of your journey, helping you create memories that will last a lifetime with jewellery that is as unique and wonderful as you are.





Anand Shah..

COUTURE DESIGNER ANAND SHAH venerates gold and turns into a wondrous artist when he works with the yellow metal. His distinctive pieces display his intimacy with his muse, Mother Nature, and he interprets it in all its wild splendour on the canvas of gold.

Designing comes as easily as breathing to Shah, who is self-taught. A commerce graduate, Shah has an innate aesthetic sense that impels him to create distinctive antique-finish gold jewellery enhanced by ancient craft techniques such as filigree, granulation, textures, and kundan-setting.

Declared by the World Gold Council as one of the top ten gold jewellery artists across the globe, Shah's jewellery has also graced many a red carpet event, including the Cannes Film Festival.

His journey into jewellery designing began in 1997 in Ansaa, and broke ground for introducing high-end jewellery with modern, bold templates.

In 2012, Anand Shah started an eponymous designer boutique tucked away in Zaveri Bazaar, the mecca of Mumbai's jewellery market. The tastefully done up atelier showcases artful collections that reflect Shah's refined taste.

Over the years, Anand Shah's creations have won him awards from the industry. He has also been conferred with the 'Gem of the Year' title by GJF's National Jewellery Awards and was one of the few Indian designers chosen to contribute to the JCK calendar in 2008.

The artist is perpetually on a creative high with abundant reservoirs of energy. Claiming it to be a God-given gift, Shah prefers his work to do the talking. Turning old formats into new-age jewels is an art that he has honed over the years and some of his masterpiece collections employ mixed material such as wood, wool, and oil paints in 22-karat gold jewellery




ANAND SHAH

YS18

A dream possession !





"A Dream Possession", Artistic jewellery by YS18 , meaningful to your dreams come true.

YS18 creates distinctive jewellery in 18k white, yellow and rose gold studded with brilliant white and natural fancy colour diamonds along with exotic precious gemstones. Our exclusive designs marked "YS18" specialize in contemporary, STATEMENT PIECES and unique design jewellery; studded with Natural Fancy Color diamonds, rose cutS,old mine cuts and UNIQUE SHAPE diamonds

The vital glory of YS18, drawn from its roots, goes back in 1984 when Yogendra Sethi translated the colours of nature in fine jewellery. A painter and art connoisseur himself, Yogendra pioneered the concept of antiquity in modern times. The legacy of Sethi family has been carried further by Sudeep Sethi, the next generation. Designs that voice "YS18" brand DESIGN BECAME THE CHOICE OF MILLIONS According to him "Artistic jewellery is the lifestyle of every woman and a dream possession". These fine artwork, adorn the necks of various hollywood celebrities and get showcased in the "Oscars".

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Rainy Season Precautions to Stay Safe in this Monsoon

The rains are a much-awaited change of season for most of us. It is eagerly awaited by kids and adults as it brings respite from the scorching summer heat and refreshes us. But, it can also bring along with it a wide range of minor and major illnesses such as viruses and various types of infections. Stagnant water in the form of small puddles in your locality can lead to the breeding of dangerous breeds of mosquitoes that can spread different infections. It is necessary to take certain precautions to keep your family safe while enjoying the monsoon to the fullest.

8 Monsoon Health Tips to Stay Healthy During the Rainy Season!

The healthcare specialists at Fortis Hospitals recommend the 8 rainy season precautions that can be followed during the monsoon to stay healthy and keep infections at bay while enjoying the rains.

Here are 8 Monsoon Health Tips:

Drink clean and boiled water
Avoid street food and junk food
Avoid stagnant water around the house
Wash fruits and vegetables carefully
Get your beauty sleep
Follow an exercise regimen
Wash your hands
Avoid getting wet in the rain too often

1. Drink clean and boiled water

Water sources can get contaminated during the monsoon and this increases the chance of contracting waterborne diseases. Stomach issues and fever are some of the most common health woes during this season. It is necessary to have a water filter at home or one can also traditionally boil water daily for consumption. It is also recommended to carry drinking water whenever you travel or to only buy sealed and packaged water when necessary.

2. Avoid street food and junk food

Many hawkers sell popular street food and freshly cut fruits that are stored in the open. It is best to avoid such foods as they are kept in the open and are vulnerable to harmful microorganisms. The longer these foods are exposed to the open air the higher the chances of contracting infections if consumed.

