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Life & Style of Stars

ANJALI SIVARAMAN

Women Have Desires, Dreams'

RISHABH SHETTY

I Won't Do Kantara Part 3 Unless...

TEJA SAJJA

They Kept Telling Me, "Why Are You Doing This Film?

SIMRATT KAUR RANDHAWA

I Never Thought I'd Be Doing Movies

AMEESHA PATEL

People half my age want to take me out

Rashmika Mandanna

Thamma is a very special film for me

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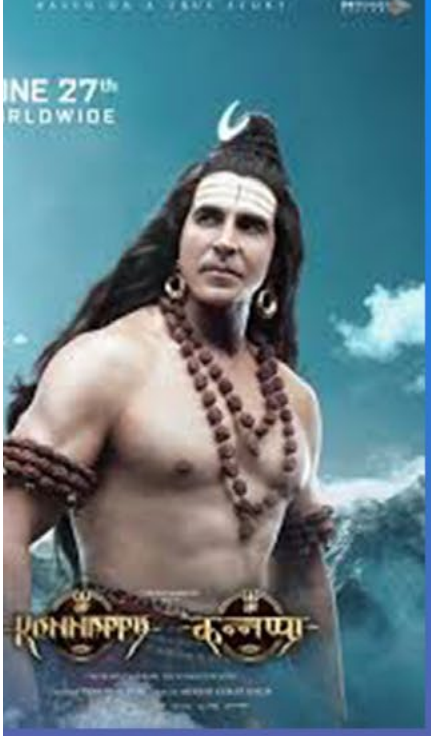

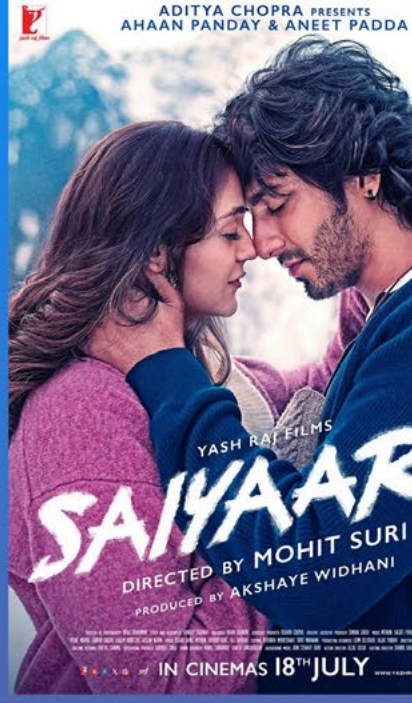

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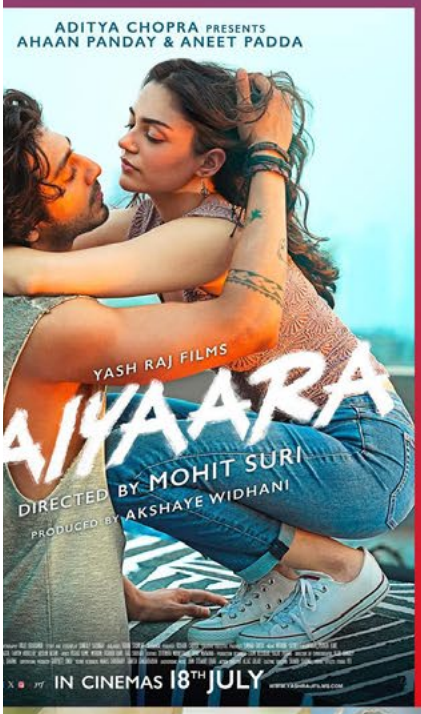

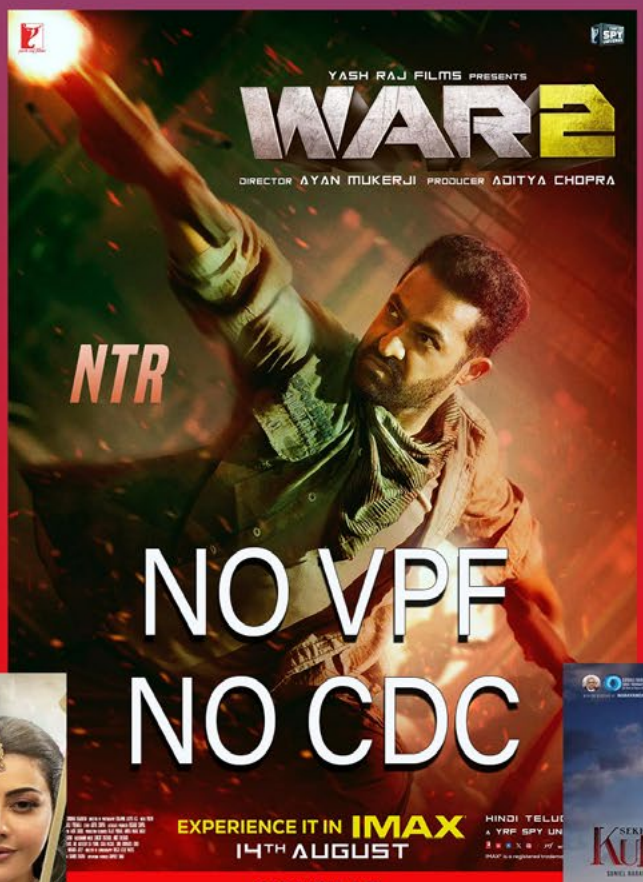

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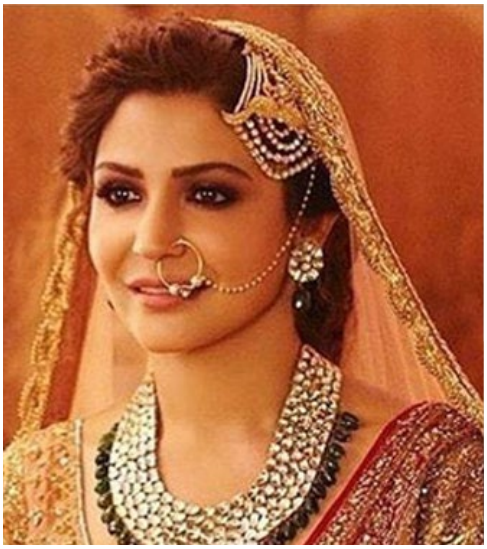
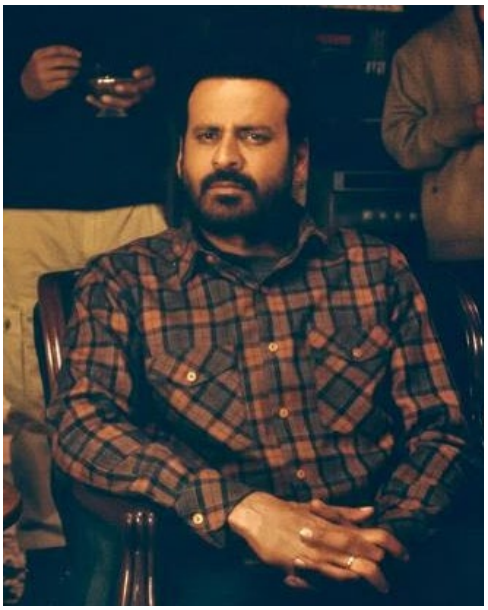




SEEMA PIMPLEY
EDITOR & PUBLISHER

Rashmika Mandanna 'Feeling Extra Grateful' This Dussehra, Thamma Actress Thanks Fans For THIS

"Rashmika Mandanna expressed her gratitude this Dussehra, thanking fans for their love on the Thamma trailer and song. The actress shared that she's "feeling extra grateful" for the overwhelming support."

Rashmika Mandanna is all smiles this Dussehra as she celebrates the love for her upcoming film Thamma. The actress took to social media to thank fans for their overwhelming response to the trailer and first song. She shared that she's feeling "extra grateful" for all the support and appreciation.

Rashmika Mandanna 'Feeling Extra Grateful' This Dussehra

Sharing gorgeous pictures in a saree, the Pushpa star wrote, "Happy Dussehra my love. This year, I'm feeling extra grateful because of all the love you've been showering on the Thamma trailer and our song."

She added, "Your messages, your excitement, your constant support… you make every moment bigger and happier for me. And I can't wait to see you all super sooooon during the promotions."

Thamma, which marks Rashmika's entry into Maddock Films' super-hit horror comedy universe, also features Ayushmann Khurrana, Nawazuddin Siddiqui, and Paresh Rawal. After Stree, Bhediya and Munjya, the franchise is bringing a vampire love story for fans. It is being touted as the first romance film in the universe.

Talking about Thamma, Rashmika earlier said in an official statement, "Thamma is a very special film for me because it brings together horror, comedy, folklore, and even a love story rooted in India. Playing Tadaka has been both challenging and exciting, as she's an age-old legend brought to life anew. I'm thankful to Maddock Films for giving me this opportunity once again, and I'm really looking forward to everyone experiencing Thamma."

Rashmika Mandanna opens up about stardom, says she's working for the brand 'Rashmika Mandanna'

Rashmika Mandanna reveals her emotional side in a candid interview, discussing the pressures of stardom that force her to maintain a curated public persona.

Millions know Rashmika Mandanna as a bubbly, stylish, and confident star—but behind that carefully shaped public image lies a more grounded and deeply emotional person, one that fans rarely get to see. In a recent candid interview, the actor opened up about how the pressures of stardom often force her to present a curated version of herself to the world.

Rashmika talks about the difference between her online and offline persona

In an interview with Nayandeep Rakshit, Rashmika said, "I am an actor, and I am working under this brand called Rashmika Mandanna. With all the advice people give—'Oh you can't say this, you can't behave like this, you can't do this'—that becomes your online personality. It is a part of you, but it is not entirely you."

She went on to describe the stark contrast between her public and private selves. "If you see me at home, you will be surprised what an old-school person I am. I will be the one feeding everyone, checking if they have rested well. I don't understand Gen Z terms. I can't keep up with these things. I am really an emotional person, but I can't really show it outside, because honestly, these days, people think kindness is fake." Rashmika also opened up about the emotional strain of being in the public eye, admitting that social media and online chatter affect her. She admits that her problem is that she cares too much and does get affected by it. However, it has been a constant journey of going through it and healing from it over all these years.

Rashmika's latest work

This year, Rashmika Mandanna has showcased her versatility across languages and genres. She portrayed Maharani Yesubai in Laxman Utekar's period drama Chhaava, opposite Vicky Kaushal in the titular role. She also starred as Saisri Rajkot in AR Murugadoss' action entertainer Sikandar, alongside Salman Khan.

In the bilingual Telugu-Tamil film Kuberaa, directed by Sekhar Kammula, she played Sameera, sharing screen space with Dhanush and Nagarjuna. Rashmika's upcoming slate includes the Hindi film Thama and the Telugu female-led drama The Girlfriend, continuing her streak of balancing mainstream cinema with performance-driven roles.

Beautiful Celeb Tattoos

Kriti Sanon recently gave us a glimpse of her first new tattoo.

Now, if you're considering getting inked too, Namrata Thakker gives you some celeb inspiration.

Kriti Sanon, who has started filming for Cocktail 2, has got herself an ankle tattoo. It's a bird, and a reminder to herself.

She explains, 'A promise fulfilled. A reminder that I can fly higher.. to the sunrise! To anyone out there with dreams in their eyes... Take that leap you're scared of. It may not be easy, But you'll find your wings, You'll find your rhythm, You'll learn to fly!'

Priyanka Chopra Jonas has a tattoo on her wrist which says, 'Daddy's li'l girl.'

The actress got it to honour her late father Dr Ashok Chopra.

Kartik Aaryan's wrist tattoo features seven different moon shapes which represent life's cyclical changes like growth, decline and rebirth.

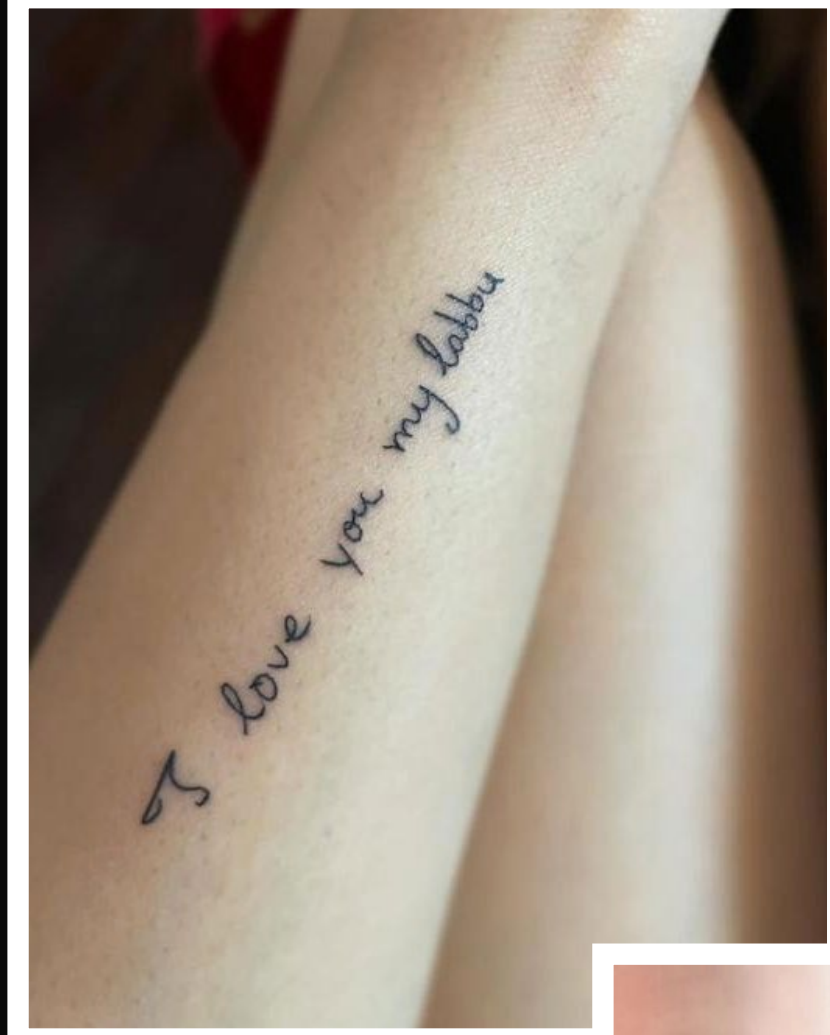
Ajay Devgan flaunts his Shiva tattoo while chilling on his vacay.

Did you know Sanjay Dutt inspired Ajay to get inked? He got a tattoo during the filming of All The Best back in 2009.

Doting daddy Ranbir Kapoor has got daughter Raha's name inked on his shoulder.

Akshay Kumar has three tattoos, all of them representing his love for his family.

He has got his son's name Aarav (who turned 23 on Tuesday) inked on his back, daughter's name Nitara on his left shoulder and wife's name Tina just above his heart.



As a tribute to her late mother Sridevi, Janhvi Kapoor has a tattoo of her handwritten note, 'I love you labbu', on her wrist.

She also has a small evil eye tattoo on the inside of her left wrist

Sonakshi Sinha's star tattoo is just above her collarbone. The actress got it inked on her 27th birthday and believes it is her guiding star.

Alaya F has wings inked on her back along with the words, 'Still I Rise', which is a poem by Maya Angelou that the actress first read in school and was deeply moved by.

Shruti Haasan got her name inked on the back of her shoulders when she was just 19.

In total, she has six tattoos including Lord Murugan's Vel, which represents her spiritual side.

AMEESHA PATEL REVEALS WHY SHE IS SINGLE AT 50: 'PEOPLE HALF MY AGE WANT TO TAKE ME OUT'

Bollywood actress Ameesha Patel has earned many fans for her beauty and style. However, she remains happily single at 50. The Kaho Naa Payaar Hai actress recently revealed the reason for not getting married. She also shared that she's open to the idea if her partner supports her professional goals. The actress also recalled a serious relationship in the past that ended because of her career

During her appearance on Ranveer Allahabadia's podcast, Ameesha shared, "People who love you will let your career prosper. I have lost a lot in my career, and I have also lost a lot for love. I have given up both things for the other, and I think that I have learnt from both. For example, I had one serious relationship, and it was before I joined films. He belonged to a very big industrial family from South Bombay, like mine. Had the same background and education, and the family setup was the same. It ticked all the boxes, but when I decided to go into film, my partner did not want a person in the public eye, and that is how I chose my career over love."

