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Renuka Shahane

We Are Fixated By White Skin In India

Ibrahim Ali Khan

There's always scope to do better

Suniel Shetty

corporate culture that now dominates the film industry

Patralekhaa

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Waves 2025 in Mumbai.

Akshay Kumar

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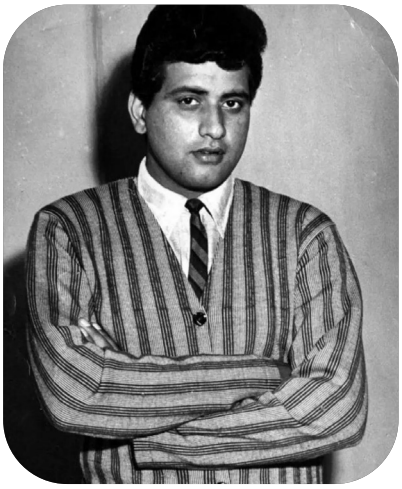
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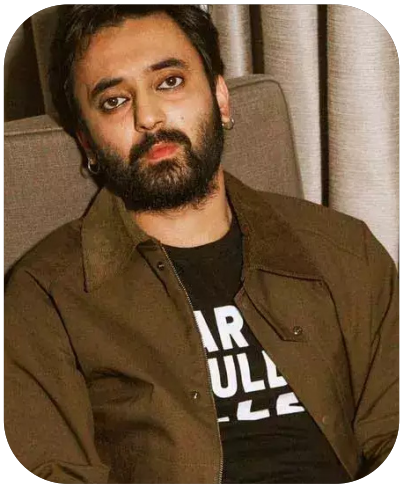














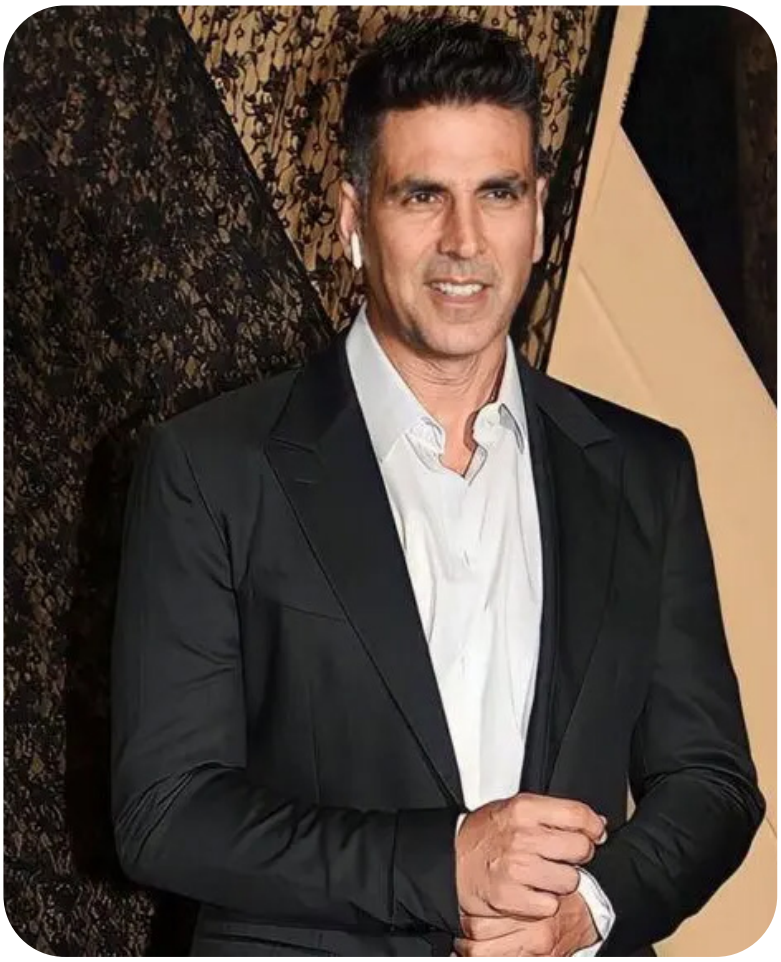


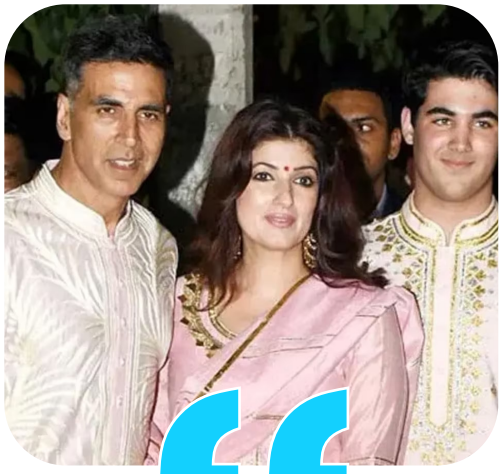
Seema Pimpley
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Akshay Kumar says audience criticism hurts sometimes: 'People have said kuch alag karo'





In a recent interview, actor Akshay Kumar opened up about the impact of his films, how he embraces audience criticism, and his biggest fear in life.

Akshay Kumar is currently basking in the success of his latest release Kesari: Chapter 2. In a recent interaction, Akshay opened up about the impact of his films, how he embraces audience criticism, and his biggest fear in life.

When asked about feeling proud of his movie choices that bring a change in society, the actor said, "I have felt this a lot of times. After watching Toilet: Ek Prem Katha, people started taking toilets seriously and invested in building it at home. Even after Padman, people started talking about periods openly at home."

The actor continued, "Daughters were able to talk about periods, their pain, and buying sanitary pads with their fathers freely. I also made OMG 2 based on sex education. I talked about how important it is. Jab log inn kahaniyan se relate karte hain and get impressed, it feels gratifying to me as an actor."

While Akshay Kumar believes in his audience, the criticism hurts him sometimes. "Audience hi maalik hai because they pay for the whole thing. When they clap for me, then it's a motivation and when they criticise, I get to learn as well. I always want to evolve my work. If I get genuine feedback, I never ignore it. Be it script choices or role selection," Akshay shared.

"It has happened several times when people have said, 'Kuch alag karo'. So, I tried doing different movies as well. Criticism hurts sometimes, but if it comes from the heart, then it only makes you better," he added.

Talking about his biggest fear, Akshay Kumar revealed, "Besides falling from a helicopter, my biggest fear is that when I wake up one day and there are no messages. Uss din mujhe lagega ki meri baari khatam hogayi. I am not needed now. I think this is the reason why I don't want to stop. I want to keep on working. It is a small life. I don't want to rest and make my life smaller. I want it to be bigger. Main tab araam karunga jab iss duniya mein nahi rahunga. In simple words, I'll keep on working till they have to shoot me down."



Ibrahim Ali Khan



There's always scope to do better, be better. But where I am right now, I am happy.

What's your state of mind like right now?
It keeps fluctuating. Right now. I'm a little nervous. It's my first interview. At the same time, I'm feeling great. I just want to be better, work harder. I'm in a great space, actually.

How would you review Nadaaniyaan?
People go into the film with very high expectations of what it should be. It was not to be some grand film. It was meant to be a sweet, breezy rom-com that you should enjoy on a Friday night, chilling in bed. Social media is a hateful world, right now. They tried to twist it a lot. Sure, as a lead actor, I have to bring in loads more than what I did. I know I can bring it and I am confident that I will bring it in my future projects. But I'm happy with what it was. I worked with hardworking people and we made a sweet film. I get the criticism but I enjoyed working on it. It was meant to be sweet and breezy. I would say it's good.

How would you review yourself?
There's always scope to do better, be better. But where I am right now, I am happy.

How many stars would you give yourself?
Out of five stars? I don't know. A three? Yeah, three, three point five. Don't fly too high but don't diss yourself either.

The movie opened to mixed reviews. How have you taken in the positives and the negatives that have come?
I've seen the mixed reviews on social media, they do fry your brains a bit. Obviously, most of them are bad because that's just how social media works. But I'm glad that a lot of people can see what I may be able to bring to the table. I'm happy with the response I got from the film industry. I'm quite pleased.

Do you think it was necessary to take on the Pakistani journalist?
I know I shouldn't have reacted but I'm also new to public scrutiny. When he made that personal comment about my body, it felt like a below-the-belt remark. But going forward, I'll be more composed. I shouldn't have reacted. It won't happen again.

Do you think Nadaaniyan is the perfect debut for you?
I worked with KJo sir (Karan Johar) on Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani. I love him and I respect him so much. He has given me such a good platform. He believed in me when no one else did. He's kind of been my guide in this industry. And a great guide as well. Yes, I did want a commercial, grand, theatre mein seeti marne wala launch. But nowadays, maybe theatres are not the way they used to be. In 2025, the director and the script are the kings. I genuinely believe that we won't get stars like Ranbir Kapoor, Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan, Saif Ali Khan and Aamir Khan again. That era of actors is gone. It just doesn't work how it used to work in the '80s and in the '90s, when these guys would just stand in front of the camera and the movies would be a hit. People would go crazy over these stars. Nowadays, it's hard to do that. No one can be a star like that. Unfortunately, I can't say that I'm a star. I'm nobody. My work needs to speak for me. I like the concept of being an actor and doing good work, which in 2025 is key. Bad script, a bad movie worked if it had a popular star. It doesn't work like that anymore.

Do you think you guys have it a little tougher compared to the earlier stars?
Of course. Because there was no social media then. Things were easier then. If you ask all these star kids, as you call them, they will probably think before they give an answer. I don't have to think before I say, yes, we do have it harder.

Really?
Nepotism has been there. It's been there through the ages. But nowadays, it's more of a thing. I'm Saif Ali Khan's son. But this has been happening for years. Maybe it's just social media. I don't know. We have it harder for sure. Today it is tougher to trick the audience. They have become smart now. They're not going to pay and go to theatres and see a bad movie, especially when they can watch the movie
at home.

What's your take on nepotism? There's so much talk on nepo kids. You think this kind of review that you've got is also because you're Saif Ali Khan's son?
Yes, sometimes I feel that. (Chuckles). My whole life, I thought, how will I answer this question in my first interview? And I've come in with no preparation. Of course, because of who we are and the background we're from, we will get the platform. But having said that, you have to, to some extent, be good. To some extent, you must have something in you to get that platform. Yes, I'm a part of this. Saif Ali Khan is my father, Sara Ali Khan is my sister and Sharmila Tagore is my grandmother. Amrita Singh is my mother... Sometimes, I feel like my take is not relevant...Because we come from all of this, we'll get the platform easily. But from there, you have to take it forward. I get this

debate. I get it. But hey, it's not my fault that I'm Saif's son. I'm looking to just work hard and be the best version of me that I can be. Just because I'm this kid, I'm not gonna run away somewhere. I'm not gonna hide. I am this kid and I am here and I want to do well. But as I said, I get it. We have the platform. So what we can do is be grateful to have that platform and stay true to who we are and work harder and be better.

Is there pressure to live up to your family name?

No. I just wanna match up and make them proud and make them happy and give them back what they've given me. Maybe a bit more. Yes, of course, there are expectations that I have to match. They've done really well. They've worked hard and they're big, big names.

I'm sure they don't expect anything of you, right?

No, no. I'm their small kid. But I want to do it for them. I'm sure they want to see me do well too. But no, there's no
pressure.

You do realise you're going to be compared to your father all your life?

All my life.

And the way you look...You're a carbon copy of Saif. Are you prepared for this comparison?

I take it in my stride because he's a good-looking man. And I don't think it will happen all my life. My goal is to do some good work by 30, and become my own name. (Grins) Actually, I do have my own name at this point and my own face. You actually think I'm going to cry about the fact that I've got his face? Absolutely not. And I'm so proud that he's who he is and that I'm his son.

Some of the critics actually felt that you were better in your first film than he was in his first film.

Oh. Thank you. But I'm not going to be like, yeah, I am better than him. Obviously not. I keep seeing a reel on social media where they're comparing us. It's me from my first film and they're comparing it to Saif Ali Khan from Hum Tum. He won the National Award in that movie. You can't compare that to that. They're expecting me to be like him in Hum Tum in my first film! You know what? Even I wanted to be like that in my first film. That's the bar I should raise for myself. But if it's not gonna happen, then that's okay. You can't just compare me to like my dad in his peak prime. I don't think it's his good looks that made him the superstar that he is. I think it's the roles he's played. He is a phenomenal actor. Surely I must have inherited a bit of that from him. I can't wait to just work harder and do some great work and share that with the world because I know I have it in me.

What's your equation like with him? Is he a strict father or is he the coolest dad in the world?

He's the coolest. He's chill, easy-going. But whenever something wrong happens, then obviously he can get quite strict. Otherwise, he's chill. But not like my mom. She's my whole world. She takes care of me. Whatever I am, I owe it to her only.

She's obsessed with you?

She pampers me. She praises me. She humbles me. She does everything.

What is the kind of advice she gives you?

From the small things, like, don't drink out of plastic because plastic bottles are not good, to what I should eat. And if you sleep late, what will happen? this will happen, then this will happen, then that will happen. You name it and she'll advise me.

What was it like growing up in a family steeped in movies?

So, I see Jehangir and Taimur. And a part of me does feel bad for them. Taimur, who's just turning eight years old, is trying to leave the house and he's getting clicked by the media. And Jeh, who's just four-five years old, he's also getting clicked. And when they're at home, they're playing on their iPhones and iPads at the age of eight and four. These things weren't there when we were growing up. Nowadays, it is normalised that all these eight year olds are playing games on the iPad. But that's not how it used to be. We used to go out and play. I think I belong to the last generation who had a normal childhood. We got saved because in my childhood, we didn't have smartphones, smart TV, OTT, iPhones or iPads. The paparazzi doesn't even let these kids breathe. It was only after I turned 18, that
I faced the paparazzi. I am so grateful that I got to have a normal childhood. A normal childhood, in my opinion, is not having these screens, not knowing what the world is thinking, what the world has to say.

As a child, I believe you should be raised in a safe and comfortable environment. Children are meant to feel that they are in a safe environment. They are meant to feel like the world is small. But I feel because of all this easy access, paparazzi, culture, screens, iPad, YouTube and all of that, these kids already know how huge our world is. I am just grateful that I wasn't in the limelight or I wasn't already known when I was four or five.

You were also known.

Maybe I was known. Like it was known that Saif Ali Khan has a son. But you couldn't get to me. You could not wait outside my house and click a photo of me if I were leaving for my Judo class. But I get it. Taimur is a star, I mean what a handsome younger brother I have. Go click him all you want.

When did you realise your parents were famous?

I don't know. I can't remember. Though my dad always made it clear that we are famous. And my mom always made me feel like she's just a sweet, urban Punjabi mother. My mother is a Punjabi mom. So I'm actually quite Punjabi also. Or maybe not. I don't know. Whatever I am. I'm crazy. That's because of her. She's raised two crazy people.

Me and my sister, Sara Ali Khan. She's also quite crazy. It's not like we pretend that we're crazy. We're pretty crazy.

Did it change anything in you when you realised your parents were famous?

I don't know. I was quite young when I realised that they're famous. I remember I was like seven or eight years old. My dad was shooting for Imtiaz Ali's Love Aaj Kal in the UK. What a movie! And I was like, wow. Deepika Padukone. That's when I had my first crush ever. I was so small and I was obsessed with her. I was like I want to see Deepika. And that's when I realised my dad is a big actor. Deepika Padukone is doing a movie with him.

Did you feel privileged?

Yes. And I am extremely grateful for the way things were and how they have turned out to be. My mom has raised me to be a normal and sweet kid. Despite that, to realise that you're privileged is a good thing. To realise that I'm privileged is important. And I'm grateful.

You must have been nervous...

I was very very nervous.

How did you overcome that?

I didn't think too much about it. I have to grow, work harder and be better. There's a lot more I can do by working on my craft. But I'm in a good space, looking forward to my future movies, hoping to make a mark as an actor.

Did you realise you had found your calling on the first day?

Yeah. This is my calling. This is what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. Even though social media is a very hateful world nowadays.

What was the most difficult part of the first day shoot?

Everything was difficult. From the way I was cueing, to saying my lines, to how I had to look, where I had to look, everything. But that's how we all start. But because I worked as an AD for two years, I actually knew quite a lot about making movies. You can't go in front of the camera and say, okay, I know what to do. Because when that camera turns on and there are 200 people around you and you hear "Roll camera, Action!" then it's just you and that moment. What happens in the moment, you yourself don't know. And when these people say, "wow, what a good shot," I have no idea how I did it. That's what I want to do. I want to give the shot and be like, "Wow, man, how did I do that?" That hasn't happened yet. It's not like I've given some banging shots anywhere. But that's the goal.

Has your grandmother seen your film? What did she have to say to you?

