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Love's in the air

World over, people celebrated Valentine's Day last Sunday. While the Covid-19 pandemic did affect the V-Day sales, it could do little to dampen the young-at-heart spirit

Harsh Jadav

Like every other festival, Valentine's Day has evolved. In fact, many believe it has its origin in a Roman festival Lupercalia, essentially a platform for young couples to get together, celebrated sometime in the middle of February. It is believed that boys would pick up chits with names of girls from a draw of lots. The couple united thus would spend the rest of the festival with each other. If Cupid struck, that union would get longer.

As years passed, the Church decided to adopt this festival and it evolved into a Christian festival. With the culture of gifting appended to it, Valentine's Day became a huge business opportunity, with its own paraphernalia—red roses, teddy bears, chocolates and, for those who can afford, jewellery, cars, homes... the list can go on. This Sunday, on February 14, red roses, the standard expression of love, had flown off the shelves of most stores. At one place in New Jersey, all of them were gone. How then does one express one's love? Just quietly settle for the other colors. A rose of any other color would smell just as sweet, wouldn't it? Unfortunately, no. But then, one had little choice.

As for other gifts, there is no limit to what is spent of a V-Day gift. World over, V-Day



At Sabarmati Riverfront in Ahmedabad

sales are something companies look forward to. In India, The luxury segment is increasingly finding favour among those willing to spend those extra bucks to make their partners feel special. In fact, according to recent observations, youngsters jump directly to the luxury segment, buying gifts their parents would have scoffed at.

But at the end of the day, what matters is what you feel for the person to whom you say those three words "Happy Valentine's Day". It doesn't matter what you get back, but at least you made a person feel loved and special.

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Write to us!

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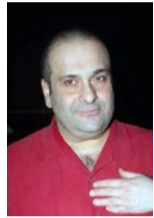
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Rajiv: The Kapoor the world missed out on

Despite his notable talents, Rajiv Kapoor, the youngest son of the legendary Raj Kapoor, could never manage to come out of the shadow of his better appreciated and famous actor-relatives

By Chandrakant Trivedi

For Rajiv Kapoor, being part of Bollywood's First Family meant he would forever be in the shadow of his illustrious grandfather



and father and famous uncles and elder brothers. That he bore an uncanny resemblance to his uncle Shammi Kapoor did not help either. But then, he was a Kapoor.

How could he not be a class apart?

In brother Rishi Kapoor's words, Chimpu, as he was fondly known, was more talented of all the siblings, but could not realise his true potential.

Born on August 25, 1962, Rajiv made his Bollywood debut with 'Ek Jaan Hain Hum' in 1983. But it was his father's 'Ram Teri Ganga Maili' with the beautiful Mandakini two years later that etched his name forever in the hearts of film lovers. He also acted in Aasmaan, Lover Boy, Zabardast, Hum to chale Pardes, Zimmedar etc. He produced Henna (1981) and Aa Ab Laut chalen (1999) and directed Prem Granth.

According to Rishi Kapoor, among Rajiv's talents was his ear for music. He was a

talented pianist. I had the opportunity to meet him at Raj Kapoor's residence at Devnar Kutir, Chembur, Mumbai in 1990.

Like many of my contemporaries, my favourite Bollywood personality too was Raj Kapoor. So, it was but natural for me to be fond of Rajiv

Raj Kapoor was Grand Marshal IDP1984 and I had taken many pictures of the event as FIA's official photographer. I had some photos and videos of that too. After his death, I decided to deliver those to his family in person. My wife Niranjana and I landed at their residence in Chembur in Mumbai in 1990. Krishnaji (Raj Kapoor's wife) and Rajiv welcomed us warmly. They gratefully appreciated my present.

Later, I met Rajiv when he came to New York for his stage show. We met again at a festival celebration in a park in Old Bridge, New Jersey. Like the rest of his illustrious clan, he exuded a natural charm in a way few else could, and it was there for all to see that day.

