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KALKI KOEHLIN

# BOLLYWOOD INSIDER

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April 2016



## Born for Bollywood **Kareena Kapoor**

Bold yet self-assured, the actress has stepped into a phase where she is ready to experiment with her roles, unconcerned about opinions



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# IIFA hollers a “Hola!”

The Bollywood extravaganza, International Indian Film Academy (IIFA), is heading to Madrid in Spain this June



Spain,” he said.

The new venue aims to reach out to the huge Latin American market for Indian films. Sonakshi said, “The event is an excellent opportunity for us to take our cinema across the globe. Madrid is a thrilling city, and I am looking forward to experiencing another spectacular IIFA in another amazing destination.”

Andre Timmins, director, Wizcraft International, said, “This year our excitement for Spain is strongly focused on the opportunity to address CSR and environmental issues.” IIFA will celebrate IIFA Rocks Fest; IIFA Stomp, an exhibition of urban trends; and the magnificent IIFA Awards. During the weekend, FICCI and the Spanish Chamber of Commerce will jointly organize The Global Business Forum. The last time the IIFA awards were held in Europe was in Amsterdam in 2005. Wizcraft had considered USA, Macau, and Abu Dhabi for the event’s 17th edition.

Wizcraft International has announced Madrid as the official host of the 17th edition of the IIFA gala from June 23 to 26. Bollywood stars Anil Kapoor, Hrithik Roshan and Sonakshi Sinha unveiled the pre-events in Madrid in March, spreading the filmy fever. They joined a Bollywood flash mob with Anil Kapoor performing an impromptu jig on popular song *Gallan Goodiyan* to

regale the crowd on the streets. The actors cheerfully shared pictures and selfies on their social media accounts, soaking in the joie de vivre of the city that is tinted in hues of Hindi cinema.

Anil, who is known internationally for *Slumdog Millionaire*, *24* and *Mission Impossible 2*, said, “I know the importance of bridging cultural divides. We are planning to dub Neerja (starring daughter Sonam Kapoor) in Spanish so that the people here

understand where we come from. By June, Spain will get a better idea about Bollywood. And Madrid is such a charming city—with an explosion of sounds, colors and textures and the gorgeous street performers!”

Hrithik applauded IIFA’s vision of overcoming boundaries and reaching out to an international audience for Indian films. “I have some very fond memories attached to Spain while we were filming for *Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara*. I am thrilled to come back to

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## LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHERS

Dear Readers,

With inspiring feedback from our readers on the East Coast, we launched the West Coast edition of BOLLYWOOD INSIDER (BWI) last month. We are grateful to our patrons who attended the launch party in Los Angeles. We now distribute BWI in New York, New Jersey, Los Angeles and Las Vegas. The feedback from our readers coast to coast has been very positive, enthusiastic and inspiring.

At the very outset, our goal was to make BWI the best Bollywood publication in the world, and we believe we are succeeding. We have recruited some very renowned and well-connected entertainment journalists in the movie capital of India. In the April issue, we have exclusive interviews with Kareena Kapoor, Arjun Kapoor and Kalki Koechlin amongst others. We hope you will enjoy these interviews and the rest of publication.

We welcome your comments and suggestions and look forward to hearing from you. Please write to us at Editor@BollywoodInsider.us.

Thank you!



Varinder K. Bhalla  
Chairman & Publisher



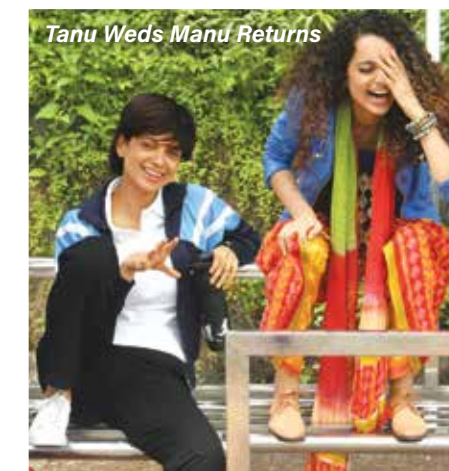
Prakash Madahar  
Co-Publisher, West Coast Edition



# Bollywood wins big at National Awards 2016



Baahubali



Tanu Weds Manu Returns



Piku



Bajirao Mastani

## AND THE WINNERS ARE...

- Best Film**  
*Baahubali* (Telugu)
- Best Director**  
Sanjay Leela Bhansali (*Bajirao Mastani*)
- Best Actor**  
Amitabh Bachchan (*Piku*)
- Best Actress**  
Kangana Ranaut (*Tanu Weds Manu Returns*)
- Best Supporting Actor**  
Samuthirakani (*Visaaranai*, Tamil)
- Best Supporting Actress**  
Tanvi Azmi (*Bajirao Mastani*)
- Best Hindi Film**  
*Dum Laga Ke Haisha*
- Best Popular Film**  
*Bajrangi Bhaijaan*
- Best Choreography**  
Remo D'Souza (*Deewani Mastani* song in *Bajirao Mastani*)
- Best Playback Singer (Female)**  
Monali Thakur (*Moh Moh Ke Dhage*)
- Best Playback Singer (Male)**  
Mahesh Kale (*Katyar Kaljat Ghusli*, Marathi)
- Best Cinematography**  
Sudeep Chaterjee (*Bajirao Mastani*)
- Nargis Dutt Award for Best Feature Film on National Integration**  
Nanak Shah Fakir
- Indira Gandhi Award for Best Debut Film (Director)**  
Neeraj Ghaywan (*Masaan*)
- Best Screenplay Writer (Original)**  
Juhi Chaturvedi (*Piku*) and Himanshu Sharma (*Tanu Weds Manu Returns*)
- Best Screenplay (Dialogues)**  
Juhi Chaturvedi (*Piku*) and Himanshu Sharma (*Tanu Weds Manu Returns*)
- Best Screenplay (Adapted)**  
Vishal Bharadwaj (*Talvar*)
- Best Music Direction**  
M Jayachandran for (*Kaathirunnu Kaathirunnu, Ennu Ninte Moideen*)
- Best Music Direction-Background Score**  
Ilaiyaraaja (*Thaarai Thappattai*)
- Best Film on Environment Conservation/Preservation**  
Valiyaga Chirakulla Pakshikal
- Best Children's Film**  
*Duronto*

**B**aahubali, *Piku*, *Tanu Weds Manu Returns* and *Bajirao Mastani* emerged as the top-grossing films of 2015. Now, they have bagged the top awards at the 63rd National Film Awards, announced on March 28.

Bollywood rules the popular imagination in India, beyond doubt. But, its increased presence at the National Awards has stirred a debate on whether the jury favors populist cinema. This year, barring regional categories, Bollywood films will walk away with maximum number of National Awards. While his epic saga *Bajirao Mastani* has earned Sanjay Leela Bhansali the Best Director award, SS Rajamouli's magnum opus *Baahubali* has become the first Telugu film to be conferred with the title of Best Feature Film at the upcoming ceremony, to be held on May 3.

This is Bhansali's third National Award. Bhansali said, “I have received National Awards for *Black* and *Devdas*, but this award is really very special for me. In my entire journey of 25 years, I never sensed this much of satisfaction. It feels like now I am getting the right result for my work.” Along with Best Director, *Bajirao Mastani* has seized five other awards—best supporting actress for Tanvi Azmi, best choreography for Remo D'Souza, best cinematography, production design and re-recording.

Bollywood megastar Amitabh Bachchan has won his fourth National Film Award for Best Actor for his role of a grouchy septuagenarian with distressed bowel movements in *Piku*—the film has bagged three National Awards. Bachchan has won national awards for best actor for *Agneepath* (1990), *Black* (2005) and *Paa* (2009). Big B took to Twitter to express his humble gratitude, saying, “To them that congratulate me for the National Award—most grateful. Thank you is never enough an expression.”

Kangana Ranaut won Best Actress for her double role in ‘*Tanu Weds Manu Returns*

as a nagging wife and a Harayani sportsperson. Kangana, who won the best actress for *Queen* last year and the best supporting actress for *Fashion* (2008) said, “It is the best birthday gift I could have got. I am thrilled and feel blessed especially since Mr. Bachchan is the best actor with me.”

*Baahubali* producer Shobu Yariagadda said it is a huge achievement for a Telugu film to bag the coveted honor of the Best Feature Film. Yariagadda posted on her Twitter page, “Winning the 63rd National Award for Best Film is a huge achievement. Being the first Telugu Film to do so makes it all the more special (sic).” The film about the battle for a kingdom between two warring brothers has also won in the category of Best Visual Effects (VFX).

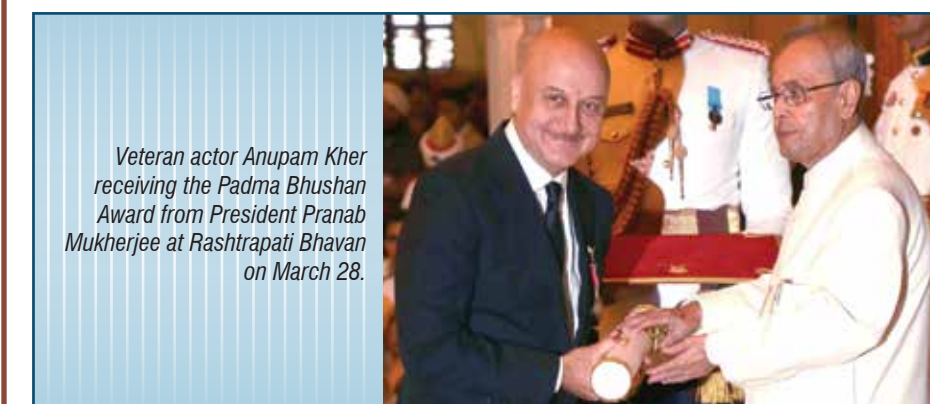
Salman Khan's *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* was declared the Best Popular Film Providing Wholesome Entertainment. Director Kabir Khan expressed his joy on Twitter, saying, “Thank you, everybody, for all your love. We are really happy that *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* got the National Award for the Best Popular Film.” Director Sharat Katariya's *Dum Laga Ke Haisha*, the '90s-set drama in Haridwar about the romance between a mismatched couple, was named the Best Hindi film.

Bollywood's multi-faceted talent Vishal Bhardwaj bagged the Best Screenplay Writer (Adapted) award for *Talvar*. This is his seventh National Award. Bharadwaj said, “I am thrilled and honored. What makes this one truly special is that it is my first for screenplay...written on my own.” Earlier, he has won the award for Best Screenplay for *Haider* (co-written with Basharat Peer), three Best Music Direction Awards for *Haider*, *Ishqiya* and *Godmother*, Best Children's Film for *The Blue Umbrella* and a Special Jury Award for *Omkara*.

## The Padma Honors



Actor Ajay Devgn receiving the Padma Shri from President Pranab Mukherjee at Rashtrapati Bhavan, on March 28



Veteran actor Anupam Kher receiving the Padma Bhushan Award from President Pranab Mukherjee at Rashtrapati Bhavan on March 28.



(L-R) Pakistani singer **Shafqat Amanat Ali**, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and superstar **Amitabh Bachchan** with the Indian Cricket team at Eden Gardens, during the ICC WT20 2016 match between India and Pakistan at Kolkata on March 19. Bachchan sang India's National Anthem at the start of the match.



Veteran actress **Shabana Azmi** is flanked by designer **Manish Malhotra** and actresses **Aathiya Shetty** and **Huma Qureshi** at the Caring with Style fashion show, organised by the Cancer Patients Aid Association (CPAA), in Mumbai on March 20.

Actress **Aditi Rao Hydari** salutes the spirit of Womanhood with a flowing dance move in her video, released on Women's Day on March 8.



Actors **Dharmendra**, **Dia Mirza**, with Iranian actor **Mohammad Reza Golzar** and filmmaker **Pahlaj Nihalani** during an event to celebrate the first cinematic co-production of Iran and India *Salaam* Mumbai in Mumbai on March 12



Actress **Kangana Ranaut** during the CII young members conference in New Delhi on March 26, 2016.

**BOLLYWOOD EXCLUSIVE**

# WAITING... TO EXHALE

Kalki Koechlin, whose next film *Waiting* releases on April 29, tells BOLLWOOD INSIDER about her brand of cinema, her shortcomings and how she deals with grief



Kalki insists that she chooses wacky characters and scripts not by design, but by instinct



BY **DHAVAL ROY**

Kalki Koechlin is a name synonymous with stellar performances in atypical roles. From a daring debut as a teenage prostitute in *Dev.D*, to a mentally disturbed girl in *Shaitan*, to a cerebral palsy patient who explores her sensuality in *Margarita with a Straw*, there has never been a dull moment in her Bollywood career spanning eight years. Kalki's next release on April 29—Anuradha Menon's *Waiting* with veteran Naseeruddin Shah—is already creating more than just a buzz.

"A unique story about an old man and a young girl, waiting in a hospital for their loved ones to come out of a coma, the narrative revolves around their uncertainty, grief, loss, and finding hope. It shows how humor exists in the darkest of situations," says Kalki. This is her second film with Naseeruddin Shah, after Anurag Kashyap's *That Girl in Yellow Boots* (2010). She credits Naseer's 'constant improvisations' for keeping her motivated throughout the film. Kalki says, "In the first film, I had only one scene with him. I was so nervous that I couldn't even function. This time, we got along really well. He surprises you with his own extempore interpretation of a scene. So, you really have to be on your toes all the time to react accordingly."

In *Waiting*, as protagonist Tara Kapoor, Kalki explores the anatomy of human grief. Not too long ago, in 2015, Kalki coped with heartache—going through a divorce with director Anurag Kashyap. According to the actress, making peace with pain is important; after going through anger, denial and frustration. Kalki says, "You need to take time out. We, as celebrities, have the freedom

to switch off our phones and go back to live with our families. But, there are people working to support their families who cannot switch off, even when they want to. You need to get in touch with people who care for you and can help you heal. But, it is still tough as you are the only one who will feel the actual pain."

Kalki insists that she chooses wacky characters and scripts not by design, but by instinct. Kalki says: "As an outsider to the industry (during *Dev.D*), I was just thrilled to have bagged that lead role. I didn't think if it was the right role to debut with or not. I didn't have a strategy then and I don't have one now. I go by my instinct. If it is powerful and stirs me from within, I take it up." For several months after her *Dev.D* debut, Kalki received offers to perform roles as a prostitute and turned them all down, even if it meant having no films for 18 months. Instead, she turned playwright with *Skeleton Woman* and travelled with it for a year to stay occupied.

Between her dark films, she has received her share of mainstream applause too. In *Yeh Jawani Hai Deewani*, she played Ranbir Kapoor's best friend, Aditi, and in Zoya Akhtar's *Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara*, a controlling fiancée to Abhay Deol. Despite earning much acclaim for herself, she says her dissatisfaction with work drives her deeper into Bollywood. "It is ironic. But, diversity in characters is extremely important to me. I do not want to get labelled in one box. I am glad that I am never happy with my work. If I turn complacent, I wouldn't be giving my best. So, telling myself that I am not doing my best keeps me motivated."