3. Avoid stagnant water around the house

Breeding of mosquitoes is one of the most dangerous issues during the monsoon season. Open water storage at home and water puddles that are stagnating around the house are breeding grounds for such insects. You must always ensure that drinking water is covered in pots and vessels or bottles. Also, make sure that the drains in the locality are not clogged and remove any visible sources of stagnant water.

4. Wash fruits and vegetables carefully

It is imperative to scrub fruits and vegetables that have been bought from the market under running water. There are different types of germs that thrive on the skins of fruits and vegetables and it is best to avoid eating raw cut salads from street vendors during the monsoons. It is advisable to opt for clean and freshly cooked home food during the rains.

5. Get your beauty sleep

Late working hours or unhealthy sleeping habits tend to disrupt your immunity and can increase the chances of contracting flu and cold-like symptoms during the monsoons. It is recommended to clock in 6 to 8 hours of sleep every night to help boost your immunity and stay healthy during this season.

6. Follow an exercise regimen

Even though activities such as walking, skipping, yoga, cycling or running can be hampered during the monsoon, don't let this season dampen your exercise routine. While exercising not only helps you stay in shape, it also maintains your immunity, improves blood circulation and fortifies your body against viruses and bacteria.

7. Wash your hands

It is important to wash and sanitise your hands before every meal especially when you come home from outside. Practice good hand hygiene especially during the monsoon to ensure the skin of your hands is clean while consuming food. This is necessary because harmful germs tend to multiply at a faster rate during the monsoon.

8. Avoid getting wet in the rain too often

This is easier said than done, living in a city like Mumbai can force you to get stuck in heavy rain spells almost every alternate day. It is advisable to keep an umbrella or a raincoat readily available if you're heading out to help protect you from getting thoroughly wet and falling ill.

It only requires a little effort on your part to ensure you stay fit and healthy during the monsoon while enjoying the beauty of this season to its fullest.



It's Never Too Late: Five Healthy Steps at Any Age

Have you ever decided to make a healthy lifestyle change but quickly given up, telling yourself that it's too late to learn new habits? It's time to take charge and not let your age stop you, because there's surprisingly not that much difference between an 18-year-old brain and a 100-year-old brain.

Take that as inspiration that you're never too old to adopt new healthful habits. The rewards: In the Johns Hopkins-led Multi-Ethnic Study of Atherosclerosis, which tracked more than 6,000 people ages 44 to 84 for over seven years, those who made good-for-you changes like quitting smoking, following a Mediterranean-style diet, getting regular exercise and maintaining a healthy weight decreased their risk of death in the time period by 80 percent. The following changes not only keep you healthy, they can help slow down the aging process, inside and out.

Be active more often.

Exercise lowers your risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and some cancers, and that powerful effect leads to something experts call "compression of morbidity." It essentially means you stay healthy longer in your late years, as compared with someone who spends the final five or 10 years of life battling chronic illness.

"Exercise is also one of the best things you can do to help prevent dementia and other cognitive changes," says Hillis. Once you're cleared by your doctor, aim for at least 30 minutes of physical activity most days of the week.

Improve your diet.

There are all sorts of plans out there to help you lose weight, but it's not only about dropping pounds. Hillis recommends a Mediterranean-style diet for anyone hoping to avoid dementia as well as minimize other health risks. It's high in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, olive oil, and fish, and low in meat, sugar and processed foods—all to help your cells function better.

Get quality sleep.

Lack of sleep impacts your memory, emotions, weight and even your appearance. The older you get, the harder it can be to fall and stay asleep, but you still need the same amount of hours. According to the National Sleep Foundation, most sleep problems are a result of snoring, medication side effects and underlying medical conditions, such as acid reflux, depression and prostate problems. Addressing those issues with your doctor is a good start. You can also enjoy more satisfying sleep by creating a calming space, dedicating enough time for sleep and practicing relaxation techniques.

Stop smoking.

In as little as 24 hours of stopping smoking, there is a decrease in risk of a heart attack. As for longer-term benefits, Johns Hopkins researchers, in conjunction with scientists from other centers, have found that quitting decreased middle-aged smokers' risk of dying early by almost half.

Exercise can help you combat smoking cravings and withdrawal symptoms. Schedule fitness for the time of day you're most likely to want a cigarette and soon you may be craving a walk or bike ride instead of a smoke. Still struggling on your own? Ask your doctor about smoking-cessation programs and aids.