She saw it. Like we were talking earlier about how it is tough now than it was earlier. I'm sure my dad has his own views on how he found it hard being my grandmother's kid. And my grandmother was a big name. She was a very big superstar. So my dad had that pressure. And I think my grandmother saw him not doing so well in his first few movies. So it's something that she already knows. It's like something she's already been through. And what have I truly done right now? Yeah, fine. I've got one movie out there. But what does that even mean? She thinks I have it in me and that's all I need to know.

That's all the validation you need.

Exactly. I know she sees me in the long run. She can see it. She sees it's a long game. It's not that I just want to give one big hit movie? Then what?

Does your grandma mollycoddle you?

No. She's a proper woman. But she has the softest spot for me out of all of these people. My grandmother is iconic.

.What kind of relationship do you share with your sister, Sara Ali Khan? Does she bully you?

Sara is sometimes my best friend, sometimes my partner in crime. She is sometimes like my mom, sometimes like my dad. She doesn't just have a dual role in this house; she has a quadruple role. But honestly, I can't picture myself without her. She's been the best sister ever. It's actually perfect that she's a girl and I'm a boy. She's a bit older and I'm a bit younger. We have a smooth relationship. She makes me grow, makes me want to be better. She's there for me in my great times and in my bad times.

Does she advise you?

What kind of advice would she give me? (Laughs) She does give advice. She'll read a script or something and be like, you should do this, you should do that. That kind of advice. Otherwise, what advice do you give to a sibling? I don't know.

Would you listen to her advice?

Actually, she's my biggest source of inspiration. She used to be, um... sorry for saying this, a bit big. But then, my sister, I love her, she worked so hard, lost all that weight, and transformed herself. She's amazing. The way she has won all these awards, the way she carried herself—it's inspiring. She's definitely someone to look up to.

Can we talk about a certain Miss Palak Tiwari?

She's a good friend. Yeah, she's sweet. That's all.

Okay. Tell us about Ibrahim as a person. What is he like when he's not being royalty, when he's not being a movie insider?

(Laughs) Royalty? Movie insider? Honestly, I'm just a chill guy. I like to relax on the couch, play FIFA, Call of Duty, Trackmania—basically, heavy PlayStation 5 sessions. Cold coffee, hanging out with my dog, chilling with a few friends... that's my vibe. I play a lot of PlayStation.

I thought by 24, I'd stop, but here we are. It's fun, so why not?

What makes you angry?

I'm a calm person... Just joking! I can have a bit of a short fuse but I'm working on it. It's not like I randomly lose it, but yeah, if I'm in a bad mood or something, then maybe.

Soli Merwan Cama: The Visionary Producer Redefining Bollywood's Global Footprint

From Cannes to Streaming Giants – A New Era of Indian Cinema and Music Begins

In the ever-evolving landscape of Bollywood, where dreams and determination collide, a new visionary is making waves—Soli Merwan Cama. A trailblazing producer with an exceptional eye for storytelling, Soli is reshaping Indian cinema's global identity with his latest cinematic triumph, Kya Main Galat?. Backed by the powerhouse SMC Music Company, this thought- provoking music and film is poised to captivate audiences on the world's most prestigious stages, from the elite Cannes Film Festival to India's leading streaming platform, Hotstar.

A Maverick Producer with a Global Vision

Soli Merwan Cama is not just a producer—he is a disruptor, a trendsetter, and a force to be reckoned with. With an unrelenting passion for storytelling and an unparalleled ability to push creative boundaries, he is redefining Bollywood's presence on the international stage.vAt the helm of SMC Music Company, a dynamic force in the Indian entertainment industry, Soli Merwan Cama has curated a cinematic masterpiece that transcends cultural and geographical borders. Kya Main Galat? is more than just a music; it is a bold narrative exploring the complexities of societal norms, personal choices, and moral dilemmas—an artistic movement designed to ignite conversations worldwide.

From Punjab to Cannes: A Story for the World

Marking a historic milestone, Kya Main Galat? heralds SMC Music Company's grand entry into Punjab, seamlessly blending regional storytelling with a universal cinematic appeal. Under Soli Merwan Cama's visionary leadership, this music and film is set to make an indelible impact on international cinema.

As the music and film prepares for its grand debut at the legendary Cannes Film Festival, it is already turning heads, reinforcing India's position as a global cinematic powerhouse.

With its highly anticipated festival premiere, Kya Main Galat? is on course to reach millions through digital platforms, streaming on Hotstar and other leading global networks.

Bollywood's Next Power Producer?

With an exceptional knack for ground breaking storytelling, an innovative approach to filmmaking, and an ambitious global vision, Soli Merwan Cama is undoubtedly Bollywood's next powerhouse producer.

As he continues to break barriers and set new industry benchmarks, the world watches with anticipation—because this is just the beginning.

Brace yourself—Soli Merwan Cama and SMC Music Company are here to redefine entertainment, one masterpiece at a time.


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cama
Founder of
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Music Producer
Visionary storyteller
Film Director

Suniel Shetty questions Bollywood's box office dip: 'Have we let international films...'



Suniel Shetty also pointed to multiple issues affecting the industry, from expensive popcorn to the falling number of theatres across the countryActor Suniel Shetty has spoken up about the recent box office struggles of Bollywood films, questioning whether international movies are now dominating the Indian market.

In an interview , Shetty shared his views on why many big Hindi films are failing at the box office.

"English films are running... Humari filmein aaj 15 lakh ka business nahin kar rahi hain. So, where did we go wrong? Have we allowed the international brands to come and steal the thunder from us? Have we allowed them to take away our business?," Shetty said.Shetty also pointed to multiple issues affecting the industry, from expensive popcorn to the falling number of theatres across the country.

"Look, we will have to reduce the prices. If the price of popcorn is higher than the ticket price, then it becomes very, very difficult. You know, the number of theatres has to increase. The number of theatres has to multiply by 5x," he said.

Reflecting on the past, Shetty recalled how earlier producers were deeply involved in every part of a film's release. "In our time, when a producer used to make a film, his life used to be tied to that film because he had to pay for it himself or take a loan to make it. For him, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday were make-or-break days."

He also criticised the corporate culture that now dominates the film industry. "And on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, if you call a corporate house, they'll say, 'I'm out for the weekend.' Our business is a weekend business," Shetty added.

Several Bollywood movies, including Salman Khan's recent Eid release Sikandar, have failed to draw large crowds to theatres. Despite this, some recent films like Kesari 2, starring Akshay Kumar, have done well and received positive reviews.

Suniel Shetty will next be seen in 'Kesari Veer', which also stars Vivek Oberoi. Directed by Prince Dhiman and produced by Kanu Chauhan, the film is set to release on May 16.

Have you heard of it?

At WAVES Summit 2025, Deepika Padukone shares her journey; PM Modi inaugurates the event, and SRK reflects on his career. Legends honoured, including Nagarjuna and Mohanlal

Sea of stars at WAVES; Salman Khan to play a soldier

Deepika Padukone

'I've done pretty well'

Deepika Padukone also shared her thoughts on her journey, saying, "I am actually going to tell myself I have done pretty well. You don't really sit back and look at the journey." She also shared how her day at home is after embracing motherhood. She revealed that her daily routine involves household chores, including sorting mail, cleaning the kitchen, and doing laundry. SRK praised her, saying, "I think the role she's going to play the best, inshallah, is that of a mother with dua. She is going to be a wonderful mother."



Salman Khan

Bhai at the border

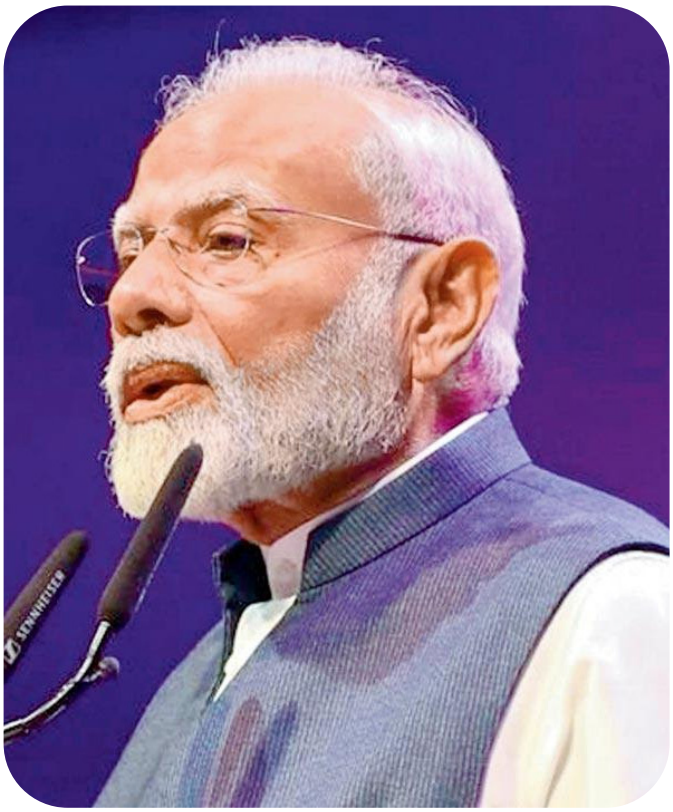
Salman Khan is reportedly in talks to star in a film about the 2020 Galwan Valley conflict between Indian and Chinese troops. We have learnt that the film will chronicle the clash that resulted in the deaths of 20 Indian soldiers and nearly 45 Chinese casualties. Salman will apparently play the role of a soldier in the film.



PM Narendra Modi

Bhai at the border

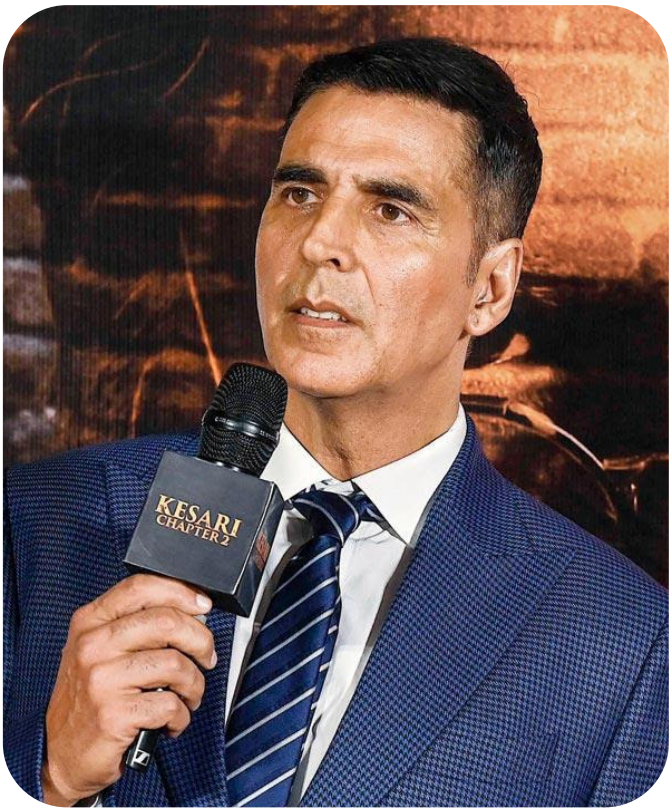
Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit (WAVES) in Mumbai on Thursday, May 1. He addressed a huge audience that included celebrities like SS Rajamouli, Aamir Khan, Shah Rukh Khan, Ranbir Kapoor, Alia Bhatt, among others. He talked extensively about the content made in India and the capability of the content creators to lead the country to an economic boom. PM Modi also promised further initiatives like WAVES awards in the near future. Akshay Kumar held the first panel of the day with Chiranjeevi, Mohanlal, and Hema Malini. The trio spoke about their journeys, inspirations and the Indian entertainment industry.



Akshay Kumar

'I was brash, overconfident, reckless'

During a fireside chat with Karan Johar and Deepika Padukone, Shah Rukh Khan reflected on his personal philosophy and journey in cinema. In the session 'The Journey: From Outsider to Ruler', SRK shared his approach to life and work. "When I am not on the sets, I don't do anything. I am in a meditative state," he said. He attributed his success to his youthful boldness, saying, "I believe I was brash, overconfident, reckless, and a lot more stupid. I'm happy I was like this otherwise, I wouldn't have chosen the path I did with such wonderful people." He also addressed the "insider versus outsider" debate and said, "I have a problem with the distinction of insider and outsider," he stressed that success depends on individual drive and perseverance. He also discussed Deepika Padukone's journey in Bollywood.



Nagarjuna

Honouring the legends

Telugu superstar Nagarjuna announced the release of commemorative postage stamps honouring Indian cinema legends Guru Dutt, Ritwik Ghatak, Raj Khosla, composer-singer-poet Salil Chowdhury, and legendary actor P Bhanumathi at the event. He thanked PM Modi for preserving and honouring Indian cinema's legacy. Nagarjuna stated that WAVES celebrates India's spirit, saying it honours a country whose stories have "shaped not just cinema but generations of hearts." The stamps were launched by PM Modi, Nagarjuna, and other dignitaries, in the presence of his son and actor Naga Chaitanya and daughter-in-law Sobhita Dhulipala.



Mohanlal

'Intellectual soul of India'

Akshay, while in conversation with Malayalam superstar Mohanlal, called Malayalam cinema the "intellectual soul of Indian cinema". To this, Mohanlal responded, "Thank you for calling Malayalam cinema the intellectual soul of Indian cinema. We are blessed with great actors and directors. From the very beginning in Malayalam cinema, there is a thin line between art house and commercial cinema. It is closely knit. It's very well-balanced. I had the chance to work with great directors. That time they used to call it art cinema, but those films also had entertainment value."



SOHA ALI KHAN...



'I Found It Very, Very Challenging To Step Away From Inaaya'

'It's been seven years since I did a movie. Now, I'm back.'

Soha Ali Khan gets to play a scary antagonist for the first time in her career, and she's loving it.

"To play an antagonist in a horror is not something I've done before,"



What brings you back to the screen?

What brings me back to the screen is just the idea of being presented in such a wonderful way as Daasi Ma. To play an antagonist in a horror is not something I've done before. I thought it would be a nice challenge to step out of my comfort zone, to wear completely new costumes, lenses, VFX, prosthetics, a different style of walking, a different way of talking with some investment into diction classes and working on an accent, smoking a hookah... Also, I have enjoyed watching horrors but have never actually been in one.



Now that your daughter is somewhat older, do you have the time and inclination to resume your acting career?

Yes, I definitely have the time. I think I always had the time. I just didn't want to make the time because I found it very, very challenging to step away from her. I wanted to be there for the many milestones that happen in the first few years of your child growing up. And I really wanted to be present for her and be involved in raising her. Now she's seven and in school for most of the day. She has an active social life and it's never as if she really needed me. I needed her and now I think that I'm comfortable stepping away from her a little bit and taking on more work. You said you enjoy watching horror films. Yes, but I feel like the older I get and certainly after becoming a parent, my appetite to consume horror has gone down. I feel very sensitive, especially to the sound in a horror film. It makes me very uncomfortable but I still enjoy it. I guess it's like a kind of adrenaline rush. I don't enjoy roller coasters but I still sometimes make myself do it because there's a high you get out of it. So I enjoy the sensation of the anticipation of fear or something that might happen. I have seen lots of horrors, whether it's Psycho, The Shining, Stephen King novels that have been turned into films... Then, there's Insidious or Conjuring or The Exorcism of Emily Rose or The Exorcist. Within Hindi cinema, some of my favourites have been 100 Days, which is one of the first Hindi horror films I saw. Then, Bhoot, Darna Mana Hai... I'm glad to see that horror is making a comeback, in terms of pure horror and not a mixed genre.



Was it tough to be scary?

No, not really. I think all of us have a darker side to our personalities and I enjoyed exploring that. What happens with horror is that you get so much support from sound, costume, cinematography, lighting... and, of course, the script.
What was difficult were things like the diction and the body mannerisms because Daasi Ma is rougher than I am. Her moral fabric is completely alien to me. So to be convinced or empathetic towards this character was a challenge for me. But being scary not so much because honestly, I just put myself in my director's hands. He had a particular vision of what this character looked like, he told me what to do with my face in terms of contorting my face and I did. The rest was teamwork from makeup, costume, effects.

Should we consider this as a new beginning for you?

I don't know if you should consider it a new beginning. I mean, I did two shows after becoming a parent. I feel my work, my career has always been a part of my life. Just because I'm not so visible on screen doesn't mean you've gone away. You're just doing something else. I know it's been seven years since Idid a movie so in that sense, I suppose I did go away. Now, I'm back. But I did do two shows in the interim, Hush Hush and Kaun Banegi Shikharwati. I have done another film. The shoot is complete and it should release later this year.

Was it tough for you to balance your responsibilities as a homemaker with your career, and do you feel you can pull it off?

