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Thank you so much for always loving me

Rashmika Mandanna

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Editor
SEEMA PIMPLEY

Co - Editor
Faisal Saif

Consulting - Editor
Lipika Varma

International Correspondent
Carlyta Mouhini

Special Correspondent
Aahana

Graphic Designer
Nasreen Qazi

Celeb Columnist &
Photo Journalist - **Shrisheel**

Feature News Writers
Sandeep Hattangady
Akshita Pawar

Photographer
Indrajeet Aurangabadkar

International Printing,
Publishing & Marketing Partner.
Slc global Group
303/3053 red Floor Dilkap chambers.
Behind hard rock cafe. Fun republic
lane. Vera desai. Andheri west.
Mumbai.400053
Phone: 9867256229

Global Pictures Media LTD.
UK - 450 Bath Road Longford,
Middlesex Heathrow UB7 0EB
USA - 21w 38th st FL9 New York 10018

Corporate Office
Global Movie Media PVT LTD.
Sargam Banglow, 4 Banglow, Andheri
(West). Mumbai - 400 053
Phone : +91 83569 74612
Email : globalmovie@gmail.com
Website : www.globalmovie.in
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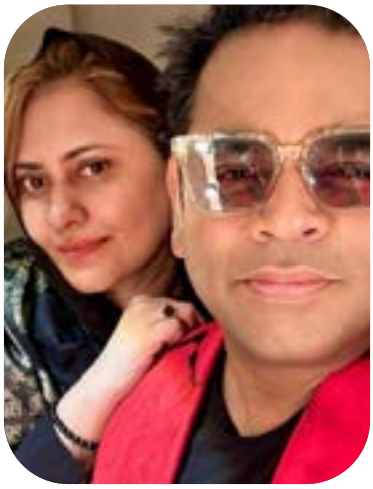


Seema Pimpley
Editor & Publisher

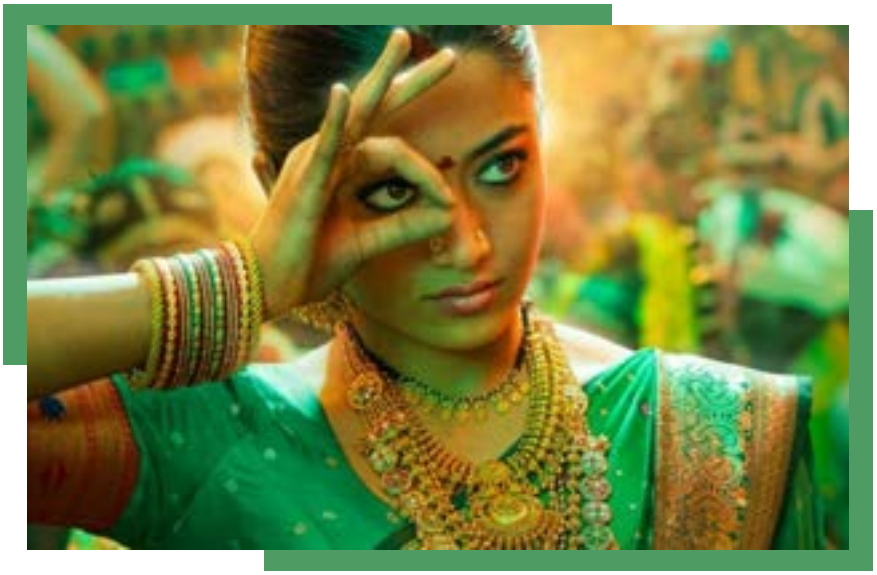
Rashmika Mandanna on rising from financial hardship: In my heart, I am still that girl who could not even buy a toy

> Buckle up, Bollywood! Here comes Rashmika Mandanna, a rising star who's crossed language barriers to become a pan-Indian actress. This award-winning beauty started out in Kannada films, captivating audiences with her debut in "Kirik Party."

But her talent didn't stay confined to one language. She soon took Telugu cinema by storm with blockbusters like "Geetha Govindam" and "Sarileru Neekevvaru," proving her versatility and charm.Now, with a Bollywood debut on the horizon alongside Ranbir Kapoor in "Animal," Rashmika Mandanna is poised to take the entire Indian film industry by storm. With 42.5 million Instagram followers, she is one of the most-followed stars in the country. Besides her impressive acting skills and versatility, Rashmika is also well-known among young people for her fashion sense.

From Kirik Party to Forbes 30 Under 30, Rashmika Mandanna started her acting career in 2016 with the film Kirik Party, directed by Kantara actor Rishab Shetty. The film became one of the highest-grossing movies in Kannada cinema history. Rashmika won the Best Debut Actress (Kannada) award at the 6th SIIMA Awards for her role.Since 2016, Rashmika Mandanna has starred in numerous films, showcasing her rare versatility in the Indian film industry. Some of her most notable performances include Chamak, Geetha Govindam, Dear Comrade, Yajamana, Sarileru Neekevvaru, Pushpa: The Rise, and Goodbye. Thanks to her outstanding work and growing popularity across India, Rashmika was featured in Forbes India's 2024 list of 30 under 30. It was a big moment for Rashmika Mandanna, who has achieved so much in just eight years. What's even more intimidating for her peers is that she's only getting started. For those who don't know, Rashmika has several upcoming films like Pushpa 2: The Rule, Rainbow, The Girlfriend, Chaava, and Kubera. These projects have already generated a lot of media buzz and look very promising.

Rashmika Mandanna faced financial struggles with her parents in the past. In an old interview with the Hindustan Times, Rashmika shared insights into her childhood and upbringing. She emphasized that she never takes her success for granted, having witnessed her parents' challenges in paying rent. Rashmika highlighted that she learned to be careful with money at a young age due to the financial difficulties her family faced. She stated, "I have been on the other side. There was a time when we would move homes every two months. I have been conscious of these things (struggles) ever since I was a child. I am taking the liberty of recalling how they used to find it hard to search for a place for us to live in and pay those rents." In the same interview, Rashmika Mandanna acknowledged that despite financial struggles, her parents never denied her anything. However, she was aware of her family's situation and never asked for anything from them. Rashmika shared that her parents couldn't afford to buy toys for her during her childhood, and these memories keep her humble. She explained, "In my heart, I am still that girl who could not even buy a toy. I respect the money I earn, the love I receive, and the acknowledgement that I get as an actor. My childhood memories don't let me take my success lightly, because I know this will not last forever." As per the Forbes 30 under 30 List 2024, Rashmika Mandanna's net worth is estimated to be a staggering Rs. 66 crore. Besides earning Rs. 4 crore for each film, she also does numerous brand endorsements and earns a significant amount from advertisements and appearances at events. Rashmika owns a lavish bungalow in Bangalore worth Rs. 8 crore, showcasing some of her most expensive possessions.



Ahead Of Pushpa 2 Release, Rashmika Mandanna Thanks Fans In Kochi: "Your Love Feels So Pure And Nice"

New Delhi:
First, let us thank Rashmika Mandanna for making our day by sharing oh-so-stunning pictures on Instagram. The actress looks so pretty in a mustard yellow saree. Oh, and, her smile has made the frame all the more brighter. Rashmika, who is busy with the promotion of her upcoming film Puspha 2: The Rule, also mentioned that she is Kochi. Sharing the photos, Rashmika said, "Hey guys. Today I am in Kochi. And coming to Kochi always makes my heart so happy. Thank you my love.. your love feels so pure and nice and I get engulfed in it fully. Always. Thank you so much for always loving me this way and supporting me this way. I love you. I promise you Pushpa 2 on Dec 5th is not going to disappoint you at all." The pictures spread like wildfire on social media, Replying to the post, actress Hansika Motwani wrote, "SO pretty."

'I Still Have Dreams Of Being A Mother'

Samantha plays little Kashvi Majmundar's mother so naturally in Raj-DK's Citadel: Honey Bunny that one wonders if she wanted to be a mother in real life too.

"I don't think it's too late,"
"I still have dreams of being a mother and yeah of course, I would love to be a mother. I actually treated Kashvi like an adult, like an equal. We didn't do any child talk; she's a very smart girl. "I haven't seen the kind of talent that she displayed, like crying on cue. She had unbelievable empathy. She was able to understand what we were telling her, she was so quick. I think she's the best part of the series."

Have the blows of life made Samantha stronger? "People say that when you go through hardships, you become bitter and cynical. But honestly, the opposite is true for me. Sometimes you can evolve through life's blows and you can evolve quicker than you would ever have with only successes and an easy life. I am calmer now, sorted and don't easily stress anymore. I never thought that this day would come. "Even before release, I was actually pretty calm and that's not my personality," she adds. "I freak out about every single thing and then about the response and go looking for the negativity. But this time, I sense a lot of calm and a lot of change in me. I am quite surprised by myself. "It has to do with growing up, maturing and understanding that everything is not in your control. You have to do your best with what life throws at you. I'm surrounded by wonderful people, who inspire me every day. I'm happy to be on set with such talented film-makers and co-stars, so I'm in a very good phase in life. I'm genuinely happy and feel blessed to have the opportunity to live every day to the fullest."

Samantha has been getting a lot of praise for her work in Citadel, but she's cautious about the success. "I don't want to get lazy and relaxed in that feeling of success. I'd rather move on to the next challenge. I'm taking my time to soak it in," she says. "The fact that I was able to finish Citadel was a success for me. Today, to get this kind of appreciation, where no one is really pointing out that she wasn't convincing and which I was really scared of...

I learnt all my actions on set. I didn't have time to prepare for this role, so I was scared that I wouldn't do justice to it. But I think 90 percent of the comments have been positive, so this means a lot."

'I don't think it's too late.'

Samantha's medical condition has improved. "I haven't gone into remission, but the episodes don't happen too often," she says.

"Before it was a lot more to deal with, but now, it is easier. I know when it's coming, so I'm better prepared. But I'm a lot better. "I thought about this when I was sick and would ask myself, why me? But now, I wouldn't have it any other way because I'm proud of my resilience. I've never said I'm proud of myself; I have always been uncomfortable with compliments. I used to be filled with self-doubt and insecurities. "For me to be able to stand here today and tell you that I am proud of myself has taken a lot. I don't think I would have been able to get here without everything that life threw at me."

A. R. Rahman

A R Rahman Speaks Out On His Divorce

Oscar-winning composer A R Rahman and his wife Saira Banu have decided to separate after nearly three decades of marriage. The composer shared the news on his X account on Wednesday, where he stated that while they had hoped to reach their 'grand 30', life had other plans. 'We had hoped to reach the grand thirty, but all things, it seems, carry an unseen end. Even the throne of God might tremble at the weight of broken hearts. Yet, in this shattering, we seek meaning, though the pieces may not find their place again. To our friends, thank you for your kindness and for respecting our privacy as we walk through this fragile chapter,' read his post on X.

Their children daughter Khatija and son Ameen also took to their Instagram Stories and requested 'privacy' during this time. 'We kindly request everyone to respect our privacy during this time. Thank you for your understanding,' he wrote. In a statement on behalf of the couple, prominent divorce lawyer Vandana Shah said they took the decision to separate after 'significant emotional strain in their relationship'. 'After many years of marriage, Mrs Saira has made the difficult decision to separate from her husband Mr AR Rahman. This decision comes after significant emotional strain in their relationship. Despite their deep love for each other, the couple has found that the tensions and difficulties have created an insurmountable gap between them, one that neither party feels able to bridge at this time.

'Mrs Saira emphasised that she has taken this decision out of pain and agony. Mrs Saira requests privacy and understanding from the public during this challenging time, as she navigates this difficult chapter in her life,' said the statement. Rahman and Saira married in 1995 and share three children, Khatija, Raheema and Ameen.

When Bollywood Went Nude

Baring their soul before the camera is a prerequisite for every actor. But going naked in front of it may not be everyone's cup of tea. Still, there are some who agree to bare it all or almost for the sake of the story or sensationalism. One recently caught a fleeting glimpse of Varun Dhawan's bare butt in his OTT debut, Citadel: Honey Bunny, which had the amused actor respond. That's the tricky bit about going au naturel on screen, it's all everyone wants to talk about for better or worse. Sukanya Verma looks at some bold instances of Bollywood's beauty appearing in the buff.

Ranbir Kapoor, Saawariya

Few remember the movie as well as the moment Ranbir dropped his towel in a tantalising moment of his acting debut, Saawariya showing off his talent and tooshie with equal gusto. It would be the first of his many disrobed avatars.

Ranbir Kapoor, Besharam, Animal, Sanju

Shots of Ranbir's butt crack under the shower in Besharam, fully monty in Sanju and slow motion streaking of a man losing his mind in Animal reiterate the extent of an actor comfortable in his own skin.

Ever the perfectionist, Aamir performed the alien arriving on earth sans any clothes in his birthday suit. Initially though, he tried to do the sequence, which required him to chase a man, wearing a pair of modesty camouflaging shorts but decided to go for the final cut without anything on to make it appear truly convincing.

Rajkummar Rao, Love Sex Aur Dhoka, Shahid, Omerta

Working on scenes of intense sex and torture required Rajkummar to shed his inhibitions to an extreme degree. And the only reason he was able to overcome his nervousness is his faith in the film-makers at helm (Dibakar Banerjee, Hansal Mehta) known for their artistic aesthetic.

