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**SHAILENDRA SINGH**

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PHOTOGRAPHY: KABAN PRATAP

# The **KEEDA** is back!

Words: Srividya Menon

Apologies to be starting this piece on an utterly flattering note, but compiling this booklet makes one point clear. There is something you cannot deny about Shailendra Singh. The man has guts, and to top that, brains to direct his guts, years before the industry was ready for it. But before he incepted the grand Percept umbrella, Shailendra was that boy who sat in the front row of the stall arena of a single-screen theatre, munching on samosas and being fascinated by every dialogue, stunt and climax. Which is why it was surprising that he never started with movies in the first place. Percept delved into many aspects of advertising, but filmmaking as a bug was yet to bite Shailendra in the head for a while.

It all started with a concept - a concept of launching 176 debutants with a young, colourful movie. It wasn't so much a career as much as it was a passion for this man. That passion was clear when he sat under the glass ceiling with the sunlight hitting his face, making him look like a Godman of sorts, narrating his journey - the one that you will read in the booklet here. And then he says, "I want to be interestingly inspiring. I want to start a forest fire. I am here to make a difference." And we knew we had set the tone.

Shailendra Singh might have launched 23 companies and mentored a whole army in the first three-quarters of his professional life, but this last lap needs to be more exciting, the types which end with fireworks, figuratively, as that is to be expected with Shailendra around, anyway. It has and will be quality content and less money, large-hearted with a unique flavour. That is what happened in his past 74 movies, and will continue happen in the years to come.

**We re-introduce a man who needs no introduction.**

**Why? Read on to discover that yourself.**

# Larger than Life Debut!

*Pyaar Mein Kabhi Kabhi*



**Taking baby steps to the producer's chair, he made sure nothing went wrong. His business acumen and how he got things done for his debut, and went on to make a full-fledged film, is what left everybody stunned. Shailendra narrates the inception of his first film and how he learnt the tricks of the trade thereafter...**

**Words:** Nawaz Kochra



PHOTOGRAPH: KARAN PRADIP

Back during *Pyaar Mein Kabhi Kabhi's* (PMKK) inception in 1999, the film was bold enough to take on 176 newcomers. And when Shailendra's first few films materialised, it was he who had written all the scripts, but didn't reveal that since he didn't think it would look good. A businessman by profession, Shailendra, deep down, always hid his passion to direct. He thought he didn't look like a director, yet he was a hard-core storyteller. He spoke to David Dhawan and Suniel Shetty, recalling David's *Coolie No 1* days when he would edit three movies at once, since he was ridden with so much work. Shailendra managed to sit with him and expressed his desire to get into production. David wasn't so encouraging though. He knew producers lose money. "The only ones who made money were the spot-boys, make-up artists and drivers 97 per cent of the time," muses Shailendra wryly.

Since he was debuting himself, Shailendra decided to take on a cartonfull of debutants for his first movie. With a budget of Rs 1.80 crores, Shailendra got Raj Kaushal, another debutant, to direct. "Rinke Khanna wasn't my idea. Raj Kaushal cast her because she was Dimple Kapadia's daughter and the picture would get good PR." The apprehensive Shailendra complied but couldn't really see the 'very lovable girl-next-door' in her. It was nothing like what Kajol did, prancing about in a short white skirt, in *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge*. The film continued with her and Shailendra hoped the gamble would work. It didn't. The ones who went on to make history were music composers Salim-Suleman and Vishal-Shekhar, and singers Shaan and Mahalakshmi Iyer, who today have become big names in the film fraternity. Others who garnered fame included Longinus Fernandes, the ace choreographer, Sanjeev Mulchandani, leading costume designer, Rajeev Jain, the now well-known



cinematographer of *Slumdog Millionaire* fame and Sweta Salve, a currently popular artiste on television.

Shailendra was a hands-on producer, no doubt. "The opening scene was shot in Fergusson College, Pune, and the white Pajero used in the scene was mine," he reminisces. Interestingly, the tickets for the film were sold for Rs 450 in the black market, while those for *Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam*, a simultaneous release, went for Rs 250. Back then PMKK was the hottest thing for the youth. But Shailendra knew when saw the movie in David Dhawan's edit studio, that the movie had more drama off-screen than it did on-screen. PMKK had the first in-film endorsements PMKK hosted 16 premieres nationally. The cast entered PVR Theatres on a Hero Honda bike, the excited crowd broke the glass in PVR and as Shailendra puts it, "The picture didn't have drama, but the events that followed did."

There were success parties after each premiere, and one of them saw Kapil Dev, Shailendra Singh and Mandira Bedi get high and crazy. Kapil, in drunken revelry, broke 60 plates singing the movie's hit number, 'Woh Pehli Baar...'. Mumbai's Sports Bar was launched with the movie and Shailendra, who stayed away from sweets, had a piece of cake for the first time in nine months. Dino

Morea, who debuted as a hero in the film, meanwhile, was in a bad shape to go home and then board a 4 am flight to another city the next morning. So, he decided to go directly to the airport, disheveled, and changed the next day into borrowed clothes. Shailendra made noise, so much that Sanjay Leela Bhansali reportedly wondered what was up with them. Considering PMKK was releasing with *Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam*, a movie with Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, Salman Khan and Ajay Devgn, it was definitely a matter of curiosity how they were so confident about their vehicle of excited debutants.

But the failure didn't really matter that much to Shailendra, monetarily. Lasith Sanghvi, the co-founder of Alchemy Capital Management, showed a great deal of interest in investing in the film, since *Mussu Mussu* (a hit number from PMKK) were his kid's first words ever. Shailendra tried to dissuade him, to no avail. Lasith invested Rs 90 lakhs into the film and his cheque came as a great help to Shailendra. However, people like Kumar Das Gupta, who signed the satellite rights for a crore and more, backed out after they saw the response to the film on Friday, because theirs was a small movie (thanks to a clause in the contract - Subject To Board Approval).



**The cast entered PVR Theatres on a Hero Honda bike, the excited crowd broke the glass in PVR and as Shailendra puts it, "The picture didn't have drama, but the events that followed did."**

Left: Mandira Bedi, SS & Kapil Dev

But debuts are tough, and Shailendra knew that there was no guarantee of great performances. He had limited resources, but a dream which he landed establishing. **This debut vehicle isn't one like the current day Hero, where Sooraj Pancholi and Athiya Shetty were powered with the mighty forces of Salman Khan and their individual filmy families; too much power for newbies.** In fact that is what happened with his movie, *Yahaan*. Shailendra feels. Shoojit Sircar's cinematography was phenomenal, but that quality needed stars - say a Shah Rukh Khan and Rani Mukerji, for the film to find success. Let's not forget, stars get eyeballs. "You know the media is selfish. They won't come for newbies." Ever the realist - **Shailendra Singh remains so. Then and now.**



Top: Salim Sulaiman, Dino Morea & Shaan  
Right: David Dhawan, Neha Dhupia & SS



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THE INCEPTION

# The INCEPTION

## Love for Bollywood!

**From his dream to his passion, Bollywood has been a part of Shailendra Singh's life in a big way. More unusual was the story of how it all began. Read Shailendra's filmy account on the beginning for his love of cinema.**

**Words:** Shravan Shah

A big name in the Bollywood circuit, Shailendra has cinema running in his blood, but the story was far from easy at the time of his beginnings. As a child, like most other kids, Shailendra too wanted to hang out with his friends and play cricket, unlike his mommy, who loved cinema. With his father working in Karnataka and his brother in a hostel, Shailendra was the one to accompany his mother to films. As time passed, this practice turned into addiction - *Shatranj Ke Khiladi* was seen thrice and *Shirdi Ke Sai Baba*, around five times. Shailendra fondly remembers how his mother, unaware of his exam the next day, forced him to take a break and watch a movie with her. Those were the days at Geeta Talkies and Satyam Shivam Sundaram at Worli, Mumbai. He was friendly with the owner and he even was famous enough to stall the screening of the movie until he arrived. It wasn't long until he realised the impact Bollywood had made in his life.

Now that the seed was sown, Shailendra wanted to be in the entertainment business till his last breath. After spending the

better part of his life in the industry, in the current time, which he feels is the last quarter of his professional life, Shailendra is determined to make it only about films and run with Bollywood. The idea is to create an altogether new industry that will provide opportunities to new talents. The power is vast, only if Bollywood stands united as an industry.

Like a true lover of Bollywood, Shailendra's motivation was only to make content, never money. Otherwise, he wouldn't have put Salman Khan in *Phir Milenge* rather than use his star-power in massy film, like a *Biwi no 2*. But he chose to make different films, and did so before its time. He has always been ahead of the game. And that, perhaps, is what Shailendra Singh will always be known for.

THE INCEPTION

PHOTOGRAPH: KIRAN PRASAD

# The Show-sha And Moolah



PHOTOGRAPH: KARAN PRATAP

## Business of Bollywood

**Filmmaking has become an out-an-out money making business. While it has the required *masala* and entertainment, it is also true that the industry is not everybody's cuppa *chai*. With all the hard and fast rules set by stars in Bollywood, Shailendra Singh plays the game on his terms...**

**Words:** Stuti Srivastava

"Bollywood has changed today," quipped Shailendra as we spoke about the cinema he loved. *Dor*, which released in 2006, was according to him, one of the best productions from his kitty. But releasing such realistic subjects back then wasn't much appreciated as single-screen theatres only released films starring megastars. The film, directed by Nagesh Kukunoor, did manage to create buzz, but didn't collect the amount invested. "We invested Rs 2.6 crores for making the film, and another Rs 2.5 crores to promote it. We ended up facing a loss of Rs 1 crore." But the loss didn't really matter, for Shailendra was happier with the appreciation the film received.

He doesn't blame the audience though, for time has changed. We have entered the digital space and today, the multiplex business has caught pace. With so many multiplexes, small-budget films easily avail screens to release their films. In his long-term phase in Bollywood, Shailendra wishes to bring back the best, films hidden somewhere in the industry archives. Years may have passed, but Shailendra remains the same. This industry has taught him the hard way of dealing with stars, but he plans to work more on the parallel film lines. His loss of interest in commercial cinema may be the effects of his previous dealings, but he still has much more to contribute.

The plan is to revive old-world cinema. Stars are not only actors, but also businessmen,

you see. Like the businessman in Amitabh Bachchan he encountered during a film deal - *Johnny Walker*. Originally, Shailendra's script apparently, was similar to an M Night Shyamalan movie. He had a script in hand which UTV and Fox Studios claimed to be theirs. He shelved the film, only to realise that a similar film was made by UTV with Amitabh in the lead! As expected, Shailendra and Fox both opposed it legally, and it failed to see the light. However, that incident did leave him soured somewhere.

