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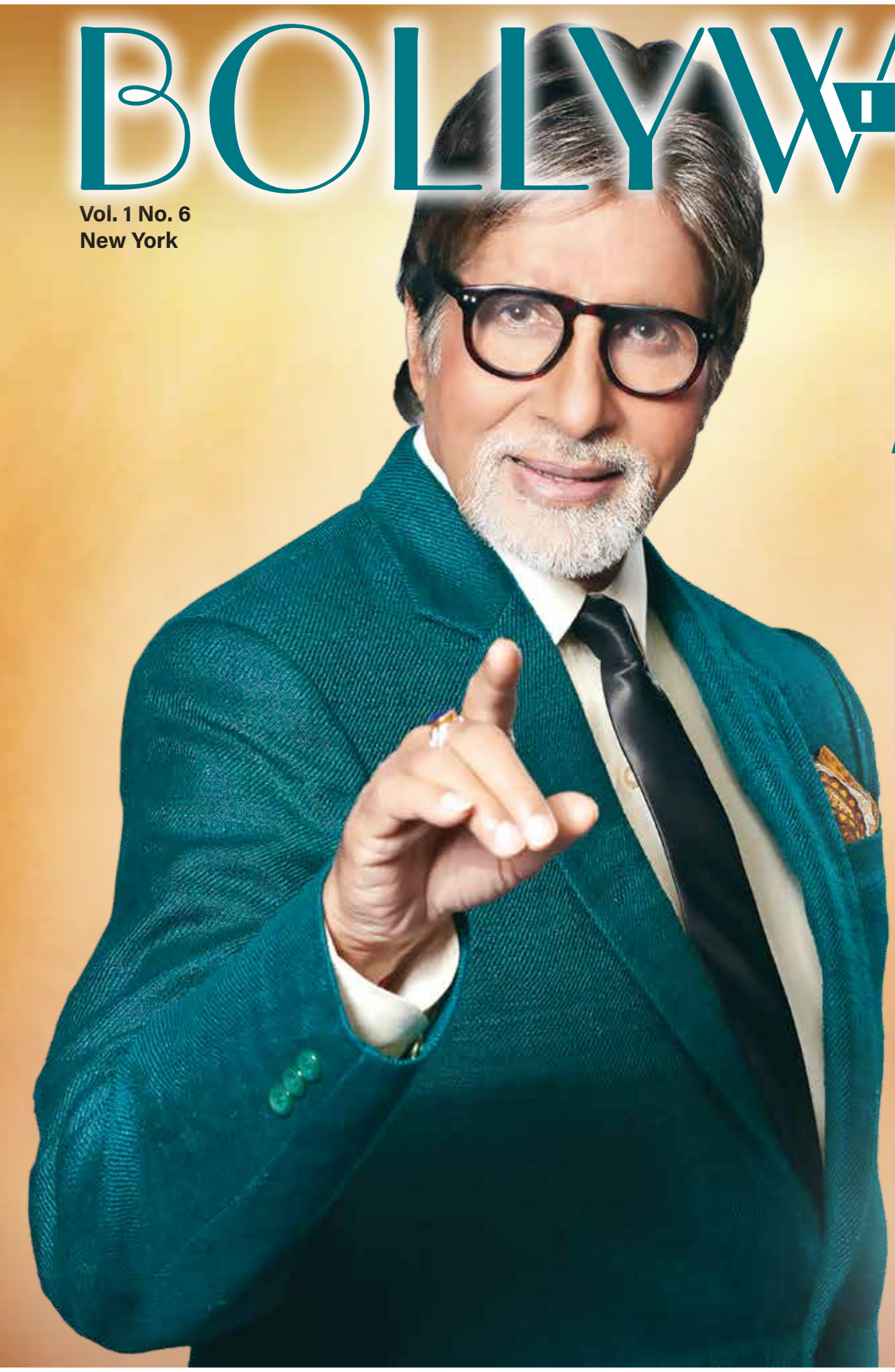
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BOLLYWOOD INSIDER

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Amitabh Bachchan

Superstar of the Millennium Speaks to BOLLYWOOD INSIDER



ABHISHEK BACHCHAN
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Bollywood panache wows Cannes



Aishwarya in an Ali Younes Couture gown



A selfie moment for *Sarbjit* cast at Canes



Sonam in a black and blue sari by Rimzim Dadu

Bollywood emerged in its entire splendor at the 69th edition of the annual French Riviera—the Cannes International Film Festival—known for showcasing the finest films across the globe. Cannes is also the biggest international platform for tinsel town beauties to strike the right pose for the international paparazzi.

India's unofficial ambassador to the prestigious festival, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, opened her 15th year in style with a flowing golden Ali Younes Couture gown and stunning red lips. At the premiere of Steven Spielberg's *The BFG*, she looked resplendent in an embellished pink-gold Elie Saab gown—her best look of the year. For the premiere of *Sarbjit*, Aishwarya chose a heavily embellished, golden-brown *bandh gala* by Rohit Bal, teamed with a Deepa Gurnani neckpiece. The former Miss World went bold with lavender-blue lips to match a pretty Rami Kadi floral gown at *The Land of the Moon* premiere. Meticulously scrutinized and rebuked by the fashion police, the 42-year-old actress said, "It is my professional commitment to deliver what fashion brand *L'oreal* expects from me as their ambassador. It is not a frivolous thing on my part. I have made choices of hair and makeup. I have been here long enough to get stardust in my eyes."

Sonam Kapoor, who has earned the tag of the "Indian fashionista" at Cannes, represented her film *Neerja* at the festival. The young style icon chose British couture house, *Ralph & Russo*, for most of her outfits. She added vintage glamor at the Chopard party with a black strapless gown but mostly chose white and subtle colors at other events. At the red carpet, she made a stunning silhouette in a white column gown with a short train. She also chose a gold embroidered gown for her last formal appearance at the amfAR Gala. Her look for a press interaction—a black and blue sari by designer Rimzim Dadu, with fuchsia lips—earned her the tag of the "absolute diva" on the festival circuit, held between May 11 and 22.

While Aishwarya and Sonam made most of the headlines, the talented Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Seema Biswas, Vicky Kaushal and Shahana Goswami also made an appearance for the premiere of their films. Goswami was part of the cast of *Tu Hai Mera Sunday,* which screened at Marche du Film (Cannes Film Market). Nawazuddin's *Raman Raghav 2.0* –his eighth film at the gala in four years –got a standing ovation of almost 15 minutes after its full house screening. The 41-year-old said, "I love the fact that a film is appreciated and gets critical acclaim here."

The festival welcomed the cast of *Sarbjit*, sans Randeep Hooda. This year marked Richa Chadda's third appearance after *Gangs of Wasseypur* in 2014, and *Masaan*, which had received a standing ovation in 2015. Mallika Sherawat promoted her upcoming Chinese film *Time Raiders* and later attended a UNICEF event. Popular Tamil actress of British descent, Amy Jackson, also made her Cannes debut along with the surprise of the year, Pooja Batra, former Miss India and actress. Batra walked the red carpet for the world premiere and the trailer launch of her Hollywood film *One Under the Sun*. Rahat Kazmi's hard-hitting *Mantostaan* also received big hurrahs at multiple screenings on May 14.

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LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

Dear Readers:

A year ago, when we first thought of publishing BOLLYWOOD INSIDER, our editorial board discussed all possible topics which would interest our readers in America. Interviewing Bollywood celebrities, covering scoops, star tracks, annual award shows, previews of upcoming movies and reviews of recent releases were the obvious choices. We also decided to include a nostalgic memory lane covering stars of yesteryears and even a segment naming the most popular movies of the golden era starting with the 1950s. Those were some of our initial ideas which formed the basis of content in our publication, which has been well received by our community.

But now we come to you—our readers—for ideas. Please send us your thoughts about any topics which you think will make BOLLYWOOD INSIDER more interesting and exciting.

Please write to us at Editor@BollywoodInsider.us. We eagerly look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you!



Varinder K. Bhalla
Chairman & Publisher

Kareena-Shahid Starrer Udta Punjab Faces Censor Hurdle



Just a few days ahead of its June 17 release, Anurag Kashyap's *Udta Punjab* starring Shahid Kapoor, Kareena Kapoor, Alia Bhatt and Diljit Dosanjh, finds itself in the midst of a thick controversy with the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) of India, popularly referred to as the Censor Board. The subject of the Abhishek Chaubey directorial, which deals with rampant drug abuse, especially among the youth in Punjab, has become a crucial issue for the Censor Board that has refused to give certification for its worldwide release. Reports state that the CBFC Examining Committee—which is the first leg of the screening process before a certificate is allotted to the makers—saw the film and felt that the profanities largely used by Shahid's character, Tommy Singh, were inappropriate. The EC is said to have recommended as many as 40 cuts to the filmmakers, including a song and some scenes of drug abuse.

While the actors are hopeful that the controversy will be resolved, the film's producers—Phantom and Balaji Motion Pictures—have refused to comply with the cuts. The makers have applied for an 'Adult' certificate to ensure that the film is left as it is. With the CBFC refusing to budge, they have now approached the Film Certification Appellate Tribunal (FCAT), in New Delhi to make it in time for the release. An optimistic Alia Bhatt said, "Anurag Kashyap put out a tweet that the due process is on. Let's wait and watch, hopefully, everyone will be happy." To put an end to the speculations around the movie being completely banned, Kashyap said, "A film is banned only when examining, revising and FCAT—all three committees—refuse a certificate. And then you fight it out in the Supreme Court."

For the promotions of the film, the filmmakers have planned musical tours, keeping in line with Shahid's character of a rock star in the film. Aman Gill, the CEO of Balaji Motion Pictures has stated that unlike other films, the producers of *Udta Punjab* are being "very selective" about promoting the film on the television shows, owing to the content of the film. In fact, music director Amit Trivedi says the soundtrack of the film is also "dark and trippy", as an extension of Shahid's character in the film.

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Anupam Kher and **Neena Gupta** perform in Rakesh Bedi's play *Mera Woh Matlab Nahi Tha* in Shimla on May 17.



Rado brand ambassador **Hrithik Roshan** unveils the Brown High-tech Ceramic Collection at the brand store in Mumbai on May 27.



Amitabh Bachchan and **Jaya Bachchan** click a selfie during the inauguration of a jewellery store in Kolkata on May 8.

Newly married **Preity Zinta** and her husband **Gene Goodenough** visited the Taj Mahal in Agra on May 12. A day later, they hosted a star-studded grand wedding reception in Mumbai.





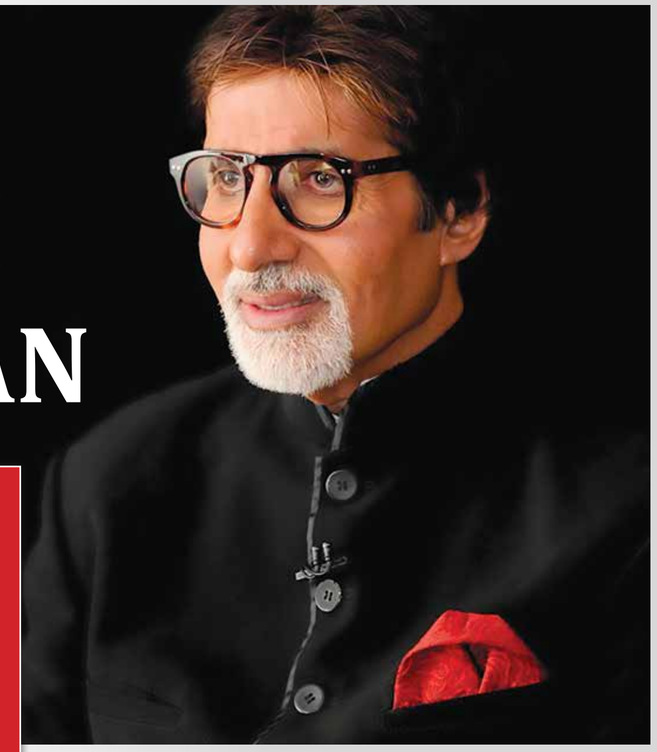
Anil Kapoor, Shilpa Shetty, Salman Khan and **Sooraj Pancholi** at a press interaction for the 16th International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) Awards in Mumbai on May 20.



House Full 3 cast **Riteish Deshmukh, Lisa Haydon, Jacqueline Fernandez** and **Akshay Kumar** walk the red carpet of Hindustan Times Most Stylish 2016 in New Delhi on May 24.



AGELESS AMITABH BACHCHAN



There are actors; there are stars and superstars… And there is Amitabh Bachchan. The most unmistakable voice of India with a charm that ceases to fade even at 73, Big B—as he is fondly called—ruled the industry through the '70s like a colossus. He wooed women, mesmerized men, impressed the classes and entertained the masses. With 218 films and three National Awards for Best Actor under his belt since his 1969 debut in *Saat Hindustani*—he also received the National Award for Best Newcomer—the megastar of Bollywood is as passionate about his work as a youngster.

MESSAGE TO FANS IN THE US:

Thanks for being there for us, for seeing our films, for loving us this much. I have many blog members from the US, who I keep interacting with and keep discussing my work with. They are aware of all my projects. I keep in constant touch with them.

Amitabh Bachchan, in the last few years, has essayed characters of scripts meticulously written for him—*Paa, Rann, Aarakshan, Satyagraha, Piku, Wazir* and the yet to be released *Pink*. His next film *TE3N*—alongside Vidya Balan and Nawazuddin Siddiqui—hit theaters on June 10. He is also set to team up with Aditya Chopra for an undisclosed film. Bachchan says, "I am grateful to the writers, who think I can play these roles. There is a set pattern for a leading man in our films. So I am blessed to have the opportunities to do things I have never done before." In the midst of hectic promotions for *TE3N*, the inimitable icon of Hindi cinema, **Amitabh Bachchan** shares with **BOLLYWOOD INSIDER** his undying passion for cinema, speaks about playing a vigilante and reminisces his years in Kolkata, where the film is largely shot.