Ranveer Singh, Befikre

Whether he's shaking his bare butt to assert his playful character in Befikre or stripping for a magazine cover, Ranveer's madcap persona is ever willing to embrace its wildest impulses much to the moral police's chagrin

John Abraham, New York

Playing a victim of racial profiling as an Asian immigrant in post-9/11 America, John's character goes through a whole lot of torture and trauma behind bars. Kabir Khan's unrelenting documentation of it as well as John's no-holds barred participation adds to the impact of his living nightmare.

Rajshri Deshpande, Sacred Games

Rajshri grabbed quite a few eyeballs with her topless fervour as part of Sacred Games' torrid lovemaking sequences. 'When I did the scenes, I wasn't aiming at a particular impact. It was what the character Subhadra and the situation demanded. Since I had faith in my director Anurag Kashyap, I didn't hesitate even for a minute in saying 'yes'

Neil Nitin Mukesh, Jail

Although the private bits got blurred out in the final edit, Neil had no qualms about performing frontal nudity in Madhur Bhandarkar's Jail, which revolves around a wrongly convicted man's experience doing time in prison.

Kareena Kapoor Khan, Kurbaan

There's much hue and cry whenever a mainstream leading lady engages in skin show. Expectedly political parties and the moral police didn't take too well to the focus on Kareena's 'topless' allusions or intimate scenes with Saif Ali Khan in Kurbaan. One protester even draped a sari around her poster.

Simi Garewal, Siddhartha

Back in 1972 when demure was the desi way, Simi's bare torso and Khajuraho-inspired sex scenes with Shashi Kapoor in Conrad Rooks' adaptation of Hermann Hesse's novel attracted both eyeballs and controversy for its content. Indian censors didn't take kindly to its provocative imagery, which continues to be the most talked about aspect of this Indo-American collaboration.

Rishi Kapoor, Bobby

Years before Ranbir Kapoor doffed his hat, rather, dropped his towel as a nod to his dad's adult debut Bobby, Rishi Kapoor showed off his fearless presence and posterior in front of the camera with nothing except a towel on his shoulder for the Raj Kapoor directed romance.

Zeenat Aman, Satyam Shivam Sundaram

Raj Kapoor's weakness for erotic visuals, wherein his voluptuous, scantily clad leading lady would often find herself under a waterfall in transparent saree, became the talking point of his purported social dramas. Be it Zeenat Aman's partially disfigured village belle in Satyam Shivam Sundaram, which, ironically talks about inner beauty prevailing over the physical.

Mandakini, Ram Teri Ganga Maili

Or Mandakini's shower in the mountains draped in a blouse free, barely there chiffon sari leaving little to imagination. Her lack of talent ensured she would never live down that image.

Padmini Kolhapure, Geharayee

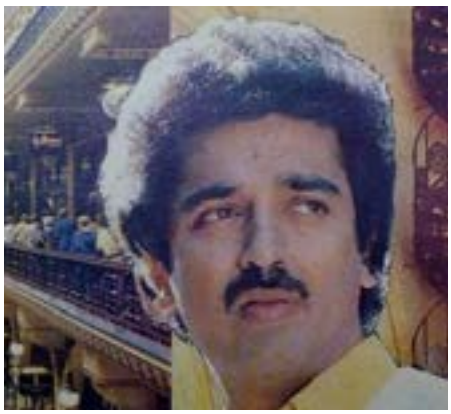
A teenage Padmini Kolhapure stars as a possessed schoolgirl undergoing an exorcism ritual, which requires her to be butt naked for a sequence of the Aruna-Vikas directed 1980 horror. Considering she was a minor at time of filming renders it both controversial and creepy.

Kamal@70: The Motto He Believes In

'Kamal has surfed and navigated a lot of tidal waves, manoeuvring the peaks and troughs, combining rare intelligence and commonly available intuitions to overcome unimaginable crises all his life.'
'There is no looking back at the past, for his only motto has been 'Tomorrow belongs to us'!'

How does the great Kamal Haasan choose his films? What makes him say yes to a Vishwaroopam 2 or a Vikram?

On Kamal Haasan's 70th birthday on November 7, we follow him on his recent celluloid excursions through this fascinating excerpt from K Hariharan's book Kamal Haasan: A Cinematic Journey. Let us pause a moment to locate Kamal in his journey through Tamil cinema. In 2013, he took on the ambitious two-part project titled Vishwaroopam I where he played Wisam Ahmed Kashmiri, an Indian military agent delegated to eliminate a senior ISIS leader to protect the sovereignty of a world at severe risk of survival. Cut. Before he decided to don the greasepaint for Vikram 2 in 2021, Kamal did an amazing film called Papanasam(Vanquishing One's Sins; 2015), directed by Jiju Joseph, where he played an ordinary satellite cable TV agent named Suyambulingam, who accidentally gets involved in a murder and tries to save himself and his family from the fallout. This film was a phenomenal box office hit, asserting Kamal's capability to channelise a good script into a more superior form of cinema through his convincing performance.While Papanasam (a remake of the Malayalam hit Drishyam), was a delicate Hitchcockian family thriller, Vishwaroopam attempted to give Indian cinema a very nuanced Rambo/James Bond-like experience in a global After Papanasam, Kamal headed out to finish an old commitment, Vishwaroopam 2 in which Wisam tries to balance the guilty emotions of a good military man having to sort out interpersonal issues in the forces with the need to enter the chambers of a cruel ISIS tyrant/leader and eliminate him and his global associates. This film, though, turned out to be a box-office disaster. Surely this would have put Kamal in a quandary. Would the market allow for another actor-dominated film like Papanasam to become a success? Or should it be a film dedicated to sheer action-domination, the current market favourite genre? Kamal chose the latter. With his penchant for experimentation, the time had also come for him to enter a new arena with a more global formula, namely the big-budget super-action drama. Kamal reopened Vikram, an older franchise of his company, by announcing the production of Vikram 2 in 2021 to navigate the spectacle of excess, such as in the fantastic sci-fi world virtually propelled by Marvel Studios' 'Cinematic Universe', which dominates theatres and OTT platforms across the world with multi-star casts, lavish sets, extensive use of computer graphics, loud music and thrilling action sequences.



The villain in Vikram 2, Sandhanam, is a clownish Joker-like character played by Vijay Sethupathi. The Joker in the DC Universe is often considered Batman's antithesis. While Batman is driven by a desire for justice, the Joker operates without a clear motive, only wanting to spread chaos. The Joker's existence serves to highlight and challenge Batman's own principles and beliefs. In Vikram 2, Sandhanam, introduced like a hulk, plays a narcotic drug manufacturer, producing cocaine on a 'massive scale', who supposedly has the power of destroying not only India but the whole world. The story remains silent on the veracity of such high-volume drug business in 'real' India. And we have all accepted that clarifying such information is not necessary at all. Fake news has become reality. The masquerade or secrecy surrounding such 'mythological' characters and organisations ends up serving as a narrative tool to explore the themes of power, responsibility and accountability.

In Vikram 2, a local drug lord's daughter's marriage scene shows Sandhanam waiting to attack while cooks sing out cookery ads and visitors dance to popular music. In such a bizarre intersection, masked men (headed by Kamal, also in a mask) enter on motorcycles, wipe out Sandhanam's men and even end up kidnapping the drug lord. The portrayal of unregistered or 'secret' national security forces can be interpreted as a commentary on real-world concerns related to government secrecy, classified operations and the lack of transparency. But does it resolve the balance between national security imperatives and the public's right to know in any tangible manner? No. The narrative thus mimics the opacity of existing news media, mostly packed with opinions and even fake news.

Superhero narratives have a long history of reflecting and commenting on

contemporary social and political issues. The portrayal of secret national security forces may resonate with concerns about the expansion of government surveillance, but the use of covert military operations and the implications of unchecked power in the real world provide a new level of credibility for modern-day governments. I am sure that Kamal is aware of such dangerous intersections and implications in real-day politics, where he is a committed player, and therefore the structuring of logic and reasoning into a film like this becomes important.

One can clearly see this in the insertion of a scene with Vikram's chosen members where he delivers a five-minute-long sermon about his rationale for doing whatever is being staged in the film. The setting is a dim basement packed with all kinds of ammunition. Vikram's team members are feeling unsure about the plan and he replies, 'So, you think I am doing all this to take revenge for my son's murder? My son died to give us a drug-free society. Should we not respect his sacrifice? This drug will soon take us back to the law of the jungle, namely, to multiply and procreate with no awareness of who your mother, sister or daughter is. You all came to me because of an ideology. Whoever we have killed is not murder, but a statement to clean the crap out of our society. And a masked face is necessary nowadays to carry out even a good deed. I am an agent and known for my secrecy. I have a successful track record which I cannot reveal to the world because I am an honest militant. And our society should know that is the legacy we want to leave behind and for that Sandhanam must be killed. One man's terrorism is another man's revolution. The freedom song of yesteryears has become our national anthem today. Rebel is not a curse word, but a virtue. Sorry boys, I am lecturing. We are warriors of tomorrow but now, grow up, guys!'

The Preamble to our Constitution assures for all citizens 'justice, social, economic and political' and a rejection of violence as a means to achieve justice. With this 'statement' in the film, is Kamal propagating the need for violence as a contingent measure when law and order go out of hand? Or is he announcing the new 'Wagnerian' narrative as the norm? Acknowledging this monologue in the film as a 'lecture' is in fact Kamal's statement to his audience. Most of the lines spoken here are in the English language, subtitled in Tamil. Watching so much English spoken here and in many other Tamil films today is a clear indication of the 'surplus enjoyment' provided. Finally, the tone and delivery of Vikram's speech here is a tribute to the legendary Sivaji Ganesan, Kamal's idol.

Registering such a memory also portrays Kamal's disposition to the well-proven narrative, namely, the need to clearly register the hero as a 'positive' person with no ambiguity at all which, strangely, is clearly not the narrative of the Hollywood superhero films. Kamal has surfed and navigated a lot of tidal waves, manoeuvring the peaks and troughs, combining rare intelligence and commonly available intuitions to overcome unimaginable crises all his life. There is no looking back at the past, for his only motto has been 'Tomorrow belongs to us'!

'Kamal Got Me Hooked On To Fitness'

It was my job to read out their lines to the actors and make sure they spoke them with the right diction, accent and pronunciation.'
'If you look at my photographs from the Sadma set, you will always find me with a file in hand, even when I am in my costume.'

Among Kamal Haasan's many friends and colleagues is Gulshan Grover. The 'Bad Man' was at Kamal Haasan's birthday party last year, as both of them had been shooting for Indian 2 at the time and shared with the other guest at the party, Mani Ratnam how delighted he was to reunite with his Nayakan hero after three decades for Thug Life. As Kamal Haasan turns 70 on November 7, Gulshan tells about the 43-year-friendship that began on the set of Sadma and the lessons he learnt from him, particularly during the fight scenes. "Kamal not only gave me tips on how to overpower an actor bigger and stronger than you, but also gave me the knee and elbow pads he had brought for himself from abroad. These imported pads made wrestling on the rough terrain smooth. Kamal, who had sacrificed his protective gear, ended up with the bruises, but made a permanent place in my heart."

Kamal has changed...

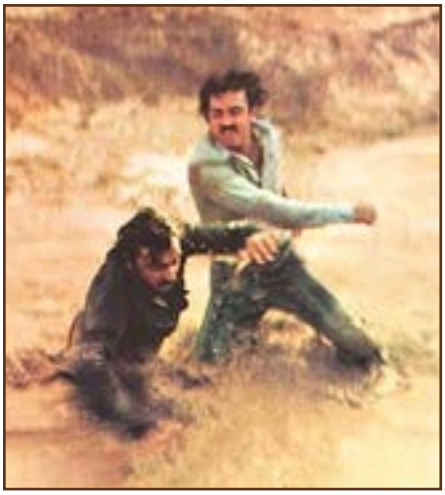
I was shooting with Kamal Haasan after many years and was understandably nervous on the first day of Indian 2's shoot. I recalled from the Sadma days that Kamal, who is a fantastic actor and well-versed in technique, would just get up from his chair, walk through the rehearsals and be ready for a take in a jiffy. I, on the other hand, like to prepare well. Since I'm playing his adversary in this film, I knew I had to have my game on point and be ready to take him on without too many rehearsals. But to my surprise, I discovered that Kamal had changed. The most wonderful actor India had ever seen, who surprises you in every film, leaving you wonder-stuck with not just his versatility but also his ability to carry off action, emotion, dance, drama and comedy, industriously rehearsed every scene with me several times. Brushing off all the praise heaped on him, the flood of compliments he is deluged with, Kamal Haasan works as hard and industriously as any newcomer even today, to get into character and understand what is required of him. When I was stuck while we were doing a scene together, he acted out my portions for me and put me back on track. When I pointed out that he should emphasise a particular aspect in a scene, giving the audience another perspective, he accepted my suggestion with grace and incorporated it. There was a lot of give and take between us which made the God of acting not just more human. This has also taken his films one step up. Last year, at the age of 69, Kamal Haasan gave Tamil cinema its biggest hit, Vikram, which underlines not just his star power, but also his hunger to excel.

