

BOLLYWOOD INSIDER

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July 2020

Dad Intimidates Me
Even Today

Tiger Shroff

Playing
Strong Characters

Bhumi Pednekar

A Talent Bollywood
Refused To Accept

Sushant Singh

Jackie
Shroff

"Tiger is so focused,
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It's all about loving your Papas!

From birthdays to Father's Day, Bollywood stars shower love on their dads

By Dhaval Roy

Bollywood stars enjoy immense adulation by millions of fans. But for them, the hero worship seems to be reserved for Daddy Cool! Many actors expressed their love and reverence for their papas, not just on the occasion of Father's Day, which fell on June 21, but also on their birthdays in a few cases. Here are the sweet things they had to say and the adorable photos they had to post.



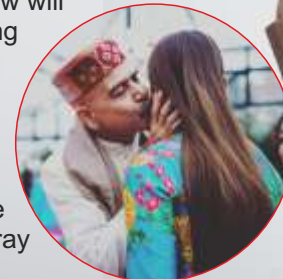
Salman Khan: Dad's happiness lies in kids'

On Father's Day, Salman Khan uploaded a video with a montage of his dad Salim Khan's photos from his younger days as an actor, one half of Salim-Javed, with his first wife Salma Khan, with the *Sultan* actor himself and more. Salman said that the best gift one can give their dad is to live happily. "Kids khush fathers khush..." his caption said.



Anushka Sharma: Learning life lessons

The *Pari* actress shared an image of her father giving her a peck on the cheek. She wrote about their conversation on always doing the right thing no matter how hard it is. "Papa- You will always come out happier and at peace with yourself. "Me- "But how will I know what's the right thing to do in all situations in life. "Papa-"For that, pray for wisdom. Wisdom to know the difference between right and wrong and the strength to choose the right thing always." I pray that you all find the same wisdom that I pray for daily and I pray that all girls are blessed with a father like mine," Anushka says in her feed.



Deepika Padukone: Being a true champion

Wishing her dad Prakash Padukone on his 65th birthday, Deepika Padukone called him the greatest off-screen hero she has ever had. In her note, she said, "Thank You for showing us that being a true champion is not only about one's professional achievements, but also about being a good human being! We love you!"



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Vicky Kaushal: Like father, like son



Uri: The *Surgical Strike* star Vicky Kaushal looks like a spitting image of his dad in the Father's Day post where they're both sitting on a park bench. Vicky wrote, "माँ कहती है, पूरा carbon-copy है... #HappyFathersDay (Mother says, I'm your carbon copy)," followed by the emoji of a crown. All hail King Kaushal!



Kiara Advani: Having each other's back



Kabir Singh actress Kiara Advani's dad turned a year older on June 18. She celebrated their bond with a pic of the two on an outing at what looks like a café outside India. Kiara captioned the photo, "He's always got my back and I've always got his #daddysgirlforever Happy Birthday papa!"





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Bollywood mourns Dancing Queen Saroj Khan

The *dhak dhak* abruptly stopped on Friday morning.



By Jaydip Sengupta

Bollywood was devastated...again. The lady who made stars dance to her moves was no more. At 71, with 40 years and 2000 songs behind her, Saroj Khan left her earthly abode to shake a leg with *Hawa Hawai* girl Sridevi one more time.

As Bollywood choreographers go, Saroj Khan was in a league of her own. She was a genius who immortalized stars and the music that defined an era with her iconic work. Winner of 3 National and 8 Filmfare Awards, *Master ji*, as she was fondly known, choreographed some of Bollywood's biggest dance hits - many of which starred actresses Sridevi and Madhuri Dixit.

Born Nirmala, her parents Kishanchand Sadhu Singh and Noni Singh migrated to India after the partition. She started her career as a child artist at the age of three with the film *Nazarana* as child Shyama and a background dancer in the late 1950s. She learnt dance while working under film choreographer B.Sohanlal, whom she married at the age of 13 while he was 43 years and was already married with 4 children of which she apparently did not know at the time of marriage. She separated after four years in 1965 and in 1975 married Sardar Roshan Khan.

Later, she herself shifted to choreography, first as an assistant choreographer and later getting her break as an independent choreographer with *Geeta Mera Naam* (1974). However, she had to wait many years to receive acclaim and that came with a succession of superbly-choreographed numbers in the late 80s. Saroj's earliest hits were for Sridevi in films like *Mr. India* (1987) - in which she choreographed the quirky dance steps for *Hawa Hawai - Nagina and Chandni*. She then made Madhuri gyrate to chartbusters like *Ek Do Teen, Tamma Tamma Loge, Dhak Dhak Karne Lagaa, Dola Re Dola* and *Choli Ke Peeche*.

Quite understandably, Madhuri was left heartbroken by the news. "I'm devastated by the loss of my friend and guru, Saroj Khan. Will always be grateful for her work in helping me reach my full potential in dance. The world has lost an amazingly talented person. I will miss you. My sincere condolences to the family. #RIPSarojji."

Kajol, who was choreographed by Saroj in the title song from *Baazigar*, wrote: "RIP to the most talented coolest choreographer ever! She taught me sooooo much that I always used everywhere in so many other ways. When

she danced it was like watching a whole book! Everything that she wanted to say was there so clearly on her face and in her body language. Even later when she grew older whenever we met I could see that mischief and affection and sheer love for her work. Love u Saroj ji and be at peace knowing that u are loved and will always be remembered."

Kareena Kapoor, who was taught the steps by Saroj Khan in *Yeh Ishq Haya*, shared how the veteran choreographer had coaxed her into enjoying dancing. "Master ji always told me... *perr nahin chala saktiii toh kam se kam face toh chalaaaaa* (If you can't move your feet, at least move your facial muscles). That's what she taught me... to enjoy dancing, smile and smile through the eyes. There can never be another... Dance and expression can never be the same for us actors and for everyone who loved her...Love you master ji. Till we dance again... RIP #SarojKhan."

Saroj transformed many non-dancers in Bollywood and Sanjay Dutt, who worked with her in *Thanedar* and *Khalnayak* among others, was one of them. "This news has left me heartbroken. Saroj ji was not just a legend but also a humble person. We shared a beautiful relationship & worked in many films together. Her contribution to the industry is irreplaceable as there was no one who could dance like her. Om Shanti," he tweeted.

Subhash Ghai, who teamed up with the ace choreographer in most of his cult films like *Hero, Karma, Ram Lakhan, Khalnayak, Pardes, Taal, Yaadein* and *Kisna*, couldn't hold back his grief. "AN ERA HAS GONE... absolutely my personal loss... an integral part of our Mukta arts family-my strong partner in grooming stars like Madhuri, Meenakshi, Manisha n Aishwarya. Master of masters...Saroj Khan will live in history of choreography of Indian cinema indeed. Bye JAAN. RIP."

SAROJ KHAN

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Jackie Shroff

“Tiger is so focused, it's scary”

By Shubarna Mukerji Shu

Almost four decades in the industry, with films like *Hero*, *Ram Lakhan*, *Khalnayak*, *Gardish* and more – Jackie Shroff is one of the rare success stories that refuses to move past his modest beginnings. *Jaggu Dada*, that's how he is fondly called by most of the industry insiders, is today more famous for being Tiger Shroff's father. How fast life has been changing for him and yet he remains at the top of his game. When life was bleak, he was selling his artworks and furniture, but still was the most loved man in the industry. How did he do that? How does it feel now to have each of his triumphs superseded by the tag of being Tiger Shroff's dad? With many more questions and a special appearance from Tiger Shroff himself, Shubarna Mukerji Shu brings you the man Bollywood loves to love – Jackie Shroff.

- When I told my kids - aged 8 & 4 - that I was to go meet Tiger Shroff's father, they were so excited, I had to physically stop them from following me out. Do you realize for the new generation, that's your identity?

How sweet! What more can a father ask for? He (Tiger) is my child. I am thankful that the nation

is giving him so much affection and love. He is protected by everybody who gives him good vibes. Wherever I go, when people say 'Oh, your son and his films...' I feel so happy. Respect is everything. Nothing else matters. And my baby is being loved by little babies (laughs). So, it feels great.

When Tiger entered the film industry, he was nervous about being compared to me. I have been known to have a different swag; it is not right for one to be compared with others, but Tiger felt he would be compared. He felt he will fall short; I told him even then, there will be a time when people will know me as Tiger Shroff's father. He has done it in such a short while; I am immensely proud of his accomplishments as an actor. I keep telling him don't work so hard...

- Why is that? I thought all parents usually tell their children to work harder!

Not when you have a diligent son like Tiger. He is too disciplined. He is so focused, it is scary. As a parent I worry that he is not enjoying himself enough. He needs to do things that kids his age do.

- Do you remember how it was when you were his age?

I think I can easily say, I was not half as diligent. We needed a different kind of work ethics. None of the actors were as fit as the actors are today. We used to do some 5 or even 6 films at a time; most of the time we

“ I brought in the swag. The word has now got popular, but I was the definition of it. So, nothing shocks me, I shock people instead.”



couldn't say which one is which. Can you imagine how difficult that is? Of course, after all that work, we didn't earn half of what the actors get today. Times have changed a lot.

- But you are going right along with it, seeing that some of the work you have been doing on the digital platforms is really different from anything we have seen Jackie Shroff do before...

I keep joking, I am doing more work now than I was doing at the peak of my career. But it is true in a way; I certainly have more projects on. Now since there are so many varied mediums, the options just multiply automatically. It is nice for someone my age to get the chance to do so much.

- You are liking the change?

Loving it! Not many actors of my era have made the transition so successfully. Today, one has to be big, but relatable. You cannot do larger than life, unrealistic acting. You need to spread across the frame in a quieter way; it needs inherent style. And an ease of being in your own skin. I have always been like that; so for that reason, I think this change is easier for me than most.

■ **Wasn't the OTT platform a cultural shock to you in any way?**

I think it was liberating, *apun pehle se hi censor nahi karta tha* (from the very beginning, I never censored my words); I was a cultural shock to people when I started off in the film industry. People didn't wear jeans here. They didn't even know what Woodstock is! They had never seen a bandana! I got a certain kind of style to Bollywood; I brought in the swag. The word has now got popular, but I was the definition of it. So, nothing shocks me; I shock people instead.

■ **My favourite Jackie Shroff film is *Gardish*; what is that one role which remains closest to your heart?**

I would say *King Uncle*. It had a nice soft story about girl-child adoption. Something people are now trying to talk about. A story like that, a film like that is a blessing in disguise.

■ **There is a big ongoing debate on nepotism, what's your take?**

One should move with the tide and not worry about these things much. They may say that both father and son are in films. But that wasn't the case with me. My father was an astrologer and I worked in the film industry. If you have talent, nothing can stop you. If you don't, nothing can get you floating!

■ **You have always held yourself away and aloof from the crowd, be it in movies or even social media. You don't always open up and share...**

I am very detached as a person; I guess one gets to be like that when you know the actual truth of life. Today I have so much, there might be many who would love to be in my position. I am not saying I am ungrateful for all the blessings. But I cannot forget how content and happy we were when we were living in a small chawl in Mumbai. Today, I have a huge house, but my parents who helped me get here are not with me. I don't know how long I have to share these moments with my children. Eventually I, too, will be gone.