BY JANHAVI SAMANT

You play a vigilante in *TE3N*. Tell us about the experience.
First of all, we have to establish whether I am a vigilante in the film or not. I hope that will be part of the mystery. *TE3N* is the story of a middle-class Anglo-Indian, John Biswas, who lost his beloved grand daughter in a mishap. It is not a revenge drama; it's more like a search and how it could have happened. Physically, Biswas is weak but he is extremely determined because he loves his family.

How different is John Biswas from your other characters, especially your recent Bengali character in *Piku*?
One thing that Ribu (Dasgupta, director) said to me when he was writing my character was, 'I don't want you to be who you have already been in your other characters.' At this age, it is not much of a challenge. What you see of me physically, you will find in the film. Because I had already played a Bengali in *Piku*, Ribu decided that there should be a departure from that. He didn't want me to be aggressive but to have a certain tone to my voice. There is a very large population of Anglo-Indians in Kolkata. I had interacted with many of them during eight years of my living there (Bachchan worked as an executive in the coal business division of the company in erstwhile Calcutta from 1962 to 1969). So, I had an idea about their mannerisms. During our research on Anglo-Indians, we did not find them any different from anyone of us. They spoke Hindi fluently and hardly ever spoke Bengali.

Did you specially prepare for the role? You are seen riding an old scooter in the film.
When Ribu told me that I will have to ride a two-wheeler in the film, I told him to leave a scooter at *Jalsa* (his home in Mumbai), at least a month before the shoot, so that I could practice. They complied with my request. I am not too experienced with riding two-wheelers. I would sneak out in Mumbai to train to balance myself.

How was it shooting in Kolkata, where you lived many years ago? Has the city changed?
The best part of the film is that we shot in Kolkata. Initially, we were to shoot in Goa but there were problems with permissions. I said, 'Let's go to Kolkata'. That's when Sujoy told me, 'I am going to show you places in Kolkata that you have never seen before.' And, how true it was during the making of the film! We virtually settled in Kolkata, and in one long schedule, we finished the film.

The city is dear to my heart. Every time I visit the city, now in a different profession and circumstances, I revisit my life as a youth. Now, a lot of nostalgia is attached to it. I remember all my friends, all the eating places, all the things that happened when I used to live there. Every evening you would meet the same people at prominent places and never get bored as they would have something unique to say. I keep reliving those times. As a city, Kolkata has its own uniqueness. Yes, of course, things and places change over the years. I was there in the early 60s and now the city has undergone many changes. But the *puchka paani* that you get outside Victoria Memorial is the tastiest in India. In our times, we could fill our stomachs in *two-ānās* with a salary of ₹ 400. There was a place called *Nizam*, where I would have delicious *Kaathi Kebabs* for dinner. That was before I turned vegetarian 35 years ago. It has shut down now. My friends from Kolkata keep sending me *mishti doi*.

Did you shoot at any favorite location in the city?
In Bengal, everyone has a favorite *adda* (a spot to hang out). To visit the old sites and just be there in that environment is very exciting for me. But, some of the locations Sujoy took us to, I had really never, ever seen before. There were some ironic situations as well. We were shooting in an old mill. After a few hours of the shooting, I disclosed that the mill was managed by the company I was working for and I would often visit there during my training years. In fact, a lot of inputs for *Kala Patthar* (1979) made by Yash*ji* (Chopra) came from my own work experience there. In *TE3N*, all locations are natural. We did not create a single set. At times, I wondered if Ribu was really shooting because the location would be so dark, without a single light bulb. We have come from an age when huge brute lights and reflectors were used for filming. We could not even open our eyes most of the time. Now the style has changed.

TE3N depicts a grandfather's anguish. How is your real-life relationship with your three grand children—Navya, Agastya, and Aaradhya?
It's a beautiful relationship. I don't think we pay as much attention to our own kids as we pay to our grandchildren. As parents, we are often busy with our work, trying to settle down and create financial security for the family, organizing school schedules, disciplining our children. With grandchildren, we are more at ease. We are relaxed and have more time to indulge them. We are lenient with them. Somehow there is greater affection for a grandchild than a child. It is more fun, yes.

You have breathed life into so many characters. Does an emotional film take its toll on you compared to other genres?
Yes, at times, you get involved in the moment. Sometimes you do get involved in the moment. If it's an extremely emotional scene, you need to reach that correct attitude and bearing. Sometimes you think of all kinds of weird things. I do that a lot. At times it really works; at times, it looks very mechanical. If there is a moment where I feel I can refer to a past actor or scene or experience, I allow that to play in my mind. I have noticed that when there is a true emotional connect with a character, it works better than any glycerin or fake tears. I generally rely on the way a writer designs my character, clothing and will, therefore, dictate what I must do as an actor.



AMITABH, ON BREATHING LIFE INTO SO MANY CHARACTERS: *I have noticed that when there is a true emotional connect with a character, it works better than any glycerin or fake tears.*

Do you share a special bond with Sujoy Ghosh?
Sujoy and I have always been appreciative of each other's work. He has been a bit more effusive about his love for me and I am grateful for that. We did *Aladin* (2009) together and it was an enjoyable experience. When he was doing *Kahaani*, he wanted me to sing the theme song *Ekla Chalo Re*, which I did. Even when he is not working, we meet often at our favorite spot, which is Vishal and Shekhar's music room. It took me just a couple of seconds into the narration of *TE3N* to decide that I would do the film. I had worked with Ribu for my TV serial *Yuddh* and felt very good. There was never any constriction on how you should perform, or a time space to finish your lines. I like to be free to do what I want to do.

How was the experience recording for the song *Kyun Re* for TE3N?
It's always very frightening for me to sing because I am not a singer, especially when you have people like Clinton Cerejo (music director) sitting six inches away from you. I am very self-conscious, so I go to a studio I am familiar with, like Late Aadesh Srivastav's studio. With the help of some friendly musicians, I did an impromptu recording (for *Kyun Re*). Clinton destroyed it and said, 'It's rubbish. You have to do it again.' Ribu then said he will send Clinton while recording. I told them don't send him. I will not be able to sing. Eventually, I succumbed and when Clinton came to the studio, I sang very *besura*. But he said, 'Don't worry. When I go and work on my machine, it's going to sound great.' So what you hear is a machine version.

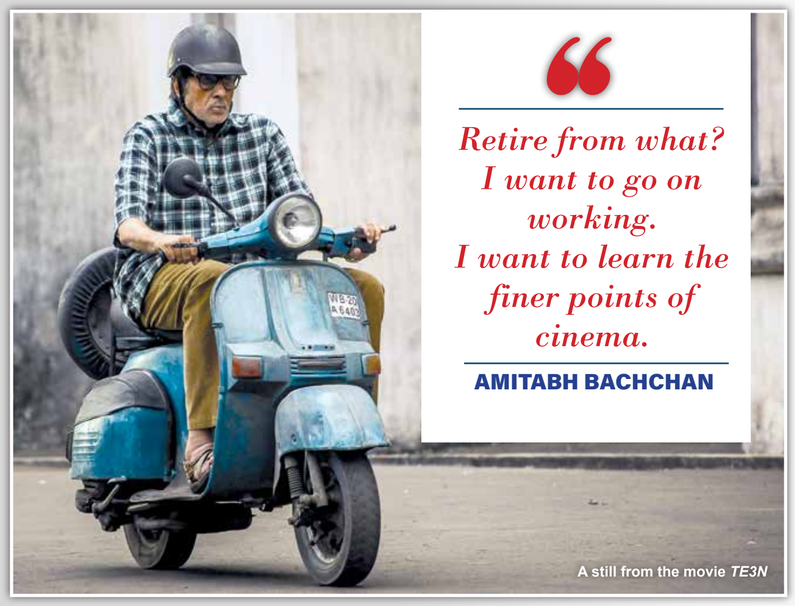
How was it working with Vidya again? This was also your first film with Nawazuddin.
It has always been a joy to work with Vidya and I was so happy that they decided to have her in the cast. But, I was equally delighted to work with Nawaz, whom I have always admired. He is a phenomenal talent. Truly, we get to learn so much from artists like Vidya and Nawaz. I have a great admiration for my two co-artists in the film.

Do you enjoy working with new, young actors in your current films? Like Tapsee Pannu in *Pink*?
I am in so much admiration of this (new, young) talent. I am amazed how they can be so perfect in their very first outing. I can't find any mistakes. I am still learning. I make so many mistakes, but these people are so good. I really love being with them and see them work and how they approach their work. They are very relaxed.

You have been involved in many social awareness campaigns like *Beti Bachao*, Pulse Polio, and more recently, Tuberculosis. What kind of difference does a celebrity make in changing people's basic mindsets about these issues?
Social campaigns work if you believe in the issue you are supporting and by connecting with millions of people. Much before the *Beti Bachao* campaign, I was made the UN Ambassador for the Girl Child Mission. I had already done the Tuberculosis campaign then. Medically, I have been associated with TB, Polio, Hepatitis B, Diabetes, and have been trying to spread a lot of awareness about these illnesses. The *Save the Tiger* campaign was essential because we were losing all our tigers. Usually, if I feel that I can make a real difference, I never hesitate to lend my support. If my face and voice are able to do some good for our society, I am happy and ready to do it.

Very often, your family is under attack on social media. Do you think that the freedom of expression can validate harsh personal opinions?
Social media has granted a lot of independence to citizens to air their opinions, which was not available previously. If the medium exists, why shouldn't people take advantage of it? Also, it's not always criticism that is aimed at us. Celebrities get a lot of praise and appreciation too. The important thing is to see how educative or informative a tweet is, as far as knowledge is concerned, rather than look at the nastiness of the opinion. I must admit, I do not delete or block any kind of nasty trolling among my followers. Nobody is perfect and we must be able to stomach criticism as much as we like the appreciation. There are people who will express themselves through a medium like Twitter. If you are on the medium, you jolly well accept it. Their assessment of why a film did well and what you should have done is brilliant. I don't stop them.

Have you ever thought about retiring?
Retire from what? I want to go on working. I want to learn the finer points of cinema. I wish I had formal training in cinema. I still hope I get the opportunity to learn an instrument or speak more languages. I constantly hope to find more time to do all these things but I would rather do these alongside full-time acting.



"Retire from what? I want to go on working. I want to learn the finer points of cinema."

AMITABH BACHCHAN

A still from the movie *TE3N*



PRIYANKA TO PICK HER NEXT HINDI FILM

Priyanka Chopra is back in Mumbai after wrapping up her maiden Hollywood film *Baywatch* and the first season of American television series *Quantico*. Priyanka, who will return to the US to shoot for Season 2 of *Quantico*, is accompanied by her TV co-star Yasmine Al Masri on her short stay in India. B-town is abuzz with rumors that Priyanka is in talks with Sanjay Leela Bhansali for his next two projects, including a period drama on Rani Padmavati. Priyanka said, "*Baywatch* will release in May next year. I have come home for 10 days and will go back for *Quantico* Season 2 in July. Now that I have returned, I'll decide what (Hindi) films I'll do." She plays FBI agent Alex Parrish in *Quantico* and will be seen in a negative role as Victoria Leeds in *Baywatch*.



SRK HOSTS BOLLYWOOD BASH FOR "ROCKSTAR" TIM COOK

On his maiden visit to India, Apple CEO Tim Cook's busy schedule included a star-studded dinner at Shah Rukh Khan's sea-facing bungalow in Mumbai, followed by a visit to Bollywood's iconic Mehboob Film Studio for a guided tour of the sets of Mahesh Bhatt's Emraan Hashmi starrer *Raaz Reboot*. At SRK's grand party, Cook met bigwigs of the Hindi film industry—including Amitabh Bachchan, Abhishek, Aishwarya, Aamir Khan, and Madhuri Dixit, director Farah Khan, award-winning composer A R Rahman, and tennis star Sania Mirza. In a series of tweets, SRK shared pictures of the party and thanked the guests for "making Mr. Cook and his team feel the warmth of India". He called Cook "a rockstar".

WHY *RAMAN RAGHAV* LEFT NAWAZUDDIN DISTURBED?

Nawazuddin Siddiqui is earning plaudits for his act as a notorious serial killer in *Raman Raghav 2.0*, which was well received at the 69th Cannes Film Festival. But getting into the skin of the character was a 'disturbing' experience for Nawaz. "It is not a normal character. He has a different thought and philosophy. When you are essaying such a character, you need to feel his thought to be able to do justice to it. You have to imbibe a notion that you actually don't believe in. It can get disturbing. If you see the character with a normal perception, it is very disturbing. While shooting, the lines between right and wrong got blurred," says Nawaz, who also has *TE3N* releasing on June 10. *Raman Raghav 2.0* is slated for a June 24 release but is already making the right noises on foreign shores.





LAAL ISHQ MAKES BHANSALI LIVE HIS MARATHI DREAM

Filmmaker Sanjay Leela Bhansali is "extremely proud" of the success of his first Marathi production *Laal Ishq*. Calling it a dream come true, Bhansali says, "I've always been extremely close to all things Maharashtrian, be it food, music or cinema. I grew up listening to the Mangeshkar family's Marathi songs. I speak fluent Marathi. It was always my wish to make a Marathi film." Bhansali says he had waited long and was hooked to director Swapna Waghmare Joshi's script. It is also Bhansali's first in the suspense genre. In fact, Bhansali gave away the title *Laal Ishq*, which he had originally registered from a song in his previous super hit *Goliyon Ki Raas Leela: Ram Leela*. Bhansali says, "I had registered *Laal Ishq* for my future Hindi film. But I thought it would be perfect for Swapna. I happily gave it away."



SONAM STANDS WITH THE LGBT COMMUNITY

Sonam Kapoor extended her long-continuing support to the LGBT community at the inaugural event of the Kashish Mumbai International Queer Film Festival on May 25. Agreeing with Sir Ian McKellen's call of getting rid of the draconian laws in India, Sonam voiced her support for the rights of the gay and lesbian community. She said, "It's a basic human right. It's not about being lesbian, gay, male, female or transsexual. It's about being able to be who you want to be. I have advocated that since the beginning of my career." Of course, Sonam did not miss the chance to make her unique style statement. She stepped out in a quirky green printed cotton saree by designer Anvila Misra, paired with shiny black Oxford shoes.