I think women are good at multitasking. We have to play many roles and wear many hats, whether it's daughters, mothers, siblings, daughters-in-law, professionals, homemakers... there's a lot going on all the time. What we do need to learn is delegate. I am one of those women who likes to be everywhere at one time and make everyone happy but that is impossible to do. So it is important to have a supportive community around you, professionals like my nanny who is so intrinsic to me achieving my dreams because she looks after my child when I can't be there. We should lean on that when we can because it is impossible to be everywhere at once and do everything perfectly. Women generally need not be so hard on themselves. We don't always have to be perfectionists. I think the idea is, especially if we have to be in the workplace, the idea is to delegate and to rely on other people who can be there to help you at home.



Recently, there was an awful incident in your brother Saif Ali Khan's life. What has that told you about the safety of the family? How can celebrities avoid being easy targets?

Alert toh hum hai hi, kabhi kabhi aisi cheezain ho jaati hai, which are very unfortunate. I think the sense of feeling now is very blessed, ki aur bura nahi hua, joh hua uss hadd tak hi hua, and everyone is fine.



‘I Didn’t Work Because Of Lack of Good Offers’

‘It’s important to keep doing your work. Do what you understand and don’t expect much.’



We first met **Patralekhaa** in CityLights, where she played the wife of Rajkummar Rao. Today, they make up one of the talented couples working in Bollywood. Comparisons may be inevitable but Patralekhaa insists her journey is different from her husband's.

After a series of underwhelming projects since her 2014 debut, the actor seems to be re-shaping her career as seen from last year's terrific show IC 814: The Kandahar Hijack. The next is Ananth Mahadevan's period drama Phule in which she plays the historical figure Savitribai Phule.

"When you are playing like such powerful characters and you're doing this day in and day out, you derive a lot of strength from them," Patralekhaa tells .

What are your favourite movies with strong female characters, not necessarily historical or biopics?

I like Sadma a lot. There are many movies but Sadma is one of the movies I can recall well.

How much did you know about Savitribai Phule before this project came to you?

She and Jyotiba Phule really worked for the well being of society.There's so much written material available on the internet, so many books written by them, about them. They were such prominent figures. We haven't discovered anything new as such.

When you play such powerful characters, do their character traits rub off on you?

I am not sure about that. But does it empower me as a human being? Of course, it does. When you're playing like such powerful characters and you're doing this day in and day out, you derive a lot of strength from them.

This film has a period setting but we live in modern times, constantly surrounded by mobile phones and gadgets. What shift happens when you go on sets?

It is important to keep your phone away. It's a very organic way actually because you are trying to live a life and play a character that isn't today's and a phone just breaks that wall.

Having said that, it's not like I didn't use my phone. My phone was with me but I used it much less. I think everybody on the set used it much less.



Is there any ritual that you followed to play this character? Like, some actors listen to particular songs to get into that zone.

What really helped me about this character was that we were cut off from everything. We were shooting in Bhor, in the interiors of Maharashtra. The internet was very slow, we couldn't get a network on phones.

That place really helped me to be secluded in my mind.

What is one character trait of Savitribai that you have as well?

She never gives up. I will never give up. They were fearless people in the way they lived their life.

What is one moment from Phule that will always stay with you?

There's so many moments because they lived such a humongous, giant of a life. They were always doing something or the other. In one instance, cow dung gets thrown at Savitri and she comes home and tells Jyotiba about it.

That was a very powerful moment for me. There's another moment where Jyotibha is telling people from the Satyashodak Samaj that this is the end of his life and Savitri will take over the reins. I didn't have anything to say but just listening to Pratik kind of shifted something. That was a very powerful moment.

Despite their equal contribution to society, the world bestowed the title of Mahatma only on Jyotiba. Do you think Savitribai deserved the title too?

For sure. When I was reading the scene, I was like, but she was an equal partner with him, how come it wasn't given to her? Even Jyotiba felt a certain way about her not getting the title of Mahatma. But it was just so nice that Savitri kind of maneuvers him out of it.

But yes, I feel she deserved the title.



Having seen these characters up close and having studied them, what is the one thing about Savitribai and Jyotiba's partnership that you would like to imbibe in your own marriage?

There are so many things. They thought they were equal. They were together in achieving and uplifting society, reforming society, and nobody tried taking away the credit.

Like you mentioned, she was not given the title of Mahatma and Jyotiba did feel bad about it.

He did try to make her understand that that wasn't right because she did the work equally. But their partnership was so strong. They had one vision for society and worked towards it.

You made your debut in 2014 with CityLights. You haven't done too many films in all these years. Was it because of lack of good offers?

It was obviously because of a lack of good offers. It's important to keep doing your work. Do what you understand and don't expect much.



The last couple of years have been good for you with IC 814: The Kandahar Hijack and now Phule.

Gulkanda Tales with Raj & DK is coming up next. Do you feel you are in the best phase of your career?

No, it's going to be better. I want to be a part of really interesting scripts and good directors and producers.

Does it irritate you when people compare your journey with your Rajkummar's?

Not really. I mean, it's their look out. You can't compare apples and oranges, both are so different.

In one of your interviews, you mentioned how you wanted to run away from Mumbai because you didn't feel like belonging here. How has your equation evolved with the city?

I love the city. I don't think I can live anywhere else.

Given a choice between Shillong, your birth place, and Mumbai, what would you prefer?

Mumbai, any day.



‘It Wasn’t My Time To Go’

‘Maybe I’m meant to do a few more good films, have some more nice times with family and friends, do some more charity.’





Saif Ali Khan is excited about his brand new movie, Jewel Thief: The Heist Begins, where he shares the screen with 'perhaps the most impressive actor' Jaideep Ahlawat.

Putting his **horrifying attack** firmly behind him, Saif looks ahead and tells , "When we did Sacred Games, it was for people to aspire to watch us. In Jewel Thief, we are making it simple for them but with scale and style."

You were recently shooting in Mandwa, near Alibaug. Tell us about the project.

I'm doing a patriotic period piece about a driven and passionate man, who organises India's first general election.

It's got a lovely feel in time and place, and quite dramatic and emotionally uplifting. Rahul Dholakia and I talked a lot, and so much of what we spoke about is in the script.

You will next be seen in Netflix's heist thriller Jewel Thief: The Heist Begins.

Jewel Thief is a fun caper, double cross, heist film. It has scale and pace and should be a fun ride. It's a father-son drama at its core.

What was it like working with Jaideep Ahlawat?



Jaideep is perhaps the most impressive actor I have worked with in recent times. I've learned a lot from him.

Jewel Thief reunites you with Siddharth Anand, who directed you in films like Ta Ra Rum Pum and Salaam Namaste.

Sid is a big movie-maker, so it was fun to do that with him. In his last avatar, we were doing very stylish rom coms. He always wanted to do action. He tried to stay away but couldn't help putting something of himself in the film.

You were one of the pioneers of the Indian OTT, having scored success with Sacred Games. Do you think the platform has evolved over the years?

I think the platform is trying to get more and more accessible to Indian thinking, more commercial as well as basic. When we did Sacred Games, it was for people to aspire to watch us. In Jewel Thief, we are making it simple for them but with scale and style. Netflix is so respectable as a platform, the whole world watches it. It's fab to be on it.

What are your other projects?

I play a blind guy in Priyadarshan's next film.



You and your family went through a terribly traumatic experience recently. What is your takeaway from that?

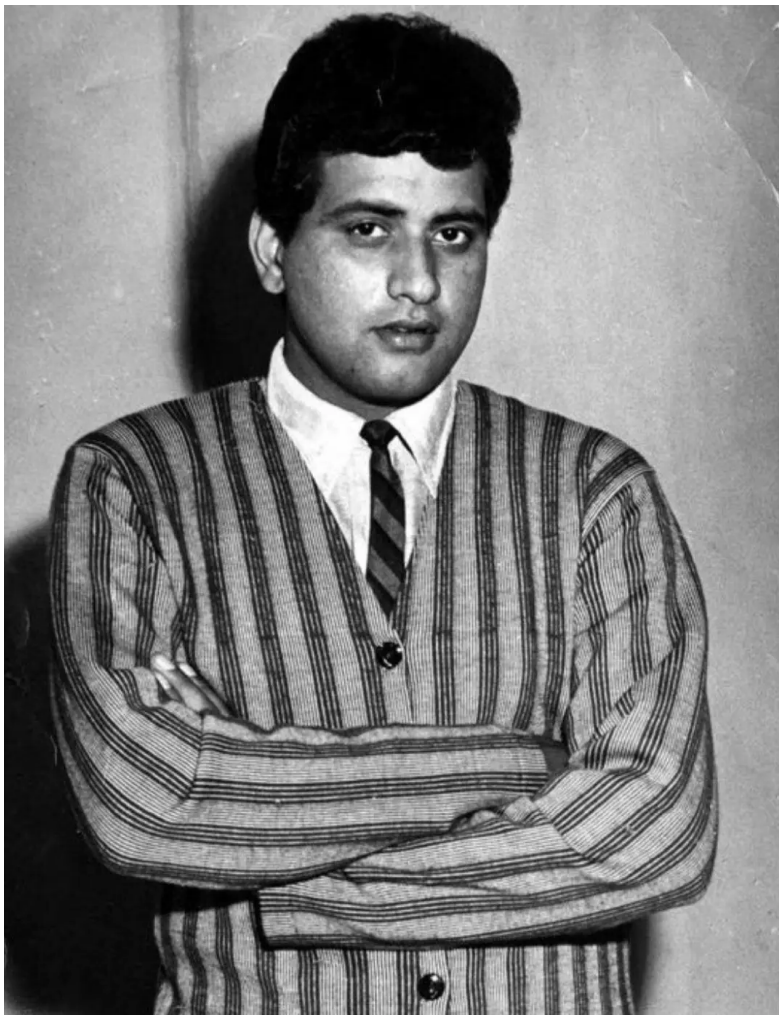
Lock doors and be careful! We have a lot and a lot have not. So while I am grateful, we must understand that and be careful. Lock things. Block access points. Smarten up security. It's sad. I never believed in security, I hate to have people around me. But it needs to be there for a while at least.

It must have shaken you up.

It wasn't my time to go. Maybe I'm meant to do a few more good films, have some more nice times with family and friends, do some more charity.

‘I Came To Films To Earn Rs 3 Lakh’

Dharmendra, Shashi Kapoor and I were inseparable while we struggled together. When a disillusioned Dharmendra was packing his bags to return home, I prevailed upon him to give himself two months. Five days later, he was signed for Shola Aur Shabnam and I signed Picnic.



Manoj Kumar’s passion for films was evident in his famous repertoire as well as in his interactions.

An intelligent, literate man (he could cite literary works like Kamayani in the midst of a conversation), Manoj Kumar was also humble and easy-going.

Excerpts from the many interviews the actor did with the then Movie magazine(Global Movie Magazine) Editor **Dinesh Raheja** through the years, where he says, “My films dwelt on idealism and siddhants. You can’t talk about patriotism in one moment and jump into bed with a woman in the second.”

As a child of the Partition of India, how did you develop this patriotic zeal which informs most of your famous films?

I was born on July 24, 1937 in Abbotabad, a military cantonment founded by Sir Abbot in the North West Frontier Province, now in Pakistan. We lived in Lahore but just before Indian independence from the British on August 15, 1947, we come to Delhi by train.

We stayed in a refugee camp in a single-room barrack. My mother was very sick and in hospital, my baby brother died.

On Independence Day, my father woke me up early and I saw Pandit Nehru hoisting our flag at the Red Fort.

My father, who had been crying in desolation at his many personal tragedies, clapped along with the huge crowd and shouted ‘Jai Hind’. The fact that my grief-stricken father could still be enthusiastic about our country’s freedom made me realise its importance.

As a 10 year old, the Red Fort had another significance for me. Since Partition had uprooted me from my house at such a tender age, I yearned for the streets of Lahore.

The name evoked memories of a patriotic song we children used to sing in Lahore: ‘Lal Qile Se Aayee Awaaz, Saigal, Dhillon, Shah Nawaz’.



How did you make a move from Delhi to Bombay and the world of films?

I was only 19 when I came to Bombay to become a hero in films. It was on October 11, 1956, that I took the Dehradun Express which took two long days to reach Bombay but it was the train with the cheapest fare.

Within a month, my cousin Lekhraj Bhakri, a filmmaker, conducted my first screen test, which was at Prakash studios. I still have the reels of that screen test. I began my career as a junior artiste. I played an old man in the Pradeep Kumar-Mala Sinha film, Fashion (1957). The first song picturised on me was sung and composed by Hemant Kumar. The words were Maati Ko Lajaana Na Yeh Desh Hai Mahaan. I guess from the onset, I was fated to have a relationship with Mother Earth.

You had to struggle hard for half-a-decade to make a name for yourself. What were those days like?

I stayed with my chacha in a poky little room at Shivaji Park (central Mumbai). One day, I overcame my timidity and asked Lekhraj if he was considering giving me a break. He replied, 'Tumhare toh joote ka ek sole nahin ghisa ab tak, yahan toh logon ke pair ghis jaate hain.'

Dharmendra, Shashi Kapoor and I were inseparable while we struggled together. When a disillusioned Dharmendra was packing his bags to return home, I prevailed upon him to give himself two months. Five days later, he was signed for Shola Aur Shabnam and I signed Picnic.

For these films, we were promised a salary of Rs 350 per month and a first class train pass. Dharmendra and I celebrated by taking a train ride from Churchgate to Borivali for four days in a row!

Rajendra Kumar was like an elder brother. He would take me home for dinner and even trust me with his tijori keys. I came to films with the intention of earning three lakhs, to be distributed equally between my parents, siblings and myself. I was focused on the thought of making money and convincing my parents to let me marry a non-Brahmin girl, Shashi. Eventually, I married Shashi a month before the release of Hariyali Aur Rasta (1962) which was my first big hit.

Did your wife contribute to your creative pursuits, if at all?

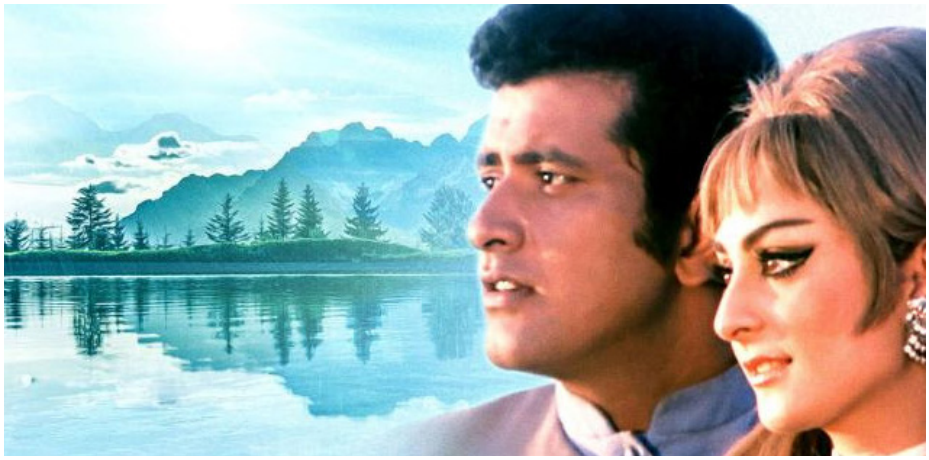
She gave me the idea for Purab Aur Paschim (1970). A harsh critic, she rarely praises my work. I am grateful to her for that.

Jin filmmakers ki biwiyan unke kaam ki tareef karti hain, unki pictures ki taarif log nahin karte hain. She is also knowledgeable about films.

During our three-and-a-half-months-long courtship, my wife and I saw 109 films together!

Despite your romantic views and many initial romantic films like Woh Kaun Thi, your cinema has rarely depicted any intimacy between your alter ego, Bharat, and his women.

Even after a marriage, the honeymoon takes place in the privacy of a suite, doesn't it? My films dwelt on idealism and siddhants. You can't talk about patriotism in one moment and jump into bed with a woman in the second.





Which are the most beautiful screen images of women in your opinion?

From the films I directed, I really like a shot of a half-lit Asha Parekh in Upkar. Nanda looked ethereal in the Ek Pyar Ka Nagma Hai number in Shor.

Meena Kumari's close-up in Dil Apna Aur Preet Parayi, Bina Rai in Kali Ghata and Anarkali's O Aasmanwale number and Vyjayanthimala in Nagin. Sadhana in Mere Mehboob and as the dulhan in Woh Kaun Thi.

How do you look back on your rich career?

Right from my first directorial venture, Upkar (1967), I have made films with conviction and planned them on a grand scale.

I am told that three films made under my banner are perennially popular: Roti Kapda Aur Makaan (1974), Purab Aur Paschim (1970) and Kranti (1981).

The theme of these films is relevant today. Kranti's claim to fame is its grand scale, music, story and performances. More than 10,000 people were involved in making the film. It would take four months to build the sets of the fort.