Sharing that she is open to the idea of getting married, Ameesha added, "I am all up for marriage, as long as I find someone worthy. They say that 'Where there is a will, there is a way,' so the person who finds me through everything and makes a difference (takes advantage of the situation) will be my person. I still get all kinds of proposals from a lot of well-to-do families. People half my age want to take me out on a date, and I am open to it because a man has to be mentally mature. I have met a lot of people older than me who have the IQ of a fly."

Ameesha Patel workfront

Ameesha made her comeback on the big screen in 2023 following a hiatus of five years with the film Gadar 2, alongside Sunny Deol and Utkarsh Sharma. The film turned out to be a blockbuster, collecting Rs 686 crore worldwide at the box office.

Post that, she was seen in the 2024 film Tauba Tera Jalwa, a romantic comedy, written and directed by Akashaditya Lama and produced by Naresh Bansal and Madanlal Khurana under Shreeram Productions and Victorious Enterprises. The film also featured Jatin Khurana and Angela Krislinzki in lead roles. Although the film opened to negative reviews from critics, Ameesha's performance was appreciated. The actor is yet to announce her next project.

Aryan Khan reveals which dialogue from The Ba***ds of Bollywood proved motivational for him

Netflix and Aryan Khan's The Ba"'ds of Bollywood continues to pierce the cultural zeitgeist with fans worldwide taking to the internet to share memes, comments, and reels on the series and its music. Within hours of its release, the series quickly made it to the top spot in the Netflix India Top 10 list and continues to be amongst the Top 5 Non-English TV titles on Netflix's Global since it launched two weeks ago. It continues to trend in 14 countries, retaining the number 1 spot in nine countries. Produced by Red Chillies Entertainments Pvt. Ltd, the series is created by Aryan Khan and co-creators Bilal Siddiqi and Manav Chauhan, who also wrote the show.

Aryan Khan reveals character who inspired him

Talking about the dialogue and character that kept him going even during difficult times, Aryan Khan said, "Whenever things got difficult, I'd hear Jaraj's voice in my head, "Haarne mein aur haar maanne mein bohot farak hota hai". At first, I thought it was motivation, but soon realised it was just lack of sleep and fatigue. Still, that vision kept me going, and now to see the happiness my work has brought people is deeply emotional for me.. it is why I do what I do, it is what drew me to storytelling. "

Reacting to the love that the show has been receiving from the audience, Khan said, "The love from around the world has been incredible, with the show trending across countries and filling timelines with reels, memes, and fan theories. What began as my story now truly belongs to the audience, and it's only because of Netflix that this story could reach homes across the globe. As Jaraj would humbly sayâ€|Ab pehchana?"

Monika Shergill, Vice President - Content, Netflix India, "The Ba"'ds of Bollywood has opened to a phenomenal response. The way audiences are turning every moment into funny memes, sharing heartfelt reactions, and reviving classic songs, speaks to how deeply the show has struck a chord. Aryan Khan has captured what makes Bollywood timeless: its emotion and its ability to inspire dreams, while giving fans a rare look into the world behind the screen. It is heartening to see such passion and enthusiasm, and we look forward to watching this wave of love grow across the world."

The Ba"'ds of Bollywood impact

Since its launch, the show has taken social media by storm, sparking a meme fest as fans recreate scenes and share enthusiastic reviews of the show. As per press reports, Bobby Deol's 1997 song Duniya Haseeno Ka Mela has made a comeback with over 5 million fresh views after The Ba"'ds of Bollywood. The series also had a media blitz with posters being seen across Times Square in New York, and train stops across London, including King's Cross Station and Liverpool Street Station. Raghav Juyal and Bobby Deol made an international stop in Dubai for the Asia Cup, watching India win and sharing an important dialogue with the host, bringing audiences another meta moment.

Led by an outstanding ensemble cast including Bobby Deol, Lakshya, Sahher Bambba, Raghav Juyal, Manoj Pahwa, Mona Singh, Manish Chaudhari, Anya Singh, Vijayant Kohli, Gautami Kapoor, and Rajat Bedi the series captures both the glamour and the grind of chasing your dreams in the world's most vibrant film industry.

The Film Rana Daggubati Is Proud Of

> ‘Every day you’re learning and wanting to find something new.’

The brilliant Marathi film Sagar Bonda about gay love in rural Maharashtra won the Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival.

The film’s Indian distribution is handled by **Rana Daggubati**.

As it readies for release in theatres on September 19, “I’d love it if many more mainstream film-makers champion cinema like this.

”What made you back a film like Sabar Bonda?

The honesty of telling a story was unparalleled when we saw it the first time.

I think Director Rohan Parashuram’s craft of understanding humans and the milieu was so impressive that we wanted to find a way to release it and get it to the audience.

Do you feel smaller but significant Indie films need to be nurtured by someone like you who has the power to do so?

Well, I’d love it if many more mainstream film-makers champion cinema like this.

But to me, it comes from a personal choice because I enjoyed watching such films when I was growing up.

I thought it was important to show the audience the same.

See, commercial cinema already follows a fixed format. The bigger challenge is when cinema is slightly more alternative.

The fact that these films are going abroad and winning awards should mean something.

As an actor, would you be willing to do something as unconventional as a Sabar Bonda?

If I was cast in a film that gives me something unique to play, I definitely would be a part of it.

How would you view your journey first as an actor and now as a producer?

I don’t see them separated.

I started my career in the movies by doing visual effects, and then production, and then as an actor.

Now, I’m distributing and doing other things.

So I guess in this ocean of cinema, I’ll keep doing something or the other. And I enjoy them equally.

Do you feel films that are routinely offered to you are unable to do full justice to your talent?

Interesting question. I know I have made certain unique choices as to how I’d like to be in cinema.

I think every day you’re learning and wanting to find something new.

And the best is always yet to come.

That’s how life goes on.

10 Celebs Who Got Pregnant In Their 40s

Katrina Kaif, 42, and Vicky Kaushal, 37, are all set to embrace parenthood for the first time.

Kat is in her third trimester and due next month.

After getting married to Saif Ali Khan at the peak of her career, Kareena Kapoor Khan became a mother for the first time when she was 36.

She was 40 when she conceived for the second time

Neha Dhupia welcomed her second child, son Guriq, in October 2021. The actress was 41 at the time.

Bipasha Basu was 43 when she got pregnant with her daughter Devi, who was born in November 2022.

Gauahar Khan and Zaid Dabar became parents for the second time earlier this month.

Gauahar was 41 when she announced her pregnancy in April.

Kannada actress Bhavana Ramanna conceived at the age of 40 via IVF and gave birth to twin girls via earlier this month.

Actress and director Nandita Das was in her 40s when she became a mother back in 2010.

Farah Khan welcomed her triplets, Czar, Diva and Anya, in 2008 via IVF when she was 43.

Television actress Kishwer Merchant got pregnant at 40 and called it a 'gift from God'.

Amrita Singh and Saif Ali Khan had their son Ibrahim Ali Khan in 2001. Amrita was 43 at the time.

Is Aamir Khan working on Dadasaheb Phalke's biopic? Grandson Chandrashekhar Pusalkar.

Rumours suggested Aamir Khan was making a biopic on Dadasaheb Phalke. Phalke's grandson, Chandrashekhar Pusalkar, clarified the claims were false. He revealed that the script is ready and the project will start soon

"The script is finalized, and the project will start soon. Rajkumar Hirani has also shown interest. I believe if such a film is made, it will serve as a role model and help people understand my grandfather's contribution in detail," he added.

Aamir has reportedly joined forces with director **Rajkumar Hirani** for the much-anticipated biopic.

When asked how it was being the grandson of such a legendary figure, Pusalkar revealed that he considers himself very lucky to have been born into his family.

"When I was young, I came to know that my grandfather was different. His name used to appear in newspapers, and my mother would proudly show it to everyone in our small home. She would say, "Look, how great your grandfather is." Although I never saw him—because he passed away in 1944, years before I was born in 1951—my mother would often share stories about him. Sometimes she would laugh, sometimes she would cry, but she kept his memory alive for me."

"She was very particular about discipline and often scolded me, saying, "You should have been in your grandfather's kingdom." At times, I used to get angry and wonder, who is this grandfather because of whom I keep getting scolded? But later, as I grew up and learned more about him, I became thankful for her words," he added

ANAND SHAH.

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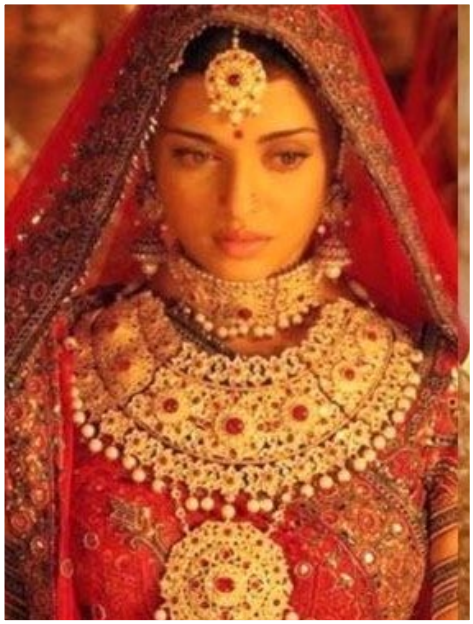
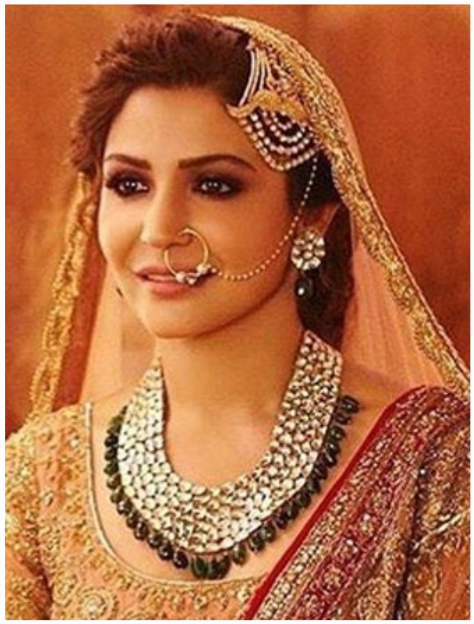
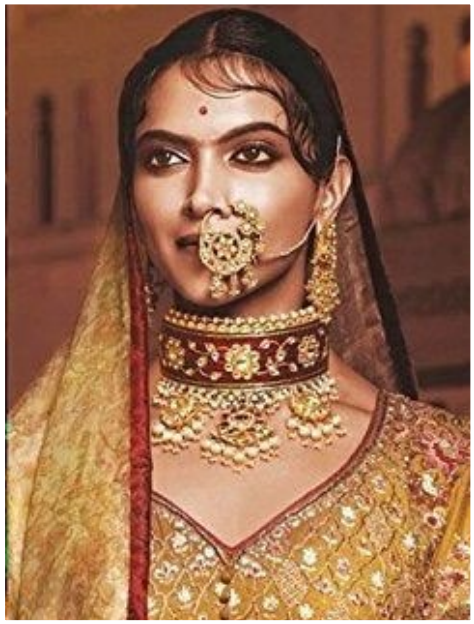
ICONIC JEWELLERY PIECES OF THE BOLLYWOOD CELEBS FROM THE MOVIES







Indians are obsessed with two things – Bollywood and Cricket. The Indian obsession with Bollywood films and film stars is unmatchable. Film stars like Amitabh Bachchan and Shahrukh Khan are considered next to God in the Indian subcontinent. The fashion space in India is greatly influenced by 'Bollywood style' especially Bollywood Jewelry.

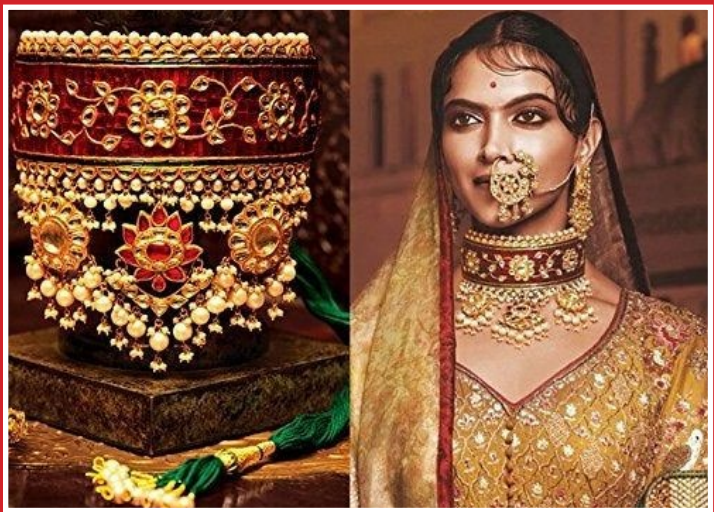
Think of the infamous Mumtaz style saree that became a rage in 1965 when ace actress Mumtaz wore it in 'Ram Aur Shyam' or even the splendid choker necklaces that became the quintessential bridal jewellery items when Aishwarya Rai Bachchan wore it in 'Jodha Akbar'.

Weddings are not just about the celebration of love. Today, they are more than that. Weddings today include sporting the most glamorous lehengas and jewellery, trendy shoes, innovative hairstyles and so much more. It is all about looking for one's glamorous best and having fun while doing so! Sure, wedding season has been stalled due to the COVID-19 pandemic hit, but once the world recuperates, hunting for outfit inspiration will become a hassle yet again!

For all the brides-to-be, waiting for their big day, looking for outfit inspiration, hair inspiration and more, we have you covered! Bollywood is known to have some of the most epic and glamorous wedding outfits and makeup, so why not take inspiration from there? Take a look at some of the most dazzling, trendiest and gorgeous bridal looks from Bollywood films that could serve as inspiration! Here is a list of some iconic jewelry items worn by the Bollywood stars that you should make space for in your wardrobe.

DEEPIKA PADUKONE 'PADMAAVAT' CHOKER

The red meenakari choker necklace worn by Rani Padmaavati was worn by innumerable brides on their wedding day as the imitations hit the market. The simple choker necklace is a great choice for family weddings and bridal wear.



ANUSHKA SHARMA 'AE DIL HAI MUSHKIL' KUNDAN NECKLACE

The heavy Kundan necklace with emerald embellishments worn by Anushka Sharma in Karan Johar's 'Ae Dil Hai Mushkil' is a must-have for all brides-to-be. The over-the-top necklace can be matched well with your traditional Indian attires.

SONAM KAPOOR 'VEERE DI WEDDING' JHUMKAS

Unlike traditional lehengas, Sonam Kapoor Ahuja's peach number featured a body-skimming mermaid-style skirt and sequin bralette for a choli. While the cut of Kapoor Ahuja's lehenga was sultry, its romantic palette and floral details gave it a feminine spin. What's more, that choker-style dupatta made her outfit surprisingly easy to manage.

To complete her look, the actor picked statement-making earrings by Birdhichand (don't miss the layers and layers of gems cascading down to her shoulders) and a potli bag from The Pink Potli. The super heavy ear cuff multi-layer jhumkas in Jadau style worn by fashionista Sonam Kapoor in 'Veere Di Wedding' are a bridesmaid's essential for you. These are the top favourites on our list.

AISHWARYA RAI 'JODHA AKBAR' CHOKER

Jodhaa Akbar was quite the magnum opus, from its grand sets to the elaborate cinematography. Another impressive feature of this film was the jewellery, which was not only opulent like the palaces and the costumes but also ideal for wedding-outfit inspiration. Even though most of us can't afford to purchase those pieces, they made for great design inspiration for those making imitation traditional jewellery, and the way the necklaces were layered and paired also gave us inspiration on how to style such pieces.