KARAN GETS EMOTIONAL ON *BEFIKRE* SETS

Karan Johar felt "so emotional" when he recently visited the sets of Aditya Chopra's upcoming directorial *Befikre* in Paris that he took to Twitter to reminiscence his *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* days. Karan tweeted, "Spent two days in Paris! Felt so emotional being on Adi's sets again! Took me back the *DDLJ* days…the best memories." Karan and Chopra worked together in the 1995 film, which featured superstar Shah Rukh Khan and Kajol in the lead roles. As far as his projects are concerned, Karan is currently busy shooting for his upcoming film *Ae Dil Hai Mushkil* starring Ranbir Kapoor, Aishwarya Rai, Anushka Sharma and Fawad Khan. His home production and Shaad Ali's upcoming directorial *Ok Jaanu*—starring Shraddha Kapoor and Aditya Roy Kapoor—has been wrapped up. The film is a remake of hit Tamil film *Ok Kanmani*.

BOLLYWOOD EXCLUSIVE

Abhishek on Father, Family films



Abhishek Bachchan and the cast of *Housefull 3*—Lisa Haydon, Jacqueline Fernandez and Akshay Kumar

PIC: ROHAN SHRESTHA

BY SHIVANI MANKERMI

Abhishek Bachchan recently suffered a slipped disc and took a break from his professional commitments. In the midst of a marathon of promotions for *Housefull 3* (released on June 3), he says he is now feeling "a 100% better" but doing one film at a time, owing to his health condition. Over a cup of black coffee, Abhishek Bachchan gets chatty with **BOLLYWOOD INSIDER** about his father, films, and his production plans.

Your father recently won the National award for the third time, how do you feel about it?
I feel proud. The first time he won the National Award for *Black* and the second time we both got it for *Paa*, and now he got it for *Piku*. These are special moments in life and it is nice to have your family around. Your wealth is not money or a super-hit film but the memories and experiences of being together. It was a proud moment for him to have his wife, daughter, son, and daughter-in-law to be present at that event. Only Aradhya could not be there, as children under five are not allowed.

What made you take up a comedy franchise like *Housefull 3*?
Housefull is a great franchise. It is a very funny script. I agreed to do the film the minute I heard it. What I liked is the diversity of characters. Akshay is a footballer, Riteish is a car racer and I am a rapper. We fall in love with three girls and get into their house to impress their father. Akshay pretends to be lame, Riteish acts blind and I fake being mute. All three girls in the film—Nargis Fakhri, Jacqueline Fernandez, and Lisa Haydon—have been chosen because they are not fluent in Hindi. In the film, too, they can't speak Hindi as they have grown up in the UK. They literally translate English to Hindi in a thick accent. This story is an ingredient for complete chaos.

Do you think comedy is a difficult genre?
Yes, it is the most difficult genre because you rely entirely on what is written. In action, drama and romance you can create performances with expressions; but in comedy, if the comic timing is not good, it can fall flat.

The song *Tang Uthake* is doing very well. But, do you relate to such lyrics?
You have to communicate with the audience as efficiently as possible. You cannot use clichéd Hindi lyrics these days. Earlier, we didn't have such lyrics because the audience didn't relate to it. But we have a younger audience and they love such songs.

According to you, which actress in Bollywood is the most outstanding in comedy?
Sridevi! She was one of the most outstanding actresses. Maybe other actresses didn't choose to do such comedy.

Apart from acting, you are also a very successful producer. Which films are you producing next?
I like to do all kinds of films but right now we are looking for the right script. Currently, we are producing a film titled *PINK* (starring Amitabh Bachchan) and dad has finished shooting for it. It is a wonderful film. Besides that, we have not started any other project yet.

> *"If I ever work in a sequel to dad's films, the media will say that I am not as good as him."*
>
> *- Abhishek Bachchan*

What do you look for in a film, as an actor or a producer?
If the script appeals to me I take it up. R Balki narrated the story of *Paa* to me in such a way that I couldn't hold back. He came and told me, 'You are playing your father's father and he is playing your son.' I immediately said 'yes' and went on to do the film. Similarly, for me to produce any film, it should appeal to me instantly.

How has your relationship with your father, Amitabh Bachchan changed over the years?
My camaraderie with dad is the same. He has always treated me like a friend. That is the one thing which has not changed till date. My mother was always the enforcer, very strict. She used to scold and spank us, but after a while, we were out of reach. Dad gave us the freedom to do whatever we wanted to pursue.

Would you want to star in a sequel to any of your father's films? Who else do you think can play his characters?
I don't see anyone else. Besides me, who can play his roles? But I don't think I will ever work in a sequel to his films. If I do, the media will not appreciate it and say that I am not as good as him. My dream film is *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham*. If there is a remake or even a sequel, I would like to be a part of that.

Your father made his international film debut with *The Great Gatsby* and Aishwarya has acted in multiple international films. Are you interested in Hollywood?
There is a lot of hype about Hollywood. English is just a language and nothing else. Today there is a huge demand for Hindi films, globally. People from Hollywood are coming and doing item numbers and films. Indian cinema is unique, unlike Hollywood. You go to Hollywood and show them a Manmohan Desai film, they will not understand why there is a song in the movie. Actually, they don't understand our films, and at times, we don't understand theirs, as our cultures are very different. But this barrier has always been there.

What about your fans in the US?
We are exhibiting our films in the US and they are being watched all over, as we have expatriates there. People in the US love our films.

"Our films must address UNIVERSAL AUDIENCES"



After delivering power-packed performances in *Piku*, *Talvar* and *Jazbaa* last year, Irrfan Khan is all set for his upcoming social-thriller, *Madaari*. Directed by Nishikant Kamat (of *Drishyam* fame), the film is based on a real-life incident that took place at the under-construction overhead Metro bridge in Mumbai in 2014. Irrfan plays a vigilante, who loses his son in an accident for which he holds the Home Minister responsible, and seeks justice by kidnapping the minister's son. In the film, actor Jimmy Shergill plays the policeman in pursuit of Irrfan, whose powerful dialogues and convincing emotions in the film's trailer have left an indelible impact on viewers. Although Irrfan had expressed confidence about the film doing well despite its clash with Amitabh Bachchan's *TE3N*, releasing on June 10, the makers have now pushed back the release of *Madaari*. On the initial clash with *TE3N*, that also stars Vidya Balan and Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Irrfan had said, "He is very big and senior. I have grown up watching his films. We have a large number of audience base, which should be enough to cater to both the films." *Madaari* is written and co-produced by Irrfan's wife Sutapa Sikdar, who has admitted she feared that her husband would reject the script. The actor, who will also be seen in Hollywood film *Inferno* alongside Tom Hanks, fielded questions at *Madaari* promotions:

What led you to produce this film rather than just act?

A strong two-line idea drew me towards the subject so much that I wanted the film to be made. This led me from not only being part of the film as an actor but also do much more as a producer.

Tell us about playing a vigilante in *Madaari*, which is critical of certain political ideologies.

I don't know if you can call him a vigilante. Rather, I play a man who feels the system has collapsed completely and there is need for a reform. My character is not based on any one individual. Nor is the film an attack on any political ideology. It's a very powerful subject in the thriller genre. But the drama and human emotions are not drowned in the narrative. This is what I like about this script.

Did you dig into your fatherhood experiences to draw inspiration for your character in *Madaari*?

I never do that. If, as an actor, you begin to delve deep into your own personal emotions and experiences, it can get very dangerous. I never draw connections between my own life and the characters I play. I leave my characters on the sets when I return home.

You have marked a decade in Hollywood too. How does the global audience perceive Bollywood?

Our films are truly making a difference from a content perspective and changing the perception of India being a land of song, dance and snake charmers. The industry started growing and Indian films popularly picked up the pace in film festivals around the world. There are many instances where Indian films have even done great business at the international box office. Now, the audience isn't only restricted to Indians residing abroad. There is a big population of westerners, who are keeping a close eye on Indian films. They recognise Indian actors and are welcoming them with a lot more than just caricature roles.

Priyanka Chopra has made her mark in Hollywood. Deepika is expanding her horizon. Do you think it has sparked off a trend?

Priyanka deserves the recognition coming her way. The way she has reached Hollywood in such a small time and with so much recognition, I think she is doing great. And that industry is not easy. I hope more and more directors would also travel there and make a name for themselves. We have so many talented directors; they must go and work there.

What made you host a special screening of Marathi movie *Sairat* recently?

Our young generation watches a lot of Hollywood cinema and often doesn't watch our films. So I thought of organizing this screening for all my sons' friends to give the young generation a taste of our cinema. There is a need for our films to address universal audiences. This film is the identity of the new cinema that will evolve and give us the courage to compete with Hollywood films. The more cinema gets diverse, the better it is for the growth of the industry. Our industry is unable to cope with the demands of the audiences. That is why Hollywood films are earning so much money. Mahesh Manjrekar-directed *Natsamrat*, starring Nana Patekar, also did brilliant business at the box-office. I think it should've won the National Award for Nana*ji*. Anyway, I wasn't on the jury.

Who do you credit for your phenomenal success?

The directors have shaped me. People don't come to cinema halls to see performances. They come to see the actors on the screen. I am fortunate that despite not dancing (in films), people still come and watch my films. My wife, Sutapa, critiques my work and is my deepest inspiration. (The couple met each other while studying at the National School of Drama). But, our working relationship is not that amicable. When we work together, we fight more. She has a better understanding of my performance. If she says it is a good performance, I blindly accept it.

"I never draw connections between my own life and the characters I play. I leave my characters on the sets when I return home.

- Irrfan Khan



*Irrfan with wife Sutapa at the trailer launch of **Madaari***



*A still from **Madaari***

BOLLYWOOD INSIDER EXCLUSIVE

"I DO IT MY WAY"



BY SHIVANI MANKERMI

As an actor, Emraan Hashmi has evolved from being irrelevant to a smart, unorthodox actor. His last release *Azhar*—a biopic on cricketer Mohammad Azharuddin—recorded a decent Box-office show. In a candid chat with **BOLLYWOOD INSIDER**, Emraan speaks of his Bollywood career of 12 years and penning a book about the most "transformative experience of his life"—his son's battle with cancer.

From the irreverent serial-kisser 12 years ago to your current mature persona, you seem to have done quite a few things right. How has this come about?

Yes, I have evolved quite a bit. I entered the industry as a brash bold actor, completely irreverent to industry rules. I came in for a lot of criticism as well. But surprisingly, my films were always successful.

At that time, I had no strategy or direction. I mostly did all the films I was offered. But now I realize that I was the only actor who wasn't doing romantic comedies, family dramas, and multi-starrers, which were all the rage in those days.

I was doing these thrillers and edgy plots that people found very interesting. People take me seriously these days. With films like *Shanghai* and *The Dirty Picture*, the critics have started looking at me differently. But I have never sought this kind of categorizing that I only do certain kinds of films.

For a long time, people said you didn't act at all...

I saw a lot of Amitabh Bachchan and Dilip Kumar films while growing up but soon my interest in Hindi films waned. I took to Western films in a big way. I would watch a lot of films on VHS and most of my acting style comes from Hollywood, where actors tend to underplay emotions. In India, actors overplay and therefore restrained acting is not noticed at all. I believe in real performances. I do it my way.

Do you feel you have got your due as an actor?

Mostly, yes. It depends on what yardstick you measure your success; if by awards, then no. But if popularity and success of a film are the measures, then most definitely yes. For instance, many fans feel Azharuddin has not got his due as a cricket legend. But look at his track record, his fan following, and the number of matches he has won for India. I have never aspired to be part of any camp and I don't play for the top slot. There are actors who do and I don't judge them. I find satisfaction in doing the kind of work I am doing.

What prominent attributes of Azhar did you have to bring out in the film? Did you watch a lot of Azhar's cricket?

As a person, Azhar is extremely stylish. My preparation was aimed at internalizing his distinct body language—his hunkered gait, an upturned shirt collar and his love for watches and suits. I have never played a real-life character before. So, I have never had to model myself on anyone. And although I have not imitated him directly, I have learned some of his mannerisms to get his attitude right. Even as a cricketer, he has been unconventional and risk-prone despite his agility and strength. It's a distinct style. The bigger challenge was to dramatize all the research and facts of a real-life celebrity into a cohesive screenplay.

Instead of any of your Bollywood friends, you asked Chief Minister of Delhi, Arvind Kejriwal, to launch your book *The Kiss of Life*. Why?

I am not into politics. It doesn't interest me as much as good health does. While researching for my book, I realized that Arvind Kejriwal has done serious work to support pollution-free environment. Air pollutants are the biggest cause of cancer and other life-threatening diseases (His son Ayaan, now 6, was diagnosed with cancer in 2014). Kejriwal's efforts made me feel that he is someone who knows how dangerous this is for us. So, I just thought of inviting him to launch the book. That's it.

MESSAGE FOR US FANS

I studied in London and spent many vacations in the US. I have very fond memories. It is great that Indians in the US are such huge fans of Bollywood. It is encouraging for our cinema.

"I've got my stamp of approval from the box office"

Swara Bhaskar is riding high on the success of her first solo film *Nil Battey Sannata*. She will be seen in a never-before avatar in *Anaarkali Aaraah-waali* (literally Anarkali of Aaraah, a town in Bihar). The actress shares that the film revolves around the journey of a woman famous for performing on explicit numbers.

Swara says, "I think this one may be yet another departure from the expected role. I portray a foul-mouthed, feisty orchestra party singer from the volatile town of Aaraah in Bihar." Speaking of her preference for content-driven cinema over commercial, Swara said, "I think any actor would prefer roles that give them a chance to perform. I also feel the typical boundaries between commercial and content high cinema are dissolving. I have been lucky that even in my commercial films I've got the chance to play performance-heavy parts." On the success of *Nil Battey Sannata*—she left audiences teary-eyed with her act as a domestic help struggling to ensure that her daughter receives good education—Swara says, "The fact that it's my first solo hit feels amazing. Actors are not considered 'legit' till the box office certifies them. So, it feels like I've got my stamp of approval from the box office. I always knew and believed that it would be well received. But I had no idea that the reviews would be so good and the audience response would be so effusive and affectionate."