Do I wish things were different? Of course, there are things I would have liked to do, things I would have done differently. For instance, my mother passed away in her sleep. I always wondered did she call out for me? In this huge house, I couldn't have heard her if she called me. Perhaps if we

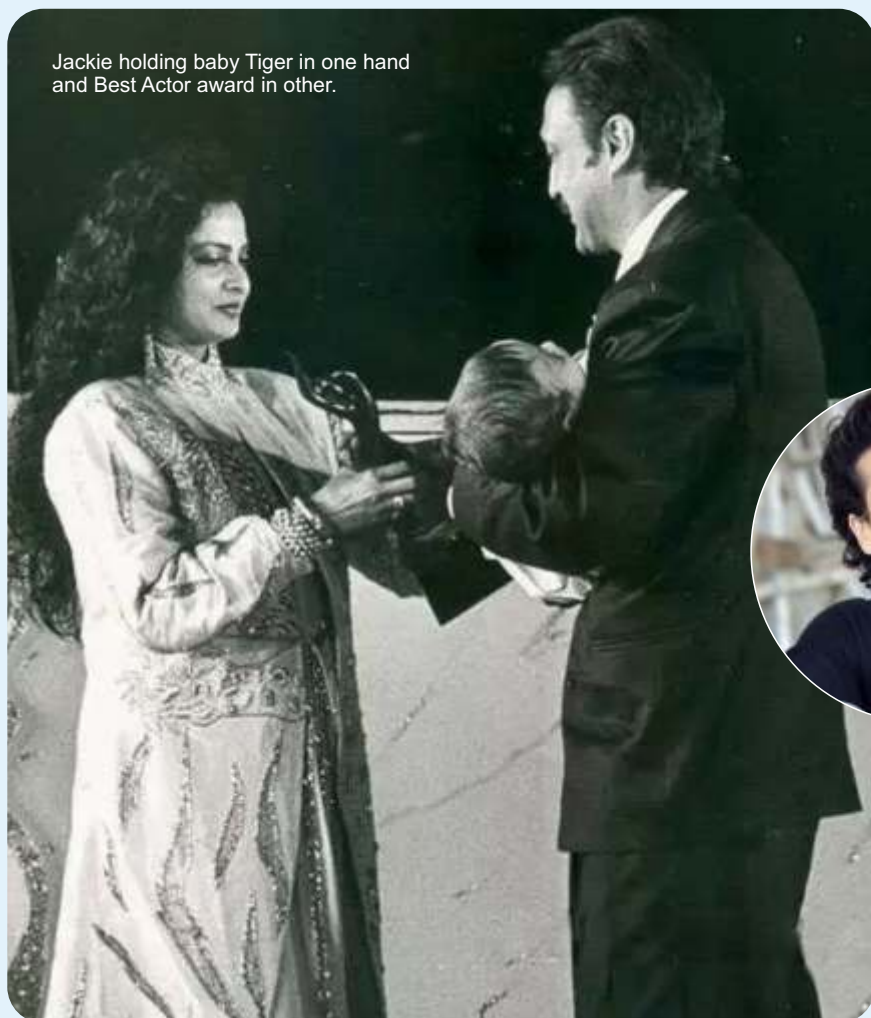
were still living in that tiny chawl, I would have sensed her distress, done something for her... These thoughts are as inevitable as they are useless. But they come, there are going to be regrets, there are going to be joys, there will be a yesterday you miss and there will be a tomorrow you won't see. Make your peace with it!

■ **How do your children react to such statements?**

They have grown up hearing me speak like this; so, I don't think they have much of a reaction to it. You can ask Tiger...

■ **What is the one thing you would like to tell our readers?**

I would like to say thank you for keeping me alive in your hearts. I believe my greatest strength is in the fact that I have always enjoyed doing everything that I have had to do. I just enjoy life; I enjoy every breath I take. I live every moment that God has given me, the strength and love of people for me, to my children, to my family. I feel blessed when I see around. There is so much grief around us all; so we should always thank God for keeping us alive, taking care of us and our loved ones.



Jackie holding baby Tiger in one hand and Best Actor award in other.

Tiger Shroff on his father Jackie Shroff

As a kid, I was always in awe of everything that my father did. People keep asking me, why haven't we done a film together, but I get a feeling I will freeze if I have to work with him. I think he intimidates me even today. The only time I have seen his macho-façade crumble was when he saw *Heropanti*, my first film. I could see he was tense. He didn't sleep at nights till the numbers started coming in and the film was declared a hit. My parents have given me a very simple and normal childhood, just like anybody else's. The only time I would feel like my father was different was when we would go out for a meal together, or when he'd come for any of my school functions. He is a very hands-on father and very involved in our lives.

The year I was born, he won the Filmfare best actor award for *Parinda*, and he carried me on to the stage. He had the black lady in one hand and me in the other. We still have a photo of that moment. My dad and I don't discuss films or my career too much. We don't even share too many common interests. I think we are as different as the North and South poles. I'm into sports and fitness. I live a disciplined, army kind of a lifestyle, and he is more *bindaas* and cool about his fitness. He's not a person who likes to be pushed around; so I've never forced him. He likes to do things his way. The best part about him is that he has remained absolutely the same. But the one thing I will always like to adopt from him, is his sense of equality. His mannerisms and his style of talking have remained the same, no matter who he is speaking to. I've noticed that he always chills out with the light guys and the spot boys, even more than the director. He's such a cool guy!

Sushant Singh Rajput

A talent Bollywood refused to accept



The boy from Patna, who had gone to live his dreams in the cut-throat world of Bollywood, never could fulfill his immense potential. Was he just a confused soul, or an immensely gifted, sensitive, caring and passionate guy who was in the wrong profession? For all the glamour and money that Bollywood brings to those who play by the rules, it is an unforgiving place for an outsider.

Sushant wasn't going through the best of times. One could see his despair, when he pleaded with a fan to go and see *Sonchiriya*, because if it failed, which it eventually did, he said Bollywood would throw him out and he had no godfather in the industry except his fans. It was almost like the Bollywood elites were waiting for him to fail and trying everything to make sure he did.

Flashback to 2002 and maybe one can begin to try and understand what was playing on Sushant's mind. He was still in his hometown Patna, when his life was turned upside down by the passing away of his mother whom he loved beyond words. "Maybe I would have been a different person than what I am now. The way I looked at things then and now, they are very different and I cannot go back to doing that. It's unfortunate. But everything that used to excite me, doesn't excite me that much now. I don't know why. No relationship, no success, absolutely nothing... If she was alive, probably it wouldn't concern her, but just because something has changed inside me, everything has become so insipid. It takes a lot out of me to force myself to get overly excited about things and probably this is the reason why I like acting so much. Because it helps me get away from myself," he had said in an interview following the stupendous success of *M.S. Dhoni: The Untold Story*.

By Jaydip Sengupta

Something still doesn't quite feel right. It's been just over two weeks now since Sushant Singh Rajput's life ended prematurely, but there has been no closure and we are no closer to knowing the truth. The forensic report is but a clinical diagnosis that says his death was caused by hanging, but those in the know, whisper of a bigger game afoot.

The boy from Patna, who had gone to live his dreams in the cut-throat world of Bollywood, never could fulfill his immense potential. Was he just a confused soul, or an immensely gifted, sensitive, caring and passionate guy who was in the wrong profession? For all the glamour and money that Bollywood brings to those who play by the rules, it is an unforgiving place for an outsider.

Sushant was an outsider in the true sense of the term and it was not just because he had no godfather or connections. Scholarly, well-versed in the works of existential thinkers Nietzsche and Sartre, playing the guitar, writing poems and reaching for the stars with his telescope; he oozed an old-world charm that made Bollywood uncomfortable, because it was used to the crass of its self-appointed custodians. His higher pursuits probably intimidated them for he didn't act like one of them; so how could they let him into their inner sanctum?

Stories of filmmakers going the extra yard to ensure he didn't get any films have been popping up all over since that fateful day of June 14. Losing seven films in six months can be devastating at the best of times and

Is that why Sushant was so desperate to make it big in Bollywood?

A brilliant student, he cleared 11 Engineering exams including that for the Indian School of Mines, secured admission in Mechanical Engineering after ranking 7th in the Delhi College of Engineering Entrance Exam and was a National Olympiad winner in Physics. While a student, he joined dance and

acting classes and before he realized, he had been bitten by the acting bug. "I found the experience liberating. I realized that I could communicate with the audience. I knew I wanted to do this forever," he was quoted as saying.

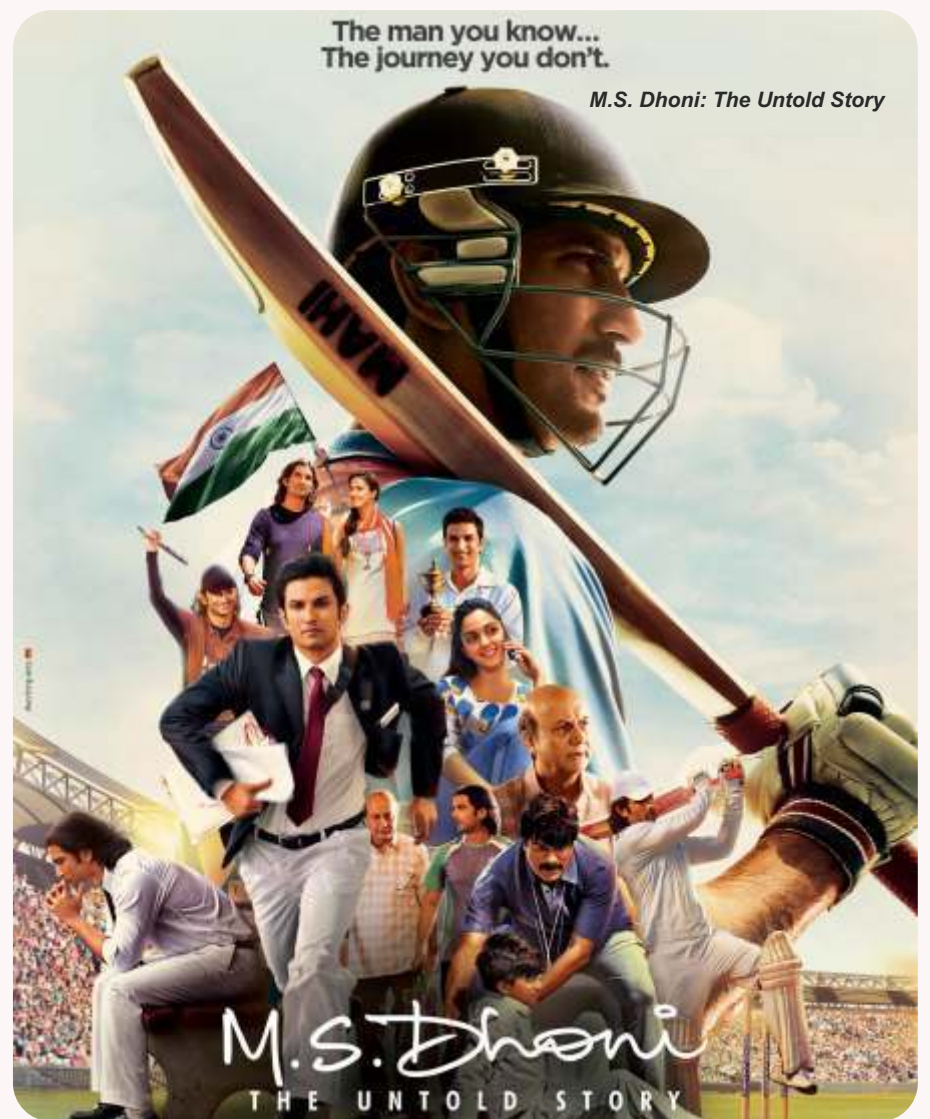
After he started participating in theatre and dance, he rarely had time for studies, resulting in several backlogs which ultimately made him leave DCE. He completed only three years of the four-year course before dropping out to pursue his acting career. It was a risk he decided was worth taking.