Challenge your brain.

Whether it's learning a language or driving a new route to work, your brain loves tackling fresh tasks. Make it a goal to keep learning as you age.

Definitions

Whole grains: Grains such as whole wheat, brown rice and barley still have their fiber-rich outer shell, called the bran, and inner germ. It provides vitamins, minerals and good fats. Choosing whole grain side dishes, cereals, breads and more may lower the risk for heart disease, type 2 diabetes and cancer and improve digestion, too.

Mediterranean diet: Traditional cuisine of countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea, shown to reduce the risk for heart disease, diabetes, some cancers and dementia. On the menu: Plenty of fruits, vegetables and beans, along with olive oil, nuts, whole grains, seafood; moderate amounts of low-fat yogurt, low-fat cheese and poultry; small amounts of red meat and sweets; and wine, in moderation, with meals.

Dementia (do-men-sha): A loss of brain function that can be caused by a variety of disorders affecting the brain. Symptoms include forgetfulness, impaired thinking and judgment, personality changes, agitation and loss of emotional control. Alzheimer's disease, Huntington's disease and inadequate blood flow to the brain can all cause dementia. Most types of dementia are irreversible.

19 of the best places to visit in Asia in August to add to your bucket list

We will highlight the 20 best places to visit in Asia in August. Whether you are seeking budget-friendly options, cultural immersion, or breathtaking natural landscapes, we've got you covered.





01 Ha Long Bay, Vietnam

Among the best places to visit in Asia in August for budget travelers

Nestled in the northeastern part of Vietnam, Ha Long Bay stands as a captivating destination that beckons budget travelers and is one of the best places to visit in Asia in August. Recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, this natural marvel spans 1,553 square kilometers and is adorned with 1,969 limestone islands of varying sizes and shapes, creating a picturesque seascape. In August, Ha Long Bay enjoys favorable weather, with temperatures ranging from 29 to 30°C, offering a pleasant atmosphere for exploration despite occasional rainfall. Visitors can embark on enchanting boat cruises, navigating through iconic landmarks like the Kissing Rocks and Sung Sot Cave.

Moreover, Vietnam travel presents a myriad of other ideal destinations in August, such as Nha Trang, Hoi An, and Phu Quoc. These destinations are all known for their pristine beaches and vibrant nightlife, offering a perfect blend of relaxation and entertainment.

For an unparalleled vacation experience, it is highly recommended that you immerse yourself in the luxurious retreats offered by Vinpearl's hotels and resorts. Vinpearl's properties are located at Vietnam's most prominent locations. With exceptional hospitality, world-class amenities, and breathtaking views, visitors can enjoy a stay that transcends ordinary getaways. Additionally, you can complement your stay with an adventure at Vi Wonders, a system of entertainment complexes brought to you by Vinpearl.

02 Rajasthan, India

Rajasthan, formerly known as Rajputana, emerges as a testament to India's grandeur and historical richness. The August weather in Rajasthan transitions from scorching heat to more agreeable weather, making it among the best places to visit in Asia in August. The temperature hovers around 33°C, accompanied by occasional light rainfall which transforms the arid landscape into a lush green expanse. Key attractions like the Amber Fort in Jaipur, Lake Palace in Udaipur, and Umaid Bhawan Palace in Jodhpur beckon travelers during this time. Wildlife enthusiasts can explore Ranthambore National Park, while adventurous souls can embark on a desert safari in Jaisalmer, spending a night under the starlit sky.





03 Gili Islands, Indonesia

The Gili Islands, a charming archipelago consisting of Gili Meno, Gili Air, and Gili Trawangan, allure travelers with their pristine beaches and vibrant marine life in the northwest of Lombok, Indonesia. August marks an ideal time to explore these paradises, as the dry season prevails with temperatures ranging from 22 to 34°C. These islands boast postcard-perfect beaches with warm turquoise waters, making them a beach lover's paradise. Diving enthusiasts can delve into the rich marine ecosystems surrounding the islands, with various scuba diving centers providing diverse underwater experiences. The islands' small size allows visitors to easily explore them by bike, creating a unique experience at one of the best places to visit in Asia in August.