We shot a strenuous schedule for the film aboard a ship too. Most of the cast and technicians became seasick. I am not fond of flying but on board the ship, I remained as fit as a veteran sailor. When people asked me my secret, I would just smile and say, 'Homeopathy'.

I had to mortgage my house for Kranti. Fortunately, it ran for 50 weeks at Apsara cinema, Mumbai. After seeing the film Raj (Kapoor) saab remarked, 'This is our answer to Hollywood. (Akira) Kurosawa, who heard about the film, sent me a fountain pen and a letter of appreciation.

Do you sit with your son Kunal and watch contemporary films?

Yes, why not? I was very bashful once. My father would take me every Saturday evening to a restaurant in Connaught Place, Delhi, that held cabarets.

He realized that I was extremely shy because I would run away from home even if relatives came over. This was probably his chosen way of helping me overcome my inhibitions.

What is your life like after retirement?

My sons, Vishal and Kunal, treat me well. I am equally fond of my grandson Vansh and my granddaughter Muskaan -- the first girl born in my house after 42 years.





‘We Are Fixated By White Skin In India’

‘Not just women, but even men are judged by the colour of their skin and have to fight prejudice every day.’



Whether or not **Renuka Shahane** will **enter politics**, she's certainly inspirational as the sweetly smiling, grass-root politician who tries to break the glass ceiling and keep Dhadakpur crime-free for a bigger goal in Amazon Prime Video's OTT series Dupahiya. She's got other aces up her sleeves but she's taking her time. "I'm a little slow when it comes to writing. I have a lot of family responsibilities that I have to attend to with the children growing up, so writing takes a backseat."

After watching Dupahiya one wishes you would do more work.

I am, actually.
Dupahiya was shot around August to October 2023. I did other projects which should come out soon so people will see me more frequently now. There's a film called Chakda Xpress that I'm really looking forward to. It's a beautiful character with a very different look. The film is a biographical sports drama, a genre I'm not associated with. It's not a very big role, but it's important to the narrative. I really enjoyed working with Anushka Sharma and our director, Prosit Roy.

Since Dupahiya started streaming, any reactions in particular from women in small towns and villages like Dhadakpur on any of the issues it raised?

I think what has really hit home is the issue of colourism which was highlighted through Pushplata's daughter. Nirmal is a very intelligent girl who encourages everybody to do something beyond their capability. Yet, she herself is struggling with an inferiority complex. In a country like India where we are still fixated on white skin, not just women, but even men are judged by the colour of their skin and have to fight prejudice every day. In the circumstances, for a mother to tell her daughter that she does not need any kind of skin treatment and that if someone rejected her for her dusky complexion, then they have a black heart, is pretty awesome. That has touched a lot of hearts.

Komal Kushwaha, who plays Nimal, turned the spotlight on this colour prejudice and its impact on young minds beautifully through her nuanced performance. Some of the older ladies also loved my character Pushplata's spirit. They found the middle-aged widow in a way out village, struggling with power equations, and yet, in her small way, trying to break the glass ceiling, inspiring.

One saw you in an unconventional avatar in the short film, Sunshower, which was part of the anthology, Stories on the Next Page, written and directed by Brinda Mitra. Rajeshwari Sachdeva and you play a couple who, urged on by your screen son, get a chance to finally find happiness together.

Yeah, it's a lovely film, just around 20 minutes. It is streaming on Jio Hotstar. There's another short film, Ek Kadam, playing on the Pocket Films YouTube Channel. That's much more in line with what I have been doing on television, the long suffering, submissive woman of substance. It struck a chord with a lot of women, even empowered women, urging them to take that one step forward to finding happiness. There was another film with Lakshmi Iyer and Ananth Mahadevan, First Second Chance, which is also streaming on YouTube. I love doing stuff like this which offers food for thought and hopefully, a slight change in people's mindsets.

You have directed a short film too?

Yes. I have written, directed and produced a Marathi animation film, Loop Line, which is doing very well on the festival circuit. I was at Tasveer, a South Asian Film Festival in Seattle, where it bagged Best Animation Award and an honorary mention for Best Narrative Short last year. It revolves around a day in the life of a middle-class Maharashtrian housewife, who is representative of millions of women.

Why animation?

I have always been fascinated by animation which is the predecessor to moving pictures. The film is a salute to that art that sadly, has not evolved much in terms of mature content in our country. We still think of animation as related to children, cartoons and advertising despite appreciating anime from abroad.

I could have made Loop Line as live action, but it was like a calling. Something inside me was urging me to experiment with animation. I met Soumitra Ranade, Co-Founder and Chief Creative Director of Paperboat Design Studios at the NFDC production market, and asked him if we could collaborate. This was the first time they were working with a director who was not a part of the direct process of animation. Loop Line is just around eight minutes but has travelled from New Zealand to Iceland, validating the fact that if a subject has universal appeal, people from across the world can relate to it. We need to make more such films so they can be subsidised. Currently, animation is a labour-intensive and expensive process. For me, it was a passion project. I don't expect any returns on my investment, knowing there are no distribution channels for animated films with mature content in India.

Not even on OTT?

I wouldn't know; I haven't pitched it to any OTT platform yet. After we finish the rounds of the festival circuit by July, I will do so. If any of them pick it up, it would be great. Otherwise, I will be only too happy to put it on YouTube, so people can watch it for free.



Have you written anything that could turn into a feature film, which you could direct like Rita or Tribhanga?

Yes, there are two feature films scripts that I have written and a short film which I might turn into a feature. (Laughs) I'm still working on them; I'm a little slow when it comes to writing. I have a lot of family responsibilities that I have to attend to with the children growing up, so writing takes a backseat.

Are your sons, Shouryaman and Satyendra, showing signs of following in the footsteps of their talented parents?

Not at all. They are far removed from our world. Right now, they are still studying and haven't figured out what they want to do. I've told them it's okay to take their time and then pursue their passion.

So it could be acting too?

As of now, they are not keen. (Laughs) Also, they are so pressurised by the fact that people might see them as nepo kids, bechare! When both the parents are in the industry, that's a lot of pressure on any kid from the industry to live up to.

You have a Marathi film releasing soon?

Yes, on April 25, and I am waiting for people to see it. It's produced by Luv Film, their first Marathi film, and directed by Tejas Prabha, with whom I had done the Marathi comedy drama, Bucket List, earlier. It has Mahesh Manjrekar in the title role and is a really intense script.

Your husband, Ashutosh Rana, has been doing a very popular play, Humare Ram, in which he plays Raavan. Have you ever thought of doing something on stage?

Not really. I'm thinking of doing things behind the camera now. Also, a play requires a different kind of commitment. Ranaji has been doing this for the last one year, and because the play is hugely popular, he's basically been doing only this. It also requires you to travel a lot which I can't do. I need time to handle our home, kids and my writing. (Laughs) In between, thoda bahut acting bhi kar leti hoon (I do some acting too).

After two decades, is your Hindi as good as your husband's?

(Chuckles) Not as good. His language is just amazing. Since Ranaji is such a voracious reader, it keeps getting better. Speaking any language well requires good vocabulary and a thought process, along with a liking for speaking. I'm a Marathi girl speaking Hindi. Unlike Ranaji, it's not my mother tongue. Are people still fida of that million-dollar smile? (Laughs) Yes, of course!





We want to hide it (by saying) we are too busy in our lives, we have other things to attend to, we have families. But they all had families, including Jyotiba Phule or Mahatma Gandhi, or anybody who challenged the system.



After he was catapulted to stardom in 2020 with Scam 1992, Pratik Gandhi didn't restrict himself to mainstream opportunities.





He is one of those few actors who adeptly straddled the line between mainstream and arthouse.

The actor began 2025 with the goofy comedy Dhoom Dhaam. Up next, is the period drama Phule, in which Pratik portrays social reformer Mahatama Jyotiba Phule. The Ananth Narayan Mahadevan directorial co-stars Patralekhaa as Jyotiba's wife, Savitribai Phule.

"If we seriously think that movies can change lives, movies can change the thought process of the nation, or one movie can actually move a lot of things socially, politically, personally, if we believe in all that, then Phule should move people,"

What was your first reaction when the makers approached you to play Mahatma Phule?

I was really excited. It was great to be given this opportunity to portray the first Mahatma of our country. It's always exciting to create something like this.

You play a Maharashtrian in this film. Being a Gujarati, how did you familiarise yourself with the milieu?

Marathi is very close to Gujarati. My aunts and uncles are from Mumbai, so we visited Mumbai since childhood. In fact, I was born in Mumbai. So I have heard Marathi since a young age. I completed my graduation from North Maharashtra University, Jalgaon. That dialect is a little different than the Marathi you hear in Pune. I always felt that proximity and closeness to the language. It's just that I can't speak it fluently but I understand everything.

Most people would know Jyotiba Phule as a social reformer but he was also a businessman, a trader, a teacher and a playwright.

What was your process to assimilate such a diverse personality?



It's a vast subject. His body of work is so huge and diverse that to compile everything and put it into a film of two hours was not an easy task. There are certain traits that we will show on screen, but may not spell it out. That's how we have tried to achieve that balance and I hope it has translated well.

You are playing Mahatma Gandhi in Director Hansal Mehta's upcoming series. Gandhi greatly admired Jyotiba Phule's work in social reform and called him the real Mahatma. As someone who has studied both these personalities, how do you compare them?

Jyotiba happened to India almost a century before Gandhi. The social condition, social challenges, political scenario and the complexities were much, much different in the times of Jyotiba. As Gandhiji said, he deserved to be called Mahatma Jyotiba Phule. But as the century passed and Gandhi's time came, there were more challenges, newer challenges. I guess they are both Mahatmas in their own right. The kind of work they have done, you can't imagine anybody even thinking about it. In today's modern times, we are scared to ask questions against the system. At that time, people were not ready to listen to anything that was beyond certain norms.

When you portray such dynamic characters, do they leave a mark on you?

Yes. I feel privileged that I am an actor and get to be a part of these stories. So many profound lines came out of their mouth, they did so many things without making any noise.

When you perform these characters, when you say those lines, when you recreate these sequences, they move you. Some things stay with you the whole life. Mahatma Gandhi's simplicity touched me. Not only in terms of the appearance and clothes, but in his thoughts and process. For Jyotiba Phule, there are so many things. He was a practical person. Like you said, he was not only a reformer, there are so many different aspects to his life. He used to take labour contracts from the government and he would put the money he earned in reforms by opening vidhva ashrams (community homes for widows), child education and all those things. That's such a practical approach towards life.



Can you share any particular moment from this film that impacted you?

I will give you spoilers if I talk about it! (Laughs) When he is given the name Mahatma, he delivers a speech. Some part of that speech is a part of the trailer. 'Humara desh ek bhavuk desh hai. Yahan, dharam aur jaati ke naam par logo ko ladhana bada hi saral

hai. Yeh bhavishya mein bhi hoga (Our country runs on sentiments. It is very easy to make people fight in the name of religion and caste. This will happen in the future too).' Such a profound line. Not just today or hundred years back, this will stand true in centuries to come. There's something called Powada (a form of poetry that glorifies) in Maharashtra. When I was performing that line, a Powada group came and created a song for Jyotiba and Savitribai Phule. When the song reached its crescendo, I got goosebumps. There's another sequence where Jyotiba is down with paralysis and he thinks his life will end. There are certain things that he wants to discuss with Savitribai Phule. That scene is very close to my heart.

Did you visit his published works as a part of your prep? Like his most notable book, Gulamgiri.

Gulamgiri will be a part of the film. The book was with us during the shoot. I read many anecdotes and things from that. The script itself is good research material because it is such a vast topic that you have to research almost everything and then decide on the flow of the story.



How does the social commentary in this film mirror our current times?

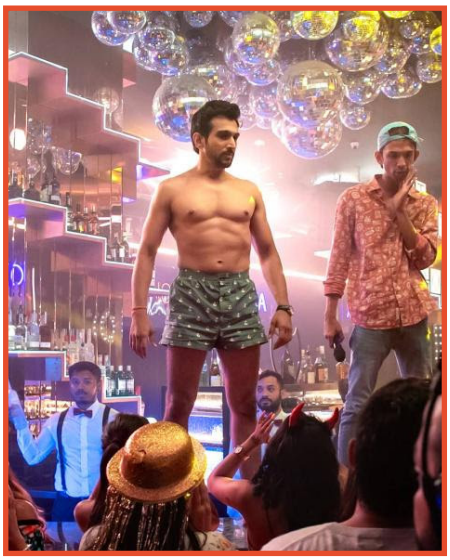
I think socially, somewhere we are losing that selflessness. Everybody is scared. We want to hide it (by saying) we are too busy in our lives, we have other things to attend to, we have families. But they all had families, including Jyotiba or Mahatma Gandhi, or anybody who challenged the system. It's just that the courage is missing. And I'm including myself. We all have some angst. We ask why are things not changing. But what are we doing? We live in difficult times.

Jyotiba's philosophy says: 'People die, thoughts don't die'. Do you relate to his words?

Absolutely. This is the philosophy that the world survives on. All the reformers and thinkers have given us something different in life, which stays with us for centuries. Like the concept of Ahimsa (non-violence). Jyotiba had said that if you want to fight the British, or any system, arms and ammunition is not required. What you require is knowledge. It fits in today's context also.

The recent trend shows that the masses are lapping up angry movies, and these movies are doing well. Where does a film like Phule stand in such a scenario?

If we seriously think movies can change lives, the thought process of a nation or move things socially, politically, personally, then this film should move people. A film which shows anger or violence in a different way is largely working, as you're saying. If that is true, it shows the sentiment around us, right? There is a lot of angst in people's minds. Most of the people are angry and that anger wants to come out. But Phule will tell them that if you are angry or not happy with certain things, violence is not the only way. There are other powerful ways to tackle this situation. Phule was really angry, really hurt. He was discriminated on the basis of his caste and that triggered what he did. If you are really angry about certain things, this is the most sustainable way to set things right and change. That's how I understand Phule's life, and I hope it translates for people also.



Your frequent collaborator Hansal Mehta recently said that the Hindi film industry needs a disruption in its process. What do you think he is trying to say?

All the industries need innovation consistently and constantly because everything is changing extremely fast. I am sure camera companies would have never thought that mobiles will replace them, and before they could realise that, they were replaced. The same thing is happening in stories and films. As an actor, what I understand is that if you liked certain characters, my job is to present another range to you and not do the same thing. I believe in the first thought of films: Why are you making this film? Is it the story so compelling that it is not letting you sleep? Is it constantly telling you that this needs to come out? If it comes from that point of passion and if the intentions are right, it will translate well. But if the starting point is wrong, like if you begin to make a film with the thought that let's make a Rs 100 crore film, then it it is bound to fail. And things are largely failing.

Meet The Man Behind Kesari 2

'I found a story that merged my two passions, history and law. I couldn't have found a better story for my debut film.'

Akshay Kumar may just have **a winner** on his hands with Kesari: Chapter 2, giving his career a much-needed respite from a spate of flops. The film, a courtroom drama revolving around the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, has been directed by first-timer **Karan Singh Tyagi.**

A lawyer by training, Tyagi has written OTT shows like Bandish Bandits and Kaalkoot. Kesari 2 may not have got it right historically, but Tyagi defends his work, "Just like my screenwriter hero Aaron Sorkin, who said that movies on real life events and people are not supposed to be photographs. They can be 'paintings'. In a painting, there is more freedom to express an idea, more latitude in creating a sense of drama."

How did you achieve this synthesis of history and fiction in your directorial debut?

You called it 'synthesis of history and fiction' and that is exactly what I wanted it to be. Just like my screenwriter hero Aaron Sorkin, who said that movies on real life events and people are not supposed to be photographs. They can be 'paintings'. In a painting, there is more freedom to express an idea, more latitude in creating a sense of drama. I wanted Sankaran Nair's story to reach the widest possible audience. With the support of his family, my writing team and I set out to create a portrait of a man, who had a transformational journey from a British loyalist to the country's biggest patriot. He is somebody who used the power of the courts and the law to bring down an empire.



Normally, a filmmaker would start one's directorial career with something much lighter, maybe a romcom. To what do we owe your interest in history?

I am a lawyer by profession and I love history. Stories on the idea of justice, courts, the interplay between governments and citizens have always fascinated me. I have grown up loving Raj Kumar Santoshi's work like Damini, Ghayal... I have been fascinated by courtroom dramas from the West, like Rob Reiner's A Few Good Men. I count Sidney Lumet's Verdict as one of my all-time favourite movies. Here I found a story that merged my two passions, history and law. I couldn't have found a better story for my debut film.

There have been other films on Jallianwala Bagh and most recently, a series by Ram Madhvani called The Waking Of A Nation. Was there a fear of repetition?

I respect Ram Madhvani as a filmmaker and yes, of course, there was a fear of repetition as both our stories covered the same topic. But both stories appeared on different mediums. Both have found love from the audience. I believe the more real-life stories emerge in our popular culture, the better.

