

BOLLYWOOD INSIDER

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LOCKDOWN IN BOLLYWOOD



BOLLYWOOD INSIDER TRIBUTES

Irrfan Khan & Rishi Kapoor



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Beating lockdown blues



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IRRFAN KHAN

Gone too soon; A hero of world cinema

Jaydip Sengupta

His name was Khan too, but he was not one among The Khans of Bollywood. No six-packs, no bulging biceps, no drop-dead good looks and yet, Irrfan Khan could stop you dead in your tracks with one smoldering look. Then there was his baritone voice, that deliberate pause before his dialogue delivery, the signature drawl and of course, the swagger that made him tower over the rest in an industry full of stars and mediocre star kids.

Irrfan was his own man, far removed from the star-trappings of his contemporaries in Bollywood. He went where even the most secure actors feared to tread and always emerged triumphant, be it in mainstream Bollywood or even Hollywood for that matter. Name the genre and Irrfan is sure to have at least dabbled in it. From Bollywood crossovers to mainstream Hollywood, Irrfan evoked the kind of love and respect usually reserved for industry royalty.



When news of his untimely death at the age of 53 broke on Wednesday, it sent the film fraternity and his legion of fans into the kind of mourning seldom seen before. No RIP statuses, which is usually the case when an actor passes away, for this was way more personal. Here was a supremely gifted actor who had his feet on the ground even as he touched the sky and that probably resonated most with his fans as they poured their hearts out.

Some remembered his films, others his dialogues, while many chose to remember the down-to-earth, opinionated and witty human being that Irrfan was. His phenomenal body of work in Bollywood, which included movies like *Maqbool*, *Paan Singh Tomar*, *Hindi Medium*, *The Lunchbox* and *Piku*, just to name a few, has placed him on a pedestal most actors can only dream of stepping on.

The Bollywood bigwigs, along with the country's leaders, joined in celebrating the life of this versatile genius. From Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Amitabh Bachchan, tributes poured in on social media.

"Irrfan Khan's demise is a loss to the world of cinema and theatre. He will be remembered for his versatile performances across different mediums. My thoughts are with his family, friends and admirers. May his soul rest in peace," PM Modi tweeted.

Bachchan wrote: "An incredible talent .. a gracious colleague .. a prolific contributor to the World of Cinema .. left us too soon .. creating a huge vacuum .. Prayers and duas"

Irrfan's *Billu* co-star Shah Rukh Khan tweeted: "My friend...inspiration & the greatest actor of our times. Allah bless your soul Irrfan bhai...will miss you as much as cherish the fact that you were part of our lives. Love u." he posted on Twitter.

Elizabeth director Shekhar Kapur called Irrfan India's "most successful export to Hollywood." He added that he was "an actor that every director wanted to work with. A human being that gave his best in every role...A man loved by all. Sad to see #IrrfanKhan leave us, after what we thought was successful fight against cancer. God bless you Irrfan."

A.R. Rahman, who scored for the Irrfan-starrer *Slumdog Millionaire*, tweeted: "One of the greatest ambassadors of Indian cinema has left us. Gone too soon..#RamadanDay5 #memories #oscar2009"

Priyanka Chopra, who starred with Irrfan in the 2011 black comedy *7 Khoon Maaf* by director Vishal Bhardwaj, paid tribute, tweeting: "The charisma you brought to everything you did was pure magic. Your talent forged the way for so many in so many avenues. You inspired so many of us. #IrrfanKhan you will truly be missed. Condolences to the family."

Mainstream Hollywood too joined the bandwagon to celebrate an icon that captivated audiences in acclaimed hits like multiple-Oscar winner *Life of Pi*, *The Amazing Spiderman* and *Jurassic World* among others. Directors Colin Trevorrow and Ava Duvernay and actors Kal Penn and Riz Ahmed paid glowing tributes to Irrfan.

Penn who played Irrfan's son in Mira Nair's *The Namesake*, penned: "Irrfan's art and humanity will be badly missed. Never seen someone use the beats of silence so beautifully to convey so much about who we are."

Trevorrow, who worked with Irrfan in *Jurassic World*, tweeted: "Deeply sad to have lost #IrrfanKhan. A thoughtful man who found beauty in the world around him, even in pain. In our last correspondence, he asked me to remember 'the wonderful aspects of our existence' in the darkest of days."

DuVernay, of *Middle of Nowhere* and *Selma* fame, wrote about watching the actor on screen and appreciating his work as a fan. "A grateful fan of #IrrfanKhan here. Gone too soon. When he is on screen, you can't take your eyes off of him. He lives on in his films."

Riz Ahmed, who rose to fame with Blockbusters like *Jason Bourne*, *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* and most recently *Venom*, paid the ultimate tribute. "Rest in peace one of the greatest actors of our time, Irrfan Khan. I never met him but he was an inspiration and a hero to me and millions of others. His work was consistently transcendent, he was a guiding light for so many of us."



RISHI KAPOOR

The brightest Star of Bollywood

“He’s GONE! I am destroyed!” Amitabh Bachchan



He went on to play the romantic lead in 92 films between 1973 and 2000 and was conferred the Filmfare Lifetime Achievement Award in 2008. He was part of hit films like *Amar Akbar Anthony*, *Laila Majnu*, *Rafoo Chakkar*, *Sargam*, *Karz*, *Khel Khel Mein*, *Chandni*, *Bol Radha Bol* among others. In the later stages of his career, he lit up the screen with films like *Kapoor and Sons*, *Mulk* and *102 Not Out*.

The actor was last seen in Emraan Hashmi’s *The Body* and had recently announced his next project, a remake of Hollywood film *The Intern*, also featuring Deepika Padukone.

The Bollywood fraternity, already reeling under the lockdown and spending more time on social media, went into overdrive on Thursday.

Amitabh Bachchan, who has worked with Rishi Kapoor in *Kabhi Kabhie*, *Amar Akbar Anthony*, *Naseeb* and *102 Not Out*, shared the news of his close friend and colleague’s death on social media first. “He’s GONE..! Rishi Kapoor gone.. just passed away.. I am destroyed!” Big B tweeted.

Akshay Kumar also paid tribute to his *Namastey London* co-star and said, “It seems like we’re in the midst of a nightmare...just heard the depressing news of #RishiKapoor ji passing away, it’s heartbreaking. He was a legend, a great co-star and a good friend of the family. My thoughts and prayers with his family.”

Priyanka Chopra shared an endearing image with Rishi and his wife Neetu Kapoor, and tweeted, “My heart is so heavy. This is the end of an era. #rishisir your candid heart and immeasurable talent will never be encountered again. Such a privilege to have known you even a little bit. My condolences to Neetu maam, Ridhima, Ranbir and the rest of the family. Rest in peace Sir.”

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who had shared his heartfelt condolences on Wednesday after hearing the news of Irrfan’s death, again took to Twitter on Thursday. “Multifaceted, endearing and lively...this was Rishi Kapoor Ji. He was a powerhouse of talent. I will always recall our interactions, even on social media. He was passionate about films and India’s progress. Anguished by his demise. Condolences to his family and fans. Om Shanti.”

Rishi himself was prolific on Twitter, frequently commenting on controversial issues and often getting into heated exchanges with people on the social media platform. His last tweet was an appeal to people not to attack medical staff at the frontlines of the fight against the coronavirus saying, “we have to win this war together”. He is gone now, having fought a tremendous war on his own.

Bollywood Insider salutes Rishi Kapoor, the brightest star of Bollywood, paraphrasing what Shakespeare said in *Romeo and Juliet*: “In his passage to the paradise, take him away and make him out into stars and he shall make the face of heaven so beautiful that all his fans around the world will be in love with the night.”

May he rest in peace!!!

Jaydip Sengupta

It seems doomsday is truly upon us, what with a pandemic sweeping across the earth, countries counting the dead in thousands and meteorites skimming past dangerously close. Well, in case you thought things couldn’t possibly get any worse, someone up there decided this was the right time to hit us even harder.

Even as the world of cinema was coming to terms with the untimely demise of legendary actor Irrfan Khan on Wednesday, the news that Rishi Kapoor, Bollywood’s original Chocolate Boy of the 70s and 80s, had followed his *D-Day* co-star to eternity and beyond, sent aftershocks around the film industry on Thursday.

It is gut-wrenching to say the least, having to deal with back-to-back blows like this. True, the 67-year-old Rishi was fighting the dreaded disease that had taken away Irrfan a day before, but the abruptness of his departure really caught everyone off-guard. *Chintu*, as he was fondly known, had recently returned from the US after more than a year’s treatment, seemingly better off, when all of a sudden this happened, leaving fans in frenzy and wishing 2020 never happened.

Rishi, unlike Irrfan, was true-blue Bollywood royalty, born in the first family of Hindi cinema, second son of showman Raj Kapoor. He started young, as befitted the eventual heir to the throne, when he starred in *Mera Naam Joker* in 1970 and scooped a National Film award for his role as a child artist. His first role as an adult came in the iconic *Bobby* in 1974 opposite Dimple Kapadia, one that won him a Filmfare award.