AISHWARYA RAI'S HEAVY NECKLACES WERE TRULY FIT FOR A QUEEN

Despite being heavy yellow-gold, the huge necklace was arguably one of the most stunning pieces of traditional Indian craftsmanship.

ALIA BHATT IN 2 STATES

Playing the perfect South-Indian bride, Alia donned a Kanjeevaram silk saree in orange and pink-tinted hues to maintain a modern look. Minimal gold jewellery only added to her girl-next-door look that we absolutely love!

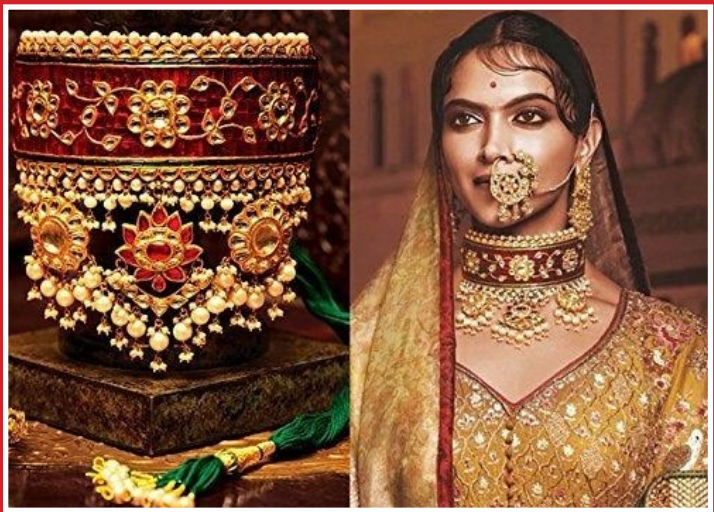
1500 PIECES OF JEWELLERY IN BAAHUBALI 2

The costumes and jewellery used in the epic 'Baahubali' movies will never get out of our mind. It wouldn't surprise you all if we say that those beautifully crafted exquisite pieces of loud jewellery are in fact, ordered to be made.

For the backdrop of war drama, it is quintessential that costumes with complimenting jewellery are used for an enhanced look of the characters, which is a crucial part of the whole makeover process.

Not just 100 or 500, but about 1500 pieces of this jewellery was ordered to a leading metal and silver jewellery maker from Jaipur, to be adorned on Sivagami, Baahubali, Bhallaladeva, Devasena and the rest. They are made out of other metals which also include silver but are polished with gold to look the part and resemble gold jewellery.

70 JEWELS THAT CONJURED MAGIC TO GIVE MAHANATI SAVITRI'S LOOK



15 karigars worked on these pieces exclusively for 8 months after almost 6 months of study and research and probing into the actress's life story and her films Mayabazar, Devadas, Pelli Chesi Choodu, Missamma and many more movies.

A team of five hand artisans put meticulous work into reinventing the classics. Gold, Kundan, and Diamond jewellery was recreated in the same old designs and finished with the antique look. Close to 15 karigars worked to customise and recreate these pieces exclusively for 8 months after almost 6 months of study and research and probing into the actress's life story.

Some of the antique jewelry was customized to meet the expectations which included Necklaces, champaswaralu, earrings, jhumkas, bangles, watches, finger rings, paapidi billa, and vaddanams.

JEWELLERY COLLECTION FOR SYERAA NARSASIMHA REDDY MOVIE

The life story of strong historical characters is a reminder of Indian culture and pays homage to the design aesthetics of ancient India. The actresses who play brides in these movies and the jewellery they wear, have revived ancient craft techniques and made them popular again. One such movie was India's Oscar-entry film Paheli, starring Shahrukh Khan and Rani Mukherjee.

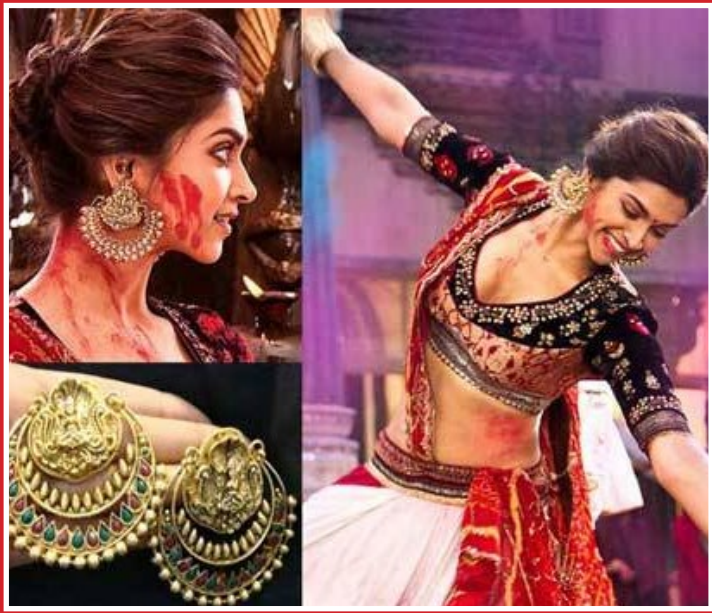
The traditional Rajasthani character of Rani Mukherjee was styled in jewellery and featured kundan and meenakari work. The success of the movie and its international exposure ensure that the jewellery pieces featured were a hot-ticket item for Indian brides.

ALI BHATTS'S EARRING DESIGNS

Chunky Earrings have been a trend for a long time. You can pair with a traditional or modern outfit. Ali Bhatt is on a roller coaster and her accessory game is always on point. Movies like Raazi, Highway and Kalank show the variety she has been doing.

EARRINGS WORN BY DEEPIKA PADUKONE IN RAM LEELA

The character of Leela played by Deepika Padukone was hailed for her bold and brave fashion sense. The piece of jewellery has always been there in the market but it was a piece that few tried and others were in a dilemma.
Once this movie was released, every flea market selling artificial jewelleries got young girls thronging to purchase 'Ram Leela earrings'. Chaandbali is a very old Indian jewellery and it seems that it was reborn as 'Ram Leela earrings'. This is how movies sway the market!



JEWELLERY WORN BY AISHWARYA RAI IN THE MOVIE DEVDAS

This iconic film of 2002 is based on a Bengali novel that gave some romantic characters and moments to remember forever. Everyone who has watched the film must be aware of Paro's bangle that Devdas gifts her. It became a symbol of love and every common girl dreamt of possessing such an intricate bangle.

It was a film by Sanjay Leela Bhansali, and so, fine detailing in the costumes and jewellery was mandatory. The jewellery donned by Aishwarya and Madhuri Dixit became popular not just among Bengalis but among all other fashionistas.

Bollywood celebs and their stylists are introducing some of the most iconic Bollywood jewelry styles into your lives. Right from the early days of Indian cinema to even today, there is better jewelry inspiration for all the Indian women than their favourite Bollywood.

In this modern age of westernisation when we were losing the charm of heavy jewellery patterns, Bollywood stepped in to take the responsibility of their revival. Jewellery designs inspired from iconic films have not only revived but increased the popularity and demand of traditional Indian jewellery designs.

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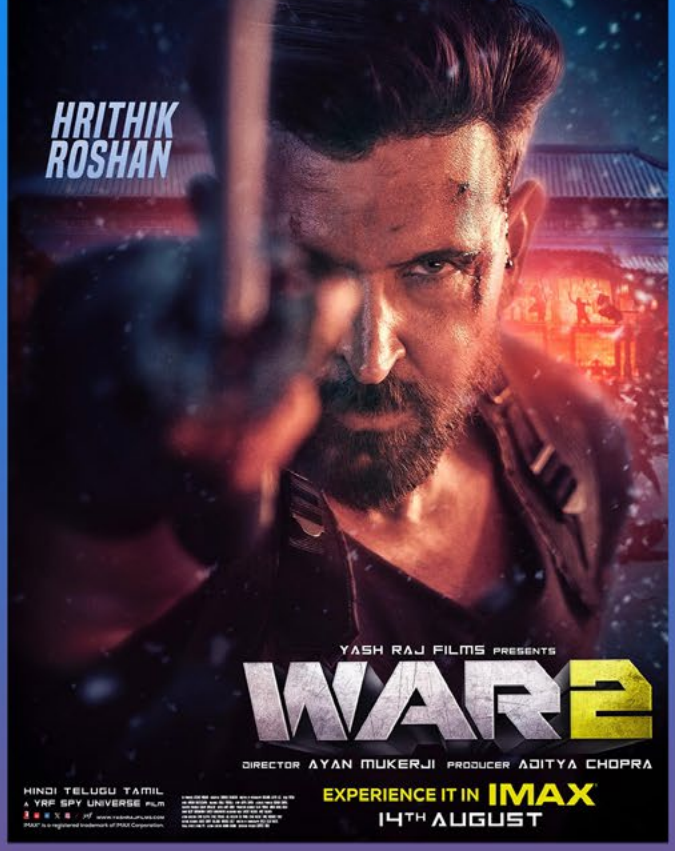
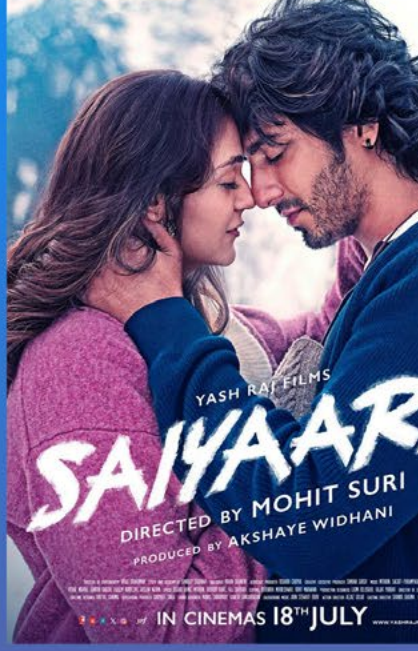
Sachin Chavan

A Stellar Indian Entrepreneur with more than 27 years of experience in various industries such as Finance, FMCG/Franchising, Media & Films, and Aviation. An enterprising and successful young business person; he found his core passion in Finance where he had an opportunity to work along with renowned business houses from across the fields throughout his career such as HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank Ltd, Centurion Bank, and Forbes. From the word go he understood the dynamics of each industry and gained experience and insightfulness of the Industry. He had an overwhelming experience during his tenure with VFSL, (Visagar Financial Services Ltd), a non-banking financial company. His expertise is in financial consultancy across the spectrum. provide a wide range of monetary advice. He is also acknowledged for promoting the VFSL (Visagar Financial Services Ltd) brand and leading from the front for strategic marketing initiatives to comply with the Company's growth.

Mr. Sachin also finds his name in the community which has dedicated resources for CSR. Social Responsibility is one superseding of all other needs and is carried out through R.K HIV & AIDS RESEARCH AND CARE CENTRE. Fruits of hard work are achieved when it is manifested and he was awarded The Guinness World Records and regional, The Asia Book of Records Certificate for the Largest Medical Camp. His other noble initiatives include "Hospital on wheels"; providing basic Sanitation to Women and building more shelter homes for children. He has humbly supported a small step toward a Disease-Free nation. As Global Movie Magazine, DIRECTOR; Mr. Chavan has found a means to express his creative side and enjoy the social scenes in India. Presently, he shall nurture all aviation projects and devote his time and to the best of his ability to promote the Aviation business in India.





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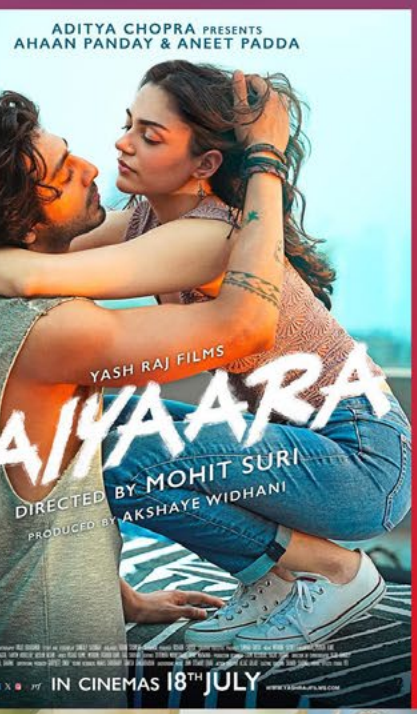

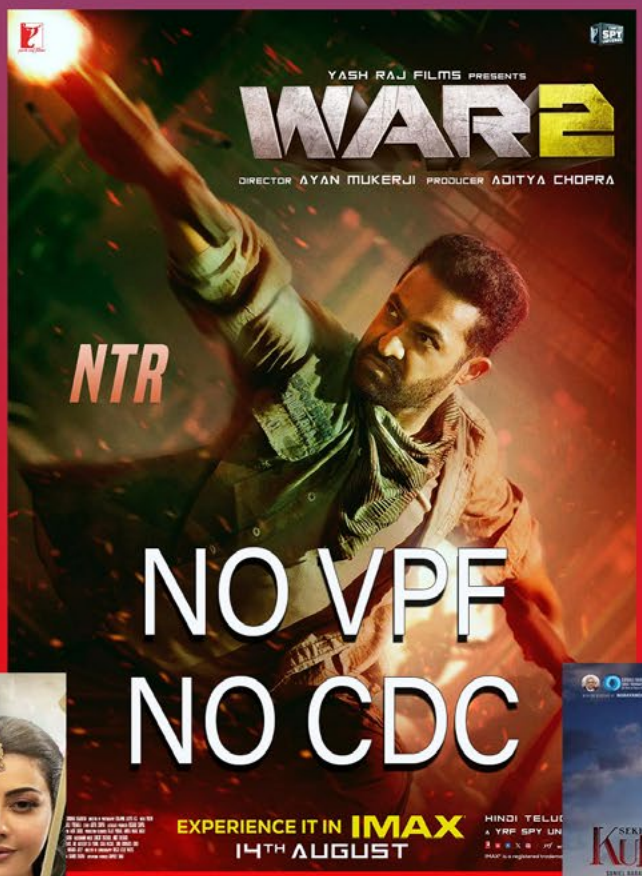

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'You Don't Know If The Rebellion Will Be Successful'

'It is daunting, for sure, because you're rowing upstream.'

In the age of high-speed entertainment, some films compel you to slow down to take notice of their beauty.

Raam Reddy's Jugnuma: The Fable is that kind of film.

Reddy is a true indie darling, whose debut feature Thithi set him apart as a standout talent and won him a National Award in 2016.

His muted and introspective style is once again on display in his second feature, which tells a story about an orchard owner whose peaceful life in the Himalayan foothills is disrupted when a mysterious blaze engulfs his sprawling fruit estate.

Headlined by the ever dependable Manoj Bajpayee, alongside Deepak Dobriyal, Priyanka Bose, and Tillotama Shome, the film is brought into mainstream view by Guneet Monga and Anurag Kashyap.

"It was very challenging for all of us working independently to get things out but now, that support has started coming through via champions. My film is being presented by Guneet (Monga) and Anurag (Kashyap), and they were keen that it was seen on a big screen. That's not always the easiest thing for an Indie film,"

Tillotama Shome, who acted in Jugnuma, described the film as 'Dum Biryani'.

(Laughs) Yeah, she did.

The film has been in the making for about eight years.

Now that the film is finally out in cinemas, how do you look back at the hardships of the making?

It dissolves the moment you have it out.

The dream is kind of fulfilled, and then all the struggles dissolve into that positivity.

I've been carrying it for so long on my shoulders.

I feel light.

You once described yourself as a perfectionist. What was the hardest part of making this film?

All of it was quite hard.

I think maybe it was getting the VFX to blend seamlessly with the 16mm impressionistic style. VFX is very hard to turn invisible.

The world building was always one of the key aspects for me.

Then we had to shoot season specific. The dream was to go and shoot the blossoms in the orchard.

The blossom in the orchard in Uttarakhand is such a dicey thing because you don't know when it's going to happen as it happens differently every year.

We were watching the seasons, and we were like, okay, let's just pray that when the unit is up in the hills, and we're shooting in those locations, the bloom is there. That full bloom period is really short. It lasts only for a week, you know, like the Japanese cherry blossoms.