Born in New Delhi, with no connection to glitz and glamour, the *Raanjhanaa* fame actress holds a masters degree in sociology from Jawaharlal Nehru University. She says for outsiders, Bollywood is a big risk. "I can't comment on how difficult it is in comparison to star children. For an outsider, you are potentially gambling away the best years of your life on a crazy desire that may not be fulfilled. There are thousands of people who come to Mumbai with the same dream."





"Film industry is MALE-DOMINATED"

At 41, award-winning actress Kajol stands strong and bold in the film industry. With a film career spanning over two decades, the Padma Shri awardee believes that showbiz is "just another business in a man's world". Married to actor-producer Ajay Devgn, the mother of two was last seen on the big screen in the 2015 film *Dilwale*. And no, she isn't taking a break from movies again. She is all set to start shooting for her untitled home production this year.

Wage inequality recently became a hot topic in Hollywood and Bollywood. What are your thoughts?
It is a male-dominated industry. There is no getting away from that fact. Whether it is Hollywood or Bollywood, gender inequality will exist because our world is like that. It is simply another business and it also has to be monetarily feasible and economically viable. It has everything to do with the pay scale.

Neither age nor marital status has ever come in the way of your career. Are doing husband Ajay's film, next?
I can't talk about it right now. It is still in the scripting stage. I hope it goes on floors in the next three months or so. The director is yet to be finalized.

How did you become the ambassador of the 'Help a Child Reach 5' campaign, advocating hand washing with soap as one of the most cost-effective means of preventing child deaths?
Through our ad *Haath Mooh aur Bum, Bimari Hogi Kum*, we want to bring alive the message of hygiene in a fun and engaging manner. Clean surroundings and following good hygiene are two prerequisites to stay fit and healthy. The campaign is very close to my heart. As a person, you have the responsibility to help out in whichever way you can. I am famous and people recognize me. Hopefully, they will believe in the things I say, so I can use that to the advantage of society and work for it.

You met Prime Minister Narendra Modi to discuss the campaign…
We talked about making hand wash mandatory in schools. Only when the facility is available, will it become a habit. Our campaign coincides well with the *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan*. We are definitely on the same page and have the same goal of creating a hygienic environment. We want to lower the child mortality rate.

With multiple projects in your hands, don't your children—daughter Nysa and son Yug—complain?
They always complain. If they had their way, I would be sitting at home 24/7. My son tells me 'Mama I like it when I enter the house and see you waiting for me'. I think every child wants their mother to be their *bai* (maid).

"I can't over-act all that well"



Naseeruddin Shah could be passionate, angry, subdued or even witty, and simply dominate a film with his stellar performance—no matter how small his part. Known for his craft in parallel cinema and character-oriented roles, the Padma Bhushan awardee's latest accomplishment is Anu Menon's *Waiting*—released on May 27. The film showcases the relationship between two people, who befriend each other in a hospital while nursing their respective comatose spouses. Shah plays Shiv, an old-school Philosophy professor, alongside the young Kalki Koechlin. The 66-year-old actor feels it is time for Bollywood to encourage "substance" in cinema.

How do you manage to play loud characters in films like *Tridev*, or more recently in *The Dirty Picture* and *Welcome Back*, and then underplay, like in *Waiting*?
When I'm working with younger actors I make it a point to emphasize that there is no such thing as over-acting or under-acting. These are faulty terms. There is truth and there is falseness. If you say over-acting, then *Kathakali* or *Kabuki* are the worst forms of over-acting. But that's not so. There is a long list of loud films. It is the kind of acting that is required for a particular form of cinema. For Hindi commercial cinema, a certain kind of acting is required. For the kind of film *Waiting* is, it is different.

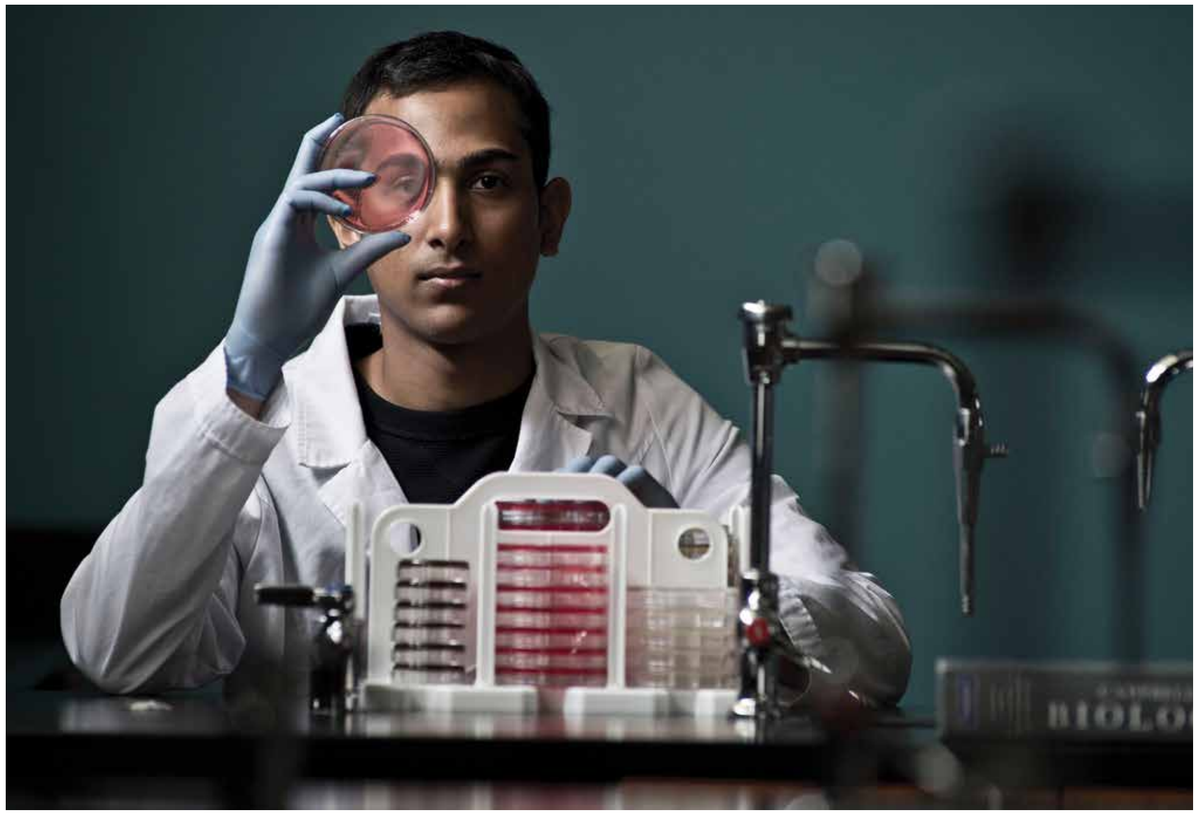
In *Waiting*, are you doing more of what you are known for?
I am playing a calm and composed character despite the pain of waiting for my wife to come out of coma. The character is so well-written that the actor's job is almost over with the writing alone. I find myself more comfortable in a subject like this because I can't over-act all that well. There are some who do it well.

Do you think the audience discerns meaningful scripts today?
I feel viewers should support more films such as *Waiting* and look for something engrossing and stimulating than just entertainment in a film. This film has been made under really difficult, straitened circumstances. It is because of the backing of a courageous producer, and the vision of a director who desperately wanted to make it, that all of us got together and it has been successful. This is the kind of movie that I feel particularly close to because of the nature of its budget, nature of its subject, and the nature of the way it is made.

From the current breed of actors, who according to you classify as performance-oriented?
Our country has a fantastic crop of actors. I envy Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Manoj Bajpayee, and Irrfan Khan. They are so skillful. Actors like Arshad Warsi and Vijay Raaz are at par with the best actors in the world. Nawazuddin is one of the finest actors I have ever seen and I wish I was that good at his age. But it remains to be seen what our great film industry does with a talent like Nawaz. We don't know what it (Bollywood) will make of him and talents like Manoj and Kalki. But I feel these guys have the caliber to make an enduring mark.

But, aren't they also commercial actors?
We can call Nawazuddin a commercial actor. He stole the limelight in *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*. To give that kind of a sparkling performance in a movie like *Kick*, Nawazuddin stands alone. He is the only one who has done justice to both kinds of movies. I was never able to. Om (Puri) was never able to, even Irrfan was never able to.

Why do you say Bollywood may not do justice to these actors?
Bollywood has no content most of the time. We just rip off Hollywood. We are stealing and patting ourselves that the whole world is watching our movies. The whole world is watching our movies because they are also eating Indian food! It is the spices and the variety that is attracting them. Indian food has substance, which is why it will remain popular. Hindi cinema doesn't, which is why this bubble will burst very soon.



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"I was very scared as I don't look like a wrestler"

Anushka Sharma is paired opposite Salman Khan in *Sultan*, that releases on July 6. At the trailer launch of the film, Anushka shared how she transformed into Aarfa for Sultan.

After Shah Rukh and Aamir, how was it working with Salman?
Salman is a very refreshing person to work with. If you see someone like him you feel relieved. You realize his passion when you work with him, which is amazing. He has worked really hard for this film.

What made you take up the role of a wrestler?
Earlier, I was very scared as I don't look like a wrestler. We perceive wrestlers to be of a particular size. I often asked producer Aditya Chopra, 'How can this happen?' But when I researched, I found out that there were international wrestlers, who looked like me. I learnt the technical moves of wrestling as I was sure I will not use a body-double. I felt if I have learnt something, I should show it properly. I am very happy I did it. Now, when I watch wrestling, I know what's happening.

How comfortable were you in the fight sequences?
As a girl, you are not used to having someone so close. In the beginning, I used to feel very uncomfortable. When I saw a lot of videos, I realized that you have to go all into it to do it correctly. I went for it and did not care about anything.

Tell us about the process of getting into the skin of your character?
I had a good team of trainers. Luckily, there were no injuries. I had six weeks to prepare for the film and I am glad everything went on smoothly. The kind of work that goes into wrestling is something I had not seen before. I am happy I got to experience it in fragments. I am going to hold it close to my heart.

Is Sultan an out-and-out romantic film?
It's the story of two wrestlers. They understand each other's ups and downs as they are in the same profession. My character in the film says, 'In life if you start focusing too much on one particular thing, you forget important things.' So, the film is about how their love story affects Sultan's life.



Salman and Anushka at the Sultan trailer launch

"My heart is not on my sleeve anymore"

Sanjay Dutt is gearing up for his next flick *Marco Bhau*—an emotional story of a father and daughter to be directed by Vidhu Vinod Chopra's sister, Shelly. A regular at social events and award shows since his February release from Pune's Yerwada jail, Sanjay has also begun shooting for TV commercials in Mumbai to restore normalcy in his life. At the recent annual convention of the Entertainment Management Associations (EEMA) in New Delhi, Sanjay poured his heart out—speaking of surviving the jail, his emotional 23-year-long journey to freedom, and his upcoming films.

Your life is all set to be captured on celluloid in a biopic…
Two hours are not enough for my story. Rajkumar (Hirani) sir and I will make the film together. I have not heard the script yet, but I would definitely love to have Salman in a cameo.

What are your forthcoming ventures?
I am going to do some great cinema. I don't want to do films because I am compelled to do them. I want to make a difference and just try to change the genre in the industry. First, I will be doing Siddharth Anand's film and then it will be Vidhu Vinod Chopra's film (*Marco Bhau*). Since the biopic is also happening, the *Munnabhai* franchise will happen later.

You managed to maintain your physique in jail…
Who says you can't work out without a gym? I weighed 110 kgs before I went to jail because I was drinking heavily. One day, I was having a bath (in jail) and I looked at myself and thought, '*Yaar mera pet kuch zyada hi nikal gaya hai*.' Then I started running in the yard and lifting huge buckets of water. I hammered nails into the wall till my knuckles hurt and wrists swelled. I did it every day because I wanted to break through the pain.



Sanjay with wife Manyata

Did you have any survival strategy in jail?
There is no room for hope. Once you cut that hope, you survive beautifully. I want to go across the country and speak to people about my life and share my journey. For me, life has not been beautiful. It has been like going up to Mount Everest and then falling down. In the Pune jail (lodged from 2013), there are billions of flies all over, in your hair, in your clothes and even in your food. *Main makkhi nikaal kar daal pi jaata tha*. My co-accused would not eat and asked, '*Tu makkhi wali daal kaise pi jata hai*?' I said, '*Yahan protein nahin milta hai, daal mein protein hota hai*'. Now, I don't complain about my wife cooking *daal*.

Did your twins (Shahraan and Iqra) know you were in jail?
There were moments when I really wanted to see them. My wife would say, 'I will bring them there'. But I told her, 'Never'. I didn't want them to live with that image of me in torn clothes and the jail *topi*. These days, children are very smart. When I used to speak to them twice a month, they would say, '*Papa photo wala phone lagao*' (video chat). I had to tell them that I was shooting in the mountains and didn't have a proper connection. That is what they know.

Do you see it as a lesson? Any regrets?
I don't have any regrets, but I have learned from it. I now understand the law of the land. And, my heart is not on my sleeve anymore. It has gone to my pocket! I may stand by a friend in his trials, but retreat to the periphery in his happy times. To be honest, when I was in jail, I didn't expect anyone to visit my home or see me in jail. It didn't hurt when they didn't. But now, people visit me and I love it.

You have also been vocal about substance abuse.
Substance abuse is something you do if you want to do it. I didn't leave drugs because of my family. I left because I didn't want that life. I want to tell youngsters, live your life, love your work, and love your family. It is better than cocaine.

