

apropos



FILMFARE, THE TIMES OF INDIA BUILDING,
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AND SO TO WED

The April issue of *Filmfare* offered a rare insight into showbiz marriages. The interviews with Dilip Kumar and Saira Banu showed how their bond has strengthened over the years.

Rishi and Neetu Kapoor have settled down in peaceful matrimony. The comparative newlyweds Shah Rukh and Gauri Khan are very much in love. Hopefully, they'll survive whatever odds fate has in store for them. The interviews with Govinda's wife—Sunita Ahuja—and Poonam Sinha revealed the pros and cons of being a star wife.

From the made-for-each-other couples *Filmfare* rightly dwelt on the other side of the coin. It's sad that several marriages hit the rocks in the magic world of the movies. But if the private lives of the stars are unsteady, their professional lives appear to be as nerve-racking. This fact came across strongly in the interviews featuring the actresses. Very few heroines can cope with the tensions without cracking up.

However, Sridevi has weathered the storms. Her interview made it clear that despite her professional lows her confidence is intact. And in the same issue Raveena Tandon sounded so relieved that she's no longer a jinx, thanks to *Dilwale*.

Your photo-feature 'Classic' was captivating as always. Rekha looked beautiful!

P.G.Nair, Thane

The April issue was a zinger! The cover story 'That's Together-ness' was quite a surprise: most of the star couples expressed views that were positively

antediluvian.

The star husbands were presented as angels by their respective wives and most of their misdemeanours were glossed over. In fact, I wondered if they were being sincere about their husband-worship. At the same time, it cannot be denied that a handful of marriages have survived the test of time while other couples have gone their separate ways. Clearly, the star wives interviewed are pretty smart or clever liars.

In the same issue, three newcomers—Vikas Bhalla, Hitesh and Rohit Kumar—were interviewed. All presented themselves carefully as impeccable, sincere, non-smoking, non-drinking, non-skirt-chasing gentlemen. Unbelievable!

G.Swaminathan, Madras

OH, THAT GENTLEMAN!

Whiz kid composer A.R. Rahman certainly deserves praise for his compositions. First with *Roja* and now with *Keezaku Cheemai-le*, he has demonstrated that true talent cannot be stymied by competition.

His first film *Roja* is still bringing him laurels. And with follow-ups such as *Gentleman* and *Thiruda Thiruda*, Rahman has established himself as a first-class composer. He is probably the first Indian composer to use the bass guitar effectively. Indeed, his pulsating background scores are comparable to any western movie's. Rahman has certainly revolutionised the film scene in India. Everyone from 6 to 60 is humming *Rukmani Ruk-*

mani and *Chiku baku railey*.

Predictably, Bombay's composers are lifting his tunes without so much as a by-your-leave. Moreover, veterans like M.S. Vishvanathan have been ridiculing his music in television interviews. Though the barbs won't come in the way of Rahman's ascent, it just shows the insecurity of mediocre composers who have nothing else to do but criticise those who are moving ahead.

Reportedly, Rahman will compose music for a couple of Hindi movies. That should be a treat for music buffs who have been long starved of quality music. This gentleman has stolen many hearts. So it would be quite appropriate to call him 'Thiruda Thiruda'.

Vijay Iyer, Bombay

Prize: Rs 250

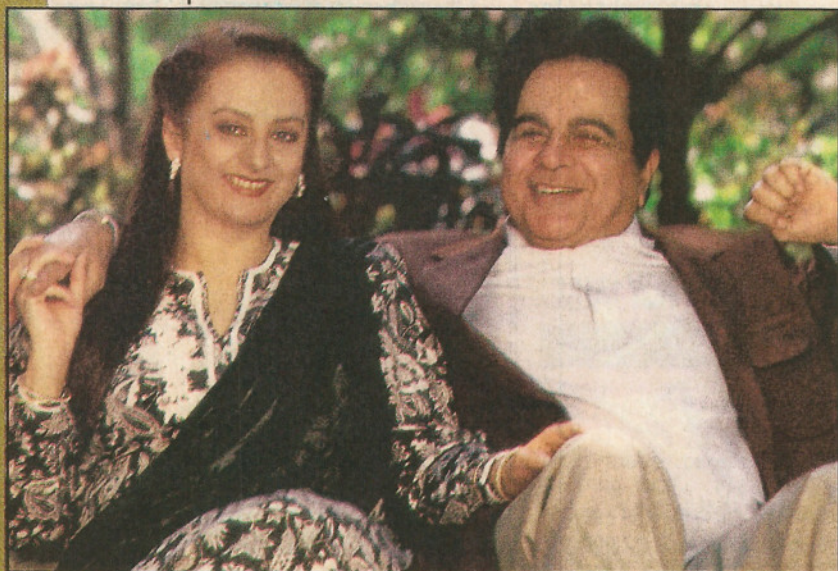
REMEMBERING PANCHAM

I was shocked to find only one, albeit highly moving article—by Gulzar—as a tribute to the late music director, R.D. Burman (February).

The accompanying black-



RAJU UPADHYAYA



RAKESH SHRESHTA

and-white photographs were disappointing. I was upset by your indifference to a composer who enriched the annals of Hindi film music with countless brilliant scores including *Pyar Ka Mausam*, *Mere Jeevan Saathi*, *Heera Panna*, *Aa Gale Lag Jaa*, *Alag Alag*, *Kudrat* and *Gardish*. *Filmfare* could have at least published a full-length feature on his life and times. An award in his name now seems insufficient.

