

Lights, Camera, Action, Smile

Khanna's reign from 1969 to 1972 defined superstardom as we know it today. Yet, those years saw little off-screen action by way of endorsements or live shows because those were looked down upon

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Charisma can inspire loyalty, even devotion. Stardom converts them brownies into fortune by way of endorsements. And Rajesh Khanna wallowed in charisma and stardom.

But then how do you explain the irony that the man who delivered 15 solo hits in a row in a period of three years, from 1969 to 1972, had to wait another 40 years for his first TV spot?

Sure, it was not the television age. But it was not as if there were no ads then either.

"Well, actually, no one ever did ads then," says ad guru Prahlad Kakkar. "The industry thumb rule was *'Jab aadmi bekaar ho jata hai toh woh ads karta hai... kangal hota hai toh hi'* (You do ads means you're out of work... bankrupt)," he says.

"Dharmendra was the only actor who ever did ads... for a whisky brand, if I recall correctly. And that too I believe because they promised him a free supply of the whisky as a deal! No money ever exchanged hands," says Kakkar.

Even the "one-man industry" Amitabh Bachchan took to ads only after his second-coming to Bollywood. Even he had refused ads in his heydays.

The stigma did not, however, extend to the female leads, so you did have a Leela Naidu doing a sari ad or an Anju Mahendroo doing a

Where Brand Kaka will find value is in his songs, which, as Karan Johar says, is what will make him live

toothpaste one.

The biggest youth icon of the 1970s and '80s never endorsed a brand in his life till Havells roped him to star in a commercial for its electric fans, just months before he passed away.

"I spoke to him over the phone. He was reluctant at first; he said he hadn't featured in an advertisement ever, and then agreed when I said we will celebrate his fan-following in

the ad," says Anil Gupta, MD of Havells India, a Delhi-based electrical and power distribution equipment company.

The only brand that saw value in the superstar was Kolkata-based Emami, which, in 1983, struck a deal for their first in-film placement in *Agar Tum Na Hote* starring Khanna, Rekha and Raj Babbar. Khanna played the owner of an agency that is called Emami.

"The reason we did this was first and foremost because of Khanna, who was a superstar. Besides, the story was so well knit into giving our brand a huge positive," says

SUPERSTAR

India's first superstar after 15 consecutive solo superhits between 1969 and 1972, which is still an unbroken record in Indian film history including *Aradhana* (1969)

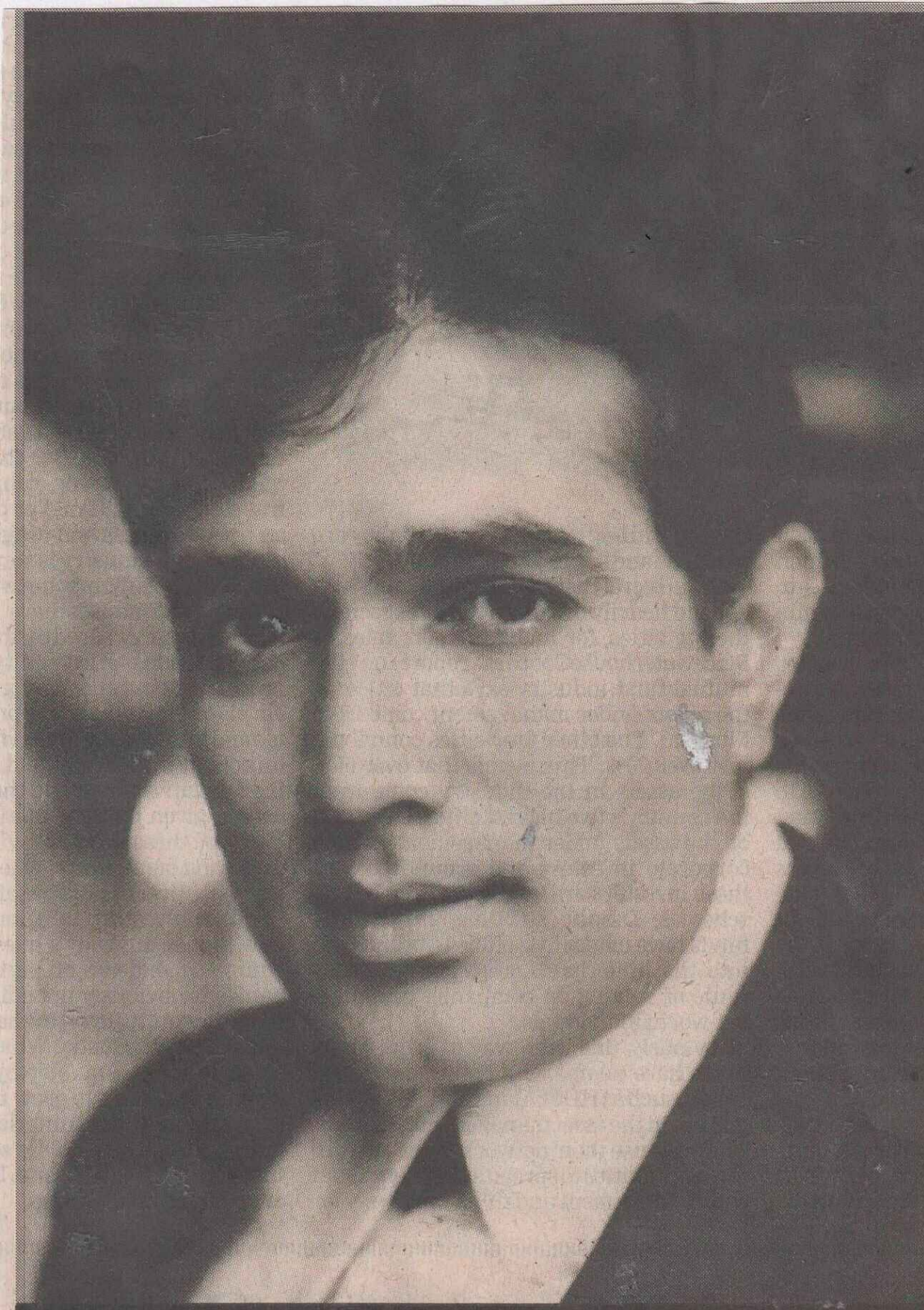
- Andaz
- Do Raaste
- Bandhan
- Doli
- Khamoshi
- Ittefaq
- Safar
- Kati Patang
- The Train
- Sachaa Jhutha
- Aan Milo Sajna
- Mehboob Ki Mehndi
- Dushman
- Anand