But today's Bollywood, no more restricted to larger-than-life family dramas, has been finding acceptance. Shailendra believes that there should be a line between commercialisation and creativity. He wants people to love creative cinema as much

they love commercial films. He plans to promote parallel cinema. He wants to create a platform for creative young minds that might lack resources but not will-power. He wants Bollywood to exist and stay where it is, but at the same time, wishes to create a parallel Bollywood. "I want to be their ambassador," he says, and also plans to organise a film festival to showcase good cinema, which in spite of all the appreciation isn't creating a lot of buzz. Shailendra's wants to build a platform in the many films with high content, just like he has done in the past.

**Shailendra believes that there should be a line between commercialisation and creativity.**

Bottom: SS, Sameera Reddy & Nagesh Kukunoor



THE CURTAIN RAISERS

# THE CURTAIN RAISERS

**Bollywood Firsts**

Words: Shravan Shah

**Believing that content is king, Shailendra Singh has created milestones with everything he has been a part of. Here's a look at the projects Percept Picture Company became a part of and, in turn, the pioneers.**

PHOTOGRAPH: KARAN PRADAP





# 1

## HANUMAN

Hanuman, one of the most beloved deities in India remained undiscovered in Hindu temples and homes, until Percept Pictures took an initiative to produce **India's first 2D animation film** on this loved monkey God. Shailendra was sure that he wasn't going to showcase the mighty Hanuman everybody is familiar with. Instead they created a *baal* (infant) Hanuman and highlighted the journey of Hanuman from birth to adulthood. The cuteness and naughty factor to the character made it every kid's favourite, and that worked. Even though it was an experiment, people praised the film and kids thoroughly enjoyed this version. The film went on to become a hit and earned a whopping Rs 8.18 crores at the Box Office. The effect of the film lasted so long that the market long after the film released, was flooded with soft toys and other merchandise of the character, right down to Diwali lanterns with Hanuman on them.

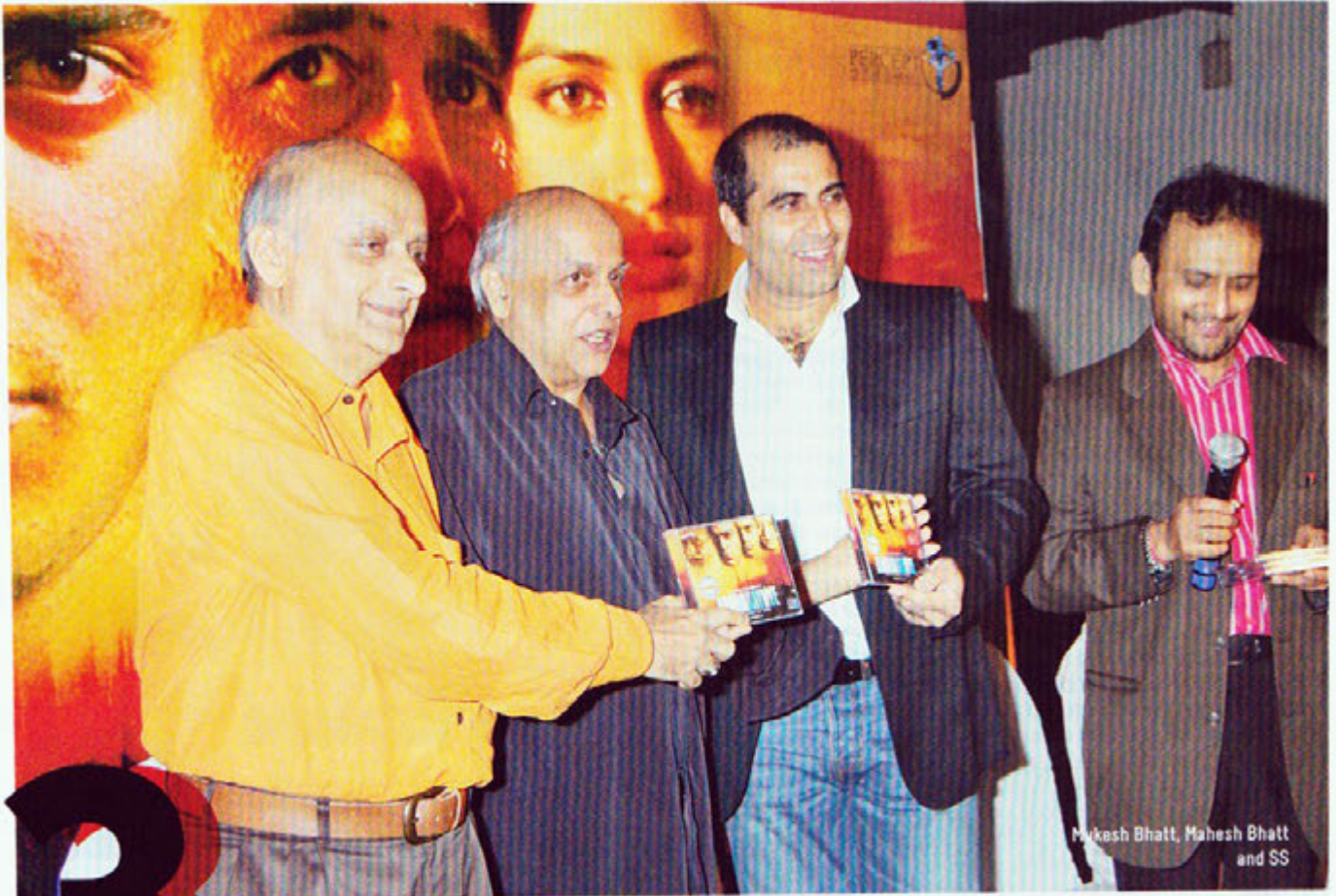
# 2

## IN-FILM ENDORSEMENTS

Shailendra was very fond of Yash Chopra and worked with him in *Mohabbatein*. He made a set for the film and used the film to promote his brands. This innovative method was yet unexplored, and Shailendra was the pioneer this way. He later on, used the same technique in other films as well. *Koi Mil Gaya* is a classic example of it. The entire basket-ball match sequence in the film was shot in a stadium which had hoardings and boards of Hero Honda throughout the stadium, and the scene was scripted as though Hero Honda had sponsored it. The placement was integral and made the point cleverly!







Mukesh Bhatt, Mahesh Bhatt and SS

# 3

## FADING THE BORDER – *Khuda Kay Liye*

Like Bollywood movies on social causes, Shailendra realised the power of cross-border stories. Pakistani films subjects ranged mostly from liberation to female empowerment. *Khuda Kay Liye* was one such film that created a milestone in Bollywood, as it was the first Pakistani film that was released here. The film dealt with a worldwide issue but India failed to appreciate their neighbouring industry. Percept Pictures became the distributor for the movie in India, and the film was critically acclaimed. Percept believed in providing a platform for content and proved that any subject could break barriers if the content was good enough.

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PYAAR MEIN  
KABHI KABHI

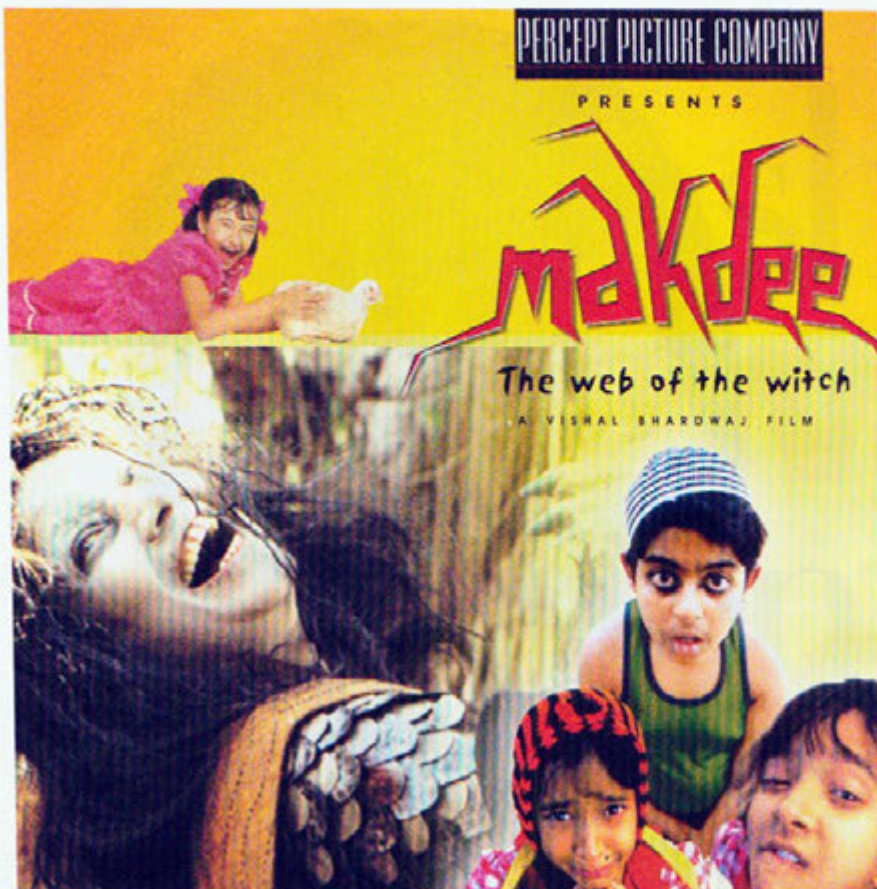
The melodious **Mussu Mussu Haasi** was an unforgettable tune, and the next thing that strikes us after the song is Dino Moreo trying to convince Rinke Khanna to smile. The interesting fact about *Pyaar Mein Kabhi Kabhi* is that, it was the first production venture which Percept did under the name of Tyger Films. The film marked the debut of 176 actors and it was the first time a Bollywood film starred so many fresh talents together. The film starred Dino Moreo who was the face of most of the commercials of the 90s, and Rinke Khanna, daughter of diva Dimple Khanna. Apart from these two, Sanjay Suri, Akashdeep Saigal, Shweta Salve and a bunch of other actors marked their entry in Bollywood with this film. *Pyaar Mein Kabhi Kabhi* was also Vishal-Shekhar's debut vehicle in Bollywood as music composers. They were the ones who gave us melodies like *Woh Pehli Baar* and *Mussu Mussu*. But riding atop all of this was Shailendra's belief. He went on to prove that if people are talented, they can go on to make a film. All you need is hard work and efforts.



## 5

## PHIR MILENGE

Salman Khan has been at the top of the league and known for a while now, but back then, he seldom tried films other than rom-coms or hardcore action. Which is why, Salman starring in a film about a serious cause, AIDS, was a surprise. Percept Picture company under the directorial of South actress Revathi, took the challenge, and were the ones who led the way to make a film on **AIDS**. The film starred Salman Khan, Shilpa Shetty and Abhishek Bachchan essaying pivotal roles, and was not only a mass entertainer, but also a medium through which the topic of AIDS was showcased and discussed. It was first time a bold step like this was taken, and it was very well appreciated amongst the audience. Apart from the film, even the performances of Shilpa Shetty and Abhishek Bachchan were appreciated.