Beating Lockdown Blues With Books

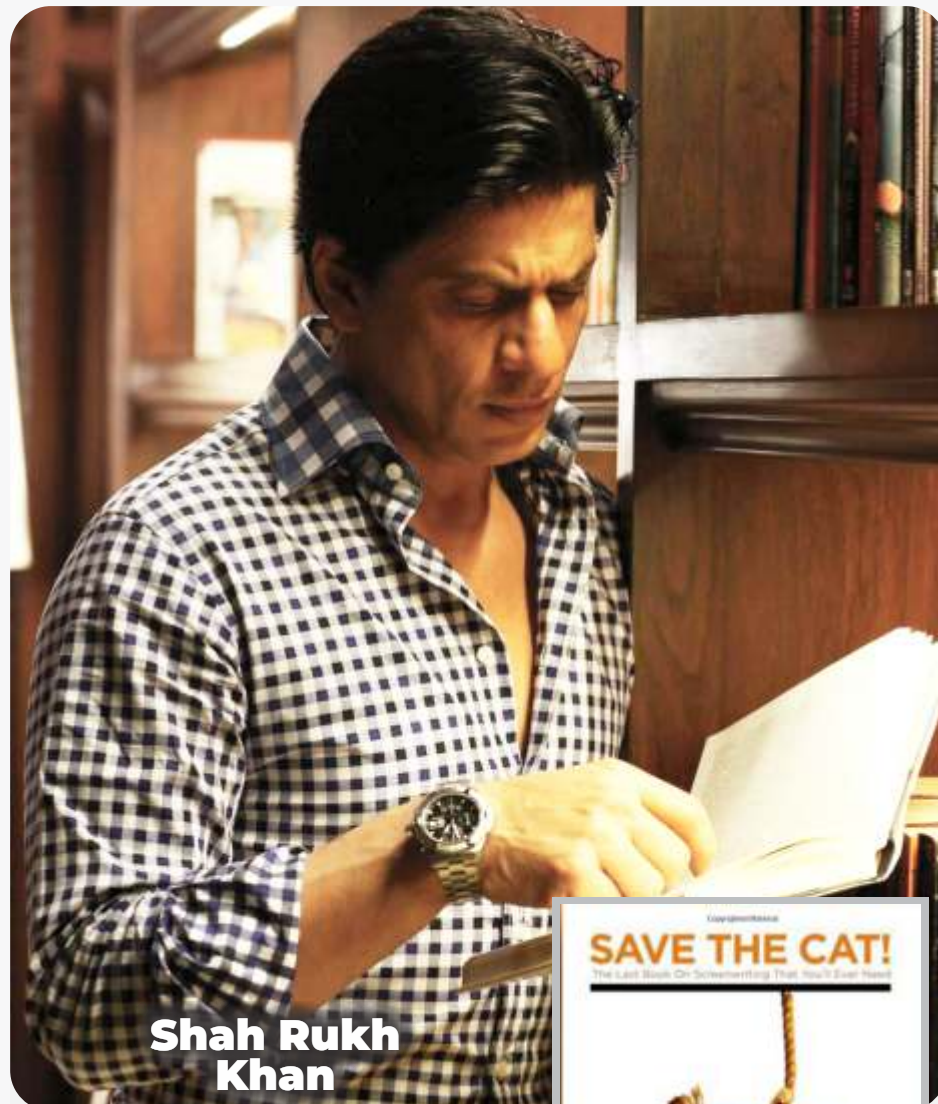
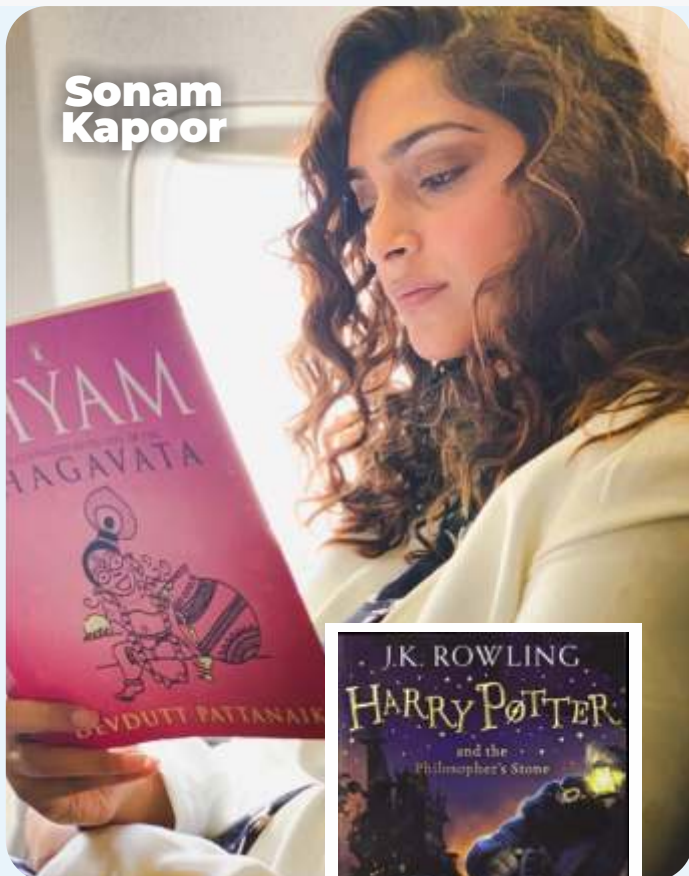
Shubarna Mukerji Shu

We have seen them enact a million emotions on-screen, have memorized their dialogues, studied their nuances and have stalked them on social media to get a peek into their life beyond cinema. Yet, there are facets of our beloved Bollywood stars that are unknown to many. Have you ever imagined what your favorite bollywood hottie looks like with his

nose buried in a book? Have you ever stopped to think if your favorite author matches with the favorite of your beloved star? At Bollywood Insider, we decided to raid the bookshelves of the industry's best to find out which books have shaped them, which ones they recommend and more. Any questions you may have had, you will find the answers right here, so read on...

"If you see the size of the glasses I sport, you will know that I love to read. My childhood was spent reading J K Rowling books. They say kids who read Harry Potter end up having a stronger moral compass, so now you know where I get it. Jokes apart, I have loved the series so dearly that I've lost count of the number of times I've waved an imaginary wand in the air and shouted 'Expecto Patronum!' and felt every bit the witch or the wizard that Harry, Ron & Hermione were! I am re-reading the series and I totally recommend it to everyone else"

Sonam Kapoor



Shah Rukh Khan

The Badshah of romance is much more than just his signature-style raised arms and sexy dimple. Not many know that he is one of the most well-read actors of Bollywood. He not only recommends reading to his children, but insists that books are like teachers, friends, confidantes all wrapped in a neat package, "I read anything and everything. But I need variety too, so at any given time you will find me with at least three or four books surrounding me. I never can make up my mind about what I would like to read today, so I keep options handy. I go to book-stores when I'm shooting abroad, that's actually my Disneyland. I get a coffee and keep browsing for hours—something I can't do in India. I come back home with a bagful of books. I'm always stopped at customs as they think I'm carrying some heavy electronic items. If there was a book I had to recommend, I won't be able to because there are just so many and each will tell you something new, always. Like this one that I am reading - Malcom Gladwell's *Blink*. It is a business book which really talks to you and tells you about the psychology of a businessman, at least one that he should adopt. When you are into business and it is competitive, the book says the man who blinks first is the first one to go down. It is a very aggressive thing to say, but it makes for a very interesting read.

As for aspiring scriptwriters, there is a book series called *Save The Cat*, by Blake Snyder. I highly recommend this one; it is like a bible for script and screenplay writing. Blake has actually written a series of books, the one I liked the most is *Save The Cat! Goes To The Movies*. Do give it a read.

The Little Prince by Antoine de Saint-Exupery, I don't know what it is about that book that pulled me. I mean of course, it is a classic, but today it is a book that I go to whenever I am a little confused in life. There are so many quotes in there which really give you a perspective. To say it is a children's book is actually not really fair. It is something the adults need to read more...

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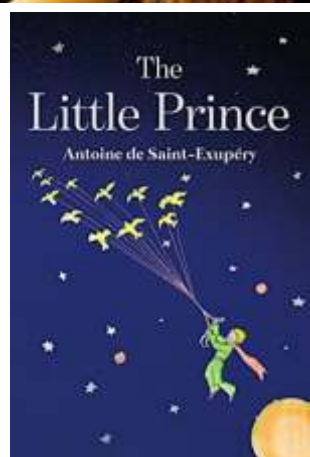
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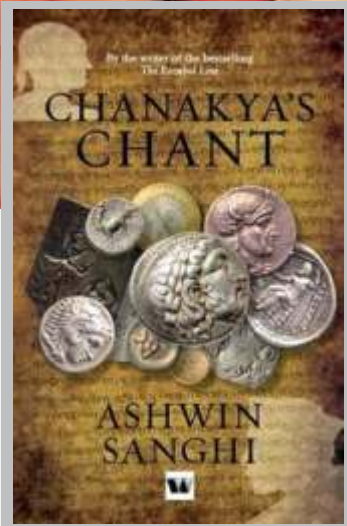
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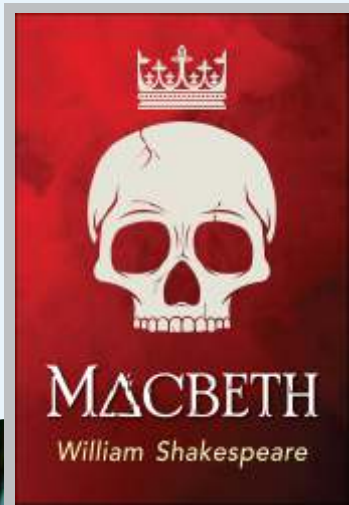


Kajol



You remember that iconic *Dilwale Duhania Le Jayenge* look of Kajol's? The reading glasses perched on her nose, looking into a book trying her best to ignore Shah Rukh Khan! Well, that is not very far from who Kajol really is. "I became a bookworm thanks to my mother and I am so glad that my kids too love to read. It is such a wonderful habit. You never lack a companion. It has always been my habit to have my nose buried in a book. I think it is the safest, and the most fun place to be, especially on outdoors. I started working very young; I really couldn't be interested in anything between cut and action – that was time I spent with my books. I have a very eclectic taste when it comes to books, like I really loved reading *Chanakya's Chant*. I recommend that book to everyone. I think *The Fountainhead* by Ayn Rand is exceptional. But you will also find me reading a Jane Austen from time to time. I love books about falling in love with someone who isn't perfect. My daughter recommended the Twilight series to me and I got glued. I love vampires and werewolves. As I said, I have an odd taste in reading, so anything and everything goes. I really, really love *Amar Chitra Katha*. All kids should read it. For children I also recommend *Peter Pan*, though I must confess that I loved Captain Hook's character in it."

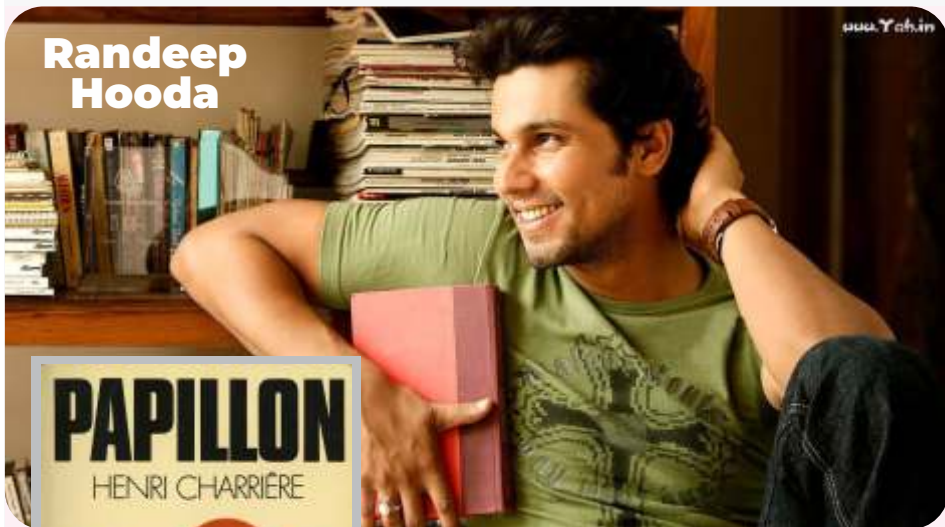
I love reading books on history or the world war. I was always into reading 'cause I grew up in a crumbling old palace in Bhopal. And then books there always were the books lying around — my father's books. In his later years he mostly was into the easy reads like John LeCarre, Robert Ludlum — *The Bourne Identity* kind of novels. So, I always enjoyed reading, but it is really ironic when my teachers wanted me to read the classics, I almost ran to the other end of the spectrum. But these are the same books that I pick up and read today. I have to tell you this, making college kids read Shakespeare is madness. They don't have the understanding or the depth it needs to really dig it. If you want kids to read, give them something that will appeal to their age. I can tell you this by experience. I have a love for classics, but I have had to grow up for them. If I had to recommend something, I would say *MacBeth*, it has so much to it. There is love, betrayal, loads of drama. Strongly recommend it."



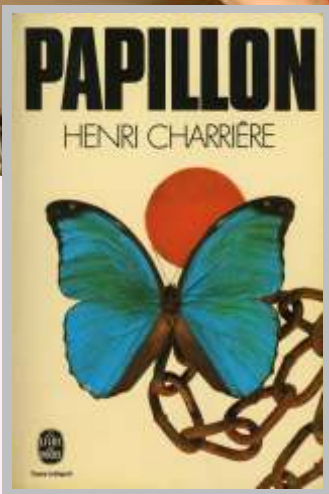
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Saif Ali Khan



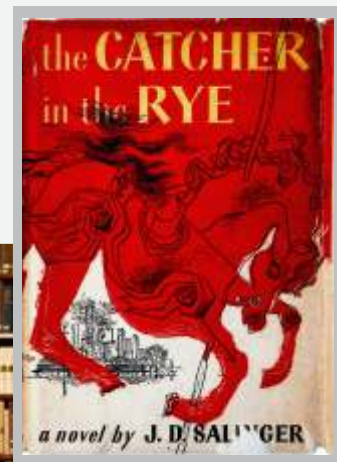
Randeep Hooda



The actor's versatility is known to all, but did you know that Randeep Hooda believes it is his reading that makes him the actor he is. "I read every day. I read myself to sleep. I don't know how and when I cultivated this habit of reading each day, but it one thing I am most addicted to. One thing that this habit has given me is vast imagination. It has given me the ability to sit in my house and know what it feels like to be in walking on the cobbled streets in old London. It is this imagination, that has helped me in my work. I have many books that I run to from time to time, but my all-time favorite one is *Papillon* by Henri Charriere. It's a very old book about a prison escape. Then I like *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho and there are a number of others, but it is not coming to me right now. While you sit at home and get weary of the quarantine, I suggest you pick one of these two."

this imagination, that has helped me in my work. I have many books that I run to from time to time, but my all-time favorite one is *Papillon* by Henri Charriere. It's a very old book about a prison escape. Then I like *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho and there are a number of others, but it is not coming to me right now. While you sit at home and get weary of the quarantine, I suggest you pick one of these two."