Born Jatin Khanna in Amritsar on Dec 29, 1942

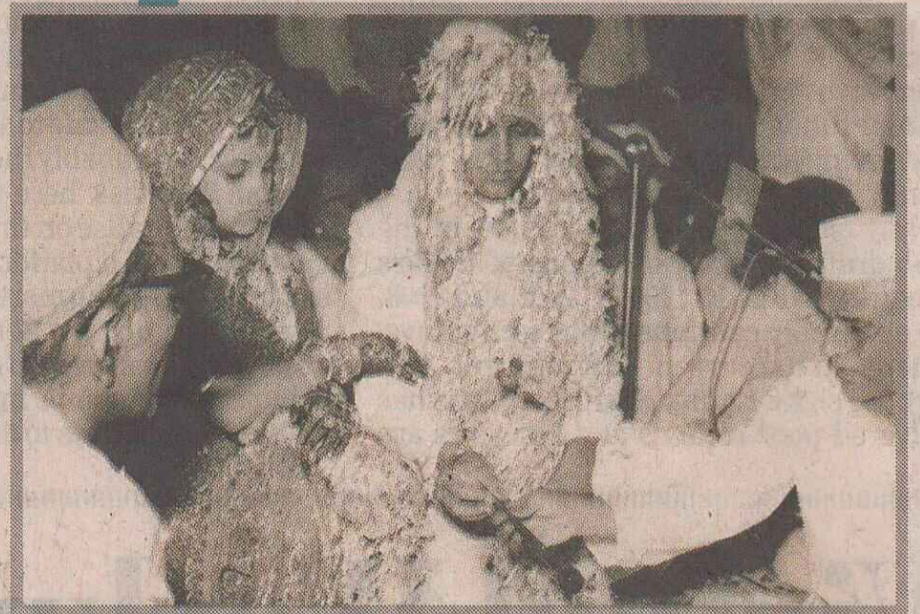
A talent hunt find. He was one of eight finalists in the 1965 All India Talent Contest organised by United Producers and Filmfare

Debut in 1966 in *Aakhri Khat*, India's entry for the Oscar's in 1967. But, *Raaz* was his first film

180 films: Holds record for most number of author-backed lead hero films - 106 solo hero films and only 22 two hero films



RAJESH KHANNA: 1942-2012



ZINDAGI KA SAFAR (Top right) Rajesh Khanna weds Dimple Kapadia, in 1973. (Top) At a Congress party meeting in West Bengal, in 1987.

our corporate clients. Movies like *Anand* and *Bawarchi*, which we have owned the syndication rights of for almost 15 years, have always enjoyed great ratings across channels. So yes, the legend will always live through the small screen," says Hiren Gada, director, Shemaroo, which has the rights to almost 15 of his iconic films and numerous songs.

Aditya Agarwal, director, Emami group. The deal then, say trade sources, was not more than a few lakhs, but did a lot of good to the brand image of Emami. "It gave the brand an exposure then which was better than anything else we were doing at that time."

"Rajesh Khanna owned the coinage of the word 'superstar' in Bollywood. That kind of mania of the '70s has yet to be seen," says filmmaker Karan Johar with a finality which brooks no argument, having seen it up close as a child and especially with Khanna being a close family friend. Not that there would be any within the industry or outside who would argue that "Kaka", as Khanna was fondly called, was not Bollywood's first superstar - one who whipped up mass hysteria to a level unforeseen in India before, definitely not for a Hindi film star. Yet, there was no leveraging on this "brand".

Where Brand Kaka will find value is in his songs, which, as Johar says, is what will make him live on forever.

"Khanna's song compilations have always been a huge hit with

LEADING LADIES



Hema Malini
15 films

Mumtaz
8 films

Sharmila Tagore
9 films



Shabana Azmi
7 films

Actor Mehmood parodied him in Bombay to Goa where the driver and conductor of the bus were called 'Rajesh' and 'Khanna'

Married Dimple Kapadia in March 1973, 6 months before her debut film *Bobby*. They have two daughters, Twinkle & Rinke

Political life: He was a Congress MP from New Delhi constituency from 1992 till 1996