Tell us about the cast. Was it tough getting the British cast in place?

I have been lucky to have a fantastic cast. Akshay (Kumar) sir, Maddy (R Madhavan) sir, Ananya Pandey, Regina Cassandra... all outstanding actors, who contributed so much to the narrative. Getting the British cast right was key. We held auditions in the UK for months before finalising the cast. Simon-Paisley Day as General Dyer is terrific! Michael Parr, Alexandra Moloney and Steven Hartley are outstanding actors.



What was Karan Johar like as a producer? Did you get a free hand to do what you wanted?

He is the best producer a director can get. As a first-time director, having a producer like him, who championed my vision so beautifully, made all the difference.

What are you directing next?

I am writing something but it is too early to speak about it.





‘Kashmir Just Went Back By 20 Years’

‘Tourism will get hit. Thousands of lives will suffer. Businesses will shut down.’



Jigra Actor **Vedang Raina** takes the **terror attack in Pahalgam personally**. A Kashmiri Pandit, the actor had visited his beautiful hometown just last year, promising himself he would return more often.

"Kashmir is already a sensitive topic for me as a Kashmiri Pandit and this is just the saddest thing that could have happened. It can't get any worse... or can it? Every time we say this is as inhuman as it can get, they surprise us again."

As a Kashmiri Pandit, how do you react to the Pahalgam tragedy?

I take it very personally. I can't explain how upsetting this is; how angry it makes me. Kashmir is already a sensitive topic for me as a Kashmiri Pandit and this is just the saddest thing that could have happened.

It can't get any worse... or can it?
Every time we say this is as inhuman as it can get, they surprise us again.

Do you visit Kashmir often?

My parents are Kashmiris but I have been to Kashmir only once in my life and that was last year. I visited Srinagar, Pahalgam and Gulmarg. Kashmir is the most beautiful place I've ever been to. During my visit, I thought it was finally back on track; there's so much progress; it feels safe to visit. I thought everyone should visit this place and experience what I have experienced. I decided to come back every year because it felt like home.

And now?

Now, it's out of the window. I can't even imagine how the locals must be feeling. The victims, their families... It's heart-wrenching. My blood boils. Kashmir just went back by 20 years because of a handful of low lives. Tourism will get hit. Thousands of lives will suffer. Businesses will shut down.

How deep is your connection with Kashmir?

My grandfather's generation left Kashmir. My parents visited Srinagar often as they had many relatives... before the exodus, of course.

All my life I had only heard stories about Kashmir until my **visit last year.** The family showed me around, all the places they visited in their childhood. It was bittersweet. We lost our homes. But it was also so satisfying to be back.

Would you go back now?

Of course I would! I won't let a bunch of cowards scare me. Kashmir is and will remain paradise.

‘I Had No Worry About Getting A Bad Name’

‘I enjoyed my fiery exchanges with Akshay Kumar, who was extremely gracious and generous when the camera was not rolling.’ ‘I enjoyed locking horns with him in court.’







British actor **Simon Paisley** Day plays the despicable Brigadier-General Reginald Dyer in Kesari Chapter 2: The Untold Story Of Jallianwala Bagh. He says, “I am ashamed to share the title of Englishman with him and would urge our government to do what is right and issue a proper apology.”

How did the role of Brigadier-General Reginald Dyer land in your lap?

I auditioned for it! Casting Director Des Hamilton had previously helped to cast me in an important piece of British television drama called This England, which dealt with the UK government’s failures during the COVID pandemic. I had played Dominic Cummings, special adviser to then Prime Minister Boris Johnson. Des invited me to send a self-tape audition and as a result of that, I had a Zoom meeting with (Director) Karan Singh Tyagi. He then offered me the role. I had to read many lines in Hindi, a language of which I was entirely ignorant. I was provided with a script that was written out phonetically. I speak French and German -- as well as my mother tongue, English -- so I was fairly confident that I would be able to master the lines, which I did. But it was only with the help of the wonderful Vivek Saini, my dialect coach. I also studied Hindi on Duolingo, so that I could understand what I was saying. Dyer was a fluent Hindi speaker, having grown up with Indian children, so I had to work very hard to make it sound authentic.

Were you worried that the role wouldn’t make you Mr Popular among Indian audiences?

I have no profile in Indian cinema or popular culture, so

I had no worry about getting a bad name. But even if I had a reputation there, I would still have jumped at the role because the only reasons not to accept it would have been if the script was badly written or the film was painting Dyer as anything other than what he was -- a brutal, cold-blooded murderer. I know there are actors out there who need to be adored and who only want to play heroes and lovers but I have never been cast in that way. Indeed, I often get cast as baddies and I enjoy it. I spend most of my life trying to be a decent person, to say and do the right thing, to get people to like me, so it is actually quite liberating -- purging even -- to play characters who behave in a way that you would never allow yourself to behave. I don't mean to suggest that I would ever behave like Dyer. I have never entertained a single murderous thought. But as an actor, one's job is to forget oneself and be immersed in the body and head of another person and to enjoy the extremes of that experience, knowing ultimately that it is only make-believe and that when the camera stops recording, one returns to reality.

You brought a steely will to the character.

Dyer served for over 40 years in various regiments in India. I have no military experience but from watching war films and speaking to the older generations of my own family, I have come to understand that, without rigid discipline, an army will never succeed. Dyer believed in discipline above everything, and he was effective in getting his men to do his bidding. But he was leading his troops to engage in the absolute opposite of a fair military endeavour. He acted cruelly and inhumanely, disregarding all the accepted rules of engagement, firing on unarmed protesters, failing to issue warning shots. During the filming of the massacre, I chose to play Dyer with a zealous enjoyment of what he was doing. He had been bullied as a boy, taunted for being a stutterer, and this was his moment for revenge.

As a human being, how do you feel about his actions on that fateful day in Jallianwallah Bagh?

I am appalled at what the man did, particularly as it was premeditated. Even if it had been a knee-jerk reaction to some sudden riot, the level of violence would still have been unacceptable. But evidence suggests that Dyer had planned the whole thing as a cold-blooded slaughter in order to give a warning sign to the people of India to back down from British rule. am ashamed to share the title of Englishman with him and would urge our government to do what is right and issue a proper apology. The word 'regrettable' simply ducks responsibility. Yes, the act was regrettable but in saying that, are we acknowledging that we actually regret it? Or are we simply describing the act as 'able to be regretted'? We need to take responsibility and say sorry. And mean it.

What was it like shooting with an Indian cast and crew?

It was unlike anything I have ever done before. Acting in Hindi, working in sometimes unbearable heat, battling stomach troubles -- all these things were challenging. But the positives outweigh the negatives. I enjoyed my fiery exchanges with Akshay Kumar, who was extremely gracious and generous when the camera was not rolling. I enjoyed locking horns with him in court. R Madhavan, who plays my lawyer, was enormous fun. We had many moments of merriment in between takes. Filming a courtroom battle takes days, so many hours of sitting on hard, wooden chairs. With Madhavan on one side and my friend Michael Parr (Major Briggs) on the other, we managed to jolly each other along. Michael and I played silly word games and did crosswords to kill time. I want to make special mention of my new friend Karan Singh Tyagi, without whom none of this would have happened. Not only did he come up with the idea and the script, he captained the ship through sometimes choppy waters and always with humour, patience and understanding. He gave the actors constant and gentle encouragement and was respectful and appreciative throughout. I think he is an incredibly nice man and an even better director. He has made a truly superb film and has such a bright future ahead of him.

Did you get to see India?

Not nearly enough. My daughter Beatrice joined me in Mumbai at the end of one filming stint and we flew to Kerala, where we enjoyed a week at the coast and then travelled up into the mountains for a week at a spice plantation. We even got chased by elephants in the forest! Unforgettable in every way Another stint of filming happened in Delhi and my oldest friend Richard flew out to join me. We had a lovely week visiting the hill stations north of Dehradun, where the air was beautifully cool after the heat in Delhi. I know that my wife would love for me to work more in India so that she, a bear scientist and fabric designer, can explore India's extraordinary biodiversity while I stay in the cities, playing more baddies. We shall see.

As a Shakespearean actor, do you prefer theatre to film?

A balance is nice. I miss the immediacy of performing in front of a live audience. Generally, theatre is all about the actors and the words, so you feel a greater sense of ownership of the project. When you are filming, you are aware that your performance is only going to be as good as the editor allows it to be. Ultimately, it's the visuals and the soundtrack that carry so much weight in cinema. But I really loved filming this piece. It is an experience I shall never forget.

What are you working on next?

I am playing a wizard in The Witcher for Netflix. I have to ride a horse. Another new challenge!

Would you like to do more Indian films?

Yes, if I am to stay married. My wife is a very determined woman. And I do love Indian food more than any other world cuisine.

Who are your performing idols?

Ralph Fiennes is a great film actor. I love Jeff Bridges, Cate Blanchett, Judi Dench... But the ones I really revere are all dead, like Paul Scofield, Peter Sellers, Alec Guiness, Audrey Hepburn... I think I'm a bit old school.

I Have Lived In My Father's Shadow'

Shehzaad Khan found fame by imitating his own father Ajit in the cult classic **Andaz Apna Apna**, which re-released on April 25. "My relationship with my father was exactly like that of Ranbir Kapoor's relationship with Anil Kapoor in Animal."

You did many films before and after Andaz Apna Apna. Yet, you are known best for that. Did your mimicry of your father Ajit's style in that film impede your career?

No, it didn't. It was just a character that I was playing and I did many films as myself in my own voice. But yes, this film became a kind of a launch pad for me, even though I had done films like Som Mangal Shani, Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak, Purani Haveli and Abhi Toh Main Jawaan Hoon before that.



What was your reaction when you were first offered this role?

I was very excited to work with Raj Santoshisaab and producer Vinay Sinhaji. I did my first film with Vinayji, Abhi Toh Main Jawaan Hoon. It was a video film. He had promised me a good role in his feature film and he kept his word.

Your father Ajit had worked in some of the most successful films from Mughal-e-Azam to Zanjeer. Was he a big influence on you?

My father was a very big influence on me. I think he was one of the finest actors; I always idolised him.My relationship with my father's was exactly like Ranbir Kapoor's relationship with Anil Kapoor in Animal.

Was it tough living in the shadows of such a formidable man?



'My father's friends told him that your son has done a film in which he has copied your voice. That's how he saw a couple of scenes of mine in Andaz Apna Apna.



Since I am his son, I have always been known as Ajitsaab's son and yes, I have lived in his shadow. But I have done a lot of films in my own voice and in my own style. Since I look like him and though he's physically not present in this world, people see him through me. In this industry, there is no father-son resemblance as close as mine and my father's. I am very grateful to God for that.

Is it true that he was upset when you mimicked him in Andaz Apna Apna?

My father's friends told him that his son has done a film in which he has copied your voice. That's how he saw a couple of scenes of mine in Andaz Apna Apna. He told me I shouldn't have done it. At the same time, I told him that I was very passionate about my work. He used to see that I had struggled to reach where I did, and was still struggling. So he understood because he had also struggled a lot in life. After that, he never said anything about it.

'I Never Took My Career Seriously'



'I didn't like doing jhatak-mataks.' 'I would subconsciously start feeling, 'Oh my God, my makeup man and my driver will be watching this."

Moushumi Chatterjee recently suffered a stroke and underwent hospitalisation for a pacemaker. She is also trying to come to terms with her beloved daughter's untimely death in 2019. But Moushumi's famous never-say-die spirit stays intact. Her new Bengali film Aarii is timed with her 73rd birthday on April 26, and Moushumi tells **Dinesh Raheja**, "You have to be a little mischievous. Life will be very dull if there is no spice, so I add dalchini and laung to bring flavour."

Was Aarii's release date deliberately planned?

The filmmakers knew about my birthday because once upon a time, I was very famous (laughs), and those who like me, remember me.

You return to acting after almost a decade. How was the experience?

During this shoot, I was continuously getting admitted in hospitals. I suffered a mild stroke. Then I had to get a pacemaker inserted. My lungs were badly affected. I have been neglecting my health. After my elder daughter Payal passed away, my husband Babu was admitted to the ICU twice. I was praying to God that I should be able to somehow complete the movie.

You have a long way to go still. You look fit as a fiddle in the trailer.



But I was so ill!
We were shooting at an isolated place near Digha and I was attended to by a government doctor.They were debating whether to hospitalise me. I relaxed in the room for the whole day and shot at night because it was a very important sequence between my screen son and me and I did not want to cancel.

The film's teaser indicates you have a challenging role of a mother with dementia.

It is one of the best roles of my career. It was a challenge but in my own life of people, I have known people who keep forgetting. Also, at the time of the narration, it struck me that the behaviour pattern of my character is identical to my own. I am full of apnapan and wish to make others comfortable but I am also very child-like, a little mad, and can say any good-bad-ugly in front of everybody, without thinking what the other person will feel.

Yes, you are definitely outspoken. Your comment on Jaya Bachchan, where you said you were better than her, recently went viral.

I was compared and I don't like being compared. I think there is a very healthy competition. I don't want to go into details because if I do so, that will be very bad for the other actors.

Today, you come across as a confident woman with a mind of her own. But you started off as a young actress who did as she was told. What has brought about this change?

I always had a mind of my own but it takes time to realise that. When you enjoy your life -- when you develop the ability to be alone and yet not feel lonely -- you get the confidence to speak your mind.

In Aarii, you play mother to a son. Do you miss having a son or is gender immaterial?

I do have a son. My elder sister's son Shubhadeep is my daughter Meghaa's age.

Aap usse beta maante hain?

Maanti nahin, jaanti hoon! But I would like to add that I don't miss anything because I am a very detached person.

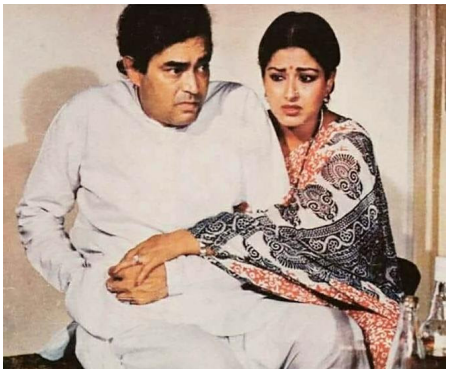


I didn't know about that aspect of your personality.

I am also a fun person. In Aarii, there is a dialogue where my son tells me, 'Sometimes I cannot tolerate you.' And my response is: 'How dare you say that! I myself cannot tolerate myself for too long.' You have to be a little mischievous. Life will be very dull if there is no spice, so I add dalchini and laung to bring flavour. I may be child-like but I am not childish. I feel if you have something in your heart, either tell that person or forget it. Sarcastic people don't have guts. People clean their outsides with soap and water but inside, there is so much malice.

When you look back on your successful career, do you feel you got your due recognition as an actress?

I never worked hard. I was never ambitious and never took my career seriously... because I could not. I had so many responsibilities. I entered Hindi films as a married woman and within two years, I delivered my elder daughter, Payal.



Your comic flair is underappreciated. Like in the 1978 hit Swarag Narak in which your role had comic, dramatic and even grey shades.

It was a good boost for my career but would been even better had I been serious.

As one senior Bengali actress told me, 'You are very good looking and talented but not in the good books of filmmakers and heroes.'

You followed it with a comic goldmine in Angoor (1982).

Haribhai (Sanjeev Kumar) said, 'You are the only actress who can play this role.' These compliments are my awards so I never sought to buy an award.

But one area was your Achilles' heel: Dancing.

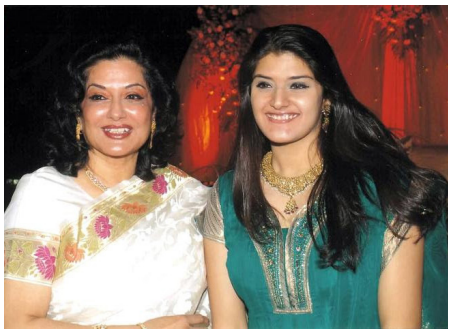
(Laughs) I never took dancing seriously. Whenever I was called for rehearsals, I was never available. I didn't like doing jhatak-mataks. I would subconsciously start feeling, 'Oh my God, my makeup man and my driver will be watching this.'

Did you lose roles because of this?

I lost many good roles. I lost Koshish even after shooting for three days. The moment somebody told me you have to compromise, I would say: To hell with it. I left Desh Premee after shooting for two days. When I was narrated the story of NN Sippy's Ghar, there were many bedroom sequences. I feel that if a skirt is lifted above the knee, it doesn't look as vulgar as a raised sari. I told Vinod Mehra I won't be able to do the scenes also because there was so much gossip about us. Shashi Kapoor pointed out that Vinod had never clarified the gossip about me, even though I was his best friend's wife. So I said I will not do the film.

