

OTT BADSHAHHS

**SPUNK &
HUNK
OR
MUSCLE &
HUSTLE**



INDIAN INSTITUTE
OF
HUMAN BRANDS

Dr. Sandeep GOYAL, Chief Mentor, IHB



The explosion in the OTT series space continues. So popular have been the various web series that Little Things is headed to Season 4. Inside Edge is already filming Season 3. And all of Kota Factory, Asur, Delhi Crime, Samantar, Jamtara, Masaba Masaba, Mismatched, She, The Fabulous Lives of Bollywood Wives and more are readying Seasons 2. New offerings like Rocket Boys, Feels Like Ishq, Rudra - The Edge of Darkness, Mumbai Diaries 26/11, Hush Hush, Hindmata, Finding Anamika, Aranyak, Mai, Decoupled, Yeh Kaali Kaali Ankhein and Scam 2003 are all ready for screen debut.

The massive opportunity in content has drawn actors from Bollywood, offered character actors more enduring and impactful roles and birthed lots of hot new talent. We had released our Report on OTT queens a few months back. It is time now to focus on the OTT Badshahs.

OTT has seen the likes of veteran Anil Kapoor and Bobby Deol drawn to this new medium, with fair success. So also middling stars Saif Ali Khan, Abhishek

Bachchan, Arshad Warsi, Vivek Oberoi, Jimmy Shergill ... with Ajay Devgun coming soon. Hot young Bollywood talent like Vicky Kaushal too has taken the web plunge. But OTT, for now, belongs to Pankaj Tripathi, Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Rajkumar Rao, Manoj Bajpayee and KK Menon. All actors known for their range and depth of acting talent. With the ability to excel at multiple roles, they display emotions that cover every possible human feeling.

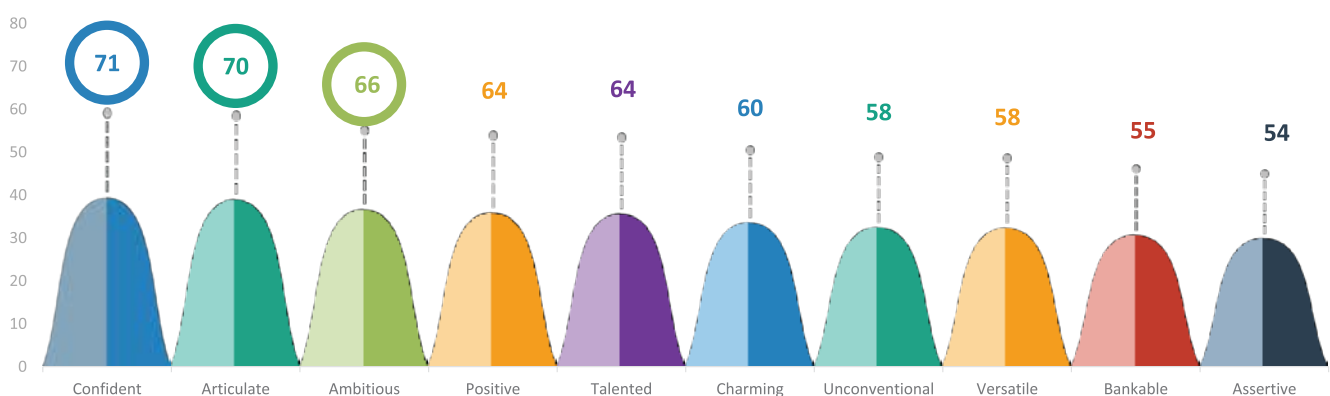
It is the arrival of the likes Pratik Gandhi, Amit Sadh and other OTT-first stars that holds the future for this galloping new medium. They have spunk. They also have the muscle. Not just physically, but also in terms of stage presence, and the ability to carry a full series on their shoulders single-handedly. Story-lines in OTT are more real; they are more edgy; sometimes more gory too. But this new generation of actors seem to carry through all roles with much aplomb and flourish.

Will more mainline Bollywood heroes shed their inhibitions and join the OTT parade. Not easy to say. OTT still is seen to be a compromise compared to the big screen by Bollywood. But with the pandemic keeping cinemas shuttered, OTT may become a default option, unavoidable if you have to remain current and relevant. Methinks, for example, Ayushmann Khurrana would do really well on OTT given his versatility but perhaps he too now considers himself a top leaguer and may consider it below his stature to do web. What is heartening is that OTT has thrown up a multitude of top quality talent, each of whom have excelled in the various series they have featured. That tribe is likely to grow and multiply. And therein lies the long term promise of the medium that is resonating with millennials and Gen Z. Far away from the Saas Bahu themes that have dominated Indian television for nearly two decades, rarely offering a good meaty primary role to male actors. OTT has more opportunity and a much wider storytelling canvas for males and they are making the most of it.

This report is based on 823 interviews with respondents All India (M=489, F=334) conducted in May-June 2021.

TOP 10 KEY DRIVER ATTRIBUTES IN THE OTT SPACE

DERIVED SCORES ARE ACROSS ALL CELEBRITIES



Confidence seems to be the lead attribute for OTT males by far. Confidence is not just the manner in which you carry yourself; it is really the innate inner strength that you portray in every role you essay. Does it come out of sheer experience? Or is it something an actor is born with? Or is it just a state of mind? In the OTT business, this confidence is what separates the men from the boys.

Interestingly, Unconventional ranks pretty high amongst the lead attributes in the OTT domain. Research shows that Unconventional is not just a personal trait but also the choice of roles that actors opt for, and then maximise in their performance. Which is why it is closely linked to the next highest ranked attribute, Versatility. Getting type-cast or stereotyped can become a serious liability over time because themes and viewer choices can change over a time continuum, and if a stereotype is no longer in favour, then that could become career-limiting. It happened in television too. Some very successful actors of mythologicals got so identified with certain types of roles that they just couldn't find good fits in mainstream themes.

OTT ATTRIBUTES – ORDER OF IMPORTANCE



Low key and humble obviously are not virtues in the OTT business! They are, as attributes, at the bottom of heap of researched attributes.

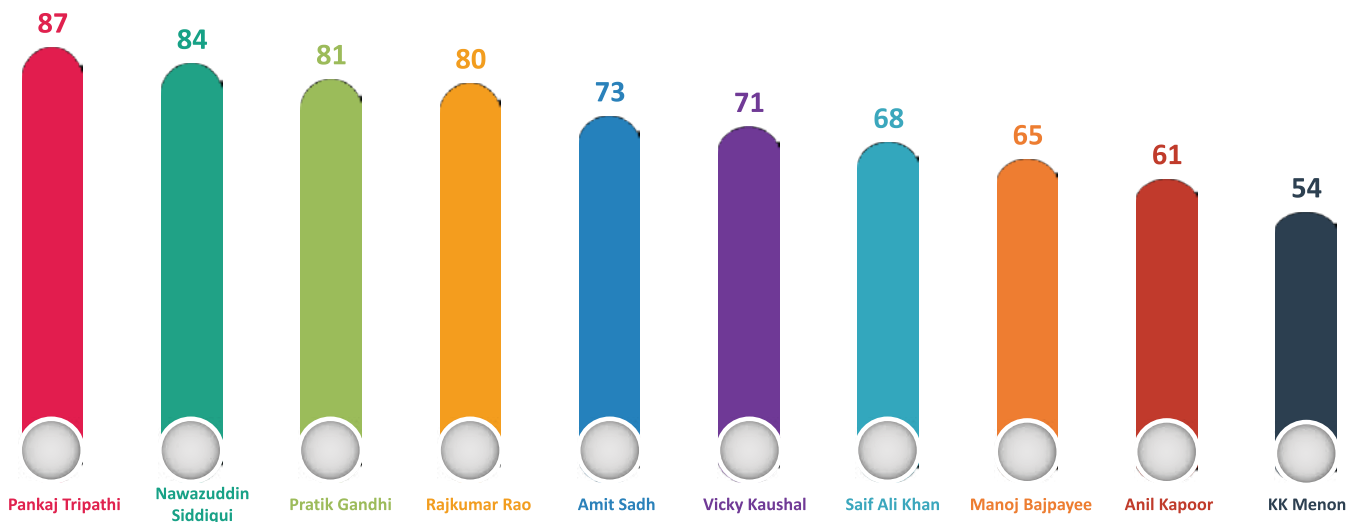
Surprisingly, International too does not seem to cut much ice with audiences. That could well be a factor of the fact that most OTT storylines are very rooted in Indian narratives currently, and since global themes are largely missing, the current players in OTT are not seen to need any international veneer.