Her acting prowess is impeccable but Kalki faces much flak for her Hindi diction—being of French descent; born and brought up in Pondicherry. She speaks fluent Tamil, instead, and is aware that her 'white-skin' does not meet the conventional 'Indian beauty' criteria for Bollywood. But Kalki takes criticisms in her stride, saying, "I lose spontaneity due to the lack of nuances and diction in Hindi. There is also this stereotypical perception about anyone who looks like a *firangi* (foreigner). They think I wasn't born here and I do not know the country well. I think it is up to us to break that prejudice."

Thus, during her self-imposed Bollywood "dry-spells"—she is extremely selective about scripts—Kalki turns to her busy career in theatre. The choosy actress says that is her rehearsal ground. "It's important to keep practising the craft of acting. And, it is not something I can do at home. So, when I don't have films, theatre keeps me in touch with my skills," says Kalki, admitting that long gaps between films make her insecure. "There was a time when I had no films for six months. I thought I was never going to get work again. In such times, I keep myself occupied with theatre, monologues and poems. So far, I have not turned insane or alcoholic without work," she laughs.

The talented actress debuted as a director with her play *The Living Room* and recently opened another show in Kolkata, titled *What is Done is Done*. But, directing a film is out of the question she says. "I went crazy directing my play, being involved in everything—from production to art direction and music. I don't think I can handle a film," she asserts. Kalki is in a good position as far as her career is concerned, but her personal life—linked to a famous director-singer-actor, who recently separated from his wife—is currently the subject of Bollywood rumor mills. Kalki flashes an impish smile and says, "I shall not talk about my personal life. Regarding work, I am happy getting the best of both worlds—typical commercial films and exceptional projects, as well."

PIC: AKSHAY SABALE

# The KING Lives On

Call him Raj or Rahul—Shah Rukh Khan is the timeless epitome of Bollywood romance. But have King Khan's amorous triumphs in Bollywood run their course? The debate rages on between critics and die-hard fans, after the actor's *Dilwale* ended as a damp squib at the box-office

BY SHEETAL RODRIGUES

It does not need a genius to guess that superstar Shah Rukh Khan is looking to break the monotony of his romantic image in his upcoming releases—*Fan* (April 15) and *Raees*, later this year. The two films will not have Shah Rukh's signature pose with arms stretched wide. Instead, he is playing characters far removed from his image of an eternally dreamy hero.

Posters of *Raees* depict his bearded face etched with an unrelenting gaze as a bootlegger in Gujarat. In *Fan* he plays a superstar Aryan Khanna—inspired by his own life—as well as the 24-year-old lookalike die-hard fan Gaurav. From his body language, dialogue delivery, tone and appearance in the trailers, it is evident that he is neither Raj nor Rahul. But Shah Rukh's career has been no ordinary one—spanning 26 years and 86 films—including Gauri Shinde's untitled under-production project with Alia Bhatt that is “not a typical love story”. Despite the long years, SRK remains one of the most cherished actors the industry has ever produced. His journey from a Delhi-lad to one of Bollywood's most bankable superstars is the most phenomenal success story ever told.

Interacting during the promotion of *Fan*, SRK says, “I am a very common person. My stardom dwells on the fact that I am extremely ordinary. I am just like the regular guy. I am not this awe-inspiring, six-foot tall muscular guy, nor do I have fans like that. I can neither imagine how people like me so much nor can I understand what it is that they hold on to me for. It is very humbling. So, when my film is not able to provide that happiness to someone, I take it very personally. It is not about the business but about letting down so many people.”

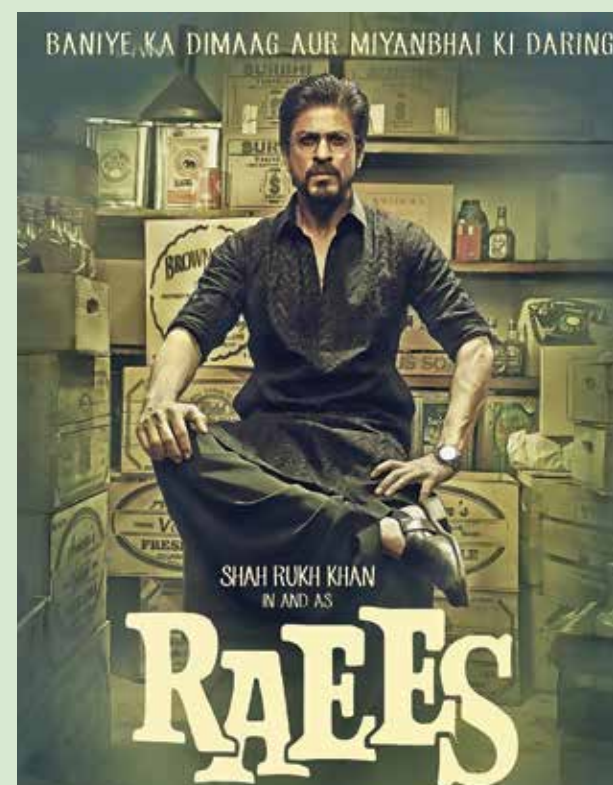
But the flip side of stardom is that there are exceptionally unforgiving critics. He may

have earned more repute as the greatest romantic hero of this generation, but SRK has also struck a chord with his unforgettable portrayals of Mohan Bhargava in *Swades* (2004), as Kabir Khan in *Chak De! India* (2007), Rizwan Khan in *My Name is Khan* (2010)—winning Filmfare Best Actor awards for all three roles; 2010 being his last, so far. Although *Swades* was a fiasco in terms of box-office collections—along with *Paheli*—it was followed by eight back-to-back hits.

In recent times, his last blockbuster was Rohit Shetty's *Chennai Express*. So, when *Dilwale* bombed, film critics began questioning his mass appeal at 50. On his 50th birthday in November, last year, SRK said, “There are so many market forces, and thought processes and so many things people tell you. So when people told me I was only doing romantic films. I said, ‘Fine, I'll do Asoka.’ And it went wrong. Then somebody said, ‘No, you don't look good in such films. It's best you wear Polo t-shirts and dance like you did in *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai*.’ I was like ‘Okay!’ I did *Chak De!* and people said, ‘Why don't you do more of such meaningful films’. But I did *Swades* somewhere and people said, ‘*Woh chali nahi yar*, Shah Rukh is finished.’ I am not saying it doesn't affect me. It does.”

Film critics have remarked that King Khan is on a decline, but *Dilwale* suffered one setback due to political protests to Shah Rukh's statement on “intolerance” across India. And because the film failed to earn positive reviews, it witnessed a Monday slump at the ticket windows despite a good opening. Trade analysts also attribute the lackluster show to a discerning audience that seeks good content and not the star cast in films. This is exactly why Salman Khan's *Prem Ratan Dhan Payo* descended after an opening collection of Rs 40.35 crore.

With *Fan* and *Raees*, SRK is aiming to capture the imagination of judicious fans, who are awaiting the return of their hero in distinctive characters. *Fan* has no leading lady, no song, and no love—a promotional tune, *Jabra Fan*, was released for a short duration. Speaking of *Fan*, he says, “While we took the trappings of stardom from



With *Fan* and *Raees*, SRK is aiming to capture the imagination of judicious fans

the life of Shahrukh Khan for the character of Aryan Khanna, it is different from how I am in real life. The journey of the character is inspired from me—a young guy from Delhi who made it big. But it (the character) could not be Shahrukh Khan in the film, as that would require a lot of my personal life to be showcased. Aryan Khanna in *Fan* is a personal, internal journey of a superstar, not flamboyant and external.”

But to play Gaurav, Shah Rukh relied on Director Maneesh Sharma. SRK says, “Being a movie star and going about your work every day the way I do, does take you away from the real world. I only had the superficial understanding of a fan. So fifty percent of the Gaurav you will see in the film is created with prosthetics and VFX, but it is 100% a vision of Maneesh. I think I got a lot of it right—the way Maneesh wanted it, but I feel I have fallen short.”

SRK says that donning prosthetics was physically challenging and irritable. “It would take six hours to do that make-up. I am not the best known to be punctual. I am not someone so dedicated, who would report to the sets at 5 am for a 9 am shift. I have a watch from a different time zone. So we would shoot from 2 pm to about 4 am. We have worked really hard to make sure it does not look unreal. And then, the challenge was that my face has been known for 25 years. If I was a new actor, it would be easier to change my face. The young crew had to put up with my impatience and irritability as the sweat would collect behind the masks,” he says.

Regardless of its outcome, Shah Rukh is excited to illustrate his *Dilli-pan*. He says, “When I moved from Delhi to Mumbai, I always wanted to show my *Dilli-pan* in films. I would get jealous of others who got to play characters set in

Delhi. The irony is that in these 25 years of living in Mumbai, I have forgotten the dialect of Delhi's Hindi. I had to put in some effort to get it back for my character of Gaurav. The film is very special, not just for the story but for the technical visual effects. It will leave something for films to look up to. It also reminded me that during my young days in Delhi, when a boy was serious about marrying a girl he was dating, he would take her to watch a movie in the rather unaffordable Priya theater and then hot chocolate fudge at Nirula's (popular hangout spots in Delhi).”

In *Fan*, Gaurav is a look-alike of his idol. The witty actor quips, “I meet a lot of my look-alike (in real) and they are so good-looking.” But answering questions about crazy fan encounters, the actor says, “I have never been intimidated by a fan. But if some of them are really big and they hug me, I get squeezed. A lot of people think I do live shows and appearances for business. But despite my injuries, I do it so that I can meet people who love me so much.” Shah Rukh says that allowing an obsessive fan following means responsibility. “If you allow that to happen, you have to cater to it. I cannot deny that it is not a great feeling, but it is also scary that I do not know what I have done for so many people to love me so much,” he says.

He forayed into Bollywood with his award-winning debut in *Deewana* (1992)—alongside the then reigning diva Late Divya Bharti. But the ‘King of Romance’, ironically, catapulted the peaks of filmdom as a villain in two 1993 flicks—Rahul in Yash Chopra's *Darr* and Ajay alias Vicky Malhotra in Abbas-Mustan's *Baazigar*. He won Filmfare Best Actor for *Baazigar*. In the following year, he won the Filmfare Award for Best Villain, essaying psychotic murderer Vijay Agnihotri in *Anjaam* (1994).

Recently, in a real-life replay of *Darr*, an obsessed lover abducted a Delhi girl for a few days, before letting her go unharmed. Shah Rukh says, often, celebrities do not realize the impact they have on someone's life. “We make a film to tell a story and not to incite people's life in a negative way. The truth is stranger than fiction and we derive our stories from life. *Darr* was the love story of an obsessive man who gives his life for his love. But it is only a film. So what happened (in real) is sad. We never even realize how close we get to people's hearts and minds through our work; and how people react to our every move. There must be a lot of things that affect people when they watch someone they love.”

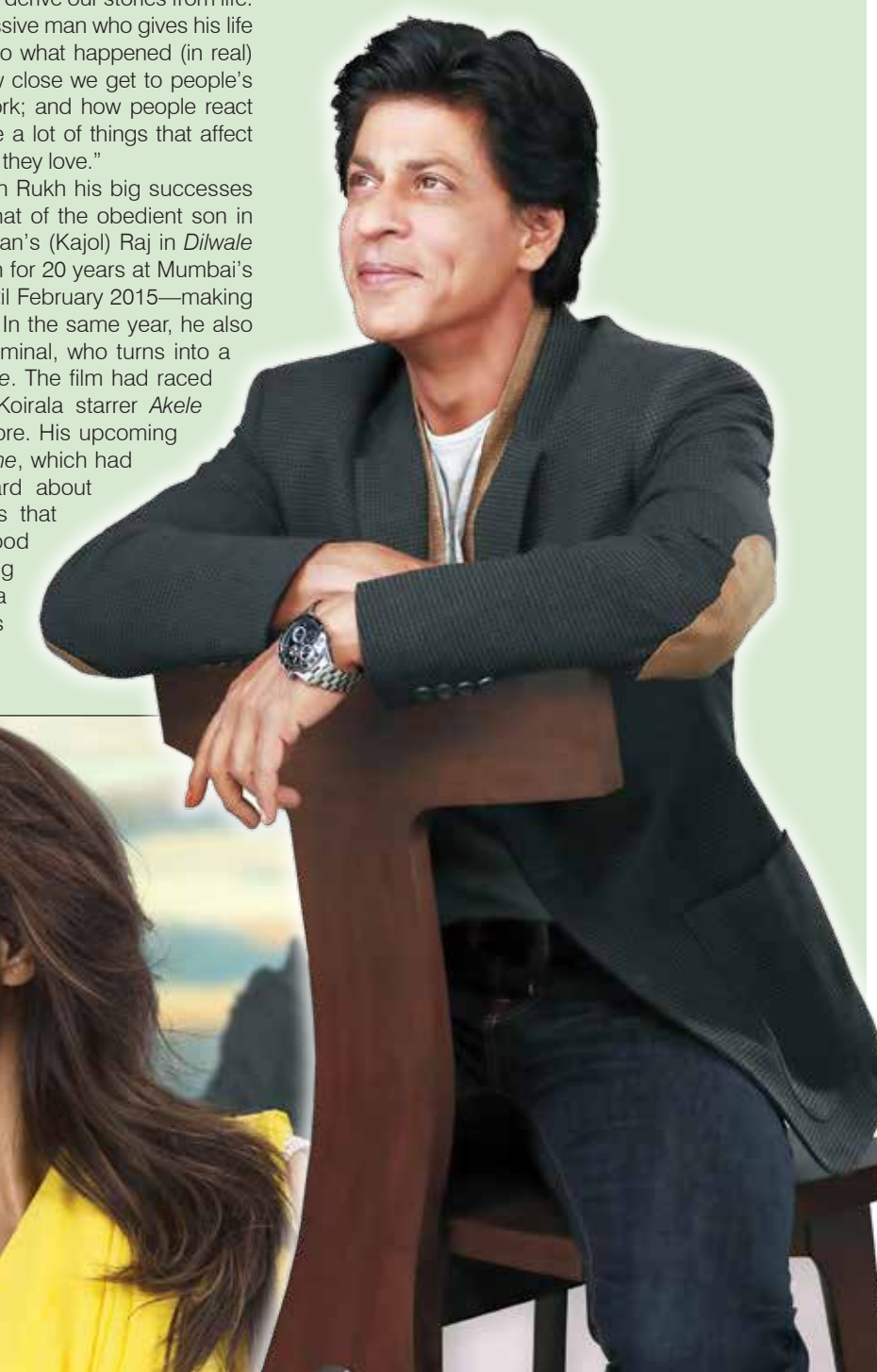
The year 1995 brought Shah Rukh his big successes with seven releases—including that of the obedient son in *Karan Arjun* and the dreamy Simran's (Kajol) Raj in *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge*—the film ran for 20 years at Mumbai's iconic Maratha Mandir theater until February 2015—making SRK every woman's dream man. In the same year, he also played a rebellious small-time criminal, who turns into a notorious gangster in *Raam Jaane*. The film had raced ahead of Aamir Khan-Manisha Koirala starrer *Akele Hum Akele Tum*, earning Rs 9 crore. His upcoming *Raees* is reminiscent of *Ram Jaane*, which had proven that he was not awkward about breaking the conventional norms that governed quintessential Bollywood “heroes” of that time. Speaking about playing gray shades in a 1994 interview, he said, “There's

a lot of ‘ji hazoori’ in the film industry. Everyone—actors, producers, directors—wants to please everyone else. So, if someone acts slightly different, they say he is arrogant. I tell the director that I can't do ‘aa aa ee oo oo oo’ (referring to a popular Govinda-Karisma Kapoor dance number of the time). I have set some standards for myself.”