He married Aarti Sabharwal in 2001, but the marriage did not last long and they divorced in 2003. Rajiv bid goodbye to the world after a massive heart attack in Mumbai on Feb 9. He was 58. Incidentally, he is the



Aug. 25, 1962 - Feb. 9, 2021

third child of Raj Kapoor to die in 13 months. First, it was his sister Ritu Nanda who passed away in January 2020, followed by Rishi Kapoor almost 3 months later on April 30.

May his soul rest in eternal peace!

The Bucs stop here

Tampa Bay Buccaneers lift 2nd Super Bowl trophy



On February 7, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers became the first team ever to play the Super Bowl on its home ground, and also the first to win it there. The match was played at Raymond James Stadium in Tampa, Florida. The clash was with last year's champion Kansas City Chiefs. Tampa Bay won the title 31-9, led by their veteran quarterback Tom Brady.

For the Buccaneers, this was their second Super Bowl win, while for Brady, it was

Tom Brady is the oldest player to be named Super Bowl MVP

his seventh. The usual crowd was missing— thanks to the pandemic, the seating capacity at the stadium was limited to 25,000.

At 43, Brady became the oldest player to be named MVP. Prior to moving to Buccaneers, Brady has spent most of his glorious career with New England Patriots. Incidentally it is Brady who inspired his erstwhile team mate Rob Gronkowski to come out from retirement to join him. Amazing performance from Leonard Fournette further contributed to Tampa Bay's historic win. The Buccaneers had not won a play-off game since 2002. The other milestone is that Buccaneers' head coach Bruce Arians is the oldest coach in NFL History to have guided a Super Bowl-winning team

This is the 10th Super Bowl appearance for Brady, the highest. He has 7 Super Bowl rings - the highest, 2 more than Joe Montana and Terry Bradshaw.

Miffed daughter of Lombardi Trophy designer wants Brady to apologise

Lorraine Grohs, daughter of Greg Grohs, the master silversmith who had designed the first Vince Lombardi trophy, has sought an apology from the Tampa Bay player for what she sees as disrespect to the trophy.

While celebrating the team's Super Bowl 55 championship during a boat parade in downtown Tampa, Brady threw the trophy from his boat over to another boat on the Hillsborough River, where it was caught by tight end Cameron Brate.

The video of the incident went viral soon after. But a not-so-pleased Lorraine says she was so stressed out because of the event that she couldn't sleep properly. "I personally would like an apology, not just to me and my family and the other silversmiths but to the fans, all the football fans, the other team players," she said to a local channel.

■ Oye, dance pe chance mar le!

Auditions are over, countdown begins

Nearly 200 participants dance to Bollywood tunes of FIA-NY NJ CT's 'Dance Pe Chance' competition; event held virtually owing to Covid-19 pandemic; Finale on Feb 20-21

Remember that dance sequence from 'Rab ne bana di jodi' where Anushka Sharma sets out to teach Shahrukh Khan some dance moves? That song suddenly made dance seem so simple. For instance, moving your hands clockwise "saat se baarah (from 7 to 12 on the clock)" is a step, just like forming an '8' with your body. Moral of the song: Just dance!

Auditions for the 'Dance pe Chance (DPC)' event of FIA-NY NJ CT were wrapped up on February 14, with 200-odd participants showcasing their Bollywood dancing skills. This was the 38th edition of the event.

Each one has been more fascinating than the previous, but 2021 was different from all of them for the very fact that the entire event was virtual. At a time when Covid-19 has made it impossible to have an event that attracts hundreds of people to one place, having a dance competition was out of question. But then, how could one break

a 34-year-old tradition? FIA President Anil Bansal, Chairman Ankur Vaidya and the rest of the board decided the show must go on, even if in just a ceremonial manner.

The response surprised everyone. Applications started pouring in, and Saurin Parikh, the DPC chair, was soon working out the logistics of what was evolving into the country's biggest online dance competition in Covid era, with over \$40,000 spent on promoting the Indian culture. The Consulate General of India-New York, too, has come on board this time.