He moved to Mumbai, got his first roles in Television soaps and ads and then *Kai Po Che!* happened. Suddenly, the doorway to stardom had magically opened up for him. His portrayal of Ishaan Bhatt, an ex-district level cricketer who is a victim of politics in the cricketing selection fraternity, received a lot of praise. Critic Rajeev Masand wrote: "...it's Sushant Singh Rajput, making his film debut as Ishaan, who it's hard to take your eyes off. The actor has an indescribable presence and it's clear from his confidence and distinct likeability that a star is born."

Somewhere, alarm bells had started to ring. Here was this small-town actor, with dashing good looks, chiseled physique and refined acting skills encroaching on their entitled space. His performances in *Shuddh Desi Romance*, *PK* and *Byomkesh Bakshi*, enhanced his CV, but then came the big one, the movie that catapulted Sushant to the big league and sent shivers down a few wary spines.

M.S. Dhoni: The Untold Story was a defining movie in more ways than one. Sushant was Dhoni all the way; he was so seamless, so under his skin, so much a cricketer. He trained for a year and half, perfecting Dhoni's batting style, including Dhoni's famous helicopter shot. Even Sachin Tendulkar thought Sushant was a cricketer when he spotted him at practice!

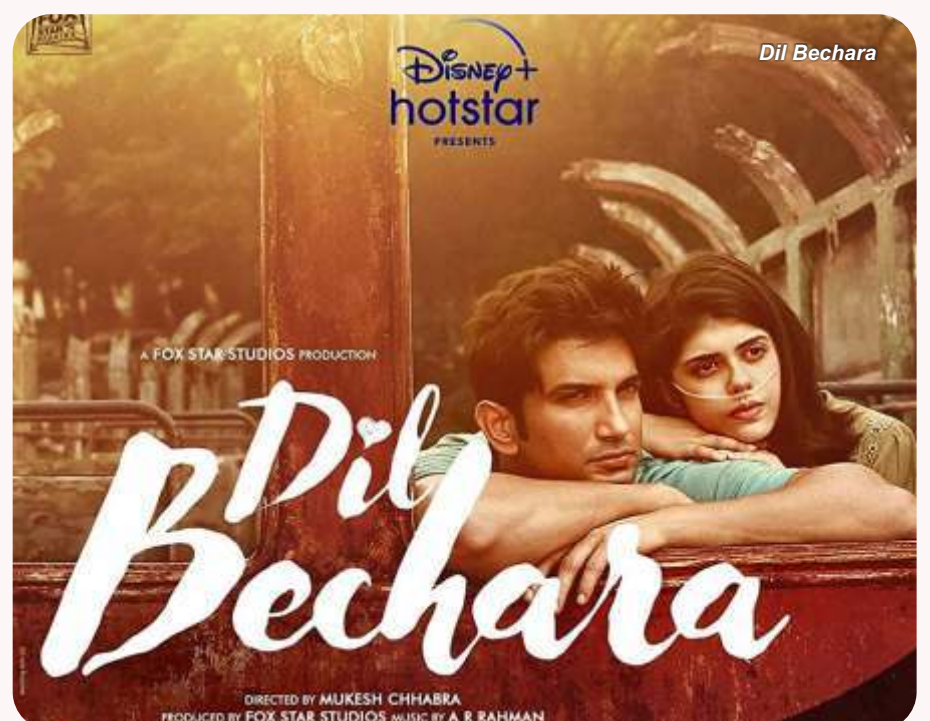
That was probably the death-knell for Sushant. He was a dangerous rival who had to be stopped. You would think that for an actor who had just delivered one of the highest-grossing films of 2016 – the movie made Rs 216 crore - it would ensure a deluge of offers and Bollywood producers would be making a beeline for his doorstep. But no, the films began to dry up instead.



His only movie in 2017 was *Raabta*. The signs were pretty ominous and Sushant knew it all too well; hence the plea to his fans post *Sonchiriya*. He had gambled and lost. Bollywood was not going to accept him. From the same interview in 2016, in his own words: "There's a story I read of this guy who's dying of thirst in a desert. He sees a mirage and runs towards it, only to find nothing. He sees another mirage a while later. He's aware of his situation now, but he runs anyway because he's dying. This is what we all are doing. We know that nothing can give one that sense of permanence and psychological security that one is craving for."

Ironically, his last theatrical release was *Chhichhore* in 2019, a film that dealt with depression and suicide. It was a huge success, making Rs 215 crore at the Box Office, but somewhere deep inside of him, Sushant probably knew his time was up. His next two films, *Drive* and *Dil Bechara* were consigned to OTT releases.

He longed to be with his mother, the rejection and loneliness proving too much for him in the end. His last Instagram post to his mother still haunts. *Blurred past evaporating from teardrops, Unending dreams carving an arc of smile, And a fleeting life, negotiating between the two...Ma (love).*





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They came to Bollywood with dreams in their eyes, lured by the glitzy world of glamour and fame. Some managed to stick it out and made it big, while others, despite everything seemingly going their way, lost out in the rat race. Nepotism, favoritism and the casting couch added to the mystery that is tinsel town, but every once in a while, one got to see its darkest underbelly.

The deaths that shook Bollywood

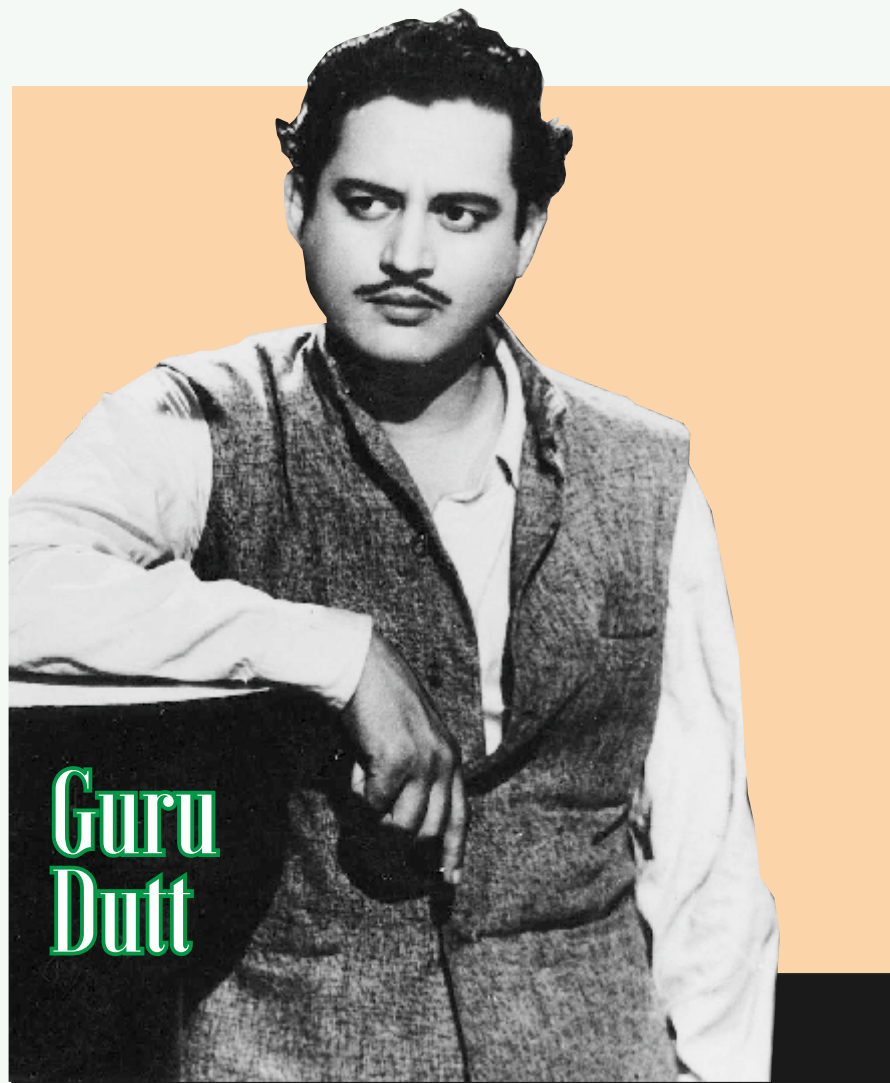
By Jaydip Sengupta

From underworld connections to the unexplained deaths, Bollywood has many sordid stories to tell. The recent demise of the immensely talented Sushant Singh Rajput has opened a can of worms with accusations being thrown at some of the established stars for pushing the boy from Patna over the edge that ultimately led to him taking the drastic step.

Behind every death lurks a conspiracy and Sushant's case is no different, with many calling for a thorough investigation into his apparent suicide.

Social media is abuzz with theories ranging from the plausible to the bizarre, but one thing is for sure; his mysterious death has definitely sparked a furor over Bollywood elites' treatment of the outsiders.

Sushant, though, is neither the first nor is likely to be the last, when it comes to actors dying in mysterious circumstances. From Guru Dutt to Sridevi, the deaths of some of the biggest names in Bollywood have left us scratching our heads in collective dismay. Read on, as Bollywood Insider takes a look at a few such notable victims of rejection and depression.



Guru Dutt

The master filmmaker and actor, who gave us exquisite works of art like *Pyaasa*, *Kaagaz Ke Phool*, *Sahib Bibi Aur Ghulam* and *Chaudhvin Ka Chand*, was found dead inside his rented apartment on October 10, 1964 at the age of 39. His cause of death was never known, with speculations ranging from suicide to accidental overdose. He had already separated from wife Geeta Dutt and his relationship with Waheeda Rehman had also fizzled out, leaving him lonely, alcoholic and suffering from chronic depression. Dutt's alleged affair with Waheeda reached its peak in *Kaagaz Ke Phool* (1959), which ironically told the story of a director falling for an actress while his marriage is on the rocks. As if that was not enough, the film also had the heart-rending song *Waqt Ne Kiya, Kya Haseen Sitam* sung by Geeta Dutt, in which she seemed to pour out the pain of her real life through the poignant vocals. It is said that a combination of sleeping pills and alcohol led to his demise, having already contemplated taking his life on two previous occasions.