Birthday memories

As far as our personal equation goes, I was gratified to find that the warmth and respect we have always had for each other, had not diminished. If anything, it has grown. From the first day to the 14-15 days that we shot together at a stretch, we were always together. While on camera we were adversaries, off it, we were the best of buddies. He kept the chair next to him for me and between shots, we were always chatting and laughing. This surprised his younger colleagues down South who, not being as well acquainted with the work I've done, had had no idea the Bad Man is also a big name in my part of the world. When they saw how caring and affectionate the legend was towards me, insisting I eat whatever was brought out for him and ensuring I had wanted for nothing during the duration of the shoot, it elevated my own standing on the Indian 2 set. Kamal invited me, along with a small circle of close friends, to his birthday party last year. There I met old friends like Khushboo and Radhika, as well as his younger daughter Akshara. Mani Ratnam and his wife Suhasini were there too and I told the director how delighted I was that Kamal and he were reuniting, three decades after their cult classic Nayakan. Their Thug Life is a film I am really looking forward to. I also noticed that when a childhood friend kept butting into his conversations, Kamal showed not the slightest hint of irritation. It is these qualities of humility, humanity and magnanimity, along with him being the fantastic actor that he is, that I gave an impromptu speech on the occasion.

Jogging to fitness and wisdom

On the second day of the Indian 2 shoot, Kamal admitted that on his way back, he had remembered our fun times from Sadma. Kamal,



who by then was already a legend, and Romu N Sippy, whose father, N C Sippy had produced wonderful films like Padosan, Guddi, Anand, Bawarchi, Chupke Chupke, Mili, Gol Maal and Khubsoorat, had befriended me, then a struggling actor. Sadma, directed by Balu Mahendru, released on July 8, 1983. Balu's first Hindi film was a remake of his 1982 Tamil film, Moondram Pirai. It is a beautiful love story with Sridevi as Nehalata, who after suffering head injury in a car crash regresses to a six year old as a result of retrograde amnesia, and Kamal's Somu, a lonely school teacher who rescues her from a brothel, brings her home and loses his heart to her. I had lucked out when my eyes caught Balu's eyes and he called Romu, insisting that he wanted me to play the baddie, Balua. Romu, who was producing the film with his brother Raj N Sippy, was surprised because another actor, a bigger name, had already been signed for the role of the local woodcutter. But Balu was adamant he wanted only me. When I met him at his office at Roop Tara Studio in Mumbai, Romu was very gracious and we signed the contract that very day. During the shoot in Ooty, I stayed with Romu, who was there throughout, in his two-bedroom suite. Every evening, after pack-up, I would go for a jog with Kamal and him. Kamal was the one who got me hooked on fitness and I took the opportunity to ask him a lot of questions on acting and the craft of cinema. Given his years of experience and fund of knowledge, it was wisdom time for me. All his tips and guidance have come in handy down the decades.

Padding up a fight

I was really nervous about our fight scene. After learning about Balua's attempt to molest Nehalata, whom he has christened Reshmi, Somu goes at him hammer and tongs. Kamal insisted I make it as real as possible and assured me that I would not get hurt, saying reassuringly, 'If there is a boulder and we are rolling towards it, I will make sure I hit it first and cushion the impact for you.' He not only gave me tips on how to overpower an actor bigger and stronger than you but also gave me the knee and elbow pads he had brought for himself from abroad. These imported pads made wrestling on the rough terrain smooth. Kamal, who had sacrificed his protective gear, ended up with the bruises, but made a permanent place in my heart. My admiration and learning which began on sets of Sadma and continues to this day.

Lessons in Tamil and Hindi

On the set, Kamal, Sridevi and Balu would discuss scenes in fluent Tamil. Suddenly, noticing the blank look on my face, Kamal would stop and translate all that had been said in English for me. Balu would urge me to learn Tamil, and Kamal succeeded in teaching me a smattering of the language. A couple of days into the Sadma shoot, some of my suggestions impressed Balu and he gave me the additional responsibility of coaching Kamal, Sridevi and Silk Smitha in their Hindi dialogues. Our director was dictated by the location and the weather. If a particular place or the lighting at a certain point during the day caught his fancy, he would rush out his actors and technicians and shoot without any prep. He barely gave his actors time to get into their costume and at times told Sridevi not to bother with make-up. During such times, it was my job to read out their lines to the actors and make sure they spoke them with the right diction, accent and pronunciation. If you look at my photographs from the set, you will always find me with a file in hand, even when I am in my costume. While Kamal and Sridevi were diligent about their Hindi dialogue, Silk Smitha, while always respectful, was not too interested in her lines or my instructions. She was one of the busiest stars at the time and on the day that she was to arrive, I would be left behind at the hotel to narrate the scenes to her and go over the lines before she was driven to the set. I don't think she realised I was one of the actors till Sadma's release.

The disguise I saw through

Kamal and I did another film, T Rama Rao's Yeh Desh, the following year. It is the Hindi remake of Krishna's 200th Telugu film, Eenadu. I was living in a building called Krishna at the time and one morning, when I went to the nearby baniya shop to make a call, I noticed a guy in dark glasses grooving to music playing on his Walkman. I looked at him closely, he stared back and I recognised him from his eyes. 'Kamal,' I muttered, he ignored me. 'Kamal,' I repeated, and this time he shushed me, asking, 'How did you recognise me?' I pointed out that I was an actor too and understood body language. Coincidentally, I had just bumped into our Sadma co-star, Sridevi, outside Mumbai's Seth Studio where she was shooting for Rakesh Roshan's Jaag Utha Insaan. When I mentioned this, Kamal immediately asked me to take him to her hotel. 'Let's rag her,' he said, and I thought to myself that he being the legendary Kamal Haasan and having done several films with her could do so, but it wouldn't be right for me to be a part of the prank too. But I could not say no to Kamal and reluctantly escorted him there. Kamal was still in his Afro disguise having planned to play the same prank on her. I heaved a sigh of relief when I learnt that Sridevi was not in her room. On Kamal's birthday, all these memories come flooding back. I wish for him to always be happy, healthy and move from strength to strength, as an actor and film-maker.

'I've Been A Puppet In Shoojitda's Hands'

'Shoojitda's prep was unique and a nice, refreshing change for me.'
'In the three to four months of preparation that we did, I think we only read two scenes.'
"We spent two, three months where he would just talk to me about life, philosophy, spirituality, and a lot of things, which I slowly realised was him trying to get into my head and understand the kind of person I was.'

Abhishek Bachchan gives us a career-best performance in his new film, I Want To Talk, where we see him with **never-seen-before candour.**

He looks back at the film and tells"Hopefully, for the next one, I can do something that I might not have done before."

Abhishek, that career-defining performance as a man who won't let death win, where does all the pain come from?

Thank you very much. I hope every actor gets to do work that is going to be career-defining with every film they choose to do. That's the attitude with which you should approach each and every one of your films. I'd like to do that with every film of mine.

As far as where the pain and suffering come from, we're actors. This is what we do. We listen to the direction given to us by our director, in this case, Shoojitda (Sircar). The entire credit I have to give him. I've just been a puppet in his hands.

How did your equation with Jayant Kriplani happen?

Jayant is a wonderful person and an even better actor. He's so natural and effortless. It made watching him perform a pleasure.

When you're working with such accomplished and wonderful actors, it makes your job so easy. I think the characters are so well-defined and such polar opposites that it makes it very easy.

Jayant and you bring a lot of humour to grim situations.

Keeping Shoojitda's perspective on film-making, he likes to find something funny, something that you can chuckle at in the most serious of situations. I really think that, you know, Dr Deb, Jayantda's character, is the perfect foil for my character, Arjun Sen. For all the drama that Arjun likes to do, he's as serious about it. It's such a wonderful board to bounce off. And he made me look so good.

You share a real bond with your screen daughter, played by Pearl Dey.

I was surrounded by wonderful actors. When you have that kind of talent around you, it makes you look good, whether you deserve to or not.

Well, yes, Pearl has done a great job. Not just Pearl, even Ahilya, who plays the older version of my daughter, has done a wonderful job and I thoroughly enjoyed working with both of them. I cannot take credit for the chemistry at all. It's entirely up to them and Shoojitda for creating that.

Is this a new beginning for you?

I don't know how to answer that. You look for new horizons.

You try to push your envelope. You want to look at doing something more challenging for the next one. That's what we try to do and try to achieve. As far as new beginnings and all that, I leave that to my learned audience. They're the final deciders of what is good and what is bad. I humbly respect and accept what they have to say.

Hopefully, for the next one, I can do something that I might not have done before.

Did you refer to your own bonding with your daughter Aaradhya?

I think every actor always, whether you know it or not, but I think subliminally, somewhere reference your own life. I think the natural process of thought is to think, what would I do in this situation? But the credit of the chemistry has to go entirely to Shoojitda, Ahilya and Pearl.

Did you meet the real Arjun Sen?

I met him about 10 to 15 days into the shoot. He came to LA, where we were shooting and spent a lot of time with me. A wonderful guy and, you know, he lived up to be the true inspiration that his life has been. Very insightful, very facetious, great sense of humour, very, very, witty. He refuses to see the downside of life.

He's very positive and I really, really, enjoyed being with him.

Is the real Arjun happy with the reel Arjun?

I think that's a question best asked to him. I'd like to believe he's proud and happy with my work.

How much prep did you undertake?

Well, Shoojitda's prep was unique and a nice, refreshing change for me. In the three to four months of preparation that we did, I think we only read two scenes. We did not do the conventional script readings.

We spent two, three months where he would just talk to me about life, philosophy, spirituality, and a lot of things, which I slowly realised was him trying to get into my head and understand the kind of person I was and therein trying to mould how he wanted my Arjun Sen to think and to behave.

It was a wonderfully new approach. It was not very direct prep, so to speak. It was more about getting into the mindset and being comfortable being this person.

What is your takeaway from this experience?

I think when you have the persistence and tenacity that Arjunda has, by just the actions of what he does in life, I think it becomes very easy to portray it. His journey is very inspirational. Once you buy into that, it makes it very easy to portray.

‘I Was Fated To Play Jinnah’

‘I have no idea why I was so many film-makers’ choice for Jinnah. I assume it is because I was born and bred in Mumbai and speak English.’ ‘There’s also my name, people tend to believe that a Muslim character can best be played by a Muslim actor.’

Arif Zakaria, who plays Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the leader of the All-India Muslim League from 1913 and the first governor general of Pakistan, in Nikkhil Advani’s series **Freedom At Midnight**,

“Politics interests and intrigues me, but as a bystander. A part of my family was and is in politics, so the curiosity is there,” he says.

Arif, given your surprising physical resemblance to Jinnah and your brilliant performance in Freedom At Midnight, one wonders if Nikkhil Advani was the first film-maker to approach you to play him?

No, Mr (Shyam) Benegal was the first gentleman to offer me the role of Jinnah. In fact, he approached me twice. Once, was for a TV show he was doing, maybe Samvidhaan: The Making of the Constitution of India. The second time it was for a long sequence featuring Jinnah in Mujib: The Making of a Nation, the biopic of Bangabandhu, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. There were offers for a few stray Web shows and films too.

I have no idea why I was so many film-makers’ choice for Jinnah. I assume it is because I was born and bred in Mumbai and speak English. There’s also my name, people tend to believe that a Muslim character can best be played by a Muslim actor. None of these offers materialised for whatever reasons. I guess I was fated to play Jinnah in such a vast, expansive way in Freedom At Midnight.

Let’s flashback to the audition...

Nikkhil, fortunately, did not put me through an elaborate audition. I remember he made me read a scene in his office. It’s the one in the first or second episode where Jawaharlal Nehru comes to Jinnah’s house asking him to join the government. Even though I was on the leaner side then, I had to lose some weight for the series because Jinnah was ailing and very frail then. But I was pretty much there in the physicality and fortuitously, things fell in place.

What was the first day of the shoot like?

Well, we shot the scene which

comes in episode seven when a young Gandhi comes to a Gujarat sabha and is welcomed by a young Jinnah. It's a big scene where Jinnah introduces Gandhi, who starts speaking in Gujarati, and runs him down.

There's an awkward confrontational moment between the two when they were young. It being the first day of shoot, the heart was pounding. Things have to be right, look good and the tone set, I know it takes time even if you have rehearsed ad nauseam in an air conditioned office or in the privacy of your home several times. This was on camera! Also, there was the smoking. I don't smoke so it took me a while to get used to tobacco. There were mini challenges, but everything worked out well in the end.

In the post release interviews, many of the actors admit playing a particular character gave them an understanding of the person. What's your understanding of Jinnah's ideology and has it changed after living him on screen?

Not really because once a shoot is over, I don't dwell too much on the psyche of the character. I perform a scene from the way it is written without getting too deep into his personal ideology. I'm already looking to my next role, there's no great resonance that I carry with me today. During those seven-eight months of shooting, I would perform in front of the camera, but there's nothing beyond that.