To filmmakers, he emerged as a talented young actor, who was open to gamble with roles that redefined the ‘male protagonist’. But deep within, Shah Rukh gauged people's fondness for a Raj over a *Ram Jaane*. Thus came the noticeable shift—from the baddie to the lover boy. In the following years, he capitalized his iconic status with Yash Chopra's *Dil Toh Pagal Hai*, Subhash Ghai's *Pardes* and Karan Johar's *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai*—the biggest hits of his career, till date. The failure of the atypical *Asoka* (2001) was disheartening and came at a time when he was pitted against Bollywood's new sensation, Hrithik Roshan, who had made an extravagant debut in father Rakesh Roshan's *Kaho Naa Pyaar Hai*.

In *Fan*, Shah Rukh traces his journey along the winding path to stardom—re-enacting scenes from his own films as the protagonist. He describes the experience as ‘schizophrenic’. Shah Rukh says, “Shooting for *Fan* was nerve-racking because Maneesh would pull out scenes from my own films and ask me to do it (for the character of superstar Aryan Khanna). Then, he would tell me that I wasn't doing it as good as the original. It was very difficult to redo what I have done 20 years in a way that Maneesh thought I had done it. I only know four or five ways of doing a scene, but Maneesh thought of the six or seventh way. So, I am playing me, but I am not able to think like me. And someone else is telling me what to do. It was shameful and schizophrenic.”

The Raj in Shah Rukh Khan may resurface in his future films. But for now, his fans can sit back and enjoy for the King lives on.



In *Fan*, Shah Rukh traces his journey along the winding path to stardom—re-enacting scenes from his own films as the protagonist



When *Dilwale* bombed, film critics began questioning Shah Rukh's mass appeal at 50





**BOLLYWOOD  
EXCLUSIVE**

# Born for Bollywood

**KAREENA KAPOOR KHAN**—bold yet self-assured—has stepped into a phase where she is ready to experiment with her roles, unconcerned about opinions. With two upcoming releases, Kareena speaks to **BOLLYWOOD INSIDER** about her journey from being a Kapoor princess to her reign at the Box Office

BY JANHAVI SAMANT

**K**areena Kapoor Khan is a woman of true blue-blood; not because she is married to Nawab of Pataudi Saif Ali Khan but because she is the fourth-generation heiress of Bollywood's royal Kapoor *khandaan*. She has the Kapoor aura in her DNA, but the calmness of her demeanor reflects in the ever-present smile across her rose-tinted cheeks. Staying true to her family legacy, she has established herself as a top competitor in Bollywood with stardom, success and glamor in abundance. Ever since her award-winning debut in *Refugee* (2000), she has also firmly proven that her flair for acting is her own and not a mere inheritance. Amidst the hectic country-wide promotions for her upcoming film *Ki & Ka*—about a couple that don't follow conventional gender roles—Kareena shares that she is yet to watch Uncle Rishi Kapoor's much-acclaimed act in *Kapoor and Sons*. "I have watched the promos and loved Chintu uncle's role in the film. Fawad Khan has done an amazing job. I would love to watch them," she says.

## WEARING THE PANTS IN *KI & KA*

Playing Kiya, the ambitious marketing manager and bread-winner in *Ki & Ka*, Kareena has thrust aside the 'home-maker' label associated with women. The actress says, "For the first time, a film on Indian celluloid will show how an ambitionless man and a go-getting wife can indeed love and support each other. It shows their challenges and what it can eventually lead to. People will find the film very different." At a recent event for the film, Kareena had revealed that the "only one condition" for marrying actor Saif was that she would work her entire life. Now, three years into her marriage, Kareena says she has matured a lot. "I am very happy to be married and be working at the same time," she says.

While Saif was rumoured to be upset with the kissing scenes in R Balki's *Ki & Ka*, Kareena says, "If my partner was not supportive, I would not be able to do a film like *Ki & Ka*. Saif told me that this is a great concept and I should take it up. He told me not to bother about what others think of me and it's not every day that such scripts come by." At the launch of the film's trailer, Kareena had revealed Saif's "amazing reaction" to the promo. She said, "I have never seen that kind of a reaction from him. He said he was proud of me. This is the kind of film that actors keep waiting for and saying, '*Kuch alag karna hai*'."

Much like her character in the film, Kareena feels a husband is the only person who can support a woman. "There are so many men in our country, who take care of their homes and children and tell their wives to enjoy their work. Earlier, women would not work after marriage. Today, working women have set an example," she says. The filmmakers, however, do not intend to change mindsets. Kareena says, "We are neither politicians nor do we want to experiment or cause a revolution. We made an entertaining film on the relationship of Kiya and Kabir. If there is a message in the film, it is great."

A scene from the upcoming film, where Kareena ties a *mangalsutra* around Arjun's neck, has also generated much curiosity. She says, "When you see the film, you will realise that the *mangalsutra* has a lot of importance in Kabir's life. It is his mother's last memento and he wants his wife to have it. But after their marriage, Kiya tells him to keep it and so he wears it on his wrist."

## THE QUINTESSENTIAL DIVA

The character has been unlike any other she has portrayed before. Kareena says: "I jumped at the role. I love experimenting. At the start of my career, I did a film like *Chameli* (2003) when nobody was thinking of doing such films. Today, many people are experimenting. I am passionate about acting and my work. If there's a good role, I am as excited as a newcomer."

She won six out of her 10 Filmfare nominations, including a special Filmfare award for her performance in *Chameli* (2004) and Best Actress for *Heroine* (2013) in which she portrayed a declining superstar. She terms it as her "bravest role". In a career spanning 16

**“**  
I wish all my fans in the  
US a lot of luck.  
Hope you keep loving  
my films!  
**”**

**KAREENA KAPOOR KHAN**

years, she also won the Apsara Film & Television Producers Guild Award—conferred by the film industry to honor and recognize the professional excellence of their peers—for her *Jab We Met* performance. Her share of blockbusters include *Bajrangli Bhajjaan* and *3 Idiots*; comedies like *Golmaal Returns* and *Golmaal 3*; dramas like *Omkara* and *Talaash*; and also the clichéd *Main Prem Ki Diwani Hoon* and *Kambakkht Ishq*—the two films tanked at the box office. She has faced much criticism over her choice of roles when she rejected *Kal Ho Naa Ho* and *Gollyon Ki Raasleela Ram-Leela*. But Kareena has taken failures in her stride without regrets. She says, "I try to balance commercial *masala* films and performance-oriented roles. I don't wait for a good film to come by. I will do a mix of light and serious performances. I have done, believed and stood by all of them—good or bad. They say a woman has 100 different shades to her and can play different roles. I want my fans to see all these shades in me. I can't just be of one shade. I also love to do item songs at times." No wonder then, at 35, she is still a crowd-puller in item numbers like *Mera Naam Mary Hai* from *Brothers* (2015) and *Ata Mazhi Satakli* from her own film, *Singham Returns* (2014) and *Fevicol Se* from *Dabangg-2* (2012). Her next film *Uda Punjab* (with ex-lover Shahid Kapur), slated for a July release is a drama on drug abuse in Punjab. The film also stars Alia Bhatt, who is being proclaimed as the 'next Kareena of tinsel town'.

## BORN INTO BOLLYWOOD

For Kareena, working with "an amazing director" like Balki has been a new experience. "As a director, the way he depicts different concepts on screen is distinct. He is never afraid to experiment and does not compromise on his ideas or convictions. That's wonderful for an actor," she says. The praise is mutual. Balki has said Kareena is "magical" and



"For the first time, a film on Indian celluloid will show how an ambitionless man and a go-getting wife can indeed love and support each other." — Kareena, on her upcoming film *Ki & Ka*

## ICONIC ROLES



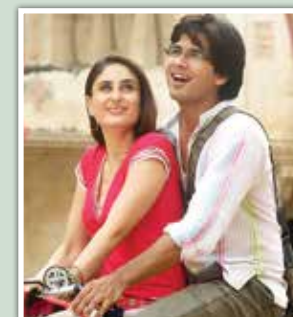
### CHAMELI (2004)

She excelled in Sudhir Mishra's 2004 drama centered around the life of a prostitute



### OMKARA (2006)

She played the perfect Desdemona in Vishal Bharadwaj's adaptation of Shakespeare's *Othello*



### JAB WE MET (2008)

Her "Main apni favourite hoon" earned a spot in the list of Bollywood's memorable dialogues.



### HEROINE (2013)

She played a successful film actress, whose career is on a decline



"the happiest actor on this planet". Kareena responds, "Balki has been very kind to me. Yes, I am very happy. I don't care about anything that is happening in the industry. I don't let anything disturb me either. All I want is to keep on doing good roles." Kareena laughs as she fields a question on pulling off a bizarre chance of playing wife to Arjun Kapoor in *Ki & Ka* as well as his uncle, Anil Kapoor, in *Bewafaa* (2005). To Kareena's credit, that is how long she has been able to sustain herself in a 'man's world', where female actresses retire post-marriage. Ask her who should be her next male co-star and pat comes the reply: "You never know it might be Harshvardhan Kapoor (Anil's son) next. If I get a good script, I will enjoy it all the more. I know Arjun from the time he used to assist Boneyji on his production team. I have worked with Arjun's father Boney Kapoor and Karisma has worked with Anil Kapoor in many films. I have known Sanjay Kapoor and Anilji for a long time too."

## BORN FOR BOLLYWOOD

Fondly called Bebo, Kareena had decided to follow her sister Karisma (Lolo) into the film industry. Kareena was a regular at Karisma's film-sets in the 1990s—she would run away from her school to closely watch her megastar sibling live her childhood dream. Kareena's attraction towards films had mother Babita so worried that she packed her off to the Welham Girls' School in Dehradun for three years. Within two years after completing schooling and returning to Mumbai, Kareena, a die-hard Sridevi fan, turned to films. Having grown up in a family of thespians, Kareena has closely watched the transformation of the Indian film industry. She says, "The industry has definitely changed. We are doing better films and using better technology. Today, films are creating awareness, which is important."

Recently, the film industry has been in the news for high-profile marriages falling apart. Kareena—mostly raised by Babita, after she parted ways with Randhir Kapoor—has carved out her own comfort zone after her marriage. Unaffected by the outward frills of glamor, Kareena does not think that the industry is responsible for relationships going kaput. The actress says, "It's a personal thing. I don't think that the industry causes heartbreaks. One never knows what the real problem is. No relationship can be broken because of outside influences, it is all within."

Kareena has attained stardom as an actor and is content. But filmmaking and Hollywood are not for her. Kareena is not fascinated by the idea of joining husband Saif's film production company. She says: "Typically, Saif and I never discuss what he wants to do in terms of his film productions. I think they have currently called it a halt while Saif is busy with *Rangoon* (a film by Vishal Bharadwaj). Maybe, after that, he will produce something. But, I am not interested in direction or production. All that I am interested in is acting. I don't have the dedication or energy for Hollywood. I want to be like Meryl Streep who is working till 70 or like Zohra Sehgal who acted till 80."

# Ki & Ka will change the way men think: ARJUN KAPOOR

BOLLYWOOD EXCLUSIVE



BY JANHAVI SAMANT

With an intimidating voice and forbidding appearance, Arjun Kapoor—son of producers Boney Kapoor and Mona Shourie Kapoor—was seen as the most unlikely ‘hero’ in his famous family. But he trounced obesity with a push from Salman Khan and coped with the trauma of losing his mother to cancer, just before the release of his debut film *Ishaqzaade* in 2012. Often misconstrued as a brooding hero, slowly but certainly, Arjun Kapoor has proven that there is more to him than just his awe-inspiring pedigree. His power-packed performances in a gamut of roles—*Aurangzeb* (2013), *Gunday*, *2 States* and *Finding Fanny* (2014) and *Tevar* (2015)—have wheedled out to the fore, the actor in him.

In a freewheeling interview to **BOLLYWOOD INSIDER**, Arjun—charming and upfront—discusses playing Kabir, a ‘house-husband’ in R Balki’s *Ki & Ka*, aiming to send a strong message on gender role reversals. Excerpts:

## Can a man be the strength of a successful marriage?

Every relationship is unique. It is up to the man to be supportive and understanding and to communicate. There are various reasons why you become the anchor of the house. It is not about the physicality but the support system. You have to build trust with your wife, whether she is a homemaker or a working woman. A homemaker should enjoy what he or she does and so should the spouse.

## What instructions did R Balki give you?

We spoke about the body language because I have a big frame. He said he wanted the gentleness of the giant and not the giant-ness of the gentleman. There were very few notes to follow. Kabir had to be childlike and relaxed. His eyes had to be soft, bright and warm. The kitchen was to be my domain; so I had to learn how to smoothly chop, cook and clean, and feel the passion of being in the kitchen. I had to ensure I had no awkwardness in switching on the gas, boiling the water, or filling the utensils while making tea or coffee.

## Did you have to come out of your comfort zone?

There is a homemaker in every man, but we just shy away



*R Balki wanted the gentleness of the giant and not the giant-ness of the gentleman.*

— ARJUN KAPOOR

from it. I have grown with domestic help at home. I have been living with my sister (Anshula), who is amazing at taking care of the house. I just have to sign checks. In the film, I clean the house. I was able to do it well. When I started, I was anxious about being able to pull it off in the most convincing way. I wanted to make it believable and not resemble a caricature, where people would say, ‘He is too perfect, a boy like him cannot exist; you have to have flaws’.

## Do you like experimenting?

At the beginning of your career, you can experiment and determine what gives you happiness. I followed that thought. I never thought about what people would think. I don’t want to do the typical romantic movies, where a hot guy chases a pretty girl. *Ki & Ka* is not an experiment but a romantic comedy with a twist. This subject was long overdue. A husband has to balance himself. Women are already balancing their home and work. I think this will change the way men think.