Working around that was extremely stressful.

Just before we shot the final scene, everything was perfect, the bloom was perfect, the timing was perfect.

And there was a hailstorm out of the blue. A hailstorm, which didn't happen at the time of the year.

All the flowers fell off the trees. We had to recreate the flowers in CGI.

That was crazy!

The shooting was extremely challenging. The remote location was extremely challenging. Merging actors and non-actors seamlessly was challenging.

But all these challenges have made the film what it is.

You once said that Jugnuma is a very personal film.

Yes. Some of the internal struggles that Dev (Manoj Bajpayee's character) is going through, whether how attached he is to the material world around him, and is there some way to shed some of that weight to find something deeper has been a question I've had since I was young.

I always wanted to try to find a narrative which would address that in a subtle manner.

The tone may be internal (but) I've always wanted to tell a story that excites people because I'm a restless person.

Even when I'm watching films, if the narrative isn't gripping, I'm not going to access the deeper layers internally.
I wanted to ask that question, and some experiences from my childhood, spending time in those estates in the south.

Lastly, the draw to magic realism as a genre is my favourite.

It's a slippery genre in some ways, it's something that you can't really completely hold on to when you're experiencing it.

As an artist, it was really exciting for me to design my own magic realism.

Before Thithi I had written a magical novel. So to come to that genre again is where I stand as an artist.

For all these reasons, it was very meaningful to me.

Also, I'm really glad that I collaborated with Manoj, who had a similar connection to the script.

He was also in that internal meditative space, seeing the conflict with the material world, when the script came to him.

What I also liked about the film is the gorgeous Himalayan setting. Manoj Bajpayee said that he almost forgot that he belonged to Mumbai when he was shooting for Jugnuma.

The Himalayas have been here long before us, and they'll be here long after we're gone.

They're just this timeless space.

I had this vested interest to spend time there for my own inner journey.

There's an aura in that place that feels like magic could almost be real.

As a setting for a magic realism film, it was perfect.

Because it was so remote, and we were in the midst of nature, you forget that we live in concrete jungles.

We really did get lost in that world.

Is it true that you edited 45 minutes out of the final version?
Yes.

That must be disheartening.

It happens to many films, but the reason it was a little harder in this film was that those 45 minutes were the same quality as the film that you see.

So cinematically, it was hard to let go of those moments with this wonderful cast.

But as they say, the whole is more important than the pieces.

Your debut feature Thithi won the National Award. Was it harder to make your second film after that recognition?

As an artist, you want to do better.

I put that pressure on myself.

I was young when Thithi happened, and I had so much support for that film. Without the journey of Thithi, I wouldn't have been able to put this film together.

Every senior cast member said they said yes to this film because they had liked Thithi.

Thithi was in Kannada, your debut short film Ika was in Telugu, and Jugnuma is in Hindi and English. Do you think of a language first when you write stories?

Honestly, the language comes a little later.

It's more like what I want to say, and then I end up finding a setting. Which one I pick for a particular story depends on the concept and other things like the actors that you want to collaborate with.

So the language comes early, but not first.

I enjoy working across languages, across settings. It's enriching.

For example, for Thithi I spent two years in a village and learned a lot.

For Jugnuma, I lived in the mountains.

Those experiences are very valuable.

My mother tongue is Telugu, but I've been brought up in Bangalore. I went to an English medium school.

I studied in Prague, where I made a film in Czech.

Before that, I did my bachelor's degree in Delhi University, where it was Hindi. Now, I am living in Bombay.

All these languages are dear to me.

What was the influence of cinema on you as a child?

I had no interest in cinema till I was about 20.

As a child, I was more into sports as well as poetry and photography.

When I was in college, there was this epiphanous moment where I realised that all my different interests converge in cinema. Then I became extremely hungry for cinema.

I started watching everything I could.

I tried to expose myself to as many kinds of cinema as possible.

It's unique how each country treats cinema so differently. The feeling of time and space is so different. The narrative structures are so different.

I remember watching Lord Of The Rings in my late teens. It's a little cliché, but that's where I saw the power of cinema, creating a world that never existed.

The world Peter Jackson built from Tolkien's novel, I was like, what am I witnessing? How do humans create such vivid, lifelike, lucid, dreaming almost? It's so powerful.

Then I got really interested in film-makers, who had that sense of scale in world building.

When I was in Prague, I was exposed to Serbian director Emir Kusturica's works. Then Francis Ford Coppola's work.

What challenges did you face when you came back to India to make films?

Honestly, it wasn't much of a struggle because I came into a project like Thithi, which was completely outside of the industry per se.

Also, some of my key collaborators were from Prague and it was our first film after film school.

There was barely anybody who was like a real professional on that film.

It wasn't until Jugnuma that I understood some of the realities of how the industry works, where the focuses sometimes are, and what your challenges are to tell a story from the heart within the structure of the industry.

Those challenges were immense because I look at cinema differently.

So getting everyone on the same page is really challenging.

Partly why Jugnuma took so much time is because you have to wait for things to come together.

The budgets are bigger, and you need to manage things very differently. That scaling up was very challenging.

It's becoming a little easier because after these two films, when I approach people to ask them if they'd work with me, they know that I'm off the beaten path.

But making a film is one of the hardest things in the world.

What are the other interests that keep you busy when you're not filming?

I'm really into music now.

I'm training my voice, and starting to learn songwriting because it's similar to writing.

I'm trying to work on music and understand it better. Also, to use it in my own films.

The second track in Jugnuma is something I performed.

I'm also into exercise because I was a national level basketball player growing up.

I played for Karnataka and got into Delhi University through the sports quota.

But I ended up being a very bad player!

You come from a family with political lineage. (His grandfather K Chengalaraya Reddy was the first chief minister of Mysore state). Were you ever inclined towards politics at any point?

My grandfather was a freedom fighter. I never met him because he passed away in the 1970s.

I was born in the late 80s.

He had mentioned to his children, to my father, that maybe they try something else and not get into politics, so none of them did.

There's a speech on YouTube he's given, which I listen to quite often. He was a great, great man.

I feel connected to the spirit, but can't imagine what that world was like at the time and what they had to do to fight for basic rights.

I feel fortunate to have not inherited a world like that.

Now, I don't know what the world is going through. I hope it heals soon.

Your films don't have a grammar of regular films, in the sense, they don't really fit into the mainstream box. As an indie filmmaker, what are the struggles to find a theatrical release?

It is daunting, for sure, because you're rowing upstream.

It's almost like a minor rebellion, and you don't know if the rebellion will be successful or crushed.

But it's more daunting from the commercial point of view.

From the artistic side, it's very exciting, very gratifying. You feel fulfilled.

I really hope I can continue to make films the way I do.

Independent cinema is experiencing a significant comeback with a newfound interest from the audience. That must be encouraging.

It's an exciting time. It seems like a little upswing, this happens every now and then.
It was very challenging for all of us working independently to get things out but now, that support has started coming through via champions.

My film is being presented by Guneet (Monga) and Anurag (Kashyap), and they were keen that it was seen on a big screen. That's not always the easiest thing for an Indie film.

Of course, Manoj Bajpayee is in the film.

A director friend of mine messaged me yesterday saying, you have an army behind you.

I can't believe how this happened but it's true.

I feel humbled.

What comes next?

I have been thinking of something.

I don't always start with an entire story. I start with something that really draws me.

Right now, I think that's music. I am starting to build something.

IMAGE: Jaideep Ahlawat, Anurag Kashyap, Manoj Bajpayee, Vijay Varma, Viineet Kumar Siingh, Raam Reddy at the screening of Jugnuma: The Fable. Photograph: Kind courtesy Raam Reddy/Instagram

Hindi Cinema's New Mogul

'We don't make films for profit and that's exactly why profit follows.'

That is the moniker for **Dinesh Vijan's** Maddock Films

.

In a market where film-makers are fumbling to understand audiences, the makers of Chhava, Stree 2, Munjya etc seem to be getting it right consistently.

In 2022, Nepean Capital, a private equity fund, acquired half of Maddock Films at an undisclosed valuation.

With a net profit of Rs 80 crore (Rs 800 million) on revenues of Rs 380 crore (Rs 3.8 billion) in the financial year ending 2024, Maddock is clearly on a roll.

Vanita Kohli-Khandekar met the elusive 45-year-old producer at his office in Mumbai for a chat on his approach to the business, where he says, "Maddock has always been a place where unusual stories find a home. If someone walks in with an idea that feels whacked-out, different, or tough to place, we'll always give it a serious listen."

How did you go from banking to films?

After my MBA, I got into investment banking.

But they wanted me to sign a three-year bond, and I didn't want to make that kind of commitment at that point.

I had done my summers with JM Morgan Stanley (now Morgan Stanley), and the person I worked with had joined ING Bank.

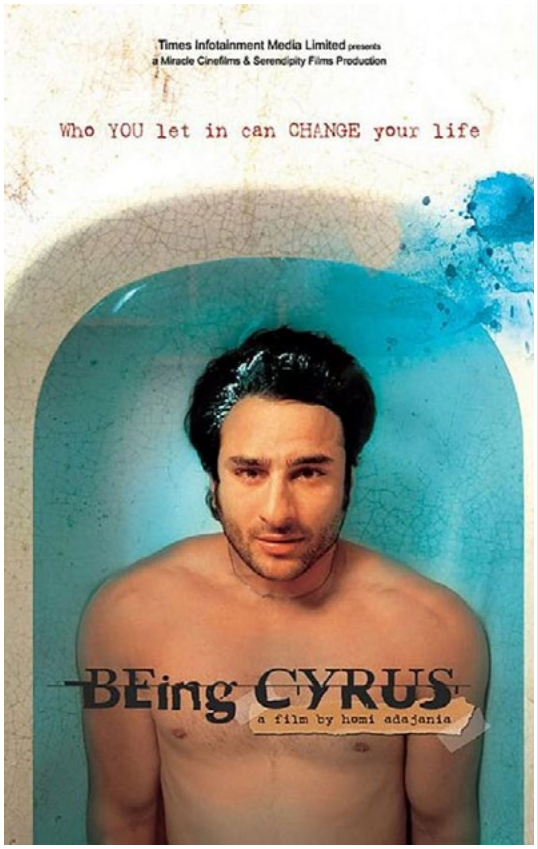
So I transitioned into private banking.

On the family front, we had a successful family logistics business that my dad hoped I'd join. But I kept coming back to the idea of making films. I ended up producing Being Cyrus (2005), which got a lot of acclaim.

Saif (Ali Khan, the lead actor) and I hit it off, and we co-founded Illuminati Films in 2009.

Love Aaj Kal (2009) really gave us a foothold.

Later, I started Maddock Films, and we've made films like Badlapur (2015), Hindi Medium (2017), Mimi (2021), Stree (1 and 2) and Chhaava (2025).



What were the big takeaways?

With Love Aaj Kal, we realised that just being a joint holder of the IP (intellectual property) wasn't enough.

To really make a difference, you needed control not only of the IP but also of distribution. That allows you to decide how its value is built over time.

Internationally, studios are very clear about this.

If you believe in your story, you have to also back it by holding on to its rights and making sure you're in control of its journey.

Where is Maddock placed in the movie ecosystem?

Maddock has always been a place where unusual stories find a home.

If someone walks in with an idea that feels whacked-out, different, or tough to place, we'll always give it a serious listen.

We try to stay original, to have a distinct voice, and to make films that stand for something beyond just the obvious.

Of course, when you're doing something new, there's always business pressure.

What is that pressure?

The biggest pressure, honestly, is that people want you to repeat a formula. But our formula is that there is no formula.

We've done a horror-comedy, a historical epic, slice-of-life films -- if we just stuck to one zone, Maddock wouldn't be Maddock.

In the last 12 months, Stree 2 and Chhaava have become two of the top-grossing Hindi films at the Indian box office. It's a huge moment, but also a reminder that nothing lasts forever.

I've seen enough to know that whoever is on top today can just as easily be struggling tomorrow.

Could you explain that?

Early on, studios would 'de-risk' the producer.

They'd put in the money, control distribution, and we'd just make the film.

It felt convenient.

If you're making just 10 per cent on a film, how do you fund your next one?

Hindi Medium did really well, including in China. But since we didn't control the full rights, most of that success didn't come back to us.

On the other hand, when you want to make a film that doesn't have an obvious market, like Stree, nobody wants to fund it.

It was a horror-comedy based on a small-town legend.

People said, 'Yeh kaun dekhega?'

We decided to hold on to the IP, put in our own money, and released it on our own terms.

We did the same with Chhaava. That helped us have a better ROI (Return On Investment).

When you believe in something, back it fully -- own it, build it, release it. That's when it works financially and emotionally because the film is truly yours, from the first idea to the final frame.

In a sense, we don't make films for profit and that's exactly why profit follows. The decision to make a film, to create art, can never be commercialised.

You're saying that what is driving Maddock are the choices you make?

No. The greenlighting process is mine.

It is a combination of a lot of people but the onus is mine.

If it goes wrong, it's me.

My role at Maddock Films is content. This will be for a while.

When my ability to spot content turns, I don't know.

What we have to find in the next five-six years is the next Dinesh Vijan to head Maddock Films.

A film should be entertaining and in your zone. Is that your philosophy?

PIn my career, I've noticed that three things usually happen when a film of ours truly lands.

One, there's no reference point to the film.

Stree, a horror comedy rooted in Bharat.

Hindi Medium too, was rooted in Bharat.

Two, an actor is either reinvented or invented like Vicky (Kaushal) in Chhaava or Kriti (Sanon) in Mimi.

And three, everyone involved, from the director to the streaming platform, must feel they got a great deal.

Why? Because they came in at a time when most people thought the film wouldn't work.

That creates a shared sense of ownership, which is rare, and very powerful.

Where does Nepean come in?

Nepean came in about four years ago. We wanted to scale to bigger films and branch into music soon. (Maddock recently announced a strategic tie up with Universal Music).

Their backing allowed us to tighten our servicing, bring HR, finance etc.

Our philosophy is still the same, only our dreams have become bigger.

Now, if we don't want to sell a film to a platform, we don't have to.

If we want to hold back theatrical rights or skip an MG (minimum guarantee) deal, we can. That flexibility is invaluable.

'I Won't Do Kantara Part 3 Unless...'

'...there's something better and meaningful to explore.'

After the huge success of Kantara, which was released in 2022, **Rishabh Shetty** is back with Kantara: Chapter 1, a prequel to the first film.

"I've gone back in time in the story. But you will get what you are expecting and you will definitely get to see what you are not expecting,"

What prompted you to do a prequel to Kantara?

I had some thoughts which, after the release of the first film, I discussed with my co-writer.

I got the idea that one more part of the franchise can be made. We thought that instead of making a sequel, let's make a prequel to give a proper backstory.What should Kantara fans expect in the second film of this furiously popular franchise?

The way everyone is reacting to the climax of the last film -- the last 20 minutes -- I think it should cross that bar, like it did last time.

It's a new story. I've gone back in time in the story. But you will get what you are expecting and you will definitely get to see what you are not expecting.

From the first Kantara film to the sequel, how much have you evolved as a human being, actor and director?

I got to learn a lot. After learning a little from the mistakes I made last time I am making a new mistake here, that's it.

In that learning process, I try to reduce the mistakes as much as possible. No matter how many boxes are kept blank, we can fill them.

As a director, as a storyteller, as a writer, as an actor, everything I do is aimed to scale up a bit. How did Kantara's success change your life?

We started Kantara during the second lockdown. Vijay Kiragandur, after watching my first film Sarkari, offered me a film. He asked us to pitch it to him if we had any ideas.

After the release, the Kannada audience appreciated us so much. It was like converting a spark into a wildfire.

The response from every audience -- Hindi, Tamil, Telugu -- has impacted us a lot.

What would you do next?

I am doing a movie with Mr Ashwin Gangaraju, it's called Anandmath. Actually, first I am doing Jai Hanuman.

Would you do a third Kantara film just because you are expected to?

Nahin... Honestly, I don't want to do it just because I am expected to.