My pick for the quarantine would be *The Catcher in the Rye*. It is a definitive tale of hope, it's death and new life. It pretends to be an adolescent fable, but is a novel for all ages. The book taught me that the only thing that comes between us and love is fear — fear of rejection. But after reading the book, I shot through my fear and learnt to love. If you haven't read this one, I highly recommend it! It changed my life, and believe me, it talks to everyone who reads it.



Rahul Bose

MANOJ BAJPAYEE

Padma Shri & National Award winner still a struggling actor?

Shubarna Mukerji Shu

Everyone is waiting eagerly for the second season of *The Family Man*. The web series has garnered so much appreciation that it is safe to say Manoj Bajpayee on OTT platform is a success like no one else. With an 8.6 rating, *The Family Man* is one of the best Indian originals. What's more, the actor recently received the prestigious Padma Shri award from the President of India in recognition of his work in the Hindi film industry since his debut in 1998 with *Satya*. But the actor believes nothing ever came easy for him and he is still a struggling actor. With two National Awards also in his kitty, why is it that Manoj Bajpayee doesn't feel like he has got his due?

He wanted to get into the National School of Drama, but was rejected thrice. "I got suicidal; it is not easy for a farmer's son to accept that he got so far and then failed to make it. But getting into Barry John's acting institute helped; teaching there helped too, so much so that I tried my hands at NSD for the fourth time!" He never did make it as an NSD student, but they hired him as a teacher there. Since then, life has been full of highs and lows, but in a profession he completely adores. "I always wanted to be an actor. I have never known anything else," he tells Shubarna Mukerji Shu...

- **When a farmer's son from Belwa becomes Shrikant Tiwari (the protagonist from *The Family Man*), you know you have a success story. But to begin with, let's talk about your foray into the world of web series and the grand success you have made out of it.**

It is a fantastic feeling for the entire cast and crew of *The Family Man*. I don't think there has been a show that was been appreciated by all so unanimously. Be it the critics, the audience, the ratings – everything favored it, which is a great feeling.

- **The last time we spoke, a little before *The Family Man*, you told me you were a little apprehensive about the OTT platform.**

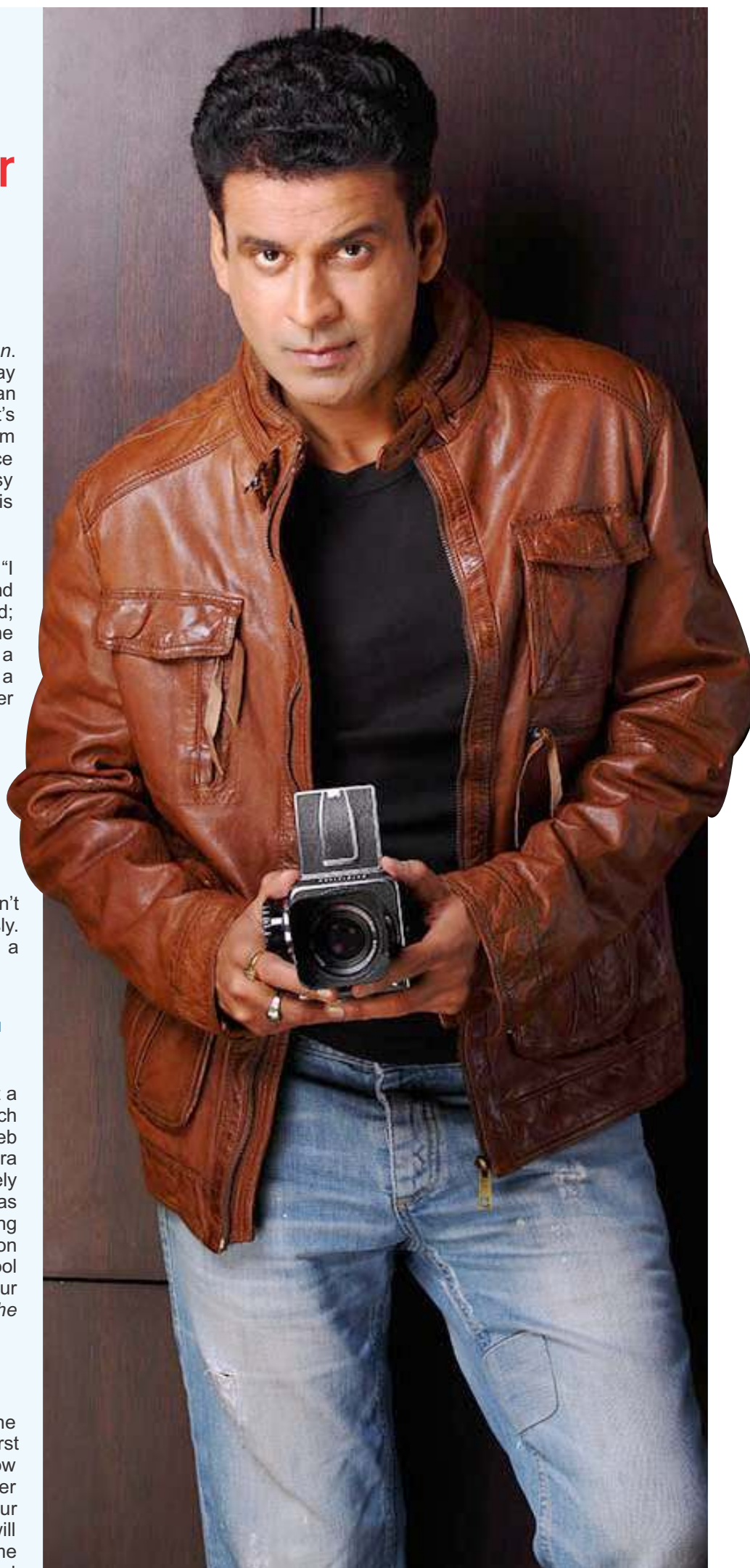
I am like most other people who like to catch a series or two before calling it a day. There are some that are absolutely engrossing and there are some which are not that great. There was a time I was noticing a pattern in the Indian web series. It felt like the makers were simply adding 'colorful language', extra violence, extra oomph etc... it was not required, but they were completely abusing the medium. I didn't want to be a part of something like that. So, I was thrilled when I got *The Family Man*, because it was so different from everything else. To begin with, it was about a regular guy. He could be anyone you see on the local train. He has the same issues, with his wife, with his kid's school admission, EMI etc... he is so relatable that a story about him becomes your own story. And if I may say so myself, I was right in giving consent to *The Family Man* because it has become a crossover of a kind for its medium.

- **Are you anxious about the second season of *The Family Man*?**

The thrill of the first season was great, but I will be foolish to take it over to the second season. The filmmakers and the cast are very clear about this, the first season is over and done with. Yes, we have celebrated its success, but now we are geared up for season two. Here Shrikant Tiwari will have newer, bigger challenges. His circumstances will be new, his challenges will be grueling. Our focus is getting that right. If we live on the success of the first season, we will never see the success of season 2. And that will be a big loss, because let me tell you - *The Family Man Season 2* is going to be much, much bigger and better than the first season.

- **As you rightly stated earlier, that web series, in India especially, was getting abused. That seems to have changed. So, what according to you does this new medium bring in for the actors?**

To sum up in one word, what this medium of web series means to an actor, I will go with the word 'opportunity'. Web series have opened up a world of opportunity for so many talented actors who were not getting jobs. There are many actors who have had the potential, but no breakthroughs. Web series have turned lives around for such actors. Frankly, I don't think the commercial



“ The lockdown is nothing but a loud and clear message from nature to us all. What we are going through today is a lesson for all of us. Nature is taking control; God is taking control. It is all in His hands. ”

cinema circuit was wrong in rejecting these actors. To be truthful, I don't think commercial cinema can stomach the kind of talent and potential these actors come with. Bollywood as you call it, doesn't have the content to contain such dynamic performers. So, Bollywood would never do justice to them. Web series on the other hand is an open field. If you have talent, you can showcase your work here. Work that speaks of quality and gives you respect of a performer too.

- **The OTT platform is a lifesaver even for its audience today. Given the circumstances we are all in, what do you make out of this lockdown life?**

The lockdown is nothing but a loud and clear message from nature to us all. What we are going through today is a lesson for all of us. Nature is taking control; God is taking control. It is all in His hands. If you still don't get the message - God help you. I think, the only thing we people can do is focus on our craft. Just keep doing what we have to do. If you have a job, well and good. If you were hoping for a job - keep honing your skills. If you have nothing, just keep practicing your craft and let this period go. There is nothing the rich, the successful or the even the poor can do in this situation. So, please quit being restless! Concentrate your energy on what you need to keep doing, concentrate on your craft and your calling. Leave the rest to God.

- **For someone whose work has always been appreciated by people of all ages, what would you say has been one of your biggest challenges as an actor?**

Throughout my career, I have only met with the challenges, doubt, obstructions, criticism... all of it changed into appreciation once in a while, but it has been quite a roller coaster ride for me. It has been quite a journey. The learning has been humbling to the core. I think some people find me a little too straightforward. I don't try to beat around the bush; I cannot tell things to please people

For me, one of my biggest challenges was to do what I believed in. You cannot imagine the kind of opposition I have had to face. Not just making the film, getting a distributor, getting publicity and finally getting the film released. I say it very openly, people laugh at it, but the fact is that I have been known for all my flops. These are films I have believed in. But these films didn't get the right kind of distribution. For example; *1971*. The film is garnering huge response from the audience, but no one knew when it came out. So, I stick to what I believe in. I give my best and I know, eventually it will reap the fruits.

- **As an actor, you give your all to all your films; yet there might be some that are closer to your heart than the others. Irrespective of the box office numbers it raked in - can you think of some of those films which you would like to recommend for our readers to see?**

Don't judge a film by the box office, whether it is mine or others. I always go by how that film made me feel, how it was making that film (if I featured in it). For me as an actor, the most important thing was to take my work/ my film to the audience; I want as many people as possible to watch my work. That is the single most important thing for me. And let them decide the fate of my film for themselves. If they like it, great. If they don't, let that be their own opinion. I appreciate every feedback I get. If someone criticizes my work, I listen to them very carefully.

For that reason, I would have wanted your readers to go watch *Budhia Singh – Born To Run*. That is one of my best performances and one of the best films of my career. It was sheer bad luck for *Budhia Singh* that it got released in the same year as *Aligarh*. Having such a strong content about the homosexually oriented professor's life, *Aligarh* acquired a lot of sympathy and empathy. Later that year *Budhia Singh* released, but people were still not over *Aligarh* and its performance, even though some critics ranked *Budhia Singh* as my best. I would really urge people to go on Netflix and watch that film.