04 Ko Pha Ngan, Thailand

One of the prominent travel destinations in Asia for solo travelers

Where to go in Asia in August? Nestled in the Gulf of Thailand, one of the cheapest countries to travel in Asia, Ko Pha Ngan experiences an average temperature of 32°C in August. It has gained lasting popularity due to its renowned Full Moon Parties, centered around Haad Rin. Meanwhile, the northern and eastern beaches provide a more laid-back ambiance. For those seeking solace, numerous nature resorts provide a serene retreat. Snorkeling day trips, Munchies Tours, and Reggae Tours offer diverse activities, catering to solo travelers seeking social encounters. Ko Pha Ngan also boasts many beautiful temples, such as Wat Phu Khao Noi and Wat Samai Kongka, showcasing the rich cultural tapestry here.





05 Samarkand, Uzbekistan

August brings perfect weather to Samarkand, Uzbekistan - among the best places to visit in Asia in August, with high temperatures around 32°C during the day and cooler nights at approximately 17°C. This ancient city holds immense historical significance as one of the oldest cities globally, dating back to the 7th century BC. Some must-see attractions in this city are the University Boulevard, adorned with oak and plane trees, leading to Gur-e-Amir, a mausoleum with a ribbed turquoise dome. The square of Registan stands as the most iconic sight, symbolizing the heart of the Timurid dynasty. The festivals celebrated in August like Ramadan, Eid Festival, and the Whale Shark Festival reflect the tradition of the predominantly Muslim population here.

06 Male, the Maldives

The Maldives, a secluded paradise comprising 1,200 coral islets, captivates travelers with its romantic allure. The August weather in the Maldives is tropical, with temperatures ranging from 29 to 25°C. The balmy weather and white beaches here attract deep-sea divers, surfers, snorkelers, sailors, and marine life enthusiasts. The capital, Male, known for its colorful buildings and architectural mosques, offers a vibrant atmosphere. Activities like visiting the coral stone mosque Hukuru Miskiy, exploring the National Museum, and relaxing at Villingili Beach provide a mix of cultural and leisure experiences.





07 Kathmandu Valley, Nepal

Among the best places to visit in Asia in August for culture enthusiasts

Where to travel in Asia in August? August in the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal, brings a slight reprieve from monsoons, with warmth prevailing and longer daylight hours encouraging outdoor exploration. The average high temperature reaches 28.7°C, while nights remain mild at 20°C. The weather conditions here are ideal, making it one of the best places to visit in Asia in August. Some must-visits are Thamel, a bustling starting point for many Nepal adventures, contrasted with the serene Garden of Dreams, offering pavilions and ponds for relaxation. Besides, Boudhanath, a UNESCO Site amidst vibrant surroundings, showcases grand Buddhist architecture. Nepali cuisine also offers a unique experience, with signature dishes such as the flavorful thakali-style thali.

08 Muscat, Oman

Muscat, standing proudly on the Gulf of Oman, is a famous heritage travel destination. This ancient port city, encapsulated by gorgeous architecture, historical sites, and mosaic-adorned mosques, paints a picture of timeless beauty. Even in its modernity, Muscat adheres to a commitment to preservation, evident in the architectural continuity of traditional features in contemporary buildings. Beyond its aesthetic allure, Muscat is known for its welcoming residents who will offer guidance to the city's modern museums, luxurious hotels, and vibrant markets. In August, the city experiences a gentle drop in temperatures, reaching an average 36°C, accompanied by a subtle reduction in daylight hours and rainfall.





09 Amman, Jordan

Amman can be the answer to the question of where to travel in Asia in August. This Jordanian city has daily highs hovering around 31°C. It serves as an intersection of cultures, introducing visitors to the Middle East's cultural richness. Amman strikes a harmonious balance between the Western and Middle Eastern charm, featuring delectable cuisine and hospitable locals. The city's distinctive bowl-shaped center, a result of the city law mandating a uniform light color palette for houses, provides a spectacle. August also brings vibrant festivals, notably the Jerash music festival in the historic Roman city of Jerash. As one of the best places to visit in Asia in August, Amman offers a delightful blend of history, music, and street food.