6

## MAKDEE

Vishal Bhardwaj is known for his Shakespearean connection, but his debut in Bollywood was a children's horror film *Makdee*. With the title role essayed by Shabana Azmi, the film was a hit among the kids. Produced and directed by Vishal Bhardwaj, the film faced problems initially because distributors weren't sure about the success of a children's film on a notorious witch. Percept Pictures came on board to back the film, and the rest is history. Shailendra believed in the film and thought it would be exciting to have a horror film for kids. The film went on to win the second prize at the Chicago International Children's Film Festival, and the lead actress of the film who played a double role, Shweta Prasad, won the Indian National Film Award for Best Child Artist in 2003 as well. Even today, it is used as reference point, and it just went on to prove that even a film made for kids can work, if the content is great.

7

## THE PERCEPT LOGO ON A HOLLYWOOD FILM

Hollywood films have been a rage in India since a couple of decades or more, and if it is a superhero film, it goes without saying the kind of business it goes to make. The world was awaiting *Spiderman 3* and as expected, Percept Pictures decided to come on board as Indian distributors. Not only were they the official distributors of the film in India, but also were the ones who had their logo along with the foreign production houses, play at the beginning of the film. Percept also featured on the posters of the film. It was indeed a proud moment as it is not often that we have an Indian company's logo playing just after the Columbia Pictures logo. Post this film, Percept continued to be the official distributors for *The Mummy: Tomb Of The Dragon Emperor* and *Hancock*.





# Unleashing **New** Talents!

**Debuts through Shailendra Singh**

**Words:** Nawaz Kochra

**Success perhaps, isn't the only reason Shailendra is proud of his journey. He recognized, welcomed and groomed talents along the way, who with the leg-up from such a dedicated mentor, subsequently managed to go a long way with their careers.**

**Shailendra counts the powerful debutants he gifted to Bollywood...**

## Nandita Das

In 2008, when *Firaaq* a political thriller, hit the theaters, everyone noticed it and the actors associated with the film were widely appreciated. However, the film fared just about moderately. Produced by Percept Picture Company, the film had Shailendra Singh play a major role off-screen. **The film was a directorial debut for actress Nandita Das, and throughout the journey, Shailendra was with her.** "We were best friends. I took her to night-clubs, it was a wonderful experience with her. But she left on a bitter note with me, saying that I didn't give her the best I could have. But when we meet now, she smiles at me, she likes me now. Her debut was quite a Herculean task because she is a great actress and comes with a legacy and body of work. So, to be able to manage her was interesting." Even though the film could have perhaps fared better, Shailendra holds fond memories of the experience. "I gave the name for the film. *Firaaq* fared just okay because she intellectualised the film too much. It had a big cast, but the film was way too dark and intense."



Shoojit Sircar

## Aishwarya Rai

Aishwarya Rai who was crowned Miss World in 1994 stormed the industry with her talent for two decades and more. But much before she became what she is today, **she was spotted at Marine Drive by Shailendra, who decided to cast her in one of his ads.** Aishwarya wasn't a big name then and she did a commercial for Rs 5000. Shailendra's eye for beauty was what brought her to Bollywood's doorsteps. As he words it, "Whilst we were doing advertising, we realised we were picking good people to act." And today, there she is, amongst the ones most admired for having a captivating face.

Right: SS, Aishwarya Rai and Michael Douglas at *Racing the Monsoon* announcement



Priyadarshan, SS &amp; Nandita Das

## Shoojit Sircar

It is a virtue to continually acknowledge the ones who impress with their skills and creativity. For Shailendra, one of them was Shoojit Sircar. **They came in contact through an ad-film, and it was through the same circle that Shailendra got to know about the film Shoojit had directed.** It was a Hindi war-drama-romance called *Yahaan*. Initially supposed to be produced by Sanjay Gupta and John Abraham, due to reasons unknown, the film didn't come under their banner. "The film was made by Shoojit to show his craft. He not only gave a look to the story, but gave an element of drama in the film. Concentrating on perfection, he portrayed a director's fear and hunger very aptly." Shailendra got in touch through Shoojit's partner Bobby Grewal, who was a part of Red Ice Films and acquired and released the film as Shoojit's big debut. But Bobby Grewal and Shoojit's association wasn't for long, as they split further on in their careers. **Today, when Shoojit is a big name in the film fraternity, we know who he owes his fame to.**



**UNLEASHING NEW TALENTS**

While sharing some special debuts, he particularly mentioned how he introduced **Lara Dutta, Bipasha Basu and Dia Mirza** in the Siyaram's ad. Wearing ethnic Rajasthani attire in the ad featuring glamorous girls, it was a perfect launch pad for Bollywood. Also, his observation skills should be complimented since he was the man who spotted **Aditi Govitrikar** as an intern at KEM hospital and offered her a soap commercial, from where the model kick-started her glamour journey and

became Mrs. World, besides scorching the ramp for years to come.

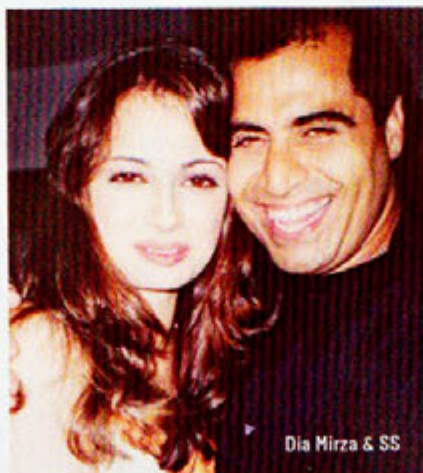
Then there was Vishal Bhardwaj, who was struggling with his first release, *Makdee*. It was Shailendra who helped him complete it, and who promoted it as India's first children's horror film. As we all know, *Makdee* was a resounding hit and Vishal Bhardwaj went on with his directorial journey. The rest, as they say, is history. Let's also not forget the entire *PMKK*

team - actors **Dino Morea, Sanjay Suri, Rinke Khanna, director Raj Kaushal, choreographer Longinus Fernandes and world-renowned DOP - Rajeev Jain.**

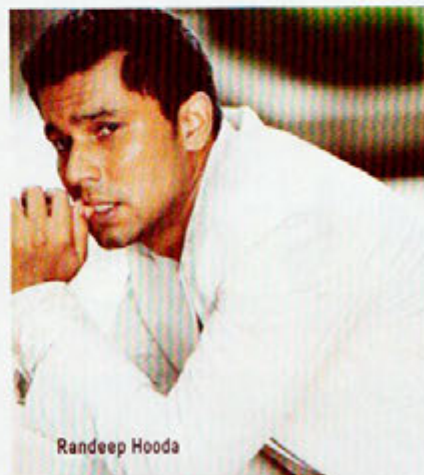
Shailendra Singh is also credited with launching **Randeep Hooda** with the latter's debut flick, *Rubaru*. Interestingly, most of the debutants have managed to carve a niche in the industry, all thanks to the man who managed to pin them to the board first. And that is arguably the best part!



Bipasha Basu



Dia Mirza & SS



Randeep Hooda



Lara Dutta

**Interestingly, most of the debutants have managed to carve a niche in the industry, all thanks to the man who managed to pin them to the board first. And that is arguably the best part!**

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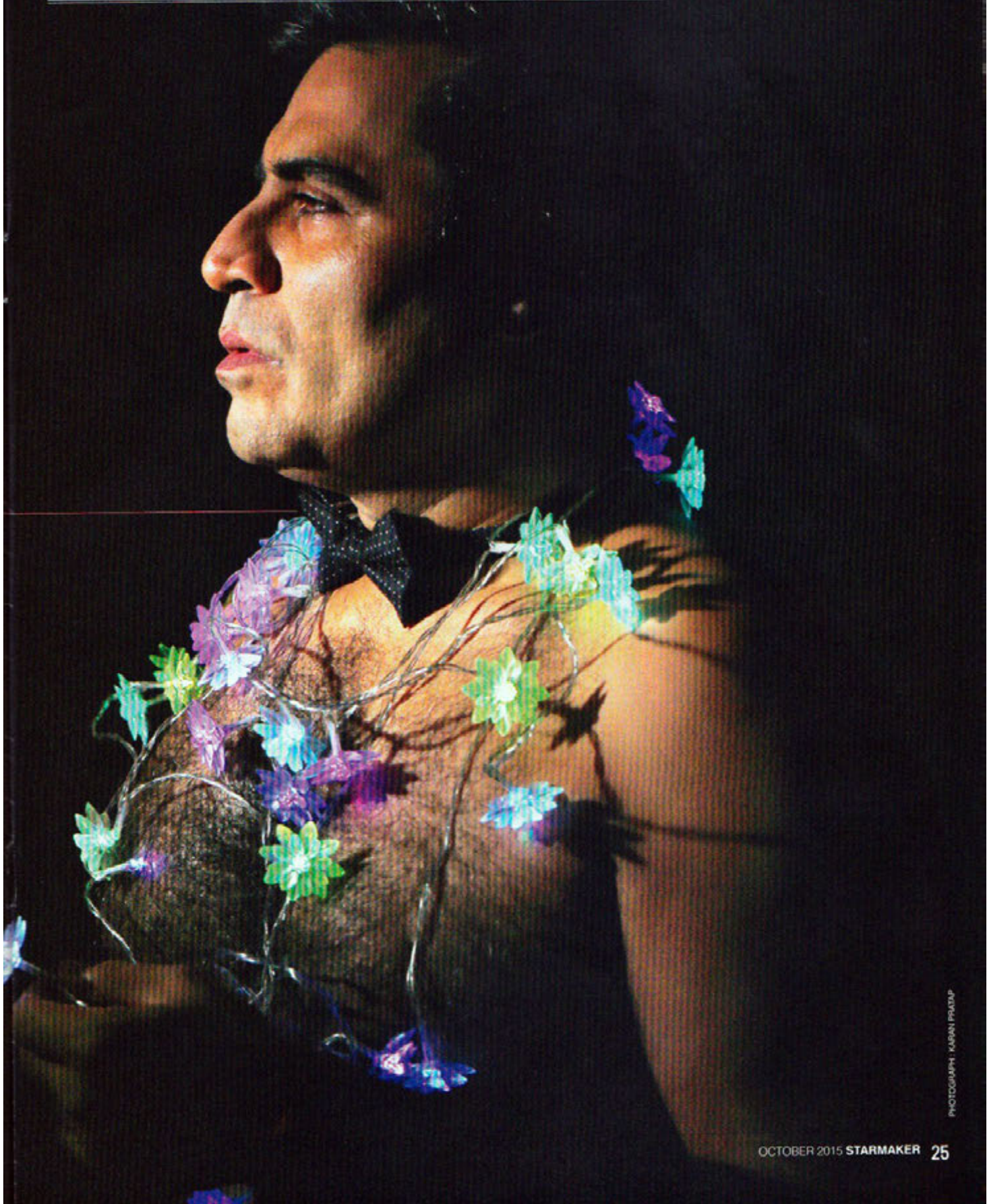
# Aces Along The Way!