What I want is for the story to be right to make a third film. I don't want to keep doing anything repetitive.

I won't do Part 3 unless there's something better and meaningful to explore.

That is exactly why we are doing the prequel, because it felt natural, because the world of Kantara has a lot of depth.

But simply making Kantara 3 because of demand? That's not something I want to do.

‘I Never Thought I’d Be Doing Movies’

‘Before Gadar 2, I was a nobody.’

Vivek Agnihotri’s The Bengal Files is labelled as propaganda and widely criticised for polarising audiences, but lead actor **Simratt Kaur Randhawa** defends the film citing artistic freedom.

She plays Bharati Banerjee, a young woman who witnesses the violence unfolding around her.

The actor, who struck gold with her Hindi debut, the blockbuster Gadar 2, followed by the dud Vanvaas, is ‘most excited’ about people’s reactions to The Bengal Files.

“I would like to know what people have to say about my performance. Please criticise my performance. Other than that, I don’t want anything else,”

How much did this story affect you?

I had no idea about Direct Action Day.

I was like, ‘Vivek sir, yeh kya hai? Is it fiction?’

He was like, you need to go and read about history.

So on August 16, 1946, the Direct Action Day took place and the movie is based on that incident.

I had to do my research.

Why do you think this story needed to be told?

As a youngster, I had no idea about history, which is really bad.

Even though I was born in India and live in India, I had no idea about the things that had happened in India.

This movie is for youngsters. They need to know history.

Secondly, everyone in the movie has done an amazing job, like Mithun (Chakraborty) sir, Anupam (Kher) sir, Darshan (Kumar), Namashi (Chakraborty) and Pallavi (Joshi) ma’am. Watch it for the performances.

Vivek Agnihotri is known for his strong opinions. Do you agree with his ideology?

As creative people, we all have the right to show and present whatever we feel like.

Obviously, it needs to be observed under government and the legalities, which have been done for his movies

Vivek Agnihotri recently said he is getting death threats for making this movie. Have you faced such negativity as well?

No. I think everybody has a right to say, good or bad.

I would like to know what people have to say about my performance.

Please criticise my performance. Other than that, I don't want anything else.

I did not want to become an actor.

I was not even trying to get movies. It just happened.

Once Gadar 2 happened, my director was like, you're meant for the movies, girl.

After that, I never looked back.

How much did Gadar 2 change your life?

It changed everything for me. Everything!

Till August, 10, 2023, I was Simratt.

From August 11, people started calling me Muskaan.

They still know me as Muskaan.

It changed my life.

I never thought I'd be doing movies in Bollywood. Now, I'm here with my third film.

'Once Gadar 2 happened, my director was like, you're meant for the movies, girl.'

How tough is it to get work in the industry if you have no connections?

It is difficult. When you have no contacts, you don't know how to walk the path.

There's a lot of struggle.

This is not a field where you can get work easily. Even if you belong to the industry, they still struggle.

If you're an outsider, you have to take two extra trains.

How did you deal with the lows in your career?

I live by this quote: 'When the heartline goes straight, you die. It must go up and down.'

The low days give me the strength to push back and go up.

I love my lows because they give me ups..

THE PAINTER WHO MADE A BLOCKBUSTER MOVIE

'Story-telling is at the core of everything I do.'

But he was always interested in the Arts and honed his artistic skills by writing, directing and acting in Tulu plays in the small towns and villages of coastal Karnataka.

He caught filmmaker-actor Raj B Shetty's attention in the pre-COVID years, and narrated the early contours of a comic story, set in a coastal village with a supernatural twist. Raj asked JP to flesh it out and give him a script.

JP rewrote the script 26 times after getting feedback from friends and colleagues, and the result is the blockbuster Kannada film, Su From So, that is drawing audiences to theatres from Karnataka, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh.

It will be released on JioHotstar this week.

Written, acted and directed by JP, the film draws inspiration from real-life incidents in his village.

Made for Rs 5.5 crore (Rs 55 million), it has collected more than Rs 120 crore (Rs 1.2 billion).

, "After it was released in Mysore and Bangalore, when I saw the orange colour on the BookMyShow app (indicating that the theatre was nearly full), I was relieved. Plus, everybody started praising the film on social media. I did this Kannada film only to go to Bangalore and survive there."

What was the inspiration behind the unique title Su From So?

After meeting Raj (Shetty, producer) sir, my perspective on cinema shifted.

I started writing short films.
He encouraged me to develop one of my own stories.

After he heard the story over the phone for about four hours, he liked the idea and suggested I work on the humour, instead of the dark side.

I came to know about the genre only after I started writing the film.

The title Sulochana From Someshwar was chosen by Raj sir due to the ghost's origin from another village.

It seems you took a while to develop the story.

Developing the script was a unique process for me., I'd narrate scenes to my team, and their laughter would indicate if it would work.

It took me around eight months to refine the first script. In total, the project spanned six years, starting 2019.

The journey was impacted by the

lockdown; I had more than enough time to rewrite my script.

Finally, it took off after 26 drafts in October 2024

You play the main lead Ashoka in the film.

Initially, I was hesitant to take on the role, feeling I wasn't perfect for it. I preferred to focus on writing and directing.

I've done supporting roles in plays but watching myself on screen is challenging for me.

But after narrating the story of Su From So and acting out characters, my team, including Raj sir, insisted I play the lead role.

They believed my six-year connection to the character would bring depth and nuance.

Despite efforts to find another actor, I ultimately took up the role, shedding extra pounds that I had gained for a previous project.

The character of Ravianna is adorable. Was he inspired by real life?

Actually, we have someone named Ravianna in our village, and he was like a superhero to me during my childhood.

Everyone loved him, and the name Ravianna sounded perfect when paired with Bhaanu.

Ravianna still lives in our village, and was thrilled when I told him about the film.

When casting for the role, I wanted someone cute to play Ravianna, and I felt Shaneel Gautham was the perfect fit.

Interestingly, I had promised this role to him six years ago.

The main character's name, Ashoka, is inspired by a late friend.

Bhaanu's (Sandhya Arakere) narrative clearly struck a chord with viewers

Bhaanu's story is a crucial part of the film, and I'm glad it connected with audiences. While writing, I envisioned a film that blends humour and emotion effortlessly.

I have grown up with my sisters and other female cousins and their friends.

I have heard them talking about women's problems.

Bhaanu is closest to my heart, representing the many women I have seen struggle silently.

This theme has been present in my work, including my short film Maa and some plays.

Since you wrote the scenes for 100 people, was it tedious to audition so many people?

We enjoyed the process.

Apart from actors from stage and film, there were none-actors too.

Since there were no professional junior artists in our village, we went door-to-door inviting locals to act.

Some mothers came with their children for auditions. We selected the mothers along with the kids, as we needed more people for the village setup.

The effort paid off when one amazing member, who was 92, walked kilometres daily to reach the set!

Despite being a novice, she delivered a natural performance.

With 60 characters, including 30 key roles, every actor, regardless of role, has an impactful part.

After the success of this film, people have started recognising you. Are you enjoying the attention?.

I recall our stage skits where the spotlight shone on the lead actors.

While fans gathered to take photographs with them, we would often feel overlooked.

We'd laugh about it later, poking fun at our supporting roles.

Things have changed now.

Recently, I visited the Raghavendra Swami temple in Mantralayam, which is on the Andhra Pradesh-Karnataka border.

My friend advised me to wear a mask, but I declined, thinking no one would recognise me.

But as we approached the temple, someone called out to me by my character's name, 'Ashok anna'.

I quickly put on the mask and entered the temple, but people still recognised me.

You had said earlier that working with Raj B Shetty has changed your approach to film-making. Can you elaborate?

As an artist in Tulu theatre and cinema, I used to approach film-making casually.

Everything changed when I worked together with Raj B Shetty on Ondu Motteya Kathe.

He taught me that film-making isn't about imitation, but about observing life, people, and letting stories unfold naturally.

Su From So draws its energy from the coastal region, thanks to the two theatre teams that formed its foundation.

When I made my first short film in Tulu, I was inexperienced and had a small team.

But I learned that film-making requires hands-on effort.

Raj sir showed me that language is just a medium, and the real magic happens on screen.

Apart from that, he is also a good human being. What I have learnt from this is to treat everyone equally, irrespective of their status.

What was your reaction when you heard your film was doing well?

A lot of critics had come to watch the film.

I was nervous and restless.

If there was no laughter, I would go out of the theatre and my team would update me.

But after it was released in Mysore and Bangalore, when I saw the orange colour on the BookMyShow app (indicating that the theatre was nearly full), I was relieved.

Plus, everybody started praising the film on social media.

We got great reviews for the dubbed Malayalam and Telugu versions too.

I did this Kannada film only to go to Bangalore and survive there.

Ajay Devgn is reportedly in talks for a Hindi remake.

Ajay Devgn is reportedly in talks for a Hindi remake.

Do you feel a sense of pressure and responsibility now that your debut film has done so well?

Actually, I'm familiar with this pressure from my experience in the drama field.

In Mangalore, where commercial drama is thriving with 70-75 teams, the expectation is high.

I do 100-250 shows per year.

When a play becomes a hit, people approach me with expectations, saying, 'Your play is a hit, you should do more.'

It's a similar feeling with the success of my film.

Tell us about yourself.

Story-telling has always been my passion.

I would weave tales and share them with friends, presenting them as if I had just watched them in a movie.

Though my formal education was cut short, and I pursued a career in painting walls, my love for story-telling endured.

Over the past 14 years, it allowed me to craft compelling scripts for theatre plays.

How did you develop an interest in cinema?

I was mad about the movies.

I've watched Sudeep sir's Kannada film Chandu over 25 times -- sometimes, three times in a day!

He was surprised to hear that when we met.

My passion for drama led me to join a Mahakali bhajan mandali so that I could play a role in our village drama.

Later, I joined the Sharad Arts team, where Prakash Thuminad was working.

Both of us are from the same place and share the same name. Someone added 'Jaya' to my name to avoid confusion -- I'm still not sure who did it (laughs)!

Just like that, I became J P Thuminad.

Prakash and I would often audition together for films and television shows, leaving our photographs and contact details behind.

On our way back, we'd chat about getting new clothes and imagining ourselves on set together.

Prakash would jokingly tell me to hit the gym if I landed a lead role.

When we'd see posters for films we auditioned for, we'd curse the casting team for not calling us back, but we'd still watch the movie and say it wasn't that great.

Despite our efforts, we never seemed to land any roles.

That changed when Raj B Shetty's team member, Rajesh Kolake, saw our drama performance in his village. He recommended us to Raj sir, who was working on a Tulu film project. We met Raj sir, got selected, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Now will you focus on direction?

Story-telling is at the core of everything I do.

While I'm deeply invested in direction and screenwriting, I also enjoy acting in projects that offer meaningful roles.

I am developing a story which I started after shooting for Su And So.

Additionally, I'm committed to nurturing my theatre group, Ranga Bhoomi.

It's all about finding a balance between these creative pursuits.

The 'Bad Girl' Returns To Films

'If I had the chance now, I would have continued acting.'
'The cultures of Maharashtra and Bengal are different and I felt I had to give my best to be a good daughter-in-law and an ideal wife.'
'I never thought I could balance both.'

Shanthi Priya, probably best known for starring in Akshay Kumar's debut film, Saugandh, returns to Tamil cinema after 35 years.

This week, she will be seen in Anurag Kashyap and Vetrimaaran's Tamil film, Bad Girl, where she plays a housewife.

Last seen as Suniel Shetty's sister Bonamma in the OTT series Dharavi Bank, "I don't want to be a prop. If you want me just for my name, I expect good payment. I'm very clear -- either give me a meaningful role or pay me well."

What made Bad Girl Director Varsha Bharath approach you for a Tamil film after 35 years? Was it because of Dharavi Bank?

I have always kept a low profile. I don't make announcements or seek media attention.
Even with Dharavi Bank, most people didn't realise I was a part of it. Only when the character Bonamma stood out did people say, 'Oh, Shanthi Priya played that role.'

As for Bad Girl, honestly, I don't know what made Varsha think of me.

I'd been open to Tamil projects for a couple of years. There were offers from television, but I wasn't interested in returning through that medium.

Also, I don't like the word 'comeback'.

For me, doing a Tamil film after 35 years feels more like a rebirth.

When I met Varsha, I asked her what made her think of me.

She said when she narrated the story, she didn't even realise I was Nishanthi. Down South, most people know me by that name because my early films were credited as Nishanthi.

She told me, 'When I mentioned you to my mom as a candidate for Sundari Miss and showed her your photograph, my mom said, 'Oh, that's Nishanthi.'

So Varsha wasn't specifically searching for me, she just came across my Instagram profile and found me interesting.

If you look at my Instagram page, it's full of glam. It's nothing like a 'bad girl' or a housewife!

But still, she had her casting team reach out.

When she cast me, Varsha had a request: 'No threading, waxing or facial. Your look must be natural. You're playing a schoolteacher and housewife who has no time for herself. To make ends meet, she takes extra tuition."

How much did you relate with the character?

A thousand percent! Anyone can relate to her, even men.

The director chose a female lead, probably because female experiences aren't often portrayed honestly on screen. But the emotions are universal.
I have two sons and have seen what they went through from school to adulthood.

As a daughter, I understood my mother's struggles.

So yes, I connected deeply.

Every family will see themselves in this story.

When we screened the film for over 1,000 students, many smiled and said, 'I'm going home to tell my mom I love her.' That was the most powerful feedback.

Were you nervous about appearing on the big screen again?

Absolutely! I had goosebumps!

When the teaser and some scenes were shown to the press for the first time, I got emotional.

Standing on that stage after 35 years and meeting press friends brought tears to my eyes.

Siraiyil Pootha Chinna Malar was my last Tamil film, and now, after 35 years, here I am againHow did your journey into films begin?

My film journey began shortly after my sister (actress Bhanupriya) entered the industry.

Our path into the arts actually started with our mother. She had a passion for classical dance but back then, my grandfather didn't allow her to pursue it. That unfulfilled dream stayed with her, and she passed it on to us.

My sister and I started learning Kuchipudi and Bharata Natyam and would perform on stage frequently.

It was during one of these performances that K Bharathiraja noticed my sister and asked if she would be interested in acting. My sister agreed.

At first, my mother didn't want me to get into films. She said, 'Your sister is doing it, so why don't you focus on your studies?'

But younger sisters tend to follow their older siblings.

I told my mother, 'I'll just do one film, and then I'll go back to studying.'
But that 'one film' turned into a full-fledged career.

You made your Hindi debut with Saugandh, which was Akshay Kumar's debut. How did that happen?

It wasn't a planned progression.

After doing 10-12 films in Tamil, I started getting offers from Telugu cinema.

Then I got an offer for a Kannada film.

Around the same time, I was offered a role in the television series Vishwamitra. My sister had played Menaka in the series, and since we looked alike, the director thought I'd be perfect as Shakuntala, Menaka's daughter.

After Shakuntala aired, Raj Sippy's team noticed me.

That's how I got the offer for Saugandh. When they mentioned Raj Sippy, I couldn't say no.

The script was strong and centered around the girl, Chand. It was a powerful debut role for a newcomer.

Hindi was my second language growing up, so I was comfortable in it. Doing a Hindi film felt like a dream, almost like doing a Hollywood movie!

By that time, my sister had already worked in Hindi films with Jeetendraji, Mithunji and Vinod Khannaji.

I would sometimes accompany her on shoots, like on the sets of Bhabhi with Govinda, so I was familiar with Bollywood sets.

From there, I was blessed with back-to-back films like Meherbaan, and Phool Aur Angaar; the latter was a big hit.

You mostly worked with Mithun Chakraborty and Akshay Kumar. How was your working relationship with them?

Amazing! They were wonderful, but very different.

Mithunji was a senior actor, I was like a kid to him. I learned a lot from him.

He told me not to follow instructions blindly like when a choreographer tells you how to move your hands. He told me to create my own style, and that lesson stayed with me.

Akshay was new then but such a sweetheart.