10 Malaysia

Redang Island in Malaysia maintains its tropical allure in August, boasting an average high temperature of 31°C. This picturesque island, adorned with turquoise blue waters and teeming marine life, beckons divers and snorkelers. Embracing crystal-clear waters and sandy beaches, Redang Island offers a haven for various water activities, including scuba diving, snorkeling, boating, canoeing, and jungle trekking. You can also explore protected marine parks and diverse dive sites, such as Terumbu Kili and Tanjung Tokong, which showcase the island's vibrant underwater world. Among the best places to visit in August, Redang Island features magnificent coral reefs and a rich tapestry of marine biodiversity.





11 Phobjikha Valley, Bhutan

August in Phobjikha Valley in Bhutan, one of the best countries to visit in Asia, marks the concluding chapter of the summer season. While the southern and western parts may experience residual heavy rains, the northern reaches witness a decline in rainfall. Nestled against the Black Mountains, this valley stands as a sanctuary for wildlife, hosting black-necked cranes, wild boars, sambars, and more. Adventure enthusiasts can explore treks, grassy meadows, and diverse flora that includes blue pine, maple, birch, and rhododendron. The valley's fauna, boasting wild boars, Himalayan black bears, leopards, and foxes, contributes to its status as a majestic destination for those with a deep affection for nature.

12 Kyoto, Japan

Kyoto, Japan, becomes a serene haven in August, inviting travelers with warm temperatures that reach an average high of 33°C and a low of 24°C. The city, once Japan's imperial capital, encapsulates a rich history through wars and fires, making it a treasure trove of temples, shrines, and historic structures. Southern Higashiyama, downtown, Fushimi-Inari, Arashiyama, Kinkaku-ji, and Daitoku-ji are some of the must-visit locales, showcasing Kyoto's cultural and architectural diversity. Visiting Kyoto in August, when there are fewer tourists and more vibrant summer festivals, allows an excellent opportunity to explore this historical gem.





13 Singapore

Singapore stands tall among the best countries to visit in Asia in August and also one of the safest countries in Asia. This city offers a unique blend of modernity, cleanliness, and entertainment. Despite the warm and humid weather, with temperatures ranging from 26 to 33°C, Singapore's attractions are ready to captivate visitors. From the futuristic Gardens by the Bay and the National Gallery to the cultural district of Kampong Glam and the world-class Changi Airport, this city-state provides an array of experiences for every traveler.

14 Sir Bani Yas, UAE

Sir Bani Yas Island, hidden off the coast of Abu Dhabi in the UAE, is an enticing escape in August with soaring temperatures. A haven of untamed beauty, this island invites solo adventurers and couples alike to explore its diverse wildlife, rich heritage, and captivating landscapes. Safari adventures in the Arabian Wildlife Park, water activities like snorkeling and kayaking, and explorations of ancient forts and archaeological sites make Sir Bani Yas a unique travel destination.





15 Jeju Island, South Korea

One of the best places to visit in Asia in August for nature lovers

Jeju Island emerges as an ideal destination for nature lovers in August, with an average temperature of 26°C. Surrounded by the sea, Jeju offers warmer weather than other parts of Korea. This island's unique attractions, including Seongsan Ilchulbong Tuff Cone, Manjanggul Lava Tube, and Hallasan National Park, cater to outdoor enthusiasts with opportunities for climbing, windsurfing, and snorkeling. From the picturesque Cape Seopjikoji to the ancient Bijarim Forest and the entertainment-filled Jeju Jungmun Resort, Jeju Island provides a captivating experience for travelers seeking the beauty of nature and culture.

16 Brunei

Brunei, with its hot and humid tropical weather, maintains a consistent climate throughout the year. Among other countries in Asia, Brunei boasts a high quality of life. The capital, Bandar Seri Begawan, blends extravagant mosques with traditional wooden houses on stilts. Visitors can marvel at the grand Omar Ali Saifuddin mosque, a stunning mixture of Italianate and Mughal design, English stained glass, and Saudi Arabian carpet, all in one extravagant creation. For a jungle adventure, one can sail through Ulu Temburong National Park, where mangrove forests and jungle-flanked hills come alive with the screeching of monkeys. Additionally, the shopping haven of Gadong brings a vibrant atmosphere for window-shopping, people-watching, and, of course, spending.





17 Umluj, Saudi Arabia

Umluj, maintaining its summertime character in August, offers a haven for outdoor enthusiasts. The Red Sea Project is transforming Umluj into a top vacation spot, with pristine turquoise waters and stunning beaches. The seawater, unique due to the absence of river discharge, provides a remarkable setting for water sports and exploration of fringing reefs teeming with over 1,200 species of fish. Umluj has diverse marine life, including dolphins and sea turtles, making it a captivating destination for nature lovers curious about where to go in Asia in August. Moreover, the shallow seas off the coast of Umluj open up opportunities for water sports among the best places to visit in August.