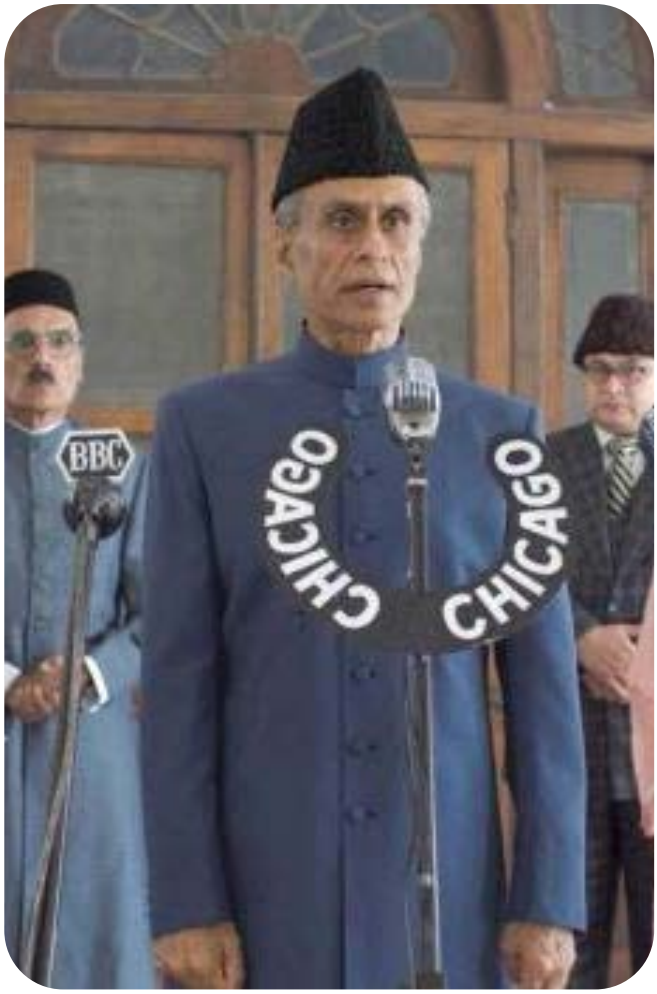
The reason I'm asking you this is that politics is an integral part of your family. Your uncle Rafiq Zakaria was a veteran Congress politician as was your father Ahmed Zakaria. Your brother Asif Zakaria is the Congress candidate from the Bandra West constituency of Mumbai on a Congress ticket. What is your take on contemporary politics and have you ever been drawn to it?

Politics interests and intrigues me, but as a bystander. A part of my family was and is in politics, so the curiosity is there. One could have preferences in terms of the choice of candidates, but that is one's personal journey. It's like asking what you eat and don't eat, not something that needs to be in the public domain.

Personally, I've been apolitical all my life.

Is India as secular as Gandhi wanted it to be?

I choose to believe it is.
There is a lot of noise because of social media. We tend to get a lot of information about a lot of conflict which has been there since the past 100 years or so.We are only becoming aware of it now in real time because of live news and social media, constantly scrolling and looking.



I'm Not Comfortable With Wearing *'A Bikini'*

'I will never go against my comfort zone in terms of outfits. So, I refused Housefull.'

Known for her striking voice as well as acting talent, **Tia Bajpai** is making waves with her latest single, Jugni, which has millions of views on YouTube.

But Tia's journey has not been a walk in the park. She has faced her share of challenges, including the harsh realities of an industry often overshadowed by nepotism.

"While it's wrong to blame insiders for their family background, there's no doubt that being an insider has tremendous advantages compared to being someone who's not,"

Jugni has been received really well.

As an artist, when your work is loved and appreciated by one and all, it truly feels heartwarming.

A lot of hard work has gone into making this track, and I couldn't have asked for more.

How did the song come into being?

Music and art is usually a reflection of who we are and what we feel around us. I rely a lot on my sensibilities when it comes to creating music for my audience and that's how the lyrics happened. It took me a long time to finalise the lyrics and after that, the collaboration with Arian Romal, who has composed the music for the song, happened. No venture is possible without

a successful collaboration and I am fortunate that my team had the same vision regarding the song.

You first rose to fame as a contestant on Sa Re Ga Ma Pa in 2005. How do you think reality shows have changed over the years? Are they still real?

Well, I am not sure about the 'reality' part of it. A lot of things have already been said and written about it. What I can truly say is that a music reality show doesn't guarantee you success. Yes, you will get that initial boost in your career; your Reels and YouTube channel may start going viral. But what after that? I feel that in today's times, a lot of artists lack the recall value, which wasn't the case back in the '90s or even 2000s. My motive behind every song is to always create that recall value which will prompt my audience to engage with my tracks again and again. Sometimes, the results happen the way I want and sometimes it doesn't. But then that's part and parcel of the industry. You can't take success or failure seriously. It's important to focus and move on quickly.

If given a chance, would you like to be a judge on a singing reality show?

It would be an honour. If there is any reality show and the makers feel that I would do justice as a judge and add value to their show, why not? Judging young and raw talent and preparing them for the industry would be my little way of giving it back to my industry and the arts community.

From Sa Re Ga Ma Pa, you transitioned into acting, starting with the popular ZEE TV show Ghar Ki Lakshmi Betiyann. What inspired you to take that leap from being a singer to becoming an actress?

There was not a particular moment that made me do that. As an artist, right from my childhood, I have been inclined towards both music and acting. I have trained myself for both. So, if I am confident enough to do a decent job in both, why not?

You starred in the film, Haunted-3D.

Yes, there were multiple rounds of auditions, look tests and everything involved in the usual casting process. What worked for me was that I kept my expectations minimalistic. I was entrusted with a lot of faith by my director and was told that the role was tailor-made for me. So I had to do a decent job to keep up with that faith. I am happy it worked out the way I wanted.

After Haunted-3D and 1920: Evil Returns, you've been selective with your projects and have remained relatively away from the limelight. What factors contributed to that decision?

If you see my work portfolio, it has always been about quality ahead of quantity. I don't want to be remembered for hundreds of songs and movies, the majority of which don't have a recall value among the audience. I would rather have a lot less in terms of numbers but the quality should be such that in terms of sheer impact, it is equivalent to the work of a lot of people who are ahead of me. I need complete satisfaction before saying yes to anything. God has put me in a position to choose, so I am not in any rush.

You were offered Housefull 2. What led you to reject that film?

Yes, I was offered one of the films of the Housefull franchise and was happy that it came my way. But I wasn't comfortable with the idea of wearing a bikini. It was beyond my comfort zone and I will never go against my comfort zone to that extent in terms of outfits. So, it didn't work out and I refused the film.

When you look back at your journey, were there moments when you felt your lack of industry connections hindered your opportunities?

Absolutely. I am a self-made person and whatever I have been able to do for myself professionally, it is a direct result of my hard work. No one has set things up for me on a platter. Connections certainly help if you are someone who's born in the film industry. But then, I had two options: Either crib about the fact that I wasn't an insider in the industry or do my best with whatever I have. I chose the latter. We can't control where we are born, right? While it's wrong to blame insiders for their family background, there's no doubt that being an insider has tremendous advantages compared to being someone who's not. Being from a film family helps in getting the initial bit of work. Also, you get multiple opportunities even if you fail, while an outsider won't. But then, let's face it, that's how it has always been and that's how it will be. I am not someone who will blame nepotism.

What kind of roles or projects would excite you most?

Like I said, I don't believe in limiting myself to a certain type, be it with acting or music. Whatever it is, it has to challenge me as an artist. The joy of doing something right after you previously felt that you can't do it is the best feeling for an artist.

'It's A Different Kashmir Now'

'One day, I would love to have a house there.'

Vedang Raina, who was recently seen in Jigra, recently visited the Kashmir Valley and came back refreshed.

He shares his experience with "Kashmiri food is my favourite! I love Rogan Josh. The walnut pies in Kashmir are also really good."

Have you been mobbed after Jigra release?

I haven't really stepped out yet, so no mobbing (laughs). But Jigra changed my life way before it was even released. I'm grateful to be a part of this project and work alongside some really great minds. I feel blessed to be in this position so early in my career and at such a young age.

Which is the best compliment you have received so far?

That this did not look like my debut at all. I work really hard to get appreciated for my work. I'm glad people liked my performances and saw some promise. It really means the world.

You recently visited Kashmir. What was that like?

It's one of the best places in the world to visit. One of my favourite vacations I've had.

Did you go with friends?

I went with my family.
My parents didn't live in Kashmir either but they used to go there often as kids. They had family there. It was special to visit the places where they spent their childhood. They showed me around Srinagar like it's their home.

What are the locals like?

They are very warm to all visitors.

Did you meet your kith and kin in Kashmir?

I don't have any relatives there anymore. Quite sad, actually.

Did you get a chance to try the local cuisine?

Oh yes! Best food in the world! Kashmiri food is my favourite. I love Rogan Josh. The walnut pies in Kashmir are also really good.

Would you like to go back to Kashmir?

Most definitely. I love Kashmir. One day, I would love to have a house there.

Did you feel safe in Kashmir?

It's a different Kashmir now. Yes, I felt safe.

Where do you feel at home?

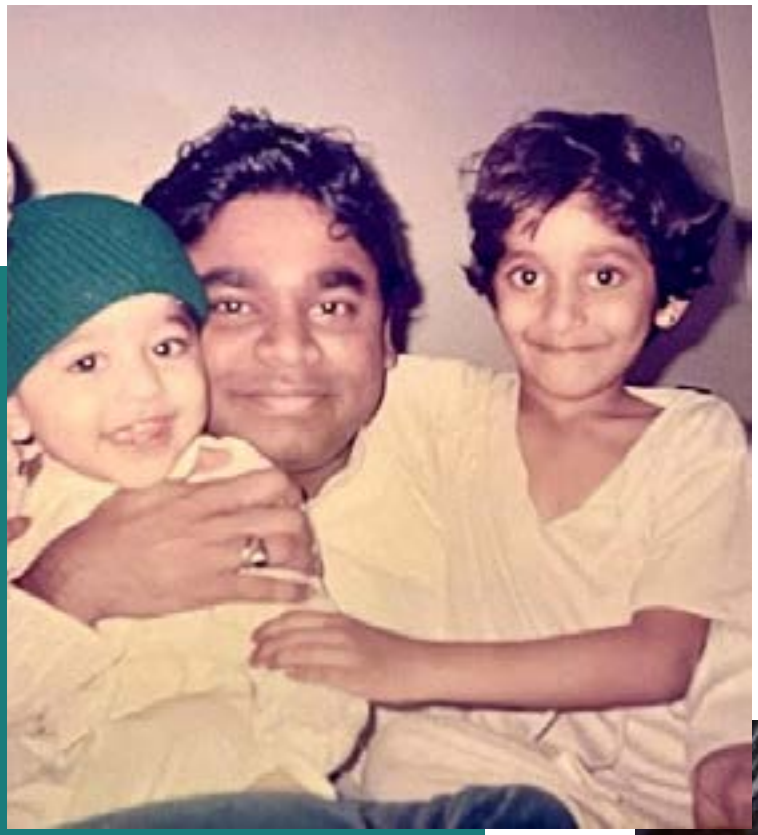
Now, it's Mumbai. But Srinagar somehow feels like home. Rainawari in Srinagar is where my father's side of the family is from.

What next?

I want to keep growing, improving and evolving as an actor. I want to keep challenging myself and keep working. Hopefully, I will get interesting opportunities to do that.

'IT'S IMPORTANT MY KIDS SEE THEIR FATHER REGULARLY'

'It is a blessing to work at home. My family is always around me.' 'I think that's what keeps me creatively charged.



Ever since **A R Rahman** and his wife Saira Banu announced their separation on social media, his past interviews have been coming back to the forefront, where people try to look for signs of marital turmoil.

In 2007, when Rahman turned 40, he spoke at length about his three young children but kept his wife out of the conversation. "A year back, I didn't allow my kids to be anywhere near me. Now, they're all over the place while I compose," Rahman told 17 years ago.

Will Chennai always be your home?

You never know. I'm trying to cut down drastically on my travelling. Though it was a learning experience, I need to be at home more now. The kids are growing up. I need to be with the family more often. A year back, I didn't allow my kids to be anywhere near me. Now, they're all over the place while I compose. I think it's very important for them to absorb the ambience.

Are your children musically inclined?

They have just started learning classical music from Ghulam Mustafa Khansaab. Just last week, he came and took over their training. My son is going to be four on the same day as me; we share the same birthday.

So are you entering a new phase in your life?

So far, I've just been busy living life. From my childhood, I was surrounded by grownups, I never got a chance to enjoy being a child. It took me a while to realise how young I was. By the time I realised I was missing out on youthful activities, I was no longer young. Now I'm reliving my childhood with my children. If I'm able to give them everything that I couldn't afford, they are giving me back something vital.

What sense do you make of the 40 years of your life?