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Chairman, Indian American Voters Forum
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Kalathil Varghese



(L-R) 1: Glen Cove Mayor Tom Suozzi with former Prime Minister of India I K Gujral and Varinder Bhalla (1999), 2: Dev Anand first met Tom Suozzi when he was Glen Cove Mayor (2000). A year later, Anand appealed to the Indian community on RBC Radio to support Suozzi in his run for County Executive, 3: A great admirer of Indian culture, Suozzi receives welcome Tika from Riti Sunshine Bhalla while Dev Anand looks on, 4: Dev Anand and Suozzi having dinner together with Riti Bhalla, 5: Suozzi with Ambassador Dnyaneshwar Mulay and Dr. Sunil Mehra.

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NUTAN

The Ethereal Beauty

In times when Hindi cinema welcomed many of its larger-than-life *Prima Donnas*, Nutan Samarth Behl epitomized the believable woman with her carefully etched characters—subtle and yet strong, with utter disregard for vanity. With her evocative dialogue delivery, Nutan could be shy and effervescent with as much ease as she could be fiery and witty. Through her career of over four decades and 70 films, Nutan essayed the protagonist or at least shared an equal footing with her heroes. She battled her mother in court over misappropriation of funds for several years; she once slapped her co-star Sanjeev Kumar in a fit of temper. But, for many, Nutan continues to be the archetypal *bhartiya nari*.

BRUSH WITH THE CAMERA

Born to Marathi filmmaker-poet Kumarsen Samarth and his actress wife Shobhana, on June 4, 1936, Nutan was the eldest of four children (her younger sister is actress Tanuja). Her parents separated when she was a child. At the age of 14, she starred in K Asif's *Hamari Beti*, produced by her mother. In an age when petite was beautiful, she was initially dismissed as "ugly" and "skinny". She reached her first peak in 1951 with hit films *Hum Log* and *Nagina*, as well as a Miss India title in 1952. Her big break was *Seema* (1955), for which she won her first Filmfare Best Actress Award. But, she left her budding film career mid-way to join a Swiss finishing school—*La Chatelainie*.

THE EXTRAORDINARY COMEBACK

On her return, she tasted success with romantic comedy *Paying Guest* (1957) alongside Dev Anand. She unabashedly agreed to wear a swimsuit in *Delhi Ka Thug* (1958), shocking her critics. Her marriage to Naval Commander Rajnish Behl in 1959, marked the beginning of the most triumphant innings of her film career. She starred in two hits, *Anari* (with Raj Kapoor) and Bimal Roy's *Sujata* (with Sunil Dutt) in 1959 and delivered a streak of successful films through the 1960s and 1970s, including *Chhalia* (1960), *Saraswatichandra* (1968), *Devi* (1970) and *Main Tulsi Tere Aangan Ki* (1978). Her pairing with co-star Dev Anand was popular, and the two acted in three more films together—*Baarish* (1957), *Manzil* (1960) and *Tere Ghar Ke Samne* (1963).

In 1963, Nutan also essayed Kalyani in Bimal Roy's socio-realistic *Bandini* (1962). Counted among the "most iconic performances" of Hindi cinema, Nutan's portrayal of the complexity and dilemma of a young woman convicted of poisoning the wife of her lover (played by Ashok Kumar) was influential in the film's overwhelming success. The film won the Filmfare Award for Best Movie and she received her third Best Actress Award. In the same year, she was blessed with a son—Mohnish Behl—who would go on to become a successful actor in his own right.

Her fourth Filmfare Award came for *Milan* (1967). In 1978, at 42, she made yet another incredible comeback as the upright Sanjukta Chauhan in *Main Tulsi Tere Aangan Ki* and walked away with her fifth Filmfare Best Actress Award. She created the record for 'Most Filmfare Best Actress Awards', also becoming the oldest winner at 42 years of age. Till date, the only other actress to share the honor with Nutan is her niece Kajol. Nutan was perhaps the only actress of her generation to command leading roles in her 40s, with tremendous success. She was honored with the civilian honor of Padma Shri in 1974. Her blockbuster streak continued through the 1980s, essaying roles in films such as *Meri Jung* (1985), *Naam* (1986), and *Karma* (1986), in which she was paired with Dilip Kumar for the first time. For *Meri Jung*, she won a Filmfare Award for the Best Supporting Actress.

Madhuri Dixit worked with Nutan in Umesh Mehra's *Mujrim* (1989), in which Nutan played the mother to the male protagonist, Mithun Chakraborty. In February this year, at the launch of the fourth upgraded edition of Nutan's Marathi biography, '*Nutan–Asen Mi, Nasen Mi*' (*Nutan: I may be here, I may not be*)—the narrative by author Lalita Tamhane summarizes Nutan's life experiences as shared by the actress—Madhuri said, "When you think of Nutan*ji*, you can only feel the love she has left behind. The first time I met her was during the filming of *Mujrim*. I was a new actress and expecting her to arrive with starry airs like most others. But she walked into the set holding her own umbrella. I could not believe my eyes. She was a star but so simple! She asked me about my family and was thrilled to know that my mother was a trained classical singer. After the pack up that day, she sat me down and sang her original *bhajan* compositions to me. That day, I had decided that I would model my personality after her. You may be a star, but at the end of the day, you are what you are. She was very true to herself."

END OF AN ERA

Nutan turned to spirituality during the last few years of her life and reconciled with her mother. During the release of Nutan's biography in 2009, sister Tanuja said, "She would always tell me, 'What is gone is gone. You must not remember it. If you must, only recall the good things but do not feel bad about what has gone'. She had her ways of punishing me for being mischievous and stubborn." Nutan fiercely guarded her private life and rarely agreed to be interviewed. She never revealed how she met her husband, Rajnish, to whom she remained married until her death. Nutan succumbed to a long valiant battle with cancer on February 21, 1991, at the age of 54. Two of her films, *Insaniyat*, and *Naseebwala* were released after her death. Filmmaker Sanjay Leela Bhansali has confessed on several occasions that his heroines unfailingly assimilate Nutan's sublime charm. The charisma of Nutan's fleeting expressions, however, has remained unparalleled, eternally.





With Dev Anand in Tere Ghar Ke Saamne (1963)



Main Tulsi Tere Aangan Ki (1978)

When SONU NIGAM pulled off a street prank

Singer Sonu Nigam, who has rendered soul stirring numbers in *Sarbjit*, recently slipped into the garb of an aged street performer for a social experiment video, titled *The Roadside Ustaad*. The singer spent a significant amount of time on the busy streets of Juhu in Mumbai, with a harmonium; with gray hair, dark glasses, a beard and mustache and tattered clothes, to capture mixed reactions of individuals. While some stopped by and enjoyed the 'old man's' singing, others nonchalantly walked away—all of them oblivious to the fact that the old man is none other than Sonu himself. Only one young man, as a gesture to acknowledge the roadside singer's craft, gave Sonu Rs 12. The singer was so touched by the act of kindness that he framed the money next to his trophies at home. The video has gathered close to 4 million views on Culture Machine's YouTube channel *Being Indian*, since its release in May. The 42-year-old is currently recuperating from his second knee surgery—within a few months—forcing him to cancel his concerts for the moment.

Didn't it feel awkward to do this experiment?

I went (to do this video) without any expectations, totally bereft of any awkwardness for the way I was looking and what I was about to subject myself to. For the first time, I was not me. The makeup was so authentic that even people standing so close couldn't recognize me.

What were the reactions like?

They didn't recognize my voice. But they liked my voice. The good part was that I could actually attract them through my voice. I was dreading that people may recognize me; that would be an embarrassment. There was no one around me, no bodyguards, no team, and no managers.

You sang for over three hours for a six-minute video. Was it easy?

What you saw is a very short clip of just two songs. At every spot, I sang for one hour each. It wasn't easy sitting in the sun, in the dust; I sang at least 25 varied songs. I worked hard, that's why so many people joined in.

What did you want people to learn from the video?

What learning can I give others; it was my own learning. It's the same me, it's the same voice. The only difference was the clothes and my look—a poor man sitting alone. We wanted to know how that experience would be. It was all so humbling. And from such an unfamiliar zone, I managed to procure something—gratitude, grace and appreciation for what we have.



Sonu Nigam spent time on the busy streets of Juhu in Mumbai, with a harmonium; with gray hair, dark glasses, a beard and mustache and tattered clothes.



1954 Movies: Worth a Watch

AAR PAAR



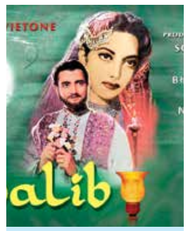
The *joie de vivre* of Guru Dutt's early films like *Aar Paar*, starring Johnny Walker, Shyama, Shakila, Jagdeep and Jagdish Sethi is infectious. With music by O.P Nayyar and lyrics by Majrooh Sultanpuri, eight tuneful songs are snugly encrusted in the film. Raj Khosla and Guru Dutt's brother Atma Ram, assisted him during the making of *Aar Paar*. For Shyama, the film was a sterling success among her many B-grade ventures.

JAGRITI



Based on the 1949 Bengali film *Paribartan*, directed by Satyen Bose, Jagriti won the Filmfare Best Movie Award in 1956. The lead hero, Abhi Bhattacharya, won the Filmfare award for Best Supporting Actor. This movie is known for its classic patriotic songs, written by one of the greatest Indian poets and lyricists of all time, Kavi Pradeep, and set to music by Hemant Kumar.

MIRZA GHALIB



Directed by Sohrab Modi, *Mirza Ghalib* is a biographical film in Hindi and Urdu, based on the life of well-known poet Mirza Ghalib. It stars Bharat Bhushan as Ghalib and Suraiya as his courtesan lover, Chaudhvin. Set in a historical background, the film portrays the life of the sensitive poet, who is deeply affected by the conflict between love and loyalty. The story revolves around his trials, success and failures, and his ultimate descent into poverty.

NAGIN



The highest grosser of the year, *Nagin* starred Vyjayanthimala and Pradeep Kumar as members of rival clans of snake charmers, who eventually fall in love. Directed by Nandlal Jaswantlal, the film was partly taken by Technicolor. Music director Hemant Kumar delivered a hit soundtrack of 13 songs, including *O Zindagi ke Denewale*, which had a popular *been* music by Kalyanji on the clavioline and Ravi on the harmonium.

NASTIK



The social crime drama, written and directed by I S Johar, *Nastik* ran for 50 weeks at the box-office after facing an initial ban. The film highlighted the anguish of partition using documentary footage of the mass exodus of people from both sides of the border. The film is still viewed as a benchmark in comparison to other films on the same topic. The film starred Nalini Jaywant, Ajit, Raj Mehra, Ulhas, Mehmood, and Roopmala.

TAXI DRIVER



Produced by Navketan Films and directed by Chetan Anand, *Taxi Driver* starred Dev Anand and his wife-to-be Kalpana Kartik, and Johnny Walker. A nostalgic journey of erstwhile Bombay of the 1950s, the film showed a British Hillman Minx black car with the registration number 1111 as Dev Anand's taxi. The film's success saw Hillman Minx become the popular brand for taxis in Bombay until the 1970s.

June 1

R MADHAVAN



Fondly called 'Maddy' by his family, friends and fans, Madhavan aspired to join the Indian army but went on to pursue graduation in Electronics. After completing his degree, he conducted public speaking workshops across India. He bagged a sandalwood talc advertisement from Santosh Sivan in 1996. Sivan recommended him to Mani Ratnam for a screen test for Tamil film *Iruvar*. Madhavan failed the test and turned to television. He made his acting debut with popular TV series *Yule Love Stories* and appeared in a few cameos in films, before bagging Mani Ratnam's Tamil blockbuster *Alaipayuthey* in 1999. The film earned him awards, accolades and a role in *Minnale*, which was later remade as *Rehna Hai Tere Dil Mein* in Hindi. It marked Madhavan's debut into mainstream Bollywood with Dia Mirza. His chocolate boy looks have repeatedly earned him the number one spot on the 'Sexiest Man Alive' lists of various glamor magazines. He was voted as the "cutest male vegetarian" by an online poll conducted by PETA in 2006. Madhavan's popularity soared with critically acclaimed roles in *Rang De Basanti*, *Guru*, *Mumbai Mere Jaan*, *3 Idiots* and the *Tanu Weds Manu* series. He turns 46 this year. Happy Birthday, Madhavan!

June 2

SONAKSHI SINHA



Daughter of actor-politician Shatrughan Sinha, Sonakshi's deepest desire is to own a fashion label, although she has her energy focused on acting at the moment. She was the costume designer for the movie *Mera Dil Leke Dekho* (2005) and has been a regular on the annual Lakme Fashion Week ramp. Her sensational debut in *Dabangg* (2010) made many directors take notice of her unconventional Indian beauty. She donated her signing amount of the film to Salman Khan's charitable organization 'Being Human'. After *Dabangg*, Sonakshi was signed up by established production houses for *Rowdy Rathore*, *Joker*, *Lootera*, *Son of Sardar* and *Race 2*. Fondly known as 'Miss 100 crore' of Bollywood, Sonakshi has a penchant for wearing traditional *sarees* since childhood. She is passionate about sketching and has expressed her intention to launch her own clothing line called 'Asli Sona'. She turns 29 this year. Happy Birthday, Sonakshi!

June 8

SHILPA SHETTY KUNDRA

A well-trained Bharatnatyam dancer and sports buff, Shilpa Shetty captained her school volleyball team and earned a black belt in karate. In her teens, she participated in one of filmmaker Mani Ratnam's stage shows called *Netry*, *Indru* and *Naalai*. She earned her first soft drink advertisement at the age of 16 in 1991 and was soon cast by filmmaker duo Abbas-Mustan as the supporting actress in *Baazigar* (1993), alongside Kajol and Shahrukh Khan. The film was a blockbuster hit at the box office. But for Shilpa, a streak of average and poor films followed. She rose to fame in 2007, becoming the first Indian to win the celebrity reality show, *Big Brother UK*, after facing extreme racism at the hands of the housemates. Back in India, Shilpa became an icon of courage for standing up for her dignity. She hosted the second season of the Indian edition of the reality show *Big Boss*. There was no looking back as she went on to espouse social causes and became the face of leading brands. In February 2009, along with her now husband, Raj Kundra, Shilpa became a co-owner of cricket franchise Rajasthan Royals of the Indian Premiere League. She has also launched her own gold jewelry line called Satyug Gold. Shilpa turns 41 this year. Happy Birthday, Shilpa!