- **My next question was all about which film do you consider your personal best, but I guess you already answered that...**

No, I didn't. *Budhia Singh* is available on OTT platform, hence I suggested that. Actually, *Gali Guleiyan* is my best performance till date. Also, *Bhonsle*, the film for which I got the second Asia Pacific award. The producers are looking to release these films on OTT platforms, but till that happens, do watch *Budhia Singh*.



BOLLYWOOD STARS PUT THEIR MONEY WHERE THEIR MOUTH IS

By Jaydip Sengupta



Charity begins at home and for Bollywood celebs stuck indoors during the current lockdown period, it couldn't have been closer to the truth. With shootings as well as movie releases on hold, social media seems the only avenue open for stars to stay relevant during this period and needless to say, they are making full use of it from the comforts of their palatial homes.

That said, these multi-millionaires, while trying to project on social media how like us mere mortals, they too are busy doing mundane chores at home; probably busier with image-building exercises including charity.

With masses unable to watch their favorite stars on screen, the focus, understandably, has shifted to what these uber-wealthy stars are doing with regard to helping out during this global crisis.

As the pandemic unraveled quite spectacularly on the world population and as governments worldwide struggled to contain the viral spread, Bollywood stars made sure their charitable acts went viral as well. From just promises to delivering on them, we got to see both ends of the spectrum as the celebrities opened their hearts and purse strings to donate towards fighting Covid-19.

A recent survey to calculate Celebrity Heartfulness Index (CHI), threw up some interesting figures in this regard.

With a donation of a whopping Rs 25 crore to PM CARES fund, Bollywood Khiladi Akshay Kumar stayed way ahead of the game, according to the study by the Indian Institute of Human Brands (IIHB). The Indian actor with a Canadian passport, who has often been at the receiving end for doing films and ads that make him look like a Government mouthpiece, showed that his heart is in the right place. His CHI score, a perfect 10.0.

T-Series owner Bhushan Kumar donated Rs 11 crore to the PM CARES fund and another 1 crore to the Maharashtra Government, making him the second-most generous donor. With 1 crore each, Kartik Aaryan and designer Sabyasachi garnered 8.0 points. Aaryan, besides the donation, also put up a public service video to share his concerns. Prabhas and Vicky

Kaushal occupied fourth spot while southern stars Pawan Kalyan, Chiranjeevi, Allu Arjun and Mahesh Babu all featured high on the ranking list.

Also, in the top half was Varun Dhawan, who pledged to donate Rs 30 lakh to PM CARES and Rs 25 lakh to the Maharashtra Government along with Shilpa Shetty and husband Raj Kundra who pledged Rs 21 lakh to PM CARES.

You may well have noticed that till now, none of the Khans have featured on this list. Even comedian Kapil Sharma's name was in the top half, but while Shah Rukh got just 4.0, for lack of clarity on the amount he has donated despite supporting multiple charities and relief funds, Aamir did not even open his account. Ditto for Salman, who has promised to support 25,000 daily workers in the film industry, but has not mentioned any tangible amount.

Twitter-happy Amitabh Bachchan received a score of 2.0, for not having donated anything in an individual capacity. None of his illustrious family members have walked the talk either. Today's stars like Alia Bhatt, Sara Ali Khan, Kriti Sanon, Kiara Advani, Rakul Preet, Taapsee Pannu and Bhumi Pednekar propped up the bottom with a score of 1.0 for merely tweeting their support.

And yet, the film industry superstars fared much better than their sporting counterparts, who despite their millions, were rather reluctant to open their purse strings. Anushka Sharma and cricketer-hubby Virat Kohli got low scores because their announcements did not mention any amounts.

It is probably well they didn't for when M.S. Dhoni announced he would give Rs 1 lakh from his estimated wealth of Rs 786.53 crores, the troll army came out in full force. Just for the record, Dhoni's contribution amounted to 0.00127% of his fortune. Badminton world champion P.V. Sindhu pledged Rs 10 lakh, which, although way better than Dhoni's pittance, ranked her near zero.

Just goes to show that maybe some of these stars are better off putting their money where their mouth is.



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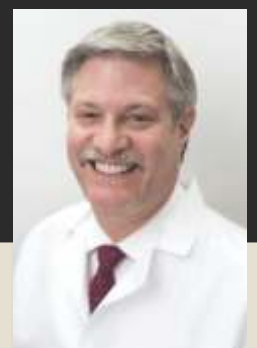
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Bollywood Bleeds in COVID Crisis

FILM PRODUCERS COUNT LOSSES AMID PANDEMIC

By Dhaval Roy



BAAGHI 3

The action flick starring Tiger Shroff hit the theaters on March 6. The third part of the super-hit franchise was projected to join the 200-crore club and enter the 100-crore club in week one itself. The pandemic hit the movie right in the first week of its release as footfalls in cinema halls had already decreased immensely. A slow decline in the following week was worsened by the Government's directive to temporarily bring down the curtains on the screens. By this time, the movie had made INR 92 crore. It is rumored that director Ahmed Khan and producer Sajid Nadiadwala plan to re-release the flick once the pandemic ends. That's something fans of the series and Tiger can look forward to!

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought the wheels of Bollywood, the world's second largest film industry, to a grinding halt. Mid-March, cinema halls in India were ordered to close down to prevent the spread of the virus, and with the nationwide lockdown announced on March 24, all on-going film shoots came to a standstill as well. As trade analysts and industry experts estimate a financial loss to the tune of INR 250 crores because of the lockdown, worst affected have been films that either released a few days before the shutdown, or were ready for an early summer release. There have also been some that quickly released on OTT platforms. Here's a list of projects that have been affected.



ANGREZI MEDIUM

Another sequel that hit a roadblock in March was *Angrezi Medium*. The film made headlines as Irrfan returned to the silver screen after he was diagnosed with and treated for an endocrine tumor in 2018. Also starring Kareena Kapoor, the film collected a mere INR 6.75 crore before cinema halls started to shut down. Initially planned for a re-release, the film was ultimately digitally released on Hotstar. Since then, the project and its actors have received rave reviews for their performance, especially Irrfan and Deepak Dobriyal.



SANDEEP AUR PINKY FARAAR

The makers of *Sandeep Aur Pinky Faraar* postponed their film, which was supposed to release on March 20. Dibakar Banerjee's black comedy starring Parineeti Chopra and Arjun Kapoor is all set to release whenever cinema goes back to business as usual. The movie is about a police officer from Haryana and a corporate woman and shows how hate, suspicion and mistrust for each other unites them.



SOORYAVANSHI

Rohit Shetty's cop universe flick *Sooryavanshi*, starring Akshay Kumar, was one of the most-awaited films of the year. Slated to be an Eid release on March 24, the film was already expected to make a box-office bonanza. The movie, which has cameos by Ajay Devgn and Ranveer Singh reprising their roles of *Singham* and *Simmba* respectively, is likely to release soon as the lockdown is lifted.



'83

Another eagerly-awaited on-screen saga is Ranveer Singh-starrer '83. The sports drama about India's legendary cricket captain Kapil Dev clinching the country's first World Cup in 1983 had set April 10 as its release date. The lead actor's look as Kapil, his recreation of the cricketer's famed Natraj pose, the real-life incidents during the World Cup tour and seeing the power couple Ranveer and Deepika Padukone on screen after *Padmavat*, have kept the film in headlines even before shooting commenced. Directed by Kabir Khan, the movie also stars Tahir Bhasin, Jiiva and Hardy Sandhu in pivotal roles.



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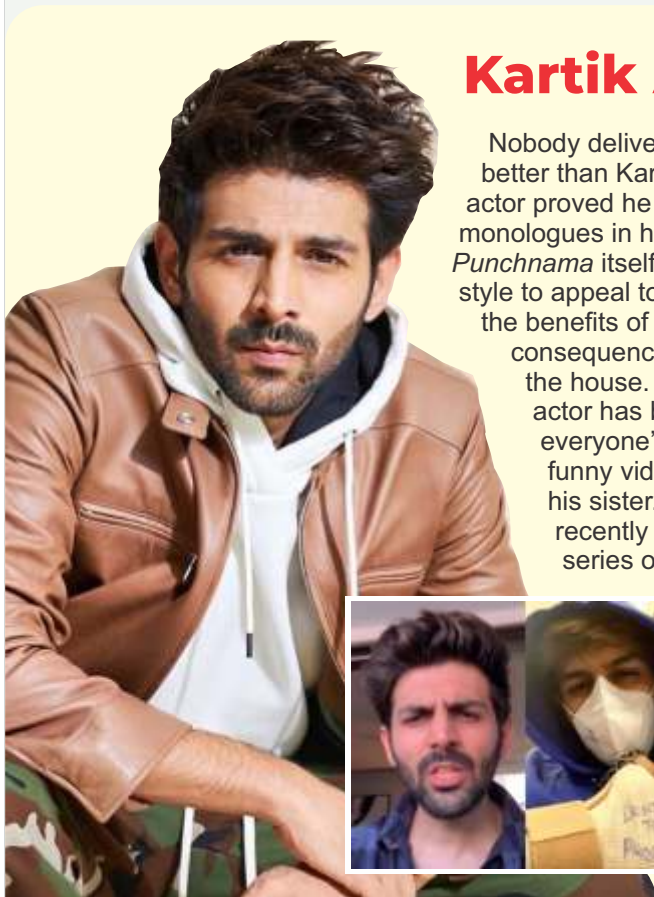


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Bollywood actors inspire and entertain amidst COVID-19 crisis

Deepali Singh

Anyone can donate money for charity, but how many can truly inspire and motivate others to bring a positive change? Our Bollywood artistes know that, and in the wake of the Coronavirus pandemic, many of them have come up with creative and entertaining ways to reach out to their fans, sharing the dos and don'ts during the pandemic, and at the same time doing what they are best at – entertaining! Here's a look at how some of our favourite actors are not letting the lockdown clamp down on their creativity and social responsibility...



Kartik Aaryan

Nobody delivers a monologue better than Kartik Aaryan! The young actor proved he was the master of monologues in his first film *Pyar Ka PUNCHNAMA* itself. He used this very style to appeal to the masses about the benefits of self-isolation and the consequences of stepping out of the house. Not only that, the actor has been trying to lighten everyone's mood by posting funny videos he makes with his sister. Kartik has also recently started posting a series of videos titled 'Koki

Poochega' in which he is seen interviewing everyday heroes like doctors and policemen who are in the frontline of fighting COVID-19.

Shah Rukh Khan

SRK is known as the Badshah of Bollywood not only for his super stardom, but also for his witty repartees and unusual take on life, success and stardom. The actor posted an informative video on his social media account about the dos and don'ts of dealing with Coronavirus. But being SRK, he did it in his own style! Taking scenes from his own films like *Raju Ban Gaya Gentleman*, *Chennai Express* and *Kal Ho Naa Ho* among others, he has made a fun-filled and informational video about Coronavirus outbreak and the precautionary measures to be taken during self-quarantine, and the kind of mask not be used – the one he wore in the *Baazigar* title song!



Vidyut Jammwal

Having trained in the Indian martial art form *Kalaripayattu* since the age of three, Vidyut Jammwal sure knows a bit about fitness. The action hero, who has often shown off his skills on-screen, has now taken to teaching them off-screen as well, posting live training sessions on Facebook, where he has been teaching people simple exercises to de-stress and develop immunity, and strengthen mind and body in these stressful times.



Ayushmann Khurrana

Anyone who follows Ayushmann Khurrana on social media knows that the actor has quite a few talents up his sleeve, including writing poetry and couplets. It's nearly impossible for an artiste to not be affected by the current crisis in the world today and the same goes for the

Article 15 actor. He penned down his thoughts in the form of an emotional poem and recited it on social media, thanking all the frontline warriors like medical staff and policemen who have been leading the charge against the pandemic.