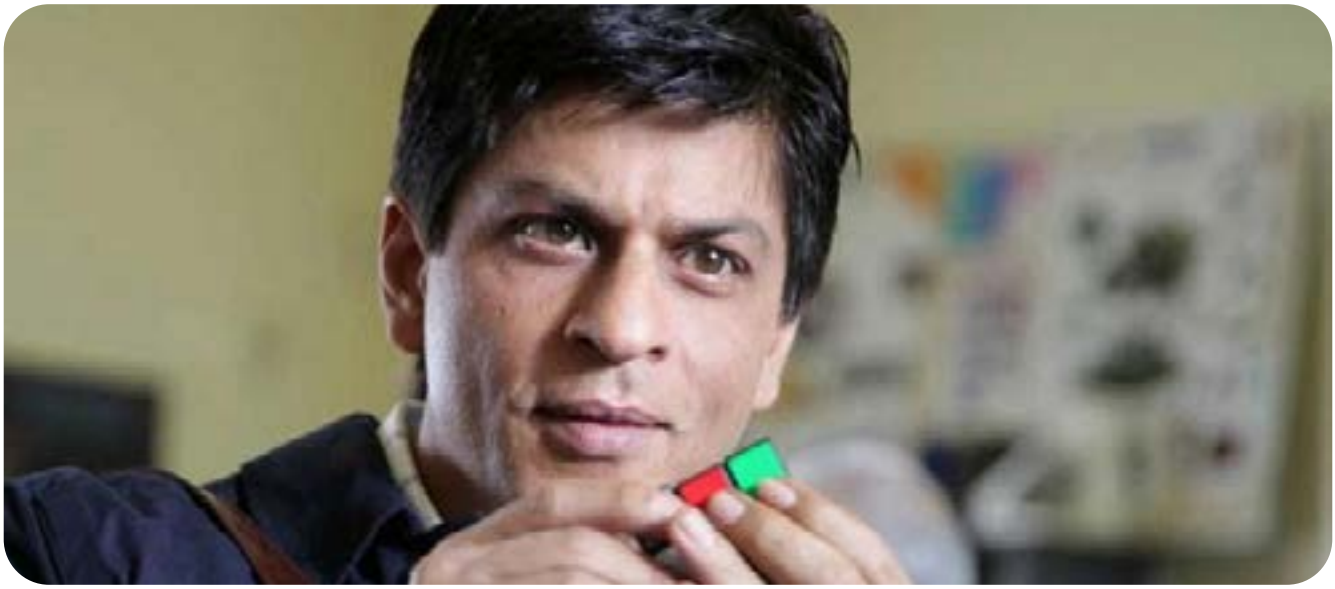
My life has always been a journey. When I was in my 20s, I went through the most turbulent and hectic time of my life. Now I spend as much time as possible with my children Khatija, Raheema and Ameen. My studio in Chennai is bang opposite my house, so they spend a lot of time with me. All they have to do is cross the road and they're with me.

So time management is a problem?

You have to prioritise your time and do what you must.
For example, I know I have to be away for five months this year. So it would be foolish of me to commit myself to anything until I finish my concerts. It is a blessing to work at home. My family is always around me. I think that's what keeps me creatively charged. When I travel, I crave to return. My kids are growing up. It's important they see their father regularly or they'll start calling me uncle! I am missing out on my children growing up. Sometimes, I do take my children abroad with me when they have school vacations. But they can't accompany me everywhere. It's not possible to wrench them away from their lives and ask them to join me wherever I am

‘I Feel I Fail Shah Rukh’

‘I’m happy piggybacking on his stardom.’



On Shah Rukh Khan's 59th birthday on November 2, close friend **Karan Johar** reveals what their relationship is like.

"Shah Rukh and I work so well together because we care so deeply for each other in real life. Creativity compounded with brotherly love cannot go wrong," Karan tells **Subhash K Jha.**

What does Shah Rukh Khan mean to your cinema?

I can't imagine making films without him, although I have. Time and again, I'm blown away by Shah Rukh. How can he think of so many things about his character when he has so much on his plate? in My Name Is Khan. I was zapped by how much he knew on the subject, and he brought all that knowledge on the sets. He had written reams of notes on how he wanted to interpret his character. To him, it was no big deal. He's ready to direct a film any time. He will be outstanding at it. His understanding of human nature and emotions can never be matched by me. There has never been an actor like him.

What does he mean to you personally?

Personally, for me, he's my God, my hero and brother. I don't have to think about how he'll play a character. He does all the thinking on his own. The character comes from my heart and then Shah Rukh takes over. He needs no presentation. His presence is enough. He gives a sub-text, graph and everything that a character needs. He understands what I want from his performance, and he gives that extra bit by himself. I feel I failed Shah Rukh. When will I give him that one film where I'll write a role that would do justice to him?

What do you have to say about the Karan Johar-Shah Rukh Khan combination?

I feel two hard working, talented people are bound to form a productive team. When these two people share a special familial camaraderie, there's bound to be valuable emotions between them, and those emotions are bound to translate on screen. Shah Rukh and I work so well together because we care so deeply for each other in real life. Creativity compounded with brotherly love cannot go wrong.

Some of his biggest hits are under your direction?

I'm happy piggybacking on his stardom. There can never be an ego between us. I know only too well that he's successful way beyond what I can ever be. Stars don't get any bigger than Shah Rukh Khan or Amitabh Bachchan. Once a film-maker accepts that, ego never comes in the way. I'm happy with the success God has given me and I'm happy God has given me Shah Rukh to attain that success. There are certain stars who glow brighter than others, that's why they're called superstars. I'm happy to have worked with two such stars, Amitabh Bachchan and Shah Rukh Khan.

'Aamir And I Are Still Very Close'

'After being married for almost 18 years, and since there was never any rancour between us, we are still very close, as parents of Azad, as colleagues in the film work that we do, and as friends.'

In the midst of her Oscar campaign in Los Angeles, **Kiran Rao** took time out to celebrate her 51st birthday on November 7.

She discusses her special sophomore film, and also the unique relationship she shares with its producer and her former husband Aamir Khan in this conversation . We still consider each other family and will continue to do so, I'm sure, in the long run."

Aamir and you are still seen together everywhere, so I am a bit confused about the divorce. Would you care to shed some light on this?

After being married for almost 18 years, and since there was never any rancour between us, we are still very close, as parents of Azad, as colleagues in the film work that we do, and as friends. We still consider each other family and will continue to do so, I'm sure, in the long run. He's my sounding board, and I am his. Our bond is built on trust and shared experiences.

Marriages are falling apart around us. Do you recommend that couples should live in before marrying?

Human relationships are complex, and I believe people (consenting adults) should have the freedom to explore and define their relationships however they choose. We need to be understanding of each other's needs, and work towards replacing moral judgement with love and empathy.

You turned a year older on November 7. How did you celebrate your special day?

Honestly, I don't think I could have asked for a better birthday. I'm currently in Los Angeles with our film, meeting some incredible talent and advocates for Laapataa Ladies. It's been heartwarming to see their reactions and the love they have for the film. A group of friends even threw me a surprise party here in LA, which was so sweet. Right after that, we jumped straight back into work.

This birthday was extra special as your film has reached unexpected heights. Are you in an extra-happy space right now?

I couldn't be happier. This film has truly been the gift that keeps on giving. When we made it, our dream was simply to share it with as many people as possible and spark conversations about gender parity, equality and womanhood. To see that happen on a global scale is incredibly special.

As a woman, mother, and film-maker, how do you view your journey so far?

I am filled with gratitude. Motherhood has given me a deeper emotional understanding of my work, helping me tell more honest and empathetic stories. Being a woman and film-maker in an industry that often isn't designed for us has pushed me to carve out my own space. I'm fortunate to have had a wonderful support system and incredible collaborators along the way, and will always be grateful for that. Every chapter -- whether as a film-maker or a mother -- has shaped the other, and I'm thankful for the challenges and the joys that have come with them.

As a female film-maker, are you able to tell the stories you want to, exactly the way you envision them? Did you have to make any compromises in Laapataa Ladies?

I don't believe any film-maker should ever have to compromise on the story they set out to tell.

I don't think I could have found better collaborators than Aamir Khan Productions and Jio Studios, who empowered us throughout the entire process. Aamir was the one who discovered the story, and that alone speaks volumes about the kind of support we received.

If you had the chance to change anything in your life, would you?

I've never really thought about it. I'm incredibly happy with everything life has offered me. The journey I've been through has brought me to this point, and I wouldn't change a thing. If anything, I just wish there were more than 24 hours in a day, so I could do even more of what life has to offer.

WHY THE PARDESI GIRL QUIT THE MOVIES

Mom trusted the wrong people, and let the wrong kind of elements get into our life.'

One may not remember **Pratibha Sinha**. but her popular song in **Raja Hindustani** -- Pardesi Pardesi Jana Nahin -- is still heard on radio stations and at dance events.

As the film starring Aamir Khan and Karisma Kapoor clocks 28 years, just why she quit Bollywood: "The world we live in is by and large misogynistic. We are simple, rustic Nepali people."

Are you proud to be known as the Pardesi Girl?

Am I known as the Pardesi Girl?
Of course. The song became your calling card to fame.

I can't believe 28 years have gone by! It feels as though we were filming the song yesterday.

I recall Dharmesh (Darshan, Director) calling me up and telling me that he was keen on me performing a song in Raja Hindustani.

Didn't you fear you might go unnoticed in a film that starred Aamir Khan and Karisma Kapoor?

I trusted Dharmesh Darshan completely.

His parents and he had been our family friends and I knew him from the time I was a toddler.

So I agreed immediately.
I was aware of the fact that he was a very gifted and dedicated film-maker, a sensitive and evolved human being who thought with his heart and felt with his mind.

Did you ever expect the song to become so popular?

When one is in the thick of things, one does not expect or even think of any kind of reaction.

Dharmesh had narrated the story to me and it was obvious that the song was propelling the story forward.

Why did you quit the industry?

To be honest, I was 'phased out' by the film industry. I guess I was and still am out of step with the rest of the world.The world we live in is by and large misogynistic. We are simple, rustic Nepali people. Mom (the legendary **Mala Sinha**, who turned 88 on Monday, November 11, 2024) trusted the wrong people, and let the wrong kind of elements get into our life. She is naive in many ways.

'I Am A Girl At The End Of The Day'

Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3 is the biggest career hit for its stars Vidya Balan and Kartik Aaryan, and they are obviously thrilled. Yet, post-release, Kartik seems to have become the face of the film, leaving the rest of the cast behind. Vidya, who has been in the industry for almost two decades, doesn't seem surprised and says "The industry and the media tend to equate the success of a hero driven film with the hero. That is the norm, right I think we have to change the way we think as an audience."

You are not an actor who would focus too much on vanity that typically comes with it. Is it then difficult for you to step into a flashy entertainer like this compared to a Sherni or a Jalsa?

Not at all. I do whatever is required for the role. Here, I had Niharika Bhasin doing my costumes and she's fantastic. She dressed me in The Dirty Picture and Shakuntala Devi. We get along very well. Plus, I had my team to make me look good. My makeup artist Harshal, my hair dresser Shalaka, they have all been with me forever. They know how to dress me according to the character. And when I say dress, it is make-up, hair, costume, everything. So yes, I enjoyed it. I enjoy dressing up. I enjoy having my hair open and done up and all that. I don't get to do that that often. But I am a girl at the end of the day.

After seeing you in BB3, I think you would kill it in a negative role. Your character has dark shades here and you were so good in showing that.

(Smiles) Thank you. I'd love to do it. It can be a fully negative character in a very entertaining film. I'm okay with that. As long as it's not dark and intense and brooding. But I really want to do comedy.

Are you actively seeking out roles that are light and fun?

Yes, yes, I am. People, who come to me with scripts, know that I am looking for something fun and entertaining. A lot of people are bringing that my way now.

You have done so many different roles across various genres. Is there any comfort space for you? A genre that makes you feel at ease.

No. I think I feel equally at ease and equally ill at ease in all genres because I just get nervous before a film. After a few days, you slowly slip into things, but it's never easy.

The entire star cast of BB3 came together to promote the film before its release. Now that it is doing great business, we see only Kartik Aaryan's face on posters flashing those big numbers.

Not to discredit Kartik, but how do you make peace with the fact that no matter what you achieve the men will have the upper hand?

The industry and the media tend to equate the success of a hero driven film with the hero. That is the norm, right? If the film is driven by a female hero, she ends up getting credit for it. Otherwise, it's the norm. I think we have to change the way we think as an audience, also. A film is a collaborative medium and therefore, I think I've always wondered about this. But having said that, I'm very happy for Kartik. Our film is doing well and he has worked very hard and continues to work hard. I'm amazed at his commitment that he's still going out there and promoting. I've gotten a little bit like, the film is going well so there's no need to do anything more. But he is at it and kudos to him for that. But yes, I think this is a mindset change that we all need to make.

From Parineeta to BB3, it's been a long and wonderful journey for you. Along the way, you have seen a lot, experienced a lot. What new changes do you hope to see in the industry?

I'm quite happy with the way things are, honestly. But I do hope that people start investing a little more fearlessly in female-led films. And make fun female-led films. That's the one thing I'm hoping for.

Who's Kashish Kapoor?

Hailing from Purnia in Bihar, Kashish is a social media influencer with over 800,000 followers on Instagram.

After completing her schooling in her hometown, Kapoor shifted to Delhi for her graduation from Amity University.While at the university, Kashish participated in several beauty contests and started creating content for social media.

After winning the title of Miss Fashion Icon in Bihar, Kashish made her way to the Times Fresh Face competition which eventually helped her in getting a stint on the popular reality show, MTV Splitsvilla.

Kashish gained popularity after showcasing her sassy personality on Splitsvilla and made it to the finale.

Nothing better than giving a bath to your fur buddy on a weekend.

Chilling with her college bestie Aroma Suri!

After Splitsvilla, Kashish was badly trolled as she chose money instead of going ahead and playing the finale round. However, host Sunny Leone came to her defence to shut down the trolls.

Holidaying in Mussoorie because it's winter!

Currently, Ms Kapoor is stirring things up inside the BB house and fans are loving her badass attitude. So will she go all the way to the finale? Chances are pretty bright!

‘Kareena Is Epitome Of Effortlessness’

‘Her love for the story -- be it understanding the story quickly or reading the script, then composing yourself in almost no time for the shot.’ ‘All of it is just so natural to her.’

In the kitchen, he is the master chef of stories. Each of his dishes has an interesting backstory with a hint of nostalgia and a lot of emotion. When **Ranveer Brar** crossed over to films, the transition was natural.