The four rounds of audition were held over two weekends—February 6-7 and February 13-14. The talent needs no description, but more overwhelming was the enthusiasm with which dance enthusiasts across all the four categories got on board. There were minors (5-10 years), juniors (11-15 years), seniors (16-21 years) and adults (21 years and above). The category for adults is a

recent addition. "Initially, we saw the virtual platform as the only option available to us. But, looking at the response, we realised that we could take this event to more people. The distance constraint was eliminated, so we had participants from different places. We will explore this platform further," the organisers say. Over the past four decades, nearly 20,000 children have participated in this competition.

The finalists were shortlisted on parameters like choreography, expressions, etc. The three best performers in each category will get an award. There will also be three prizes each for most popular performers, to be judged on the basis of votes. The best performer across all categories will be named America's best Bollywood dancer. For the finale on February 20-21, well-known film and TV actress and dancer Sudha Chandran, Bollywood choreographer Feroz Khan and actress and Kuchipudi dancer Laya Gorty will be joining from India as celebrity judges.

MINOR FINALISTS



Aiyla Hashmi



Arjun Asrani



Ashna Kumar



Dhilan Shetty



Nayan Nampally



Rayan Siddamsettiwar



Samridhi Pandey

JUNIOR FINALISTS



Aditri Chauhan



Arisha Hasan



Arya Prasad



Mahi Aneja



Prerna Kunchavaram



Ria Jain



Simone Shah

SENIOR FINALISTS



Diya Bhatt



Karina Parikh



Keshav Agiwal



Priyanka Gupta



Riya Chaturvedi



Sanjana Pulaparthi

ADULT FINALISTS



Avneet Kaur Sehgal



Carol Chettiar



Kiran Kuma Jandhyala



Santhosh Lalan



Shreya Baral



Surbhi Vij



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Uttarakhand victims' families hope for miracles

Post-mortem indicates that those who died in the massive flooding caused by the bursting of a glacier on February 7 had little time to escape; police continue to dig out bodies from the Tapovan tunnel where many were trapped



(L-R) The flood that took many unawares; rescuers pull out a man from the tunnel; search on for more survivors

For the families of those who went missing in the floods in Uttarakhand last week, no news seems to be good news as it allows them to hope for a miracle while they continue to pray for the safe return of their loved ones. But with each body that is pulled out from the Tapoval tunnel, families plunge into the darkness of grief and despair. On Monday, the death toll had reached 54.

"We will not leave hope till we see something. Miracles do happen," said Hari Singh of Mirzapur in Uttar Pradesh, whose nephew Tripan Singh is missing. Singh, who is camping in Tapovan area, says he is holding prayers regularly.

"With a very heavy heart, we ask the family members to identify these bodies," said Yashwant Chauhan, Superintendent of Police (SP) Chamoli, who is closely monitoring the

rescue operations. Family members of Alam Singh Pundir had been regularly praying at Loyal village in Tehri district since Feb 7 when the deluge struck. The moment the phone call came from Tapovan informing about the recovery of the body of Pundir, a pall of gloom gripped his family members with his old mother Manjhi Devi fainting and wife Sarojani Devi becoming inconsolable. Pundir left behind 4 daughters.

DGP Ashok Kumar said the post-mortem reports of most of the bodies have indicated that the floods did not give much time to the people inside. "They may have died immediately after the floods hit the tunnel," said Kumar. Nearly 200 people went missing after the Feb 7 morning deluge. This is the first time since the Feb 7 floods that the rescuers have been able to find bodies inside

the tunnel. "We are expecting more bodies as there is little hope for survivors," admitted a top official. There is still no contact with the remaining people trapped inside.

The rescuers are working on two places: one inside the tunnel and other at the remains of the Rishiganga project in Reni village. They have stopped the drilling process inside the tunnel, said Superintendent of Police (SP) Chamoli. As the bodies started recovering from the debris inside the tunnel, rescuers are slowly digging the tunnel so that bodies are dug out intact.