No wonder, the video went viral in no time.





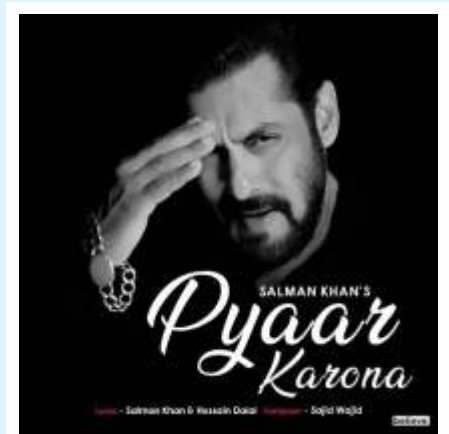
Bollywood and Tollywood Collaborate

The heavyweights of Bollywood including Amitabh Bachchan, Ranbir Kapoor, Priyanka Chopra Jonas, Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor and the biggies from the South film industry including Rajinikanth, Mammooty, Mohanlal, Chiranjeevi and many others put together a short film called *Family* to educate people on the importance of staying indoors during the lockdown. The best part about the video? There is no preaching, only a quirky story that all the actors have shot inside their own homes, although with the magic of editing, it seems they are all at one place. And finally, what better to motivate people than to hear the Shahenshah of Bollywood say in his deep, comforting baritone at the end of the video – “This too shall pass”.



Salman Khan

In recent years, we have discovered different facets of Salman Khan. The superstar is also an aspiring singer and has lent his voice to a couple of songs in movies. Whatever he does, he does it straight from the heart. And this time, it is the pandemic that has disturbed him to the extent that SK has written, composed and sung a song called *Pyaar Karona*. While the song urges people to stay at home and take care of their loved ones, it also brings forth the point that the virus does not discriminate on the basis of social status, religion, caste or creed. It's also the first independent single by the actor to release on his newly-launched channel on YouTube.



Katrina Kaif

With no house-help, Katrina Kaif has taken to doing all the *ghar ka kaam*. To see the gorgeous actress sans any make-up, washing utensils and sweeping floors of her home is inspiring for sure! Even more motivational are her fitness videos of exercises one can do at home. Kat is keeping busy for sure and hoping everyone takes a leaf out of her book!



Akshay Kumar

The young brigade of Bollywood, including Kartik Aaryan, Tiger Shroff, Vicky Kaushal, Sidharth Malhotra, Kriti Sanon, Ayushmann Khurrana, Bhumi Pednekar, Rajkumar Rao, Ananya Pandey, Kiara Advani and Taapsee Pannu, lent their presence to a motivational song called *Muskurayega India*. Led by superstar Akshay Kumar, the song has been composed and sung by Vishal Mishra and has been shared by all the participating actors on their social media accounts. And the icing on the cake, it has been shared by the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi himself!




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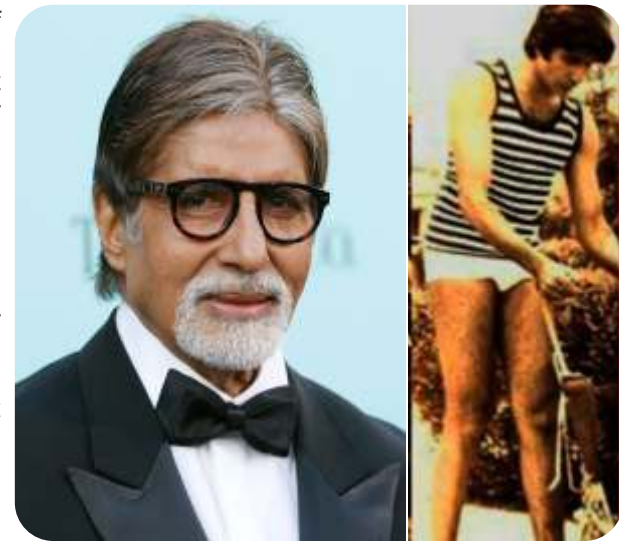
Stars Come Together for Covid-19 relief concert

Karan Johar and Zoya Akhtar have been planning a COVID-19 relief concert along with the help of Bollywood and International celebrities. The motto is to raise funds for Give India Foundation, support families displaced due to the lockdown and also to thank the frontline workers amidst the outbreak. SRK, Aamir Khan, Priyanka Chopra, Anushka Sharma and many other stars will be a part of the concert which will have a four minute video of them entertaining the audience with some creative skills.



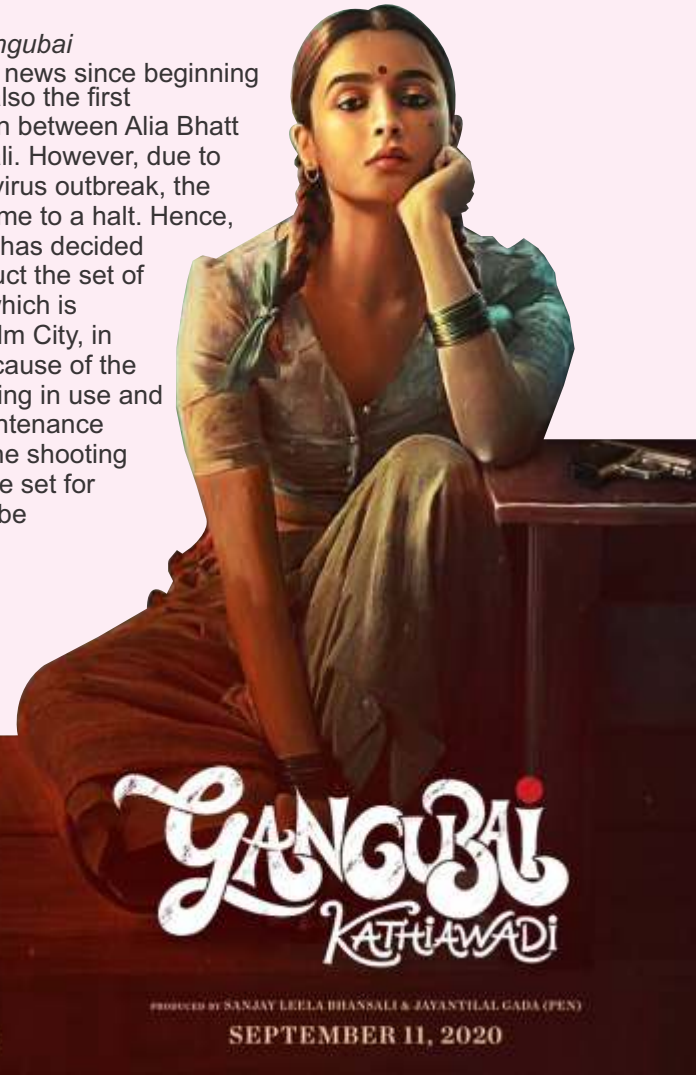
Big B shares his picture in a Bikini

Big B, on being told that the reason of not gaining enough popularity on Instagram is because he cannot post a picture of himself in a bikini. The actor took the challenge and posted version of a bikini pic on Instagram. Sharing the picture with a humorous pinch, the actor took to Instagram and wrote, "Somebody was explaining to me why I was not getting the big numbers on Insta, unlike all other youngGEN..." He said, "because you can't put up a pic in a bikini!!!".. And suddenly this one popped up.. not quite a bikini, it's more bhara hua kini.. from my film *Mahaan*..triple role.. and today 37th year of its release!!"

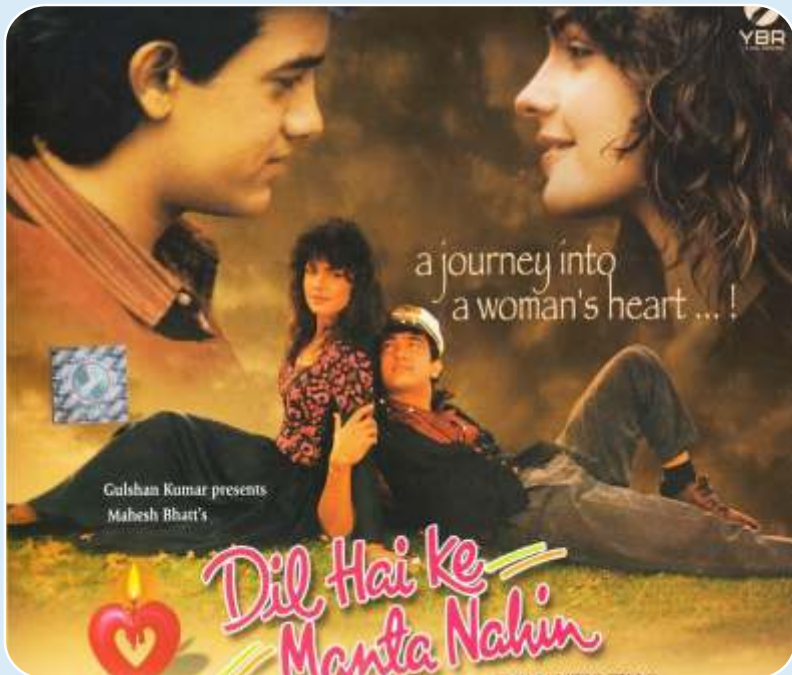


Alia Bhatt's *Gangubai Kathiawadi* set to get dismantled?

Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Gangubai Kathiawadi* was much in the news since beginning and it was also the first collaboration between Alia Bhatt and Bhansali. However, due to the Coronavirus outbreak, the shooting came to a halt. Hence, the director has decided to deconstruct the set of the movie which is placed at Film City, in Mumbai because of the set not coming in use and its high maintenance fee. Once the shooting resumes, the set for the film will be recreated.

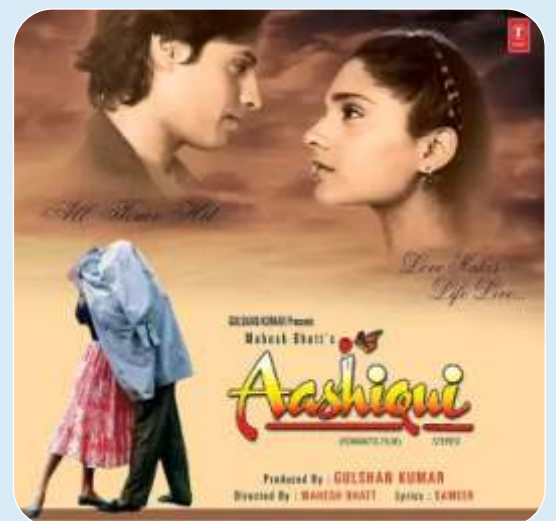


Sequels for *Dil Hai Ki Manta Nahin* and *Aashiqui*?



The much loved romantic films of the 90s era, *Dil Hai ki Manta Nahin* (1991), starring Aamir Khan and Pooja Bhatt, and *Aashiqui* (1990) starring Rahul Roy and Anu Aggarwal, might have their franchise soon once the situation gets back to normal.

T-SERIES head honcho Bhushan Kumar wants to take forward his father's legacy by recreating these iconic pictures and feel the nostalgic waves once again.



Priyanka Chopra misses India

Priyanka Chopra is spending her quarantine days with husband Nick Jonas in Los Angeles, USA. Wanting to feel happy in these difficult times, she wore a beautiful blue and a white saree, cheering up her fans and herself cheer up.

She said, "Felt like wearing a saree. So I did...At home. Miss everyone. @nickjonas"

PC keeps on encouraging people to stay at homes and stay positive during this quarantine. Previously she said, "There is always a light at the end of the tunnel... Hang in there world..." while another time she wrote, "There are so many other things to stock up on right now. Please look out for each other and the people who are most at risk for #Covid19."



