

# Saif Deserves Accolades He Got For 'Sacred Games'

By Subhash K. Jha

MUMBAI: Its good to see Saif Ali Khan back in the reckoning with the web series 'Sacred Games'. He deserves to be at the top. Thats where he belongs.

Over different periods of time, I've interacted with all the three Khan superstars -- Shah Rukh, Salman and Aamir. I was on very warm terms with all three in different time zones. Until major differences cropped up and things just ceased to be hunky-dory.

Saif, the fourth Khan superstar is a special case for me. To begin with, I am one of his mother Sharmila Tagore's greatest fans. Even today when I speak to her my hands tremble and I gush like a schoolboy. She laughs off my effusiveness, even warning me once that "such things" are not allowed to be said any longer.

But who can stop a Sharmila



Tagore fan? For me, Saif was my favourite actress' son to begin with. Then he married Kareena with whom I've shared a very warm relationship in the past. This happened much later. When I first got to know Saif, he was go-

ing through a traumatic break-up with his first wife Amrita Singh.

Saif had a lot to say and, at that point of time, I think he trusted me a lot. The interview where he lashed out at Amrita was (naturally) a sensation. Saif was, as

expected, guilt-ridden about the impact. "Did I say too much? Should I have been more restrained in my comments? After all, she is my children's mother. That will never change." Saif agonised, as only Saif can.

I assured him it was fine. He needed to have his say. Then came his relationship with Rosa (where is she now?). That too didn't end too well. Saif was looking for something in his Significant Other. He found that person while shooting for Vijay Krishna Acharya's "Tashan" in Ladakh. We could Saif-ly say that the one good thing which came out of "Tashan" was Saif's relationship with Kareena (which is more than what the director's demoniacal dud "Thugs Of Hindostan" has to redeem itself).

I think Saif is more at peace with Kareena than he has ever been. The restlessness, the fidg-

eting, the constant uncertainty is gone. This is the most self-assured phase of Saif's life. We saw how much at peace he was with his daughter, the very lovely debutante Sara Ali Khan, on Karan Johar's show.

As I watched him look so relaxed with Sara, I remember my first meeting with Saif at his well-appointed apartment. He met me warmly, led me into the study and said he would be back in a while -- and forgot that I was waiting there. More than an hour later he emerged, all apologetic.

He has evolved not only as a human being but also as an actor. His performance in "Baazaar" is his best to date. So what if it didn't work? In the way he looks, his genteel manner and the fluctuations in his career, Saif is the millennial's Shashi Kapoor who, incidentally, was Saif's mom's favourite co-star.

## Rebel Kannada Star And Politician Ambareesh Passes Away

BENGALURU: Veteran Kannada films rebel actor M.H. Ambareesh died at a private hospital here on Saturday night following a heart attack, a duty doctor said. He was 66.

"Ambareesh died at around 10.15 p.m. after a massive cardiac arrest (heart attack) a couple of hours after he was brought to our hospital in the evening due to breathing (respiratory) problem," the doctor told IANS from Vikram Hospital in the city centre.

The super star of the Kannada film industry is survived by his widow and multi-lingual actress Sumalatha and son Abhishek.

As the shocking news of Ambareesh death was flashed on local news channels and went viral on social media, hundreds of his frenzied fans thronged the hospital, wailing for the sudden loss of their legendary hero.

Karnataka Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy, cabinet ministers K.J. George, D.K. Shivakumar and Tamil superstar Rajnikanth were among the several political leaders who paid tributes soon after doctors declared Ambareesh dead.

"With a heavy heart, visited the hospital and met the grieving family members of my dear friend rebel star #Ambareesh,"



tweeted Kumaraswamy.

In consultation with the family, the chief minister has directed the officials concerned to make arrangements for the public and fans to pay their last respects to Ambareesh at Kanteerva Stadium opposite Cubbon Park.

"#Ambareesh was a rebel who was loved by all. He carved a unique place in both politics and films. He leaves back a legacy that will be cherished by his family, friends, fans and followers. May his soul rest in peace and his family get strength to bear this loss," said the chief minister in another tweet.

Kumaraswamy also assured the fans to arrange special buses from Ambareesh's home district

(Mandya) to allow them travel to Bengaluru for paying homage to him.

The last rites of Ambareesh body was performed on Monday near Rajkumar Smaraka at Kanteerava Studio in the city's north-west suburb with state honours.

Ambareesh was former cabinet minister in the previous Congress government from May 2013 to June 2016 when then Chief Minister Siddaramaiah sacked him along with 13 other ministers in a major reshuffle of his ministry.

He was Union Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting in the first UPA government and a Parliament member from Mandya Lok Sabha constituency, about 100km from here.

Ambareesh was also a member of the state legislature, representing Mandya and Srirangapatna segments as a Congress and Janata Dal-Secular (JD-S) leader.