What would you say was your screen image?

My impression was that of a lady you can take home. The shooting of Raj Khosla's Daasi was stalled because Rekha wanted my role of the wife, and suggested that I should play the dancer Tarabai. Raj Khosla said, 'From which angle does Moushumi look like Tarabai?' When Dharamji came to my house to sign me for Ghayal, he said they wanted somebody innocent, and no other heroine had that look.



Does your daughter Meghaa provide you with emotional support now?

Not really. My husband Babu has become totally dependant on Meghaa after Payal's demise. But I feel Meghaa has become weak after Payal. Payal's marriage was a disaster so Meghaa doesn't want to think on those lines. Meghaa says she would rather care of her parents than somebody else. She is a lovely daughter. See, when I had a stroke, I should have gone at that time... but I came back. Payal chali gayi phir bhi main yahan hoon, there has to be some reason for that. I still have so many duties. I have a blind brother. Meghaa has become emotionally dependent on me. I find my family is energetic if I am around.

Has the grief of losing your daughter Payal resulted in a better philosophical understanding of life?

I never thought it would happen in my life but it did. I saw my child on a funeral pyre in front of my eyes. When Payal was in hospital, I would pray at night. It was a very traumatic time. But you have to live your life till your death. And when you are living, it's better to live it in a better way rather than in a bitter way.

‘Indian Idol Has Changed My Life’

‘Shreya (Ghoshal) ma’am said she hasn’t heard a voice like mine before, and added that even in the future, there won’t be another voice like mine.’

Indian Idol 15 Winner **Manasi Ghosh** impressed not only with her considerable singing talents but also because of her ability to hold the floor with rare showmanship. Throughout her dream run on the show, Manasi was never afraid to innovate with her powerful vocals through musical variations that departed from the original song. The young talent displays the same can-do attitude in an interview . “I will be going for a UK tour and performing live. Badshah sir said that we will be doing a song and I am currently working on a Bengali single that will be released in a few days.”

Congratulations. Mid-way through the competition, I had a gut feeling you would win Indian Idol 15. Did you have an intuition too?

Thank you for your wishes. From the very first day, all I wanted was to be a finalist. I did not have any intuition about emerging the winner. By God’s grace and the love of the viewers, I won the trophy. I’m very grateful.

Considering your strong preference for non-vegetarian food, what was the celebratory meal you had on winning the trophy?



I ate my mummy ke haath ka maach-bhaat (fish and rice made by my mother).

What were the other celebrations like?

My parents were overwhelmed with joy. The day after the results, they surprised me with a road show. I was in an open jeep with music playing while my neighbours danced. It was grand. People showered me with petals and love.

What do you think will change after this win and the prize money?

I have not received the prize money yet, so I can’t say anything. But the Indian Idol show and the trophy has changed my life.

What was going through your mind when you held the Indian Idol trophy in your hand?

When I won the trophy, I went literally blank. My head was numb. I didn’t know how to react. But deep down inside, I felt a surge of gratitude for my audience, mentors, gurus, friends, parents and God.

Did you feel upset for your munh bola bhai Subhajit Chakraborty when he lost?

No, because he did not lose.



I don't know what I'm losing. He was literally one of the best singers in Indian Idol. I loved the fact that my brother also won.

What were your feelings for Sneha Shankar, your rival-turned-friend?

Sneha Shankar and I continue to be good friends.

If not for you, who would you have elected as the winner?

If not me, then I think Subhajit would be a great option for the winner.

What are the moments you will treasure the most from the show?

The comments of the judges on my performances and my interactions with the fellow singers. Most importantly, getting the opportunity from Lalit Pandit to sing a song (with Shaan for the film, Manu Kya Karega). Vishal (Dadlani) sir offered me a live performance with him on Sheila Ki Jawaani for one of his shows. On the eve of the finale, Badshah sir also confirmed that I will be collaborating with him for a song in the near future.

Did Lalit Pandit signing you give an added boost to your confidence?

Confidence boost? I was confident before also! But undoubtedly, I was happy and grateful to Lalit sir for giving me this very nice opportunity. I unlearned things as well. After recording the song, I even forgot that I had recorded it. So I didn't let it consume me in any negative way.

You were confidence personified while firing questions to the star guests on Indian Idol. Who was most fun as an interviewee?

The top three were Akshay Kumar, Kangana Ranaut and Karan Johar.

The judges heaped you with praises. Which compliment did you like the most?

Shreya (Ghoshal) ma'am said she hasn't heard a voice like mine before, and added that even in the future, there won't be another voice like mine. I am happy when someone describes my voice as unique, especially somebody of the calibre of Shreya ma'am. I was lucky to have lots of praise showered on me from all the judges.

Between Shreya's soft style of singing and Sunidhi Chauhan's robust signature, whose school of singing do you think you belong to?

I belong to both schools but really enjoy singing the Sunidhi style of songs.

Where do you go from here? Have you been approached with any further singing or jingles or hosting offers?

I will be going for a UK tour and performing live.

After your attitude in the audition and the fact that you sang Crazy Kiya Re from Dhoom 2, you were labelled Crazy Girl. Is that how you view yourself?

I am a crazy girl. Hence, the name!





'People Don't Recognise Me Now. One Day They Will'

You need patience. You need to focus and keep going. That is true not only for the entertainment industry, but in every field. Only then, the magic happens.

A native of Jalandhar, acting in Bollywood was a distant dream for **Paramvir Singh Cheema.** But he made it happen when he landed in Mumbai and took up theatre. While trying to break into films, the everyday struggles of the city and lack of good opportunities became overwhelming.

Just when he thought of quitting acting, the actor was roped in for **Tabbar, one of the best reviewed OTT shows of 2021.** This was followed by **Chamak, now in its second season.**

But the break Paramvir was really hoping for in his 10-year-long career came with **Black Warrant.**

"The acting profession is very uncertain... I thought of quitting

acting in 2021... My father gave me the confidence to keep going,"

How has life changed after Black Warrant?

Black Warrant reached the right people. I have received so much love from directors and big actors. I was waiting for that to happen.

What makes the character of Shivraj Singh Mangat special to you?

When I read the script and Vikram sir (showrunner Vikramaditya Motwane) finalised me for the role, I said one thing to him: 'Sir, this character is for me, I have to do it.' I have seen the turmoil of Punjab, and what has happened there. What happened in 1984 and other things, people have that in their hearts. When I got a chance to portray Mangat, I felt I can show people what Punjab has been through.

One of my favourite scenes in Black Warrant is in the first episode where you say 'Kar pata' to Zahan Kapoor. The way you say those words shows your annoyance, slight anger but also concern for your colleague.

It was an interesting introduction to your character.

That's an improvisation, it was not written in the script! When we were entering the jail, the entry was shot before but that scene was shot after a month. When I looked at Zahan, the way he was performing, confused, didn't know what to do, eager to prove himself, and just saying something to Tomar (Rahul Bhat's character), that back story helped me to do the scene.

It was a one take shot, and when the camera stopped on me, I just said, 'kar pata'. I thought 'yeh kat jaayega (the scene will be edited out)'. But then everybody liked it. (Smiles) I am very glad that this is your favourite scene from the show. You are the first one to say this to me.

You don't wear a turban in real life. Do people fail to recognise you as the jailer from Black Warrant?

That's fine if they don't recognise me. Right now, they are not recognising me (but) one day they will. I have started getting my space.

You are the first generation actor from your family. What gave you confidence to come to Bombay and become one?

I never thought of being an actor. I used to watch Filmfare awards and enjoy it thoroughly. I wanted to stay away from home for some time, so I went to Delhi.

I participated in the Mr India contest and won. After that, I came to Bombay for a random ad shoot. A friend introduced me to theatre. I felt theatre was the best way to release and express myself.

When you perform on stage, it's a great feeling when people cheer you on and praise you. I said let's do this.





How did you get your first acting job?

It happened with television. I asked my family to give me six months.

Then this audition came to me for Kaleerein, a TV show. It came in the last month of those six months that I asked for from my parents.

I had to do something, only then would my father allow me to stay in Bombay. I auditioned for the serial and got the part. But after that, I did not get any work. Then COVID happened and I went back to my hometown.

But even then, I never stopped auditioning. From there, I got my breakthrough show, Tabbar.



How did you manage through this struggling period?

My father was supporting me. Bombay is a very expensive city -- the rent, the food, everything is very expensive.

But my father is also getting old. He was paying me but there is so much pressure on him.

That's why I thought of quitting acting in 2021. But then Tabbar happened.

This industry is high on favouritism. As an outsider, did you ever think that the lack of connections hindered your opportunities?

I used to think that all the time. It was very hard to crack the industry before OTT.

If there were some connections, it would have been easier.

When OTT came, I was confident that actors from different places would get something. OTT is the space for new actors, and from OTT, you can jump to films.

WATCH: Paramvir shares his star-struck moment

You played the lead in Chamak, but it didn't give you recognition that you might have expected. Did it upset you?

Not really. You need patience. You need to focus and keep going. That is true not only for the entertainment industry, but in every field. Only then, the magic happens. I have a degree in law. If I had pursued that, I would have been earning. The acting profession is very uncertain. My father gave me the confidence to keep going.

WATCH: Why Paramvir is against actors posting their gym selfies

What's next for you?

I am doing a film with Anand L Rai. There's also Border 2, my first commercial film. You will see me doing action in it.

A Punjabi film is also in the pipeline as well as a couple of OTT shows returning with the second season.



‘I Needed To Deep Dive Into My Anger..’

‘I have achieved a sort of liberation as an actor and as a person after Khakee: The Bengal Chapter.’

Bandish Bandits actor **Ritwik Bhowmik** makes his mark again in a completely contrasting role in Khakee: The Bengali Chapter. “I was always worried about being typecast but with this show, I have left behind my worries,” Ritwik tells **Subhash K Jha.**

After the soft refined musician, you play a gangster. How were you able to pull off this transition so effortlessly?
That’s a very generous compliment, thank you. Growing up on stage really helps you to be easily moldable in various shapes and forms. I guess my constant need to offer something new has driven me to go from Radhe in Bandish Bandits to Sagor in Khakee: The Bengal Chapter.

Khakee proves you are a versatile actor. Do you feel more confident about your skills now?
Performing in Khakee was almost cathartic. The makers of the show were very clear about how they wanted to treat these inhuman characters with human emotions, so I needed to deep dive into my own angst, anger and ambition to bring Sagor to life. I guess more than confidence, I feel I have achieved a sort of liberation as an actor and as a person after this show.

What was your reaction when Neeraj Pandey offered you this part?
I was over the moon to know that Neeraj sir and the makers of Khakee deemed me fit to play a role like Sagor. I was always worried about being typecast but with this show and these makers, I have left behind my worries, as Neeraj Pandey saw that not many others did. I’ll always be indebted.

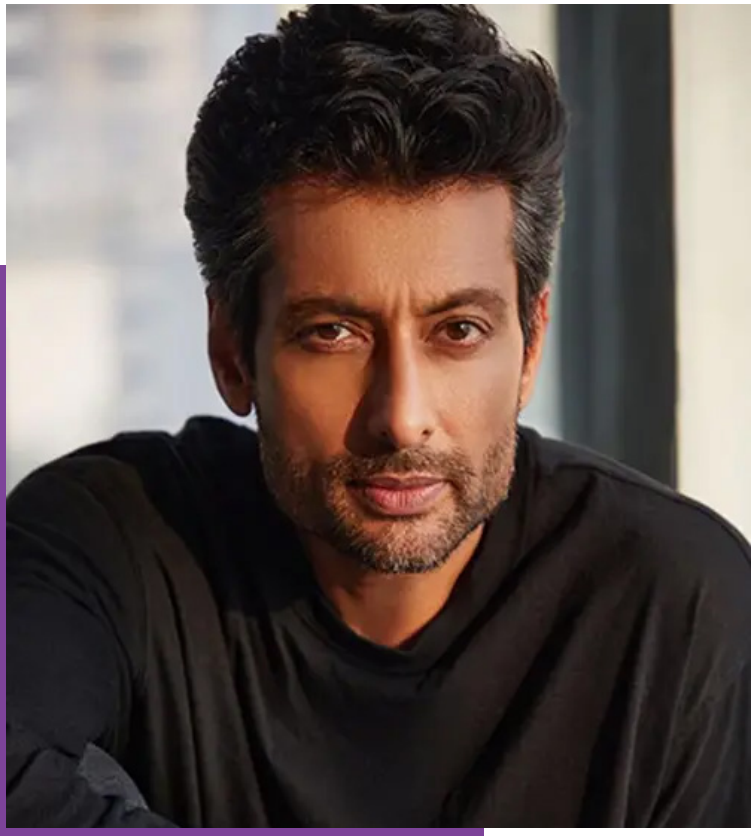
How did you prepare for your part?
My co-star Aadil (Zafar Khan) and I went through rigorous workshops and rehearsals to shape and form our characters. Our directors gave us a free hand in building these parts from the page and bringing them to life. The icing on the cake was the time we spent in Kolkata. The city, more than any workshop or any rehearsal, really showed us who/how we should be to become Sagor and Ranjit.

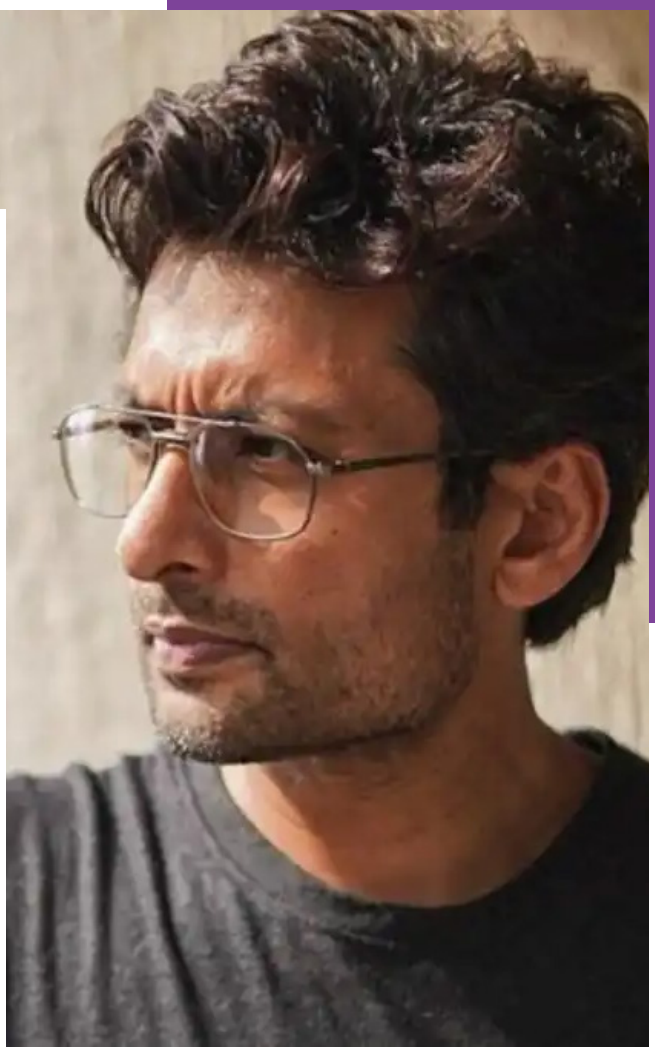
Khakee is a new beginning for your career. How do you intend to take this forward?
The most important learning that I have taken away as a professional actor post Khakee is that I need to keep sharpening my skills and oiling my machinery as an artist. Everything else falls into place.You only receive what you’re ready to receive. So from here on, I stay prepared for limitless opportunities.



‘I NEVER WANTED TO BECOME AN ACTOR’

‘Once I started acting, I gradually started liking it and the perks that come with it.’





There has been a lot of talk lately about **Indraneil Sengupta** and his divorce from his wife of 14 years, Barkha Bisht. But the actor chooses not to focus on that and instead, look at his latest film, the Bengali release Puratawn, which co-stars Sharmila Tagore. “When I went on the set and met Sharmilaji for the first time, I was a little apprehensive. But she’s such a warm person and that whole aura about her... she made everyone feel comfortable, so it was very easy working with her,” Indraneil tells.

You have been in the news for a very public divorce.

My divorce is in court right now; it’s a sub judice case, so I would prefer not to talk about it. I do not believe in being vocal about things because I do not understand the concept of a public trial. I choose to keep quiet.

How do you view your journey as an actor so far?

I love my journey in this industry because I have gradually grown. I started off as a model, then I got into acting because that was the logical thing to do. I never wanted to become an actor but once I started acting, I gradually started liking it and the perks that come with it. But I was not really into the craft of acting till a very later stage in life. I guess in the last five-six years, I have really got hooked on art and have been exploring it much more. I am loving this phase of my life. I get to explore so much; I am at the best stage of my life now.