On the other hand, Articulate and Assertive seem to be strong category drivers. Once again, the current strong storylines that demand dominant or domineering roles perhaps dictate the premium on these attributes in the personality mix.

Charming is a surprise top attribute in a game of alpha males. Perhaps it is linked again to Versatility. The ability to essay not just multiple roles but when demanded by the role to have the a softer side – sometimes humorous, sometimes romantic, sometimes just plain real which could be a WYSIWYG portrayal of What You See Is What You Get. Difficult, but certainly not impossible for this talented lot.

TOP 10 CELEBRITIES – OTT PERFORMANCE SCORE

AVERAGE INDEX BASED ON PERCEPTION RATINGS



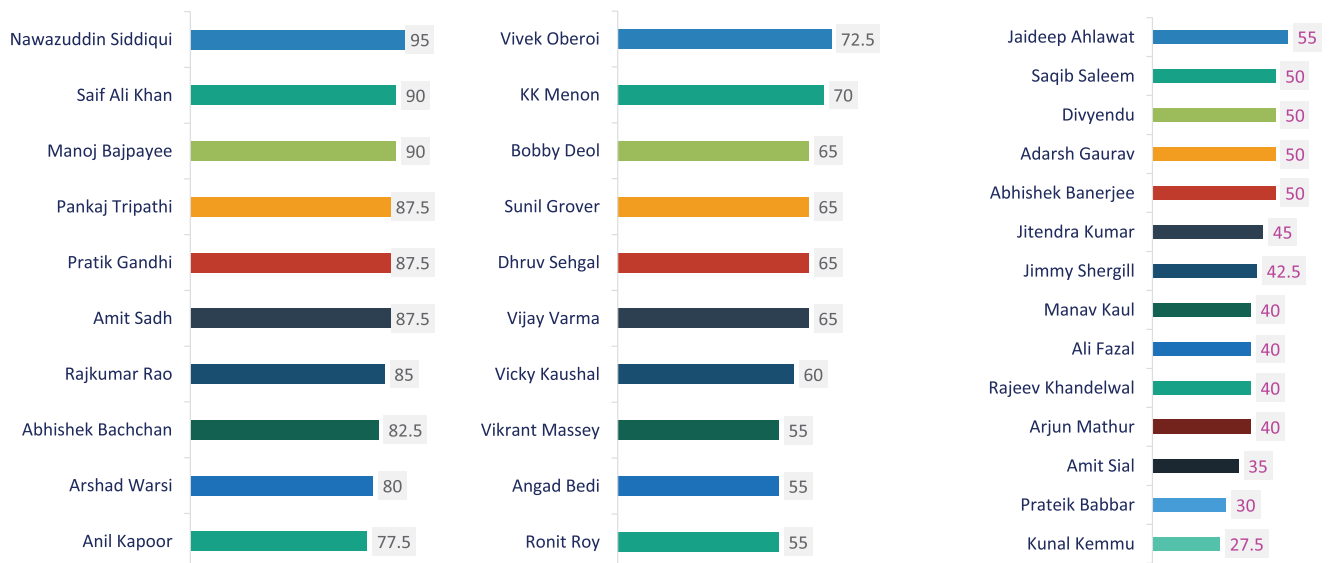
Pankaj Tripathi leads the hit parade on OTT, by far. His towering personality and his stellar performances stand out amongst the top-runners. He has style, he has panache. At the same time he has maturity and gravitas. His choice of roles too is well curated and carefully calibrated to show the enormous range of his histrionic skills. For now, Pankaj Tripathi is the undoubted King of Kings in OTT today.

Pratik Gandhi is talent that has climbed the ranks very very fast. It helped that he was already a well reputed actor of Gujarati theatre. Also, his Harshad Mehta role-fit was a masterly display of many emotions that ranged from exuberance to arrogance; then dejection to defeat. Gandhi has a long road of potential success and fame ahead of him.

Nawazuddin and Rajkumar Rao are no surprises in the top rungs. It is Amit Sadh whose name sparkles near the top. For him to rank ahead of Bollywood biggies Vicky Kaushal, Saif Ali Khan, Manoj Bajpayee and Anil Kapoor is sure indication of his talent and prowess that is not bedimmed in anyway by much better known peers.

OTT FACTOR SCORES ACROSS TOP STARS

DERIVED SCORES BASED ON OTT KEY DRIVERS



When only the Top 10 key drivers are taken into account, Nawazuddin Siddiqui noses ahead of the entire pack. The rankings don't change significantly but Saif and Manoj do jump the queue somewhat. Abhishek Bachchan and Arshad Warsi do also improve their standings when selective top parameters alone become the criteria for selection.

Scores for Kunal Kemmu and Prateik Babbar are very weak. So also for Rajeev Khandelwal. They either need better roles or they could get knocked off the elite list in the near future.

Vicky Kaushal is far lower in the rankings than expected. He will need to invest more time and energy to OTT if he has to be seen as a leader of the pack in this domain.

HOW THEY STACK UP: COMPARE & CONTRAST PERFORMANCE VS. KEY DRIVERS



The top right quadrant is the most desirable to be in. And most of the big names ... Nawazuddin Siddiqui to Pankaj Tripathi to Pratik Gandhi are all there.

The bottom left quadrant is the problem area, and that is where Angad Bedi to Jimmy Shergill to Prateik Babbar are currently placed. What can change that positioning? More interesting roles, yes. But also an attempt at personal differentiation ... trying variations in look or visible mannerisms or even styling that sets them apart. Remember how Rajesh Khanna created a cult around his hairstyle and his kurtas? Such differentiation may seem subtle but done well it can create a unique identity for the actor.

KEY 3 USPs

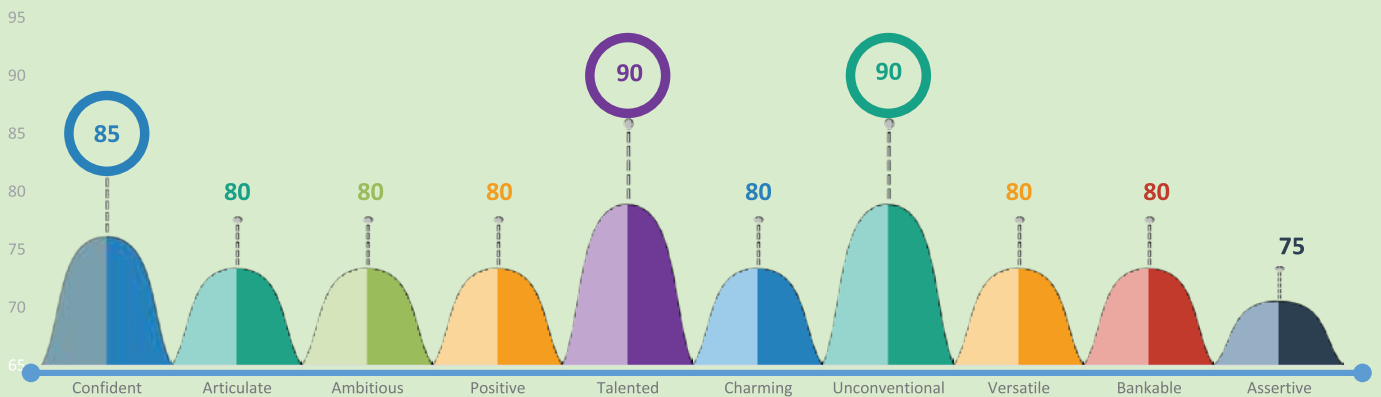
Pankaj Tripathi	Sensitive	→	Passionate	→	Humble
Nawazuddin Siddiqui	Talented	→	Versatile	→	Mature
Pratik Gandhi	Ambitious	→	Passionate	→	Confident
Rajkumar Rao	Consistent	→	Trustworthy	→	Earnest
Amit Sadh	Ambitious	→	Honest	→	Positive
Vicky Kaushal	Honest	→	Earnest	→	Stylish
Saif Ali Khan	Talented	→	Sensitive	→	Unconventional
Manoj Bajpayee	Talented	→	Versatile	→	Bold
Anil Kapoor	Consistent	→	Bankable	→	Trustworthy
KK Menon	Trustworthy	→	Unconventional	→	Thoughtful

Every actor has his distinct plusses. Pratik Gandhi and Amit Sadh are both seen to be 'Ambitious'. Pratik is also 'Passionate' and 'Confident'. Is it success that defines the actor? Or the actor defines the path to success.