His disarming personality and ability to warm up to people are evident in some of his flawless performances that we have seen on screen. But acting, Ranveer admits, "was never really part of any plan." Brar plays a grieving father whose child has been kidnapped in Hansal Mehta's The Buckingham Murders, which will start streaming on Netflix from November 8, and he shares his experience "Everything was challenging. One of the pressures was the fact that there's a director who's putting his reputation on you. It's an important film for him and he wants to give you an important role. That by itself puts a lot of responsibility on your shoulders"

What was the best part about working on The Buckingham Murders?

The best part was that surreal feeling that I got. There are few times in my life when I have felt overwhelmed with gratitude. For me, that was the best part -- moving from the kitchen to a film set. I have never been to a film school. Maybe making a short film somewhere was always a part of the plan, but not acting! Acting was never really a part of any plan. I think it has more to do with the manifest(ation) of the people who love me and care for me than me.

How did you prepare for your role in The Buckingham Murders?

I think my preparation mostly is just understanding the character. Fortunately, I've lived a fairly fruitful life with its successes and failures. I've always been a people watcher. I've always been interested in knowing and observing people. I think my bit of preparing for my character was being the character -- understanding it, going to places in my head with my character.
Just like how I would go into the head of the person I'm cooking for -- how do I touch, move and inspire them? It's the same thing.

What was it like working with Kareena Kapoor?

It was great.
I think with Kareena, the lineage shows. The fact that you come from a family of film-makers is so deeply, intensely in your blood, it shows. Her love for the story -- be it understanding the story quickly or reading the script, then composing yourself in almost no time for the shot. All of it is just so natural to her. She is the epitome of effortlessness. The way she understood the medium and interacted with Hansal sir on things that she felt were relevant. The kind of preparation that she'd put in it -- maybe (she rehearsed it) months before and definitely the night before coming on the set the next day.

What was the most challenging part of working on a film like this?

Everything was challenging.
One of the pressures was the fact that there's a director who's putting his reputation on you. It's an important film for him and he wants to give you an important role. That by itself puts a lot of responsibility on your shoulders. There's gratitude, and then there's also the underlying responsibility to deliver. That was definitely weighing on my mind.Other than that, what eventually stayed with me was that the more difficult and unlike the characters you do, the more freeing it is. Because for somebody who wants to be free and not just be the Ranveer that everybody sees on camera, it's very freeing to do characters that are diametrically opposite to who you are (in real life). It's liberating.

What type of character roles interest you?

I am too new to pick and choose. I can only -- with folded hands -- thank people for whatever I'm getting. I think grey characters really excite me because then it's a much deeper internal conversation that I have to have with myself on every action. Sometimes you have to justify an action. Sometimes you have to convince yourself of an action, which, in normal life you wouldn't need to, because we love living our life in black and white. But yeah, beggars can't be choosers (laughs). I'm happy to see what life has in store for me.

You're a MasterChef and we know that Hansal Mehta is a foodie. Kareena is also a foodie. What kind of conversations would you have on the sets?

Hansal sir is not just a foodie, he is also a bonafide chef. I can explain a dish to him like I'd explain to my sous chef, not a novice. And he will get it. He gets the details and intricacies of cooking. He is not only fascinated with the end product that comes on the table, but also the process (of making it). That probably helps him to understand and guide me better on how to meet my character.

Ranveer Brar shares his favourite restaurants in and around Mumbai in this video:

Did you get to cook on the sets?

This was a very intense shoot, so cooking on the set was not possible. We were mostly shooting in real locations or at somebody's house. There was no time and no kitchen setup. But on off days, we probably cooked something together. Kabhi chicken bana liya, kabhi aloo ya gobi. On the last day, when we wrapped up, we cooked an entire feast for the crew -- him (Hansal Mehta) and I. We cooked chicken, mutton, we cooked biryani, lahori dal.

‘I Won’t Mind Going Back To TV’

‘If there’s something that is more progressive and more modern, I would love to do it.’

Krystal D’Souza shot to stardom on television before starring in Hindi films like the Amitabh Bachchan starrer Chehre and Riteish Deshmukh-Fardeen Khan’s Viosfot. Several actors who have been a part of the television industry have often talked about the difficult nature of the medium. From a hectic schedule of over 12 hours, no leave, monotony of work and the pressure of staying fit, there’s a lot that television actors need to keep up with. Krystal harks back to her television days and says it was great “schooling” for her because of the “discipline” the medium teaches an actor.”Television teaches you punctuality; it teaches you responsibility... I have learnt a lot from television,” While many would try to shed the ‘TV actor’ tag because they are looking for roles in films or OTT shows, Krystal says she does not disassociate herself from television serials.

“I wouldn’t mind going back to television. If there’s something that is more progressive and more modern, I would love to do it,” she says. Krystal made inroads into OTT in 2019 with Ekta Kapoor’s show Fittrat and thinks OTT is instrumental for creating a better space for not just actors but also technicians. “OTT has opened a very wide space for a lot of actors and technicians also,” she says.

“There was either films or television that people were working on. This was true for actors and crew as well. And now we all have more job opportunities and more scope to do different kinds of roles. With TV, we used to do one character for a really, really, long time. Now we can do different characters and get done with it in 40,50 days.”

Her OTT stint followed with Visfot, in which she shared screen space with Ritiesh Deshmukh and Fardeen Khan. While the film met with mixed reviews from critics, Krystal says she was elated the way people reacted to her performance. “I have gotten amazing reviews for what I have done and all the reviews that I have read, excluding one or two, have been great. I have gotten amazing feedback for the film and people have loved that there was so much suspense, thrills and Ritiesh and Fardeen not doing a comedy and doing something exciting and mysterious... I think that was refreshing for people to see.”

Now that she is all set to further her career in films, is there a dream character for Krystal? She says, “I like watching psychological thrillers. I would love to do a Gone Girl.” Krystal says she is enjoying the current phase in her career where she is getting a lot of opportunities. “But,” Krystal says... “I think my best is yet to come. This is the beginning.”

11 Ways to Encourage Your Child to Be Physically Active

Did you know that only about 1 in 4 children get the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity per day? Participation in all types of physical activity drops dramatically as a child's age and grade in school increase. It's important that physical activity be a regular part of family life. Here is some information to help you keep your children healthy and active.

The benefits of physical activity:

Being physically active means moving enough to breathe heavily, be short of breath, feel warm, and sweat. Exercise is vital to the health and well-being of children. Physical activity helps build and maintain healthy bones, muscles, and joints, for example. It can help keep a healthy body mass index and reduce the risk of diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease later in life. It can help children fall asleep quickly and sleep well. Beyond benefits to the body, physical activity also boosts a child's mental and behavioral health. It increases a child's enthusiasm and optimism and boosts self-esteem, school performance, attention and behavior. It also reduces anxiety, tension and depression. It can also foster teamwork and friendship when it's part of an organized sport.

11 ways to get started

Parents can play a key role in helping their child become more physically active. Some suggestions:

1. Talk with your child's doctor. Your child's doctor can help your child understand why physical activity is important. Your child's doctor can also help you and your child identify sports or activities that may be best for your child.

2. Emphasize fun. Help your child find a sport that she enjoys. The more she enjoys the activity, the more likely she will be to continue it. Get the entire family involved. It is a great way to spend time together.

3. Choose an activity that is developmentally appropriate. For example, a 7- or 8-year-old child is not ready for weight lifting or a 3-mile run, but soccer, bicycle riding, and swimming are all great activities for kids this age.

4. Plan ahead. Make sure your child has a convenient time and place to exercise.

5. Provide a safe environment. Make sure your child's equipment and where they practice or play is safe. Make sure your child's clothing is comfortable and appropriate for the activity.

6. Provide active toys. Young children especially need easy access to balls, jump ropes, and other active toys.

7. Be a role model. Children who regularly see their parents enjoying sports and physical activity are more likely to do so themselves.

8. Play with your children. Help them learn a new sport or another physical activity. Or just have fun together by going for a walk, hike, or bike ride.

9. Set limits. Limit screen time, including time spent on TV, videos, computers, and video games, each day. Use the free time for more physical activities.

10. Make time for exercise. Some children are so overscheduled with homework, music lessons, and other planned activities that they do not have time for exercise.

11. Do not overdo activity. Exercise and physical activity should not hurt. If it becomes painful, your child should slow down or try a less vigorous activity. As with any activity, it is important not to overdo it. If exercise starts to interfere with school or other activities, talk with your child's doctor.

7 Essential Winter Skin Care Tips That You Should Follow

How to take care of skin during winters?
Winters are here and your skin moisture is keeping a distance from you. As soon as the winter arrives, you need to do a little extra care for your skin. The harsh and cold weather outside and dry air inside take the moisture away from your skin. Hence, it won't be wrong to say that winter can create havoc and there would be no escape for your skin. Cold, windy situations outside make your skin dry, flaky, itchy, and red. Once your skin starts drying, it becomes more accessible to cracks and bleeds.

Why does the skin become dry in winter?

Our skin has a tendency to absorb moisture naturally from the environment to maintain its hydration. Winter has a low humid temperature making it difficult for the skin to retain the natural moisturiser and hence making it dry. Our skin has certain protective barriers/ layers which safeguard the natural essential oils in the body that are necessary for skin health. Winter enables us to use harsh soaps and frequent hot water damages the skin's protective layer. All these together make the skin dry, chapped, flaky, and cracky. Here are some do's and don'ts for your skin to survive the harsh weather. Don't compromise with your skincare regime in the winter.

Further are some tips to keep your skin smooth, soft, and hydrated during winters.

01 Change your cleanser

If you feel dry and have tight skin after cleansing the face, then you need to get a milder cleanser. Get a product that feels light on the skin, moisturizes your face, has weakened acidic properties, and maintains the pH level of the skin.

02 Use a hydrating moisturizer

If your regular lotion or gel-based cream isn't working out for your skin, it means your skin demands heavier, oil-based, or cream-based moisturizers that lock in the moisture in the skin. A good moisturizer will soothe the skin and prevent it from itching.

Apply the moisturizer right after washing your face, and also don't forget to keep your hands, feet, elbows, knees and other dry areas to be moisturized thoroughly. Also, include moisturizing in your night-care routine.

03 Keep sunscreen closer, even on cooler days

On warmer days, your hands automatically reach the sunscreen, but sunscreen is even more important during winter to shield your skin from those harmful UVs. UV rays are subjected to skin damage in regards to hyperpigmentation, sunburns, rashes, premature skin aging, and even skin cancer, hence keeping skin protected from the rays should be your priority. Opt for SPF 30 or higher sunscreens and cover your face, neck, hands, and all exposed areas including ears, and back of the neck. Apply it at least twice a day or if you are outside or on slopes, reapply it every 2 hours.

04 A healthy diet is a key

Maintaining a healthy diet and proper food intake helps the body to retain water content and boost sebum production. It is advisable to consume foods rich in minerals, antioxidants, fatty acids, and Vitamin E, A, and C to maintain skin health. Likewise, avoid processed, packed, junk foods, and sugar. Similarly, look out for your alcohol consumption and put a brake on smoking as these both dehydrate the body and make your skin even drier.

Include some seasonal fruits rich in Vitamins and antioxidants in your diets like – Amla, Papaya, Pineapple, Banana, and Avocado.

05 Drink plenty of water

No matter what the season is, the skin will inevitably be healthy if your body is hydrated enough. Especially in winters, our water intake decreases, which turns out to be a double loss of moisture from the skin. During cold weather, take a sip of water at regular intervals and indulge yourself with warm winter teas like green tea, lemon tea, or ginger and lemon!

06 Gentle Exfoliation

Gentle exfoliation increases the blood flow of the skin and hence is a good option for healthy, bright, and glowing skin. Do not over scrub as it removes the protective layers of the skin. Use a mild exfoliator and rub gently in the circular motion. It is recommended to exfoliate two to three times a week, but always keep a watch on your skin and if required, reduce it to once or twice a week.

07 Choose comfortable clothes

Irritation on dry skin escalates if you wear tight clothes. Loose clothes allow your skin to breathe and help in skin rashes or irritation. Along with these, keeping showers for a shorter time, using warm water for bathing, air humidifiers also help the skin in cold and windy weather. Change your skincare products to high moisturizing and hydrating products like Hyaluronic acid and retinol for plumped and smooth skin. Retinol must be followed with a good sunscreen to increase the cells turnover, oil flow regulation, and to improve the pigmentation appearance. Take extra care of your chapped lips with a moistening lip balm and of your under-eye.