The talented musician was ignored by the industry in the later years of his life. It may also be recalled that Pancham missed out on at least five *Filmfare* awards which he richly deserved—*Kati Patang* (1971), *Hare Rama Hare Krishna* (1972), *Aap Ki Kasam* (1974), *Hum Kisise Kum*

Nahin (1977) and *Saagar* (1985).

Gulzar's memories of Pancham were touching, even providing rare glimpses into the composer's private life. However, you could have also asked Shakti Samanta, Rajesh Khanna, Dev Anand, Anand Bakshi, the Mangeshkar sisters, Majrooh Sultanpuri and Nasir Hussain to talk about their creative relationships with Pancham.

Gulzar aptly summed up Pancham's extraordinary talent in one beautiful sentence—"He hailed from a royal family; so he had carved out his own little kingdom with his music."

M. Asif Alvi, New York

SOUR GRAPES

Udit Narayan's interview—"I'm no copycat"—(April) was a direct attack on Kumar Sanu. Udit loses no opportunity to hit out at his rival who's been ruling the charts. Udit's claim that he can be sporting sounds terribly hollow.

Undoubtedly Udit is melodious but he should know that luck plays an important role in success and failure. Just because Sanu sounds like Kishore Kumar does not mean that he is devoid of any merit. A 'carbon copy' can succeed only once or twice, not all the time. Despite their illustrious parentage, Nitin Mukesh and Amit Kumar have failed to make any impact.

So Sanu must be given his due recognition. In the present music scene, Kumar Sanu is clearly the winner and Udit is the runner-up. If Udit continues to talk like this it will reconfirm the impression that he is suffering from a case of sour grapes! Grow up, Udit!

Another article in the same issue on divorces was interesting. But there were some omissions like the splits between Naseem Banu-Ehsan, Shobhana-Kumar Samarth, K. Asif-Nigar Sultana, K. Asif-Sitara Devi, Nadira and her husband, Aparna Sen-Mukul Sharma, Usha Khanna-Sawan Kumar. The feature could have been ended on a lighter note with the hush-hush marriage and *talaq* of Dilip Kumar and Asma!

Belawadi Ramaswamy,
Bangalore

Prize: Rs 100

VIVA LAADLI!

The interview with Sridevi (April) was incisive, covering many facets of her life. Whatever the box-office or her carping cri-

tics might have to say, La Devi is still on top. Madhuri Dixit and Juhi Chawla may have chalked up some hits. Sridevi may be facing rough weather. But her rivals are neither as experienced nor as spontaneous.

Sridevi has retained her dignity and poise on screen and off it as well. She may have done some erotic scenes and provocative dances earlier but now she refuses to break into sexy, irrelevant numbers.

In the interview, Sridevi discloses that the original version of *Laadla* (*Gharana Mogudu*) was first offered to her. Straight-off, this squashes Shantipriya's recent comment in a film magazine: "*Laadla* is a remake of my film, Sridevi is playing the role I did. So does that explain my standing in the South?" It does, it does... it explains Sridevi's standing in the film industry—in Bombay and in the South. She was the first choice for the role!

Sridevi's uninhibited praise of Juhi's performance in *Darr* indicates that the actress has matured considerably and praises a colleague when praise is due.



And her careergraph proves that brazen body display isn't essential to become the *numero uno*. If Sridevi is at the top today it is because she deserves the success.

Shashikant Singh, Patna

JUST ONE POINT

■ Of late, we've had to bear up with yet another loud-mouthed and brash star—Mamta Kulkarni. After those semi-nude poses in the magazines, she's making ridiculous statements like "I'm a vir-



HARI OM POJWAL

gin and still at the top"! How can she even think that she is at the top? If she were, where would that leave Sridevi, Madhuri Dixit and Juhi Chawla? I feel that this girl is suffering from some deep-seated complex. Despite her bold statements she appears to be very insecure.

Krishnakumar V., Bombay

■ It is amazing that Dharmendra in his career of 30-plus years has never won the Best Actor *Filmfare* trophy. He picked up one trophy as producer when *Ghayaal* bagged the Best Film award. Similarly, Guru Dutt and Rajendra Kumar never won Best Actor awards.

Pradip Singh Dhanjal, Howrah

■ Thanks for the March issue. It was truly a collector's issue. The report on the *Filmfare* awards presentation ceremony was wonderful and the interviews with the winners were stimulating, particularly the one with Shah Rukh Khan.

Parikshit Sawhney, Ahmedabad

■ The April issue opened on a heart-warming note highlighting the togetherness of not one but six star couples. But by comparison, the latter part of the issue was morbid—what with articles on Manmohan Desai's shocking death, suicides and separations in quick succession. I suppose real-life is exactly like that—a mix of happiness and grief.

Mehek Ravi, Calcutta

■ I bought six issues of your March issue just for Arvind Swamy's groovy photographs. He's a hot favourite of the college crowd. I hope he doesn't get married soon because we'll all be terribly disappointed.

P. Sundhari, Bangalore

■ Thank you for the interview with Arvind Swamy. His fans in the South are thrilled that he is becoming popular in the North as well. We fervently hope that he doesn't meet the same fate as the other South Indian heroes who've been adored at home but rejected by the dictates of the box-office in the Hindi-speaking areas.

Rajesh K., Poravoor