June 9

SONAM KAPOOR



In her early years, Sonam aspired for a career in film direction and screen writing. After receiving an International Baccalaureate from the United World College of South East Asia, she started her career by assisting Sanjay Leela Bhansali for *Black* (2005). It took Bhansali two years to convince Sonam to act in *Saawariya* (2007). Overweight at that time, Sonam considered herself "far from beautiful". She began her rigorous training for 18 months and lost 35 kilos after Bhansali told her that she looks like a painting from the historical Ajanta caves. Although *Saawariya* flopped, Sonam earned many accolades. She is known as the unbeatable fashionista of Bollywood and has won countless 'Best Dressed' titles from glamour magazines. An Enid Blyton fan and an avid reader, Sonam has a keen interest in book release events and finds shopping irresistible. She loves playing squash, video games, and painting. Sonam asserts that she has been financially independent since the age of 15. She took up a job as a waitress during her study years in Singapore as her parents gave her a meager allowance. She turns 31 this year. Happy Birthday, Sonam!

June 14

KIRRON KHER



Currently a Member of Parliament of the Lok Sabha (Lower House), Kirron Kher is busy judging reality TV show *India's Got Talent*. Born Kiran Thakar Singh, the actress grew up playing badminton with her Arjuna-awardee sister, Kanwal Kaur, at Prakash Padukone's Badminton Academy. She developed a strong faith in numerology after the death of her artist brother in 2003 and changed her name to Kirron. She began her career acting in plays and hosting television talk shows. A well-received Punjabi film *Aasra Pyar Da* in 1983 marked her cinema debut. But within two years, she took a decade-long hiatus to raise her son, Sikander. She married actor Anupam Kher in 1985, following her divorce from Gautam Berry. Kirron returned to cinema with Shyam Benegal's *Sardari Begum* in 1996, winning the Special Jury National Award. She bagged the National Award (Best Actress) for her portrayal of Banalata in Rituparno Ghosh's Bengali film *Bariwali* in 2000. The 2003 film *Khamosh Pani* (Silent Waters) won her much international recognition and a Bronze Leopard Award at the Locarno International Film Festival, Switzerland. She featured in the American medical drama series *ER* in 2004, playing mother to Parminder Nagra. Kirron turns 61 this year. Happy Birthday, Kirron!

June 26

ARJUN KAPOOR



Arjun Kapoor transformed himself from an introvert, plump teenager to an outgoing actor. Inspired by Salman Khan, Arjun took to acting after shedding almost 60 kilos for his debut in *Ishaqzaade* (2011). He lost his mother Mona Kapoor to cancer, just a few days ahead of the film's release. Arjun was extremely close to his mother and has tattooed the word 'Ma' on his right wrist in her memory. He received his first pay cheque at the age of 17 for assisting Nikhil Advani in Dharma Productions' *Kal Ho Naa Ho*. Later, he assisted Nikhil Advani for *Salaam-E-Ishq* (2007). Arjun's peers jokingly call him 'Fubu'—his nickname from teenage days, when he would mostly wear only football jerseys made by the US brand FUBU. Despite his stringent fitness regime, Arjun has a soft spot for Nutella, spicy *samosas* and loves the humble Punjabi *kadhi* and rice for a meal. He has a weakness for luxury cars and Aston Martin Rapid is his dream machine. Arjun turns 31 this year. Happy Birthday, Arjun!

SARBJIT

Emotionally engaging, but not perfect

Director: Omung Kumar

Cast: Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, Randeep Hooda, Richa Chadda

Rating: ★★★½☆



A biopic on Sarbjit Singh, *Sarbjit* is the story of a farmer from Punjab's Bhikhiwind, arrested in Pakistan for crossing the border on August 28, 1990. The film depicts the 23-year-long ordeal of Sarbjit's (Randeep) sister Dalbir Kaur (Aishwarya), in her unsuccessful attempt to have her brother released from Pakistan, where he is convicted for a series of bomb blasts on charges of terrorism.

Aishwarya delivers a reasonably potent performance that evokes sympathy; not merely on the strength of her act, but because of the powerful character. Alas, Aishwarya tries too hard to modulate her voice and emulate the mannerisms of a *Sikhni*.

Randeep as Sarbjit steals the show. His transition is palpable, physically and mentally—from a happy-go-lucky sweet brother to an anguished imprisoned soul. He deserved more screen space in the film. The talented Richa Chadda is under utilized, playing the forlorn silent wife, Sukhpreet. The rest of the cast is convincing.

Director Omung Kumar's non-linear narrative is engaging; flashback scenes of Sarbjit with his family are smoothly intermingled with the tragic moments. The film does not delve into the family controversies that surround Dalbir Kaur and the existence of other siblings, choosing to focus on the message of patriotism instead. Despite its flaws, the film is emotionally draining. Scenes that stand out in the film include one where Sarbjit breaks down emotionally and cries, "Save me, sister".

The cinematography helmed by Kiran Deohans is remarkable, capturing vibrant Punjab and the subsequent catastrophe befalling members of the family. The film is an earnest attempt to tell Sarbjit Singh's story. Watch it for Randeep.

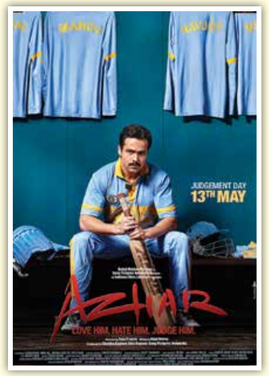
AZHAR

Wide of the mark

Director: Tony D'souza

Cast: Emraan Hashmi, Prachi Desai, Nargis Fakhri, Kunal Roy Kapur, Lara Dutta

Rating: ★★☆☆☆



A film by the name of *Azhar*, based on the life of Mohammad Azharuddin, the legendary cricketer from Hyderabad, is bound to arouse curiosity and attract cricket fans and film buffs alike. But this dramatized version of Azhar's life, as stated in the disclaimer, is neither an honest depiction nor a captivating one. Chronicling Azharuddin's life selectively—with a focus on the three match-fixing allegations, which were a stigma on his cricketing career and earned him a cricket ban from the BCCI—the film does not delve deep into the life of India's most flamboyant sports star. A combination of insinuations against other cricketers and dreary courtroom scenes, the film skims through Azharuddin's life and ends up being an impulsive shot at redeeming him through flashy dialogues preaching virtue.

Azhar lacks an ensemble of energetic performers. Emraan succeeds in imitating Azharuddin's marked body language as well as his cricketing strokes but his restrained mannerisms tend to become monotonous for a 140-minute visual narrative. Prachi Desai as his first wife, Naureen, delivers a fine performance although the script does not offer much space for her talent. Nargis Fakhri as the second wife, actress Sangeeta, is the film's biggest weakness with heavy makeup, an unappealing pout, and no performance to speak of.

Lara Dutta, as advocate Meera, has a commanding screen presence while Kunal Roy Kapoor as Reddy, Azharuddin's friend and lawyer, plays his part to perfection. Kunal's attempt as a half-balding timid lawyer is yet another evidence of his craft in pulling off an unusual character with an atypical get-up. Veteran Kulbhushan Kharbanda as Azharuddin's maternal grandfather, Wajehuddin, leaves an impact with his distinct Hyderabadi accent in his limited screen time.

The film's song *Bol Do Na Zara* has gained popularity. *Azhar* had the potential of becoming the year's most well-told biopic; only if director Tony D'souza and writer Rajat Arora had tackled the subject sincerely, instead of a lazily-crafted screenplay focused at vindicating Azharuddin, overflowing with flashbacks. Only the cricket stadium scenes appear close to reality. Strictly, a one-time watch.

COLLECTIONS

Housefull 3 off to a great start



Housefull 3, which features Akshay Kumar, Jacqueline Fernandez, Riteish Deshmukh, Lisa Haydon, Nargis Fakhri and Abhishek Bachchan, got off to a fantastic start after release on June 3. The film saw a collection of a whopping Rs 15.21 crores and grabbed the second position in the list of movies with highest opening day business in 2016.

MAY WINNERS

Baaghi
₹ 76 crores

Azhar
₹ 33 crores

Sarbjit
₹ 22 crores

WAITING

A rewarding experience

Director: Anu Menon

Cast: Naseeruddin Shah, Kalki Koechlin, Rajat Kapoor

Rating: ★★★☆☆



Wrapped in a medical drama, and speaking about hope, *Waiting* is a poignant tale about coping with despondency and frustration. Set in South India, the film intertwines the lives of two diametrically opposite people who befriend and comfort each other while making tough decisions for their beloved comatose spouses.

Married for less than a year, Tara Deshpande's (Kalki) life comes to a grinding halt when her husband Rajat (Arjun Mathur) meets with an accident and suffers serious head injuries. Shaken and alone at the hospital, Tara meets Shiv Natraj (Naseeruddin Shah), who is nursing his comatose wife, Pankaja (Suhasini), for over eight months. Their neurosurgeon (Rajat Kapoor) gives up hope on Pankaja, but Shiv, with his never-say-die attitude, fights to keep his wife alive. On the other hand, while the doctor insists on operating Tara's husband, she is skeptical about the results.

Scripted by Anu Menon, James Ruzicka, and Atika Chohan, *Waiting* has many raw, tender moments—sprinkled with humor. The dialogues, mostly in English, are candid conversations that keep you hooked. The writing effortlessly brings out the fine nuances of the characters caught in the emotional and ethical turmoil. When you have performers like Naseeruddin Shah and Kalki, half your battle is won. They are earnest and brilliant in their respective roles, displaying a broad spectrum of emotions from serious to comic. Watch *Waiting* for them!



"I want my films to be watched even after a decade"

Suriya's latest Tamil-Telugu sci-fi time-travel thriller *24* is his first film to join the $1 million club in North America. Directed by Vikram Kumar, the film has Suriya playing triple roles. The original *Singam* star wants to be part of films that create "good memories" for decades to come.

What does filmmaking mean to you?
Filmmaking is all about creating memories and happiness. Actors are like bubbles; not everlasting. They will be replaced eventually. What you leave behind are good films. Not all hit films are good films. I want my films to be watched even after a decade.

The phenomenal success of 24 must make you happy…
I'm not saying it's a path-breaking film but I know it is unique. It's a film one might come across once in three or four years. I might be playing triple roles and have more screen presence, but nobody can overshadow a good story.

Your home banner 2D Entertainment bankrolled the film. Do you think you took a risk as a producer?
Money has never been a concern, thanks to the star status I enjoy. If I lose money in a project, I can earn it in the next one I act. I don't have to sell my property or borrow money to produce a film. I use the money I've earned as an actor, to invest in good projects.

How is *S3*, the third installment in the Singam franchise, coming along?
I'm working with the same team. The best of both the parts of *Singam* has been imbibed into *S3* to make it interesting. We're also in talks for a bilingual project with *Trivikram*, and we're looking into the logistics of it.

Will your next Tamil project feature your wife Jyotika, who made a smashing comeback with *36 Vayadhinile* after a gap of six years?
We're on the verge of locking a script for Jo (Jyotika). The official announcement will be made soon. It is bankrolled under my home banner 2D Entertainment.

You two have worked in five super hit Tamil films. Will you star alongside Jyothika?
You never know! We haven't quite decided yet. As a producer, I'm kicked about the project.

"Greedy" Vidya's Marathi debut as Geeta Bali

Vidya Balan is all set to portray the role of yesteryear actress Geeta Bali in her Marathi debut film *Ekk Albela*. A biopic on legendary actor Bhagwan Dada, the film is set to release on June 24. Excited, Vidya shared the film's poster on her Twitter account and captioned it as, "Happy to share my *Ekk Albela* poster. Aala re aala Bhagwan aala." The actress' film *TE3N* with Amitabh Bachchan releases on June 10. She has just wrapped up Sujoy Ghosh's *Kahaani-2* with Arjun Rampal and is geared up to portray the challenging role of a brothel madam in the upcoming Mahesh Bhatt flick *Begum Jaan*—the Hindi remake of critically-acclaimed Bengali tale, *Rajkahini* the repercussions of India's partition on a brothel's women, who were displaced after the border was drawn.



After Bengali and Malayalam now Marathi; what makes Vidya Balan turn to regional films?
I am a greedy actor. Wherever I will get a role, I will go. I don't believe in restricting myself to the Hindi film industry. I wanted to do a Marathi film as I am from Mumbai. I was born and brought up here so I know the culture. There couldn't have been a Marathi debut better than this. I am looking at Marathi scripts. A few films didn't work.

Playing Geeta Bali should be a dream, isn't it?
I was very nervous when I was offered this film. I know that I don't look at all like Geetaji. I have attempted to look like her and adapt her nuances. She played with her face, with her eyes, with her hands, and her fingers spoke so much. Most of her shots were close-ups. What I realized is that there is not so much of body, but the eyes and the smile. All of that was her charm really! I hope I have done it decently.

You insisted on having the famous song *Shaam Dhale Khidki Tale* from *Albela*.
I like all songs of *Albela*, but *Shaam Dhale Khidki Tale* has been my favorite. When Shekharji (Sartandel) and Munishji (Babre) approached me, I asked them, 'Aren't we shooting this song?' They actually weren't planning to. But very sweetly, in a montage, they added it. I thank them for that.

You are also doing Malayalam-Hindi biopic on legendary writer Kamala Surayya. What is it with biopics and you?
After *The Dirty Picture*, I was offered at least 10 biopics. I didn't want to do them. Then I got this opportunity in *Ekk Albela* which is not a biopic on Geeta Bali. I think I get dragged to real life stories.

Would you do a full-fledged biopic on Geeta Bali?
Of course, I'd love it. But I'll have to put in a lot more work to look like her.