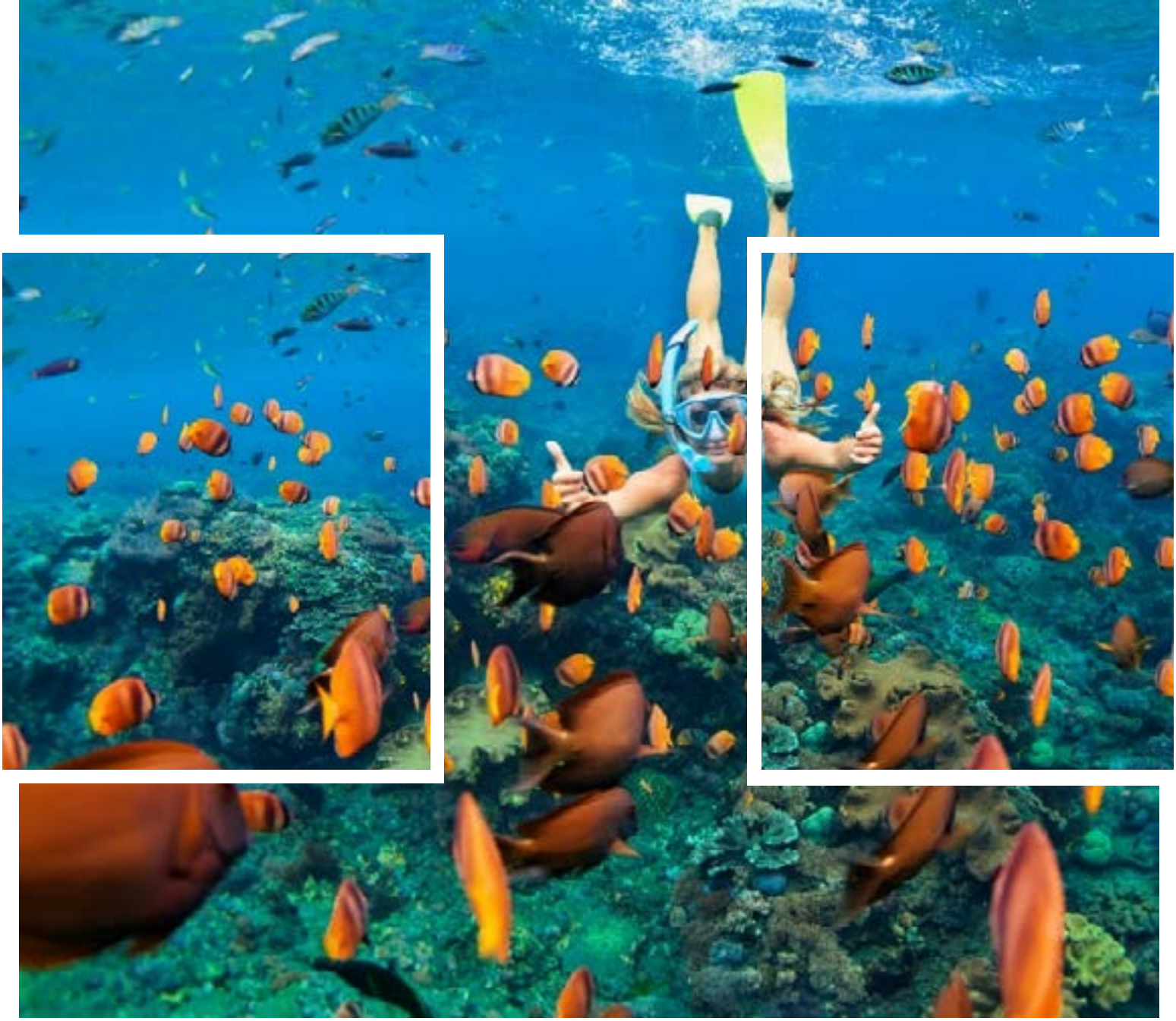
Here are some don’ts to consider in winters:

1. Don’t over-wash your face as it can further dehydrate your skin.
2. Don’t use harsh and chemical-triggered products on your skin like soaps, lotions, and body wash.
3. Avoid long hot showers as they can remove essential oils from the skin.
4. In winter, skin is more subjected to skin conditions like eczema or psoriasis hence avoiding allergens or irritants is favorable for skin’s health.

Winter skin is no different, it just requires some extra care and attention. Remember to include all the do’s and avoid all the don’ts for hydrated and healthier winter skin. Use some good skin serums and essential oil to retain the moisture in the skin to make it appear smoother and even texture.

December Holiday Destinations: The 14 Best Places Travel

As December approaches, wanderlust ignites as travellers seek the perfect holiday destinations across the globe. Amidst the winter chill, magical experiences await in diverse corners of the world, from enchanting winter wonderlands to sun-kissed paradises. A tapestry of cultural festivities and natural splendours invites exploration, promising unforgettable memories for every adventurer. Whether you dream of pristine snow-capped landscapes or sun-drenched beaches, December unveils a treasure trove of destinations to satisfy your wanderlust. Whether it's embracing the holiday spirit in charming Christmas markets or basking in the warmth of tropical getaways, December unveils an enchanting canvas of possibilities. Embrace the season's magic and embark on a journey to these captivating locales, where cherished moments and cherished holiday traditions intertwine, creating unforgettable memories that last for life.



01 Maldives

The Maldives emerges as a breathtaking paradise, beckoning travellers with its idyllic charm in December. As winter embraces other parts of the world, this tropical haven offers a warm and inviting escape. The Maldives' pristine white-sand beaches, crystal-clear turquoise waters, and vibrant coral reefs create a postcard-perfect setting for relaxation and exploration. With pleasant temperatures and relatively dry weather, December is an ideal time for water sports, including snorkelling and diving, where you can encounter an incredible array of marine life. The luxurious overwater bungalows and world-class resorts offer a slice of paradise, ensuring a dreamlike experience. Whether you seek romantic getaways, rejuvenating spa retreats, or thrilling water adventures, the Maldives promises an unforgettable December destination that will leave you enchanted and rejuvenated.

Places to visit in the Maldives

1. Male
2. Baa Atoll
3. Ari Atoll
4. Addu Atoll
5. Vaadhoo Island
6. Maafushi Island

02 Dubai

In this enchanting month, cities sparkle with festive cheer and a captivating destination emerges amidst the desert sands. This vibrant city of architectural wonders and opulent charm beckons travellers from across the globe. In December, Dubai reveals its true allure, offering a perfect blend of modern luxury and cultural enchantment. With mild temperatures and sunny days, it's the perfect time to explore the mesmerising skyline, indulge in world-class shopping at glittering malls, or meander through bustling souks with a delightful array of goods. Immerse yourself in the dazzling beauty of the city's iconic landmarks, from the towering Burj Khalifa to the palm-shaped Palm Jumeirah. Whether you seek adventure, relaxation, or a taste of Arabian hospitality, Dubai in December is a radiant destination that promises an unforgettable escape. It won't be wrong to say that this Middle-East gem is one of the best holiday destinations in December for hot weather.

Places to visit in Dubai

1. Burj Khalifa
2. Dubai Mall
3. The Dubai Fountain
4. Palm Jumeirah
5. Burj Al Arab
6. Dubai Desert Safari
7. Dubai Miracle Garden
8. Dubai Butterfly Garden

03 Thailand

In the heart of the cool season, an exotic and enchanting adventure awaits in a Southeast Asian gem. Thailand, with its rich cultural heritage and breathtaking landscapes, becomes an idyllic destination to explore in December. As the temperatures drop and the humidity eases, the weather is perfect for wandering through vibrant markets, savouring delectable street food, and discovering ancient temples adorned with intricate architecture. Undoubtedly, Thailand is one of the best places to visit in December. From the bustling streets of Bangkok to the serene beaches of Phuket and the lush jungles of Chiang Mai, Thailand offers a diverse and captivating experience for every traveller. Whether you seek bustling city life, serene coastal retreats, or thrilling outdoor activities, a December journey to Thailand promises a tapestry of unforgettable memories immersed in the essence of Southeast Asian charm.

Places to visit in Thailand

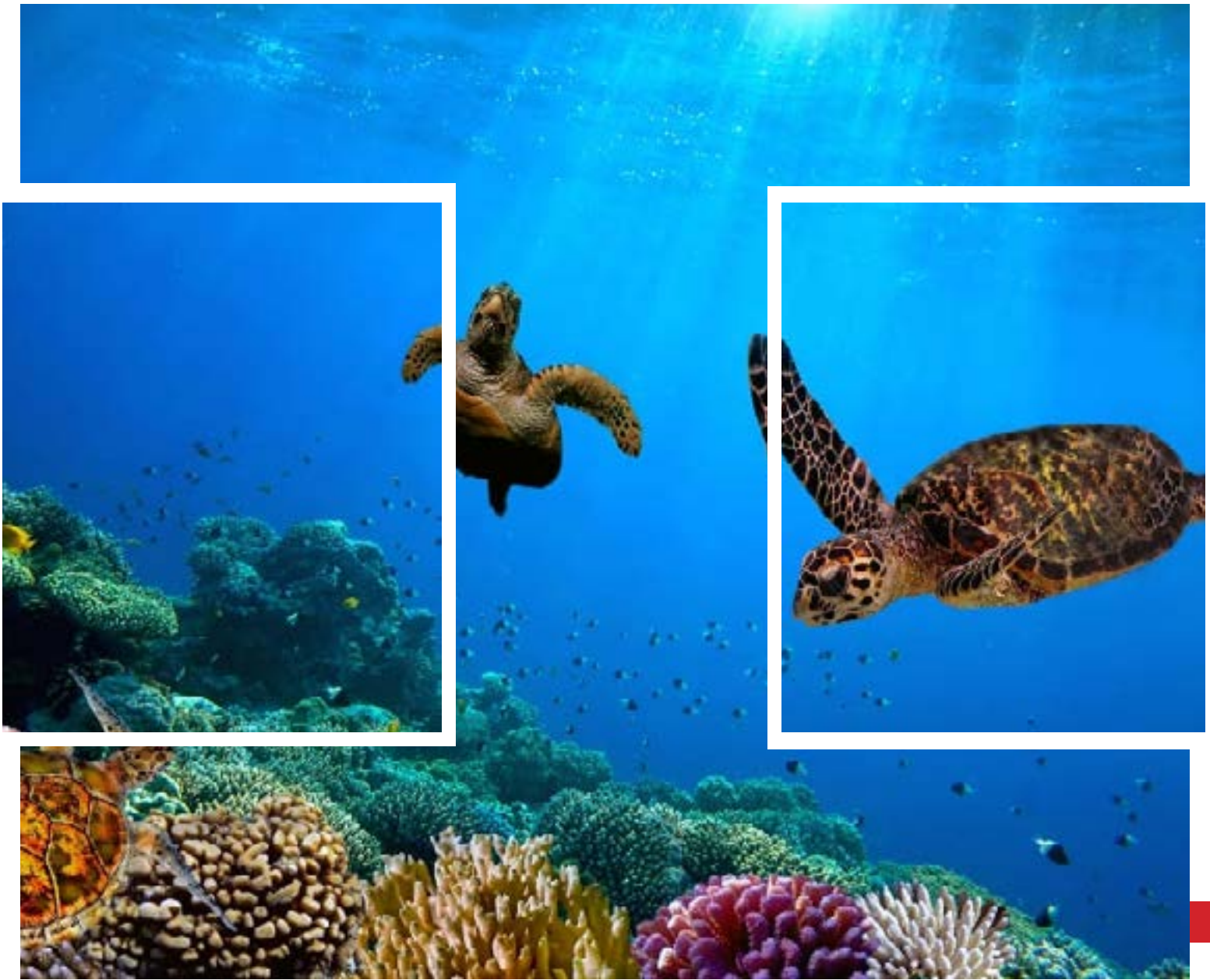
1. Bangkok
2. Phuket
3. Chiang Mai
4. Krabi
5. Ayutthaya
6. Pattaya
7. Erawan National Park
8. Khao Sok National Park
9. Railay Beach

04 Barbados

Amidst the festive holiday season, a captivating Caribbean destination beckons with its warm embrace and tropical allure. Nestled in the azure waters of the Caribbean Sea, this island paradise offers a magical experience in December. With its golden sandy beaches, crystal-clear waters, and gentle trade winds, it's a perfect escape from winter's chill. Barbados boasts a unique blend of colonial charm and vibrant culture, with colourful festivals and lively celebrations bringing the island to life. From exploring historic landmarks like the Bridgetown Garrison to snorkelling among vibrant coral reefs, the island offers a plethora of activities for every traveller. Indulge in delectable Bajan cuisine, sample rum at local distilleries, or simply unwind in the embrace of paradise. Barbados in December promises an enchanting escape where memories are etched against a backdrop of sun-kissed splendour.

Places to visit in Barbados

1. Bridgetown
2. Harrison's Cave
3. Animal Flower Cave
4. Bathsheba Beach
5. Carlisle Bay
6. Barbados Wildlife Reserve
7. Andromeda Botanic Gardens
8. Mount Gay Rum Distillery
9. Miami Beach



05 Sri Lanka

In December, Sri Lanka reveals its breathtaking beauty to travellers, offering an enticing blend of natural wonders and cultural delights. As the island basks in warm, sunny weather, it becomes a haven for those seeking an escape from winter's grasp. Serene golden beaches fringe the coastline, inviting leisurely strolls and watersport adventures. The mist-shrouded hill country boasts emerald tea plantations, where travellers can immerse themselves in a sea of lush greenery. Ancient temples and UNESCO World Heritage sites, such as Sigiriya and Polonnaruwa, stand testament to the island's rich history and architectural marvels. Wildlife enthusiasts can embark on thrilling safaris in national parks, hoping to catch a glimpse of majestic elephants and elusive leopards. December's festive spirit adds colour to local markets and traditional celebrations, providing an opportunity to savour authentic Sri Lankan cuisine and experience the warmth of its welcoming people. Sri Lanka in December promises a mesmerising journey through landscapes and cultural treasures, leaving travellers enchanted with its alluring charm.

