

TAMIL FILMS

Ajith to turn producer



Ajith, who has managed a successful comeback in Tamil cinema with a big hit in *Varalaru*, is aspiring to take up production. The actor is nursing ambitions to produce a movie next year.

A blockbuster hit in *Varalaru* this year revived Ajith's fortunes in the industry. The actor has a steady flow of offers now. His *Aalwar* is releasing on Pongal followed by *Kireedam* on 1 May, 2007.

Meanwhile, the actor has accepted to act in the remake of *Billa*, a yesteryear classic that featured Rajinikanth. After *Billa*, it is said that Ajith would act in his home production.

Directors turn lyricists



Tamil filmdom has seen a lot of directors who are adept at other branches of film-making as well, including cinematography and music direction. A good example of this would be Vijaya T Rajendhar, who is known as 'Ashtavadhani' in film circles. The word literally connotes a person who can handle eight different tasks with ease. R.V. Udhayakumar followed soon after and who can forget the lyrics in his blockbuster hit *Ponnumani*, which starred Karthik and Soundarya?

In recent times, we have been seeing Perarasu penning lyrics for the songs in his films. His songs became super-duper hits too. Remember '*Ennatha Solvenungo*' from *Sivakasi*, which went on to become a super-hit song among the masses? The lyrics for the song were penned by none other than the director Perarasu himself.

Why Sherlyn Chopra thinks she is Charlize Theron

Originality has seldom been Bollywood's forte. So it doesn't come as a surprise to learn that the concept of Vinod Pande's forthcoming film *Red Swastik*, starring Sherlyn Chopra in the lead, bears an uncanny resemblance to one of Hollywood's most controversial and initially banned movies *I Spit On Your Grave*.

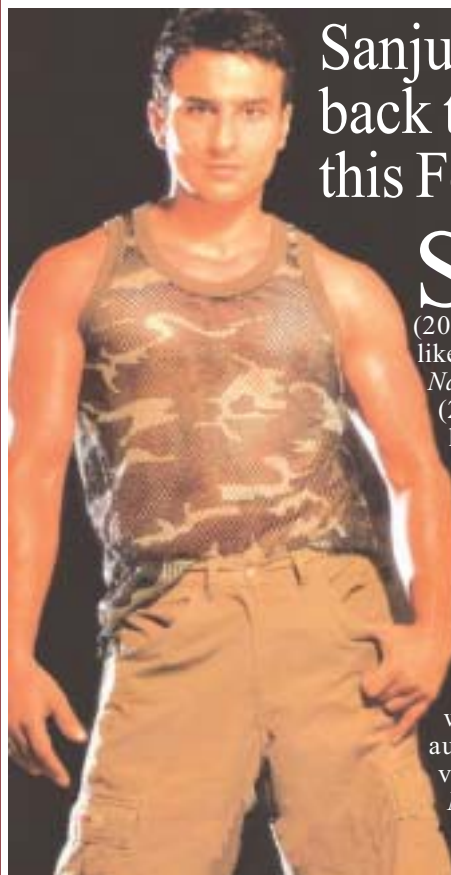


The story-lines are simple - A girl is brutally attacked by a group of boys. She manages to survive. What follows are acts of revenge. She cleanses with blood! Not only the story-lines, but even the poster designs are identical - with the barely clad girl steadfastly holding a knife to kill. Its time Bollywood starts being original.

When lead actress of *Red Swastik* was asked, she replied, "In today's times, even originality is undetected plagiarism. Most films are a reflection of life. Maybe we have to improve life before we can hope to improve our films."

As for the plagiarism charge, she said, "My role in *Red Swastik* is not only on the lines of *I Spit On Your Grave*, but also derives inspiration from Oscar-winning Charlize Theron's character of a killer highway prostitute in the critically acclaimed *Monster*. Copy from one, it's plagiarism; copy from two, it's research."