He was fantastic as a co-star, especially in the action scenes. He helped me a lot because I tend to fall during stunts, and he made sure I was safe.

stop acting in films?

because I fell in love and got married to Siddharth Ray (best known for playing Kajol's secret admirer in Baazigar, who helps her investigate her sister Shilpa Shetty's murder).

If I had the chance now, I would have continued acting.

The cultures of Maharashtra and Bengal are different and I felt I had to give my best to be a good daughter-in-law and an ideal wife.

I never thought I could balance both.

But after a couple of years, I did Aryamaan: Brahmaand Ka Yodha, Mata Ki Chowki: Kalyug Mein Bhakti Ki Shakti, Dwarkadheesh: Bhagwaan Shree Krishna.

I was in and out, but each time I returned, I didn't announce it loudly. I just worked and moved on.

Then I lost my husband.

It was a difficult time.

How did you meet your husband?

We had signed a movie together.

Actually, before that, we met at the Filmfare Awards in 1992.

It was an event for newcomers. By then, my films had been released, as well as his Vansh. We were paired together for the song Kagaz Kalam Davad La from Hum.

Despite coming from a good background -- he is V Shantaram's grandson -- he never acted like it.

He used to come in a Maruti car, wearing Kolhapuri sandals.

He never asked me to stop acting.

But I said no.

How did you manage after your husband passed away?

I've been blessed with an amazing family, and that's my pillar of strength. My in-laws have also been a tremendous source of support.

There have been ups and downs, but with the unwavering support of my parents and in-laws, I've overcome them.

Now, my two boys are my rocks.

Why didn't you pursue an acting career in the 30 years that you lived in Mumbai or after you returned to Chennai?

did get a couple of movie offers but I wasn't keen.

I've always wanted my movies to have a message or be a strong character. I don't want to be a prop.

If you want me just for my name, I expect good payment.

I'm very clear about it -- either give me a meaningful role or pay me well.

I wasn't drawn to the offers I received like I was to Bad Girl or Dharavi Bank.

When Dharavi Bank came, I never thought twice about playing Suniel Shetty's sister. I accepted because I understood the character of Bhoon Amma.

Even now, people ask when season 2 is coming.

Was there any competition with your sister?

We were close friends.

When we worked together in Sirayil Pootha Chinna Malar with Vijaykanth, she actually sat me down.

I was nervous because in one sequence, she was sitting while I had to dance the entire song in front of her.
I was scared.

Then she called me over, made me sit, and gave me a talk.

She told me not to get nervous just because she was watching.
Don't be afraid of anyone, she would say.

Everything -- from dressing to makeup -- I learnt from her.

She's been my biggest mentor.

I'm very proud to be Bhanu Priya's sister.

The industry is often biased toward fair-skinned actresses. Did you face anydiscrimination?

No. Back then, we did our own makeup.

No one ever complained about my makeup.

Sometimes the cameraman asked me to adjust my makeup tone to match the lighting.

During song sequences or intimate scenes, if I wore body makeup, the heroes were always careful and considerate.

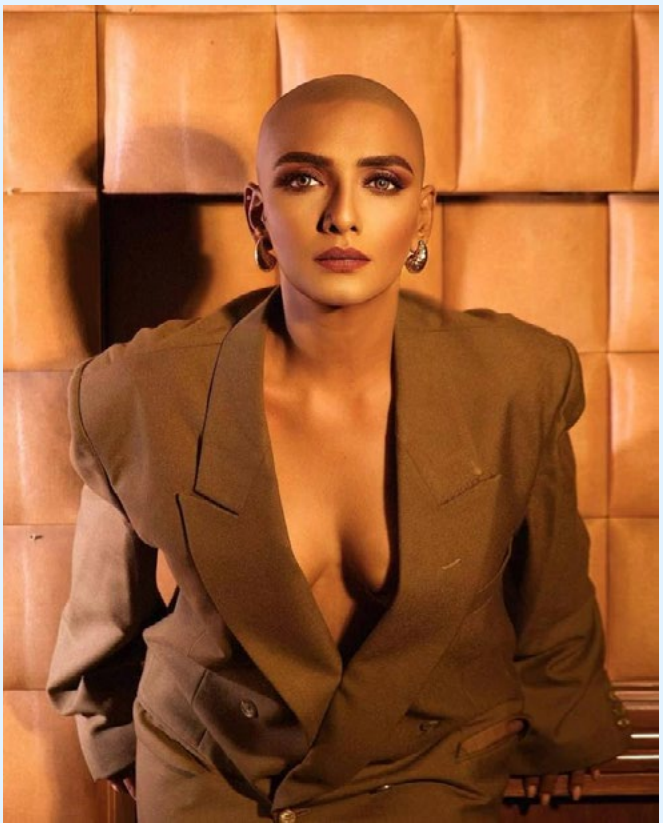
There was never any negativity like, 'She's wearing too much makeup.'

Recently, you went bald. What prompted that decision?

I needed a change.

I had beautiful highlights and great hair.

But over time, because Varsha preferred a natural hair colour for Bad Girl, I had to dye my hair a few times.



Changing colours damaged my hair, and made it fuzzy.

So, I had to go for a short style.

Someone suggested, 'Why not go bald?'
That struck me.

I didn't do it for publicity.

It's Time We Purge This Filth'

The fear of social stigma and career sabotage has kept a lid on the dark underbelly of many professions and unfortunately, the film industry has its skeletons too.' ‚It's imperative we make our working environment safe and comfortable for women.'

Vivek Oberoi does a recap of his life and career on his 49th birthday on September 3, and tells „I have a beautiful wife, lovely children and the power to help those who are in need."

Vivek, you are an under-rated actor and a successful entrepreneur known for your charitable causes.

I don't like to talk about what I do with my money.

But yes, I believe that if God has given you wealth, it means He wants you to make good use of it.

I feel honoured that I've the opportunity to give back to people some of what they've given me.

You mean the love you got as an actor?

And the love I get now in my real-life roles beyond an actor.

I truly feel blessed. I have a beautiful wife, lovely children and the power to help those who are in need.

You've been working relentlesslyto make this a better world for women and children.

Exploitation of any kind is a cancer to society.

People with power should use it to empower rather than exploit.

Artistic fraternities, just like any other institution, should have checks and balances.

I have been dedicated to the cause of women and girl child empowerment for 15 years.

It takes a lot of courage for these victims to speak up and we need to be sensitive to that.

The fear of social stigma and career sabotage has kept a lid on the dark underbelly of many professions and unfortunately, the film industry has its skeletons too.

It's imperative we purge this filth and make our working environment safe and comfortable for women.

I remember when you made your debut in Ram Gopal Varma's Company. I've never encountered such confidence in a newcomer within the film industry before. Where did it come from?

I did radio plays and radio spots. I've It just happened. I didn't do anything to get this attention.

I guess the general opinion about me in the industry was positive.

All I did was treat the opportunities that came to me with the respect and concentration they deserved.
And the love I get now in my real-life roles beyond an actor.

I truly feel blessed. I have a beautiful wife, lovely children and the power to help those who are in need.

How did you bag Company?

I first met Ramuji when he was casting for Jungle in November 1999.

He offered me a supporting role in Jungle which I declined, saying I was looking for bigger challenges from a director like him.

When he said there would be nothing more for the next year, I decided to give him a call after a year.

Saying no to Ram Gopal Varma must have taken guts?

The mutual friend who introduced us was aghast. How could I say no to Ram Gopal Varma when I had nothing else on my plate?!

My friend said Ramuji might be upset about my refusal. But I was sure that a man of his intelligence would see I had the right to reject a role just as he had the right to reject me for a role.

I told this friend not to worry, that I'd work hard for one year and return to Ramuji.
During that period, I didn't meet any producer or director.

I joined Kishore Namit Kapoor's acting academy, then went to New York for an acting course.

Back home, I trained myself in gymnastics, horse riding, etc.

I was also a professional dubbing artist for six years.

I did radio plays and radio spots. I've dubbed English films in Hindi and vice versa.

I even dubbed for J D Chakravarthy in Satya in English.

But dubbing wasn't a career option. Acting was all I wanted to do.

I was never insecure about my future, and I have my parents to thank for that.

I had the home, opportunities and the support system to spend time grooming and improving myself.

Through my formative years, I worked towards my goal. I wanted to make myself a complete product

Then what happened?

A year after Jungle, Dad (actor Suresh Oberoi) was shooting for Ramuji's Pyar Tune Kya Kiya. He took some casual photographs of mine to Ramuji for a role in Company.

Just the naturalness of the pictures clicked in Ramuji's mind and he said he wanted to see me.

Dad and he drove home immediately.

They came to my room, which was messy as usual.

I put on the audition tape for Ramuji.

More than nervous, I was dazed by the sheer suddenness of the moment.

Ramuji then asked my dad if he had any money on him. My dad took out a Rs 10 note.

Ramuji put it in my hand and said, ‚I've signed you.'

The rest, as they say, was history?

I had a charmed career as an actor, and a terrific career as an entrepreneur.

I couldn't ask for more

Vir Das Wants You To Listen To The Sounds Of India

Vir Das wants you to listen to the sounds of India.

And for that, he's devised a show that will start in Kanyakumari and go right up to Kashmir.

Called Sounds Of India, this will be the stand-up comic's largest ever India tour.

"It's my 20th year, I wanted to do something very, very special. So I wanted to write a show about India. It's kind of a love letter to India," Vir Das says at the launch.

Why make a stand-up comedy show based on sound?

I had been travelling for many years. This year alone, I went to 33 countries. Through all of that, I realised how much I miss India.
To truly understand and love something, sometimes, you have to miss it.

For me, memory feels like a voice. When you miss India, you'll hear it before you see it. That's really where the idea started.
If you ever go to your terrace at night in India, you'll hear sounds from everywhere.

What's beautiful is that all of us hear them equally, no matter where we are from.

> 'When you miss India, you'll hear it before you see it. That's really where the idea started.'

That feeling of hearing home in your head when you're far away... that's the soul of the show.

So if you come to the show, you will hear over 65 sounds -- everything from nature to news to nostalgia.

The structure is a bit like a cricket match in its pace. It is fast, dynamic, and constantly changing.

> 'If you ever go to your terrace at night in India, you'll hear sounds from everywhere.'

We take you through every state in India.

Each state has a sound.

We will also include topical sounds that've been in the news that week. Because at the end of the day, it's a comedy show, and it should reflect what's happening.

Of these sounds, which is your favourite?

The sound of Mumbai's local train.

The best thing about this city is the way we redefine space. You know how in mathematics, Pi is 3.14, right? In Mumbai, it's 4.

Because in the train, even if there are three seats, we'll turn that into four.

We make space for every dream in that train.

That's why the Mumbai train sound is my favourite; it reminds me that there's room for everyone's dreams here.

What's the most irritating sound?

Influencer sounds. I won't name names.

If you come to the show, you will hear them and will recognise them immediately.

The loudest sound?

The voice of the news anchors.

Funniest sound?
There's a section in the show that pays tribute to the legendary Indian comedians from the '60s, '70s, and '80s -- especially those who haven't gotten enough credit.

The sound that reminds you of home?
First, dogs. My wife and I adopted two strays in Goa. At around 3:30 pm, when the heat goes down, they start barking. That sound always reminds me of home.

The second is a Buddhist chant. My grandfather was a Buddhist leader, and people from all religions would come to our home and chant together
.

That sound reminds me of home and of India's diversity.

What kind of research went into this show?

This show has been in my head for 10 years. But I started thinking about it seriously five years ago.

'That feeling of hearing home in your head when you're far away... that's the soul of the show.'

At that time, global opportunities were coming in, and world tours were happening. So I went with that.

But this idea never left me. It stayed with me through jet lag and long flights.

Last year, I started writing it properly.

How important is it to keep reinventing yourself?

I don't think it's about reinvention; it's about scaring yourself.

What scares me to write?
That's where I begin.

With this show, the thought was, can I make you feel the joy of India winning a cricket match... through comedy?

That was a big challenge.

So I wrote it like a one-day cricket match, at that kind of pace.

If you scare yourself and challenge yourself, reinvention happens naturally.

Also, I'm lucky to have an audience that keeps coming back, so I can't rely on repetition.

I can't just say, 'Look, big stadium, fancier suit, more lights, smoke machine...'

They don't care about that.

They want stories.
They want a real show.
I have to live up to that.

Since the show is about sound, how do you deal with the noise?

Alcohol. Just kidding!

I don't shut my ears to the noise.

If people have something to say about my show, I listen silently, respectfully.

I believe that if I take the freedom to speak on stage, and also charge people for it, I must honour their right to respond.

I may not always act on feedback but I always listen.

The Superwoman India Is In Love With

'I wouldn't have called myself an athletic person growing up. But training for this film changed that.' 'It pushed me in ways I didn't expect and made me discover a strength I didn't know I had

Kalyani Priyadarshan is the first superwoman of Indian macine.

The actor, who has wowed everyone with her performance in Lokah, tells **Subhash K Jha,** "I was insecure in thinking maybe there were better people than me for this role but I saw it as something that came to me for a reason. I wasn't going to question what God was offering me." Now, 20 years later, his name, and that of the family banner, Trimurti Films, film, Zora, lined up for an August 8 release. I Rajiv Rai says, "At 70, I'm excited to kick off my third innings."

Our film industry is largely male-dominated. Has it been a challenge to find your voice?

This is a tough question. I think we've just been waiting for the right stories and the right storytellers. More importantly, for people like Dulquer Salmaan to back those stories so they can reach their full potential.

For a long time, there's been hesitation to take risks with women-led films, but this one feels like it's opening new doors.

What's been most moving is the kind of support it has received -- not just from women, but men as well. So many men, within the industry and in the audience, have made it their mission to celebrate this film and say, 'See what women can do.'

That really goes to show how much we sometimes underestimate our audiences. They're capable of so much love and support, as long as the content is strong.

Your journey as an actor has been swift and steady. How did you make it happen?

It's hard to pinpoint exactly how I've reached here, but I know I've been blessed in many ways.

I've had the chance to work with some of the best people in the industry.

I was born into a family that gave me both inspiration and opportunities.

I've had the privilege of choice to wait for stories that truly speak to me, rather than taking up every opportunity that comes my way.

Not everyone has that luxury, and I try to use it responsibly by picking projects that challenge me and mean something to the audience.

At the heart of it, I think it's a mix of hard work, patience, and whatever God has blessed me with.

I feel grateful.

Your father, filmmaker Priyadarshan, still can't believe you reached where you are, without his help.

I wanted a one-word title, a woman's name. We played around with around 20 titles, including Julia. Then I remembered the Zorro stories which used to be a favourite when I was studying in boarding school.