Places to visit in Sri Lanka

1. Sigiriya Rock Fortress
2. Temple of the Tooth, Kandy
3. Yala National Park
4. Adam's Peak
5. Galle Fort
6. Arugam Bay
7. Minneriya National Park
8. Kandy Lake
9. Whales Watching in Mirissa
10. Colombo

06 Vietnam

During December, Vietnam opens its heart to travellers with a captivating array of experiences. As winter embraces the northern regions, Hanoi and Sapa don a picturesque charm, offering a chance to relish cool temperatures and misty landscapes. In contrast, the southern regions, including Ho Chi Minh City and the Mekong Delta, revel in pleasant warmth and abundant sunshine. Whether exploring ancient temples in Hoi An's lantern-lit streets or cruising along the breathtaking Halong Bay, Vietnam's diverse scenery captivates the senses. Adventurers can trek through lush terraced rice fields in the highlands or embark on thrilling motorbike rides along winding coastal roads. December also ushers in a festive atmosphere, with colourful celebrations for Christmas and the upcoming Tet holiday. Amidst the local hospitality and delectable cuisine, Vietnam in December beckons travellers with an enticing blend of culture, natural beauty, and warm-hearted festivities.

Places to visit in Vietnam

1. Ha Long Bay
2. Hanoi
3. Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon)
4. Hoi An
5. Sapa
6. Da Nang
7. Nha Trang
8. Mekong Delta
9. Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park

07 Kerala, India

Nestled in the southwestern corner of India, this tropical gem captivates travellers in December with its mesmerising beauty. A haven of lush greenery, Kerala boasts a breathtaking landscape adorned with palm-fringed beaches, serene backwaters, and misty hill stations. The pleasant weather allows for a leisurely exploration of its diverse treasures. Glide through the tranquil backwaters on traditional houseboats, embracing the rhythmic flow of local life. Marvel at the cascading waterfalls in Athirapally, where nature's grandeur unfolds in all its splendour. Wander through the spice-scented plantations, such as in Thekkady, and encounter a rich tapestry of wildlife. Discover the timeless charm of Fort Kochi's colonial heritage and embrace the tranquillity of Varkala's cliff side beaches. With its warm hospitality and vibrant cultural experiences, Kerala beckons travellers in December to savour an extraordinary journey amidst its natural wonders.

Places to visit in Kerala

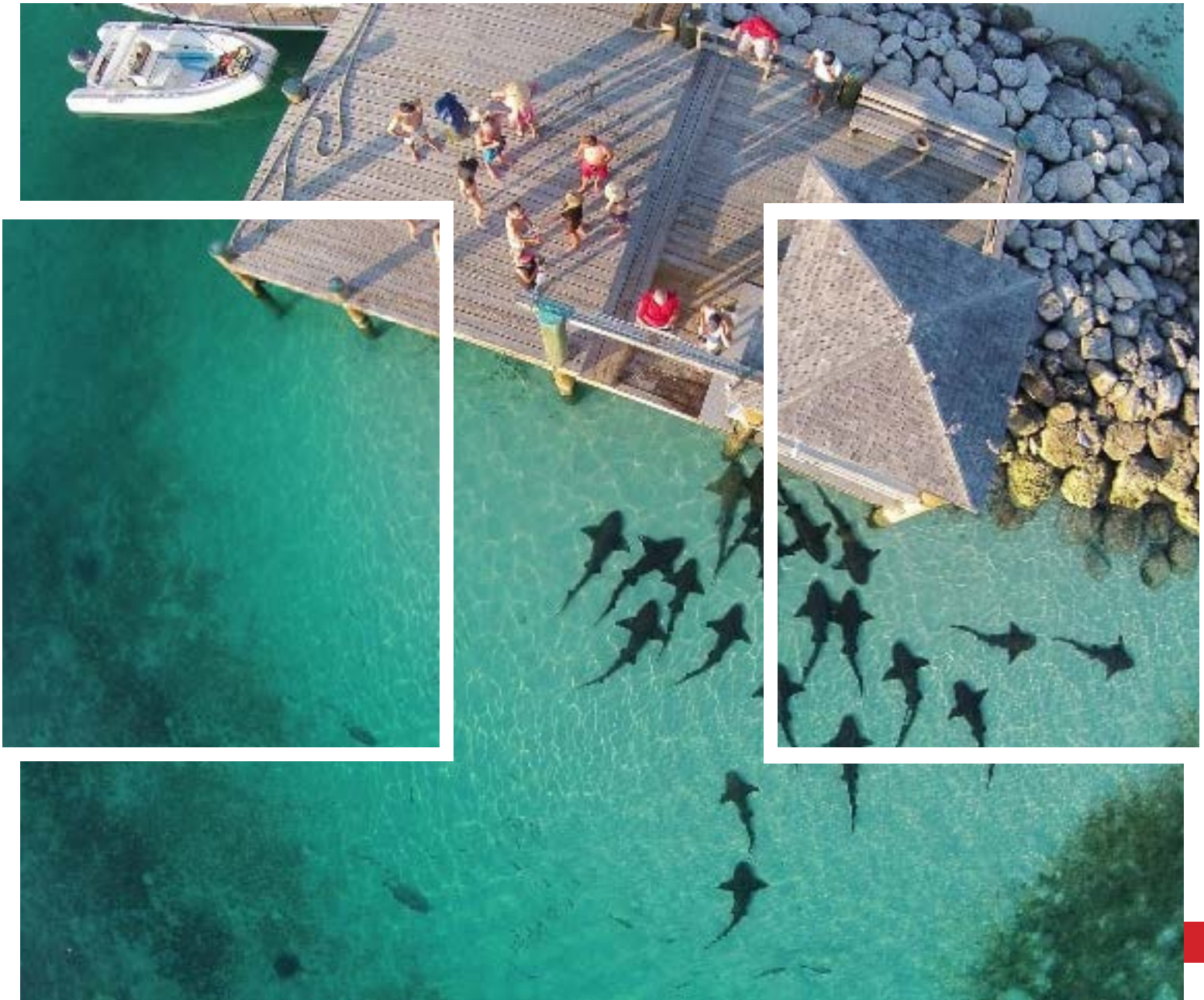
1. Alleppey (Alappuzha)
2. Munnar
3. Kochi (Cochin)
4. Kumarakom
5. Thekkady
6. Kovalam
7. Varkala
8. Wayanad
9. Marari Beach
10. Athirapally Waterfalls
11. Idukki
12. Palakkad

08 Bahamas

Nestled in the turquoise waters of the Caribbean, the Bahamas beckons travellers in December with its captivating allure. A paradise of pristine white-sand beaches and crystal-clear waters, this island archipelago becomes an idyllic escape from winter's chill. With pleasant temperatures and sunny skies, it offers the perfect setting for basking in the warm sun and indulging in water sports, from snorkelling amidst vibrant coral reefs to swimming with playful dolphins. December in the Bahamas is also a time of festive cheer, with lively Junkanoo parades, showcasing the vibrant culture and rhythmic music of the islands. Embrace the laid-back island vibe, explore the colonial architecture of Nassau, and relish delectable Bahamian cuisine. From exploring underwater wonders to simply unwinding in the lap of luxury, the Bahamas in December promises an unforgettable tropical getaway that will leave travellers enchanted with its enchanting beauty.

Places to visit in the Bahamas

1. Nassau
2. Paradise Island
3. Grand Bahama Island
4. Exuma Cays
5. Abaco Islands
6. Eleuthera
7. Bimini
8. Andros Island
9. Inagua National Park
10. Dean's Blue Hole, Long Island



09 Rome, Italy

Amidst the ancient splendour of Italy's iconic city, December casts a magical spell over Rome, inviting travellers to savour its unique beauty and immerse themselves in cherished festivities. Adorned with twinkling lights and festive decorations, the city's historic landmarks, including the Colosseum and the Vatican, exude a captivating allure under a winter's sky. Wander through cobblestone streets, where charming Christmas markets offer artisanal crafts and delectable treats. As the holiday season unfolds, Rome celebrates with fervour, culminating in the enchanting Christmas Eve Mass at St. Peter's Basilica, presided over by the Pope himself. Locals and visitors alike gather to witness the grandeur of this annual event, imbued with spiritual significance. December in Rome weaves a tapestry of beauty and cherished traditions, making it an enchanting destination to embrace the festive spirit and create timeless memories.

Places to visit in Rome

1. Colosseum
2. Roman Forum
3. Pantheon
4. Vatican City
5. Piazza Navona
6. Castel Sant'Angelo
7. Piazza Venezia
8. Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore
9. Piazza del Popolo
10. Ara Pacis Museum
11. Mouth of Truth

10 Cape Town, South Africa

Between the majestic Table Mountain and the sparkling Atlantic Ocean, Cape Town blossoms with unparalleled beauty in December, making it an enchanting destination for travellers. As the summer season emerges, the city dons a vibrant charm, boasting long sunny days and pleasant temperatures. Breathtaking beaches like Clifton and Camps Bay beckon visitors to soak up the sun and relish the azure waters. The iconic Table Mountain Cableway offers panoramic views of the city's coastal landscape. Adventurers can hike up the mountain trails, exploring its diverse flora and fauna. The city's rich cultural scene comes alive during December, with art festivals, live performances, and outdoor concerts. The festive spirit enlivens the bustling V&A Waterfront, where holiday markets and street performers add to the celebratory atmosphere. From savouring local delicacies at bustling food markets to embarking on wine tours in the nearby Winelands, Cape Town in December offers a captivating blend of natural beauty and cultural delights, promising an unforgettable journey for every traveller.

Places to visit in Cape Town

1. Table Mountain
2. Robben Island
3. Victoria & Alfred Waterfront
4. Boulders Beach
5. Bo-Kaap
6. Signal Hill
7. Two Oceans Aquarium
8. District Six Museum
9. Castle of Good Hope
10. Chapman's Peak Drive

11 Mauritius

In December, Mauritius, a tropical gem in the Indian Ocean, blossoms into a captivating paradise, offering an irresistible allure for travellers seeking an enchanting escape. With its pristine white-sand beaches fringed by turquoise waters and lush greenery, the island unveils its postcard-perfect beauty. As summer emerges, the weather becomes warm and inviting, inviting visitors to indulge in a myriad of water activities, from snorkelling amidst colourful coral reefs to sailing across the azure lagoons. For thrill-seekers, hiking through the verdant forests and exploring hidden waterfalls is a must. December in Mauritius also brings cultural festivities, showcasing the island's vibrant traditions and cuisine, and providing travellers with an immersive experience in the warmth of Mauritian hospitality. From luxurious beach resorts to intimate hideaways, Mauritius in December promises an idyllic tropical haven where cherished moments are crafted against a backdrop of nature's grandeur, creating a journey of a lifetime.

December 2024

TAROT

Loveena Crystal Gaze
(Tarot card Reader, Numerologist)

ARIES
(March 21- April 19)

Keep charging ahead, expect miracles to happen in your life. You are on right path, notice how doors open smoothly with each step you take. Blessings from Universe coming your way.

Angel msg- Fulfillment of wishes coming your way.

TAURUS
(April 20- May 21)

Congrats, you have chosen to follow your divine guidance, Universe is flowing in natural rhythm with your decision. Have faith. Release your doubts to heaven. Happy outcome is assured.

Angel msg- Setbacks are over, dreams are coming true.

GEMINI
(May 22- June 20)

You are fully supported by heaven, they have heard your prayers for financial support. Aim high to achieve Success. Let go of fears and worries.

Angel msg- Angels are watching and protecting you.

CANCER
(June 21-July 22)

Don't be tempted to give up, miracles happen to people just like you every single day. Happiness awaits you. Heaven is sending you divine love.

Angel msg- Spread your wings, your dreams will be manifested.

LEO
(July 23- Aug 22)

A happy change or addition is coming to your family. Your desired outcome will occur in the very near future. You will receive your gift from Angels. Be happy, Angels have heard your prayers.

Angel msg- Celebration time for you begins.

VIRGO
(Aug 23- Sept 22)

God and Angels want you to enjoy your life. You deserve the best. Reach for the stars with your dreams and desires. Don't compromise, smooth road ahead for you.

Angel msg- Dreams are blooming fast and will come to fruition.

LIBRA
(Sept 23- Oct 22)

New Opportunities are coming your way. Travel abroad for work is indicated bringing recognition and success. Universe is being generous with you. New dawn is coming in your life.

Angel msg- Open your arms to receive gifts from your creator.

SCORPIO
(Oct 23- Nov 22)

Your hard work will bring fruit, your positive energy will attract new contracts. Shift to a new location or home is possible. Angels are blessing you to realize your dreams.

Angel msg- Take initiative to contact clients

SAGITTARIUS
(Nov 23- Dec 21)

Timing is right for new career opportunities. Worst is now behind you, Soar with happiness. Parents need your care and attention. Seize career deals,as success lies ahead of you.

Angel msg- Embrace your hearts desire, be happy, Angels are protecting you.

CAPRICON
(Dec 22- Jan 20)

Your wishes have been heard, growth in your Career is indicated. Divine timing is in your life guiding you. Angels want to be happy today and always.

Angel msg- Love life blossoms as you spend quality time with your partner.

AQUARIUS
(Jan 21- Feb 18)

Appreciate Small things in your life to receive blessings from Universe. Relax and flow with joy. Expect miracles in your life. Universe sends a special blessing just for you.

Angel msg- Look forward to new growth, gains in Financial investments.

PISCES
(Feb 19- March 20)

Let new energy come in your life, have faith in Universe. Accept and allow changes to happen to happen. Dreams are coming true. Keep your thoughts positive.

Angel msg- Happiness awaits you now. Visualise your dreams.

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- Project Work

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