Manoj Bajpayee's *The Family Man 2* set for October release

After witnessing the tremendous success of Manoj Bajpayee starrer *The Family Man*, the audience is eagerly waiting for its second season. Going by latest reports, it seems that the wait has come to an end as actress Priyamani, who played a pivotal role in the first season, revealed that the series might be shown in October this year. Raj Nidimoru and Krishna DK, who are the creators of this series, said that the official announcement will be made soon.

Pretty excited to watch the second season! Are you?



Kajol debuts on OTT with *Tribhanga*

Ajay Devgn's production *Tribhanga*, starring Kajol, might release their first OTT project in the second half of 2020 and not in 2021, as scheduled earlier.

With the intensive lockdown tenure, the demand for online content is surging and hence as per the reports, Netflix India has requested Ajay Devgn Films to change their digital release. *Tribhanga*, directed by Renuka Shahane, depicts the lives of three women from different generation and stars Mithila Palkar and Tanvi Azmi. The reports also quote the producer Siddharth M, who asked for the 2020 release, stating that the new release date will only be decided once the final cut is submitted to Netflix.



Bollywood singers gear up for *One Nation* drive

Bollywood singers have taken a step ahead in spreading awareness against the COVID-19 outbreak. Singers like Shreya Ghoshal, Neha Kakkad, Badshah, Jubin Nautiyal, and Raftaar have joined hands with YouTubers like Bhuvan Bam and Prajakta Koli and will be seen in a YouTube gig *One Nation*, which will be released on April 30. The concert will have its sets featured from different places in the country with an aim to raise funds for PM CARES to benefit the needy.

As per reports, Badshah stated, "I am honored to be a part of this initiative by YouTube to get us all together to enable the PM CARES Fund. It's difficult times, but I hope we come out stronger and more empowered from this situation. Till then, it is important for us to understand our responsibility and practice social distancing and do our bit to help the world."





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Letter to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo
August 12, 2019



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Take a World Tour with Bollywood

Deepali Singh

Who would have thought a virus would bring the world to a standstill? But it has. And the more we stay locked up inside our homes, the more we dream of travel – of going for long winding road trips, visiting sandy beaches, snowy mountains and dense jungles and exploring cities and countries, hitherto we have never been to. To quote English writer J.R.R. Tolkien, 'Not all those who wander are lost'.

It is in such times that we find ourselves turning towards Bollywood films, not just to escape reality, but also to travel vicariously to distant destinations and places unknown. As we stay cooped up in one place dreaming of taking a trip ourselves, here's a look at a few iconic movies that celebrate travel. Until the next trip!

Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge (1995)

This writer was still in school when she watched *DDLJ* and recalls wanting to take off on a European holiday, à la Simran, played by Kajol. The romance that blossoms between Raj (Shah Rukh Khan) and Simran during the road trip, took viewers to some picture-postcard locales in Switzerland. Quaint little villages, snowy Alps and pastoral meadows formed a charming backdrop to their love story. Whether it was the St. Mauritius Church in Saanen that features in the famous scene where Rahul and Simran pray together, or the charming village of Gstaad where some parts of *Zara Sa Jhoom Loon Main* were shot, director Aditya Chopra captured the beauty of Switzerland like no other. Before him, his father, the late Yash Chopra had shot films like *Chandni* and *Darr* in Switzerland. For his contribution, a number of honours were bestowed upon him, including a Chopra Lake in Alpenrausch and a Chopra train run by Jungfrau Railways. He was even named honorary ambassador of Interlaken.



Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara (2011)



Three friends on a bachelor's trip to Spain? Sounds like a whole lot of fun, doesn't it? Well, it was, for the three boys – (Imraan) Farhan Akhtar, (Arjun) Hrithik Roshan and (Kabir) Abhay Deol who set off on an adventure trip to give them memories of a lifetime. Starting from the beautiful city of Barcelona where they are seen enjoying the rich cultural heritage to the spectacular coastline of Costa Brava, where Arjun and the gang go deep sea diving, the movie shows you the best of Spain. Who can forget the *La Tomatina* sequence where the trio, along with Laila (Katrina Kaif) have the time of their lives throwing tomatoes at each other as they sing *Ik Junoon*, *Ik Deewangi*. That particular sequence was shot in Bunol, a small town near Valencia. If Spain is on your mind, then how about taking this road trip with these buddies?

Queen (2014)

If your idea of going on a trip is to travel solo, then what better movie to watch than *Queen*, where Rani (Kangana Ranaut) takes off to Europe for her honeymoon alone, after being dumped by her fiancé two days before their wedding. We often see Rani walking on foot in Paris, which makes it easier for the viewer to take in the quaint elegance of the City of Love, with its classical bistros and boulevards. One of the highlights of the film, of course, is her visit to Eiffel Tower, probably the most popular tourist spot in Paris. From the elegance of Paris, the film moves on to Amsterdam, where the song *Hungama Ho Gaya* was shot at Club NL. We hear, post that shoot, the club has hosted a number of Bollywood nights!



Kuch Kuch Hota Hai (1998)

Did you know that most of Karan Johar's blockbuster debut film was shot in Mauritius? In fact, a number of scenes which were shown to be from Mumbai, were actually shot in this island nation, known for its beautiful beaches, lagoons and reefs, filled with nature's beauty, with its many rainforests, waterfalls and national parks. The stunning University of Mauritius is supposed to be the college in Mumbai where Rahul (Shah Rukh Khan), Tina (Rani Mukerji) and Anjali (Kajol) study.

Scotland, too, makes an appearance in the title song of the movie. There couldn't have been a better tourism ad for this country known for its castles! Some of the locations include Eilean Donan Castle, Glen Coe, Dirlerton Castle, Tantallon Castle and Bass Rock among others.



Kaho Naa... Pyaar Hai (2000)



The most stunning part about this romantic thriller released 20 years ago was, of course, a newbie called Hrithik Roshan. But apart from the light-eyed actor, the beautiful locations shown in the film also proved to be a crowd-puller. The title track of the movie, that sees Hrithik romancing Ameesha Patel, was shot on the Phra Nang Beach in Thailand. With its crystal-clear waters and white sand, it was the perfect setting for the young lovers. The second half of the film moved to New Zealand and one can see the beauty of the place in its full glory in the song *Na Tum Jaano Na Hum*.

Dil Chahta Hai (2001)

Think of a road trip that brings everything together – boys, songs and a whole lot of *masti* – and only one name comes to mind – *Dil Chahta Hai!* Mention the title and we are transported straight to Goa, where the boys – Aakash (Aamir Khan), Sameer (Saif Ali Khan) and Sid (Akshaye Khanna) head to for a vacation. From indulging in water sports to playing volleyball on the beach and enjoying food, they do it all. Ask anyone where the 'Dil Chahta Hai fort' is in Goa, and the locals will point you to the Chapora fort, the memorable sequence where the boys sit and discuss their future.



Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham (2001)



Karan Johar has a soft corner for London, which is apparent in the way the filmmaker has lovingly captured the city in this family saga of love and reconciliation. If you want to see what the wealthy part of London looks like, then just watch *K3G*. The gorgeous locations include the Millenium Stadium, Bluewater in Kent, Blenheim Palace, St Paul's Cathedral and the Waddesdon Manor among many others. But it's Egypt that surfaces briefly in the romantic number *Sooraj Hua Maddham*. The breathtaking Pyramids of Giza in the city of Cairo in Egypt is where Rahul (Shah Rukh Khan) and Anjali (Kajol) sing their song of love.

Race (2008)

The very premise of this thriller exuded luxury and high living and what better location than Dubai to bring in all the glitz and gloss? Right from the introductory scene that provides an aerial view of the stunning city to the climax that shows an intense car chase, Dubai was captured at its stunning best by the makers of *Race*. One of UAE's most famous spots for car fanatics, Jebel Hafeet with its mountainous winding roads, proved to be the perfect backdrop for one of the most thrilling car chases in Bollywood history.



FAVORITE MOVIES

OF YOUR FAVORITE STARS

By Shubarna Mukerji Shu

Cinema has always had that knack of captivating its audience. Let's admit it, we all have that one moment in a movie, when our favorite superstar entered a scene, owning the frame oh-so-completely-and-absolutely, creating cinematic splendor and captivating our heart and

soul. But have you ever wondered, which are the favorite movies of your favorite actors, which bowled them over? Read in their own words, what the stars shared with Bollywood Insider.

AKSHAY KUMAR



“While growing up, the biggest treat for us was watching our favorite films on the VHS. I remember walking to our local libraries, asking them all about the newest films that had come. We didn't have Google then; so, we had to rely on the store manager for these details. The greatest joy for me would be managing to get my hands on a new Jackie Chan film. I have always been a fan of martial arts. Till date, I don't think anyone has managed to

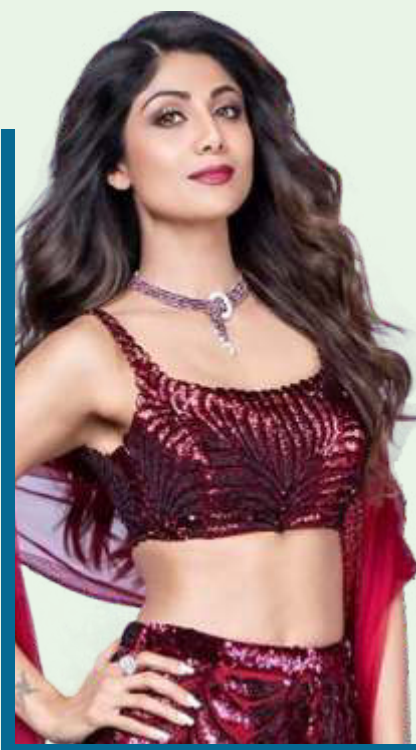
touch Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan in making action films. They have managed to do the impossible and make action loveable to one and all. My favorites were Jackie Chan's *Police Story* series which later graduated into the *Rush Hour* series. The funny moments of the making of the film, which come at the end of the movie along with the credits, are always cherry on the cake. I used to wait for them. I really think it will be nice to have the youngsters today see the level of action done at that time and age. It is unfortunate that these youngsters are not so well-versed with these geniuses. I strongly recommend getting familiar with Jackie Chan films, during the quarantine.”

AAMIR KHAN



“When we were kids, it used to be a punishment for us to sit and see some old black and white films; we wanted to see the cool Hollywood stuff, whereas our parents used to be fans of K.L. Saigal. I always had a very closed mind about that, till I was exposed to Guru Dutt. I don't know when it happened for me, but he opened up my closed mind when it comes to movies. I don't know which one I like more – I cannot make up my mind whether I like *Pyasa* or

Kagaaz Ke Phool better! Both are brilliant. For that matter, films like *C.I.D.*, *Mr. and Mrs. 55* are fantastic even today. Another director who was equally admirable, was Vijay Anand. It is unfortunate that he didn't get his due as per his excellence in cinema. *Guide* is a classic case study for brilliant cinema. Be it the screenplay, the music, the acting; each and everything in the film is memorable. I especially loved the nuances of Waheeda Rehman and Dev Anand's relationship. It is so beautifully expressed; I loved how gradually their dynamics change in the film.”



SHILPA SHETTY

“My favorite film needs to come with a disclaimer because it changes from time to time. However, I recently saw *P.S. I Love You* again. It was one of the first films I saw with my husband Raj Kundra. Of course, I cried my eyes out watching it, but I totally recommend it to anyone and everyone who believes in love. It reinstates the power of love in you. I recommend seeing it with your loved one. I know that the film, bonded me to Raj in a special way. I hope it does the same for you guys too.”