A glacier burst in the Tapovan-Reni area of Chamoli District of Uttarakhand last week, which led to massive flooding in the Dhauliganga and Alaknanda rivers and damaged houses and the early Rishiganga power project.

No fresh H1-B visas to Indians please!

Immigration advocacy group urges Biden govt not to issue the much-sought visas to first-time seekers from India until country cap on green cards is removed

The Biden administration should refrain from issuing fresh H1-B visas to first-time seekers until the cap on green cards is removed, an immigration advocacy group representing Indian Americans has said.

Currently, Indian professionals, mostly from the IT sector, have to wait for several years before they can become legal permanent residents, thanks to the per-country cap on green cards.

Any more addition would only add to the ait, Immigration Voice said in a statement that came following the Biden administration's decision to let employers of H-1B visa holders begin online for the visa lottery for 2022, scheduled to begin on March 9.

The group has called on the government to bar first-time visa-seekers, currently not in the US legally, from obtaining a visa.

In a statement, Aman Kapoor, president of Immigration Voice, pointed out that more than 60,000 Indian nationals get lured to the US every year, only to end up being subject to the whims of their employer, new administrations or even individual immigration adjudicators having a bad day.

The group has called for halting the issuance until the discriminatory limits on employment-based green cards are finally lifted and immigrants from India are no longer treated as indentured servants in the United States, Kapoor said.

"As mandated by Congress, each year the US issues 85,000 new H-1B visas. Of these, approximately 70% (or nearly 60,000 visas) are issued to workers from India," Immigration Voice said.

Agencies



'Better than Meryl Streep'! Kangana does it again



Bollywood actress, and controversy's favourite child, Kangana Ranaut once again stirred the hornet's nest with her tweets last week, proclaiming herself to be better than Meryl Streep. "Massive transformation alert, The kind of range I display as a performer no other actress on this globe has that right now, I have raw talent like Meryl Streep for layered character depictions but I can also do skilled action and glamour like Gal Gadot," read her tweet last week. And when she was trolled for it, she retorted with, "I am open for debate if anyone can show me more range and brilliance of craft than me by any other actress on this planet I promise to give up my arrogance, until then I can surely afford the luxury of pride."

Several celebrities responded to the tweets, chiding the Manikarnika actress for her "arrogance", some even posting Meryl's past comments and praising her humility.

After SSR, now his co-star Sandeep Nahar found dead



Yet to recover from the shock of the much-loved Sushant Singh Rajput's suicide, Bollywood was faced with yet another instance of an actor snuffing his own life, apparently out of depression. Sandeep Nahar, SSR's co-star in 'MS Dhoni', was found unconscious at his home in Mumbai on Monday, according to police. He was taken to the hospital by his wife and friends, where he was declared dead. Prior to the incident, Nahar had posted a video on Facebook, where

he mentioned the trauma he had been going through because of petty fights with his wife and her frequent threats to end her life and get him and his family embroiled in legal cases. He added that no one should be held responsible for his decision. Nahar was also seen in Akshay Kumar's 'Kesari'

(If you come across someone in need of help, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (Lifeline) at 1-800-273-TALK (8255), or text the Crisis Text Line (text HELLO to 741741)

Auto driver's girl is Miss India runner-up

Manya Singh, 19, has worked
at pizza outlet, call centre



"I have spent numerous nights without food and sleep. I've spent many afternoons walking for miles on end. My blood, sweat, and tears have amalgamated into courage to pursue my dreams." That's Manya Singh, the 19-year-old who was crowned Miss India Runner-up 2021 at an even last week. Hers is a story of extreme grit and determination to challenge the odds stacked up against her. Born to an auto-rickshaw driver father and a housewife-turned-beautician mother, Manya has seen struggle early on. At 14, she ran away from home in Uttar Pradesh to land in Mumbai to do something significant in life. She took up a job at a pizza outlet, completing her junior college with that money. She later joined a call centre and worked in several companies. Meanwhile, she polished her language. Despite her parents' apprehensions, she decided to go for the Miss India pageant. All worries laid to rest, Manya now looks forward to a future that she has envisioned for herself.

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