## Highlights Of His Journey

**It needs a great mind to do great things. Years later, Shailendra Singh picks out topics that he thought were the icing on the cake of his Bollywood sojourn.**

**Words:** Stuti Srivastava





## The GREAT Discovery

Aishwarya was just out, living her moment, when Shailendra Singh saw her taking a stroll at Marine Drive, Mumbai. And given Shailendra's eye for talent, he signed Aishwarya for her first endorsement under Shailendra's Talent Management Company for Rs. 5000.

While it was an enormous amount then, Shailendra can't be thanked enough for his discovery. She went on to become Miss World in 1994 and the rest, as we all know, is history.



Top: SS, Aishwarya Rai and Michael Douglas at *Racing the Monsoon* announcement



## BAL HANUMAN

India's First Animation Film

A creative soul with some scenes of *Hanuman* already shot, approached Shailendra's brother, Harindra Singh to make it into a full length feature film. Harindra wasn't sure, so he directed him to Shailendra's cabin.

Within minutes, Shailendra was on board. While 3D was the new fad then, he wasn't convinced about the technological know-how to pull it off. So he decided to keep it simple, recognised his audience - mainly kids, who would be escorted by their parents - and green-lit the project.

The film, as expected, turned out well. And even though it was released at the time of the festival of Ramzan and the Indian Premier League, it scored well at the Box Office and garnered maximum appreciation from the universal crowd. A moment of appreciation that Shailendra remembers the most, however, is when he met Dick Cook, the then Disney Chairman. As Shailendra entered the room, Dick said, 'Welcome Mr. Hanuman.' This comment is cherished till date.

# And The WINNER Is...

It was during the filming of *Dhol* that Priyadarshan happened to narrate a one-line of a story to Shailendra, which nobody was ready to fund. Shailendra instantly agreed to produce the film, but offered to invest only Rs 1 crore.

As it turned out, the film *Kanchivaram* was nominated in the popular film category with films like *Rab Ne Bana Di Jodi* and *Ghajini*. It won Priyadarshan the Best Director's Award; Shailendra Singh the Best Producer's Award and Prakash Raj won the Best Actor. Priyadarshan went on to win more appreciation and awards for the film, including the prestigious V Shantaram Award. This was a proud moment for the film as well as the makers. But the film remained unsung and didn't get its due at the Box Office.



President Pratibha Devisingh Patil awarding SS with National Award for *Kanchivaram*



SS and Priyadarshan with National Awards for *Kanchivaram*



Priyadarshan, SS & Prakash Raj with with V Shantaram Awards

ACES ALONG THE WAY

# KHUDA KAY LIYE'S

## India Release!

*Khuda Kay Liye*, a Pakistani film, was making waves soon after its release in Pakistan. The film had great actors, one of which was Naseeruddin Shah. The film turned out to be the highest grosser in Pakistan, but its release worldwide looked difficult.

While many stepped back, Shailendra, amidst all the speculations, dared to distribute the film in India. And that's not all. He even hosted a premiere for the film at Metro Cinema, for which he flew down the whole cast of the film from Pakistan. **Needless to say, it not only elevated Shailendra's position in the industry, but also opened the gates for Pakistani cinema in India.**



## The Making Of

# MAKDEE

## & VISHAL BHARADWAJ

Shailendra Singh is a man with a heart of gold, and he proved it yet again by producing *Makdee*. The film was stuck, for NFDC stalled its funds. Shailendra asked for a few film clips and after watching it, agreed to pay Rs 26 lakhs for the completion.

It was a one-of-its-kind film as it belonged to the kiddie-horror genre. After some delay, when the film was released, it was appreciated by all and sundry, but most importantly, it marked the entry of a maverick director, Vishal Bhardwaj – the filmmaker, who later gave us masterpieces like *Omkara* and *Haider*.

On a funny note, Shailendra took a few random children to watch the film with him. As expected, the kids got scared and hated Shailendra throughout. They cried, and Shailendra laughed his way to the bank.

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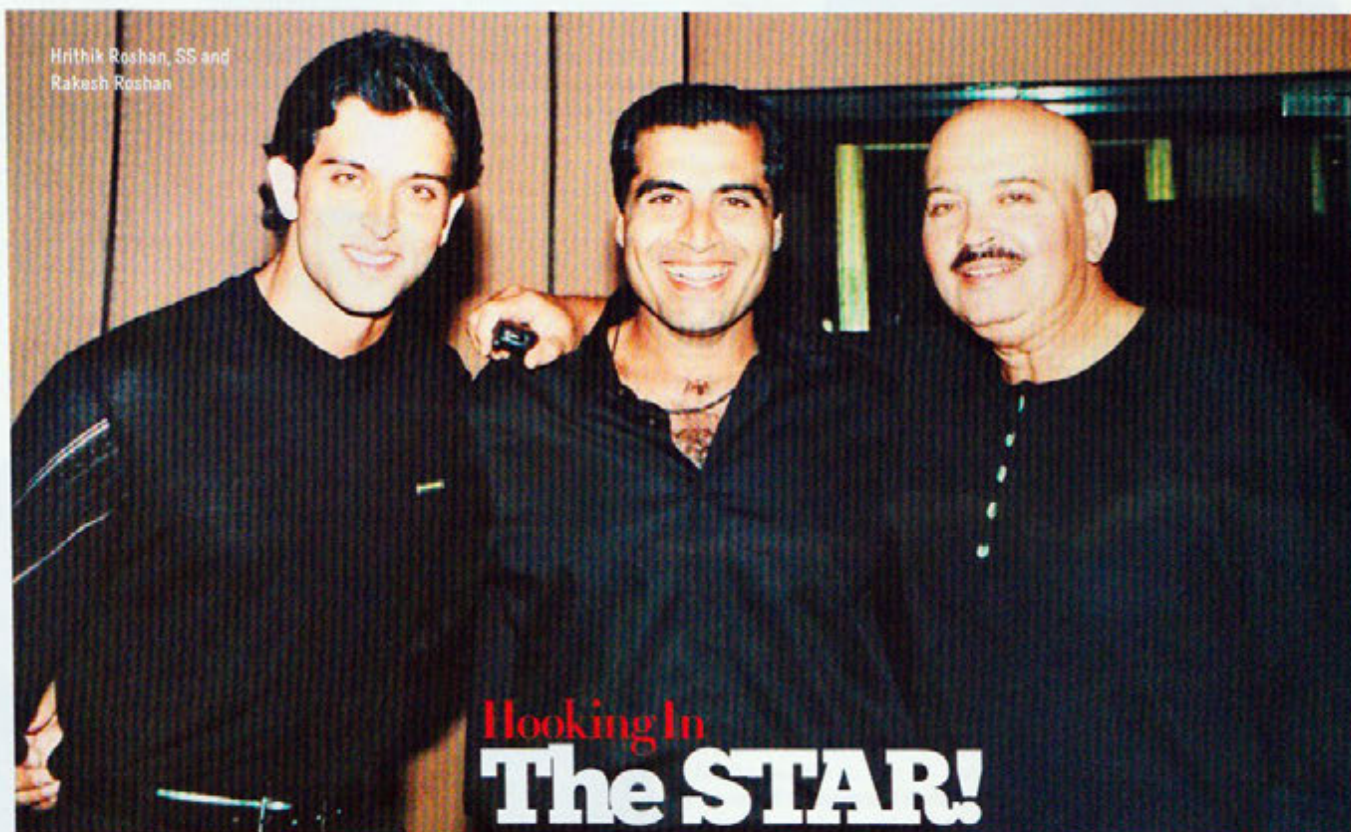
## Shailendra's MAGIC WAND

Shailendra was always inclined towards charity. He collaborated with Smita Thackeray for Mukti Bollywood Shows, that had stars supporting the cause of HIV awareness and treatment. The shows had stars performing to raise funds for the organisation founded by Shailendra against HIV. Shailendra wanted to do more for the cause, and so he planned to produce a film about HIV.

Shailendra and Salman Khan have been friends ever since they first met. Salman acted in *Phir Milenge*, a film produced by Percept for HIV awareness. It also starred Shilpa Shetty and Abhishek Bachchan. The film created quite a stir for its bold topic, and was applauded for its honest performances. It went on to win the MTV Staying Alive Award.



SS receiving MTV Staying Alive Award from Alanis Morissette, with Shilpa Shetty



Hrithik Roshan, SS and Rakesh Roshan

## Hooking In The STAR!



Hrithik Roshan's *Kaho Naa... Pyaar Hai* had just released, and he was the hottest thing in town. Not surprisingly, brands were lining up to sign him as their ambassador. Shailendra's star client, Hero Honda was one of them. Shailendra promptly called up Rakesh Roshan and asked him for dates. Rakesh directed him to Hrithik, who asked him to speak to his father, again. Realising that this wasn't going to be fruitful as he was stuck in the **Guddu-Duggu** loop, Shailendra landed up in Mauritius where the father-son

were shooting for Hrithik's first Coca-Cola commercial. Shailendra knew that Rakesh went for a 6 pm walk every day, and waited outside his hotel to join him. Cornered and with nowhere to go, Rakesh confided that he was waiting for the Coke commercial to release, post which Hrithik was planning to hike his fee. Shailendra knew the trick and coerced Hrithik to sign the Hero Honda deal in Rs 8 crore, before he kicked it to Rs 12 crores the next year. Smart move Shailendra!

SS, Hritik Roshan & Sourav Ganguly

Madhur Bhandarkar



## The **PAGE 3** Reality

Shailendra once got a call from his friend Ashok Ahuja, about an opportunity to invest in an unfinished film. He was told that Bobby Pushkarna had initially started the film, but couldn't finish it in the specified budget. He then met Madhur and spoke to him about his previous directorial. Shailendra liked the story and found it real. He immediately agreed to put in his money to complete the film.

Fortunately, *Page 3* became successful. It was a life-changing experience for all the people involved in the film.

PS: Shailendra is himself known to host lavish page 3 parties, and that's one of the reasons he gave his nod to Madhur's film, and also dishied out creative inputs.

## WISHLIST

'*Umeed pe duniya kayam hai*,' - a line often used by optimists. Like everyone, even Shailendra has dreams, but he has an unusual bouquet of them. With years of experience in the industry, Shailendra plans to do something different.

Shailendra deems creativity more important than the moolah. He cares less for the many commercial scripts he receives, and would rather promote good talent. Unlike many of his earlier discoveries and the new talents he keeps introducing, Shailendra has still gone unsung.