SHAHID KAPOOR



“While growing up, I watched whatever came on Doordarshan, like *He-Man*, *Giant Robo* and what not; today I am a lot more selective about what I watch.



There are some of my own films which I won't waste time watching, they just don't do it for me. But I can tell you this; my love for Hindi cinema kicked in when I watched Guru Dutt in *Pyaasa* and *Sahib Bibi Aur Ghulam*. These are the films that just stayed with me. I hear a lot of millennials saying *Andaz Apna Apna* is a cult film etc, but if you really want to know a cult comedy film, then watch *Jaane Bhi Do Yaaron*, the one film which has made it possible for Bollywood to make something other than slapstick fun for its audience.”

SIDHARTH MALHOTRA



“Today, cinema is a lot different from the kind of cinema I grew up watching. I was, I am and always will be a die-hard Amitabh Bachchan fan. Be it *Sholay*, *Agneepath*, *Hum* – I have watched all of these films a million times. I so vividly remember the last scene of *Hum*, where Amit ji holds onto a rope and screams 'Bhaktavar!!!' I was so young I didn't realize that Bhaktavar was the villain's name; I thought it was some kind of a bad word. So, I would go down to play with my friends and pretend I was Amitabh Bachchan while I called them all 'Bhaktavar'. Frankly, that according to me is the true definition of a hero; you make a



child in some corner of the world believe in you and your ability to beat the evil. I think in today's day and age, we need that hero very badly.”

VARUN DHAWAN

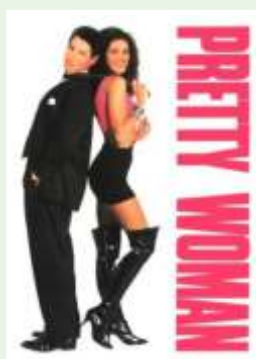


“For me, cinema has always been about my father and my brother. I have grown up watching what my father made and now I am in the position to work with my brother. I think both of them are brilliant directors. Thanks to my brother, I have been exposed to some world cinema and such, but still, at heart I am a Bollywood film buff. For amongst my father's work, I really loved *Raja Babu* the best. I think Govinda did fantastically in that film. The humour, the madness, the chemistry in that film is completely out of the world. You don't see that kind of work today, because it was like brothers coming together and making



a movie. I felt that same energy when I was working for *Dishoom* with my brother. I really think a little humour and madness will make this period pass a lot more easily.”

KRITI SANON



“While everyone is locked down, I think we girls would love a little moment of romance in our lives. Especially those of us who are single. I very strongly recommend Julia Roberts and Richard Gere's romantic classic *Pretty Woman*. It is a cliché Cinderella movie, changed into something more beautiful. Julia Roberts looks like a million dollars in the film. She is one of my all-time favourite actresses. Closer home, I totally love Madhuri Dixit. If you notice, both my favourite actresses have one thing in common. They have the most expressive face. Acting is all about emoting, not just parroting the lines. One should study these actresses to know how to get the acting right. Amongst Madhuri Dixit's elaborate repertoire, I recommend *Hum Aapke Hain Koun*.”

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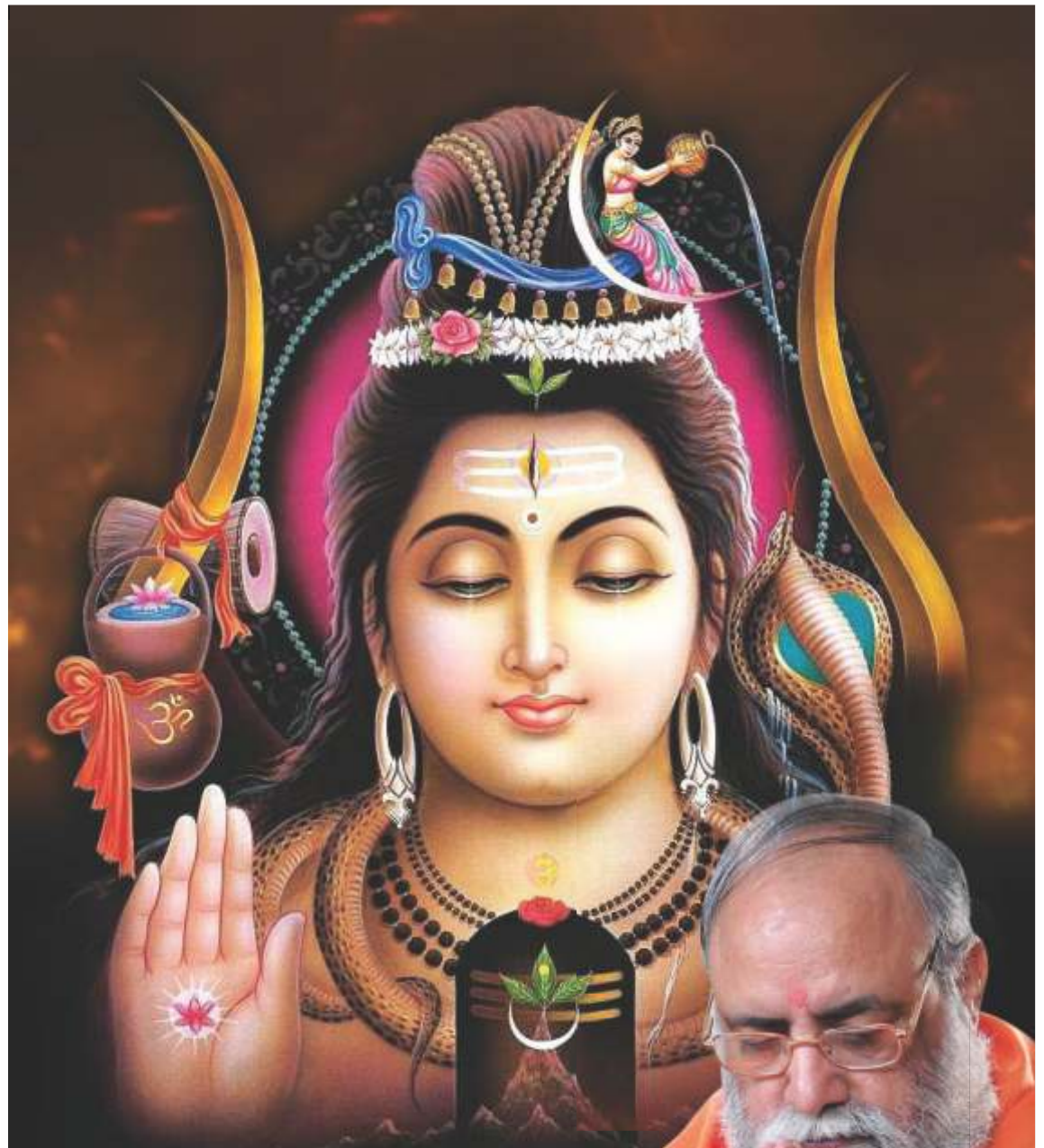
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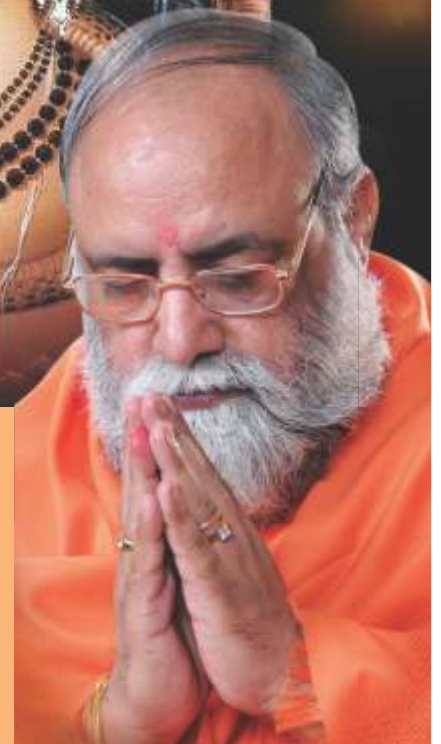
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Revered Brahmishi Shree Kumar Swamiji being honored by Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, former honourable president of India.



Shri Rajnath Singh, Union Minister of Home Affairs, receiving blessings from Revered Brahmishi Shree Kumar Swamiji



Revered Brahmishi Shree Kumar Swamiji with world renowned spiritual master His Holiness Shri Dalai Lama.

SHAHID KAPOOR'S CANDID CONFESSIONS

By Shubarna Mukerji Shu

When was the last time you caught a busy star and cornered him into a rapid-fire questionnaire? Rare, if at all, isn't it? And if the interview is with none other than Mr. Kabir Singh (Shahid Kapoor) himself, the treat just gets yummier. While Shahid now waits at home like all of us, his film *Jersey* is waiting for post-production work to kick-start. Very few know that Shahid will once again share screen with father Pankaj Kapur in this south remake. Given the last time that happened, in Vikas Bahl's *Shandaar*, the film went down without a whimper, Shahid's anxiety levels are hitting an all-time high. Taking a break from it all, Shahid indulged us with a chat about anything and everything his fans had always hoped to ask. Brace yourself for this *Bollywood Insider* Exclusive, for it will give you an all new insight into the actor, promises Shubarna Mukerji Shu.

Have you ever picked a book and couldn't keep it down?

Don't get fooled by the book I am holding at the moment. I am really not much of a reader. Even this book I am supposed to read as part of a prep for my upcoming movie, but I am just not being able to get around to doing it.

Have you ever cried listening to a song?

When it comes to songs, I think some people really have the ability to reach out to their low points in life and bring them out in words you have not been able to do yourself. It is like, I would have said these words, had they come to me... Yes, songs have made me cry...

Have you experienced love at first sight?

I don't believe in love at first sight etc... I don't believe you simply fall in love when you see a beautiful face. Love is something that grows within you, into a beautiful relationship. I am so grateful to God for Mira and my kids; they are love personified for me!

Has a fan-experience ever left you speechless?

Every rendezvous with a fan warms our hearts. Can you imagine how it feels to have a stranger's eyes sparkle upon seeing you?

Have you ever been embarrassed by a fan, with all this social media overload?

They do such wonderful things, why should it embarrass you? Agreed that there are times when their ways of expressing gets a little heavy, but that's their love! Actually, I should tell you this; I am not really embarrassed easy – Try me!

Have you ever given in to temptation?

When you make it sound like that, I would like to say no and run off. But then, there are various types of temptations. There are varieties that are absolutely and completely harmless; those I don't bother resisting.

Have you ever felt hopelessly lonely?

Actually, there was a time I just couldn't stay alone for even an hour, but thankfully being alone and being lonely, have now become two separate issues. I used to think that a little me-time is almost therapeutic, but now that I have my family, my kids... I like this chaos and believe that's therapy!

Have you ever got upset reading something nasty about yourself?