Parveen Babi

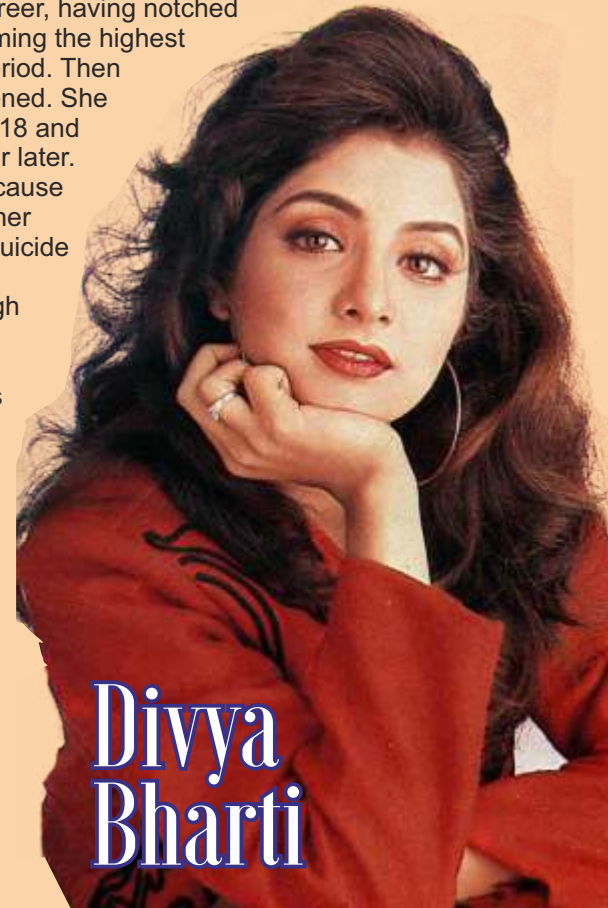
The first from Bollywood to appear on the cover of *Time* in 1976, Parveen Babi was found dead on January 22, 2005 after her residential society alerted the police that she had not collected milk and newspapers from her doorstep for three days. The police suspected that she may have been dead for up to 72 hours before her body was found. The cause of her death was not immediately known. The police ruled out any foul play and it was determined she had succumbed due to organ failure and diabetes. Back in the 70s and 80s, Parveen had carved a niche for herself with her glamorous persona, working opposite some of the biggest names including Amitabh Bachchan with whom she did 8 successful movies, starting with *Majboor*. She churned out hit after hit with *Deewaar*, *Amar Akbar Anthony*, *Suhaag*, *Shaan*, *Kaalia*, *Namak Halaal* among others and was rumored to have had an affair with Amitabh whom she would later accuse of trying to kill her. She was also in a relationship with Mahesh Bhatt, whose name, coincidentally, has come up post Sushant Singh Rajput's death as well.



Sridevi

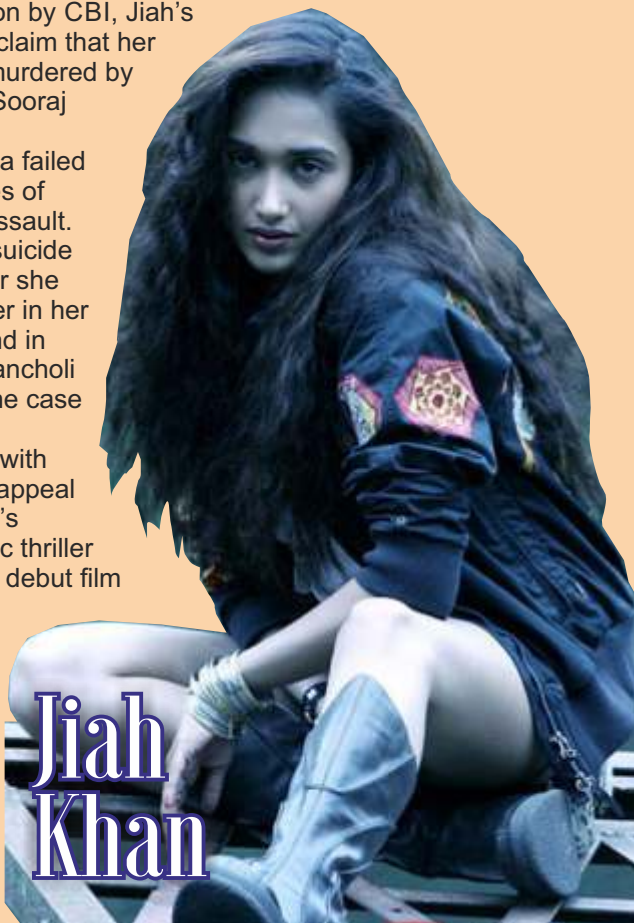
In what is surely one of the most intriguing instances of celebrity deaths, Sridevi, Bollywood's first female superstar and Padma Shri awardee, was discovered drowned in her hotel bathtub in Dubai on February 24, 2018 by her producer-husband Boney Kapoor. The cause of her death was cited as 'accidental drowning' and even traces of alcohol were found in her blood, but it is unclear whether the 55-year-old first drowned and then became unconscious, or whether she fell asleep or unconscious and then drowned. In any case, conspiracy theories flooded the internet, with some even wondering how a 1.68m tall person managed to fit and drown inside a bathtub. Her fans were understandably left gutted, as the veteran of 300 films was a much-loved figure in Bollywood, having sizzled on screen with her effervescent performances in *Nagina*, *Chandni*, *Mr. India*, *ChaalBaaz*, *Lamhe*, *Khuda Gawah* and later on in *English Vinglish* and *Mom*. In between, she was in a relationship with Mithun Chakraborty for 3 years from 1985-1988, won 3 Filmfare awards and a National Award and was the highest-paid actress in the 80s and 90s.

Possibly the most tragic incident to shock Bollywood was that of a 19-year-old rising star falling to her death from her Mumbai apartment in April 5, 1993. Divya Bharti was riding the crest of hits like *Vishwatma*, *Shola Aur Shabnam*, *Deewana* and *Dil Hi To Hai*, in just two years of her fledgling career, having notched up 14 movies and becoming the highest paid actor during that period. Then Sajid Nadiadwala happened. She married the producer at 18 and met her tragic end a year later. Speculations about the cause of her death, as to whether it was an accident or a suicide or even a murder, never really died away, although the official version was accidental death. Those in the know say she was drinking and depressed on that fateful day. It was an abrupt end to a career that was as promising as it was successful, her role in *Deewana*, opposite Shah Rukh Khan and Rishi Kapoor, even fetching her a Filmfare Award for Best Female Debut.



Divya Bharti

She came, made her mark and died young, yet another instance of unfulfilled promise in Bollywood. Just 25 and 3 films old, Jiah Khan was found hanging from a ceiling fan in her bedroom of her family's residence in Juhu, Mumbai, on June 3, 2013. Deemed suicide following an extensive investigation by CBI, Jiah's mother continued to claim that her daughter had been murdered by her boyfriend, actor Sooraj Pancholi, leading the prosecution to make a failed attempt to lay charges of murder and sexual assault. Jiah did not leave a suicide note, but a week after she died, a six-page letter in her handwriting was found in which she blamed Pancholi for ruining her life. The case is still ongoing. Jiah scorched the screen with her attitude and sex-appeal in Ram Gopal Verma's controversial romantic thriller *Nishabd* in 2007, her debut film opposite Amitabh Bachchan. Her next, Aamir Khan-starrer *Ghajini*, became the highest-grossing film of 2008, followed by another hit *Housefull* in 2010, opposite Akshay Kumar.



Jiah Khan

In case you are wondering why Silk Smitha features here despite having hardly done any Bollywood movies, the reason is that her death too had a similar script like others on this list. The southern siren, who was introduced to Bollywood fans through *Sadma*, was found dead in her Chennai home on September 23, 1996 at the age of 35. The reason behind her death remains a mystery. Some believe it was due to depression over her debt accumulated from producing movies, while others continue to suspect foul play. A few months after her death, it was declared in the post-mortem report that Smitha died of suicide by hanging herself from a fan with a sari with high amounts of alcohol found in her body. Seen mostly in South Indian movies, Smitha became a household name in the rest of India, when the Kamal Haasan-Sridevi starrer *Moondram Pirai* was dubbed in Hindi as *Sadma*, which means shock, a very apt title given two of the three main characters in the movie eventually died in mysterious circumstances.



Silk Smitha



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Second-choice **Salman!**

Some of the iconic 90s hits such as *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai*, will forever remain in our hearts. Digging into the past, there is an unknown fact about this evergreen film that might surprise fans. Originally, for the film, Karan Johar had approached Chandrachur Singh for the role of Aman; the character that had later been played by Salman Khan. However, the former, later confessed that it was a big loss for him to have rejected such an offer.



The joke's on you, **Kajol**

Kajol, who is quite active on the internet these days, took to social media to share a meme of herself once again. Sharing her picture of a forced smile, the meme read, "So glad you didn't get the joke and now I realise that u didn't even get that it was on you!(sic)"

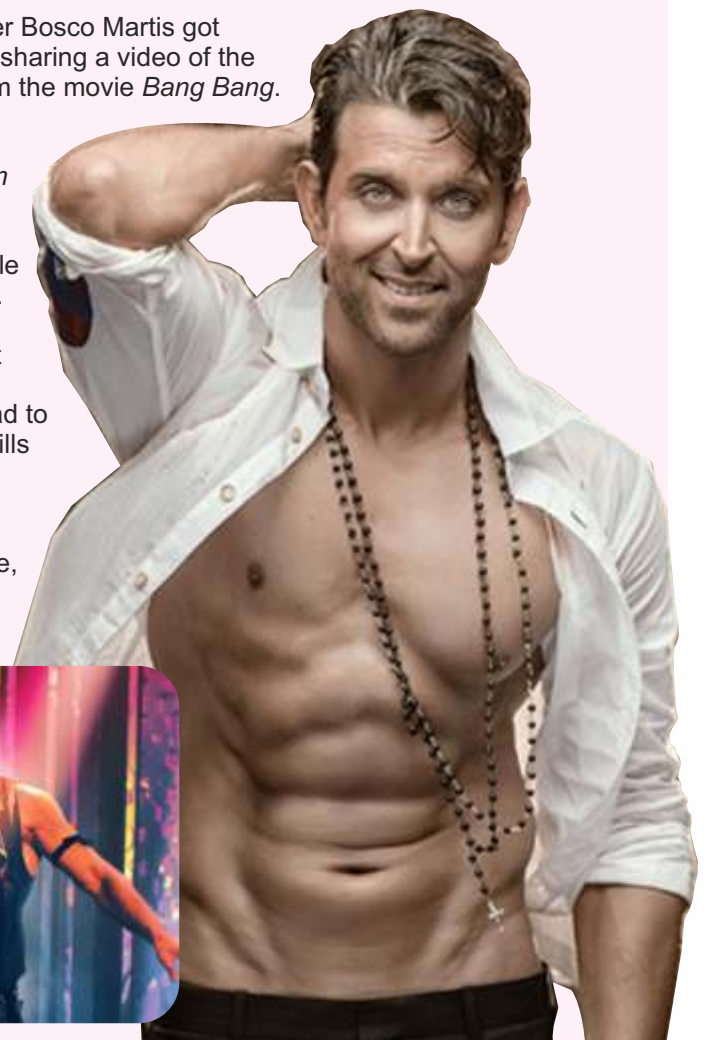


12 pairs for **twinkle-toes Hrithik**

Choreographer Bosco Martis got nostalgic while sharing a video of the song *Tu Meri* from the movie *Bang Bang*.