But he will now return, and it will surely be with a bang. He planned to produce India's first Hollywood and Bollywood commercial collaboration named *Racing The Monsoon*. He dreams of casting **Michael Douglas and Aishwarya Rai Bachchan** together in the film remains unfulfilled but you never know, someday you might see Hugh Jackman singing and running around trees.

There are big plans - a plan for a parallel Bollywood. A place where aspiring writers, producers, actors get a chance to prove themselves, in a place where content decides the platform.



# Kat Did It! Sush didn't!?

Words: Shailendra Singh

My first meeting with Katrina Kaif was on a Sunday afternoon, 2:30 pm at my office, at the Raghuvanshi Mills, in Lower Parel, Mumbai. She was all of 20, or maybe 19 at the time. Just in from London, straight into Masala Mumbai. After exchanging pleasantries, the first thing she said in her very British accent, was, "I want to be a Bollywood Star."

I said, "Start with modelling?"

She said, "No, please."

I said, "Ad-film acting?"

She said, "No."

I said, "Ramp walks?"

She said, "No. Just Bollywood."

So I said, "Are you a trained actor?"

She said, "No."

I said, "Can you do Bollywood dance?"

She said, "No."



I said, "Can you speak Hindi?"

She said, "No."

I said, "Ha ha ha. You are crazy, Ms Katrina."

Because I was not yet making Bollywood movies at that time, I connected her to Dino Morea. Had I been making movies, I would definitely not have let her go. Rarely do you find a young girl so ambitious, focused and hungry - but so marginally qualified. I have always believed that the formula for success in Bollywood is to have hunger (bhookh) - and fear (darr). The hunger to do the work, to learn the work, to excel at the work; and the fear of failure that keeps you on top.

Soon, and correctly so, Katrina found a boyfriend and Godfather in my very dear, rock-star of a friend, Salman Khan. After *Just Chill, Chill, Just Chill* happened with David Dhawan, there was just no stopping the Katrina Tsunami. She grew as a girl, as an actress, as a performer and as a brand. 'Krazy Katrina' had enough focus and fire to light up all of Bollywood. She had the hunger to work her ass off, and never considered failure as an option.

She has made me, and a lot of people, very proud.

Sushmita Sen, on the other hand? Also very hungry, very good-looking, very well-educated (those Bong family roots!) and extremely talented. She owned Miss India, and then Miss Universe and, eventually, all the Indian hearts on the planet. Overnight, she became the pride of India.

When you heard 'Sush' speak, you would immediately nominate her to run for the post of the President or Prime Minister of a country. She is knowledgeable, charismatic and imposingly hot. But all this worked negatively, in Bollywood. It is still a traditional, old-school industry. Sush became a rebel without a cause. The first Bollywood actress to get a boob job done and publically announce it at a press conference? That was a bit too much for traditional Bollywood to consume.

Having live-in relationships, and speaking her mind (she certainly had one!) wasn't the Bollywood way. One certainly couldn't ignore her talent, good-looks and massive brand power. Bollywood kept giving her chances, but the 'real' Sush fought with the 'reel' Sush. She had the hunger to work hard, but, because she was so confident in herself as a person, she didn't have the fear of falling. She wanted to stay true to herself, and the 'real' Sush won.

She stuck to her guns, and today, this very hot, talented, naturally gifted actress is a single-mother to two beautiful children. She's still having live-in relationships and her actions are showing that, unfortunately, she's quite defeated in Bollywood (in my professional opinion). She is left judging a comedy-show, in which she is paid to laugh at jokes which are not funny, alongside also not-so-funny, but cool judges, Shekhar Suman and Sonu Sood.

I admire both women, and adore them equally. But Bollywood is, at the end of the day, a business. In my professional opinion, focusing on the desires and trends of the generation next of Bollywood, Katrina has become a role model in Bollywood for 'Impossible Is Possible'. And Sushmita Sen, for 'Possible Can Be Very Easily Made Impossible'.



CUSTODIAN TO STARDOM

# Custodian To Stardom!

## Bollywood Talent Management

**From signing fresh talents for his advertising commercials, to becoming their manager, Shailendra travelled a long way. Even though it seemed a difficult road, for a man who has tread on many paths, this was just another piece of cake. Read on to understand how an advertiser became a talent manager for the top celebrities in Bollywood.**

**Words:** Shravan Shah

Shailendra through his ads, had the power to pick up talent, and could easily recognize the talent when he came across an individual. That's how he was the one who set the lives of **Dino Morea, Aishwarya Rai, Aditi Govitrikar** and hundreds of others on their pathway to a successful career in Bollywood. He recalls how he made Aditi a model. He discovered her at a hospital in Mumbai, where she worked as an intern. Her beauty was apparent, and he offered her a soap commercial, and that's how she became a model, and subsequently, an actress.

After being the nation's top advertiser and interacting with celebrities and talents nationwide, Shailendra had realised early on that if he could manage top brands well, then he could do the same with celebrities and talents. If he could be a custodian to the brand, he could be the same with celebrities, and didn't require any different set of skills to manage them. Artist Management was equal to brand management, and so came about the birth of Talent Management - the brainchild of Shailendra Singh.





CUSTODIAN TO STARDOM

CUSTODIAN TO STARDOM

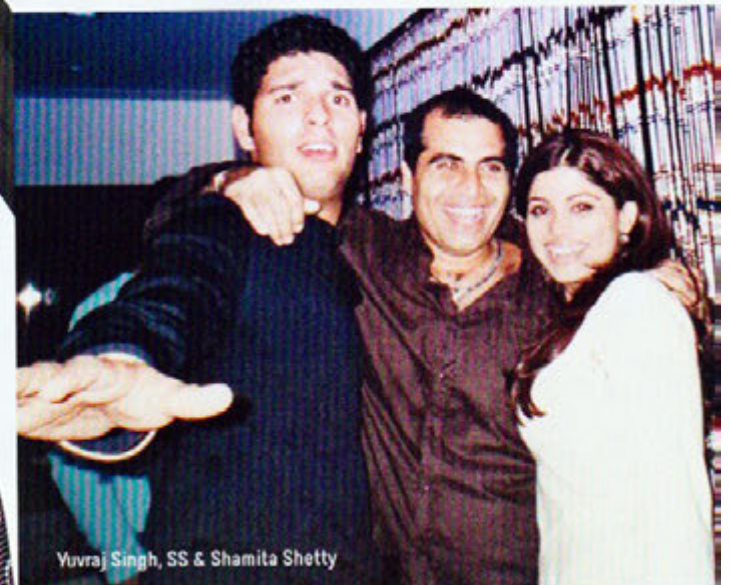


**Yuvraj Singh had lived in his house for five years. Once you develop that kind of relationship with the artiste, it becomes even easier to manage and take care of him, as well as the image he has.**

PHOTOGRAPHY: KARAN PRATAP



Kapil Dev & SS



Yuvraj Singh, SS & Shamita Shetty



SS & Boris Becker

**He recalls how he made Aditi Govitrikar a model. He discovered her at a hospital in Mumbai, where she worked as an intern. He found her beautiful, and offered her a soap commercial, and that's how she became a model, and subsequently, an actress.**



Aditi Govitrikar

He started the venture with celebrity athletes initially. These included **Leander Paes, Mahesh Bhupati, Sushil Kumar, the South African cricket team, Zaheer Khan, Kapil Dev** et al. Post which he delved into Bollywood celebrities' talent management. He conducted talent management transactions for Bollywood celebs like **Rani Mukerji, Preity Zinta, Amitabh Bachchan**, etc.

He always believed in working with freshers

Leander Paes, SS & Mahesh Bhupati



because he believed they possessed energies which can be tapped into. The freshers who worked with him back then, today own top Talent Management Companies themselves, and manage current-day stars from **Salman Khan, Priyanka Chopra, Alia Bhatt** and many more. Apart from starting a talent management unit, Shailendra also formed FDCI (Fashion Design Council of India) and ran Fashion Week for five years. The approach he believed in and utilised, was that



the artiste is God and has to be looked after, and they as a talent management company, should help the artist make money. There was no other premise. He knew the artistes in and out. **Yuvraj Singh had even lived in his house for five years.** Once that kind of relationship is developed with the artiste, it becomes even easier to manage and take care of them, as well as the image they have.

It was also a challenge for him because the year he started his company, the international brand, IMG had come wanting to manage artists in India. But because of the hard work and dedication Shailendra's company offered, IMG couldn't sign up a single celebrity. Shailendra takes pride in that even though they had been in India since 15 years, they couldn't sign a single celeb because Percept didn't allow them to.

The only loss he felt acutely and remembers, is the time they were to sign **Ajay Devgn**. Ajay had made it clear in the very beginning that Percept couldn't cash on his looks, but his talent. As Shailendra's company back then lacked script-writers, they went on with an Idea commercial with him, where they tried to sell him as an actor. To his bad luck, the commercial didn't succeed, and Ajay Devgn never signed up with Percept furthermore. Shailendra learnt from this mistake, and apart from this case, he made sure he managed the rest perfectly. Percept had a long list of names from **Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, Amitabh Bachchan, tennis seeds Anna Kournikova and Boris Becker, American athlete Edwin Moses, Hrithik Roshan, Australian model and television presenter (also Miss Universe 2004) Jennifer Hawkins, Kareena Kapoor, Olympic American sprinter Michael Johnson, Sunil Gavaskar, Salman Khan, Shah Rukh Khan** and many talents in their kitty.

Tisca Chopra, SS, Shahana Goswami, Nandita Das & Sanjay Suri at *Firaag* launch

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THE MAGIC OF STAGE



PHOTOGRAPH BY KORBAN FINECAP

# The Magic Of Stage

Live Shows

Words: Nawaz Kochra

**Being social, yet persistent, he worked towards many causes whilst also changing lives. We list down the events at which Shailendra Singh brought the industry together for noble causes. Right from Amitabh Bachchan and Shah Rukh Khan, to the many mega-stars that witnessed it all...**



SS, Amir Khan & Sunil Shetty

"In our industry, live singers remain playback singers, but globally, they become pop stars. Here, an Alka Yagnik song will make Madhuri Dixit famous," says Shailendra, as we begin our conversation about live shows. Finding it a fascinating experience, he put together 200 shows and also pioneered concept-based live shows that got him close to the artists. He opined "The amount of jubilation an artist gets performing live is different from playback singing, the connection becomes stronger." Smart, we must admit. His one of his most memorable shows was the tribute to Helen. The entire industry had united and also organised a cricket match between Bollywood and cricketers. He recalls a football match, where **Shah Rukh Khan**, on the losing side with only 15-minutes in hand, asked Shailendra for extra time because he couldn't bear losing on live TV! Shailendra refused because of the limited time allotted on television. The stars lost to Sachin Tendulkar's team eventually.