18 Yunnan, China

Yunnan welcomes travelers in August with warm temperatures that reach over 30°C. The summer season showcases Yunnan's natural wonders, from deep gorges to snow-capped mountains. Home to 25 ethnic minorities, Yunnan invites visitors to experience the unique cultures of China's diverse ethnic groups. Well-preserved old towns and villages with ancient buildings offer a glimpse into rich histories. Yunnan is a multifaceted destination for those seeking a blend of nature and culture with its abundant tourist attractions, including rainforests, rice terraces, and lovely lakes. The province's unique geography and diverse climate make it a paradise for outdoor activities such as climbing, windsurfing, and snorkeling, providing adventure seekers with a plethora of options to explore.





19 Altai Mountains, Mongolia

Last on the list of the best places to visit in Asia in August is the Altai Mountains. August in the Altai Mountains mirrors the pleasant weather of July, with a slight drop in temperatures as the summer festivities continue. With 14.1 daylight hours, outdoor activities thrive in this western Mongolian region. The landscape here is a breathtaking spectacle, with verdant valleys, snow-capped peaks, and a vibrant array of colors, creating a surreal visual display. The unique cultural diversity and awe-inspiring landscapes make the Altai Mountains a must-visit for those seeking a blend of adventure, cultural immersion, and natural beauty.

August 2025

TAROT

Loveena Crystal Gaze
(Tea and Coffee Cup Reader, Tarot card reader)



ARIES
(March 21- April 19)

Surprises are in store for you, you are likely to indulge in extravagant shopping sphere, spend quality time on your loved ones. A potential yes from a client is the good news you have been waiting to hear. A new Venture will turn profitable.

Angel msg- Loved ones in heaven are blessing you.

TAURUS
(April 20- May 21)

Let go of the old so that new experiences and Situations can manifest. Deals will be Signed, take advantage of divine timing. Financially very good period ahead.

Angel msg- Angels are blessing you with lucrative options .

GEMINI
(May 22- June 20)

Good days are coming ahead, Soar with happiness, leave your cares and worries to Angels. Loved ones in heaven are blessing you. Career will yield gains. Happiness awaits you now.

Angel msg- your prayers for financial help have been heard.

CANCER
(June 21-July 22)

Meeting someone you love very much enhances a quick and encouraging turn of events. Positive new energy is coming your way. Travel abroad for business deals wll be beneficial. Universe is sending you blessings.

Angel msg- All your dreams will be fulfilled, Reach for the stars.

LEO
(July 23- Aug 22)

Angels are blessing you in your love life, they are leading you towards the one you desire. Spread your wings. New dawn is coming in your life. Have faith in universe. Your dreams are manifesting very fast.

Angel msg- Angels want you to be happy today and always.

VIRGO
(Aug 23- Sept 22)

Angels are Surrounding you with loving light, news you have been waiting for anxiously comes through and this is a relief. Allow your heart and soul to sing with joy. Visualise your dreams. Success in business ventures is indicated.

Angel msg- keep charging ahead, smooth road ahead.

LIBRA
(Sept 23- Oct 22)

A change of residence is foretold, Go with the flow, A happy move to a new home or place of employment will bring you positive new energy. Universe is in a generous mood. Ask and you shall receive. Abundance in money is coming.

Angel msg- News from your loved one will bring happiness in your life.

SCORPIO
(Oct 23- Nov 22)

Remove clutter from your home and office to get new Positive energy. Your hard work will be recognized, you will be promoted sooner than expected. Money inflow is encouraging.

Angel msg- Thank the universe for guiding you

SAGITTARIUS
(Nov 23- Dec 21)

Celebrate, live in the now and let go of the past. Dreamt of projects will be manifested. Universe bestows generosity on you and lovely changes in your Career.

Angel msg- Aim high, don't descend.

CAPRICON
(Dec 22- Jan 20)

Miraculous solutions will appear in your Career. Positive new energy is coming your way. Rough phase is over, reach for your goals.

Angel msg- New horizons bringing abundance and opportunities in your Career.