## What was your impression of Kareena before you became an actor and now, having played her husband?

Even today, she is the same girl who I met the first day—very chilled out and entertaining. She has achieved a lot of success but has not changed by even an ounce. When the camera switches on, she’s a different person. She is a one take artist. The extension of our comfortable off-camera relationship is seen on-camera. It has helped us in playing our roles well.

## What do you think of audience appreciation?

It is a good time for actors. When I was an assistant, I thought I was aware of a lot of things. Some time ago, male actors would not be accepted as heroes, if they did a film like *Ishaqzaade*. But the audience has changed and is appreciating actors. I realized this only after I became an actor.

## Would you trade stardom for a normal life?

I must be crazy to do that. I have made my choices clear before I became an actor. I have no thoughts of being normal. But, I wish I had some ordinary days to be able to have a conversation without being photographed. I wish people could understand that I need a few moments of my own, too.

## But stardom is not constant...

That is why you have to keep working hard to ensure that what you do, gives you a foundation. I believe that your first 10 films decide where you stand. It also helps you gauge your level and the acceptance from the audiences. Either they love you or they don’t. I know I am good enough to sustain. I have that confidence.

# Pakistan’s ‘King Khan’ wins India over

After the success of his second project *Kapoor & Sons*, Fawad Khan is looking forward to essaying ‘character roles’ in films

By SHEETAL RODRIGUES

His hypnotic gaze and debonair aura in his intense blockbuster Pakistan TV shows *Humsafar* and *Zindagi Gulzar Hai* have left women drooling over Fawad Khan. The popularity that his shows garnered in India, earned him his big Bollywood break in 2014, alongside Sonam Kapoor, in *Khoobsurat*. One of the many enchanting things about Fawad is his instinctive modesty, even after two successful big banner Bollywood flicks. He has an army of female fans wanting to get close, including *Kapoor & Sons*’ producer Karan Johar’s mother. At the trailer launch of the film, Karan revealed that his mother, Hiroo, blushes at a fleeting glimpse of Fawad. But, the King Khan of Pakistan, adjudged the ‘Most Beautiful Man’ at *Vogue India Beauty Awards* 2015, dons a serious demeanor, as self-effacing as he can be. He says, “I find it hard to believe. I don’t think I am very handsome. But I am grateful for the love. This adulation makes me blush.”

The success of *Kapoor & Sons*—featuring Alia Bhatt, Sidharth Malhotra, Rishi Kapoor and Ratna Pathak Shah—is a result of teamwork, he says. Incidentally, in both his films, Ratna played his on-screen mother. Fawad quips, “I think she is my permanent *filmi maa*. It is a delight to work with veteran actors from whom you can learn something. She is very giving and collaborative. There was much camaraderie between the team. The positive energy has translated into the film.”

Fawad says Rishi Kapoor is his favourite coactor from the film. “He is the most important element of the film. As a kid, back in Pakistan, I did not have access to films. I would rent VHS tapes and watch Rishi Kapoor’s movies. Today, I am more than thrilled to work with him.”

He describes himself as a ‘chilled-



The success of *Kapoor & Sons* is a result of teamwork says Fawad Khan

out person’, but confesses that dance sequences in the film made him sweat much. Fawad says, “Dance is not really my forte. So, while I got a chance to loosen up a bit, I experienced difficulties. The others were all set to go after three days of rehearsal. Not me. Next time, I would need a month.”

The actor-singer-model has his eyes set on Hollywood, aiming to be ‘global’. Fawad says, “I want to be known as a global actor. Although the Indian film industry is great, it has a comfort zone as the language is same. I would like to venture off anywhere else. I’m a very big fan of Hollywood. I really like what’s happening there right now, where the marriage between cinema and TV is amazing. Here (in India), it is changing but is only the tip of the iceberg.” His dream list of Bollywood films includes a possible remake of the 1965 Waheeda Rehman-Dev Anand starrer, *Guide*. “It is a film I have never seen completely. I have watched a portion of it in my childhood. If offered, I would love to star in the remake. I am a very big fan of films belonging to that period.”

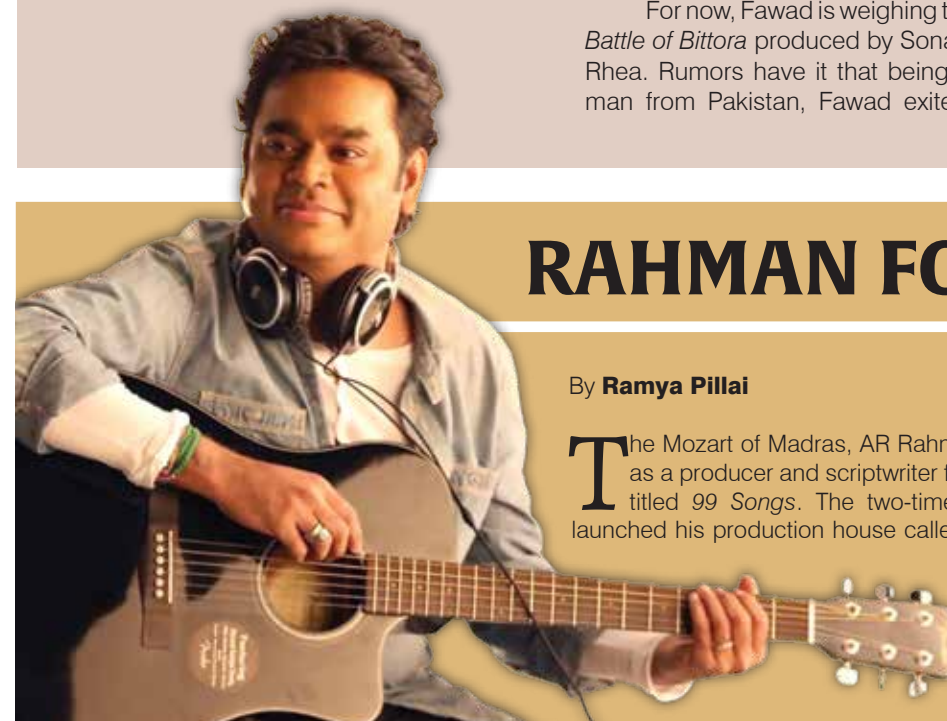
For now, Fawad is weighing the script of *Battle of Bittora* produced by Sonam’s sister, Rhea. Rumors have it that being a married man from Pakistan, Fawad exited the film

in July 2015, citing that intimate scenes in the film would hurt sensibilities back home. But both Sonam and Fawad (they shared a sizzling on-screen chemistry in *Khoobsurat*) have stated, that the final script is still in the making.

The 34-year-old actor says he has not planned his journey ahead. “In Bollywood, even six months is a long time. There are some interesting things that I am looking at, but it completely depends on the script. My intention is to do something different by taking up character roles. It will be an interesting journey for me. I have been fortunate to get good films. I couldn’t have asked for anything more,” says Fawad.

The first Bollywood Khan from Pakistan says the ‘warmth’ of Indians has helped him cope with the absence of his family in Mumbai, despite political protests against Pakistani artists. Fawad says, “I am a politically illiterate person. I don’t keep up with the current affairs. Whenever I have come to India, I have experienced tremendous hospitality and have received a warm welcome. I do miss my family but India feels like home.”

*Fawad describes himself as a ‘chilled-out person’, but confesses that dance sequences make him sweat much*



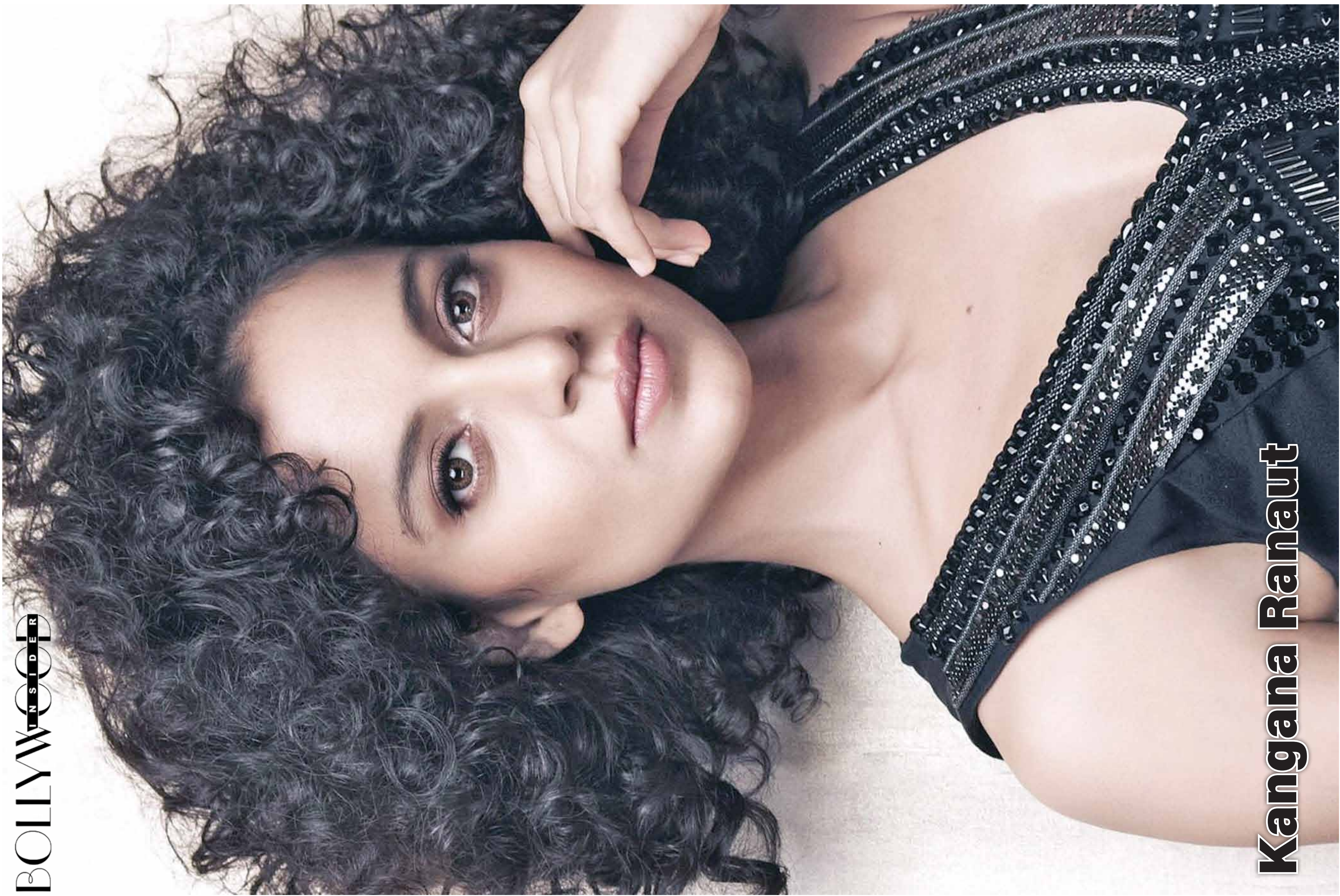
# RAHMAN FORAYS INTO FILMMAKING

By Ramya Pillai

The Mozart of Madras, AR Rahman, is all set to dabble as a producer and scriptwriter for his home production titled *99 Songs*. The two-time Oscar Award winner launched his production house called *Y M Productions* and unveiled the poster of the film on Facebook in March. The poster depicts a couple in a

surreal aerial dance move, hanging on to a piano, which is suspended from the sky. Rahman posted, “With your support and good wishes, I’m pleased to share my movie’s first poster!” Directed by Vishwesh Krishnamoorthy, *99 Songs* is a musical journey of self-discovery of a struggling singer, who aspires to be a successful music composer. Slated for a 2017 release, the cast and crew of the film are yet to be finalised.

Rahman, who is currently composing music for superstar Rajinikanth’s *2.0*, a sequel of Shankar’s *Enthiran*, will create touching, beautiful tunes for his upcoming production.



**Kangana Ranaut**

# Manoj Kumar: A Patriot and Visionary

Five decades after he reigned over blockbuster charts as the unrivaled 'Bharat Kumar' of Hindi Cinema with gritty screenplays and amazingly natural dialogues, Manoj Kumar continues to be inseparable from the cinematographic interpretation of *desh bhakti*. His cinematic genius has made him the 47th recipient of cinema's highest official honor, the *Dadasaheb Phalke Award*



(L-R) *Woh Kaun Thi* (1964), *Shaheed* (1965), *Roti Kapda Aur Makan* (1974), *With Dilip Kumar* in 1981

BY SHEETAL RODRIGUES

At the 63rd National Film Awards on May 3, Manoj Kumar will be bestowed with the customary *Swarna Kamal* (Golden Lotus), a cash prize of Rs 10 lakh and a shawl—components of the coveted *Dadasaheb Phalke Award*. A five-member jury comprising of singers Lata Mangeshkar, Asha Bhosle, Nitin Mukesh, Anup Jalota and writer Salim Khan unanimously selected him for the honor. The actor, who turns 79 this July, said, "Every award I've been honored with—be it the National Award or the *Padma Shree*—has been big. But this one is the biggest, officially. I was sleeping when (filmmakers) Madhur Bhandarkar and Ashoke Pandit called me up to wish me. They said that I could watch the news on TV if I didn't believe them." The award is motivating him to return to filmmaking. "I have been absent and that's my mistake. I have wanted to make a movie and will soon do so. I want to be more active," the actor says.

## A VICTIM OF PARTITION

Born in *Abbottabad* (now in Pakistan) as Harikishen Goswami, his family lived in the Hudson Lane refugee camp in Delhi during the gory India-Pakistan partition. Here, the actor lost his infant brother. Even today, he often expresses his heartache of lowering his mortal remains into the river Yamuna. As a 10-year-old boy (while in a refugee camp), he watched Dilip Kumar's 1947 hit film *Jugnu*. In a moment, little Hari decided to become an actor and rechristened himself Manoj. In an interview, the actor said, "Manoj was a very neat and unreal name. It was Dilip Saab's name in *Jugnu*. I had decided that when I become an actor, I would call myself Manoj." He lived his dream when Dilip Kumar made his on-screen comeback, after a long sabbatical in Salim-Javed's *Kranti* (1981). The two actors forged a personal lifelong bond during the filming.

## THE STUBBORN STRUGGLE

His career graph indicates many conquests, but at the age of 19, in 1956, Manoj moved to Mumbai, slept on railway platforms and often got baton charged by the police. He has revealed, "I came to Mumbai only with the blessings of my parents as I did not run away from home. I swallowed my pride to endure verbal abuses and insults. Whoever comes to Mumbai has to bear this to succeed. I would queue up for work outside offices of film directors, just like for cinema tickets."