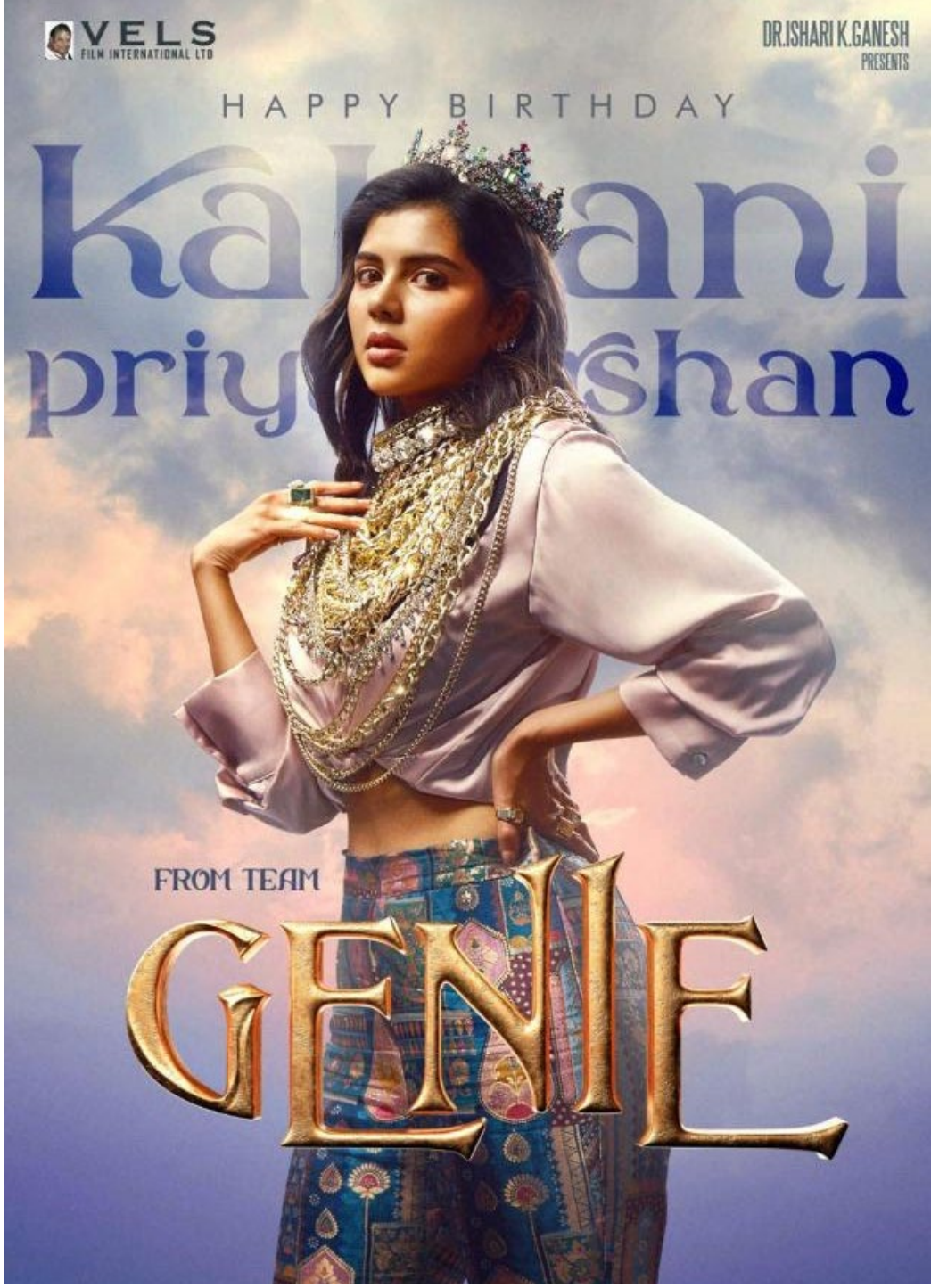
I don't think that's a fair statement for him to make.

He knows how hard I work for the opportunities I get, but honestly so much of why I'm even here has to do with him.

All through my childhood, he has passionately talked to me about cinema, and made sure my priorities were about the craft and not the fame. I owe a big part of this journey to him.

How did Lokah happen?

This is a question best answered by screenwriter-director Dominic Arun because long before I came on board, he had been working on this story with cinematographer Nimish Ravi for about two or three years.



It was originally planned as a very small, standalone film.

But once Dulquer Salmaan came in, he saw something bigger in it.

He's always had a larger vision and ambition for the kinds of stories we can tell, and he encouraged them to expand it into a bigger universe.

He told them not to think of it as just a female-centric film, but as something with far more potential, and he backed that vision completely.

Honestly, it's the three of them who made my character Chandra's story much larger than what it was initially meant to be..

What was your reaction when you were first offered the film?

I clearly remember the day Dominic Arun narrated Lokah to me. The moment he left, I sat there thinking, 'Wow, this is incredible, but also so ambitious.'I had two doubts: one, whether I was the right person for it, and two, whether someone I didn't know personally, like Dominic, could actually pull it off.

So within minutes of him leaving, I called everyone I knew who knew him.

I told them I'd heard a script I loved but needed to know one thing: Can this guy really pull off something so big?

What did they say?

The response was unanimous. Everyone whose opinion I trusted said the same thing -- that Dominic is incredibly talented.

After we started shooting and became friends, Dom once laughed and said, 'You know, all my friends called me right after the narration to tell me you were checking up on me!'

How were you sure that you could pull it off?

The confidence in myself. I knew I couldn't say no to something this special.
I was insecure in thinking maybe there were better people than me for this role but I saw it as something that came to me for a reason. I wasn't going to question what God was offering me.

Tell me about the shooting process.

Were the stunts tough?

I had the best time shooting this film, even though it was one of the most challenging experiences I've had.

Most of it was shot through the night, for months on end, but I honestly have no complaints because those were some of the best months of my life.

And that's thanks to the team.

We had (action director) Yannick Ben on board because we had big ambitions for this project and wanted the best of the best.

But since we were already on an overstretched budget, we had to plan carefully.

All the action had to be shot in one go.

Things like flying Yannick's team back and forth wasn't possible, so for three weeks straight, we shot non-stop action.

I was right in the middle of stunts, fights, and training every single day.

It was intense, but when you're working with a team and toward a shared vision, you get this energy you didn't know you had.

How intense was your preparation?

My training journey began much earlier, from the day I got the role.

Action and stunts were new territory for me, especially on this scale.

I wouldn't have even called myself an athletic person growing up.

But training for this film changed that.

It pushed me in ways I didn't expect and made me discover a strength I didn't know I had

Tell us about your forthcoming projects.

I have Genie with Ravi Mohan, which is ready for release, and Marshall with Karthi, a rural gangster film.

Both are very different from what I've done before.

'Women Have Desires, Dreams'

'Women have always been given titles like 'mother' or 'housewife'.
'These tags put so much pressure on a woman to be a certain way.'

Anjali Sivaraman was introduced to the audience in Cobalt Blue (2022), followed by her show-stealing turn in Netflix's Class (2023).

She transitions from OTT to the big screen with her first lead project Bad Girl, directed by debut filmmaker Varsha Bharath and backed by heavyweights Vetrimaaran and Anurag Kashyap.

Anjali perfectly encapsulates the role of Ramya and her journey of self-love and discovery from an awkward school girl to defiant young woman, with judgmental eyes on her.

Just like her character Ramya, Anjali's pursuit of her dreams has been anything but neat.

"I'm not a very resourceful person. It was very difficult for me to put myself out there and navigate through all the noise and meet authentic people,"

Ramya is such a fun, layered character, who is free-spirited in the true sense of the word. What did you think of her when you first read the character?

I immediately connected with her.

I think she's living her most authentic life.

My only questions would be about technical things, like her look, the period it will be shot in...

I didn't have any questions about the character because I completely understood her.

I didn't judge her.

Just because she's vocal doesn't mean

a lot of people think that way too.

I feel a lot of people shy away from being vocal because they're afraid of being judged by society.

She's able to confidently say what's on her mind and do what she wants to do without the fear of judgment.

Shanthipriya, who plays your mother, is also amazing in the film.

She was, wasn't she?

The film packs an impactful commentary on social constraints, especially for women. Have you ever felt that society has a different approach towards women?

Women have always been given titles like 'mother' or 'housewife'.

These tags put so much pressure on a woman to be a certain way.

At the end of the day, all humans are equal.

Women also have needs and desires and dreams.

That is what needs to become normalised.

What would you tell Ramya if you ever met her?

I feel Ramya and I would be great friends because we're very similar.

But I would tell her to go easy on her mom.

What's also lovely about the film is how it presents female friendship.

Yeah, I loved that!

How important are friends in your life?

Oh my God! My female friends are everything.

I don't know how I would survive in this world if I didn't have the friendships that I do.

That goes for all my friends because I have a healthy number of female and male friends.

Society encourages women to compete with each other but actually, we're very collaborative people.

We have high emotional intelligence and are very empathetic.

When we come together, celebrate each other and stand for each other, we become a stronger community.

I would be nothing without my friends.

What's the most rebellious thing you have done in your life?

When I moved to Bombay from Bangalore at 20.

I told my parents one week before that I would be moving and then I just moved.

I lived on my sister's couch for three months.

I found an ad production agency in Bombay, and worked as an AD for three months. I worked at a music production agency with Mike McCleary as an assistant for about a year, and started singing for a band called The Bartender.

At some point, my senior from college -- he was Dibakar Banerjee's assistant at the time and they were casting for a Vivo ad -- got in touch with me. They auditioned me, and I got the part.

That's how everything began.

What inspired you to pursue a career in acting?

I've always been interested in acting.

My sister used to do theatre, my mom is a playback singer and would perform on stage.

I grew up watching them perform. I also grew up watching a lot of movies.

But when I tried to audition in Bangalore, I was constantly rejected.

When I moved to Bombay, after the Vivo ad happened, I started getting more and more calls from casting directors.

In 2018, I decided that I wanted to pursue it more seriously.

I went to the Prague Film School in the Czech Republic and studied acting.

I came back to India and started auditioning seriously.

In 2019, I did a commercial for Tinder, in which I acted and sang. That commercial went viral.

From then on, I started getting calls from filmmakers, directors and production houses.

I started auditioning, one thing led to another and I did my first film, Cobalt Blue, followed by Class.

How difficult is to find opportunities without industry connections?

Extremely difficult. It's a game of working really, really hard, being consistent with your work, and also luck.

Some people get opportunities and some don't. It's entirely about luck.

A lot of people are extremely talented people but don't have the same luck.

You also need to be driven and work hard.

Being an actor also means you have to be brave enough to face rejections and harsh opinions. Does it get overwhelming at times?

I'm not saying that I don't get affected because it has taken me a lot of trial and errors to get where I am today.

You do end up believing what you're hearing.

You do get upset.

But it's about how you pick yourself up and decide what to do next.

Do you decide to give up or do you decide to keep working?

I'm not a very resourceful person. It was very difficult for me to put myself out there and navigate through all the noise and meet authentic people.

But if there's a goal, you just have to do it.
It's having a really strong support system in your personal life.

Who are some actors or filmmakers that really inspire you?

Tillotama Shome, Konkona Sensharma, Kalki Koechlin, Irrfan Khan...

There's a whole list of them.

I have always wanted to work with Anurag Kashyap sir, so Bad Girl was an incredible opportunity.

I'm a huge admirer of Mira Nair.

There are so many wonderful, fresh voices, people, who are so incredibly talented with such incredible stories.

How will Bad Girl change things for you as an actor?

I don't know. At the end of the day, the kind of artist that I've always wanted to be is a performance-based actor.

I want to act in a variety of projects where I can learn and grow as an actor.

I always dreamt of being able to convey that impact of emotion because I remember how it would affect me when I would watch movies.

I hope it will open more doors for me and I will get to work with incredible filmmakers.

The Mohanlal No One Knows

‘I always say that if Mohanlal was not there, Priyadarshan would not have been there.’

Priyadarshan shares a very close bond with Mohanlal. Out of the 97 films he directed, 45 starred the Malayalam superstar!

As Mohanlal **received the Dadasaheb Phalke Award** -- the first Malayalam actor to get this honour -- Priyan looks back at his childhood friendship with the actor, and tells **Subhash K Jha,** “We literally came together to Chennai! We made our first film, a black and white one, during our college days together. We were neighbours as children and would play in the same ground.”

Nobody is more qualified than you to talk about Mohanlal. How many films have you done with him?

I have done 97 films so far, 45 of them are with Mohanlal.

No director-actor combination has done so many films together in the world! How do you feel about him getting the Dadasaheb Phalke Award?

I feel as if I’ve got the award!

We grew up together, started our careers together.
When we were barely in our 20s, we took the same train to Chennai to become an actor and director.

Did you actually take the same train or is that a metaphor?

We literally came together to Chennai!

We made our first film, a black and white one, during our college days together.

We were neighbours as children and would play in the same ground.
So we are childhood friends. He is three years junior to me.
Did the two of you recognise the potential in each other from right then?

No, no, it was a dream. We saw it together.

We were not sure where we would reach.

It was not only me and him. There was also Suresh, Keerthy Suresh’s father.

All of us dreamt cinema together.

There should be a movie made about your friendship with Mohanlal.

But who will make it? Only the two of us know the true story.

One day, this actor-director called Satya Nandikar said that if this guy (Mohanlal) becomes a superstar, our life will be saved because nobody else will give us dates to direct.

So I always say that if Mohanlal was not there, Priyadarshan would not have been there.

Because those days, even today, you need the big stars’ dates. So because he became a star and believed in me, he gave me opportunities to make films.

And till date, till the last film we did together, he never asks what the subject is, what is my role, what are we doing...

That is Mohanlal's faith in you.

But that has became a huge responsibility for me. That pressure actually made almost 90 percent of my films with him successful.

Do you socialise with him? Do the two of you get together for a drink?

Definitely! Because we grew up together and our families are also close to each other.

My children and his children grew up together.

We used to go vacations together with our families.

Let me tell you something interesting.

Do tell.

I'm on my 97th film. Mohanlal declared that the 100th film will be with me since my first film was with him too.

Let's see if I get there.

You mean to your 100th film? Of course you will.

You never know about tomorrow. I always feel that the film I am making will be the last. I'm a very insecure person.

What is the biggest reason for my success? It is my insecurity.

You are currently remaking a film that you have done with Mohanlal. Is Mohanlal also acting in the film?

Yeah, he is doing a cameo. Not the role he played in the original (Oppam).

Which among the films that you have done with Mohanlal is your favourite?

There are three. One is Chithram, which ran 365 days. It broke the record of Chota Chetan and is the highest running cinema in the history of Malayalam cinema.

Then, there's Kaalapani.

The third is Thenmavin Kombath.

The 100th film will surely be a masterpiece.

I don't know. It can be a flop or a hit, who knows?

I have been growing by learning cinema every day. I hope that I'll do something good for him.

I'm known more as Kalyani Priyadarshan's father now than Priyadarshan. That's not what I thought would happen, but it did.

Did you see Lokah?

Yes, I did. I messaged you and spoke to Kalyani. Success has not gone to her head.

No. That was my message to her.

I said success should never go to your head and failure should never go to your heart.

Amaal Mallik recalls Anu Malik abandoning him during Mumbai floods: 'They locked their Mercedes, and I was left'

Amaal Mallik revealed how Anu Malik once insulted his father with a mock recording. He recalled being abandoned by Anu Malik's family during the 2005 Mumbai floods. Amaal also spoke about his mother's hardships during pregnancy, which deeply impacted him

Amaal Mallik is currently the captain of Bigg Boss 19 house. The singer recently shared how he rejected big-budget offers to participate in the show. Now, the singer indulged in a heartfelt conversation with Baseer Ali ahead of captaincy task. He recalled how Anu Malik and his family mistreated his parents. He even shares how they abandoned him when he was stuck during Mumbai floods.Amaal said, "The Mallik legacy comes from Sardar Mallik, but it was taken upwards like a boss by Anu Malik. The year I did Sooraj Dooba Hai, he did Moh Moh Ke Dhaage, but there is no talent. Where we felt hurt was... I saw my dad lying down still, he was sweating profusely, and was taking pills for confidence. After many years of not caring, he called his dad to a studio, saying he wanted him to dub for a song that evening. Cut to when he went to the dubbing studio, the song that he was told about was playing in Uditji's voice. So my father inquired about the song, and learned that it was a song from a film that was released three years ago.""He just called dad for a mock recording. He removed a three-year-old song demo where he muted Udit Narayan's voice and made Daboo feel that he was giving him a chance." When Baseer asked why he did so, Amaal replied, "Evil hearts." He went on to share, "My father didn't recover only from this betrayal. When they were 14 and 19, their love was insane; later wives came in. Wives are a big issue. The women in anyone's life can create havoc. That is why my father made sure Armaan and I never became a duo, but had individual identities. But he told me that when I become big, I should also hold my brother's hand and help him."

Amaal Mallik on Anu Mlaik's family abandoning him

Amaal Mallik also recalled an incident from his childhood when he was abandoned on the streets by Anu Malik and his family during the Mumbai floods of 2005. He shared, "We are two swords of the same empire; no one has a bigger heart than my father. Seeing this, I became a warrior. In 2005, when it rained in Mumbai on 26 July, I must have been seven years old. Juhu is a low-lying area, so it was flooded. His (Anu Malik's) family saw me outside the gate struggling and crying, and the water was up to my chest. And I saw they locked their Mercedes, and I was left there. Manholes were open, and another friend of my father's wife saw me, and she picked me up and got me into her car. I was waving. I saw my aunt going to the car, the driver was there. Instead of opening the door, she just locked it. When I came home and said this, hell broke loose."