AQUARIUS
(Jan 21- Feb 18)

Miracles happen to people just like you. Everything is working out in a divinely perfect way. Don't give up. Now is perfect moment to dive in and embrace your hearts desire.

Angel msg- Spread your wings, your dreams will manifest very fast.

PISCES
(Feb 19- March 20)

Finances are favorably highlighted. Believe to attract and receive. Celebration period begins for you. Your time has come to collect your rewards.

Angel msg- Your dreams are blooming very fast

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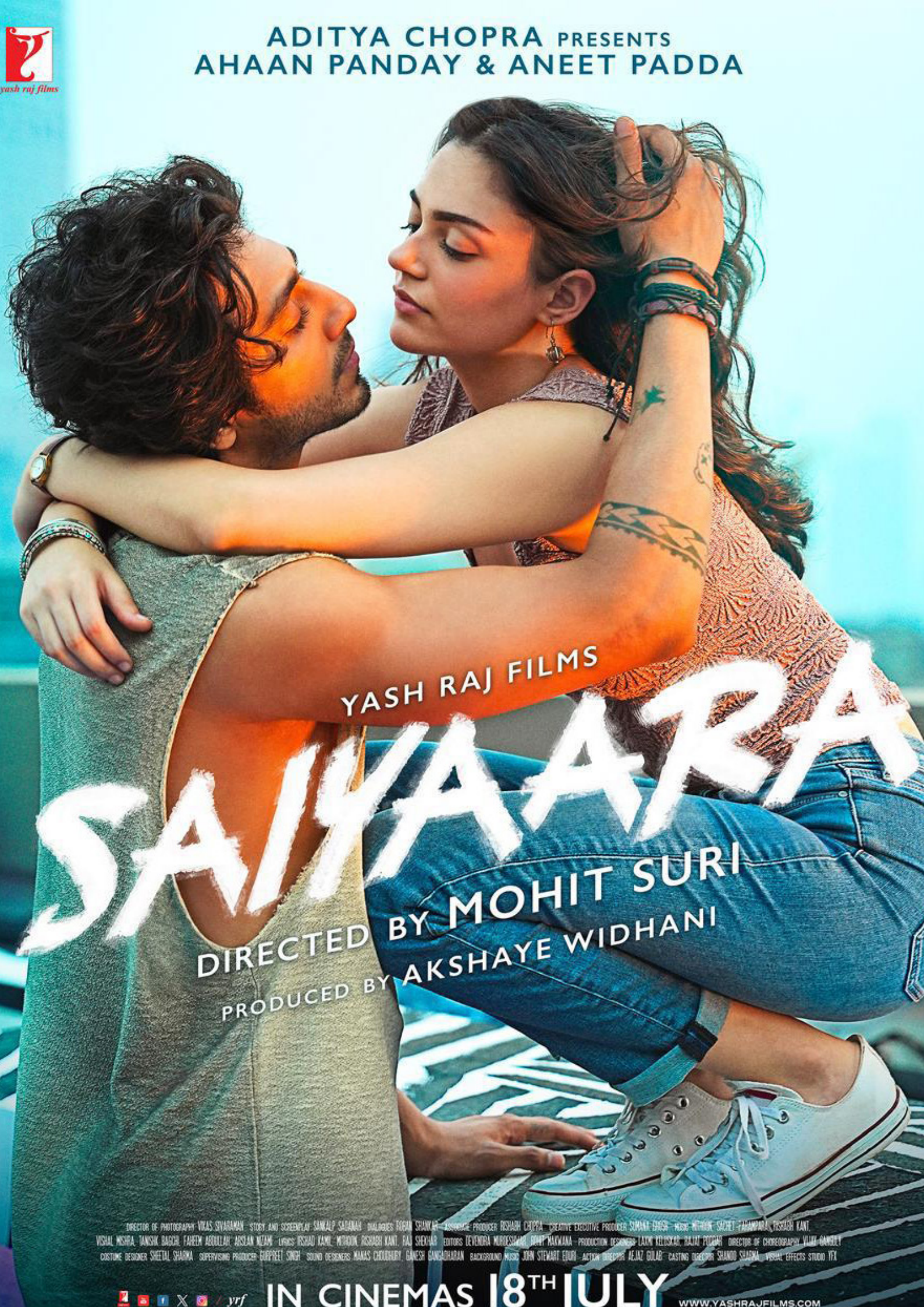
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- Project Work

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