Most of Salman's shows were memorable too. However, his favorite was a series of 20 shows with Govinda, the biggest entertainer, according to Shailendra. Remembering, the time they went to discuss the show with him, he narrates, "Govinda had lunched on mutton and was suffering from a gastric problem. He excused himself for five minutes and went for a walk. We were waiting in a hotel in Goa for him to return, and after two hours, we discovered that he was in Mumbai! He is the most unsteady, unstable person, but when he turns up, he makes sure to kill it."



Airtel Cup with Amir Khan



Right: Ayesha Takia, Vivek Oberoi & SS at Walk for Life





“

**Govinda had lunched on mutton and was suffering from a gastric problem. He excused himself for five minutes and went for a walk. We were waiting in a hotel in Goa for him to return, and after two hours, we discovered that he was in Mumbai! He is the most unsteady, unstable person, but when he turns up, he makes sure to kill it.**

”



**Left:** SS with Bappi Lahiri at Concert for Cancer  
**Top:** Sanjay Bangar, SS, Yuvraj Singh & Zaheer Khan



**Top:** Wajid Khan, Bakhtiyaar Irani, Riteish Deshmukh, Sohail Khan, Sajid Khan & Aftab Shivdasani

# A Noble Cause

## Mukti Foundation

**Shailendra Singh and Smita Thackeray collaborated and formed Mukti Foundation, which extended help to HIV- affected patients.**

Words: Writer Name

Shailendra Singh and Smita Thackeray collaborated and formed Mukti Foundation, which extended help to HIV- affected patients. They collaborated for 100 Bollywood shows across the country, to raise money for the cause, targeting both, AIDS awareness and treatment. The Bollywood stars collectively appreciated as well as supported the cause, and also performed at fund-raisers and events for free.

While Shailendra handled the creative aspects of the show, Smita Thackeray handled the charity side. As much support rendered from the stars, they received in equal measure from the masses. The Political Supremo, Balasaheb Thackeray (also Smita's father-in-law) was supportive of the cause and was appreciative about the work they put in for this cause.

Shailendra and Smita were a power-packed duo, whose initiative went on for 10 years. And in those 10 years it changed the lives of many.



Top: Lara Dutta

Right: Saif Ali Khan, Ibrahim Ali Khan & Salman Khan



Left: Salman Khan

Top: Saif Ali Khan





Left top: Sohail Khan  
Left: Lara Dutta  
Right top: Salman Khan  
Right: Shah Rukh Khan



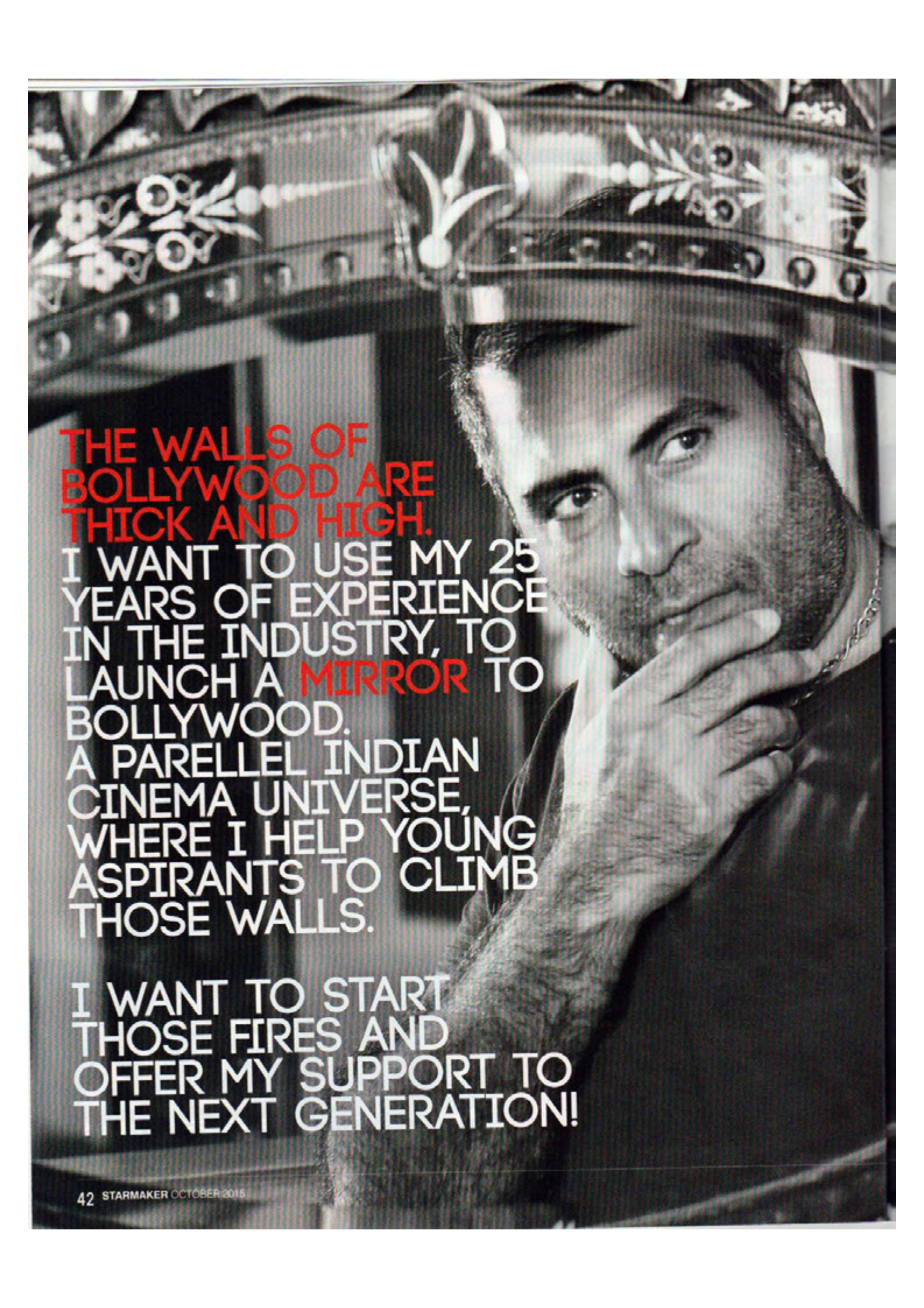
**Shailendra and Smita were a power-packed duo, whose initiative went on for 10 years. And in those 10 years it changed the lives of many.**



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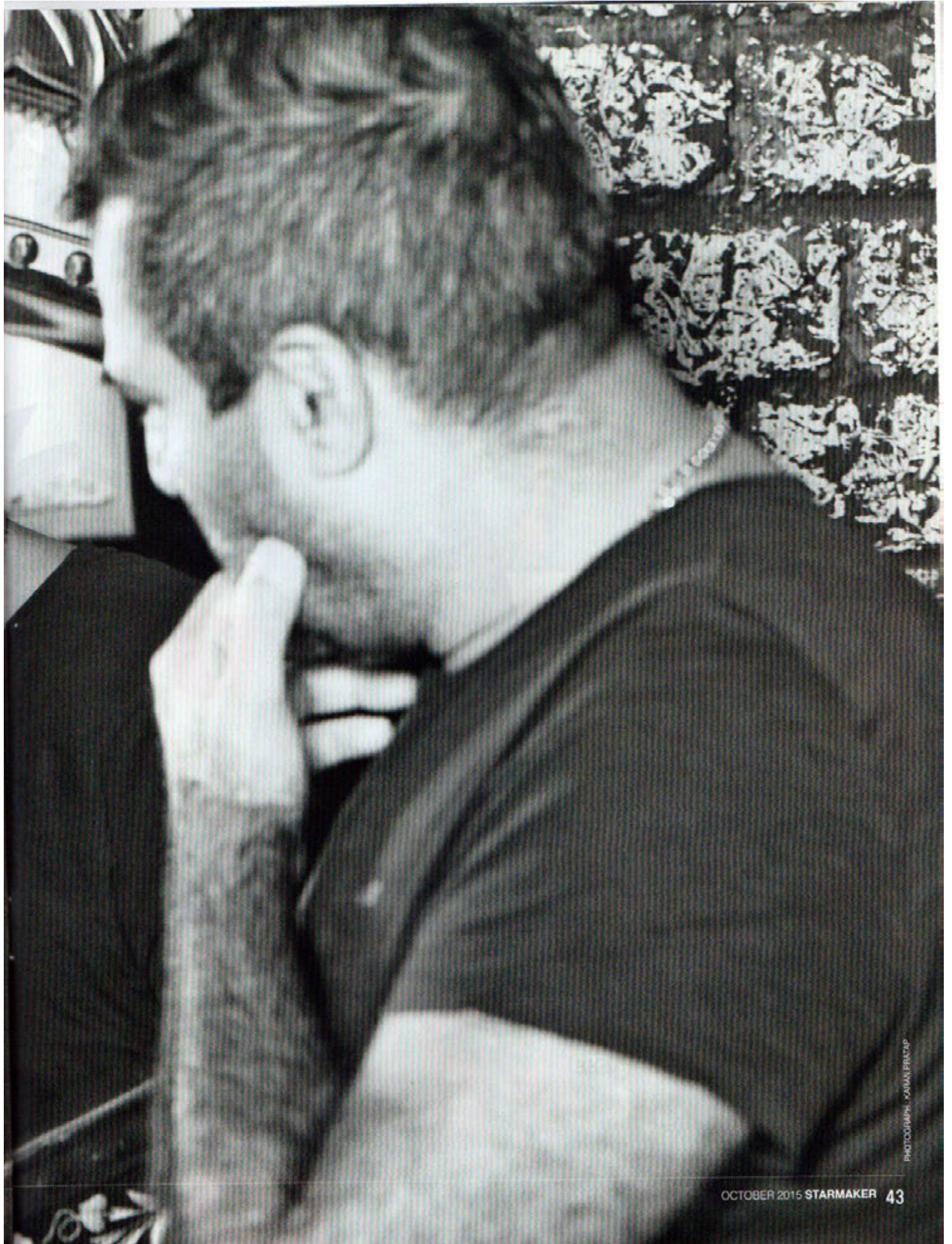


THE WALLS OF  
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IN THE INDUSTRY, TO  
LAUNCH A **MIRROR** TO  
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A PARELLEL INDIAN  
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WHERE I HELP YOUNG  
ASPIRANTS TO CLIMB  
THOSE WALLS.

I WANT TO START  
THOSE FIRES AND  
OFFER MY SUPPORT TO  
THE NEXT GENERATION!



PHOTOGRAPH: KARAN PRATAP

OF LOVE & WAR

# Of Love & War

## Top 7 Stories

Life isn't always fair, but there exist stories that make it totally endearing. We present to you some priceless stories from Shailendra's very filmy Bollywood journey.