Amongst the senior lot, Pankaj Tripathi stands for 'Sensitive'. Nawazuddin is 'Versatile' while Rajkumar Rao is 'Consistent' and 'Trustworthy'. Manoj Bajpayee, like Nawazuddin is again described as 'Versatile'. Anil Kapoor, because of his pedigree and star status is 'Bankable', while the stalwart KK Menon is 'Unconventional' and "Thoughtful".

Do these individual traits help differentiate the various stars? In a way yes. Choice of roles is obviously dictated by personality types. But sometimes this also leads to stereotyping. The sudden surge of Pratik Gandhi is a case in point. His impactful and memorable portrayal of Harshad Mehta should now not lead to him only doing similar roles of white collar crime. That is the only pitfall to watch out for.

THE OTT INNINGS OF SAIF ALI KHAN



PERCEPTION
SCORE

VS

OTT USP
SCORE

PERCEPTION
SCORE

68.2

OTT USP
SCORE

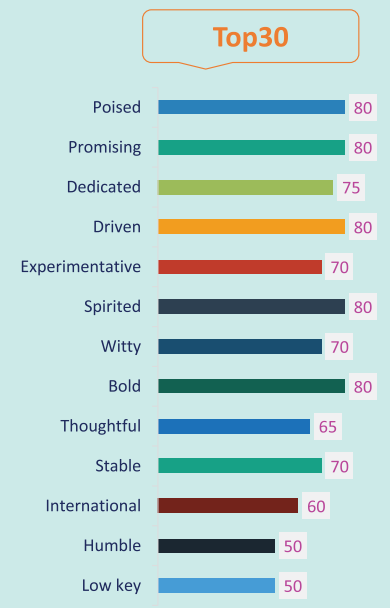
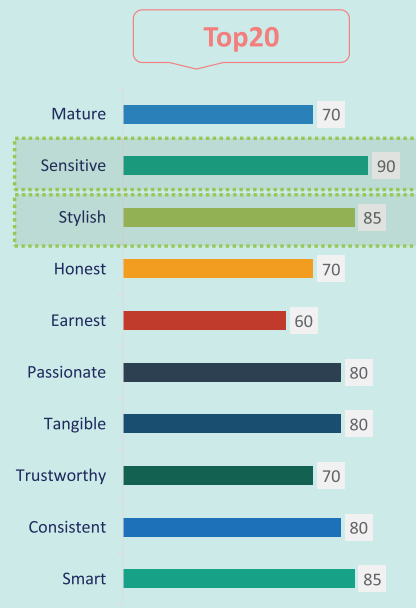
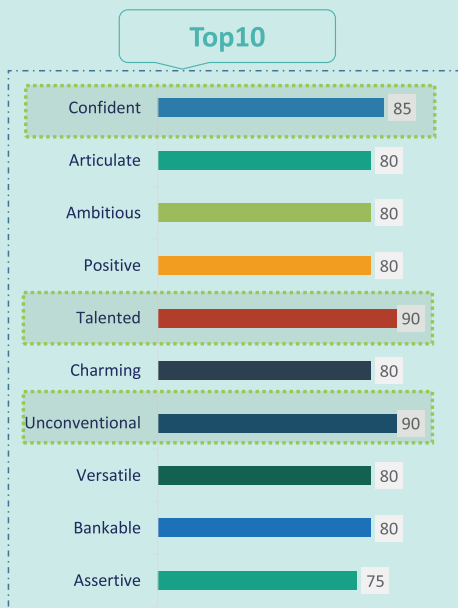
90



KEY ATTRIBUTES

TALENTED | SENSITIVE | UNCONVENTIONAL

SAIF'S TOP FACTORS



Top 5 Attributes



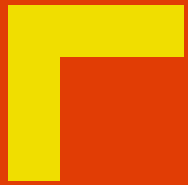
Saif Ali Khan was one of the earliest successes of the OTT circuit with Sacred Games. That he stepped out of his comfort zone of the big screen and played a pivotal role in a web series was a signal to other Bollywood biggies that OTT was not a career dampener, but actually a force multiplier.

Saif Ali Khan actually played a role that was second fiddle to Nawazuddin Siddiqui in Sacred Games. It is a sign of his maturity, self-confidence and versatility that he agreed to do the role. He is absolutely relatable and tangible in both Sacred Games and Tandav.

Even after being in the business for 25 years, Saif is probably the only Khan who still experiments and continues to do so in his unique tone and tenor. He finds OTT platforms to be way more egalitarian than the Box Office, owing to its obsession with weekend openings and collections.

Saif is definitely one of those actors who does not disappoint as far as his performances go. His

charm, his class, not to mention his grounded-ness despite the blue blood is his ticket to continued success. His Top 5 attributes of Confident, Talented, Unconventional, Sensitive and Stylish all fall within the top half of the attributes list, which explains that his formula for the future is anchored in solid ground.

The background of the entire image is a monochromatic orange overlay on a photograph of three men. The man at the top center wears a turban and has a serious expression. The man at the bottom left is holding a handgun and looking directly at the viewer. The man on the right is partially visible, looking towards the camera.

MEET THE OTT BADSHAHS





Pratik GANDHI

Fresh Face of the Year

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cam 1992 catapulted Pratik Gandhi to national fame. A Gujarati theatre and film actor, this new-found actor has already bagged a lead and title role of Vitthal Teedi on OHO Gujarati, an OTT platform for premium Gujarati content. This Surat born man has 15 years of intense struggle behind him. But those struggling days are now over. He is a designated star debuting on the reality show Star vs Food on Discovery Plus, with co- participants such as Kareena Kapoor, Karan Johar and Arjun Kapoor. Without a doubt, this is a testament that he has arrived. Despite his new heights of success, we see from his Instagram that he hasn't lost his attachment with theatre. He says, theatre is second nature. The man is also on an endorsement spree, quite understandably so. The brand fit with BrandApp365 and Wow skin Care and even Gabbana is perfect. It's really nice to see a new crop of theatre- trained actors making an inroad into the mainstream cinema. It's only a matter of time that we will start seeing him on 70 mm screens as the main lead . After Sanjeev Kumar and Paresh Rawal, Pratik Gandhi would perhaps be the next contribution from Gujarati theatre to mainstream film and OTT. Scam 1992 has surpassed shows like Breaking Bad and Chernobyl on IMDb.

Fun Fact - Pratik Gandhi is mentioned in the Limca Book of records for playing 'Mohan No Masalo' in three different languages in one day.



**BEST
DESCRIBED:**

Ambitious, Passionate, Confident.

Saif

ALI KHAN

Nawab of OTT



He is Kalakandi, Chef and Bazaar tanked. But one of the first actors from mainstream cinema to leap into the promising world of OTT, gave OTT platform credibility. Sacred Games Season 1 was riveting from the word go. Something that helped Netflix as a new platform establish itself too – as a presenter of content. A seasoned actor with 25 years of experience in Bollywood, his 70 mm persona of a romcom actor was repeated in the much-appreciated Jawaani Jaaneman and as the villain in Tanhaji. So, while, he adheres to his large screen image, he became absolutely relatable and tangible in Sacred Games and Tandav. When he was asked about his success and his choice of

projects, he said he wanted to be in an artistic space, but not demented either. This would partly explain why he selected to act in Laal Kaptaan, a western by definition. Even after being in the business for 25 years, Saif is probably the only Khan who still experiments and continues to do so in his tone and tenor. He finds OTT platforms to be way more egalitarian than the Box Office, owing to its obsession with weekend openings and collections. Saif is definitely one of those actors whom we know is not going to disappoint as far as his performance goes. We are amply familiar with his charm, his class, not to mention his grounded-ness despite the blue blood.

**BEST
DESCRIBED:**

Talented, Sensitive, Unconventional



Vivek OBEROI

The Bankable Actor

Vivek Oberoi was Bollywood's blue eyed boy when we first saw him in Ram Gopal Varma's Company. He was noticed and signed by almost all the big directors in the early 2000s. Mani Ratnam for Yuva, Shaad Ali for Saathiya, Vishal Bhardwaj for Omkara, all of them lapped him up as he was a bonafide actor and star.