Ambareesh entered filmdom through the role of 'Jaleel' in veteran director Puttanna Kanagal's 'Naagarahaavu' in 1972. He also acted in 'Shubhamangala', 'Antha', 'Chakravayuha', 'Masanada Hoovu', 'Olavina Udugere', 'Hrudaya Haadithu', 'Odahuttidavaru', 'Diggajaru' and 'Elu Suttina Kote', where he played an acclaimed role

## Singer Mohammed Aziz Dies After Heart Attack

MUMBAI: Veteran Bollywood playback singer Mohammed Aziz, best remembered for his naughty rendition of the song 'My Name Is Lakhani', passed away on Tuesday, after a heart attack in a private hospital, a family member said.

Aziz, 64, collapsed at the Mumbai Airport after deboarding from a Kolkata flight on Tuesday afternoon. He was rushed to the Nanavati Hospital in Vile Parle where he breathed his last a short while later. His body was taken to his suburban Kandivali home.

Born in West Bengal's Ashok Nagar as Syed Mohammed Aziz-un-Nabi in July 1954, he started his career as a restaurant singer in Kolkata till he got a singing break in a Bengali film, "Jyoti", before he shifted to Mumbai and sang for the Hindi film "Ambar" (1984). Later, he was spotted by the music director Anu Malik and got his first major breakthrough in Bollywood with the song "Mard Taangewala" (Mard, 1984).

Subsequently, he sang for top music directors like Naushad, O.P. Nayyar, Kalyanji-Anandji, Laxmikant-Pyarelal, Bappi Lahiri, R.D. Burman, Rajesh Roshan, Ravindra Jain, Raam-Laxman, Usha Khanna, Nadeem-Shravan, Jatin-Lalit, Aadesh Shrivastava and others. Songs sung by him



were picturized on Amitabh Bachchan, Mithun Chakravorty, Rishi Kapoor, Govinda, Anil Kapoor and other leading actors.

Deeply inspired by the legendary singer Mohammed Rafi, at one point of time Aziz was considered the musical heir to his idol for his versatility and range of singing.

Besides Hindi, he sung in Bengali, Odiya and other languages during his career spanning nearly three-and-a-half decades.

Some of his memorable Bollywood numbers solo and duets include 'My Name Is Lakhani', 'Aap Ke Aa Jaane Se', 'Lal Dupatta Malmal Ka', 'Dil Le Gayi Teri Bindiya', 'Tu Kal Chala Jayege, To Main Kya Karunga', 'Patjhad Sawan Basant Bahar', 'Tu Mujhe Kubool, Main Tujhe Kubool' and 'Behna O, Behna'.

## SRK, Kangana, Vijay To Share 'Passion To Paycheck' Tales

MUMBAI: Film stars Shah Rukh Khan, Kangana Ranaut and Vijay Devarakonda will share their personal 'Passion to Paycheck' stories with a live audience as part of Signature Masterclass, to be held across six cities starting December 15.

Shah Rukh will talk about his journey to the audience in Lucknow, while southern star Vijay will share his experience with the Hyderabad audience. Kangana will travel to Gurgaon, Kolkata, Guwahati and Pune.

Popular VJ-actor Cyrus Sahukar will host the interactions.

Looking forward to the experience, Shah Rukh said in a statement: "I came to Mumbai from Delhi with nothing more than a passion to act. I had grown up amidst the great actors on the campus of the National School of Drama and that really inspired

me. I am excited to have the opportunity to share my story with the audience through the Signature Masterclass platform."

Kangana said: "My journey has been really personal and I dreamed that it would ever be one that could inspire people.

"I love the fact that I get the chance to share my story with people in such an intimate way. As a woman, I understand the struggles we undergo and through my masterclasses, I hope to inspire women and men alike to follow their passion irrespective of the barriers and challenges they face."

"Arjun Reddy" fame actor Vijay also hopes to inspire the youth. "Everyone has a dream...I was lucky enough to have been given the opportunity..."

This will be the third season of the Signature Masterclass.

## 'Alia Has Raised Bar For Herself'

MUMBAI: Filmmaker Meghna Gulzar says actress Alia Bhatt has raised the bar for herself in cinema with her role of Sehmat Kaur -- the Indian spy -- in the movie "Raazi".

"Alia performed quite challenging scenes in the movie. She would be trembling before you say action but the moment camera rolls, you see the performer in her taking over everything. She has raised the bar in acting for herself," Meghna told IANS.

The daughter of veteran lyricist-poet Gulzar, Meghna, who showed the India-Pakistan spy drama against the backdrop of the 1971 war through the film, admitted that Alia was her first choice for Sehmat.

"I could not see anyone else play this part. If she (Alia) had not done the film, I would have made it. Alia's vulnerability, fragility fitted the character which I imagined. I am grateful for the belief she put into the character."

<p>416.742.3456</p> <p>1530 Albion Rd. Etobicoke</p>	<p>416.299.3456</p> <p>1571 Sandhurst Circle, Scarborough</p>	<p>905-707-3456</p> <p>115 York Blvd, Richmond Hill</p>
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