## ASCENDING THE PEAKS

At 19, Manoj's first screen appearance was as a 90-year-old mendicant in the song *Dharti Ki God Mein* from Lekhraj Bhakri's *Fashion* (1957), starring Pradeep Kumar and Mala Sinha. The actor once remarked, "I asked him (Bhakri), what were his plans for me. He told me that not one of my shoes had even discolored while many others struggled forever." The much-awaited break as a hero came in H S Rawail's *Kaanch Ki Gudiya* (1961) and film producers rushed to sign on the 'new kid in tinsel town'. Even before his debut release, Manoj had bagged four films—including Vijay Bhatt's *Hariyali Aur Raasta* (1962) with Mala Sinha. Ahead of its time, the film reunited separated lovers who are unable to reconcile to their ill-fitting marriages. Overnight, Manoj became a colossal star. A series of hits followed—*Woh Kaun Thi*, *Himalay Ki God Mein*, *Sanyasi*, *Patthar Ke Sanam*, *Gumnaam*, *Pehechaan*, *Be-Imaan* and *Dus Numbr*.

Speaking of his resounding success, the actor has said, "I came to Mumbai with only two aspirations: to become an actor and to earn Rs 3 lakh. When I earned that sum of money, I was a successful actor. My Mumbai dream was fulfilled. I wondered, now what? Then, my close friend and renowned publicist, Kewal Kishyap, insisted on producing a film on Shaheed Bhagat Singh. In those days, there were no books on him and two earlier films had fared poorly. I researched a lot on the subject."

## SON OF THE SOIL

*Shaheed*, in which Manoj played the role of Bhagat Singh, won the President's Medal (the then equivalent of the National award) and much admiration from the then Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri.

The actor has shared: "Shastriji attended the premiere and was to stay only for ten minutes. But, the film gripped him. I told the projector room technician to skip the interval. Later, at 2.30 am, his officer called up and said that Shastriji had invited me for tea, early next morning. When I met him, he said, "Son, you have done a great job. I have given a slogan. Can you make a film on my catchphrase *Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan*?" With an adrenaline rush, I touched his feet and boarded a train at 4 am from Faridabad. When the train reached Mumbai, the story of *Upkar* was ready."

A blockbuster Golden Jubilee, *Upkar* released after Shastri's demise, winning six *Filmfare Awards*. It also earned Manoj—who essayed an idealistic farmer—a National Film Award and the unrivaled 'son of the soil' moniker.

It was in the buoyant phase of the newly independent India that Manoj successfully reloaded the sentiment of *desh-prem*.

His *Purab Aur Pachhim* (1971) with Saira Banu, highlighted the cultural conflict between India and the West; and *Roti Kapda Aur Makaan* (1974), based on the basic human right of food, clothing and shelter—earned big at the box office, also setting the trend for multi-starrers.

Manoj's creativity fell into a downward spiral with *Kalyug Aur Ramayan* (1987), *Clerk* (1989) and *Jai Hind* (1999)—which was to be a debut for his son, Kunal Goswami—turning unsuccessful.

In the 1990s, Manoj announced many films he never made. His last big screen appearance was in the 1995 film *Maidan-E-Jung*.



## April 2 AJAY DEVGN

Ajay—son of Veeru Devgn, a famous stuntman—reluctantly made his film debut at the age of 22 in *Phool Aur Kaante* (1991). The film went on to be the most successful Bollywood production of that year, establishing Ajay as the new action hero. Initially, Ajay had rejected the offer as he was still a student at Mumbai's Mithibai College and dreamed of becoming a filmmaker. He had cited that his busy schedule with college documentary films did not allow him to take up *Phool Aur Kaante*. But his father pushed him to sign the film. However, Ajay's first tryst with the camera was at 16, as a younger version of Mithun Chakraborty's character in *Pyari Behna* (1985). Ajay loves light-hearted comedy over serious action. His directorial debut *U, Me Aur Hum* was an adaptation of *The Notebook*. He was said to be Sanjay Leela Bhansali's first choice for *Bajirao Mastani*. Till date, he has been part of over 150 films—some as a producer. Among the 32 awards he has received in his long career are two National Awards: for *Zakhm* (1998) and *The Legend of Bhagat Singh* (2002). He turns 47 this year. Happy Birthday, Ajay!



## April 15 MANDIRA BEDI

Actress and TV host Mandira Bedi, popularly called Mandy, was offered to play the title role in *Shanti*, India's first ever daily soap on *Doordarshan* in 1994. At that time, Mandira had just completed her post-graduation and begun working at an advertising agency. The incredible success of *Shanti* earned her the role of a demure Preeti in Yash Chopra's *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* in 1995. She appeared in TV shows like *Aurat* (DD and Sony), *Dushman* (DD) and eventually, *Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi* (Star Plus). Mandira went on to become the first lady cricket presenter at the *ICC Cricket World Cup* in the years 2003 and 2007 and the *ICC Champions Trophy* in the years 2004 and 2006, setting a trend for many female cricket presenters. She showcased her talent in fashion designing, debuting at the coveted *Lakme Fashion Week* in 2014, with her collection of sarees. She has promoted faux leather for PETA. Mandira is married to producer-director Raj Kaushal and has a son named Vir. The couple has now applied for the process of adopting a girl child to complete their family. Mandira turns 44 this year. Happy Birthday, Mandira!



## April 15 JAYA BACHCHAN

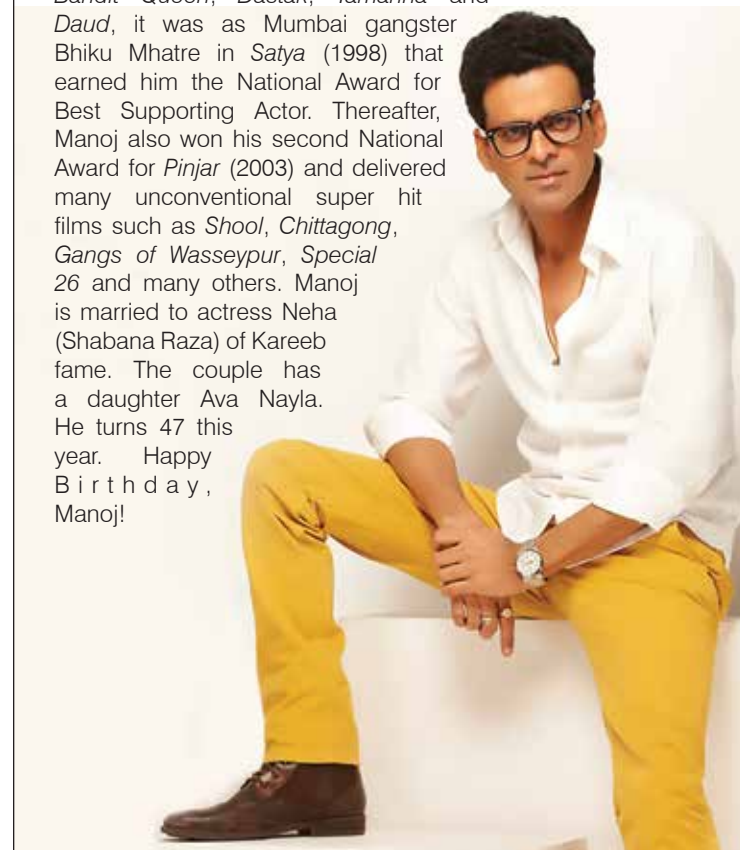
Jaya Bachchan made her acting debut in her teens as a supporting actress in Satyajit Ray's *Mahanagar* (1963). Her first film as an adult was *Guddi* (1971), in which she played the role of a schoolgirl obsessed with a film star. The film paved the way for a long collaboration with director Hrishikesh Mukherjee. An alumnus of Film and Television Institute of India, Pune, Jaya penned the story of the super hit Amitabh Bachchan-starrer, *Shahenshah* (1988). It was a film called *Bansi Birju* that brought Jaya and Amitabh together for the first time. The film was a hit and Big B became a star. The co-stars soon fell in love and got married. When they signed the cult film *Sholay*, in which Jaya played Amitabh's love interest, she was pregnant with her daughter, Shweta Nanda. And by the time the film opened in the theatres, Jaya was pregnant with her second born, Abhishek. In 1981, Jaya took an indefinite sabbatical from movies to raise their children and made a comeback 17 years later, in 1998 in *Hazaar Chaurasi Ki Maa*. She was last seen in Bengali film *Sunglass* in 2013. Jaya was awarded *Padma Shri* in 1992. She turns 68 this year. Happy Birthday, Jaya Bachchan!



## April 23 MANOJ BAJPAI

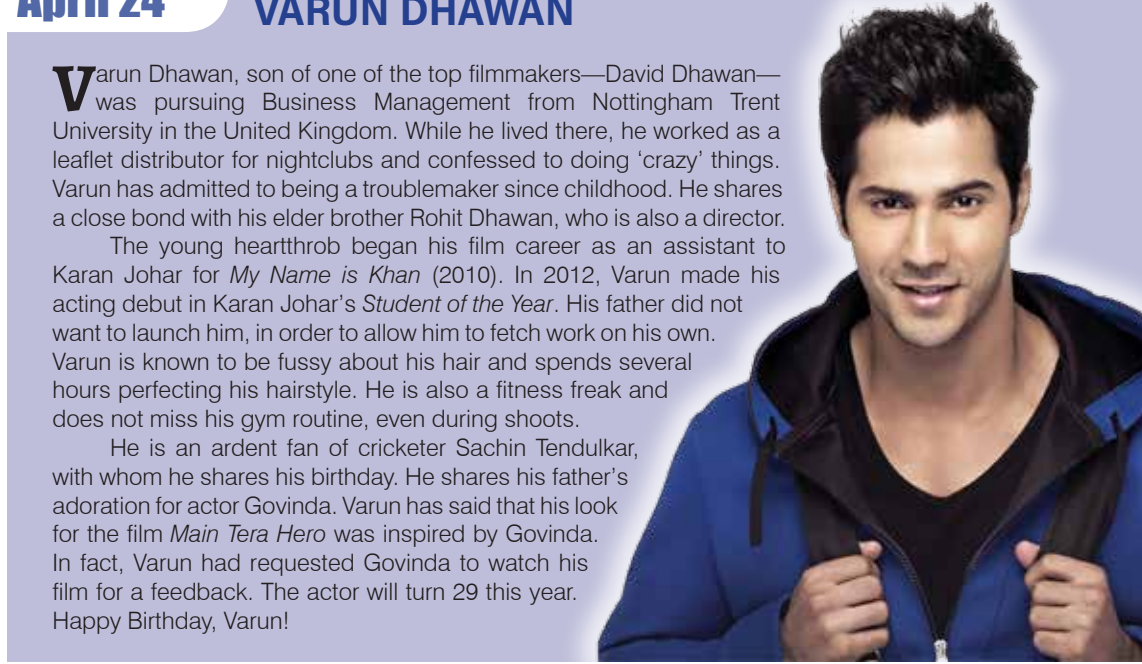
Born into a poor farmer's family in a small village called Belwa, near the town Narkatiaganj in West Champaran, Bihar, Manoj is the second among his five siblings. His childhood has been full of struggle—farming with his father and studying in a school that ran out of a hut. Although he wanted to be an actor, his father dreamt of making him a doctor despite financial crisis. After completing his HSC in Bihar, Manoj moved to New Delhi at the age of seventeen. It was here that he learnt about the National School of Drama (NSD). Manoj was rejected three times, driving him to attempt suicide. But, it was in that phase of depression that actor Raghubir Yadav recommended him to acting coach Barry John's workshop. Impressed with his talent, John hired Manoj to assist him in his teaching. The NSD offered him a teaching position at the school on his fourth application.

After a couple of blink-and-miss roles in films like *Drohkaal*, *Bandit Queen*, *Dastak*, *Tamanna* and *Daud*, it was as Mumbai gangster Bhiku Mhatre in *Satya* (1998) that earned him the National Award for Best Supporting Actor. Thereafter, Manoj also won his second National Award for *Pinjar* (2003) and delivered many unconventional super hit films such as *Shool*, *Chittagong*, *Gangs of Wasseypur*, *Special 26* and many others. Manoj is married to actress Neha (Shabana Raza) of Kareeb fame. The couple has a daughter Ava Nayla. He turns 47 this year. Happy Birthday, Manoj!



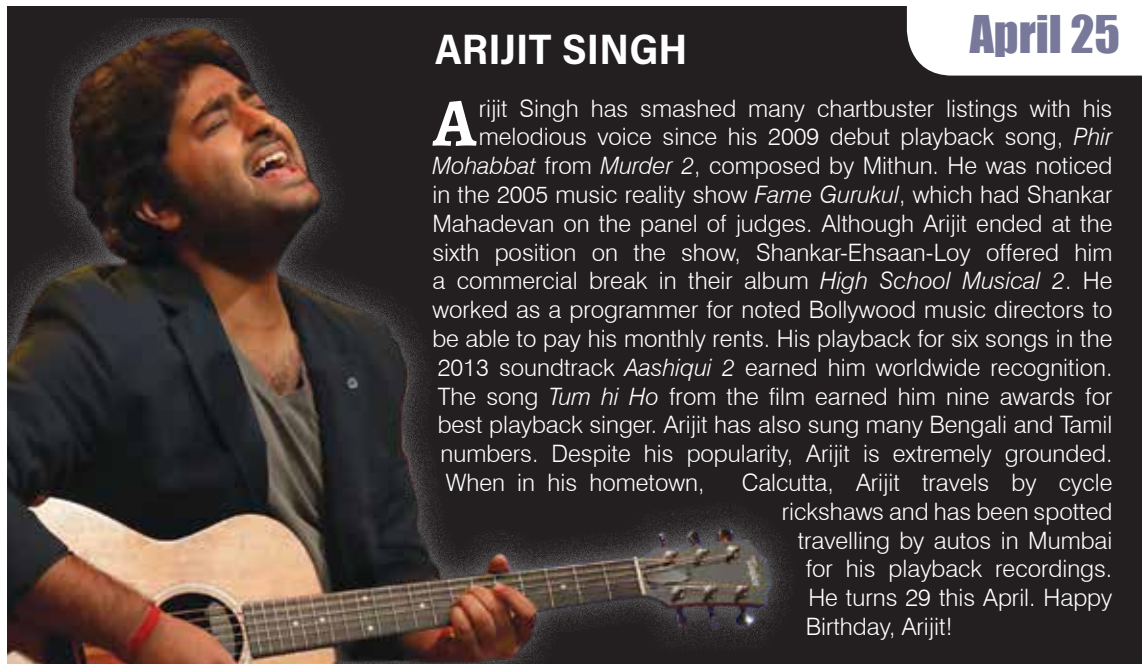
## April 24 VARUN DHAWAN

Varun Dhawan, son of one of the top filmmakers—David Dhawan—was pursuing Business Management from Nottingham Trent University in the United Kingdom. While he lived there, he worked as a leaflet distributor for nightclubs and confessed to doing "crazy" things. Varun has admitted to being a troublemaker since childhood. He shares a close bond with his elder brother Rohit Dhawan, who is also a director. The young heartthrob began his film career as an assistant to Karan Johar for *My Name is Khan* (2010). In 2012, Varun made his acting debut in Karan Johar's *Student of the Year*. His father did not want to launch him, in order to allow him to fetch work on his own. Varun is known to be fussy about his hair and spends several hours perfecting his hairstyle. He is also a fitness freak and does not miss his gym routine, even during shoots. He is an ardent fan of cricketer Sachin Tendulkar, with whom he shares his birthday. He shares his father's adoration for actor Govinda. Varun has said that his look for the film *Main Tera Hero* was inspired by Govinda. In fact, Varun had requested Govinda to watch his film for a feedback. The actor will turn 29 this year. Happy Birthday, Varun!