How did you bag this role in Puratawn?

Director Suman Ghosh called and said that he wanted to narrate a script to me. I landed up at his place and then he narrated this beautiful script, which had this amazing character called Rajeev. I thought I would fit into this role. In addition to that, he told me

that Rituparna Sengupta's company is producing it. I was excited about that too because I have collaborated with Ritu on about six films and it has always been a pleasant experience to work with her.

How was the experience of working with Sharmila Tagore?

The final 'carrot' came my way when he told me that Sharmilaji will be making a comeback into Bengali films after 14 years with this. I was thrilled to know that I would be a part of her comeback film.

Most of your scenes are with Sharmilaji and Rituparna. That must have made Puratawan a happy experience?

Yes. When I went on set and met Sharmilaji for the first time, I was a little apprehensive. But she's such a warm person and that whole aura about her... she made everyone feel comfortable, so it was very easy working with her. I think actors thrive in that environment which Sharmilaji provides by being so nice.

Which of your projects so far do you consider to be important?

I have done quite a few projects in Hindi and Bengali, one in Marathi as well. The Hindi projects that I have been associated with and would be most remembered for are Sujoy Ghosh's Kahaani and Anubhuti Kashyap's Dr G. Vikram Bhatt's 1920 was one of the earlier films that I did. I have done quite a bit of OTT like Human on JioHotstar, Aranyak on Netflix, Broken News on ZEE5, Aarya on JioHotstar and a few more. These are the memorable ones that I have really enjoyed.

And in Bengali?

In Bengali, I have done a lot of good films. The ones really mentionable would be Arekti Premer Golpo, directed by Kaushik Ganguly and co-starring Ritupurno Ghosh. Then there was Srijit Mukherjee's Autograph and Mishor Rohoshyo as well as Buddhadev Dasgupta's Janala. Purawatan is one of the biggest films I have been a part of. It's a very important film for me in terms of the performance that Suman Ghosh has been able to extract out of me, plus the space the film has given me, the audience it has reached out to.

Tell us about your forthcoming projects.

I have done a film directed by Tannishtha Chatterjee, co-starring Kirti Kulhari, Sharib Hashmi and Monica Dogra. The post-production is over and now they are looking at a festival release. I am keen on seeing how the audience takes it. I have a film with Ajay Devgn Production, which will probably release in a month or two. It's called Maa and Kajol is the protagonist. There is a Bengali film called Goodbye Mountain, with Rituparna. It may be out in a month or so. I did a Netflix film called Chor Nikal Ke Bhaaga a couple of years back. There will be a sequel to it; we will start shooting in September-October.

You have been a part of television, cinema and OTT. Which platform do you enjoy the most?

Every platform that I have worked on has given me something, be it television, cinema or OTT. But I have always maintained that I liked cinema the most because it provides you with that space and that luxury of time to delve into characters, to work on roles more, to get into the nuances of a character or a scene. Television doesn't give you that because it is constrained by deadlines and budgets. You have to churn out episodes, so you do not get much time to get into details.

But cinema also has limited scope because there are so many actors but only a particular number of films are being made in a year. So the number of actors getting absorbed may be a little lesser than how much television absorbs throughout the year.

I guess OTT gives you the best of both worlds?

OTT is the saving grace. It has great content and is comparable to cinema at times. There is some OTT content that is better than cinema. All the good actors are doing it, so there are good makers and good quality work happening. I love being an actor on OTT because I get to work with brilliant makers, brilliant actors and learn everyday. So OTT is the most practical and promising medium for me now. At the same time, if something nice and relevant in cinema is offered to me, I would jump at it. I'm not looking at television for the time being because I enjoy the other two mediums more.









Summer Skincare Tips

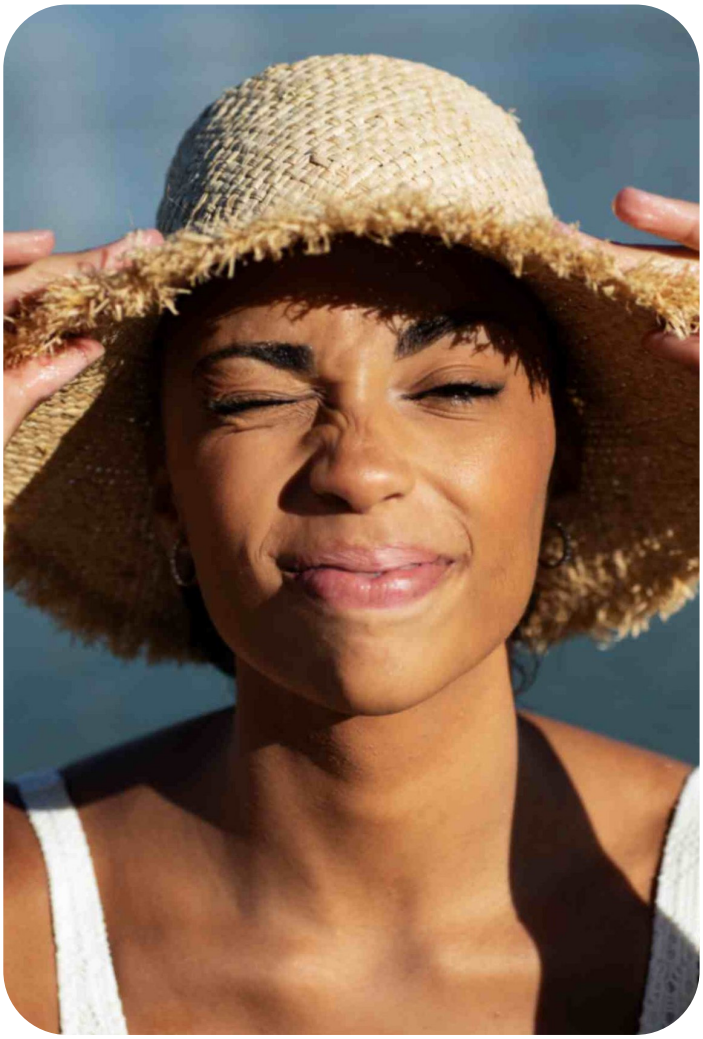
It is that time of the year when hot coffee or tea gets replaced by tender coconut, and your desirable clothes become only cotton fabric. Indian summers can be harsh, which leads to excessive sweating. Excessive sweating can lead to exhaustion, and proper hydration is required. Our skin tends to change depending on the weather conditions. Summer season can also come with certain seasonal changes as the weather gets hotter than usual. As a result, sebum can be produced by the skin's sebaceous glands. Excessive sebum production can lead to clogged pores, stickiness and acne. People with oily skin suffer a lot during the summer because sebum tends to get mixed with sweat, leading to stickiness and clogged pores. The reason for proper skincare requirements during summers.

What impact can the summer season have on your skin?

The rise in temperatures can trigger an increase in sebum production from the skin's sebaceous glands. This excess sebum can clog pores, causing stickiness and potentially leading to acne breakouts. Those with oily skin are particularly prone to these issues during the summer, as sweat mixes with sebum, exacerbating the problem. This underscores the importance of a proper skincare routine tailored to the summer months.

Tips to take care of your skin during summer

Human skin, the body's largest organ, consists of three layers: the epidermis, dermis and hypodermis. It serves as the body's primary barrier against UV light, pathogens, chemicals and mechanical injury and can indicate our general health. As seasons change, it's important to care for your skin. Here are some tips to protect your skin during the summer months.



1. Cleansing, Toning and Moisturising

Sun exposure, dust and dirt can damage your skin and lead to pigmentation and ageing. So it is important to follow a skincare regimen like cleansing, toning and moisturising. These skincare regimens will help you cleanse your skin and remove any dirt that has clogged your skin's pores. This can further lead to other problems like acne. So, it is suggested that the proper cleansing, toning and moisturising process be followed.

2. Hydration is the key

Summer season can be harsh and lead to dehydration, which can primarily cause dryness and itching. It is essential to drink enough water, which will keep you hydrated and prevent your body from heating up. Additionally, frequently splashing water on your face will help keep your skin refreshed and hydrated.

3. Use sunscreen

The sun produces UV A and UV B rays, leading to skin tanning. These tans can be stubborn, and you cannot get rid of them very easily. Apart from these stubborn tans, it can also lead to fine lines, age spots, premature ageing and wrinkles. Sunscreen protects your skin from these harmful rays and is one of summer's most vital skincare products. A sunscreen with SPF 30-50 is ideal for all skin types.

4. Avoid heavy makeup

Heavy makeup can prevent your skin from breathing and clog pores. Avoid using heavy foundation and other cosmetics like compact powder. You don't have to avoid makeup completely; try using a tinted moisturizer and a tinted lip balm. Also, remove makeup at night to let your skin breathe.

5. Face wash to remove excessive oil

During the summer, oily skin can lead to excessive oil production, leading to acne and breakouts. The best way to reduce excessive oil production is by washing your face regularly, which will also help remove dirt and other impurities. People with oily skin should go for a face wash that suits them, and people with dry skin should use a non-foaming cleanser. An alcohol-free and pH-balanced cleanser is recommended.

6. Exfoliation for healthy skin

Exfoliating helps remove dirt and oil from the skin, but using a scrub that suits your skin type is important. Applying too much pressure can damage the skin since the scrub contains small particles. Use a mild exfoliating agent that won't harm the skin but will help remove dirt and pollutants.

7. Don't miss out on the seasonal fruits and vegetables

Seasonal fruits such as cucumber, watermelon and muskmelon contain nutrients that help keep you hydrated and improve skin health. In addition to watermelon and cucumber, fruits like jackfruit, cherries and pineapples also offer nutritional benefits that improve skin health.

8. Avoid taking hot showers

Taking a hot bath during the summer season can lead to dryness. Cold showers will help your body to cool down and prevent acne. So, taking cold showers is advised. However, steaming is recommended as it will help open pores and also prevent the clogging of dirt in your skin.

9. Face packs

To hydrate your skin, use a moisturising face pack. Papaya, known for its natural moisturising and anti-ageing properties, can be mashed and applied directly to your face. Leave it on for a few minutes, and then rinse with warm water. Applying this mixture 2-3 times a week can help remove tan. Additionally, you can use yoghurt on your face. Yoghurt helps retain moisture and soften the skin during the summer. Simply apply a generous amount of yoghurt to your face, leave it on for 10 minutes, and then wash it with cold water for radiant skin.

10. Coconut oil can be a saviour

Coconut oil can work wonders for your skin, surpassing the benefits of expensive creams or lotions. Its moisturising properties are particularly effective for dry skin. Moreover, it reduces inflammation and aids in wound healing. Before bathing, apply coconut oil to your face and body. Afterwards, bathe in cold water for a refreshing sensation and revitalised skin.

11. Appropriate soap

The choice of soap or shower gel is crucial. Harsh soaps can strip away the skin's natural oils, leading to dryness. Opt for natural soaps or bath gels that help restore moisture and prevent dryness instead of using harsh soaps.

"05 Tips"

For a healthy summer

Great weather and long days give a big boost to any healthy summer goals. Follow these tips to maximize your results and avoid seasonal cancer risks. Do you count down the days to summer? Dreaming of lazy days by the pool or a vacation outdoors? The long days and warmth of summer provide endless opportunities for fun. Why not make sure you are healthy while you're enjoying yourself? Feel your best in the coming months with these simple tips



1. Choose in-season fruits and vegetables

Eating in-season produce is good any time of the year. It's often less expensive because those in-season fruits and vegetables don't have to be transported as far. They are more nutrient rich because they stay on the branch longer. And in summer, the large amount of in-season produce means it's simple to eat a huge variety of antioxidants and phytochemicals. Healthy summer produce All that bright sunshine means some of your favorite fruits and veggies are at their best during the summer months. In-season produce can taste better and is healthier. If you've been toying with the idea of switching to a plant-based diet, summer is a great time to go for it.



2. Travel healthy

If you're traveling, it's easy to let your healthy lifestyle plans slide. It's hard to find nutritious options when you're surrounded by fast food restaurants. And long periods trapped in a car or airplane can sap energy and drive up temptation. Try these tips for a healthy road trip. Healthy summer road trip tips If you fly or take a train or bus, take a brisk walk around the terminal – and skip the moving sidewalks. When you reach your destination, make your walk to baggage claim or the exit a quick one to get your heart rate up and give you a boost. If you stay at a hotel or with friends or relatives, make use of the hotel gym. If that's not an option, find an exercise video online, or use an exercise DVD or an exercise app. Explore the area by taking a jog, hike or brisk walk.



3. Summer exercise

The idea of breaking out your summer wardrobe could be just the thing to push you into that healthy exercise routine you've been planning. And exercise doesn't only make you look good, it helps you get to a healthy weight, which reduces your risk of disease. Boost your metabolism, strengthen your bones and tone up with this easy strength training routine. Do it two times every week. 6 easy strength training exercises Take advantage of the cool mornings and evenings to get in your cardiovascular exercise. Whether you walk, run, swim, play soccer, baseball or V else, aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise or 75 minutes of vigorous exercise each week.



4. Barbecue Healthy

Grilling can be healthy if you follow these simple rules. Healthy summer barbecue tips Ditch the hamburgers and hot dogs. Red meats like pork, lamb and beef, and processed meats like hot dogs, ham, sausage and bacon increase your risk for colorectal cancer. Choose healthier proteins such as skinless chicken, turkey breasts or fish. Cook your meats properly to avoid exposure to cancer-causing substances. That means trim the fat to make your meat as lean as possible and don't char or burn it. When you cook meat at high temperatures over open flames, chemicals called heterocyclic amines (HCAs) are formed. HCAs have been found to cause DNA changes that may increase the risk of cancer. Marinate your meat for 30 minutes. This also reduces HCAs. Balance out the protein by adding a variety of colors to your plate with those seasonal fruits and vegetables. Try grilling onions, zucchini, tomatoes, bell peppers, eggplant, mushrooms, corn on the cob and watermelon.



5. Remember Sunscreen

Perhaps the golden rule for a healthy summer is to make sure you stay safe in the sun. Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer.

Follow these simple rules to reduce your risk:

1. Seek shade between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., when the sun's UV rays are strongest.

2. Wear protective clothing, including a wide-brimmed hat, sunglasses with UVA and UVB protection, and dark, tightly woven clothing.

3. Wear sunscreen that's at least SPF 30, broad-spectrum and water resistant. Apply liberally every two hours.

4. Check your skin monthly using the ABC guide.



KAZAKHSTAN

Best Cities to Visit for Your Holiday

Kazakhstan, the ninth-largest country, covers vast areas of treasures that are yet to be discovered. The timeless charm of this Central Asian gem lies in its beautiful cities. Kazakhstan cities will leave you in awe of their beauty and weirdness. There are unearthed sites, unexplored attractions, and unwitnessed landscapes waiting for you to discover. From the Atlai Mountains to the Caspian Sea, Majestic Canyon, Colossal Glaciers, and much more, an array of experiences awaits your arrival. With two time zones and five climate zones, Kazakhstan has a wide geographical diversity that accounts for exciting travel experiences. If you want to experience everything that Kazakhstan has to offer, you must skim through this post. We have curated a list of the best Kazakhstan cities where you can relish dramatic mountains, canyons, valleys, and lakes.





01 Almaty

Almaty is known as the largest cultural hub of Kazakhstan. It is one of the gorgeous Kazakhstan cities, offering a beautiful outdoor setting. Set in the foothills of the Alatau mountains, Almaty offers picture-perfect landscapes. The soaring snow-capped mountains create a gracious backdrop for everyone. Kazakhstan offers vibrant attractions such as the Central State Museum, Zenkov Cathedral, Charyn Canyon, Kok Tobe Park, and Museum of Folk Musical Instruments. Besides, there are various exciting outdoor activities that you can indulge in. From hiking the mountains to sitting by the upper lake, Almaty has so much for its tourists.