Amaal on womb trauma

He further recalled his mother's struggles and said, "People say, I abuse a lot. I have a womb trauma, boss. Meri mom ko bahut kuch sunaya gaya (my mother was taunted a lot) when she was pregnant with me. They used to make her work a lot as she was living in a joint family. One day, she just smashed her hand on a cupboard in anger. She went through all this to make us reach where we are today."

‘Was Nervous About Playing A Sex Worker’

‘Some things and powers are just not in your control.’

Taaruk Raina is enjoying his OTT fame, thanks to several shows like Songs Of Paradise, Rangeen, The Waking Of A Nation, Mismatched and The Broken News.

He looks back at the one that’s challenged him recently, “When you read it (the Rangeen script) and you’re playing a gigolo, you’re a bit sceptical, but then you know that it’s not about that and the sensitivity it is made in.”

How do you view your journey so far?

My journey has been very interesting and an absolute rollercoaster.

It went from doing theatre to being a television host to doing YouTube to doing voice work to music to acting...

It’s like a massive melting pot of things. It’s been very eventful and a massive learning experience

What brought you to the gigolo’s part in Amazon Prime Video’s Rangeen?

What brought me to Rangeen was an audition call.

Then I had the pleasure of reading the script and was so excited by it.

It was such a unique story and especially the part I got to play.

When you read it and you’re playing a gigolo, you’re a bit sceptical, but then you know that it’s not about that and the sensitivity it is made

Were you nervous playing a sex worker?

Yes. I thought I needed to look a certain way.

I started researching on how they keep themselves, groom themselves, behave, what are the ethics and rules that they follow, what they are like.

Are they impersonal?

I started watching documentaries

It was written in a way where it was dealt with a lot of sensitivity

So your nervousness vanished?

Yes. It became incredibly fun to play this part, especially (coming) from the series Waking Of A Nation... I've been very lucky to get that opportunity.

I shot Rangeen almost a year and a half or two before Waking Of A Nation.

Both shows could not have been more different.

As actors, that's our job. We're supposed to get into different skins of different characters.

Getting into different skins and owning them and having fun, I feel like I've been blessed.

I'm very grateful to have gotten these opportunities.

There are a lot of people who haven't been as lucky.

It's a tough city, you know, and a tough industry to crack.

Some things and powers are just not in your control.

What do you seek as an actor?

I seek something different from every character I play.

Anything that makes the character identify with me is a lot of fun.

The more different parts I get to play, that's what I seek.

I want to do more as an actor, play more characters and explore my range and improve it.

I just did an independent film called Songs of Paradise for Amazon Video Prime.

That apart, I have a lot of music coming out and am excited about that as well.

you don't work alone, some of the actors and technicians are also affected. During Moner Manush, I made Prosenjit Chatterjee prep for four months to play Lalon Fakir and he later confided that the film

changed the way he looked at life and cinema.

Charlie Chaplin, whose Tramp made him a huge success across the world, returned after the war with Monsieur Verdoux and King in New York. The films didn't work

because people were expecting to see the popular character again, but Chaplin refused to go back to

‘They Kept Telling Me, “Why Are You Doing This Film?

we wanted the Himalayas as a backdrop, we didn’t shoot it on a green screen.’ “We actually went to thalayas and shot on location.’

“We were able to achieve that kind of output with limited resources. Only because of the director’s experience as a cinematographer. And also definitely the actor, mine, commitment,”

Did you ever expect Mirai to be so huge?

Everybody around me used to warn me. They kept telling me, why are you doing this film? Why are you working with newcomers after your previous film (HanMan), you have a huge blockbuster. You can work with anyone. You can try to talk to anyone from any industry. Why do you do this?

You had faith in Mirai’s team?

I knew Karthik Gattamneni, the director of the film, is immensely talented. Immensely talented. I’ve known him for 10, 12 years. And I had a gut feeling that both of us together can create something. Because I’m a very patient actor.

And I’m someone who supports the director as much as they want. So I was always confident that we can deliver something great if we both collaborate.

And you have delivered. Because apparently the budget was nothing more than Rs 30 crores. Is that correct?

No, sir. We are double of what you have mentioned. Okay.

Okay. 60 crores. But still, it looks like a 150-200 crore movie.

Sir, the whole thing is we were able to achieve that kind of output in limited resources, if I may say so. Only because of the director’s experience as a cinematographer, sir. And also definitely the actor, mine, commitment.
If we wanted the Himalayas as a backdrop, we didn’t shoot it on a green screen. We actually went to the Himalayas and shot on location.

Oh, you did? I didn’t know that.

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay. That train sequence, the whole train sequence looked so natural because that was an original train. It was a real bridge. And we were shooting on the train. And every sequence that you have watched in the film is actually original.

So no green screen for you?

Nothing, nothing. Only green screen portion is the interval block where we had to create a mammoth bird and that we cannot get on location, no?

Apart from that, the whole film is actually in real locations. And even the sets that you have seen, Machu Manoj’s fight sequences, the first couple of action scenes in the first half, all those sets are actually on location.

We wanted a place which looked like Morocco. So we worked on making it look like Morocco, although we couldn’t afford to actually go there. A very funny thing, I didn’t tell this anywhere else. As we are talking, Sir. I am reminded of it.

Tell me.

When the director Karthik told me I am going to create a portal and from the portal we can monitor the Kumbh Mela, show people dying there. So imagine what I would have thought when he was telling me.

So if a director comes to you and tells you, this fellow is in Cambodia, creating a portal, and in India, from that portal, he is killing people. If somebo**dy tells you this, how unbelievable is it?**

Were you in disbelief when you heard this?

I had my own doubts in my head, Sir. But I never mentioned my doubts to the director.

When you are trying to achieve something so out of the box, there will be invalidity. Yeah. And also, he was telling me about the black powder, that if a villain throws a black powder ghost and all. I was a bit apprehensive. I have never told him. But the good part is I never told him.

You never shared your misgivings with him because you didn’t want him to lose his confidence?

Yes. Yes. About the story, every day we used to talk, every day there used to be confrontations or about the graph of the characters or what we have to do, where we have to introduce what. All those things would be discussed.

I kept quiet because one thing I believe is Karthik has a great sensibility. He is a great filmmaker.

And was that the real Kumbh Mela?

You are asking about the big secret, sir. That’s the real Kumbh Mela.

‘World Has Not Seen This Gandhi’ *Before*

Pratik Gandhi is elated by the global response his latest project is getting.

Gandhi, directed by Hansal Mehta, is the first Indian series to get premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival, and it got a fabulous response.

“We screened only the first two episodes at TIFF and got a standing ovation,” **The Gandhi series was screened at the Toronto International Film Festival to a standing ovation.**

It’s a lifetime experience for me!

My heart is full of gratitude and satisfaction.

It’s the biggest project of my career till now.

Lots of firsts attached to this one.

My wife Bhamini and I are working on screen together for the first time. That’s a long awaited dream come true for us.

It is also the first series to be shown at the TIFF. Usually, they screen feature films. It is the first ever series on Gandhi made in India and by Indians.
I am sure the world has not seen this Gandhi before. It’s about ‘Mohan’ whom we don’t know much about.

We screened only the first two episodes at TIFF and got a standing ovation. That was extremely overwhelming.

I am happy the world will explore Bhamini’s talent through her impactful and compelling performance as Kasturba.

I can’t wait to show the series to my audience in India.

Do you see this as your international launch?

Yes, I would like to believe so.

Going by the response we have got in Toronto, I can see the impact of the series spreading.

Bollywood's most sculpted actors who set new standards for fitness and style

Greek God physique

Hrithik Roshan stands tall, flexing muscles that have become the gold standard in Bollywood fitness. His chiseled arms, defined abs and proportionate build are products of intense strength training, strict diet control and recovery routines. Hrithik's unwavering commitment inspires countless fans to take their health and body transformation journeys seriously.

Relentless training regime

In the boxing ring, Farhan Akhtar unleashes powerful punches with precision, his sweat-soaked focus revealing years of disciplined training. Known for his dramatic physical transformations, Farhan relies on functional workouts, agility drills and stamina-building exercises to maintain peak fitness for both demanding roles and real-life endurance challenges.

Strength and power

With a frame built on sheer grit and dedication, John Abraham showcases the raw strength that fuels his action-packed performances. Known for heavy lifting, high-protein nutrition and consistency, John's muscular build reflects decades of fitness discipline, making him a benchmark for power and physical dominance in the industry.

Compact muscle definitio

Kunal Khemu captures his progress in a mirror selfie, highlighting lean muscle, sharp definition and functional strength. His fitness approach blends weight training, mobility work and endurance exercises, ensuring balance and agility. Kunal's physique proves that disciplined training can deliver both aesthetics and performance without compromising overall health and flexibility.

Bold gym persona

Never one to shy away from making a statement, Ranveer Singh combines his larger-than-life personality with serious gym discipline. His broad shoulders, toned arms and commanding presence result from high-intensity workouts and relentless effort. Ranveer's approach fuses physical power with personal flair, motivating fans to bring energy into every training session.

BEST PLACES TO VISIT IN CANADA IN OCTOBER.

October is a spectacular month to visit the natural beauty and small towns and big cities of Canada. It is true that the fall season is a breathtaking change in the country with bright leaves, cool breeze and harvest festivals. Travelers who want to visit Canada in October 2025 should expect wonderful sights and the absence of crowds of tourists. Make sure that you apply early enough to apply for a Canada visa as you plan on the trip. Nature, culture, and a peaceful break, all of which Canada in October offers, are the reasons why this country is absolutely worth visiting in October.

The list of Places to Visit in Canada in October is as wide as the country itself, with the maple-draped landscapes of Ontario being on the one hand and the mountain-framed towns of Alberta on the other. Hunters, lovers of wild nature, photographers and outdoor enthusiasts may enjoy the magic of the season. When it comes to Where to go in Canada in October, the list of destinations is long since the country is rather comfortable and beautiful at the same time. The weather is pleasant and the sceneries are beautiful making it one of the best months to sightsee the Great White North.

Here are the Best Places to Visit in Canada in October 2025

1. Banff National Park, Alberta

Banff in October will give you a perfect scenery of snow-topped mountains and fall leaves. Wonderful weather is a good time to hike and observe wildlife without the summer rush. Cruise along Icefields Parkway or hang out at Lake Louise with the golden larches and still waters. Banff is one of the best Places to Visit in Canada in October because it is a combination of adventure and serenity, and all of this is set against the most beautiful background.

2. Québec City, Québec

October QuEbec City is painted in burning reds and oranges which makes cobblestone streets and old buildings even more magical. Take a stroll through the old part of the city of Quebec or watch the colors of autumn on the terrace of Dufferin. This love destination is ideal to those who want to experience cultural beauty and scenic beauty and it is high in the list of the destinations in Canada in October that are enjoyed by the travelers who want to have a European styled escape.

3. Niagara Falls, Ontario

Niagara Falls is one of the most famous natural sights in North America and it is even more beautiful in October. The foliage around creates a fiery landscape and the boat tours are made cooler by the surrounding temperatures. Individuals who want to travel to Canada in October 2025 must consider Niagara as an adventure, beauty as well as mouth-watering wine tasting experience.

4. Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia

Cape Breton is known as a place of dramatic coastlines, particularly in the Cabot Trail, which turns into a work of art in terms of fall hues in October. Stop and go through highland forests, visit quaint fishing villages and see scenic lookouts. It is an absolute necessity to anyone who questions where one should go to Canada in October when the panoramic views and local culture are needed.

5. Vancouver, British Columbia

Vancouver is a city of urban vitality and natural beauty and is at its best in October. The city is surrounded by parks filled with fall foliage and the mountains are even starting to have some early winter snow. It is one of the Best Places to Visit in Canada in October with pleasing temperatures and beautiful views, which both the city people and nature lovers can enjoy

6. Prince Edward Island

October sees PEI become a haven of harvest fairs and coastal drives as well as pretty countryside scenery. This island is very tranquil with colourful trees and fresh seafood, which makes it a perfect autumn vacation. This is one of the destinations in Canada that many people have not heard about even though it is a beautiful place to visit during October.

7. Algonquin Provincial Park, Ontario

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8. Whistler, British Columbia

Whistler is a serene getaway before the snow season begins, and it has fewer people and trails that are colorful. Have fun riding a mountain bike, ziplining, or just breathing in the fresh alpine air and enjoying the colorful sceneries. Being one of the most adventurous Places to Visit in Canada in October, Whistler will suit both the couples and the adventurers.

9. Ottawa, Ontario

In October, the capital of Canada is illuminated by the tree-lined boulevards and colorful parklands. Parliament Hill, Rideau Canal, and Gatineau Park are the good locations where one can witness the show of fall. Ottawa, with its museums, markets, and cozy cafes, is a moderate decision to explore the culture and go on nature walks throughout Canada in October 2025.

10. Jasper National Park, Alberta

Jasper provides peaceful sceneries and wildlife experience in less crowded nature compared to the sister park of Banff. In October, there is crisp new air, the sighting of elks and the golden forests with pristine lakes. Jasper is one of the Best Places to Visit in Canada in October, and it is created to please photographers, hikers, and all of the people who want to be closer to nature.

October 2025

TAROT

Loveena Crystal Gaze

(Tea and Coffee Cup Reader, Tarot card reader)

ARIES
(March 21- April 19)

You have been a giver, now its receiving time for you. Deals, project will be signed. Look forward to new growth and progress in your career. Universe is blessing you. Personal life will be interesting.

Angel msg- you are going closer to your goals.

TAURUS
(April 20- May 21)

Visualise your dreams, positive new energy is coming your way. Seize opportunities that come your way . Surprises are in store for you.

Angel msg- money inflow is encouraging.

GEMINI
(May 22- June 20)

There is no better time than the present ,to dive into the future. You are advised to take both big and small steps to move into the direction of your dreams.

Angel msg- prosperity and happiness is coming your way.

CANCER
(June 21-July 22)

All blocks, obstacles that keep crossing your path will soon be removed. Your prayers have been heard. Good news regarding finances is coming your way. A longed for wish comes true.

Angel msg- ask and you shall receive, angels are blessing you with abundance in money, luck, miracles.

LEO
(July 23- Aug 22)

Financially good days ahead. Waves of abundance coming from all sides. Golden period ahead. Celebration time. Be happy.

Angel msg- thank the universe, open your arms to receive blessing from your creator.

VIRGO
(Aug 23- Sept 22)

Something new and positive is coming your way. Spread your wings, your dreams will be fulfilled. You will triumph over obstacles.

Angel msg- more comforts and luxury are coming your way.

LIBRA
(Sept 23- Oct 22)

Reach for the stars, all your dreams and desires will be fulfilled. Abundance in work and career opportunities coming your way. Aura is energized for financial gains.

Angel msg- new home is coming.

SCORPIO
(Oct 23- Nov 22)

Release your doubts to heaven, happiness and positive energy is surrounding you and your family. All setbacks are over. Deals will be signed.

Angel msg- embrace your hearts desire, be happy.

SAGITTARIUS
(Nov 23- Dec 21)

Angels are guiding you in miraculous ways, its time for changes in your career. Let go of old energy to allow in newer vibes. Family get together will bring happiness in your life.

Angel msg- stability is assured.

CAPRICON
(Dec 22- Jan 20)

Stay optimistic, be discreet about your projects. Stay away from negative people and situations. Don't make impulsive decisions regarding finances. Health will be good.

Angel msg- relax, be happy. You are protected.

AQUARIUS
(Jan 21- Feb 18)

Universe is bringing peace and harmony in your life. Stop worrying about money, finances will improve. Aim high,don't descend. Angels are showering you with love and progress in your career.

Angel msg- miracles will manifest in your life.

PISCES
(Feb 19- March 20)

Rejoice, divine timing in your career. Take advantage. Deals will be profitable, growth in your career. You are on right path.

Angel msg- allow yourself to glow in the positive aura of the universe.

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- Project Work

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