Calling Hrithik a 'perfectionist,' he revealed that the *Dhoom* actor changed 12 pairs of shoes while shooting for the song so as to feel comfortable dancing on the slippery floor. He said, "I am sure no one noticed it as the perfectionist @hrithikroshan made it look invisible and @katrinakaif had to control her super dancing skills because she had to play the character! ..(sic)"

On the work front, meanwhile, the actor will soon be seen in *Krish 4*.



OTT blues for **Coolie No. 1**



With the ongoing pandemic crisis, every big or small budget movie has taken a U-turn and is now opting for the latest trend of digital release. However, it seems that David Dhawan is not so happy with the digital trend and hence, wants *Coolie No. 1*, starring Varun Dhawan and Sara Ali Khan, to release only in theatres. Fans are quite disheartened with the news as they will have to wait some more time for *Coolie No. 1* to release on big screen when things will get back to normal.



Life's a beach again for Preity

The dimple cutie, Preity Zinta, remains quite active on social media and keeps posting videos and pictures to share with her fans. After 104 days, she stepped out of the house to spend some relaxing time at a beach and took to her Instagram account to share the beach pictures along with her pet dog. Wearing a tank top paired with denim shorts and sports shoes, she captioned the picture, "Our first trip - Finally after 104 days was the BEACH and WE LOVED it. Both of us were in heaven(sic)"



Real-life romance for reel-life pair

The much-loved on-screen pair Pulkit Samrat and Kriti Kharbanda, have worked together in hits such as, *Veerey Ki Wedding* and *Pagalpanti*. The duo is about to team up again for Bejoy Nambiar's *Taish*. On being asked about his relationship with his rumored girlfriend, Pulkit said that the secret behind his on-screen chemistry with co-actor Kriti Kharbanda is their close friendship. As per reports, the *Fukrey* actor said, "I think the fact that we are best friends and share a certain warmth and comfort translates on screen. We have got some quality time to spend in the lockdown. It is nice. We got a chance to know each other better."

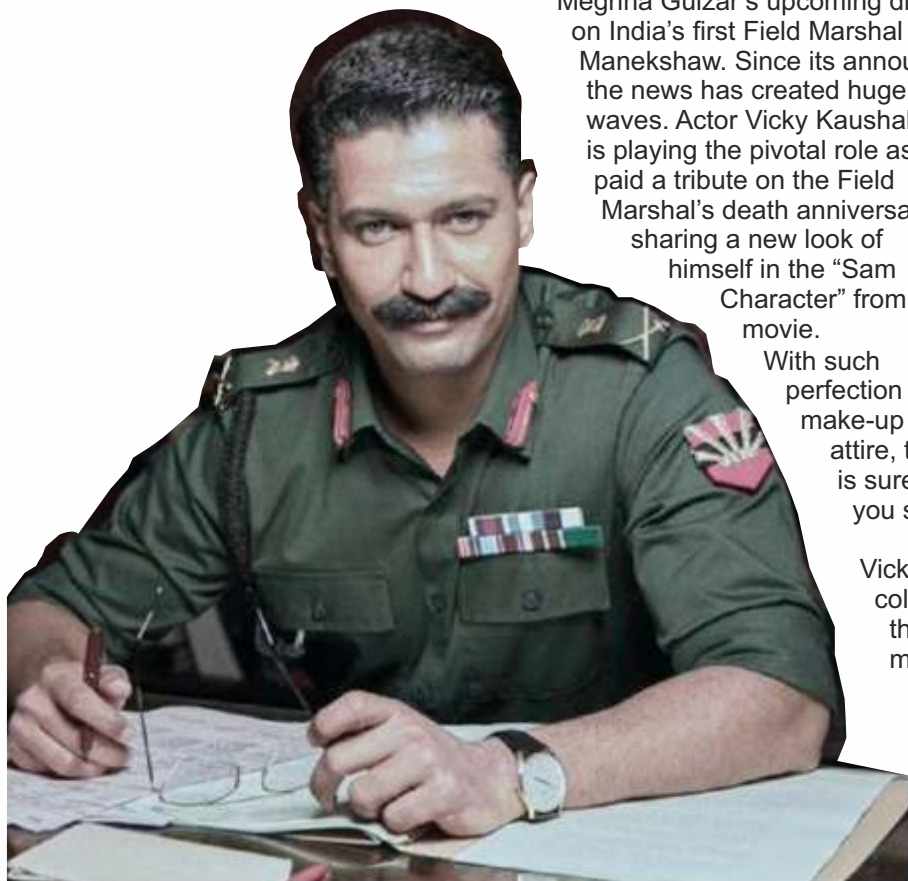
However, Kriti has already confirmed dating Pulkit and she wants her parents to know about it. Also, the two have been spending the lockdown period together by cooking food and playing *Antakshari* to kill the boredom.

Major promotion for Vicky Kaushal

Meghna Gulzar's upcoming directorial is a biopic on India's first Field Marshal - Sam Manekshaw. Since its announcement, the news has created huge waves. Actor Vicky Kaushal, who is playing the pivotal role as Sam, paid a tribute on the Field Marshal's death anniversary by sharing a new look of himself in the "Sam Character" from the movie.

With such perfection in make-up and attire, this look is sure to give you some chills!

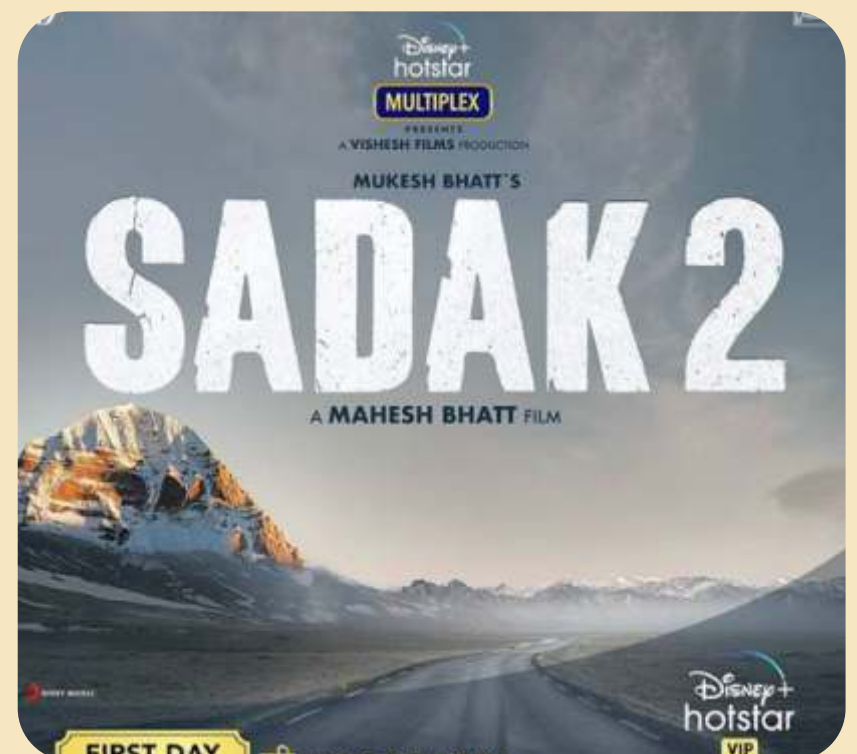
Vicky Kaushal had already collaborated with Meghna Gulzar in the past in the critically acclaimed movie *Raazi*.



Digital date for Alia's Sadak 2

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, Aditya Roy Kapoor and Alia Bhatt starrer *Sadak 2* will have its OTT release soon. Directed by Mahesh Bhatt, the picture was originally supposed to release on July 10, in theatres. However, with the uncertainty on reopening of theatres, digital release is the only option left, said producer Mukesh Bhatt.

Sadak 2, a sequel to 1991 film *Sadak*, also features its original stars Sanjay Dutt and Pooja Bhatt.



The War Heroes



of Bollywood

By Jaydip Sengupta

Is it just a coincidence that *The Art of War*, an ancient treatise on military warfare tactics, was written by a Chinese military strategist?

Sun Tzu's 5th Century BC masterpiece still remains the most influential strategy text in East Asian warfare and has influenced both Eastern and Western military thinking, business tactics, legal strategy, lifestyles and beyond. Incidentally, a movie with the same title hit the screens in 2000, but it was on covert warfare, involving - you guessed it - the Chinese and did not do well at the Hollywood Box Office.

Now, while such films do have their separate fan base, it is the ones on overt wars that leave a permanent mark on the psyche. Movies like *The Bridge on the River Kwai*, *All Quiet on the Western Front* and *Saving Private Ryan* are absolute cinematic masterpieces that have stood the test of time.

Bollywood too has given us war movies of celluloid brilliance. We have been involved in four wars with Pakistan and one with China since our independence, sufficient material to make war movies on and the producers haven't disappointed. Right from the wars with Pakistan in 1947 and 1965 over Kashmir, to the one with China in 1962, followed by Bangladesh's War of Independence in 1971 and culminating with the 1999 Kargil War, there have been movies made on every single one of them.

The recent skirmish with the PLA on the Indo-China border is probably already being written into a movie script by our enterprising brethren in Bollywood, but while we wait for the end product to hit the screens in the not-too-distant future, let's, in the meantime, take a look at 6 of the best war movies to come out of the Bollywood stable.

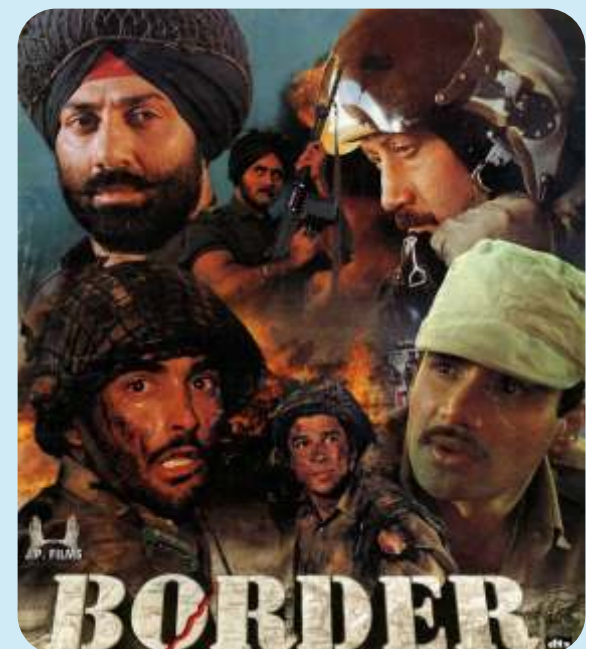
Haqueqat (1964)



What better film to start the discourse than the Balraj Sahni-Dharmendra starrer and Chetan Anand-helmed magnum opus from 1964. Set against the backdrop of the Sino-India war of 1962, the film's main plot revolves around a small platoon of Indian soldiers in the hilly terrain of Ladakh. Captain Bahadur Singh (Dharmendra) is a dashing, young soldier who falls in love with a Ladakhi girl, Angmo (Priya Rajvansh), while posted in the region. On a visit to Kashmir and Ladakh, Bahadur

Singh's father, Brigadier Singh (Jayant), receives news of creeping encroachment by Chinese troops along the border and orders Major Ranjit Singh (Balraj Sahni) to send his officers to secure the posts. Thus, begins the struggle of the soldiers, who await further instructions while facing a wily adversary. Sounds eerily familiar even after 56 years, doesn't it? The movie hit all the right notes, coming as it did so soon after the Chinese war, with the song *Ab Tumhare Hawaale Watan Saathiyon*, sung by Mohammed Rafi, becoming synonymous with patriotism in India.