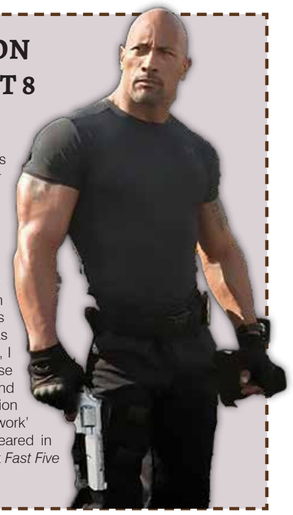


MENDES WON'T DIRECT NEXT JAMES BOND FILM



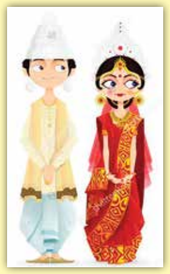
Oscar-winning filmmaker Sam Mendes, who directed the last two *James Bond* films *Spectre* and *Skyfall*, has announced that he will not return to helm another film in the popular franchise. "It was an incredible adventure, I loved every second of it. But I think it's time for somebody else. I'm a storyteller. And at the end of the day, I want to make stories with new characters," Mendes said at the Hay Festival 2016 in Wales. It's unclear whether actor Daniel Craig, who has been playing the role of the famous British spy since last four installments, will return for the next part. Rumors have swirled about his potential replacement, the most prominent names being Tom Hiddleston, Idris Elba, and Jamie Bell.

DWAYNE JOHNSON INTRODUCES FAST 8 CHARACTER



Actor Dwayne *The Rock* Johnson has shared the first look of his character Luke Hobbs from the upcoming action film *Fast 8*. Johnson released the image on *Instagram* and *Facebook*. "When you strip a man of all he has, all that's important to him, you force him to return to his roots. And sometimes that's a very dangerous and twisted place," Johnson captioned the photograph showing Hobbs wearing jeans and a leather vest. "If I was going to return for another *Fast & Furious*, I wanted to come in and disrupt the franchise in a cool way that got fans fired up and their blood pumping to see a new version of Hobbs and his 'Daddy's gotta go to work' mentality," he added. Johnson first appeared in the popular franchise in its fifth installment *Fast Five* and has since been a part of it.

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AUDIENCE WANTS MODERN LOOKING MOTHERS ON TV

There was a time when streaks of white hair denoted an ageing character on the small screen. Not anymore, says 27-year-old actress Hina Khan, popularly known as Akshara of the long-running *Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai* on *Star Plus*. The actress, who is unmarried in real life, plays the mother of two, following a leap of a few years in the show. Hina says people prefer to see actresses looking modern. "Times have changed. People don't want to see artistes playing mothers in gray hair. In real life too, everyone wants to look younger. That is what the serials are showing. People have become modern."

Hina has literally grown with the show since 2009. "It has been a very good journey. It (the leaps in the show) has changed nothing in my character. I'm still going strong. I'm very proud of all the twists and turns the show has seen in the last seven years. I'm looking forward to good (TRP) numbers."

Has she never felt bored of playing the role for so long? "Of course, sometimes it feels monotonous. My producer understands and respects that. Now with the latest leap of five years, people will see a new exciting track. Although Naira (her onscreen daughter) is not getting married anytime soon, I don't have any problem playing a mother-in-law too. But, becoming a grandmother is too far," she quips.



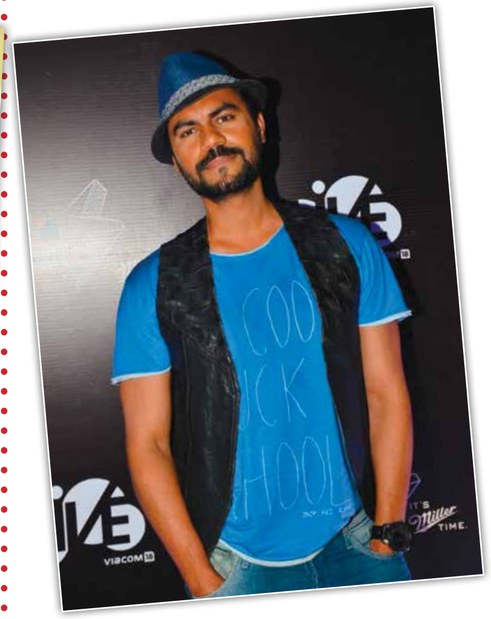
AVIKA GOR'S MINIMAL LOOK ENCHANTS AT CANNES

Balika Vadhu fame actress Avika Gor's flowing navy blue gown turned many heads at the Cannes Film Festival in May. She chose sparkling eye makeup, curled short hair and minimal jewelry to complete her look. Accompanied by *Sasural Simar Ka* co-star Manish Raisinghani, Avika walked the red carpet on May 20 to watch the trailer of a French film *Juste La Fin Du Monde*, directed by Xavier Dolan. Manish looked dapper in a black tuxedo with a red bow-tie. Later, the actors attended the unveiling of the poster and trailer of their short film *Ankahee Baatein*. The Manav Bhinder film was selected for the Short Film Corner category. It stars Manish and Barkha Bisht while Avika is its creative director.

KARAN PATEL STOPS SHOOTING FOR *YE HAI MOHABBATEIN* TO SAVE WATER

Upset that a romantic rain sequence would waste a lot of water amid drought in various parts of the country, actor Karan Patel refused to shoot for *Ye Hai Mohabbatein* until his concerns were allayed. Karan refused to shoot the scene that required artificial rain, given the amount of water that would be wasted. Karan said, "I thought the scene was avoidable considering the water crisis we are facing. At our level, we should try our best to conserve water. People look up to us. This is the least we can do as actors. So I asked the production house (Ekta Kapoor's Balaji Telefilms) to create a scene without water." Karan resumed shooting after the producers tweaked the sequence, understanding the importance of water conservation.







KUSHAL TANDON'S 'COMPLEX' DOUBLE AVATAR IN *BEHAD*

Kushal Tandon, best known for his stints in *Ek Hazaaron Mein Meri Behna Hai*, and *Bigg Boss*, will next be seen playing a double role of twin brothers in upcoming TV show *Behad* on *Sony TV*. Kushal says, "I aim to do good work and the concept of the show is very interesting. For the first time, I will play two roles that are diverse and complex. I will be able to show my versatility." The show will also feature popular actress Jennifer Winget in a never-seen-before negative avatar.

GAURAV CHOPRAA MEETS 'SPECIAL' FAN IN GEORGIA

Gaurav Chopraa, who was part of the Georgia edition of American TV show *Dancing With The Stars*, took out time to meet a special fan, Lela, who is physically challenged since birth. Lela had been writing to Gaurav and the channel for several months, seeking time to meet the actor as Gaurav's character of Raghuvendra Pratap Rathore, who fought for others in popular TV show *Uttaran*, had instilled hope and strength in her. When Gaurav learnt about her, he visited her village near a small town called Khulo. The actor described it as an "emotional moment". Gaurav said, "I wanted to go and see her. I went to the village. The girl and her family greeted us with so much warmth and love; it was unbelievable. Her family members were dressed up and her youngest sister had prepared a dance for me to an Indian song. I spoke to Lela and tried to give her some hope. She started crying. It was an emotional moment."



Irrfan Khan, seen with his family, held a special screening of Marathi film *Sairat* in Mumbai on May 23.



Newly-weds **Bipasha Basu** and **Karan Singh Grover** shoot for an episode of *The Kapil Sharma Show* in Mumbai on May 28.

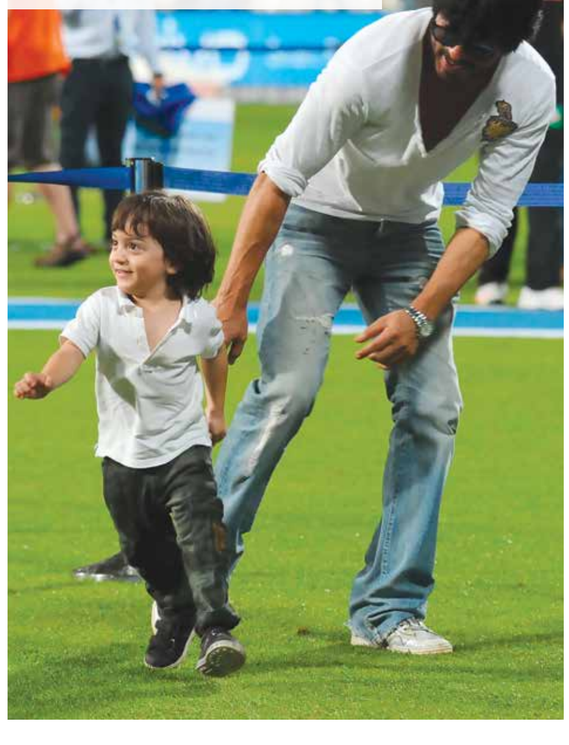


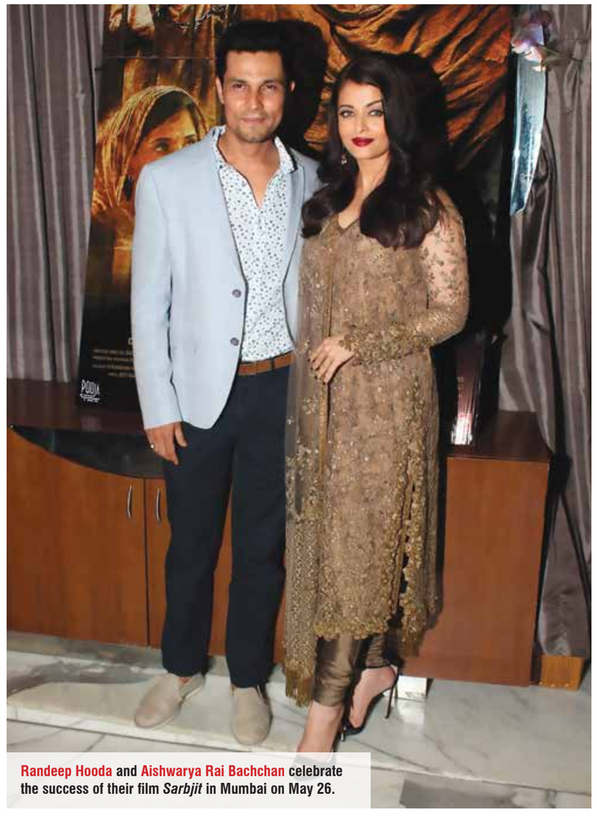
Salman Khan and stunt biker **Aras Gibieza** promote the Suzuki Gixxer bike in Mumbai on May 14.



Kangana Ranaut, **Vidhu Vinod Chopra**, and **Anupama Chopra** during a talk organized by MAMI Film Club in Mumbai on May 23.

Kolkata Knight Riders co-owner **Shah Rukh Khan** enjoys a playful moment with his youngest son **AbRam** during an IPL match against Royal Challengers Bangalore at Eden Gardens in Kolkata on May 16.





Randeep Hooda and **Aishwarya Rai Bachchan** celebrate the success of their film ***Sarbjit*** in Mumbai on May 26.

GOODBYE SULABHA DESHPANDE




A still from TV show *Kehta Hai Dil, Jee Le Zara*

The Hindi film fraternity is mourning the demise of cinema, stage and television actress-director Sulabha Deshpande, who passed away in Mumbai on June 3, following a prolonged illness. She was 80. A recipient of the 1987 Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for Hindi-Marathi theater, Sulabha was a popular face, who played memorable characters in several movies, mainly the role of a lovable mother, mother-in-law or grandmother. She essayed key roles in many TV serials and Marathi theater—her first love—and earned critical acclaim as well as audience approval.

Sulabha's act of the doting mother-in-law, Mrs Godbole, to Sridevi in *English Vinglish* (2012) was well-appreciated. Among her prominent films were *Bhumika* (1977), *Gaman* (1978), *Arvind Desai Ki Ajeeb Dastan* (1978), *Albert Pinto Ko Gussa Kyo Aata Hai* (1980), *Vijeta* (1982), *Ijaazat* (1987) and *Virasat* (1997). On stage, she acted in Marathi plays like *Shantata Court Chalu Aahe*, *Sakharam Binder,* and *Baba Harvale Aahet* among many others. Starting her life as a teacher in Chhabildas High School in Dadar, Mumbai, Sulabha's romance with theater began in the 1950s when she approached famous author-director Vijay Tendulkar to write plays for students of the school. Tendulkar, along with veterans Vijaya Mehta, Shriram Lagoo and Arvind Deshpande—who later married Sulabha—were the initiators of the experimental theater movement of the 1960s and 1970s, which Sulabha joined subsequently. In 1971, Arvind and Sulabha co-founded *Awishkar*, a theater group and its wing *Chandrashala*, which imparts professional training to children.

Top film, television and stage actors, directors and her colleagues took to *Twitter* to condole her death. Melody Queen Lata Mangeshkar said, "Today my favorite actress died. She had worked in my film *Jait Re Jait*. Sulabha was a very talented actress. Her demise is a major loss to our film industry. It saddens me." Rishi Kapoor, who worked with Sulabha in 1984 film *Duniya* also expressed his grief on *Twitter*. Pallavi Joshi and Sulabha worked together on many TV shows, including the popular '90s serial, *Alpaviram*. Pallavi said, "She was such a wonderful person and a motherly figure to me. I am very disturbed at this loss. We have worked together a lot. *Alpviram* was the longest serial we did together." Sulabha's last rites were performed in Mumbai, where many celebrities poured in to pay their last respects. Actor-Director Mahesh Manjrekar and Nana Patekar were seen offering floral tributes with moist eyes. While Madhuri Dixit expressed her grief and called her "a lovely, warm person and wonderful actress", Anil Kapoor tweeted, "Sulabha Deshpande had that rare ability to express volumes with just a meaningful look… a great and deep loss for theater and films! RIP."

Mubarak Begum: Frail and Forgotten

Popular playback singer of the Golden Era of Hindi Cinema is now destitute

Mubarak Begum, whose soulful voice added blush to the black-and-white era of Hindi cinema, is weak, weary and crushed at 76 years of age. Through the 1950s and 1960s, Mubarak Begum worked with the best music directors in the film industry, collaborating with S D Burman, Shankar Jaikishan and Khayyam for movies that starred screen legends like Sunil Dutt, Nargis, and Rajendra Kumar. But today, not a speck of the Bollywood glitter is visible on the ailing singer; none of the hands, that applauded her rise to fame, have reached out to aid her mounting medical expenses.