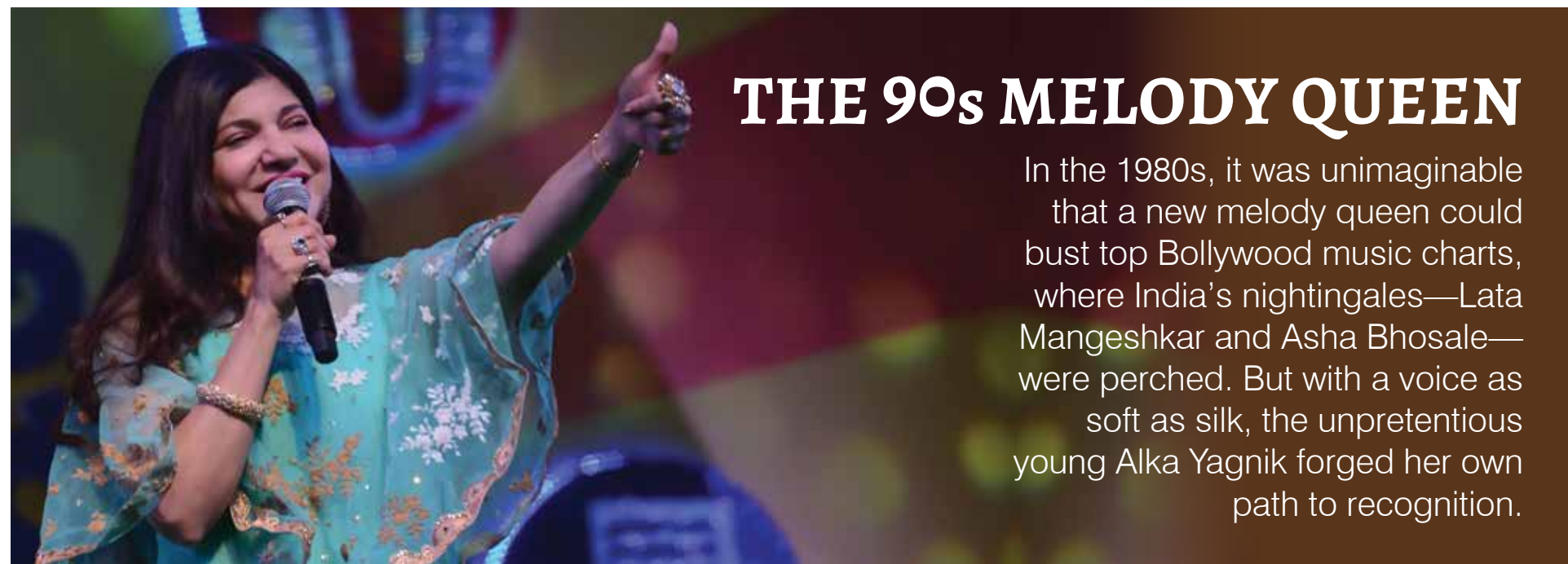


## April 25 ARIJIT SINGH

Arijit Singh has smashed many chartbuster listings with his melodious voice since his 2009 debut playback song, *Phir Mohabbat* from *Murder 2*, composed by Mithun. He was noticed in the 2005 music reality show *Fame Gurukul*, which had Shankar Mahadevan on the panel of judges. Although Arijit ended at the sixth position on the show, Shankar-Ehsaan-Loy offered him a commercial break in their album *High School Musical 2*. He worked as a programmer for noted Bollywood music directors to be able to pay his monthly rents. His playback for six songs in the 2013 soundtrack *Aashiqui 2* earned him worldwide recognition. The song *Tum hi Ho* from the film earned him nine awards for best playback singer. Arijit has also sung many Bengali and Tamil numbers. Despite his popularity, Arijit is extremely grounded. When in his hometown, Calcutta, Arijit travels by cycle rickshaws and has been spotted travelling by autos in Mumbai for his playback recordings. He turns 29 this April. Happy Birthday, Arijit!







## THE 90s MELODY QUEEN

In the 1980s, it was unimaginable that a new melody queen could bust top Bollywood music charts, where India's nightingales—Lata Mangeshkar and Asha Bhosale—were perched. But with a voice as soft as silk, the unpretentious young Alka Yagnik forged her own path to recognition.

"Even today when I sing a 1990s number for my stage shows, it rouses fervent audience response," says Yagnik

BY RAMYA PILLAI

From 1988's *Ek Do Teen* (Tezaab) to 2008's 'Ringa Ringa' (*Slumdog Millionaire*), Alka Yagnik's voice was once the voice of Bollywood's leading ladies. In a country, where film music captivates listeners, the transition from soft romantic numbers to digitization has forced Alka to become 'choosy', and fade away from the music charts.

From lending her voice to the entire soundtrack of several films in the 1990s, Alka sang only six songs in 2015. One of them, *Agar Tum Saath Ho*—picturized on Deepika Padukone and Ranbir Kapoor in *Tamasha*—topped music charts and earned her the *Mirchi Listener's Choice Award* 2016, held in March. Before she won the trophy, she had said, "It feels good when people appreciate a song. But, I think I will not win the award... It is a big thing that I have a nomination. I think Shreya (Ghoshal) should win an award (for *Bajirao Mastani*)." The award was her first in three years—a dry-spell for the melody queen, who, at the 1994 Filmfare Awards, had all five nominations for Best Playback Singer (Female). Eventually, she had won a shared award with singer Ila Arun for the controversial 'Choli ke peeche' from *Khalnayak* (1993). She recalls, "The song was very popular. For that time, it was a naughty song. It became a trendsetter with bold lyrics. Lyricist Anand Bakshi and music composer Lakshmikanth Pyarelalji saved it from becoming a cheap song."

Alka has been expressive about her dislike for modern day songs. Alka, who sang a bhajan—*Hari bin raha na jaaye*—as a six-year-old for All India Radio, has said, "The odd songs that are being made today, do not suit my style

### FILMFARE AWARDS FOR PLAYBACK

1989 "Ek Do Teen" (Tezaab)  
1994 "Choli Ke peeche" (Khalnayak)  
1998 "Meri Mehbooba" (Pardes)  
2000 "Taal se Taal" (Taal)  
2001 "Dil ne ye kaha hai dil se" (Dhadkan)  
2002 "O Re Chhori" (Lagaan)  
2005 "Hum Tum" (Hum Tum)

### National Film Awards

1993 "Ghoonghat Ki Aad se" (Hum Hain Rahi Pyaar Ke)  
1998 "Kuch kuch hota hai" (Kuch kuch hota hai)

of singing. I sang many songs during the romantic era of Bollywood. I think my forte is that my voice has romance. God has gifted me with a tonal quality and a voice that can suit most heroines. Today, they use more gimmicks and have very little melody and soul. I have been refusing so many songs as I am not comfortable."

While *Agar Tum Saath Ho* is being touted as being her comeback song, she says the exile is 'self-imposed'. The singer, who has turned judge for music reality shows and awards, has stated, "The song from *Tamasha* is a soulful A R Rahman composition. He is the coolest and the most humble music director. Till I was not established, I could

not refuse a song. I was just excited to sing. I even sang many songs that I did not like, with all my soul." Alka has to her credit over 2,482 Hindi songs from 1114 movies—mostly romantic duets with her famous contemporaries Udit Narayan, Kumar Sanu, Sonu Nigam, Shaan, Babul Supriyo and Abhijit Bhattacharya. Recalling the generation of 'young musicians', Alka said: "The generation of actors, singers and music directors in the 1990s, were raw. We enjoyed the discussions and late-night recording sessions. Everyone wanted to prove their mettle. It was the best phase of music."

Alka's career received much support from nightingale Lata Mangeshkar—a prestige that no other young female playback singer managed to earn. On March 20, this year, Lata wished Alka for her 50th birthday on Twitter, saying, "Namaskar. Aaj guni gayika Alka Yagnik ka 50va janamdin hai. Meri taraf se usko bahut badhai aur aashirwad. (Greetings. Today is the 50th birthday of the talented singer Alka Yagnik. Congratulations and good wishes to her from my side)." Alka credits her 'unassuming' approach for winning Lata over. The singer has said: "I have been a devotee of Lataji. When I met her as a youngster, she blessed me. Many new singers came and bragged about how they could sing like Lataji. No one can sing like Lataji and Ashaji. I told everyone I am new and much smaller than Lataji. If, as a youngster, you do not respect your veterans, it would irk any established person in any industry."

So has the tuneful era of Alka's romantic numbers ended? The singer states, "Even today when I sing a 1990s number for my stage shows, it rouses fervent audience response. Everyone has a place. No matter how many singers come and go..."

## Bajirao Mastani, Tamasha top GiMA nominations

Sanjay Leela Bhansali's epic historical romance, *Bajirao Mastani* is all set to sparkle at the sixth Global Indian Music Academy (GiMA), to be held in the first week of April. The film has swept the illustrious nomination list, grabbing the highest nods in nine categories. Imtiaz Ali's *Tamasha* starring Ranbir Kapoor and Deepika Padukone comes a close second with seven nominations and Vikramjit Singh's Ranbir Kapoor starrer *Roy* has bagged six.

The GiMA Awards, an initiative by Wizcraft International Entertainment Pvt. Ltd, is a unified platform to honor talent across various genres in Indian music, artistic achievement, and technical proficiency. Music maestro A. R. Rahman is nominated across four categories for his incredible music in *Tamasha* while Arijit Singh features prominently in the list of playback nominations. Rahman said, "I am really happy to be nominated across four categories for *Tamasha*. It is always a great feeling when your

work is appreciated by the fraternity. GiMA is a grand platform." Shankar Mahadevan, who is nominated across multiple categories (film and non-film), said, "I am happy to see such a diverse range of new artistes in the debut categories. It is an amazing feeling to be a part of an outstanding platform."

GiMA encapsulates a plethora of genres including classical, devotional, pop, rock, fusion, Bollywood, folk and more. Out of the total number of 21 award categories, 11 categories feature music from films while ten are dedicated to the non-film music segment.

Sabbas Joseph, Director, Wizcraft International said, "This year we have introduced the 'Best Music Video' category to reach out to many more talented artists from across the country."

The secret ballot voting is open only to the members from the Indian music industry. It is monitored by evaluator KPMG.

Team BWI



While Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Bajirao Mastani* grabbed the highest nods in nine categories, Imtiaz Ali's *Tamasha* comes a close second with seven nominations



## Vidya Balan to portray Kamala Surayya

BY SHEETAL RODRIGUES

Vidya Balan has earned an impressive reputation for breaking many Bollywood stereotypes—in her choice of unconventional roles and her disregard for designer couture. Now, 16 years after she was labelled 'jinxed' by Malayalam filmmakers, the feisty actress has signed a bi-lingual biopic, in English and her native tongue, Malayalam. The film is based on the life of the controversial and audacious Indian-English writer Kamala Surayya Das, also known by her one-time pen name Madhavidas or Madhavikutty.

Since her Bollywood debut in *Parineeta* (2005), the versatile actress has overcome criticisms to redefine the contours of female objectification in cinema, becoming an icon for many women in the country. Her decision of playing Surayya—a passionate literary author, who offended conservative mentality with her pronounced writings—does not come as a surprise. These are the perfect character roles that Vidya loves to essay. She had bagged the National Award for her performance in *The Dirty Picture*. But National Award winning director, Kamal, is anticipating his upcoming Malayalam-English movie to spark off much controversy, thanks to the rebellious writer as its subject and Vidya's utter disregard for typecasts. The makers have revealed that the film will go on floors in October this year. Kamal has stated that the movie will have fictional aspects interspersed with the writer's real-life events. Award-winning Malayalam actor

Prithviraj Sukumar will also play a pivotal fictional character in the film.

Surayya wrote in English as Kamala Das and as Madhavikutty in Malayalam. She created much hullabaloo when she changed her name to Kamala Surayya after embracing Islam, a few years before her death. Surayya's most scandalous work is *Ente Katha* (My Story), which was initially publicized as her autobiography. Later, Surayya had clarified that it was an imaginary book.

Vidya's acting career in Malayalam cinema never took off, as her debut film *Chakram* opposite heartthrob Mohanlal was shelved in the year 2000. When three more films—in which she was to play the female lead—got shelved, producers threw her out of 12 films that she had signed. At the Women Economic Forum in 2015, Vidya had said, "I got signed for a Malayalam film, which was shelved. Later, about three films that I was part of were shelved. I was labelled jinxed and thrown out of films because of that." Her Bollywood career has seen blockbuster performances in *Parineeta*,

*Ishqiya*, *The Dirty Picture*, *Paa and Kahani*, to name a few. Vidya's latest film *TE3N*, alongside Amitabh Bachchan and Nawazuddin Siddiqui, is releasing in May. She has already begun filming for Sujoy Ghosh's *Kahaani 2*.



Inset: Kamala Surayya



## FROM THE OTHER WOODS

### Pawan Kalyan's *Sardar Gabbar Singh* in Hindi too!

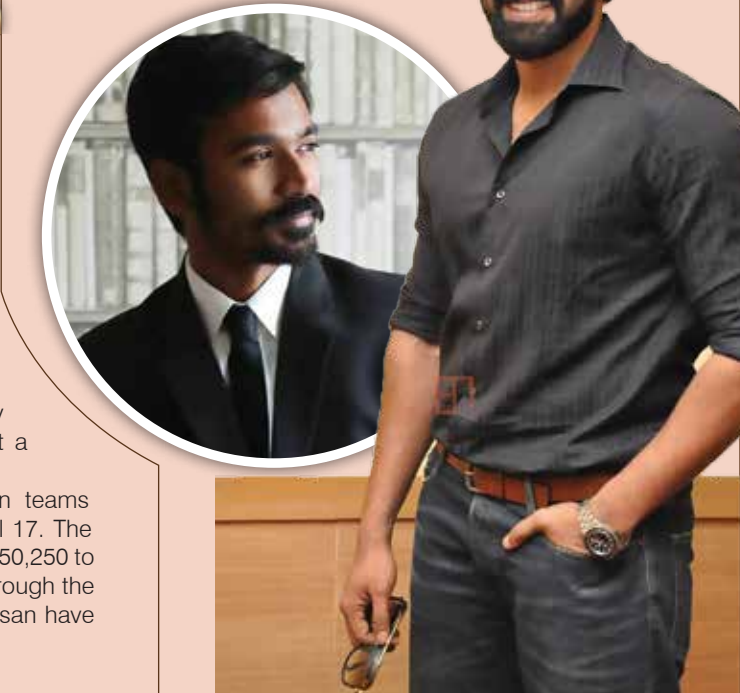
Pawan Kalyan-starrer Telugu action film *Sardar Gabbar Singh*—a sequel to the 2012 blockbuster *Gabbar Singh*—will also release in a dubbed Hindi version on April 8. In the film, Pawan plays a flamboyant horse-riding cop, who gives a wicked treatment to the goons in the fictitious princely town of Rattanpur. Actress Kajal Aggarwal—Ajay Devgn's love interest in *Singham*—is the lead. Pawan sports a red *gamcha* in the film. The film's teaser received the highest likes on social media platforms, encouraging the producers to plan a pan-India release in its dubbed Hindi version. Pawan told reporters, "The story of the film has a universal appeal for audiences across India. Filmmaking cannot be confined to a certain area or demographics. Our film attempts to make a unique connection with India, especially the Hindi belt."