Border (1997)



If there is one Bollywood movie that immediately comes to mind when we say war drama, it has to be this J.P. Dutta-directed saga. Set during the Indo-Pakistan War of 1971, it is an adaptation of real-life events that happened during the Battle of Longewala in 1971. The story revolves around a band of 120 Indian soldiers in the Longewala region of Rajasthan who defend their post all night against more than 2000 Pakistani soldiers until they receive assistance from the Indian Air Force the next morning. The film boasted of a stellar cast and superb performances from Sunny Deol, Suniel Shetty, Akshaye Khanna, Jackie Shroff, Pooja Bhatt, Tabu, Rakhee Gulzar, Kulbhushan Kharbanda, Puneet Issar and Sudesh Berry made it one of the top-5 movies of the 90s. Not surprisingly, it won several awards, including National Award for Best Film on National Integration and Filmfare awards for Best Director and Best Debut (Male) for Akshaye Khanna. Even today, *Border* is remembered for its gripping storyline, anti-war message, hummable songs and brilliant performances.

1971 (2007)



This is one of those rare out-of-the-box movies Bollywood is generally not known for. Reminiscent of great Hollywood classics like *Stalag 17* and *The Great Escape*, this POW escape movie received rave reviews from critics for its slick filmmaking and sublime acting. Amrit Sagar's directorial is based on the true story of 54 POWs during the 1965 and 1971 wars with Pakistan and showcases the attempted escape of 6 Indian soldiers from a Pakistani camp and how they confront death with honor, courage and sacrifice on their journey home. With magnificent performances by the redoubtable Manoj Bajpayee, Ravi Kishan and Deepak Dobriyal, the movie keeps one engaged throughout with brilliant execution, powerful screenplay, riveting dialogues, patriotic emotions and top-notch direction. Although the film didn't set the Box Office on fire when it released, despite winning the National Award that year for the Best Feature Film in Hindi, 13 years on, netizens have rediscovered the gem during the lockdown with the movie, uploaded by a user on YouTube, garnering 22 million views within a month!

The Ghazi Attack (2017)



It is a fact that movies based on real-life incidents resonate better with audiences and *The Ghazi Attack* proved that to the hilt. Directed by Sankalp Reddy, it was made into a multi-lingual film starring Rana Daggubati and Taapsee Pannu in lead roles and was inspired by true events from the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971. Also starring Kay Kay Menon and Atul Kulkarni, its story is about an executive naval officer of an Indian submarine and his team, who remain underwater for 18 days. The film explores the mysterious circumstances under which Pakistani submarine PNS Ghazi sank off the coast of Visakhapatnam in 1971 and narrates an underwater tale of the valor of Indian Navy aboard the Indian Submarine S21 which destroyed PNS Ghazi when it ventured into Indian waters to sink INS *Vikrant* off the shore of Visakhapatnam. The film won the Best Feature Film in Telugu at the 65th National Film Awards 2018.

LOC: Kargil (2003)

If one is to be honest, there were only two notable films made on the India Army's heroics during the Kargil war against Pakistan in 1999. While Farhan Akhtar made the Hrithik Roshan-starrer *Lakshya* which told the story of one man's fight with himself, with Kargil only as the backdrop, J.P. Dutta, definitely India's best director of war epics, made a four-hour saga on the Kargil war. Upon release, *LOC* received mixed response critically and commercially. With a running time of 255 minutes, it is one of the longest Indian films ever made and fifth in terms of running time. The film is based on the 1999 Operation Vijay and Battle of Tololing around the Line of Control. Dutta had 32 well-known actors including Sanjay Dutt, Ajay Devgn, Saif Ali Khan, Akshaye Khanna, Abhishek Bachchan and Suniel Shetty, 11 cameras, 1,000 army men at hand, authentic army issue guns and live ammunition. Just like his previous war movie *Border*, the Indian military provided technical and material assistance during the production and filming, with weapons depicted being those used in the Kargil war.



Uri: The Surgical Strike (2019)

No list of war movies would be complete without the movie that took patriotic fervor to new heights in India. The film made Vicky Kaushal a household name for his brilliant portrayal of Army Major Vihaan Singh Shergill and unsurprisingly, also became one of the top-10 highest-grossing films of all time. Based on true events of September 2016, director Aditya Dhar declares that his film is a 'Tribute to a brave new India'. Nationalism is writ large all over this war drama that leads up to and re-imagines the retaliatory surgical strikes conducted by the Indian Army against militant launch pads in 'Pakistani-administered Kashmir'. Also starring Paresh Rawal, Yami Gautam, Mohit Raina and Kirti Kulhari, the movie went on to win 4 National Film Awards and 4 Filmfare Awards besides amassing Rs 300 crore in less than a month. The dialogue: '*How's the Josh? High Sir*' has gained cult status among India's younger generation. Needless to say, those who are looking to helm the next war flick on the recent Galwan Valley skirmishes with China have a tough act to follow.



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BOLLYWOOD ACTRESSES PACK A PUNCH

From high heels to high-octane action movies, the leading ladies of B-Town are turning intense on screen

By Dhaval Roy

What are you likelier to hear in Bollywood—action hero or action heroine? Sure, it's been the former so far but the tide has been quickly turning of late. In the recent past, actresses such as Priyanka Chopra Jonas in *Jai Gangaajal*, Rani Mukerji in the *Mardani* series, Taapsee Pannu in *Naam Shabana* and Shraddha Kapoor in *Saaho* among others have packed quite a punch with their action-laden turns that go beyond just period dramas like *Bajirao Mastani* or *Manikarnika: The Queen of Jhansi*. And looks like the trend is here to stay. Here are the girls we will be seeing toting guns, throwing punches, kicking and all!

Alia Bhatt

Brahmāstra: Part One of Three

As the name suggests, this is the first volume of the trilogy that also stars Amitabh Bachchan and Ranbir Kapoor. Director Ayan Mukerji has described the movie as a romantic-fairytale in a supernatural format and a contemporary film with ancient elements. Touted to be one of Bollywood's most ambitious fantasy-action dramas in recent times, it has Ranbir playing Shiva—a man with supernatural powers—and Alia as his love interest, Isha. The actress has action scenes in the flick and even injured her shoulder and arm while filming one of the sequences.



Kangana Ranaut

Dhaakad and Tejas

Razneesh Ghai's *Dhaakad* is being called a mega action entertainer and will have the feisty Kangana Ranaut in an out-and-out fighting mode. She will undergo a six-week training in hand-to-hand combat, Krav Maga and using guns, tutored by a team of stunt directors from Thailand. Shot in Prague, Thailand and Budapest among other locations, the project is in the same space as Hollywood sci-fi action film series, *Resident Evil*. It also promises to have heavy-duty chase sequences and sword fights. Apart from *Dhaakad*, one will also see the National Award winner in Ronnie Screwvala's *Tejas*, which is on the same lines as *Uri: The Surgical Strike*. In the Sarvesh Mewara directorial, Kangs plays an Air Force pilot and has donned the uniform for the first time.



Katrina Kaif

Ali Abbas Zafar's untitled superhero flick



After *Ek Tha Tiger* and *Tiger Zinda Hai (TZH)*, Katrina Kaif is teaming up with director Ali Abbas Zafar one more time for a movie that kicks off his superhero universe. Ali was inspired to cast Kat in a full-blown action outing after fans praised her daredevilry in *TZH*. The dearth of women as leads in the genre was the reason the director came up with this project. He told *Mid Day*, "I feel it's high time we made a larger-than-life action film with women in this country. This story has stayed with me for a long time." To prep for the film, the *Bharat* actress has been focusing on her fitness and staying injury-free before she starts rigorously training for her role.

Janhvi Kapoor

Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl



After debuting with a romantic movie, *Dhadak*, Janhvi Kapoor's sophomore big-screen project will see her as a combat aviator Flight Lieutenant Gunjan Saxena. In the biopic, the actress plays the titular role of the first female Indian Airforce (IAF) Pilot in a combat zone. Gunjan flew the helicopter Cheetah for casualty evacuation during the Kargil War in 1999. Not only did she make history but also paved the way for the inclusion of 1,600 more women in the IAF as combat pilots.



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Brahmrishi Kumar Swami Ji being honored by President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind.

BHUMI PEDNEKAR

“This is the best **time to be a female actor in India!**”



Taapsee Pannu, Alia Bhatt, Deepika Padukone, Kangana

Ranaut - everyone is giving their best and doing some fantastic work. I am proud of each of my contemporaries who are changing the script.



By Shubarna Mukerji Shu

It has been five years for Bhumi Pednekar in B-town. With seven film releases, all superhits except one, Bhumi is edging closer to being an A-lister. Despite the love she carries for her deceased father, the Pednekar family is proud to be an all ladies' domain. The pride shows in the kind of cinema Bhumi has chosen. Starting with *Dum Laga Ke Haisha* and moving on to films like *Toilet Ek Prem Katha*, *Shubh Mangal Saavdhaan*, *Saand Ki Aankh* and more, Bhumi clearly leans towards strong women characters. Yet, her last release was *Pati Patni Aur Woh*, a film that clearly spelt her interest in a more commercial zone in Bollywood. So, what's her gameplan? Bhumi Pednekar shares with Bollywood Insider.

- What a year you have had, as despite the superhits, you received brickbats for everything you tried. If you were an old lady, people had a problem; if you were playing a few shades darker, that was a problem... your commercial venture – *Pati Patni Aur Woh* wasn't spared either. Did you get tizzy with all the criticism?

Did you just listen to that list you just shared? Are you seeing the kind of variety I am doling out in the name of cinema? I always knew it would not be easy being an actress, but that is what I always wanted to do. I am living my dream today. I don't think it gets better than this. If there is criticism, I would like to learn from it and move forward.

- This variety would not have been possible a few years ago; do you realise you are a part of the golden era of Bollywood?

I think it's the best time to be a female actor in India and I'm extremely fortunate that I started my career at a time when parts for women are being celebrated. See the kind of stories that I have done, be it *Dum Laga Ke Haisha* about an overweight girl and a guy who's a complete failure, *Shubh Mangal Savdhaan* about a couple dealing with a topic that is taboo, or *Toilet: Ek Prem Katha*, where I am on an equal footing with Akshay Kumar. It is not just me, look at the kind of work Taapsee (Pannu) is doing; she has had some really nice films, all female-led. Alia Bhatt, Deepika Padukone, Kangana Ranaut - everyone is giving their best and doing some fantastic work. I am proud of each of my contemporaries who are changing the script.

- Do you see yourself as someone who in a way helped bring about that change?