However, due to a tiff with Salman Khan over his then girlfriend Aishwarya Rai (Bachchan), professionally, he hit a rough patch and his career nosedived.

However, he did manage to deliver hits like Shootout at Lokhandwala in 2007. The role of Maya Dolas, a gangster who decides to take on D- Company on was a nuanced and memorable performance. His portrayal brought about Vivek's wicked bad-boy side which

extended even into his role in Inside Edge. When it comes to OTT, it is Vivek Oberoi who gets the credits to be the first mainstream Bollywood actor to set afoot into the OTT world, when the concept was still nascent. In 2019, he debuted into the Malayalam film industry with Lucifer, where he played the lead villain opposite Mohanlal. His role as PM Narendra Modi in 2019 did not receive any great reviews, but his balanced performance was appreciated by few critics. His social media profile is abuzz with his social work such as his partnership with Emirates Youth Platform, an initiative for the community of students. While he keeps himself active with social causes, we are waiting for Inside Edge 3 and more of the actor on OTT.



**BEST
DESCRIBED:**

Smart, Spirited, Assertive

Arshad WARSI

King of OTT Circuit

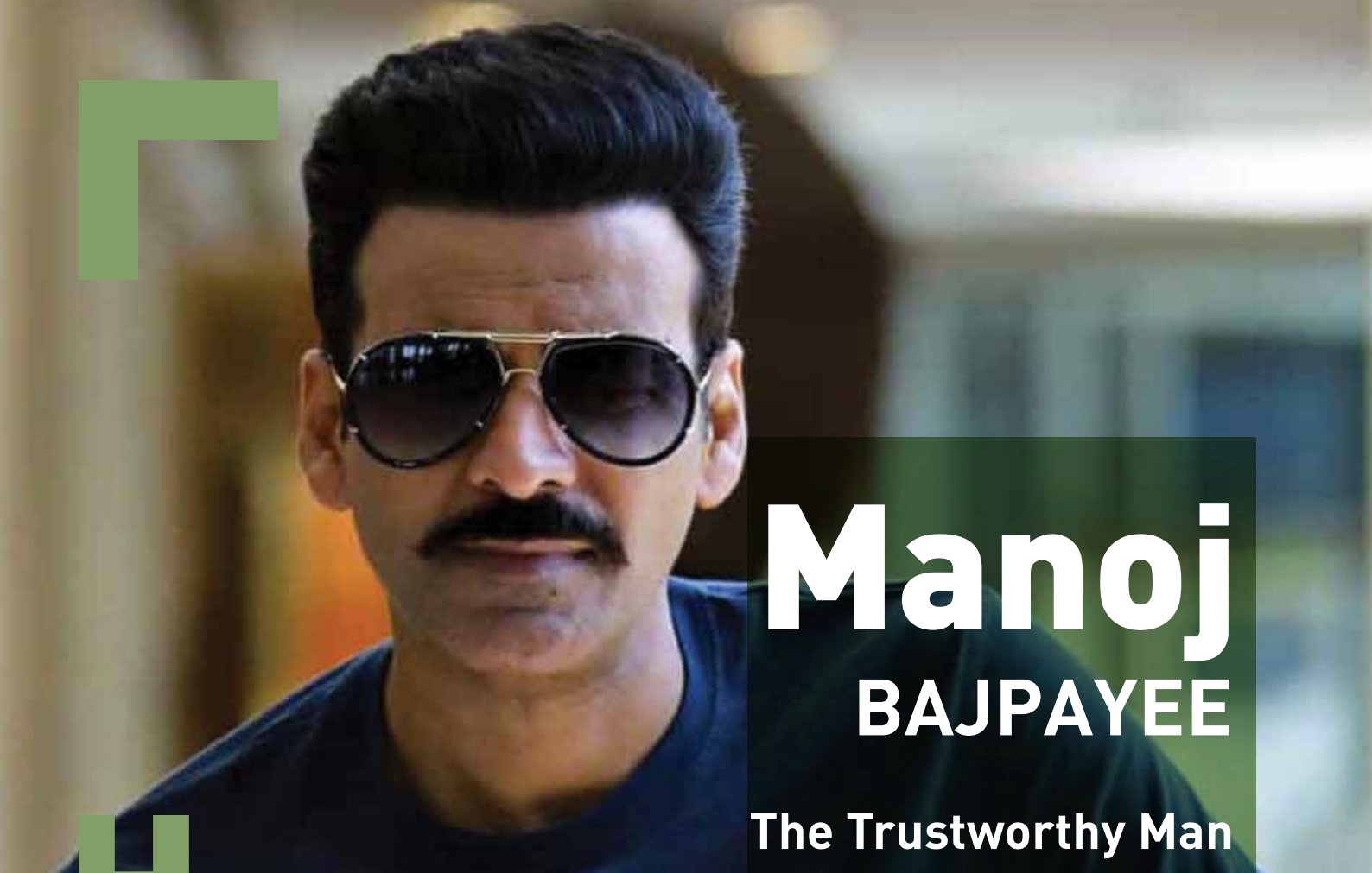


A sound and competent actor who started his career with Tere Mere Sapne, an adaptation of Mark Twain's the Prince and the Pauper. A highly entertaining film which immediately established Arshad Warsi as a comedian and a dancer. His pairing with Chandrachur appeared promising at first but fizzled out soon after their second film. Franchisees like Golmaal, Dhamaal and Ishqiya with Vishal Bharadwaj kept him in circulation. The Munnabhai franchise is by far his best but was impeded by Sanjay Dutt's arrest. A third and final installment of Munnabhai is in the offing. Though according to reports, his versatility was proven through films like Jolly LLB and Sehar. In his debut on OTT with Asur,

Arshad made a big shift from his mainstream comical persona. He plays a forensic expert solving a crime. His nuanced performance was much appreciated by everyone. In Durgamati, another horror thriller film that released on Amazon Prime, Arshad plays the lead villain. In his opinion, it is these OTT projects that are helping him break the mould of a comedian. It is clear that Arshad feels a sense of creative fatigue doing what people expect him to do and make people laugh. Although in the recent LOL Hasee toh Phasee, we see him judge a bunch of standup comics and content creators like Sunil Grover and Mallika Dua in a different kind of reality show. As for us, we are looking forward to Asur 2, the shooting of which has apparently already begun.

**BEST
DESCRIBED:**

Witty, Talented, Versatile



Manoj BAJPAYEE

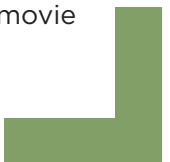
The Trustworthy Man

His breakthrough film Satya put him on the Bollywood map. He is the kind of actor who owns any role that is given to him whether it was the role of Raghav Ghatge in Aks, Shyam Benegal's Zubeidaa, the emotional police inspector in Shool, or that of gangster Sardar Khan in Gangs of Wasseypur. His common man persona is the reason why perhaps he was considered so apt for The Family Man where he plays the role of spy in the garb of a Family Man. It was the first time that audience say Manoj Bajpayee as an actioner. For The Family Man, Manoj got the Filmfare OTT Critics award for Best Actor in a Drama Series.

For Bhosle, a Sony Liv original film, Manoj Bajpayee bagged the National Award for Best Actor in 2020. In

2019, he was also awarded the Padma Shri. When asked about his process for acting in web series, in one of his interviews, he said acting in web series is like playing in a Test match, attributing that web series is but a format. His path in Bollywood paved the way for actors like Irfan Khan, Nawazuddin Siddiqui and Pankaj Tripathi, all of whom are products of National School of Drama.

His Netflix original Mrs. Serial Killer, where he played husband to Jacqueline Fernandez apparently received lukewarm reviews. Manoj is always going to be that actor who lends the gravity to any movie by his sheer presence. The Family Man Season 2 is due for release on Amazon in June.