### Rana joins Dhanush's gangster film

Rana Daggubati will be seen in a crucial role in Dhanush-starrer Tamil action thriller *Enai Nokki Paayum Thota*. Rana began shooting for his part in mid-March, although makers are yet to confirm if the 6-foot tall beefy actor plays an antagonist in the film—which is said to be a story of gangsters. Rana now has his hands full with the ongoing shoots of the concluding part of *Baahubali* and another film *Ghazi*. He is also planning to produce a sequel of his debut film *Leader*.

*Enai Nokki Paayum Thota* is expected to wrap up by June, to enable Dhanush to report for the first schedule of his debut Hollywood project *The Extraordinary Journey of the Fakir who Got Trapped in an Ikea Cupboard* opposite *Kill Bill* actress Uma Thurman and directed by Iranian-French director Marjane Satrapi. Dhanush is also awaiting the release of his two Tamil films *Rail* and *Kodi*.



### Celebrity Cricket Tournament for a cause

South superstars Rajinikanth and Kamal Hasan will join many other Bollywood actors of Tamil-origin for a cricket tournament organised by the South Indian Film Artistes Association (SIFAA), popularly known as Nadigar Sangam. The tournament titled Super Six Star Cricket will be held on April 17, at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai. The artistes' guild has invited Tamil actors, who have earned recognition in Bollywood, to join the charity tournament that aims to raise funds to construct a building for the Nadigar Sangam.

About 50 actors will be part of the seven teams that will play a series of six-over matches on April 17. The Nadigar Sangam has raised a bank loan of over \$450,250 to construct the building and hopes to raise funds through the cricket initiative. Both Rajinikanth and Kamala Haasan have confirmed their participation in the match.





### WHEN BIG B'S SIDES ALMOST SPLIT

Usually mobbed by fans, it is rare for Amitabh Bachchan to pull off a prank on commoners. That's exactly what he did while in Delhi for his upcoming Shoojit-Sircar thriller *Pink*. Big B took a casual stroll in the most crowded Delhi area, masked. No paparazzi followed and not a soul on the streets recognized him. The actor wrote his daily blog, describing that he almost split his sides with the thrilling experience. "Huummmpphh... ran out of breath bending down backwards laughing my strengths out. My strengths... strengths, my stomach... the strength of us all the gut... the stomach... without it we be nothing...!!! So why the hysteria. The masked wonder on the streets of crowded Delhi and ne'er an eye is raised...This is what life is all about 'buddy'. It's called indifference, unrecognizable, and even if recognizable not interested in recognizing... happens to all that were once recognizable... shall happen to all... it's not something that shall bring the oceans at your feet!!" (sic), he wrote. In the film, Bachchan will be seen in the role of a lawyer.



### FARAH KHAN CHOREOGRAPHS JACKIE CHAN

Choreographer-director Farah Khan has a special reason to thank actor-friend Sonu Sood, who is filming with Jackie Chan for the first Indo-Chinese Project, *Kung Fu Yoga*. Based on Sonu's suggestion, Chan agreed to include a Hindi song in the film choreographed by Farah. Sonu explained to Chan the importance of film music in India. The crew of the film had a gala time during the Rajasthan schedule in March, where the first part of the song was filmed in Jodhpur's Umaid Bhawan Palace. It is said that some portions of the song will also be filmed in Beijing in China. The action-adventure film is slated for an October release. It marks Sonu's Hollywood debut along with actress Amyra Dastur, who shot some action sequences in a busy market set-up in Jaipur's Amber Fort area, along with Chinese co-star Li Zi Long.

### KATRINA'S REAL-LIFE HEROES

Katrina Kaif recently revealed that she draws inspiration from Former Indian Prime Minister Late Indira Gandhi and tennis player Serena Williams. Speaking at a show to celebrate womanhood, the actress said, "I find them inspirational because they left a mark in a field that has been primarily dominated by men. As women we can go through moments of feeling insecurities, uncertainties, not knowing our place or what we want to do in our lives. But we should always know that whatever we are, that is enough." The actress, who has seen many hardships in her life—box-office relationship failures—spoke about the importance of imparting education to create gender equality. "Education will change gender bias. It is the way forward. It will change people's mindsets."



### SONAKSHI CAN SAY "KHAMOSH!"

Sonakshi Sinha has been a victim of trolls on social media platforms. But the actress is a tough cookie who knows how to handle people in real as well as in virtual space. The actress, who is preparing for two action films *Akira* and *Force-2*, has been a butt of jokes on social media in the past. When asked if such behaviour affects her, Sonakshi said, "No, it (criticism on social media) doesn't affect me mentally. I think it (trolling) is something that I have been part of since it has come about. So, gradually you know how to handle people and I definitely know how to handle people on or off social media." Sonakshi will be seen performing martial art stunts for *Akira*, directed by A.R. Murugadoss. But, she also showed her girly side on International Women's Day, participating in an event along with several other women, to set a record for "most people painting their fingernails simultaneously". Sonakshi nailed the *Guinness World Records* title, along with other participants. The girl truly has many shades!



### NOT AN EASY PAIR OF SHOES

Sushant Singh Rajput, who essays India Cricket Captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni in the upcoming Hindi biopic *M. S. Dhoni: The Untold Story* has hailed him as one of the "best sportspersons". Sushant is overwhelmed by the "huge responsibility" to play Dhoni. Sushant said, "It is a challenge and a huge responsibility, considering you are playing someone who is the most famous, loved and successful skipper of India." Sushant, who was spotted at the nail-biting match between India and Bangladesh at the World Twenty20 Tournament in March—India beat Bangladesh by one run after Dhoni's 15 yard sprint to run the batsman out. He took to *Twitter*, saying, "We can make 100 films on you and it will still not be enough. You are one of the best sports mind ever and a great person. We love you MS." For the biopic directed by Neeraj Pandey, Sushant underwent training in wicket-keeping from former India player Kiran More. Sushant reportedly also sustained rib injuries while practicing Dhoni's signature 'helicopter' shot for the film.



## I don't have patience for fiction on TV

Former Miss India Neha Dhupia has stepped into the non-fiction TV space, as a judge of a popular reality show *MTV Roadies X4*, but says fictional shows are not for her

BY SHEETAL RODRIGUES

Neha Dhupia is earning much praise for her composure on the belligerent reality show *MTV Roadies X4*. The actress, however, does not feel encouraged to return to a fictional TV show—she was part of a political drama *Rajdhani* in the late 1990s. Neha asserts, "I don't think I have the patience for fiction TV shows. It requires too much time, patience, and commitment. I don't like things that take me away from being myself. *Roadies* has been the most fantastic experience of my life because I have the liberty to be myself. It makes me fearless. I have learned so much from the contestants."

She became the second female judge on the cult show's 13th season,

this year, replacing actress Esha Deol. Initially "scared", Neha says the show has helped her shed her "inhibitions". The former Miss India said, "I've always been scared of reality television. But I feel you have to shed all your inhibitions. So, I took part in this show. Right now, if my professional and personal life doesn't give me everyday moments, where I can throw my head back and just laugh my heart out, I don't think I want to do it. That is the drive I want," says Neha, who is best known for her roles in films like *Julie*, *Kyaa Kool Hai Hum*, *Delhi Heights*, *Paying Guests* and *Phas Gaye Re Obama*.

She recently joined hands with beauty brand Kiehl's and 'Teach for India' campaign to educate

underprivileged children. Under the partnership, proceeds from the sale of the Ultra Facial Cream will go to 'Teach for India'—to improve access to quality education in under-resourced schools. While actors often face criticism for taking the focus away from the issue, Neha says, "A public face makes a very big difference as people listen. As a brand, you leverage yourself to the things you believe in. To me, it is education. It doesn't really matter where the spotlight goes as long as the money goes towards the right cause. That is where Kiehl's initiative comes in. We have worked so hard for it and it is a really satisfying feeling."

Neha has in her kitty, upcoming films *Santa Banta* and *Moh Maya Money*.

## Tele-shots

### AVIKA QUILTS TV

TV actress Avika Gor has bid adieu to her popular character of 'Roli' in *Colors TV* show *Sasural Simar Ka*, choosing not to renew her five-year contract, ending in April. Avika shot to fame as the child bride Anandi in *Colors TV*'s *Balika Vadhu* in 2008 at the age of 10 and was only 14 when she began essaying the role of a *khandaani bahu* in the TV soap. The actress wants to focus on her flourishing film career in the South, instead. Avika, 19, recently said in an interview, "I have been working for the last nine years without a single holiday. Because of this hectic schedule, I suffered from asthma and disturbed sleep. Can you imagine, at this age, I am continuously working either here (in Mumbai) or in the South." Avika has acted in five South Indian films since 2013—four in Telugu and one in Kannada. Fans will definitely miss Avika as Roli. But the producers have roped in actress Mansi Srivastava to take the show forward. Mansi will begin shooting in mid-April once her role in the show is clear.



### MARATHON MAKEUP

Actress Pallavi Joshi's daily six-hour makeup schedule—using prosthetics to portray an 80-year-old matriarch, Devika Gaekwad, in *&TV*'s new show *Meri Aawaaz Hi Pehchaan Hai*—is "tedious and tiring". The show has Pallavi oscillating between her avatars as a 30-year-old and an 80-year-old. Pallavi says, "It's extremely tiring to sit for long hours while someone works on your face all the time. And whatever little energy is left, gets drained in the shooting. But it's all worth it."

Pallavi says she is "selective" about her roles as they must have "something to offer to the society". The actress says: "It's not a conscious effort to be choosy. I only take up a few roles. Everything I have done in the past had something to offer to the society, as an actor. There has to be some value, education and social responsibility. It's quality that matters to me."



### VIR ON AMERICAN TV SHOW!

Stand-up comedian and actor Vir Das is shooting for the pilot season of an American comedy show. Impressed by the "amazing response from the audience" to his three-city US comedy tour, the world's biggest comedy management company—Levity Entertainment Group—signed Vir. The *Delhi Belly* star has become the first ever Indian comedian to have been signed by the organisation that has worked with world renowned comedians such as Jamie Foxx, Jeff Dunham, Trevor Noah, Daniel Tosh, Tracy Morgan, Amy Schumer and Gabriel Iglesias.



### SHILPA SHINDE UNDER ATTACK

Actress Shilpa Shinde's popularity spiralled to a new high as *Angoori Bhabhi* mouthing "*Sahi Pakde Hain*" in *&TV*'s popular daily comedy show *Bhabhi Ji Ghar Par Hai*. But the actress is under fierce attack from the TV industry after her unceremonious exit from the show, breaching her exclusive contract with the producers. Earlier this month, the actress stopped reporting to the sets, alleging "mental torture". The fight between Shilpa and the producers escalated to another level when CINTAA (Cine and TV Artists' Association) issued a show cause notice to the actress, finding "no merit" in her complaint against the producers. The buzz is that Shilpa is seeking greener pastures in comedian Kapil Sharma's upcoming show on Sony TV. This has not gone down well with her producers, who are now threatening her with a legal notice.



**Kapoor & Sons (since 1921)**  
Hilarious, Tear-jerking and Real

**Cast:** Rishi Kapoor, Rajat Kapoor, Ratna Pathak Shah, Fawad Khan, Sidharth Malhotra, Alia Bhatt

**Director:** Shakun Batra

**Rating:** ★★★★★



It's all about loving your family—the customary take-home message from producer Karan Johar. His impression on *Kapoor & Sons* is certainly strong, just like many other Dharma Production films. But, despite being a predictable story of a detached family—with hurtful secrets—director Shakun Batra's tactful treatment makes the 140-minute-long narrative a riveting one. The story revolves around a bickering family—Harsh (Rajat), Sunita (Ratna) and their two sons: a successful novelist, Rahul (Fawad) and a confused struggler, Arjun (Sidharth)—bound together by their love for the 90-year-old patriarch, addressed as *daddu* (Rishi Kapoor). When *daddu* suffers a heart-attack, the alienated Rahul and Arjun visit their Coonoor family home, situated in the midst of serene lush green hills, after five years. Daddu expresses his last wish to have a picture-perfect family frame titled *Kapoor & Sons—Since 1921*.

On the momentous occasion of his 90th birthday, uncomfortable secrets tumble out and curdle the delightful reunion, leading to the eventual family meltdown. And pretty Tia's (Alia) attraction towards Rahul but the soulful connection with Arjun, fans the fire even more. Does the triangle square up to allow *daddu* have the family photo he desires? The clincher in *Kapoor & Sons* is the unfeigned family emotions—the graceless sibling rivalry and a string of misunderstandings, cheating parents and lighting love-lives. The family bellows in riotous situations, accusing one another at the slightest provocation as *daddu* watches silently. It has the subtle moments of parenting—Sunita cooks Bhindi which Rahul loves but Arjun hates, making him resentful.

Bound mostly to the wheelchair, with overdone prosthetics to appear his age, the 90-year-old quirky *daddu* runs away with the film, lusting after Mandakini's wet sari with unapologetic humor. Sidharth plays an endearing but vulnerable Arjun while Fawad is sophisticated yet suffering silently, weighed down by the expectations of being a "perfect *bacha*". Ratna Pathak Shah shows what a fabulous performer can do to a monotonous snappish housewife—with an unfulfilled ambition, financial crisis, and a cheating husband. Alia plays just another unexploited Bohemian avatar—charming but idle. The film has its tender touches of forgiveness that follows the over-reactions—clutching on to the shoes of a departed beloved and an attempted reconciliation between the brothers. Unlike many of his films, the soundtrack is strictly average. The tale, however, stirs a fuzzy feeling of warmth and is sure to leave you with wet cheeks. Because it's about loving your family—beyond the barbed ends.