I cannot take that responsibility but I would say I'm a product of that change. I wouldn't exist if our content hadn't revolutionized. Today, Taapsee and I have the courage to play characters more than double our age in *Saand Ki Aankh* and I get to do a film like *Bala* where we're talking of colour bias and conventional notions of beauty and I'm playing a deep-coloured girl. My next is a film called *Durgavati*, which revolves solely around me. Today, people want to see movies that they can relate with and characters that could be one of them. That's what's working. There was an entire

period where the actor alone mattered, anything he would do, it would work. But today, writers are celebrated; as cliché as it sounds – content is king! That in itself is a reason to celebrate.

- **Remembering the positives is perhaps the best way forward. While work is still going slow, the whole of Bollywood mourning Sushant Singh Rajput's untimely death, any positive thought or vibe is to be cherished. It was beautiful what you wrote for him "Your genius will live on with all the work you've done; And through that telescope I'll spot you again; It will be easy - cause you will be the youngest & the brightest among many we love up there. You truly are a double slit photon, A Neutron Star. You are going to be missed - Our dear SSR."**

Sonchiriya was special to me always, and now it is all the more special. There was so much I learnt on those sets, it did abysmally at the box office, but it helped me grow as an actor, as a person. I have such fond memories of Sushant from the sets. He really gave his work, all his heart. He has left a void.

- **You came as an outsider too; Bollywood has always been touted as a dirty, unsafe place – did you come with fears?**

I am not defending the film industry when I say the world is a dirty, unsafe place for a woman. You cannot single out the film industry. My sister is a lawyer; I know how the field is out there too. Having said that, I have to say my experience in Bollywood has been nothing I can complain about. I give the credit for it to my team. I always say that I've been fortunate to have been a part of Yash Raj and it's been a secure environment for me. But because I started working when I was 17, I've met people who've not had the most pleasant experiences, which is sad. There are so many thousands of people who come to Mumbai every day with hope. What I am glad about is that today, anybody in a place of power, be it a man or woman, who would want to exploit another person, would not just think twice, but would not have the courage to do this because of the various movements like #MeToo and such. And that is exactly what we needed.

- **How did the lockdown treat you? With all that time in hand, how did you spend your time?**

For the first few days I was lost! That was a little bit of exaggeration from my end, but what I am trying to say here is that, it was tough. I belong to a family of workaholics and I can work 24X7. We, Pednekar ladies, are a bunch of very ambitious women. Having been born and brought up in Mumbai, I have a very set life. When I'm not working, I try and spend as much time as I can with my family and girlfriends or just watch TV, read, do some gardening. Now that I said that aloud, I guess my life is pretty simple and basic that way.

The sudden free time was a boon and bane too. But one must do everything one can to safeguard another life.

- **Many feel *Pati Patni Aur Woh* is your way of telling people, you are ready to glam up for commercial cinema. Are movies like *Dum Laga Ke Haisha*, *Lust Stories* a thing of the past?**

Okay, let me say this once and for all, Bhumi, the person, believes in vanity. I want to take that time to get ready and wear make-up, but I don't think make-up is the reason I look good. It's just something that enhances my mood and what I'm trying to communicate in that moment. What's most exciting for me is that when I'm in front of the camera, I don't care about shedding these layers and I love celebrating my flaws, because I think that's the most human approach you can have. In real life, I'm nothing like the characters I play and it's like an adrenaline rush for me. It's a lot more reaffirming when you're appreciated for your craft and not just your beauty. My craft is something that is going to stay with me forever, the way I look is not something I have control over. *Pati Patni Aur Woh* was me telling myself that I can do something my favourites like Karishma Kapoor, Madhuri Dixit did in their time. I wanted to live that experience, and that's all.

- **What goals and ambition do you have, even beyond cinema?**

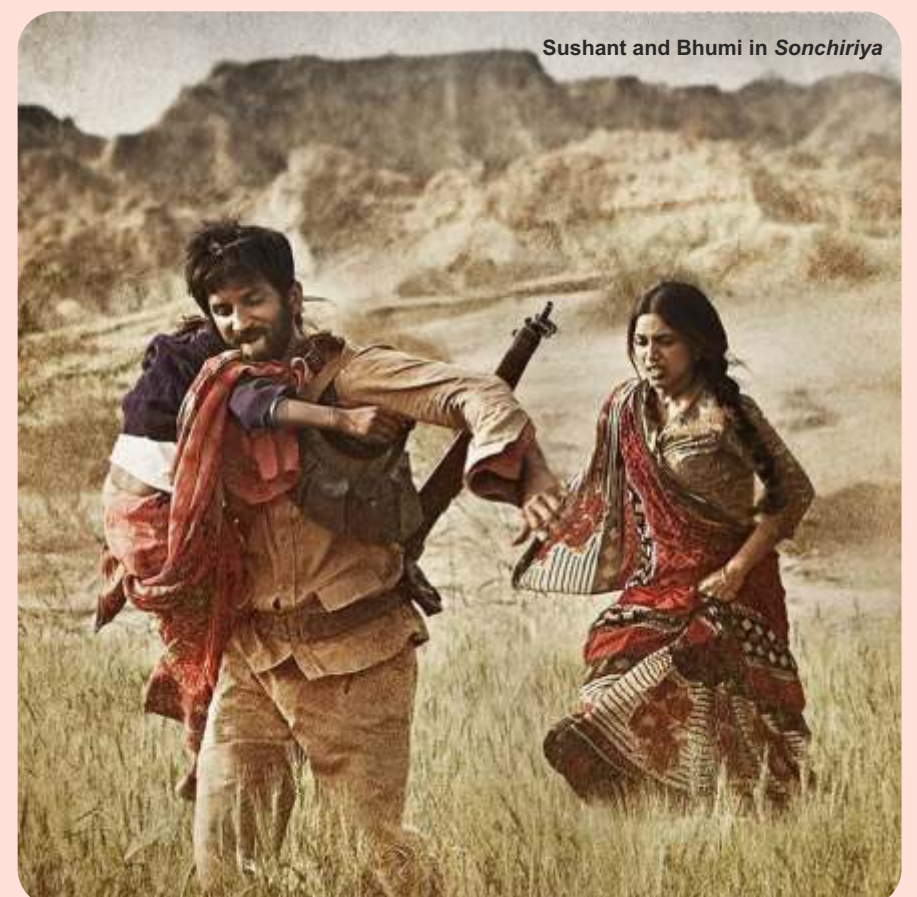
My list of the people I want to work with is endless. But something apart from films that I'm passionate about is the environment and I'm trying to use my power to change how irresponsible people are towards it. I'm starting a project called Climate Warrior on my social media, which would comprise interviews with people who've been fighting this war for many years; I'm going to get their point of view. I'm going to put out a lot of interesting content, it's going to be simple yet hard-hitting and entertaining, just to send across the message that we have really abused our planet and it's reached a point where things have gone out of hand.



Saand Ki Aankh



Dum Laga Ke Haisha



Sushant and Bhumi in Sonchiriya

Down but not out



B-Town's depression survivors

By Deepali Singh

They live in beautiful bungalows that are the stuff of architectural dreams. They wear designer clothes and have access to all the fancy accessories their hearts desire. They rub shoulders with the crème de la crème of society and are fancied by millions across the globe. Enough to make them feel happy and content with life, right? Well, not always.

However wealthy and famous they might be, Bollywood stars are not immune to problems related to mental health. Some of the industry's biggest stars have been honest about their struggles with anxiety and dealing with the low phase in their lives.

Back in the 50s, Dilip Kumar, who portrayed intense roles in several movies, thus earning him the label of 'Tragedy King', suffered from depression for a brief period. On the advice of his psychiatrist, he took up lighter roles in movies like *Aan*, *Azaad* and *Kohinoor*.

These days, the chatter around mental health issues has reached a crescendo following actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death last month. Here's a look at a few stars who fought their inner demons and emerged wiser and stronger.



Deepika Padukone

What's your first reaction when one of India's highest-paid actresses, famed for her beauty and talent, declares that she is suffering from depression? Shock and disbelief? That's exactly what most of us felt when Deepika Padukone revealed that she is suffering from depression. "The perception and the general understanding was that I was at a professional high. But, what I was also experiencing was this hollow, empty, pittish feeling... I would just cry out of nowhere," she said in an interview. Diagnosed with depression in 2014, the beautiful actress not only spoke publicly about her ailment, she also went on to create a foundation called Live, Love, Laugh to spread awareness of mental health issues. More power to her!



Hrithik Roshan

The *Kaabil* star's struggle with stammering is well-documented, but his battle with depression and mental health issues is something only a few have been privy to. In 2016, the handsome actor, who has experienced professional lows as well as the pain of separation post his divorce, was asked to speak at an event for mental health. "I've been through my ups and downs. I have experienced depression; I have experienced confusion, as we all do. It's a very normal thing. We should be very casual about it when we speak about it," he had said. He also added that both the highs and the lows have made him evolve as a person and he has emerged stronger from the experience.



Karan Johar

With two adorable babies in his life and a mother who dotes on him, Karan Johar's life certainly is full of love. But, there has been a point in time in the past when the filmmaker has wondered about the possibility of never finding the right partner for himself. Those pent-up issues, coupled with other buried feelings, led him to feeling unfulfilled and unhappy. Post an anxiety-attack, KJo visited a psychologist with whom he attended a few meditation sessions. "I felt that I did not deal entirely with the loss of my father, though it's been 11 or 12 years; I felt the pain and hurt of certain relationships that had dwindled from my life and I was carrying all that baggage. Also, there was the fear of future, the fear that I was not being able to find a life partner. At one point, the lack of love in my life was really bothering me. Today, I feel a lot freer from it. I feel there are loads of other things to look forward to," he mentioned in an interview.

The lovely Manisha Koirala isn't just a cancer-survivor; she has battled depression and loneliness as well. One look at her social media handles and you will see how much pleasure she takes in the simple things in life now. But it wasn't always the case for the actress who gave us cinematic gems like *Bombay* and *Khamoshi* among other films. Manisha admitted that she has seen really low phases and gone off track, but it has been a learning phase for her. Her advice for people dealing with mental health issues? "Seek help. It could be professional or friendly advice or, help from someone you can open up to. Do not hesitate. Secondly, never think that you are alone. For, there is always someone willing to hear you out. And, don't ever give up on yourself — you can survive everything!" she said in an interview. Spoken like a true survivor!



Manisha Koirala



Shah Rukh Khan

The Badshah of Bollywood has been at the receiving end of a lot of criticism and has faced many lows in his life – enough to make anyone feel overwhelmed with negativity. But the fighter that he is, SRK has come out tops in every situation. However, in 2008, it was a shoulder surgery that really bogged him down, leaving him feeling depressed and sad. The pressure to remain fit and active got to him and for a long time, he couldn't shake off that feeling. But with a bit of help and support from his family, he came out on tops there too! "I feel so much healthy and refreshed from within—due to the injury and the suffering I had got into a depression mode, but now I am out of it. I feel happy and boosted with energy," he told a media agency in 2010.



Anushka Sharma

A successful actress and an equally successful producer, Anushka Sharma wears the dual hats with aplomb. But while she is all that and more, Anushka is also someone who battled anxiety issues to emerge victorious. In January 2015, the *Pari* actress revealed in a magazine interview that she was facing mental health issues and was on medication for the same. "I'm on medication for my anxiety. Why am I saying this? Because it's a completely normal thing. It's a biological problem. In my family, there have been cases of depression. More and more people should talk openly about it," she said. She added that she wants to do as much as she can to remove the stigma attached to mental health problems.