**BEST
DESCRIBED:**

Talented, Versatile, Bold

KK

MENON

OTT Gem



Another gem from the world of theatre, KK Menon's debut in the world of acting started from a play called Mahatma Vs. Gandhi where he worked alongside veteran Naseeruddin Shah. Two stellar films that catapulted him into mainstream Bollywood were Hazaron Khwaishein Aisi and Black Friday. In mainstream Bollywood he was seen in many commercial projects like Deewar: Let's bring our Heroes home where KK was among the principal cast along with biggies like Amitabh Bachchan, Sanjay Dutt, and Akshay Khanna. Films like Sarkar with RG Varma, Corporate with Madhur Bhandarkar, Gulaal with Anurag Kashyap, Bheja Fry 2, Life in a Metro,

Honeymoon Travels Pvt. Ltd, Baby were some of his major projects. He is known in Bollywood as one of its finest actors in the league of Manoj Bajpayee. His first OTT foray as a R&AW Agent called Special Ops, with old friend Neeraj Pandey was much loved and appreciated. It was one of the first shows that released during the pandemic. KK Menon said that the love and affection he got from people owing to Special Ops has far surpassed the love he ever got for his mainstream films. The success of Special Ops has encouraged the team to take it to its next season called Special Ops 1.5. Another show which will see KK Menon in the lead is another gangster drama called Murshid.

**BEST
DESCRIBED:**

Trustworthy, Unconventional, Thoughtful

A portrait of actor Divyendu Sharma. He is wearing a light blue denim shirt and orange-tinted aviator sunglasses. He has dark, wavy hair and a light beard. The background is a blurred blue sky.

Divyendu SHARMA

Small Town Hero

Divyendu Sharma, an FTII graduate became a household name with Mirzapur Season 1 and 2. But his debut in Bollywood happened with Pyaar Ka Punchnama where he was one of the three leads along with Kartik Aryan. He worked with the late Rishi Kappor in Chashme Baddoor under the direction of David Dhawan. In an interview, he says that he could've easily stuck to the comedy genre after these films, but he consciously and fearfully refused the offers to avoid being typecast. Divyendu however plays Tier 2 city hero with aplomb. His role in Bollywood film Batti Gul Meter Chalu as a Tehri resident of Uttarakhand, Kanpuriye, Mirzapur and of course the recent Bichcho Ka Khel establish it amply. In Shukranu, a Zee5 original, he plays the role of a man forcefully sterilized during the 1975-77 Emergency

period. While the film received average reviews, Divyendu strikes a decent balance in the dramedy. Divyendu says that he wants to do a variety of roles. And he prefers acting for the OTT platform because it offers a wide reach thanks to the penetration of mobiles. Not everyone has the money to buy a film ticket. But it's the role of Munna Bhaiyya that gave Divyendu all the accolades. From a dark and merciless bad ass in a Season 1 to a kinder version in Season 2, the character goes from being feared to being loved. You feel bad when he gets shot in the end. But does that mean that's the end of Munna Bhaiyya? We don't know that yet as Mirzapur has always surprised its audience with its twists and turns. We are definitely looking forward to seeing him in a variety of roles.



BEST DESCRIBED:

Low key, Unconventional, Positive



Vikrant MASSEY

OTT's Fave



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irzapur made a lot of lesser-known faces of Bollywood into loved household names and Vikrant Massey is definitely one of them. The cleverer of the 2 brothers, unassuming and charming, his absence in Season 2 was gravely felt. Vikrant Massey's career goes back to 2004 when he acted in telly serials like Kahan Hu Main and Balika Vadhu. He was seen in major projects like Dil Dhadakne Do and Lootera. He has worked with some of the best women directors like Alankrita Srivastava for Lipstick Under My Burkha, Konkana Sen Sharma for Death in the Gunj and Meghna Gulzar in Chapaak where he played Deepika Padukone's significant other.

Vikrant Massey belongs to that crop of artists who are competently straddling mainstream films, OTT originals and web series. In Criminal Justice, he acted with his colleague from Mirzapur, Pankaj Tripathi and Bollywood hero Jackie Shroff. An official adaptation of Peter Moffat's series, this show also has an American adaptation called The Night Of. Directed by Tigmanshu Dhulia, this show is gritty, and it kept the viewers enthralled.

In the Netflix original Cargo, a sci-fi tale in which he plays a homo-demon, he reunited with his Mirzapur co-star Shweta Tripathi. Vikrant Massey has the ability to lend a certain credibility to his role and he carries a romantic boy look with equal ease exemplified by Ginny Weds Sunny and Dolly Kitty Aur Who Chamakte Sitaare. A number of projects are lined up for 2021 including Season 2 of Alt Balaji's Broken But Beautiful with Harleen Sethi.

**BEST
DESCRIBED:**

Sensitive, Positive, Confident





Ali

FAZAL

Hollywood Dreams

When Raju Hirani noticed Ali Fazal in a series on television commercials and theatre, he offered him a small role in the Aamir Khan starrer 3 Idiots. Within the next 2 years, he bagged the Fukrey franchise with Excel Entertainment. With co-actors like Vidya Balan in Bobby Jasoos, Sanjay Dutt in Prasthanam, Ali Fazal is one of those actors who has done international projects too, like Furious 7 and Victoria and Abdul, where he plays titular role alongside Dame Judi Dench. In Mirzapur, Ali Fazal made a huge shift from his otherwise lean look to a hefty beefcake in season 1 of Mirzapur within a span of 3 months. He says that while Mirzapur season 1 was physically gruelling, season 2 was mentally gruelling. A show like Mirzapur is like shooting 3 films and he was anxious to get it over with. But his restrained and emotive performance in Season 2 is going to be compensated with riotous Fukrey 3 in 2021. He is a part of the franchise Happy Bhaag Jayegi with its 3 installments slated for release in 2021.



Another big film to look forward to is Death On The Nile where Director Kenneth Branagh will be playing Hercule Poirot. Ali Fazal will be sharing the screen with the likes of Gal Gadot, Russell Brand, Jennifer Saunders and Annette Benning to name a few. While we wait with bated breath for Mirzapur 3, we are also looking forward to seeing Ali Fazal in many more international projects.

**BEST
DESCRIBED:**

Promising, Bold, International



Prateik BABBAR

Chhote Nawab of OTT



W

ith a debut alongside Genelia Dsouza and Imran Khan in Jaane Tu Ya Jaane Na, Prateik Babbar was touted to be one of the promising star kids of Bollywood in 2008. But the films that ensued were underwhelming at the Box office. He acted in films such as Dhobhi Ghaat, Dum Maro Dum, and Aarakshan alongside Amitabh Bachchan, Saif Ali Khan and Deepika Padukone which didn't cut ice with the audience. Prateik makes no bones about the period in his life when he was into substance abuse and alcohol. He got his act together and has been staying focused since. He was a part of a music video in 2017 which

highlighted various social stigmas, one of which is that of a recovered addict.

In 2019, he played the lead in the Zee 5 web series called Skyfire, a sci-fi film based on a novel written by Aroon Raman. In the series, Prateik played a journalist, a historian and an intelligence agent. In the same year he was part of the woman-centric series called Four More Shots Please. On MX player, he plays the role of Inspector Virkar in Chakravyuh. He is working on several new projects slated for release in 2021, one of which is a film with Director Sanjay Gupta called Mumbai Saga and India Lockdown with Madhur Bhandarkar. There is also a new web series in the pipeline with Director Kunal Kohli. Prateik is maturing as an actor with every passing project. We look forward to seeing more of him.

**BEST
DESCRIBED:**

Positive, Stable, Dedicated



Kunal KEMMU

The Fearless Actor



Kunal Kemmu's digital debut happened with Abhay on Zee5 in 2019 where he plays an astute investigating officer. A show based on true crimes, according to Kunal, he considers this role to be a welcome shift from the other comedy roles he has done in Golmaal and Go Goa Gone franchisees. However, with the film Lootcase, Kunal is back in the comfort zone of comedy wherein he plays a common man who works in the printing press as a repair man. He lives in a chawl with his wife, played by talented Rasika Duggal and his son. His insipid life takes a turn when he finds a suitcase accidentally which contains 10 crore rupees. Prior to his digital debut, Kunal was seen in Malang where he played the role of a troubled policeman and lead villain. With Abhay, Kunal's expectation was to revive a plateaued career wherein he hoped to get that impetus, much like his brother-in-law Saif Ali Khan did with Sacred Games. Abhay Season 2 released on Zee5 last year in August. The second season was directed by Ken Ghosh. This season of Abhay also has Chunky Pandey. Even though comedy happens to be his forte, Kunal adds exceptional gravitas even to his serious roles. Kunal Kemmu is the son of a Kashmiri Pandit who had to leave Kashmir owing to the persecution meted out to Hindus. He received the Hitlist OTT award for Best Actor Male for Lootcase.