Sanju-Saif in back to back films this February



Saif has been having a great run at the box office since the release of *Hum Tum* (2004). His subsequent films like *Parineeta* (2004), *Salaam Namaste* (2005), *Being Cyrus* (2006) and *Omkaara* (2006) have all been earners and all eyes are now set on him to see how 2007 goes.

Meanwhile Sanjay Dutt has a monster in the form of *Lage Raho Munnabhai* behind him that has only helped his super-star status.

There are two films that would be vying for audience's attention in the very first quarter of 2007 - *Nehle Pe Dehlla* and *Eklavya - The Royal Guard*.

Bollywood

Tanushree 'hitches' in nine yards



Another hot damsel topping music charts with her sizzling performance in her latest chartbuster *Lawani* is Tunushree. This hottie draped in the nine yards *Maharashtrian 'kashta'* (saree) seems entangling viewers in her *thumkas*. Her latest dance number is from her forthcoming release '*Risk*' by Vishram Sawant, wherein she plays a dancer against the macho man Randeep Hooda who's playing a cop.

"Oh! I'm so excited about this number which has been performed by all the leading actresses and has been admired over the years. From Helenji to Diya Mirza, everyone has danced to the tunes of *Lawani*. And it is a very nice experience to wear the *kashta* and the *Maharashtrian 'Nath'* (nose pin), it is a very graceful experience altogether."

Adding about her role in the movie she added, "*Risk* is eagerly awaited as my role in the movie is more than just a glamour quotient, it is a mature and performance based role." It seems this dusky beauty has got the 'key' to 'hitch' viewers.

Syd Field working in Mumbai



A good script is a mixture of strong action and strong character - an interesting character to reveal the action and good action to reveal the character says Syd Field, the script guru!

Syd Field, described by CNN as 'the guru of all screenwriters' known for his sharp eye for detailing, is in India on invitation by UTV to conduct a screenwriting workshop and seminar to be held in Mumbai in January 2007.

"Well what does a doctor do? You have symptoms - a sore arm, sore chest, a pain somewhere you go to a doctor... Well a script doctor is much the same thing. You have a screenplay but something you feel is not working. Something needs to be added, subtracted, strengthened, weakened, lessened..."

Antakshari guys' new loyalties



Beginning February 2007, Star One will bring a whole new experience to TV audiences with the launch of *Antakshari - The Great Challenge*. The show will be produced by Gajendra Singh, the creator of some of the biggest shows on television (he is the original *Antakshari* guy who parted ways with Zee TV recently after *L'Il Champs*).



Henstridge, *The Tourist*

The Canadian model-turned-actress Natasha Henstridge has signed to star in director Marcel Langenegger's sexual thriller, *The Tourist*.

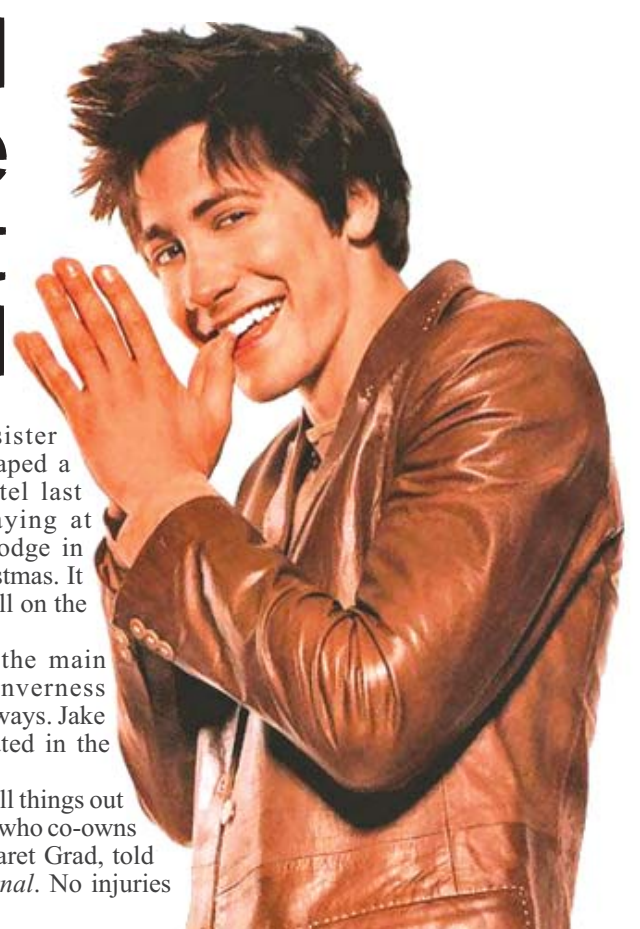
She will appear against Hugh Jackman and Ewan McGregor. The film also stars Maggie Q, Robert 'Toshi' Kar, Yun Chan