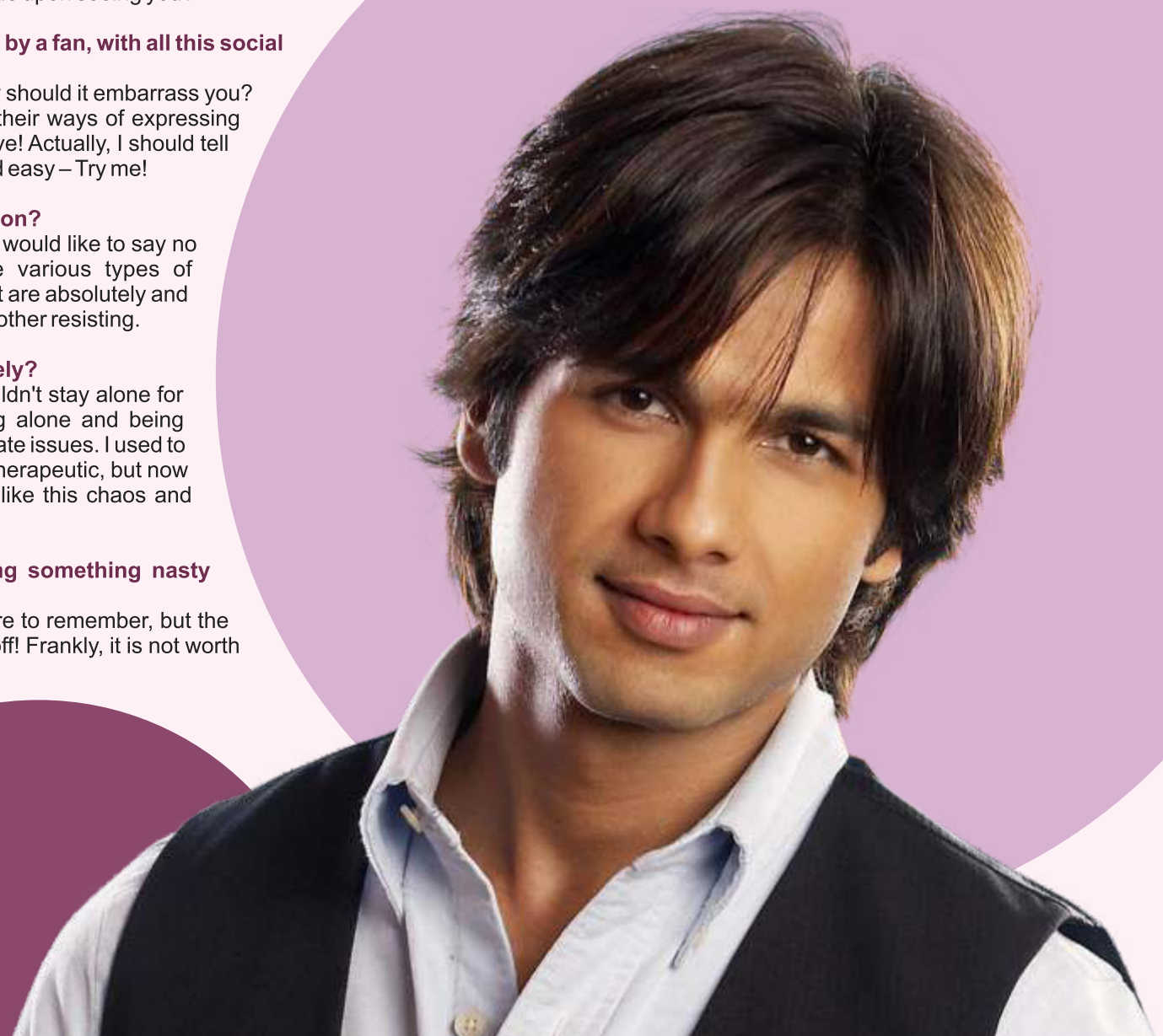
That happens more often than I care to remember, but the upset is now momentary. I block it off! Frankly, it is not worth giving another thought!

Have you ever internalized a character so much that it frightened you?

It happens; there are some characters which take you beyond your ability and in turn, you see yourself getting lost in them. One just has to dive headlong into your real world to avoid that. My children thankfully help a great deal, to level me out after a shoot.

Have you ever planned a surprise for Mira?

Of course, I try my best to be the ideal husband and I would like to think, I have mastered the art of keeping the romance going even after two kids. I read this somewhere, and I think it is true – if you treat your wife the way you did when you just started dating, there will never be an end to your relationship.



DIGITAL DRAMAS

SPICE UP HOME ENTERTAINMENT!

BY DEEPALI SINGH

Click on to any digital platform today and you will feel like a kid in a candy shop – there are so many options! From crime thrillers to romantic comedies to courtroom dramas, Over The Top (OTT) platforms offer a plethora of original content that's bound to cater to all your moods. And while international shows like *Money Heist* and *Narcos* will continue to have its fan base, the growing success of Indian web shows proves that the makers and writers have understood the pulse of the audience.

It is these very shows that have come to the rescue of all those who have been spending their days inside their homes during the lockdown period. So, take your minds off from the situation outside and get set to binge-watch these shows if you haven't already!



PANCHAYAT

When Abhishek Tripathi (Jitendra Kumar) takes up the job of a secretary of a Panchayat office in a remote village in Uttar Pradesh, he does it only because of a lack of job options. The comedy-drama with cracking dialogues and fabulous cast comprising veterans like Raghbir Yadav and Neena Gupta, captures the journey of the engineering student whose sole motivation is to get out of there as soon as possible. Probably one of the best-written shows in recent times, the success of *Panchayat* has proved that a series set in the heartland of the country can be made without resorting to depiction of physical violence or profanities.

WHERE TO WATCH *Prime Video*

TAJ MAHAL 1989

How was it to love someone three decades ago, when a left or right swipe on Tinder was not needed to lead you to your heart's desire? Pushpendra Nath Misra's *Taj Mahal 1989* takes you to Lucknow and into the lives of an ensemble of characters, belonging to different ages and backgrounds. They have their own interpretations of love. Poetry and nostalgia make for a heady combination in this show that also captures the essence of Lucknow. Sheeba Chadha and Neeraj Kabi are in fine form as are the rest of the cast including Danish Husain and Geetanjali Kulkarni. If a walk down memory lane to simpler times is what you are looking for, don't look further than *Taj Mahal 1989*.

WHERE TO WATCH *Netflix*



FOUR MORE SHOTS PLEASE!

When the first season of this undeniably bold show went on air last year, it was applauded for its depiction of female friendship – something of a rarity on Indian screens. Fans of the show eagerly waited to see what lies ahead for the four BFFs – Anjana (Kirti Kulhari), Umang (Bani J), Siddhi (Maanvi Gagroo) and Damini (Sayani Gupta). The second season sees the women deal with messy relationships, sexist bosses, infidelity, politics and more. But what stays constant through it all, is their support for each other. And of course, the many shots they down every other night at the Truck Bar!

WHERE TO WATCH *Prime Video*



HASMUKH

If he can kill in real life, he can kill it on stage! That's the premise of Netflix's new show that sees Vir Das play Hasmukh, a wannabe stand-up comic who makes it big on stage when he realises his comic mojo lies in killing someone just before he goes to perform. It's a promising premise on paper, and the show delivers in parts. Ably supported by a good cast comprising actors like Ranvir Shorey, Manoj Pahwa and Ravi Kishan, Vir plays Hasmukh as a vulnerable, yet ambitious man who is willing to get blood on his hands to achieve his dream of making it big as a comic superstar. If you're a fan of the man, then go for it.

WHERE TO WATCH **Netflix**

NEVER KISS YOUR BEST FRIEND

Tired of watching murder mysteries and political thrillers and looking for something easy-breezy? Our pick is this 10-episode tale of love and friendship based on Sumrit Shahi's book by the same name. Tanie (Anya Singh) and Sumer (Nakuul Mehta) are BFFs, who eventually end up falling in love. So, what's new, you ask? The lead cast, which quickly endears itself to the audience. Anya and Nakuul infuse their characters with an honesty and charm that is so refreshing in these times. There are enough conflicts and tensions in this romantic drama to keep you engaged right till the end. If a light-hearted take on friendship and love is what your heart desires, then this might just be the show for you.

WHERE TO WATCH **Zee5**



THE FAMILY MAN

Manoj Bajpayee is Shrikant, a regular middle-class man with a government job and a secret. He is part of a special cell of the National Investigation Agency. While his job involves protecting the nation from terrorists, he also has to ensure that his family life is not impacted by the high-pressure and secretive job. It's an apt role for an actor like Manoj, who is in excellent form as he takes on the dual responsibilities. Directors Raj DK and Krishna Nidimoru bring in their quirky sensibilities to the table, which ensures an engaging screenplay and a show that offers multiple perspectives.

WHERE TO WATCH **Prime Video**

AFSOS

The premise of this Gulshan Devaiah starrer is so psychologically twisted that one ends up wondering what exactly the show is about. Is it a mystery-thriller about a missing potion that sees 12 *sadhus* getting killed, or is it a comment on death as the protagonist attempts to end his life multiple times. The tragicomedy may have many sub-plots running parallel to each other, but the show never loses its focus and its charm lies in the engaging storyline and twisted characters.

WHERE TO WATCH **Prime Video**



STATE OF SIEGE: 26/11

A few months ago, the audience was treated to Hotel Mumbai, a film based on the attacks on Mumbai in 2008. While the movie focused on the terrorist attacks on Taj Hotel, the series takes a more holistic approach, delving into the attacks on Chabad House, Leopold Café and Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus. Directed by Matthew Leutwyler, the riveting account unfolds, offering various perspectives to what is known as the worst terror attack on Indian soil. While everyone is aware of the outcome of the attack, the slickly made thriller show is worth a watch for its apt casting and realistic narrative.

WHERE TO WATCH **Zee5**



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STARS SHUN GLITZY BIRTHDAY PARTIES DURING PANDEMIC

Birthdays for Bollywood celebrities are always big, fat, glitzy affairs — from celebrating with the media to throwing grand bashes and thousands of wishes pouring in from fans and colleagues. But not this year. Social distancing and the nationwide lockdown due to COVID-19 have proved to be party-poopers for a number of superstars. Here are some who celebrated in quarantine.

Rani Mukerji

21st March

Rani Mukerji's birthday came before the lockdown was announced, but the effects of COVID-19 had started exhibiting across the country. The *Mardaani* actress decided not to celebrate her 42nd birthday and appealed to her friends to not send gifts or cards. She spent the day with her producer husband Aditya Chopra and daughter Adira. Actor Siddhanth Chaturvedi took to social media to wish the actress with a heartwarming message and their picture from the sets of *Bunty Aur Babli 2*.



Kangana Ranaut

23rd March

The *Tanu Weds Manu* actress celebrated her 33rd birthday with her family and close friends in Manali, Himachal Pradesh. Her big day started with a *pooja* in the morning and celebrations in the evening included a homemade birthday cake baked by her sister, Rangoli Chandel, along with some food and wine. Even though the pictures of her birthday went viral, the celebration didn't go down well with some of the audiences. They criticized her for disregarding social distancing and interacting with elders and children.



Ajay Devgn

2nd April

The *Singham* actor is another superstar who celebrated his birthday in lockdown. Wishes poured in for him with special messages from Rakul Preet Singh, Riteish Deshmukh, Anil Kapoor, director duo Abbas-Mustan and sister-in-law Tanishaa Mukerji. To support the daily wage workers of Bollywood affected by the lockdown, Ajay donated INR 51 lac to the Federation of Western India Cine Employees (FWICE). Isn't that a great way to earn birthday blessings?



Allu Arjun

8th April

Telugu cinema heartthrob Allu Arjun turned 37 this year. The actor celebrated his birthday at home with his wife and kids. His fans received a sneak peek of the celebration through his wife, Sneha Reddy's Instagram stories. The *Sarrainodu* actor took to social media to announce the name of his much-awaited film *Pushpa*. He also revealed its first look to surprise his fans. Nothing could be a better return gift than this!



Chiyaan Vikram

17th April

On Tollywood superstar Chiyaan Vikram's 54th birthday, fans flooded social media with love and wishes for him. What made the *Seethu* actor's birthday special was a surprise video featuring the cast and crew of his upcoming film *Cobra*, reportedly being filmed in Tamil, Telugu and Hindi. A look at the star and no one would say he turned another year older!

While the nationwide lockdown forced these stars to have subdued b'days, Varun Dhawan on 24th April, Arijit Singh on 25th April and Samantha Akkineni on 28th April celebrated their big days confined to their homes.



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