Alia Bhatt

Being the film industry's blue-eyed girl with back-to-back hits to her credit, Alia Bhatt is an actress almost every filmmaker has on his or her wish-list. Her elder sister Shaheen Bhatt was diagnosed with depression and even wrote a book about her journey. Last year, Alia revealed in an interview that she has been facing anxiety for a couple of months and she recognised the symptoms after reading her sister's book. She admitted to having bouts of anxiety and crying for no reason. The *Raazi* actress is grateful for the support of her family members and friends who helped her out of the phase. "What's important is to accept it and not say that you're fine. If you're not feeling fine, then you should just say you're not feeling fine," she said. That's the Alia we know and love!



Varun Dhawan

Having played happy-go-lucky characters so far, playing a revenge-obsessed man whose wife and son get murdered in 2015's *Badlapur*, took Varun Dhawan to the brink of depression. While the actor wasn't clinically depressed, he said that he almost reached that point. "I was very sad to a certain degree," he said at the time. "Maybe because I am young and I had not seen the things I got to see during the making of *Badlapur*. I think, that is why it hit me harder than it would affect a person older than me," he added. The discovery led him to seek medical attention and the actor took medication and counselling for the same.



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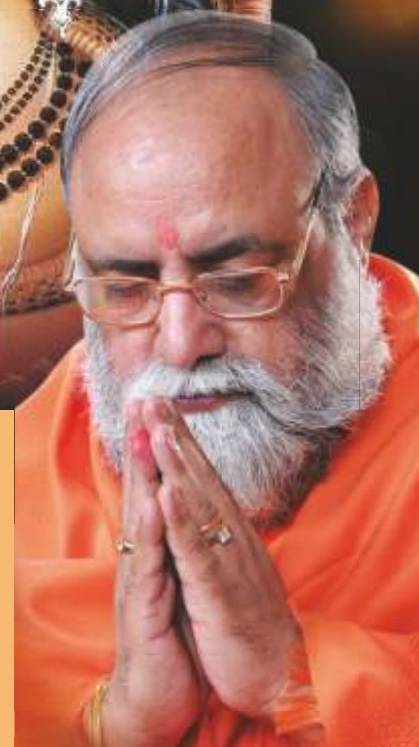
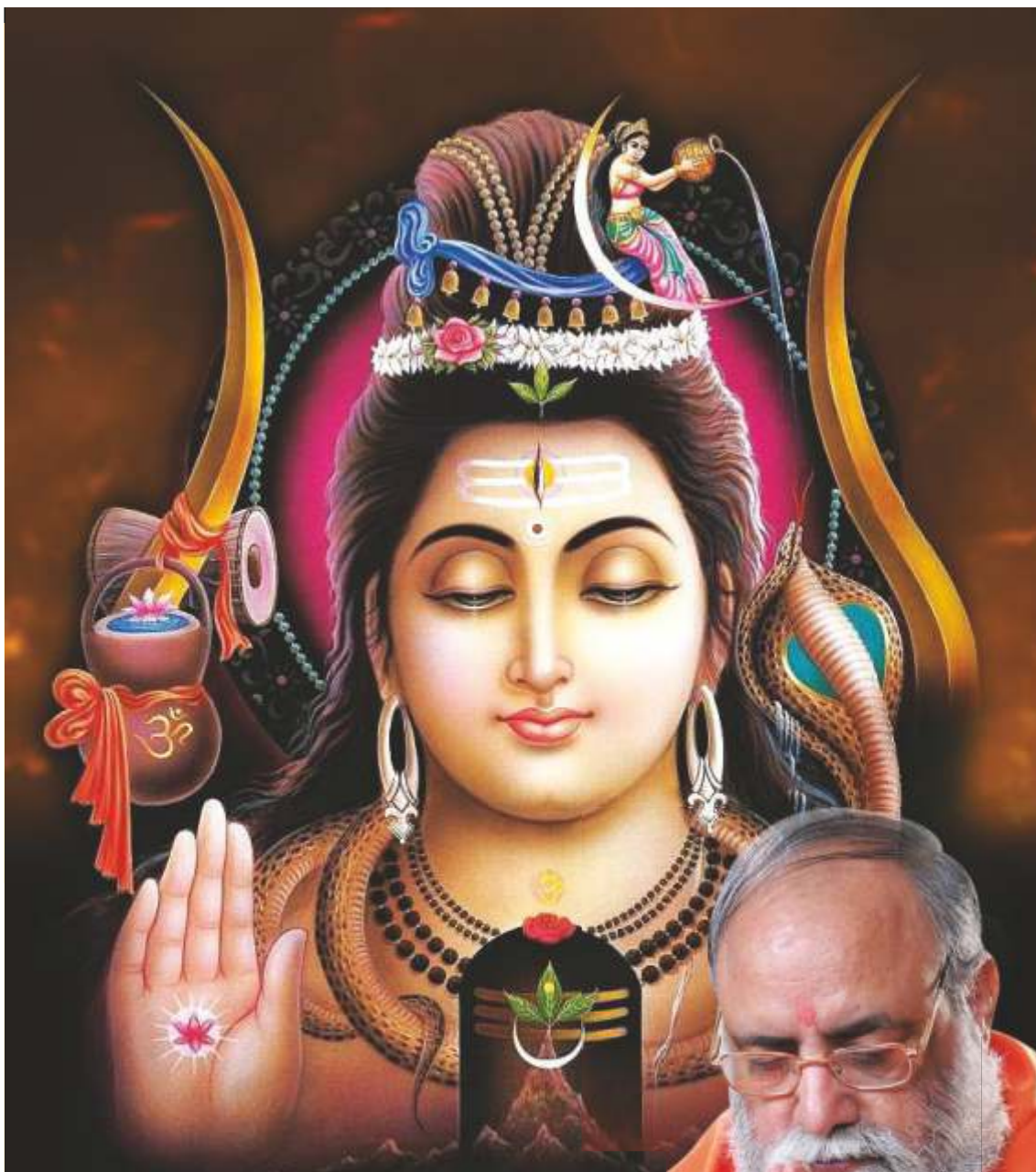
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Bollywood family sagas

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By Deepali Singh

Catching up with parents over video calls, playing games with your siblings on mobile applications and worrying about your family's safety in these unsure times, has truly been an eye-opener. It's taught us what we should be valuing the most – family. And who better to celebrate family than Bollywood!

Circa 1965, Yash Chopra's multi-starrer family saga *Waqt* was hailed as a film much ahead of its time, bringing together the might of acclaimed actors

such as Balraj Sahni, Raaj Kumar, Sunil Dutt and Shashi Kapoor. The lost and found formula found its way into many films, including *Amar Akbar Anthony* and *Yaadon Ki Baraat*. Over the years, Hindi films have continued to celebrate traditional family values, but have also made way for modern sentiments and realistic portrayals.

While some films have snuck away, a few have stood the test of time. So, bring out the popcorn, get into those comfy pyjamas and get ready to binge-watch some of the greatest family films Bollywood has gifted us...



***Hum Aapke Hain Koun..!* (1994)**

So charmed was the late M.F. Husain by the lead actress of this film, that the acclaimed painter apparently watched it 85 times, only for Madhuri Dixit! Not as much as Husain, but is there any true-blue Bollywood film lover who has not seen *Hum Aapke Hain Koun..!* at least once in his or her lifetime? Bringing together values, traditions, romance, song and dance, *Hum Aapke Hain Koun..!* managed to balance the traditional with the modern, making it a film that the entire family could enjoy together. From kids to grandparents, families thronged to watch the film when it opened in cinemas. It even went on to win the National Film Award for Best Popular Film Providing Wholesome Entertainment.

***Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995)**

Raj and Simran. Simran and Raj. Yes, we know – it's difficult to go beyond these names and the romance they created in Aditya Chopra's debut directorial venture. *DDLJ* may be a love story, but it's also very much a family story at heart. Watch the film and you get a yearning to return to your home, spend time with your grandparents, celebrate festivals with your cousins and bask in the glow of your parents' love. Follow your heart's desire, but don't forget to seek your parents' blessings as well – that was *DDLJ*'s overarching message.



***Hum Saath Saath Hain* (1999)**

If Ramayana had a modern-day version, it could well be this Sooraj Barjatya-directorial. Starring Salman Khan, Saif Ali Khan, Tabu, Karisma Kapoor and Sonali Bendre among others, the movie is remembered till today for the family values it represented, as well as for its beautiful songs and dances. Talk about sibling love and *HSSH* will probably be among the few Hindi films that come to mind even after all these years.

***Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* (2001)**

Having Amitabh Bachchan, Shah Rukh Khan and Hrithik Roshan in one frame is probably the stuff of filmmakers' dreams and Karan Johar managed to bring it alive on celluloid with *K3G*. With a tagline that told you that it's all about loving your parents, the film was also about trusting your children and respecting their choices. And what better way to get that message across than by bringing together some of the biggest Bollywood stars and surrounding them with glamour and beauty. Replete with emotions and drama, this family saga is an entertainer that's stood the test of time even after 19 years.





Baghban (2003)

Not all films about family have the children worshipping their parents and treating them as Gods. In Ravi Chopra's critically-acclaimed *Baghban*, the aging parents are treated as a burden by their four grown-up children. Amitabh Bachchan and Hema Malini bring depth and gravitas to this film that celebrates the value of parents in today's times. Brownie points for bringing in Salman Khan in a special appearance as the adopted son who treats them with respect and love. And the icing on the cake? The ending where the parents decide to keep their dignity and live their lives with self-respect.

English Vinglish (2012)

Can love exist without respect? Filmmaker Gauri Shinde addressed this simple concern in her film, starring the lovely Sridevi in the lead. Playing a homemaker whose life revolves around her husband and kids, the one thing Shashi (Sridevi) yearns for is her family's respect. Inspired by her mother's life, Shinde has said that as a child, she was embarrassed of her mother's lack of English-knowledge and this film was her way of saying sorry to her. If you're a fan of the late actress - and we'll be surprised if you aren't - watch Sridevi's return to films after 15 years in this glorious tale of a woman's self-awakening. And don't be surprised if you have a sudden urge to hug your mother.



Piku (2015)

The depth of the father-daughter relationship has rarely been explored so beautifully in recent times than it was in Shoojit Sircar's film starring Deepika Padukone and Amitabh Bachchan as her hypochondriac father. The film also brought back memories of simple storytelling by legendary filmmakers like Hrithikesh Mukherjee and Basu Chatterjee. A relatable film on many levels, it's easy to connect to Deepika's character who often gets irritated with her father and his obsession with his bowel movements. But it is ultimately in *Piku's* understanding and mothering of her father, that you understand how there is an inevitable role-reversal that happens as your parents start aging.

Kapoor & Sons (2016)

Do perfect families exist? Not really, and here's where Shakun Batra's film scores. Parents fight in front of children, estranged siblings squabble, petty jealousies and insecurities creep out and brothers even resort to fist-fights. It's not a dysfunctional family - it's a real family that functions despite all these problems. Heart-breaking and heart-warming in equal measure, *Kapoor & Sons* is as real as it gets when it comes to family movies. Plus, has the late Rishi Kapoor ever looked cuter than he does here?




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