Words: Stardust Team



PHOTOGRAPH: KASIAN PRASAD



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Prakash Raj, SS, Shriya Reddy, Priyadarshan, Cameron Bailey: Chairman of Toronto Film Festival  
*Kanchivaram*

# The Successful Duo

**Priyadarshan** was known as Bollywood's delight, since he rolled out films in four months each, and managed to make three-four successful films a year. The producers were happy working at his pace and his team was a bunch of talent as well. Shailendra and Priyadarshan together, have given hits like *Malamal Weekly* and *Dhol*, but one film that won the race was *Kanchivaram*. *Kanchivaram* was a Tamil film with a great concept. Priyadarshan had narrated the story to many but was rejected by each one of them. He narrated one-line to Shailendra who immediately agreed to produce it. But Shailendra wanted Priyadarshan to make the film in just 1 crore, which meant that the film would have to be extremely low on cost. Priyadarshan agreed, and roped in **Prakash Raj** for the film. At that time,

Prakash was exploring and enjoying the commercial space hugely, but still agreed to go bald for this film which meant his other films were halted for six months. The other actors too, who were at the peak of their success, decided to invest time and effort for *Kanchivaram*.

They all stayed like a unit, travelled in Ambassador cars, lived in huts and cooked food together. The film was finally completed and released. All the hard work paid off well, and the film went on to receive numerous awards and massive appreciation. The film got nominated in the commercial category for the Best Film in National Awards, along with films like *Rab Ne Bana Di Jodi* and *Ghajini*, and managed to beat them all to win the Best Film award.

**Priyadarshan won the Best Director award, Prakash Raj won the Best Actor and Shailendra Singh's Percept Picture Company won the Best Producer award.** But the most prestigious one for Shailendra was the V Shantaram award, without a doubt. Today, while Shailendra recalls the incident with pride, he also thinks that the media is biased and doesn't highlight such award-winning stories.

Meanwhile, *Kanchivaram* not only won laurels, but also cemented this duo's relationship into an even stronger bond.



SS &amp; Madhur Bhandarkar

# Bitter Episode

Someone once mentioned a story to Shailendra Singh of a film stalled because of lack of funds. Shailendra liked the concept and decided to go ahead. That is when he met **Madhur Bhandarkar** of *Chandni Bar* fame. He liked the concept because it highlighted the reality behind the famous Bollywood page 3 parties. It was a story depicted through the eyes of a journalist. The story stands true even today, but the topic stood bold. Shailendra chose to take it up, and the film was completed and released soon.

*Page 3* was a huge success, and Madhur Bhandarkar and Shailendra Singh bonded well. But time saw its own repercussions.

Initially, they collaborated to explore the realistic aspects of filmmaking. But they soon got a reality check themselves. After *Page 3* was appreciated for revealing the truth behind Bollywood biggie parties, they had many such truths to reveal through their films.

With *Fashion*, Madhur saw himself placed high in the industry. But with its release under the UTV banner, Shailendra's

disappointment was apparent because *Fashion* was his concept. He had initially wanted NH10 director Navdeep Singh to take it up. But because he refused, Shailendra chose Madhur, who in turn, sold the idea to UTV. The rude shock led to cracks in their friendship, despite which Shailendra decided to back Madhur's *Traffic Signal*. Strangely, Madhur refused to show the movie to him till the fag end of the making and Shailendra only saw it a day before the screening. Since the trailer looked great, Shailendra decided to courier a DVD

to Michael Douglas for his views. It was the same day the movie premiered. Micheal dissed the film and so did the film-goers.

Till date, Shailendra hasn't seen *Traffic Signal*. Together, Shailendra and Madhur made films like *Page 3*, *Traffic Signal*, *Corporate* and *Jail*. Of which, *Jail* and *Traffic Signal* tanked terribly at the Box Office. When the films tanked, their relationship went through ups and downs. Even so, Shailendra still considers Madhur one of his closest.



Page 3 success party



# Sultans For A Cause

Salman Khan and SS, *Phir Milenge*

Shailendra has been supporting the AIDS cause for 20 years now. His In-Aid-Of-HIV Shows by Mukti was one where even the Bachchans took part wholeheartedly. He then got really deep into it with concerts, and soon wanted to make a movie on the same. He was very dedicated to the concept of *Phir Milenge* and was inspired by Denzel Washington's *Philadelphia*, and thought if Washington could take a chance with such a movie, why not someone in Bollywood? He got South actress **Revathi** on board as the director, but the troubles had just begun. One day Revathi visited him to return her cheque of Rs 50 lakhs because nobody was

willing to make the movie with her. Even Uday Chopra had rejected it.

Shailendra asked Revathi not to lose hope, and rather approach Salman Khan for the film, primarily because he was her first co-actor, and also since Salman had integrally supported Shailendra in the past with his AIDS campaigns. She went straight to Salman Khan's house, who agreed to consider it once she had the rest of the cast in place. Revathi suggested **Shilpa Shetty's** name to Shailendra who in turn called Shilpa and narrated the film. "I also told her that there was a problem; that she wouldn't be

provided with five-star accommodation and an A/C van. She insisted on an A/C van as 'make up melt ho jaayega.' But that was what Shailendra wanted! She eventually agreed and came on board. The very same day, Abhishek Bachchan too agreed to do the film, considering the stars backing it. So by the end of the day, Shailendra had the cast in place. Soon, music composers **Shankar-Ehsaan-Loy** were roped in for free and the movie was made eventually. It became a decent success and even paved the way for a few awards.

# A Tale Of Johnny Who Never Walked

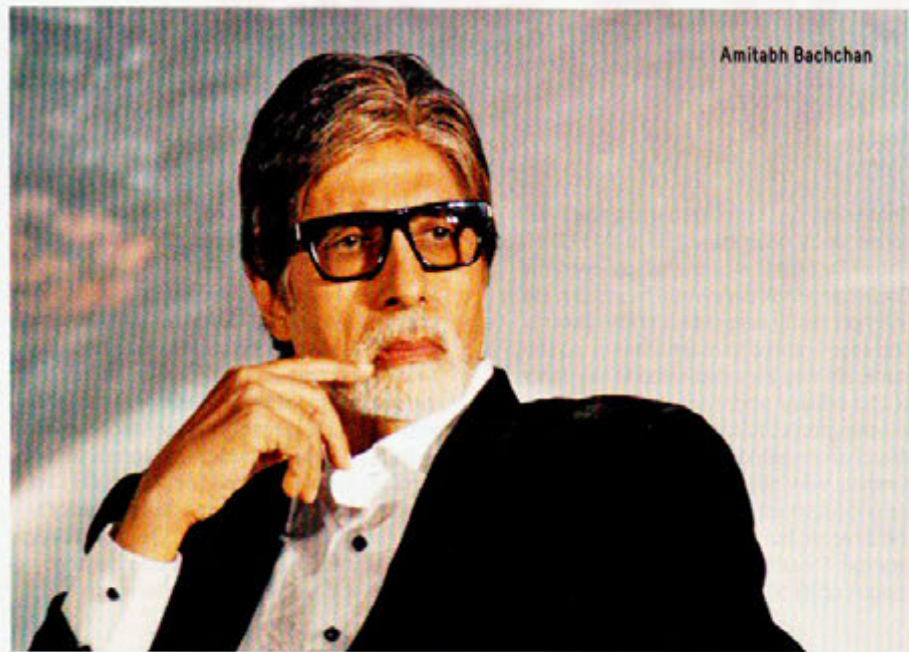
Shailendra says, "I always looked up to Amitabh Bachchan for the superstar he is. I had already met him for many occasions, including prior Stardust Award functions. He had the patience to sit for a five-hour long discussion on a winter night at Film City. He is a disciplined character and I was in awe of it. Soon, I was doing shows and endorsements with him and I became a member of the family."

Shailendra had approached Amitabh for a film called *Johnny Walker*, to be directed by Shoojit Sircar. He liked the proposed idea and wanted to proceed. The story was of a husband-wife, where the husband never confesses his love to his wife, and by the time he does, it's already too late. Then he walks from Kashmir to Kanyakumari repenting his actions. Named Johnny D'Souza, the film's title was set as *Johnny Walker*. Everything was finalised, Shoojit was ready, and they began scouting for locations. Soon the CEO of ABCL got in touch with Shailendra to take the discussions ahead. The CEO informed him that they would be charging Rs 4 crores as Amitabh's acting fee, and he paid him an advanced cheque of Rs 2 crores. However, in the days to come, it turned out that Amitabh Bachchan additionally wanted to be 50-percent ownership of the film without funding it in any way. Shailendra refused, and went on to meet Amitabh Bachchan.

However, it turned out that Hollywood director M Night Shyamalan had already put up a script on similar lines, online. This, in turn, made Bachchan queasy about the movie and he backed out, even though

Shailendra agreed to take all responsibility since it was an original idea. The film eventually was never made, and Bachchan returned his fee.

However, six months later, a rumour began doing the rounds that a similar movie was being made under the UTV banner named *Johnny Mastana*, starring Amitabh Bachchan, Dia Mirza and directed by Shoojit Sircar. Refusing to admit defeat, Shailendra went to court, so did Fox Studios who owned Shyamalan's script. UTV made the movie, but it yet cannot be released, thanks to the lawsuits.



Amitabh Bachchan





Vishal Bhardwaj

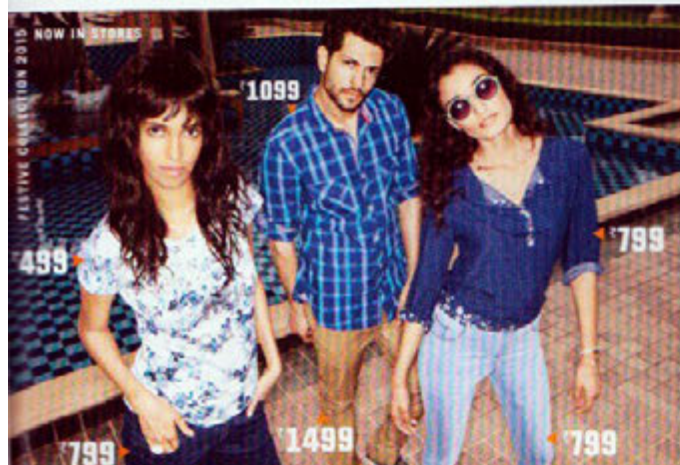
# A Boon In Horror!