Left in lamentable conditions, the singer was admitted to a hospital in Mumbai on May 3, after complaining of weakness and stomach ache. But soon, her family realized that the treatment was far too expensive for their meager earnings. After days of suffering, on humanitarian grounds, the Maharashtra government decided to bear all medical expenses of Mubarak Begum. The golden voice of hit songs—*Kabhi tanhaiyon mein hamari yaad ayegi* from the film *Hamari Yaad Aayegi* (1961), *Mujhko apne gale laga lo* from *Hamrahi* (1963) and *Woh na aayenge palat kar* from *Devdas* (1955), starring Dilip Kumar and Vyjayanthimala—for last few years has been struggling with health and poverty.

She lives in a tiny one-room-kitchen apartment in suburban Mumbai with her son, Mehmood, and his family. Mehmood used to be a driver but is now unemployed due to health complications. The household subsists on the Rs 800 pension that Mubarak receives. Since the death of her only daughter Shafaq Bano last year, Mubarak Begum has remained unwell with bouts of hospitalization. Her granddaughter Sana Shaikh says that barring some financial help from Lata Mangeshkar and Salman Khan, the entire industry—to which she belonged for 23 years—has forgotten her. Sana said, "Nobody from the industry has called; none has enquired or offered help, except Salman Khan who made a donation directly to the hospital. For our other routine expenses, Lata Mangeshkar's family trust helps us regularly."

The former playback singer got her break in the 1949 film *Aaiye* with Naushad's song *Mohe aane lagi anghdayi* and was a voice on *All India Radio*. Mubarak Begum has sung 178 songs for over 115 films, most of which continue to be popular classical renditions, till date.

HER POPULAR SONGS

- *Neend ud jaaye teri chain se sone wale*
  Juaari
- *Kabhi tanhaiyon men hamari yaad aaegi*
  Hamari Yaad Aayegi
- *Be-murawwat be-wafa begana-e dil aap hain*
  Susheela
- *Aye dil bata*
  Khooni Khazana
- *Kuchh ajnabi se aap hain*
  Shagun
- *Mujh ko apne gale lagalo*
  Hamrahi
- *Ayji ayji yaad rakhna sanam*
  Daku Mansoor
- *Shama gul karke na ja*
  Arab ka Sitara
- *Saawariya teri yaad mein*
  Ramu to Deewana Hai



GAURI SHINDE IDOLIZES SRIDEVI

English Vinglish fame director Gauri Shinde, who recently wrapped up the shoot of her untitled second movie with Alia Bhatt and Shah Rukh Khan, has hailed actress Sridevi as her inspiration. Gauri made her love for Sridevi known, when she tweeted, "You will always be my first love. Sridevi, I learned so much from you. You made me believe in myself and you are the reason I made my second. Thank you." Prompt came the gracious reply as Sridevi wrote to the 41-year-old director, "Thank you so much, Gauri, for making me feel good again. I am sure your second one will be better than the first. All the best." The story of the film, which is produced by SRK's Red Chillies Entertainment in association with Karan Johar's Dharma Productions and Hope Productions, is under wraps. Also Gauri has confirmed that SRK and Alia are not romantically paired.





SONAKSHI'S JOURNALIST AVATAR

Sonakshi Sinha, who is awaiting the release of her two films—*Akira and Force 2*—has already signed her next, which is set to go on floors in July this year. Titled *Noor*, the film is an adaptation of Pakistani writer Saba Imtiaz's 2014 comedy crime thriller novel *Karachi, You Are Killing Me!*—a coming-of-age story of a Karachi-based journalist named Ayesha Khan. *Noor* will be based in Mumbai with protagonist Noor Roy Chaudhary, a 20-something journalist, at its center. Sonakshi, who is currently enjoying her long holiday, is excited about playing a journalist, who is a "bundle of contradictions". The *Dabangg* actress has been experimenting with her roles lately—she plays a RAW agent in Abhinay Deo's *Force 2*. She said, "I'm excited about playing Noor. I can't wait to bring this character to life under the vision of Sunhil Sippy (director). The engaging narrative follows Noor as she navigates relationships, career, aspirations, life choices, infatuations and body image issues. Every girl will relate to Noor."



KASHMIRI HERO FOR RAHMAN'S FILM

Music maestro A.R. Rahman has revealed that his ambitious home production debut *99 Songs* is all set to go on floors after four years of hard work and will feature a hero from Kashmir. Rahman said, "I'm in the midst of pre-production. I have been working on it for four years and now it is finally going on floors. We will release a virtual reality promo soon to showcase the gist of the film. We're shooting for the film at many locations. It is a Hindi film and the hero is from Kashmir. The heroine hails from a different state. However, I will reveal more later." Rahman, who is earning accolades for his music in Hollywood flick *Pele: Birth of a Legend*, has penned the story for *99 songs*, bankrolled by his home banner Y. M. Movies. The film will be directed by Vishwesh Krishnamoorthy. A first look poster of the film, released in April, depicts a couple in a surreal aerial dance move—hanging on to a piano, which is suspended from the sky.



DOTING DAD, HRITHIK



Amid his hectic schedule for *Kaabil* and managing his commitments for the promotions of *Mohenjo Daro*, Hrithik Roshan is taking out time to doodle and scribble with his sons—Hrehaan (10) and Hridaan (8). But before setting up teaching sessions for his children, Hrithik is busy sharpening his skills with the drawing pencil. The actor took to social networking site *Instagram* to share an image with the caption, "Scribbles and doodles and messy little squiggles; teaching myself to draw to teach my sons in turn." The actor may have separated from wife Sussanne Khan, but his sons get the best of his time. On the work front, the actor is looking forward to the August 12 release of Ashutosh Gowarikar's *Mohenjo Daro*—an epic love story, set in the Indus Valley civilization. Hrithik feels that it will be one of the best films of his career. Newcomer Pooja Hegde plays Hrithik's love interest in the film. His next, *Kaabil* with Yami Gautam, will hit the screens early next year.

IT'S KAY KAY CALLING

Fans of the gifted performer, Kay Kay Menon, are delighted to have their favorite actor back. Kay Kay, who will next be seen in *Sann Pachattar*—based on the 1975 Emergency in India—is busy promoting the political thriller by connecting with his fans over mobile phones. As part of the film's marketing strategy, randomly chosen fans will receive a phone call granting them access to a customized video of Kay Kay. Last seen in a special appearance in Akshay Kumar starrer *Baby*, the actor said, "The film is an absolute audio and visual symphony. It is the first true political period thriller of Indian cinema. I am happy to be a part of this film and play the most layered and myriad character of my career till date. It took me nearly six months to get into the skin and psyche of the character and to get the crisis right." No wonder then, Kay Kay vanished for weeks from the public eye, preparing for the role in his unique style.



SHAHID REFUSED PICTURES WITH KAREENA



Shahid Kapoor has revealed that he intentionally refused to click pictures with his *Udta Punjab* co-star Kareena Kapoor Khan at the trailer launch of the film to avoid media speculation. There were reports that former lovers Shahid and Kareena felt awkward in each other's company at the event where their co-star Alia Bhatt and director Abhishek Chaubey were also present. Recently Shahid said, "If Kareena and I click pictures together, the media will just write about it and nothing else." Although Shahid and Kareena are a part of *Udta Punjab*, they are not paired with each other. However, Shahid says he is open to the idea of sharing the screen with Kareena to recreate their much-loved chemistry in films like *Chup Chup Ke* and *Jab We Met*. Shahid said, "I have been asked this question numerous times, and I have always said 'yes'. If it happens, it's great and if it doesn't, I have no problem. I really don't think about it beyond a point." *Udta Punjab* was earlier slated for June 17 release but the film's issues with the censor board might push the date further.

SALMAN "VIOLATED" IN A *LANGOT*



Salman Khan has been known for going shirtless in many films, but the *Dabangg* actor admitted that shooting in a *langot* for upcoming flick Sultan has been "most difficult". Describing his awkwardness, Salman said, "Wearing a *langot* was the most difficult part. Now, I understand how difficult it is for actresses to wear swimsuits and shorts. There was a moment when a crowd of 5,000 people cheered for me and women in *ghoonghats* went, '*Aye Haye*'. My warning to the crew—not to laugh—had no effect on the junior artists. While I was walking from my van to the shooting spot, there were tears in my eyes. I felt violated. You ask me to go shirtless or wear shorts, I will never be ashamed." In pictures released from the sets, Salman, who plays a wrestler in the film, is seen flaunting his six-pack abs in the loincloth while preparing for a match in the *akhara* (wrestling ring).

SHILPA'S YOGA CLASS AT IIFA



Shilpa Shetty, who returned to TV as a judge on a dance reality show for children—*India's Super Dancer*—will conduct a special yoga class at the 17th edition of the International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) Awards in Spain (to be held between June 23 and 26). The 40-year-old actress said, "Today, yoga is practiced across the world. I am glad to have a class at IIFA as it is a great platform. I am looking forward to it." A host of celebrities like Salman Khan, Deepika Padukone, Priyanka Chopra, Hrithik Roshan, Tiger Shroff, Sonakshi Sinha and others will also perform at the ceremony. On her role as a judge on TV, the actress-turned-entrepreneur said her motherhood experiences have changed her outlook towards children. Shilpa said, "I have a son who is four years old and I know children's intentions are very pure. It wonderful to be around them. I am looking forward to being on the show. I am sure people will love it too."

RAHUL BOSE RETURNS WITH BIOPIC *POORNA*

Rahul Bose is returning to direction with *Poorna*, a biopic on Malavath Poorna—a tribal girl from Telangana, who created history on May 25, 2014, by becoming the youngest girl in the world to scale Mount Everest. Rahul, who was last seen in *Dil Dhadakne Do* opposite Priyanka Chopra, is also acting as Poorna's father in the film. Rahul said, "I bought the rights to the story from Poorna's father. But it would be easy for someone to change the names and come up with a 'me too' film. Now that *Poorna* has been shot and in the process to be screened to a studio in six weeks, I can talk about it." Rahul says he is yet to show the film to Poorna and her father and plans to take the film to her village, where they shot for 11 days. Aditi Inamdar, a Telangana girl, was selected from among 109 girls to play the title lead. Rahul added, "It has no *jhalak* of Bollywood, yet it makes you cry. That's because Poorna is one of the most remarkable people I've met—focused, disciplined, thoughtful yet fun-loving. Her story needs to be told to the world."





ALIA'S BIHARI TRAINER



Pankaj Tripathi, who is basking in the success of his recent film *Nil Battey Sannata*, trained Alia Bhatt to perfect the Bihari accent for her role of a migrant laborer in *Udta Punjab*. Describing Alia as a "hardworking student", Pankaj said, "Abhishek Chaubey (Director) is a good friend of mine. He asked me to help Alia prepare for her role of a Bihari girl. I taught her the language. As Alia has lived in an urban surrounding, it was very challenging for her to speak with a Bihari accent. Though it was a difficult job, Alia was a very hard working student. She used to practice speaking Bihari at home. She is a very dedicated actor." Best known for his widely acclaimed roles in films like *Gangs of Wasseypur*, *Omkara*, and *Singham Returns*, Pankaj trained Alia for over a month to prepare her for the role. Pankaj said, "I'm sure when the film releases, people will get to see a totally different avatar of Alia. They will love it."



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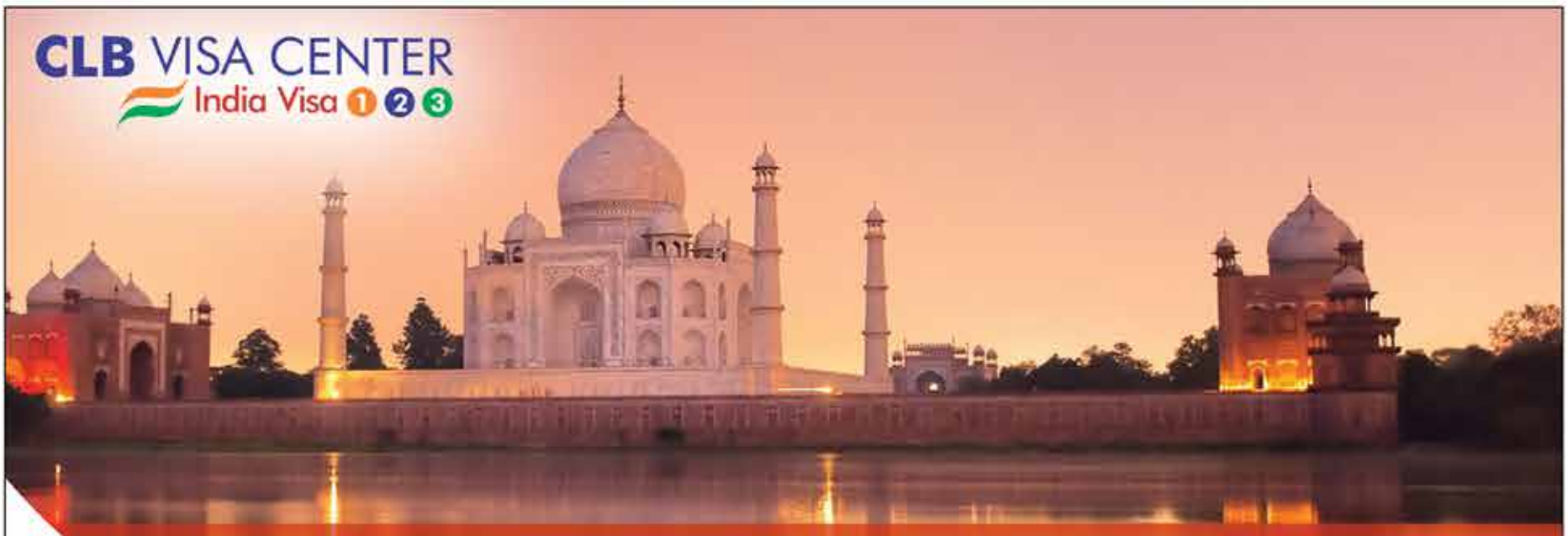
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