**BEST
DESCRIBED:**

Positive, Witty,



Abhishek BACHCHAN

Breathing a new life

W

With the release of *Breathe: Into The Shadows*, Abhishek Bachchan debuted on OTT in July last year, which incidentally also marked his 20th year in the film industry. Abhishek Bachchan is an out and out A lister. After *Refugee*, his first film, he saw a series of flops for 4 consecutive years till he appeared in Mani Ratnam's *Yuva* followed by Sanjay Gadhvi's *Dhoom*. After *Dhoom* came films like *Bunty aur Babli* and *Sarkar* which had his father Amitabh Bachchan as his co-star. Despite getting the best of directors to work and the larger production houses to work for, his Bollywood career has been chequered. The success of his films has been attributed to his father Amitabh Bachchan.

With *Breathe: Into The Shadows*, Abhishek believes that one can reach the same audience albeit a bit more intimately. OTT platforms give a more intimate viewing experience wherein it can be watched alone or with family, thereby lending itself to different kinds of story-telling, which the 70mm format does not allow. Therefore, not only did it help get a wider audience, but it also explored different genres of film making and story-telling. *Ludo*, a Netflix original directed by Anurag Basu was another fun film that he was a part of. The most recent addition to his OTT repertoire was 'The Big Bull' where he plays the small-time stockbroker who goes on to make millions off the stock market by simply manipulating the banking system. The story is inspired by the life of Harshad Mehta. His next release will be *Bob Biswas*, a spin off to Sujoy Ghosh's *Kahaani*.

**BEST
DESCRIBED:**

Promising, Stable, Dedicated



Ronit ROY

Holding audience hostage

Any actor wants his character graph to evolve, jump through the hurdles and reach its objective – said Ronit Roy in an interview. But Ronit Roy's life has been a series of these hurdles and he has emerged as a winner. Despite being a Silver Jubilee hero (it means a film ran in the theatres for 25 weeks at a stretch) which is unheard of these days, he didn't get any juicy project. After a series of smaller acting assignments, he became an established television actor with his association with Balaji wherein he worked on popular shows like KKasauti Zindakii Kay and as Mihir Virani in Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi. It was in 2010 that he came back to Bollywood with a film called Udaan in which he played a ruthless and abusive father. He received great accolades for his performance. Following which he did a series of films like 2 States, Shootout at Wadala and Kaabil where he played the lead villain. Owing to his historical association with Balaji Telefilms, he continued his association with them through their web series on Alt Balaji called 'Kehne Ko Humsafar Hain, which launched its third season in June 2020. He has a show on Disney Hotstar called Hostages, an adaptation from an Israeli series of the same name. The show did fairly well with its 2 seasons receiving average ratings from most of the critics. Ronit Roy is one of the few actors who has successfully straddled all mediums of entertainment. Through his life's hurdles he has matured as an actor and metamorphosed into a dependable and bankable actor.

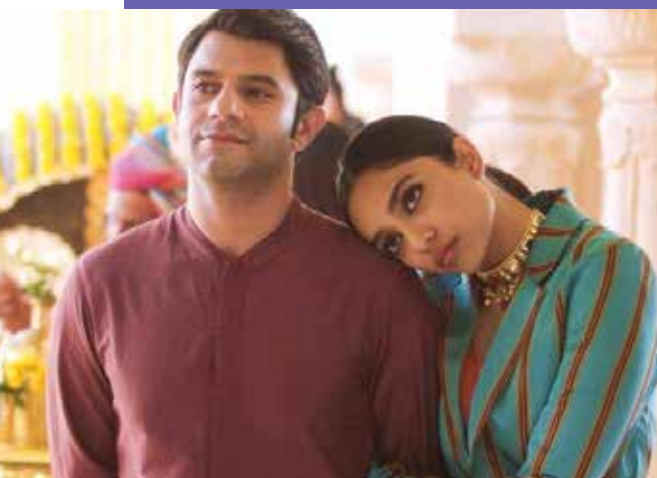


BEST DESCRIBED:

Mature, Poised, Thoughtful

Arjun MATHUR

Made in London



he only actor in this lot who received an Emmy nomination for his nuanced performance as the gay Wedding Planner in Zoya Akhtar's *Made in Heaven*. Arjun Mathur was born in Britain, but he completed his education in Delhi. His debut film was with Mira Nair. He featured in her film *Migration* where he played Irfan Khan's lover. Later he was seen in *Luck by Chance* as Farhan Akhtar's best friend. Incidentally, Zoya Akhtar, co-wrote Mira Nair's *Migration* too who later cast him in *Made in Heaven*. Arjun Mathur is a familiar face on OTT platforms. He later acted in the Voot Original 'The Gone Game' where he is seen as a Covid positive patient. A short 4-episode series with familiar OTT

actors like Shriya Pilgoankar, and Shweta Tripathi both of *Mirzapur* fame. He was also seen in Brij Mohan *Amar Rahe* in the titular role in 2018. The show received poor reviews as a Netflix original. The *Made in Heaven* Season 2 is currently being filmed and is slated to finish its shooting by July 2021. In an interview Arjun Mathur said that the OTT platform has given actors like him visibility apart from giving opportunities to technicians, writers and filmmakers. He also went to say that Bollywood would never give him the kind of role that he desires. While he is yet another actor trying not to be typecast as a gay man or the best friend of the hero, he says that the best part of these streaming platforms is the amount of freedom it gives to the artists.

**BEST
DESCRIBED:**

Sensitive, Unconventional, Charming



Jaideep AHLAWAT

The OTT Raees

At the Flyx Filmfare OTT awards, PaatalLok got the award for the Best Series in the Drama category and Jaideep Ahlawat got the award for the Best Actor in a Drama series. The series was loved by viewers and critics in equal measure. In this crime thriller, Jaideep plays the role of a cop asked to solve a high-profile case knowing that he was definitely going to fail it. But he sticks it out and goes to the bottom of it to realise some dark realities. Clean Slate Filmz which also produced Bulbul on Netflix produced this show. Jaideep Ahlawat played the role of the lead villain in Vidyut Jamwal's debut film Commando. He also did

substantial role in Anurag Kashyap's Gangs of Wasseypur and Meghna Gulzar's Raazi where he played a stoic and strict R&AW agent who mentors Alia Bhat to be a spy.

In all these films, he made a mark with his sensitive performance and expressions. In the Netflix series, Bard of Blood, he played the role of a clever and manipulative intelligence agent. In Lust stories, even though it was a single episode, playing Manisha Koirala's boyfriend, one developed a soft corner for his character. He is currently seen in Netflix's Ajeeb Dastans, another one of its anthology films. According to him fame is a mirage and an abstract concept. All we know is that we would like to see more of him in Paatal Lok type of shows which extract the most out of him.



**BEST
DESCRIBED:**

**Sensitive, Versatile, Assertive,
Trustworthy**



Abhishek BANERJEE

Ray of Good Hope



Before becoming an actor, Abhishek Banerjee was a casting director. He has cast for films like Dirty Picture, Secret Superstar and Toilet- Ek Prem Katha through his company called Casting Bay. Somewhere along the line, he started delivering auditions himself and he was cast by his friends for the main antagonist in Paatal Lok. Abhishek Banerjee was first seen in the comedy horror film Stree and also played the role of Compounder in Season 1 of Mirzapur. In an interview with Rajeev Masand, he said that in order to sink his teeth into the role, he first had to understand crime and how it gets committed. He had also played the role of a villain in Ajji, which was an internationally

acclaimed film. Abhishek Banerjee played the role of an electrician in the series called Unpaused which was a collection of mainly lockdown stories impacting lives of people in the city. His latest work is Ajeeb Daastaans on Netflix, another one of its anthology films. Abhishek Banerjee is a thoughtful actor. He is creative and process driven. While he always wanted to be an actor, he started being a casting director because he wanted to pay his bills. He was nominated to be the Best Supporting Actor in a Drama Series for his role in Paataal Lok for Flyx Filmfare OTT Awards. It is only a matter of time that we will see Abhishek performing lead protagonist roles. His lines in Paataal Lok: Jab ek kutta aadmi se pyar karein, woh achcha aadmi hain. Jab ek aadmi kutte se pyar karein, woh achcha aadmi hain.

**BEST
DESCRIBED:**

Sensitive, Driven, Thoughtful, Versatile

A portrait of Adarsh Gaurav, a man with long, dark, wavy hair and a beard, wearing a blue and white striped shirt. The background is a soft-focus outdoor scene.