and Michelle Williams. The movie produced by Jackman's Seed Productions and Cheyenne Enterprises, is based on a story of an accountant (McGregor) who is introduced to a mysterious sex club by his lawyer friend (Jackman). He soon becomes the prime suspect in a woman's disappearance.

Hollywood

Movie world with Arthur Wamanan and Warren Balthazaar

Jake and Maggie just escaped



Jake Gyllenhaal and sister Maggie Gyllenhaal escaped a fire at a California hotel last week. They were staying at Manka's Inverness Lodge in Marin County for Christmas. It is reported that a tree fell on the lodge causing the fire.

The fire destroyed the main building at Manka's Inverness Lodge, as well as the getaways. Jake and Maggie were evacuated in the early morning hours.

"Jake was helping me pull things out of the fire," Daniel DeLong, who co-owns Manka's with partner Margaret Grad, told the *Marin Independent Journal*. No injuries were reported.

Schwarzenegger recovering fast



The 38th California Governor, Arnold Schwarzenegger is recovering well after having undergone surgery to repair his broken leg.

He broke his leg while skiing with his family in Idaho over the weekend. He underwent a 90-minute operation at St. John's Health Centre in Santa Monica, California, in which cables and screws were used to

wire the broken femur back together.

In the span of a year, Schwarzenegger had three medical incidents. Last December he was examined for stomach flu and a rapid heartbeat and in January this year, he received 15 stitches to close a cut lip after colliding with a car while riding his Harley-Davidson motorcycle in Los Angeles.

Is Julia Roberts expecting a baby?



According to sources, Julia Roberts is pregnant. The Oscar winner for the movie *Erin Brockovich* is expecting her third child in the summer of 2007. Cinematographer, Daniel Moder and the 39 year old Julia Roberts were married on July 4, 2002. They became parents of twins, daughter Hazel Patricia and son Phinnaeus. Walter Huel Roberts gave her voice for the character of Charlotte in the recently released movie, *Charlotte's Web*.

Anne can cope with weight gain



Anne Hathaway, who starred in *The Devil Wears Prada* and *Brokeback Mountain*, is least worried about gaining weight.

She insists she will not be pressurised by Hollywood dictates to stay slim. If she puts on a few pounds, she will become a character actress, she says. Hathaway also says her Italian lover since 2004, Raffaello Follieri, is far more fashion conscious than her and regularly picks out the outfits she wears.

If it was not for him, she would be wearing the same unsuitable clothes, she says.

Mirren and Whitaker grab Best Actor awards

Chicago Film Critics Association honoured Helen Mirren with the Best Actor Award for the movie *The Queen* and a similar award was conferred on Forest Whitaker for the movie *The Last King Of Scotland*. *The Departed* grabbed the awards for best picture, director and adapted screenplay.

Rinko Kikuchi and Jackie Earle Haley won the best supporting performance awards for their movies *Babel* and *Little Children*, respectively. The most promising performer award was given to Sacha Baron Cohen for his work in *Borat* and *Talladega Nights: The Legend Of Ricky Bobby*. The Most Promising Director award was given to Rian Johnson for *Brick* and Peter Morgan won the original screenplay award for *The Queen*.