In 2002, when Vishal Bhardwaj's *Makdee* released, nobody thought the film would bag a number of awards and win so many hearts. The angelic Shweta Prasad in a double role was indeed a stellar performance for a child artist. The film received an award at the Chicago International Children's Film Festival. However, the story behind the film reaching the audience was something completely unheard of. When the film faced issues with distribution rights, Percept Picture Company bought them without any qualms. Shailendra Singh talks about how it all happened, "I got a phone call one day saying that there was a filmmaker who had

made a film stuck, because NFDC (National Film Development Corporation of India) wasn't issuing any more money. And he needed another Rs 26 lakhs to complete it. So, I enquired about the subject, and was told it was horror and for children. After the narration, I asked if I could see the rushes. And this man whose name was Vishal Bhardwaj visited me. **I loved the movie and jumped in. Imagine if I hadn't funded that film, Vishal wouldn't be what he is today.**

But at the position he is in today, he doesn't acknowledge how it actually happened." In fact the relationship faced a road bump

on the way. Vishal, a cricket fanatic, was invited by Shailendra for a celebrity cricket match at Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai. The match was underway but a slight miscommunication between Shailendra and his team, made the team call Vishal and cancel his participation. Unfortunately, Vishal was already on his way, with his son in tow, looking forward to playing a match with the Indian team in front his son at such a prestigious ground. Hurt by the way it was managed, Vishal didn't really warm up to Shailendra post this episode, thus affecting the relationship.



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Anurag Kashyap & SS at *Hanuman* launch

As Shailendra recalls, "There is an interesting story with *Hanuman*. Percept used to work on Saturdays then. Someone from the South had a 20 per cent film on *Hanuman* made. My room was next to my brother's, and he sent the man to me. He started with *Hanuman*, and I asked him how much he wanted. I was sure to make it in 2D since it couldn't match a *Shrek* 3D, however the content was powerful. The film became a huge success. It was the only movie to release during IPL and it killed it!

Later, Anurag Kashyap contacted me and said that he wanted to do *Hanuman 2* for his daughter and met me for the same. We ended up being good friends. We met and gelled, but when he made the film, he went overboard and screwed it up. He got carried away and brought environment and social cause into the climax, ruining the franchise.



Shailendra Singh and the megastar Akshay Kumar bonded over advertising, sports and fitness. Shailendra was impressed with the actor's discipline. But more than that, today he is quite amazed by his shrewd business sense.

Shailendra decided to make a film with Akshay over a concept brought on by Nagesh Kukunoor. It was called *8x10 Tasveer*. Akshay was aggressive, dominating with a very sharp mind. So with a budget of Rs 15 crores, the idea was to shoot the movie in Munnar, Kerala. Soon Rs 15 crores turned to 48, and the shoot was taken to Calgary, Canada, and to Cape Town, South Africa. Suddenly, a boutique movie had turned into a big budget film. The film couldn't match its budget and lost loads of money. Akshay refused to reduce his fee even after Shailendra requested him to. To top it all, there was an industry strike just before the release of the movie. Shailendra requested Mukesh Bhatt (head of the producer's wing) to postpone the strike, which he was kind enough to. But the troubles didn't end there. The buyers got a whiff of the story and refused to distribute it. Akshay again, was requested to promote the film a

bit more aggressively, but he relented only for a couple of press conferences. The film bombed eventually, and Shailendra had to bear the brunt.

But he still persisted for the sake of his friendship. With his trust in Akshay Kumar, he took to him a Thai, animated film. There too, Akshay refused to reduce his price even just to shoot a promotional video and to lend his voice to the character. Shailendra had to pay him Rs 9 crores once again. That movie tanked as well. The studio had to practically shut down after these setbacks.

Percept Picture Company was the only company after Dharma Productions and Yash Raj Films, to have been self-funded. It was important that Akshay Kumar guaranteed a hit for him to have taken such a ginormous fee. Shailendra held Akshay accountable for the film, and that soured their relationship.

Interestingly, there was another AIDS movie that Shailendra had planned with Priyadarshan which eventually slipped from the former, to Akshay. That was Akshay's way of trying to get a National Award for

himself, according to Shailendra Singh. The film never got made. Also, the super hit *Singh Is King* was Shailendra's idea. With the same name and the concept of a *Sardar* getting the Kohinoor diamond back to India, Akshay used the title, gave Shailendra credit for the same, but all for free. Now that they are making a franchise of the title, they refused to pay any remuneration, and the movies are anything but patriotic.

**But the end of the story remains that Akshay is a shrewd businessman.** What started out as a decent fee rate at the first meeting, would soon escalate, since Akshay was superstitious about the number nine. And if it isn't working out with the filmmaker, Akshay is comfortable enough to walk out from the project. Considering Akshay is the only actor who completes the shoot on schedule, thanks to his discipline, producers are willing to shell out the monies for a star like him. He is trustworthy, but quite expensive, and this, Shailendra learnt the hard way.





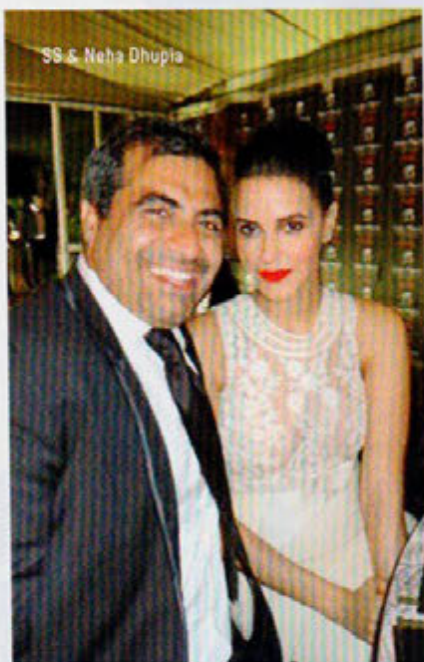
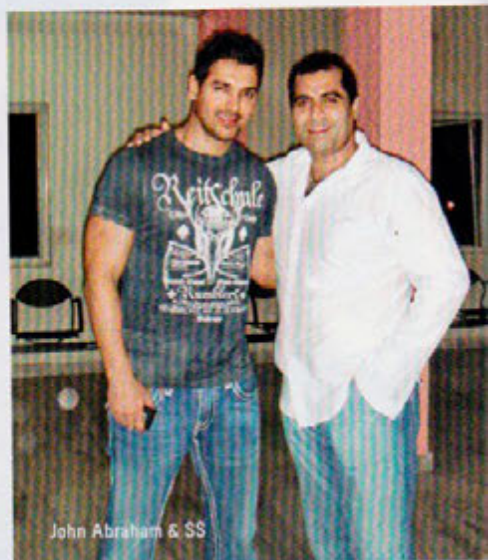
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**SOCIALLY,  
CULTURALLY  
& EMOTIONALLY**

THE VOYAGE

# The Voyage

## Journey Of Bollywood

After spending decades in the industry, he has seen Bollywood from every perspective and his existence here has not only gotten him close to the stars, but also has left him with innumerable souvenirs to cherish. Here are some of the handpicked shots from the archives of Percept Company.



THE VOYAGE



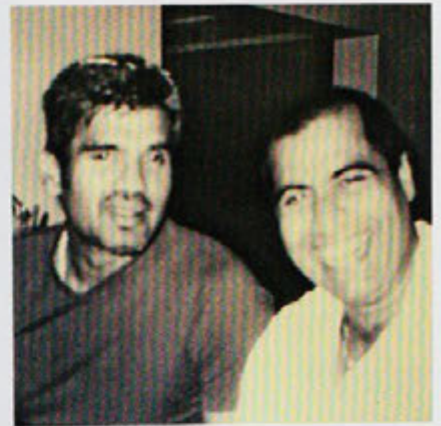
Seemanto Roy, Michael Douglas & SS



SS and Sohail Khan at WOW Awards



SS, Nayana Singh, Rakesh Roshan & Hrithik Roshan



Sunil Shetty & SS



THE CRÈME DE LA CRÈME

# The CRÈME De La CRÈME

My Bollywood  
Superstars

PHOTOGRAPHY: KARAN PRASAD





**He has been the reason why many in the industry have had a glorious career today. Shailendra Singh has given the Bollywood universe many stars, but some special ones have been and will always be his favourite superstars.**

**We present a list of his nearest and dearest, the ones he will never forget, for it is with them that he has shared infinite memories.**

## Men

## Women

NANA PATEKAR  
 AMITABH BACHCHAN  
 SALMAN KHAN  
 PRIYADARSHAN  
 SHAH RUKH KHAN  
 RANDEEP HOODA  
 NASEERUDDIN SHAH  
 SHOOJIT SIRCAR  
 PARESH RAWAL  
 VISHAL BHARDWAJ  
 MADHUR BHANDARKAR

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REVATHI  
 AISHWARYA RAI  
 SRIYA REDDY  
 SHAHANA GOSWAMI  
 LARA DUTTA  
 BIPASHA BASU  
 SUSHMITA SEN  
 DIA MIRZA  
 MALAIKA ARORA KHAN  
 NANDITA DAS  
 PREITY ZINTA

# Little Lessons

## Regrets And Learnings

Words: Srividya Menon

It wasn't so much regret as it was a lesson for Shailendra Singh to realise that like in any corporate field, Bollywood has no place for an emotional way of working. Agreed, Bollywood is way more personal and informal, but Shailendra didn't realise that this is it - what you see is what you get. Not that this lesson changed Shailendra. "I truly believe that I should be who I am and if the universe wants me to succeed, I will," he quips. But then failures have marred his trust in Bollywood, an industry he held close to his heart. But wavered, he has never.

He lists honesty, truthfulness and an earnest attitude as a regret. We weren't convinced and sought examples. "I was making *Rush* with **Emraan Hashmi** and the director, **Shamir Desai**, lost his life to cancer mid-film. I didn't stop the film and decided to go ahead nevertheless. His wife took the directorial seat, and this Emraan Hashmi starrer found a release." Then there was the very large-hearted gesture that didn't really go as planned when Shailendra gifted a rare, limited edition bike to **Neil Nitin Mukesh** during the shooting of *Jail*. It didn't rake in any money and Neil is yet to thank Shailendra for the gift.

There might be laurels of many kinds, but Shailendra misses a proper commercial hit. "Packaging is much bigger than the product in Bollywood," he says. Being a commercial filmmaker, Shailendra is yet to make a fortune from films. "Had I made it, I would have given it back to people," is his promise.

And one of the greatest regrets, he points out in hindsight, is his lack of money to make a studio for **Yash Chopra**, the legend who is an institution within himself. "I think Bollywood needs a museum, where we can showcase the works of stalwarts like him, so that the coming generation can be inspired."

But then the rules have changed in his world as well. Shailendra isn't going to make films with his own money anymore. It has to have a financier. "I need to feel empowered. I need somebody to back me. I am excited internally, but I need external backing." What do we say to that? May the force be with you!

Priyanka Thakran, Sagarika Ghatge, Neha Dhupia, Emraan Hashmi, Aditya Pancholi, Mohammad Fasih, Vinod Bhanushali, SS at the *Rush* launch



Left: Neil Nitin Mukesh and SS  
Bottom: Yash Chopra presents SS with the V Shantaram Award



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& ARBREEN VAZ (CENTER) & VARTIKA SINGH (RIGHT) IN fbb FESTIVE COLLECTION.

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