Adarsh GAURAV

New Kid on the Block

Arvind Adiga's 2008 novel *The White Tiger* was adapted into a Netflix original in 2020 and released in 2021. It was nominated for Best Adapted Screenplay at the Oscars in 2021. Ramin Bahrani consciously cast Adarsh Gaurav for the film because of the nuances he brought to the table during the auditions. According to Bahrani, the role had to be done by an unknown face. Adarsh Gaurav as part of his process has stayed in Jharkhand for 2 months and even worked in a tea shop to sink his teeth into the role of Balram Halwai. The *White Tiger* role also got him a nomination in the BAFTA awards for Best Actor alongside Anthony

Hopkins. He was also nominated for the Independent Spirit Award for the Best Male Lead. Adarsh Gaurav apparently has no mainstream Bollywood masala film aspirations. He prefers to look at scripts which are up his alley. Ever since the film released on Netflix, he has been getting showered with accolades from all over the world. His desire is to work with good directors and he is prepping for newer roles that give him a challenge. Interestingly, he is an impersonator of animal sounds and also learning Tamil and Malayalam as preparation for future projects. Before *The White Tiger*, we have seen Adarsh in *Mom* where he plays one of the antagonists. He has also worked in Netflix's *Leila*.



**BEST
DESCRIBED:**

Talented, Ambitious, Unconventional

Jimmy SHERGILL

Real life Maachis



Jimmy Shergill was seen first in Gulzaar's Maachis where he debuted along with the very promising Chandrachur Singh. He acted in several Bollywood hits like Mohabbatein, Mere Yaar Ki Shaadi, Hum Tum and Dil Hain Tumhara. He has been a part of several mainstream franchisees like Munnabhai, Tanu Weds Manu and Happy Bhaag Jayegi. Jimmy Shergill also made a place for himself in the Punjabi film industry. Always considered to be a competent actor, Jimmy Shergill debuted on the OTT platform with 2 shows in 2020 namely Your Honor on Sony Liv and Rangbaaz Phirse on Zee5. Your Honor directed by E. Niwas is an adaptation of an Israeli show called Kvodo. A crime

thriller where Jimmy Shergill plays a senior judge who gets embroiled in a hit and run case committed by his son. For the first time ever, Jimmy Shergill played the father of a teenager. The series has veteran actors like Mita Vashisht, Suhasini Muley and Varun Badola in the cast. In Rangbaaz Season 2, he plays the role of a gangster in Rajasthan. In both these shows, Jimmy has convincingly portrayed both roles – one as a righteous Judge and second as the brutal gangster.

A second season of Your Honor is definitely on the cards. In a recent interview he mentioned that while he is very happy with the spate of opportunities the streaming platforms have brought and also the variety of content one can watch on it, he expressed his doubt whether it really is the future. He said one needs to wait it out and explore to see whether it really works.

**BEST
DESCRIBED:**

Consistent, Honest, Sensitive

A large portrait of Angad Bedi, a man with short dark hair and a mustache, wearing a dark, high-collared shirt. He is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be an indoor setting with warm lighting.

Angad BEDI

In the Pink of things

Angad Bedi could have pursued his career in cricket just like his father Bishan Singh Bedi and been equally successful. In fact, he pursued it actively till he played for the Under 19 team in Delhi. Angad Bedi started his career in Bollywood and shifted to television soon after, where he played host and contestant in shows Emotional Atyachar and Khatron Ke Khiladi respectively. In the same year he played a role in Remo D'Souza's FALTU. He also acted in a Dharma Production film called Ungli which was helmed by director Rensil D'Silva. He was next seen in 3 major projects one of which was Pink, wherein his co-stars were actors like Amitabh Bachchan and TaapseePannu. In this film, he was the lead antagonist

which he delivered persuasively. He was next seen in YRF's Tiger Zinda Hain, with Salman Khan as the main lead. In 2017, he played a major role in the series Inside Edge on Amazon Prime. Released at a time when OTT platforms were nascent, this sports -drama series became a huge hit and even went on to create its second season. His role in the show was that of a scrupulous captain of the India's T20 Cricket team. For this role, Angad is known to have taken inspiration from MS Dhoni. Many of Angad's friends are cricketers and one such friend is Yuvraj Singh who has been training under Bishen Singh Bedi since his childhood days.



**BEST
DESCRIBED:**

Talented, Ambitious

Vijay VARMA

Man on the rise



Vijay Varma has made a niche for himself. After playing one of the antagonists in *Pink* alongside Angad Bedi, he made everyone sit up and take notice of him in *Gully Boy*. In Imtiaz Ali's *She*, where he played the role of Sasya, he delivered a lucid performance as a sleazy and brutal gangster who is sexually attracted to the protagonist Aditi Pohankar, who is playing the role of a female constable. Despite Vijay's depiction as a sadistic criminal, he somehow manages to leave a lasting impression on the viewer. The character Sasya he played got him an award for Best Actor in a Negative Role for E4M Play Awards in 2021. You still end up liking him for what he is. That is

the brilliance of Vijay Varma. He was introduced in *Mirzapur* Season 2 last year as Tyagi brothers. Playing a double role in the series means showing two sides of the same coin, one as an obedient and business minded Bharat and the other as the sweet and sensitive Shatrughan who falls for Guddy played by Shweta Tripathi. The cliffhanger ending of *Mirzapur* Season 2 definitely means that we will see more of Vijay Varma in Season 3 which is already announced. *Suitable Boy* released on the same day as *Mirzapur* 2 but despite its exotic representation meant for international audience, in India it was still *Mirzapur* that outshone Mira Nair's work. All in all, it benefited Vijay Varma amply because he was showered praises and accolades for both films. His latest release is *OK Computer* with Radhika Apte, where he plays a geeky cyber cell officer.

**BEST
DESCRIBED:**

Articulate, Assertive, Positive



Anil KAPOOR

Forever Young

A 63-year-old actor made his debut on Netflix this year with AK Vs AK where he played himself. A seasoned and an established Bollywood star and actor Anil Kapoor has won hearts decades ago with his rich body of work that spans 40 years. He has worked with the best of directors, actors and known to Bollywood. Anil Kapoor has received several awards in his career like Filmfare Award for Best Actor in Tezaab and Beta, Best Supporting Actor for Taal and Dil Dhadakne Do. He also received IIFA Awards, Screen Awards, Sansui Awards, Stardust Awards and Apsara Awards. He had an important role in Slumdog Millionaire which got an Oscar for Best Film along with a host of other technical awards. He has received Screen Actor Guild Award for Outstanding Performance by a Cast for the same film.

Apart from Awards, he has received the National Award for Best Actor for his film Pukar.

In AK Vs AK, where he made his first web debut, he plays himself, the star Anil Kapoor. Vikramaditya Motwane's second venture after Sacred Games, this 'mockmentary' stars Anurag Kashyap as well, as the second lead. This format of film making is new in India and it is an edge of the seat thriller. In an interview, he mentioned that yes his films that were meant to release in the theatres are now releasing on these OTT platforms, and its practical too ,to cut losses. But when the theatres do open up, he believes that people will flock to the theatres as usual as both mediums have their respective loyalists.