COLLECTIONS

**Kapoor and Sons ruling Box Office**

Fawad Khan, Sidharth Malhotra and Alia Bhatt starrer, *Kapoor and Sons*, has become the third highest grosser of 2016 and continues its strong run at the box office. The Shakun Batra directorial earned Rs. 65.07 crore at the domestic box-office until March 31, despite not having a single A-list Bollywood actor.

Trade analyst Taran Adarsh tweeted his reaction, "SUPER!" even as the film is all set to beat the lifetime box office collection records of Ranbir Kapoor-Deepika Padukone starrer *Tamasha* (Rs. 67.26 crore), Ajay Devgn starrer, *Drishyam* (Rs. 67.13 crore) and comedy film *Pyaar Ka PUNCHAMA 2* (Rs. 64.1 crore). The film is also expected to beat Sonam Kapoor's *Neerja* to become the second highest grosser of the year.

- MARCH WINNERS**
- Kapoor and Sons** (March 18)  
Rs 65.07 crores
  - Jai Gangajal** (March 4)  
Rs 38 crores
  - Rocky Handsome** (March 25)  
Rs 23 crores
  - Tera Suroor** (March 11)  
Rs 14.15 crore

MUST-WATCH IN APRIL



**Rocky Handsome**

A treat for action film lovers

**Cast:** John Abraham, Diya Chahwad, Shruti Hasan, Nishikant Kamat

**Director:** Nishikant Kamat

**Rating:** ★★★★★



How far can the love of a beloved, in danger, take you? A frame-by-frame remake of Korean flick *Man From Nowhere*, Nishikant Kamat's *Rocky Handsome* is a taut engrossing crime thriller—only if you haven't watched the original film.

It is the story of Kabir Ahlawat, a scarred, ruthless, trained assassin, with his past at the core of his demons. Kabir runs a pawn shop in Goa, having lost his wife (Shruti Hasan in a special cameo) and an unborn child in a murderous attack, followed by years of sulking in anonymity. He finds solace and conditional love in Naomi (Dia), an unlucky seven-year-old child next-door. Born to a drug-peddler, addict and repeated law-breaker, Anna (Nathalia Kaur), Naomi calls her unusual friend, "Handsome". The two hit it off, over fish and their yearning for love. But, one day, she addresses him as "Dad" in front of the cops and Kabir walks away—torn by the flashes of guilt, of being unable to save his family. Hell breaks loose when he learns that Naomi and Anna are kidnapped by the drug mafia and *Rocky Handsome* embarks on an unforgiving journey of revenge.

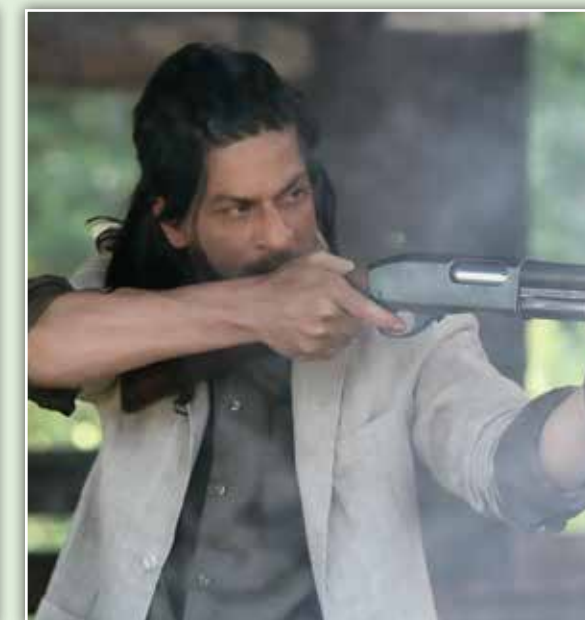
Director Nishikant Kamat, who has been hailed for creating gemstones like *Drishyam* and *Force*, does a remarkable job in holding viewer attention from beginning to end. Kamat himself plays the mean gang-lord, Kevin Pereira, in the film. After a straight first half, the suspense unfolds with Naomi's kidnapping—bringing on some well-executed action choreography. The film has its nerve-racking moments in the goosebumpy combat scenes—the bullet and stitch marks are evident on Kabir's ripped physique from many previous duels.

On the downside, the story is run of the mill and the extremely elongated screenplay (adapted by Ritesh Shah) makes the narrative of Kabir's past a tad weary. The film deserves brownie points for its crisp editing and cinematography that aptly evokes chill in its dark underworld sequences. The music is pleasant.

John carries the film with his brawny body and a permanent scowl. Kamat plays the part of the villain well for a first-time actor. Child actor Dia Chahwad is cuteness reloaded, but mouthing heavy dialogues as a brooding child makes her somewhat unreal. Shruti Hassan has not much to do as a mere flashback in the film.

Overall, *Rocky Handsome* is a treat for action film lovers, who will find the death-defying stunts more than just *paisa wasool*. But for those looking for a soulful story, *Rocky Handsome* is not for you.

SEASON OF SEQUELS



While Saif Ali Khan's (left) *Race 3* and Shahrukh Khan's *Don-3* are yet to take off, Vidya Balan's (centre) *Kahaani 2* has already gone on the floors

BY Ramya Pillai

A treat of sequels awaits Bollywood buffs who haven't had enough of their favourite flicks. As many as ten filmmakers are working on the sequels to their successful first instalments.

Director Sujay Ghosh's much-anticipated flick *Kahaani 2*, starring Vidya Balan and Arjun Rampal, has gone on the floors. The director shared a picture of the *Kahaani 2* clapperboard on *Twitter*. Ghosh's *Kahaani*—set in Kolkata—was a blockbuster, with Vidya playing a pregnant lady in search of her missing husband. The film had earned Rs 1.04 billion worldwide in 50 days and won three National Film Awards and five Filmfare Awards, among others.

There is much buzz surrounding the follow-on of Karan Johar's *Student of the Year (SOTY)* that gave Bollywood its three new stars—Alia Bhatt, Varun Dhawan,

and Sidharth Malhotra. If rumors are to be believed, the film's sequel will launch Saif Ali Khan and Amrita Singh's daughter, Sara Ali Khan, and Shahid Kapoor's half-brother Ishaan Khattar—son of Neelima, and Rajesh Khattar. For a long time, Bollywood grapevine was abuzz with news of Karan grooming Boney Kapoor and Sridevi's daughter for *SOTY 2*. Although he announced the project on *Twitter*, Karan has not commented on the casting yet.

Farhan Akhtar has confirmed that he is scripting *Don-3*. It will be his third edition in the franchise which has been long coming. The first two prequels did wonders at the box office. Although the casting for the movie has not yet been finalized, Farhan has hinted that there will be no change, except that Katrina Kaif is rumored to replace Priyanka Chopra. Farhan is currently wrapping up *Rock On!! 2*—the sequel to his much-celebrated musical drama *Rock On!!* (2008), in which estranged friends reunited for their music band. Directed by Shujaat Saudagar

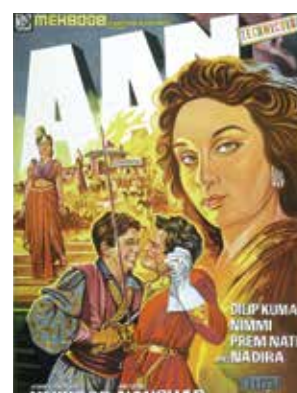
and starring Farhan Akhtar, Arjun Rampal, Shraddha Kapoor, Purab Kohli and Prachi Desai, the film is slated to release this November.

Chulbul Pandey and Rajjo will return to delight the audience again in 2017. Salman Khan has confirmed that his brother Arbaaz will direct *Dabangg-3*, which is in the scripting stage. The film will see Sonakshi Sinha continue as the female lead. Salman is also set to have the second installment of Sajid Nadiadwala's *Kick*, which is in the scripting stage. The first film *Kick* (2014) had Devi (Salman) walk out of 32 jobs due to the lack of fulfillment. He fleeces a business tycoon to help children suffering from diseases and finally becomes a police officer. Mumble in filmdom is that *Dilwale* actress, newbie Kriti Sanon may be paired with Salman for *Kick-2*.

Saif Ali Khan will also return in *Race 3*. Director Abbas-Mastan has confirmed that Saif will certainly play the lead while the rest of the casting is yet to be decided.

1952 Movies: Worth a Watch

AAN



*Aan* was India's first full feature in Technicolor—made at an expense of a whopping USD 52,894. The film also turned out to be the highest grosser at USD 226,689. The film starred Dilip Kumar, Premnath, and Nimmi and launched Nadira as the second female lead. Nadira's role was initially offered to Nargis and the makers also considered Madhubala. The film was dubbed and released in Tamil as *Murattu Adiyaal* and as *Savage Princess* in the US.

BAIJU BAWRA



The film starred Bharat Bhushan and Meena Kumari. The film was a megahit despite initial skepticism regarding classical music as its focus. Music director Naushad introduced light classical *ragas*, folk and *thumri* for the film's soundtrack. The film earned commercial and critical success and catapulted its lead actors into stardom. Meena Kumari won her first-ever Filmfare Best Actress Award, instituted in 1954.

JAAL



Starring Dev Anand and Geeta Bali, *Jaal* was Guru Dutt's second movie as director after *Baazi*. Set in Goa, the film depicts the innocent love of village girl Maria (Geeta Bali) and Tony (Dev Anand). The spirit of Christian love and forgiveness was the base of the story. The film's strong religious color was unusual for Guru Dutt films. The film's romantic song, *Yeh Raat Yeh Chandani*, sung by Hemant Kumar remained popular for several decades.

DAAG



Directed by Amiya Chakravarty, *Daag* starred Dilip Kumar, Nimmi and Lalita Pawar. Shankar (Dilip Kumar) gives up alcoholism to earn wealth and returns to his village to repay his debt and propose Parvati (Nimmi). But he learns that her marriage has been arranged with another person and so takes to drinking and loses all his riches. The film, declared a box-office hit, earned Dilip Kumar his first ever Filmfare Award in the Best Actor category.

ANANDMATH



The film, based on Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's novel, *Anandamath*, was directed by Hemen Gupta. The film is set in the backdrop of the Sannyasi Rebellion in the late 18th century in Bengal. The film starred Prithviraj Kapoor, Bharat Bhushan, Geeta Bali, Ajit and debutant Pradeep Kumar. Music director Hemant Kumar also started his Hindi film career with *Anandmath*. The film continues to be popular for its patriotic song *Vande Mataram*.

MAA



A loose adaption of a Hollywood film, Bimal Roy's *Maa* showcased a self-sacrificing son and his mother. Roy earned much acclaim for handling the sentimental melodrama with intelligence and finesse, saving it from becoming a passable tear-jerker. The film saw Leela Chitnis, playing the mother to Bhanu, essayed by Bharat Bhushan. The other stars included Shyama, Nazir Hussain, Mehmood and BM Vyas.

# Who said what?



### ANIL AFRAID OF SON

Anil Kapoor is scared of his own son, Harshvardhan, who is all set to make his debut in Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra's *Mirzya* in May. All in good humor, though. Speaking at the launch of the album *Mere Papa*, sung by Tulsi and Khushali Kumar—daughters of deceased music director Gulshan Kumar—Anil revealed how everyone in his family is afraid of Harshvardhan. When asked about his son's first look from *Mirzya*—released on Twitter by daughter Sonam—Anil quipped, "We are afraid of him. Before talking about him, we have to ask him for his permission. He doesn't look like me at all. He looks like his mother. However, we joke around a lot whenever we are home. That's our relationship." Anil, along with Sonam launched the album *Mere Papa*.



### ZEENAT'S LAHORE OUTING

Veteran Indian actress Zeenat Aman, who recently participated in a cultural event in Lahore, Pakistan, said she was mesmerized by the beauty of the city. Zeenat told reporters in Pakistan, "The city is beautiful and its people are loving. I wish I had visited Lahore earlier. Many from Peshawar starred in our film industry and Lahore, too, was the hub of films before the partition. I would like to see the entire city." The actress especially enjoyed Lahori delicacies like Biryani and Saag. She emphasized on the need for people-to-people contact and said, "I wish the people of India and Pakistan peace and harmony. Artists and craftsmen in both the countries must interact with each other as talent has no borders."



### SONAM IS STRESSED

Sonam Kapoor's Neerja is still playing in theatres. But Sonam is stressed about not having signed any new project after the movie's release. Sonam said, "I haven't signed anything and it is stressing me out." In Neerja, Sonam portrayed the real-life flight attendant, Neerja Bhanot, who displayed courage on a hijacked plane to save passengers by risking her own life. Sonam added that although the portrayal of women has become stronger in films, the disparity in remunerating actresses exists. She said, "It is slowly changing but is a far way off despite the numbers that Neerja has done and despite the numbers my films have done. I have been a part of female-centric films but we are still only opening to 700 screens. It's not about what the industry is paying you. It's about whether the audience wants to see the film or not."



### ARSHAD LIKES BEING A HOUSE-HUSBAND

Actor Arshad Warsi—best known as Sanjay Dutt's sidekick *Circuit* in the *MunnaBhai* series identifies well with the concept of a 'house-husband'. At the special screening of R Balki's *Ki & Ka*, in which, Arjun Kapoor plays a stay-at-home husband, Arshad told reporters, "I have been a house-husband. I have lived my life just the way Arjun does in the film. And, it is absolutely fine. There is no difference between a man and a woman. For three years, I was a house-husband. I didn't have a job then. I was looking after my house and my child. Being a homemaker is the most difficult job, ever. It is not easy to take care of household chores."



### SIDHARTH MALHOTRA: STUDENT OF CINEMA

Sidharth Malhotra is basking in the glory of his film *Kapoor & Sons*. But he maintains that he is still a 'student' of showbiz as each and every film has been a great learning experience for him. Sidharth said, "I have been fortunate that different kinds of roles are coming my way. Each and every film has been a great learning experience for me as an actor." Sidharth had debuted with *Student of the Year* in 2012 and has since explored various roles—a vengeful lover in *Ek Villain*, guy-next-door in *Hasee Toh Phasee* and a boxer in *Brothers*. After the March family drama *Kapoor & Sons*, Sidharth will be seen next, opposite Katrina Kaif in *Baar Baar Dekho*—a love story spanning over 60 years. Sidharth and Katrina will use prosthetics to appear older.



### ACTING IS NOT JACQUELINE'S FIRST LOVE

For Sri Lankan beauty, Jacqueline Fernandez, who shot to fame in India through performances in films like *Kick*, opposite Salman Khan, acting was not a childhood dream. Jacqueline recently said, "I did a bunch of things from the age of 14, hosted local TV shows in Bahrain and modeled. I was always comfortable in front of the camera. I knew I'd be in the entertainment industry or a journalist. I wanted to intern with *CMW* or *BBC*. Their investigative reporting inspired me. I even thought I'd be a documentary filmmaker because I love travelling."

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