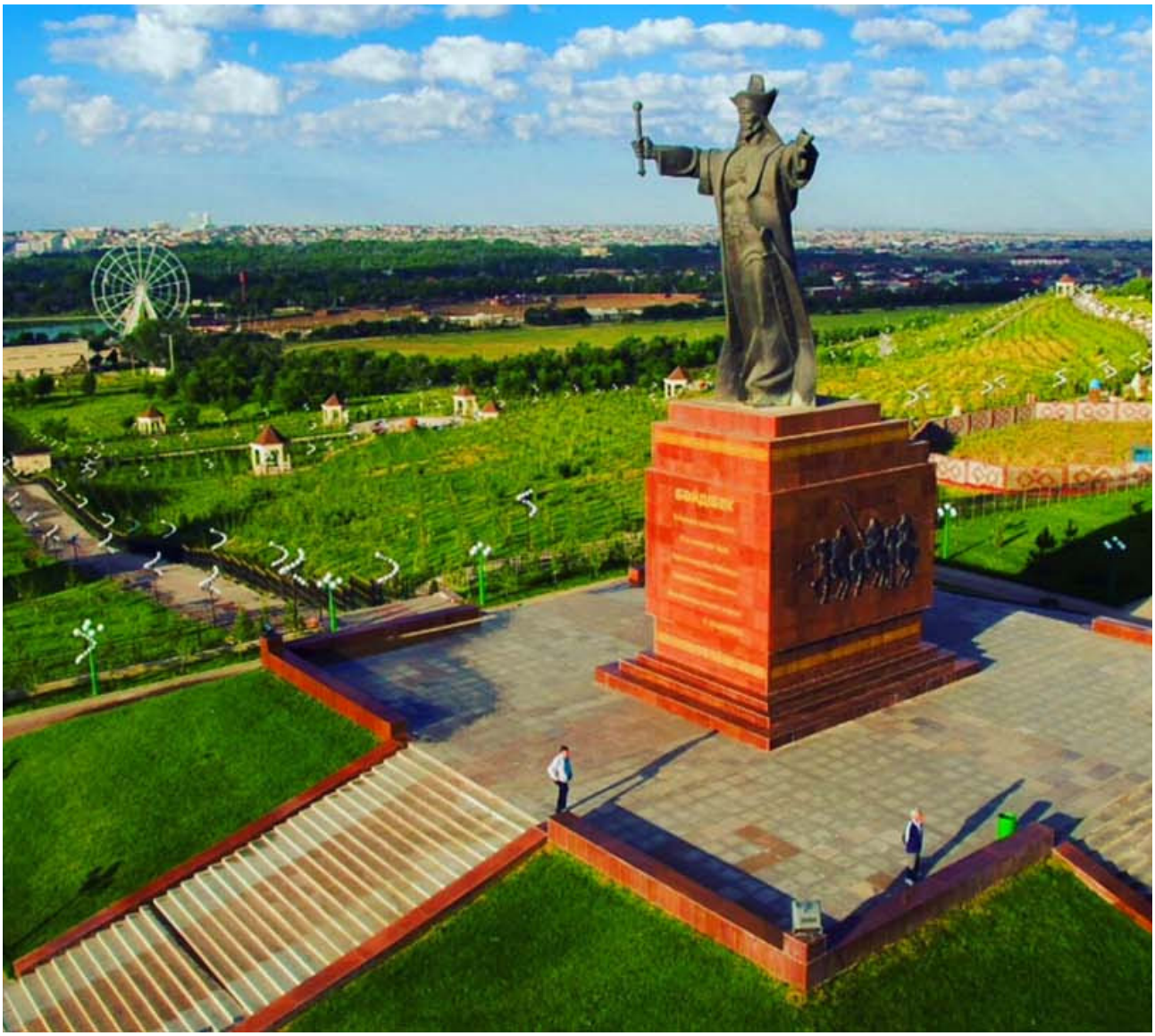
02 Astana

Astana is one of the best cities in Kazakhstan to visit. It is now known as the Nur-Sultan. This capital city is a living example of a modernized nation. With a plethora of corporate centers and soaring skyscrapers, Astana offers a magnificent panoramic view. You can experience Soviet, Western, and Kazakh influences wherever you go. There is no lack of offbeat experiences in this cosmopolitan city, with forward-looking youngsters, architectural marvels, peaceful parks, and finger-licking food. Some major attractions in Astana are Bayterek Tower, City Park, Sky Beach Club, Khan Shatyr Entertainment Center, The State Theatre of Opera & Ballet, and more.



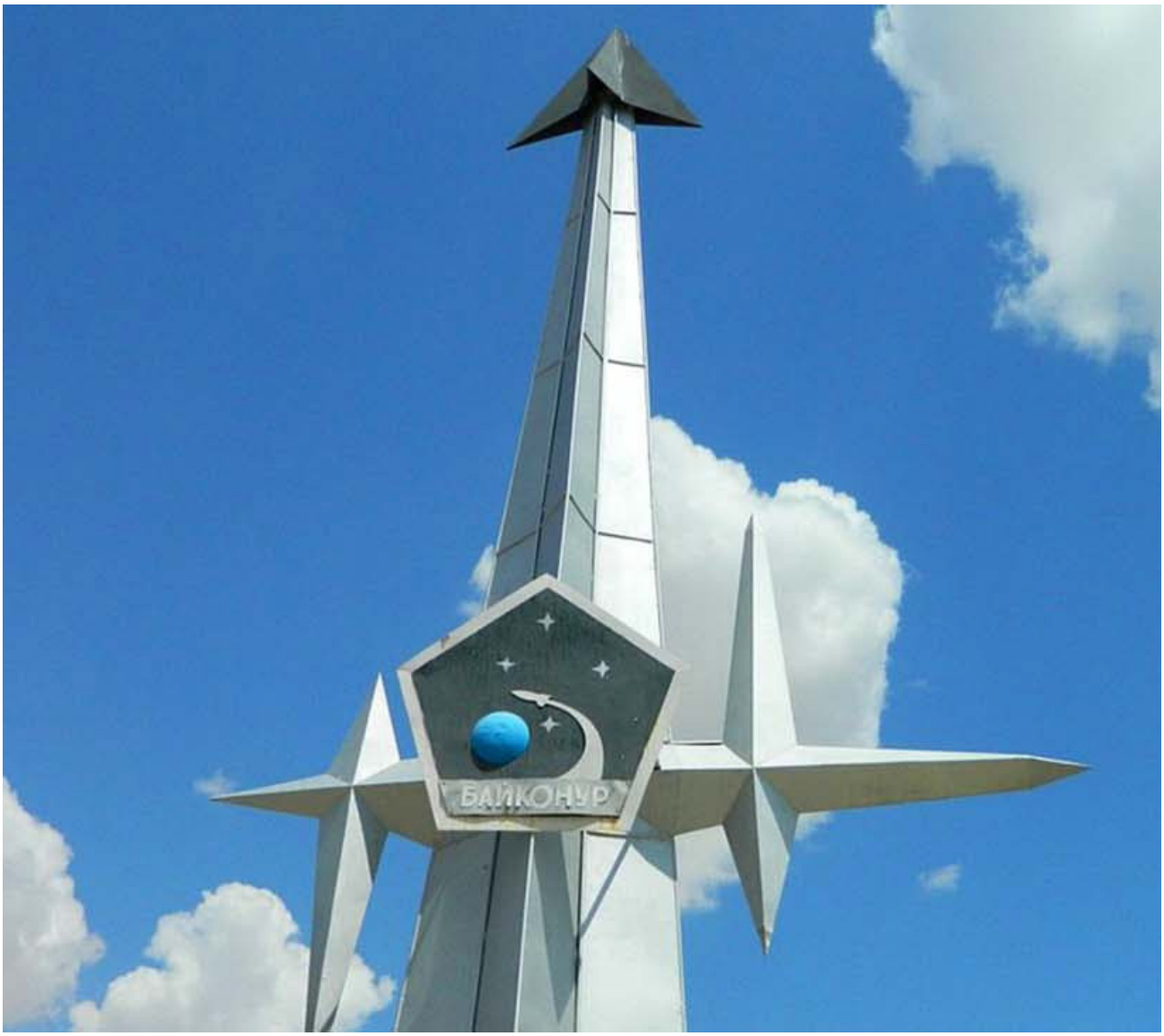
03 Taraz

Taraz is one of the most enticing Kazakhstan cities that stands as a testament to the nation's rich history. Filled with captivating landscapes, diverse culture, and thriving attractions, Taraz is a budding tourist destination. This city offers a marvelous blend of ancient traditions and modern amenities. If you are seeking historical insights and contemporary experiences, Taraz is an ideal place for you. Some major Taraz attractions worth exploring are Aisha Bibi Mausoleum, Zhengis Park, Central Mosque Taraz, Ancient Taraz Archaeological Park, and more. You can even enjoy the festivals and events in Taraz that happen throughout the year.



04 Shymkent

Shymkent is one of the stunning cities to visit in Kazakhstan that unveils the charms of Kazakhstan. Located in the southern part of Kazakhstan, Shymkent is an alluring tourist destination. It beacons travelers with natural splendors, cultural heritages, and gorgeous attractions. Being the third largest city in Shymkent, you can witness numerous historical landmarks, diverse traditions, mouth watering food, and contemporary marvels. Shymkent boasts plenty of cultural sites, historical treasures, and UNESCO Sites that captivate the heart of every traveler. This city promises an unforgettable vacation through the southern charm of Kazakhstan.



05 Baikonur

Baikonur is one of the most visited Kazakhstan cities to visit. Situated in the steppe of Kazakhstan, Baikonur holds a Soviet charm that allures visitors from around the world. The famous Baikonur Cosmodrome, with countless space missions, attracts the attention of many visitors. Tourists can take guided tours to witness the launch pads where iconic missions like Yuri Gagarin's groundbreaking journey began. Some other attractions in Baikonur are Yuri Gagarin Statue, Nadelin Catastrophe, Soyuz Spacecraft Model, etc. If you are a science enthusiast, this city will welcome you with open arms.

Best Places to Visit in India During Summer

Plan your summer vacation in India with our guide to the best destinations! Escape the heat with cool hill stations, scenic beaches, and more. India, a land of different landscapes, has many summer destinations to suit every type of traveller. From the foggy highlands of the Himalayas to the sun-kissed beaches of the Andaman Islands, summer in India can be a thrilling experience if the correct destination is chosen. Whether you're looking for adventure, relaxation, cultural immersion, or a combination, this guide will show you the best places to visit in India during summer so that you can plan your next summer destination in India.





01 Manali, Himachal Pradesh

Manali is a haven for nature lovers and adventurers alike. Its temperate environment, abundant foliage, and snow-capped peaks provide an ideal respite from the sweltering summer heat. The town combines old-world elegance with modern attractions, making it an excellent summer tourist place in India for honeymooners, backpackers, and families.

Top Attractions

1. Hadimba Temple - A tranquil, centuries-old temple situated among towering deodar trees and renowned for its superb wooden architecture.

2. Solang Valley - It is a hotspot for adventure sports and spectacular mountain vistas, with activities such as zorbing and ropeway rides.

3. Old Manali Cafes - Cosy cafes with excellent food, live music, and a relaxed atmosphere, ideal for unwinding after a long day of exploring.

Activities To Try:

1. Paragliding over the gorgeous valley provides unparalleled aerial views.
2. Whitewater rafting on the Beas River is an exciting activity.
3. For mountain lovers, consider trekking to Hampta Pass or Rohtang Pass.
4. Exploring the busy local markets for souvenirs, woollen apparel, and artisan jewellery.

02 Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir

Ladakh is a country of stark beauty, with rocky mountains, breathtaking lakes, and a distinct Tibetan-influenced culture. The beautiful blue skies and stunning scenery make it a must-see place in India during summer for those seeking seclusion and excitement.

Top Attractions

1. Pangong Tso Lake - This is a breathtaking high-altitude lake that changes colours during the day, producing a captivating visual spectacle.

2. Nubra Valley - It is a strange desert valley with dunes and double-humped camels, creating an almost unearthly sight.

3. Magnetic Hill - This is an optical illusion in which cars appear to defy gravity, providing a unique experience for tourists.

Activities To Try:

1. Bike through the world's highest motorable passes, such as Khardung La.
2. Trekking via remote Himalayan trails, including the legendary Markha Valley trip.
3. Visiting historic monasteries such as Hemis, Thiksey, and Diskit to discover Ladakh's spiritual essence.
4. Taking a camel ride across the frigid desert of Hunder is a unique experience.





03 Kashmir (Srinagar, Gulmarg, and Pahalgam)

Kashmir, known as 'Paradise on Earth,' boasts beautiful views of snow-capped peaks, verdant valleys, and tranquil lakes. The region is rich in culture, history, and natural beauty, making it a perfect summer destination in India.

Top Attractions

1. Dal Lake - It is famous for its shikara rides and houseboats, which allow visitors to enjoy peaceful floating stays.

2. Tulip Garden - Asia's most extensive tulip garden is in full bloom during the spring and summer, creating a riot of colours.

3. Gulmarg Gondola - One of the world's highest cable cars, with stunning views of the surrounding peaks.

Activities To Try:

1. Shikara rides at sunset on Dal Lake provide a lovely experience.
2. Gulmarg offers a one-of-a-kind high-altitude golfing experience with its lush green meadows.
3. Stroll through Pahalgam's apple orchards and taste fresh local products.

04 Rishikesh, Uttarakhand

With its beautiful blend of adventure and spirituality, Rishikesh is a haven for individuals seeking both thrills and tranquillity. Set along the banks of the holy Ganges River, it is a must-visit place in summer in India for yoga enthusiasts and adrenaline junkies.

Top Attractions

1. Triveni Ghat - A sacred confluence of rivers where the evening aarti is a captivating spiritual experience in Rishikesh.

2. Beatles Ashram - A historic retreat where the Beatles meditated, which is today a graffiti-covered artistic haven.

3. Ram Jhula and Laxman Jhula - Iconic suspension bridges spanning the Ganges that provide breathtaking views and connect temple towns.

Activities To Try:

1. Whitewater rafting on the mighty Ganges, with rapids ranging from easy to complex.
2. Yoga and meditation retreats in peaceful ashrams for complete relaxation and renewal.
3. Bungee jumping from India's highest platform provides an adrenaline rush.





05 Andaman & Nicobar Islands

The Andaman Islands are a tropical paradise for those who enjoy beautiful beaches, turquoise waters, and marine life. Its pristine natural beauty and rich history make it a popular destination in summer in India.

Top Attractions

1. Radhanagar Beach - It is one of Asia's best beaches, with powdery white sand and crystal-clear blue waters.

2. Cellular Jail - This is a colonial-era historical relic that now serves as a museum recounting India's struggle for independence.

3. Havelock Island - A must-see destination for its breathtaking coastlines, lush foliage, and fascinating undersea life.

Activities To Try:

1. Scuba dive to discover magnificent coral reefs abounding with marine life.
2. Snorkelling through crystal-clear seas to see unusual species and sea turtles.
3. Beach hopping on many islands, including Neil Island and Ross Island.

May 2025

TAROT

Loveena Crystal Gaze

(Tea and Coffee Cup Reader, Tarot card reader)



ARIES
(March 21- April 19)

New avenues of income and Opportunities coming your way, Universe is blessing you with your dreams and desires. Relax, let Universe bring Changes in your Career and love life. Contact someone to whom you are attracted.

Angel msg- your prayers, Visualisations help you in your Career.

TAURUS
(April 20- May 21)

Universe is very Happy and your wish is being granted. What you have asked for is coming true. Stay positive because negativity could block your desire.Allow yourself to receive and glow. Money inflow is encouraging.

Angel msg- Love enters like Sunshine in your life.

GEMINI
(May 22- June 20)

Perfect timing for you to move forward. Now is the answer. Universe has opened gateway for you to easily step through. New home is indicated for you.

Angel msg- Take risk and initiative in your Career. You will reap profits.

CANCER
(June 21-July 22)

You will receive promotion, new job. Trust and follow through on a new business idea, or career Opportunity. Celebration period begins for you. Abundance coming in your life.

Angel msg- Angels are helping you in your business ventures.

LEO
(July 23- Aug 22)

Good time to invest in a new home, you are going closer to your goal, Miracles coming in your life. Finances are highlighted.

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

VIRGO
(Aug 23- Sept 22)

An upcoming trip out of town for work will bring prosperity and will beneficial for your Career. Go with the flow, Angels are guiding you. Contracts will be Signed.

Angel msg- Embrace your hearts desire, be happy.

LIBRA
(Sept 23- Oct 22)

Aura is energized for financial gains, Career will bring Miraculous results. Lot of appreciation coming your way. Angels are blessing you in your love life and Career.

Angel msg- Reach for the stars, your prayers have been heard and are getting answered.

SCORPIO
(Oct 23- Nov 22)

You are headed in the right direction, deals will be finalized, positive time begins for you. Universe bestows generosity on you.

Angel msg- Have faith, wishes have been heard by Angels.

SAGITTARIUS
(Nov 23- Dec 21)

Growth in your Career, Angels are guiding you to new horizons, go with the flow. All your hard work will bring fruit.

Angel msg- your dreams are blooming very fast.

CAPRICON
(Dec 22- Jan 20)

All doors are opening for you. Happiness awaits you now. God and Angels want you to enjoy your life. Aim high.

Angel msg- Soar with happiness, love life will blossom.

AQUARIUS
(Jan 21- Feb 18)

Pursue your dreams and desires, keep charging ahead. Expect Miraculous Solutions to appear in your life. Time is right for new venture.

Angel msg- fulfillment of wishes coming your way.

PISCES
(Feb 19- March 20)

Expect the unexpected, Universe is blessing you with lovely opportunities in your Career. Smooth road ahead.

Angel msg- Heaven is sending divine love in your life.

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- Project Work

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