**BEST
DESCRIBED:**

Consistent, Bankable, Trustworthy



Vicky KAUSHAL

Always Striking

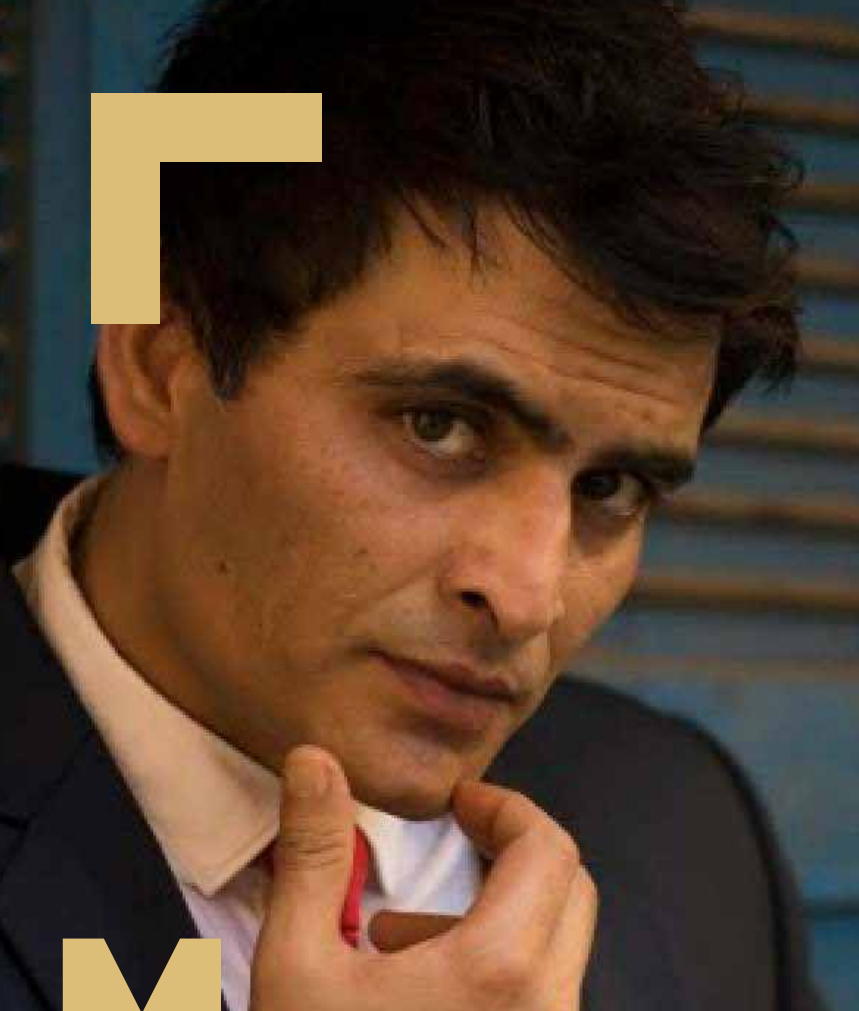


Within 6 years of his stint in Bollywood, Vicky Kaushal has already received the National Award for Best Actor for the film Uri: The Surgical Strike. Son of action choreographer Sham Kaushal, Vicky Kaushal started his career with Masaan opposite Shweta Tripathi. The film received several awards and accolades from critics and international platforms. In 2018, he played the male lead in the Netflix Original Love Per Square foot. It was Netflix's Indian original film which released on Valentine's Day. The film was well received by the critics appreciating the simplicity of the storyline and also the chemistry between the protagonists. Vicky Kaushal followed this film with Raazi where he played a

Pakistani Army man opposite Alia Bhatt under the aegis of Meghana Gulzar. This was followed by Raju Hirani's Sanju where he played the role of Sanjay Dutt's best friend Kamli. He received several awards like Filmfare Award, Zee Cine Award and IIFA Award for Best Supporting Actor for his role. He is loved by the media in equal measure where he was Times of India's Most Desirable Man of 2018 and also made it in Forbes India's 30 under 30 list of 2018. Vicky has the ability to make people fall in love with his characters whether it's the simplicity of Paras in Lust Stories or Iqbal in Raazi. With Uri having made 250 crores on the box office, Vicky Kaushal has moved in the league of the 100 crore + stars.

**BEST
DESCRIBED:**

Honest, Earnest, Stylish



Manav KAUL

Theatre institute

M

anav Kaul's role as the right-wing politician in Kai Po Che was memorable. You couldn't miss him as the doting husband in Tumhari Sulu where Vidya Balan plays a housewife turned Radio Jockey. And as Iqbal Qasim in Jolly LLB 2. He has acted in Netflix shows like Ghoul and Finding Anamika. He played the lead in Sarthak Dasgupta's Music Teacher, which released on Netflix. Manav Kaul is creative. He is rooted in theatre and his dissatisfaction with plays led him to write his own plays like Shakkar Ke Paanch Daane and Peele Scooterwala Aadmi, Bali Aur Shambhu, Ilhaam, Aisa Kehte Hain, Park and Red Sparrow. Manav Kaul has been a part of major projects like Thappad, Badla and Wazir, still he has never been in spotlight. He acted as the lead in The Verdict - State vs. Nanavati, which released on Zee5 and Alt Balaji. The show is the story of a real-life case court case of India and critics have said this show was the most realistic representation of the court case. Many versions of this story have come out in the past where Nanavati was played by Vinod Khanna in 1973 in a film called Achanak and by Akshay Kumar in 2016 in Rustom. Manav Kaul is an actor with depth. He reads, writes plays, short stories, novels. He is seen in Ajeeb Daastaans on Netflix recently where he is playing a role opposite Shefali Shah.

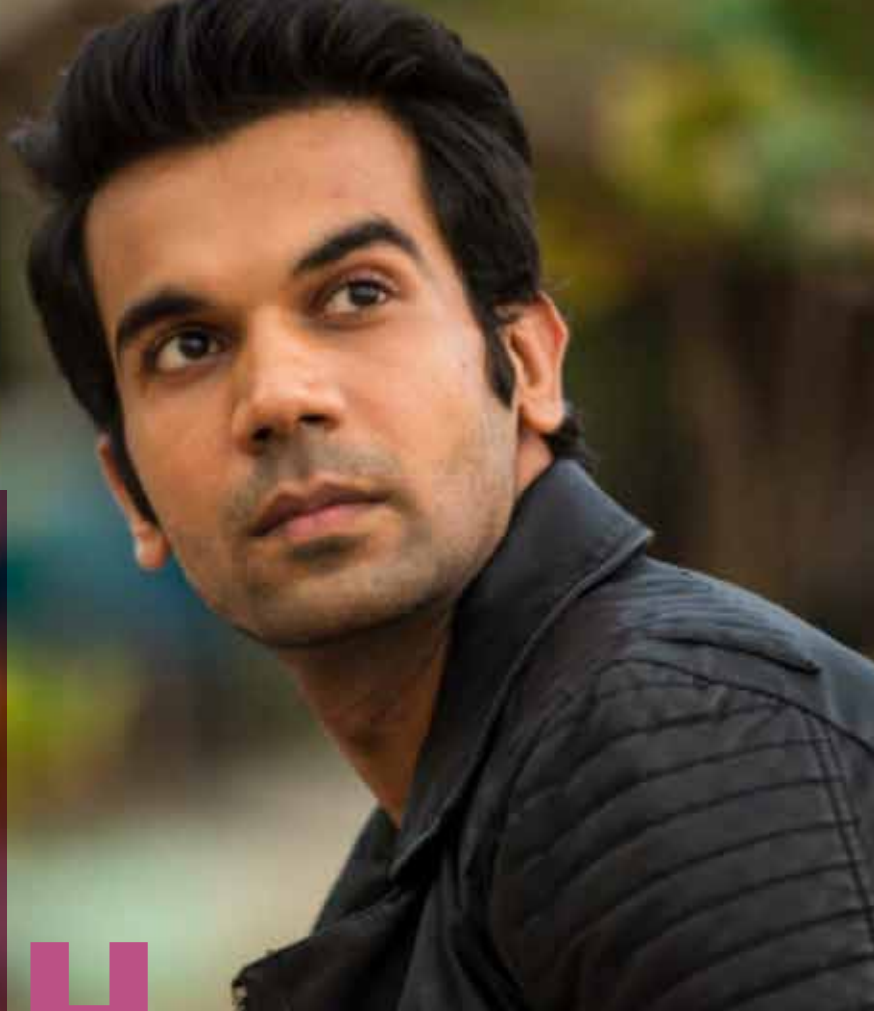


**BEST
DESCRIBED:**

Sensitive, Thoughtful, Poised

Rajkumar RAO

Leapfrogging to
excellence



He was one of the 3 heroes in Kai Po Che with Amit Sadh and the late Sushant Singh Rajput. He played the role of the earnest police inspector in Talaash alongside Aamir Khan. He played the role of the selfish boyfriend in Queen. Rajkumar's Rao filmography is long and impressive. He has had a balance of critically acclaimed films as well as commercially successful ones. He has received a ton of awards including National Award for Best Actor for the portrayal of the titular role Shahid. Filmfare Award for Best Actor and Best Supporting Actor for Shahid and Bareilly Ki Barfi respectively. GQ Man of the Year, CNN- IBN Indian of the Year have also been bagged by him. A product of FTII Pune, he is among the new crop of actors who have

been sought in good productions and providers of quality content rather than big banner films. His choice of roles is different – where he doesn't always have to get the girl, doesn't always have to be the lead. In The White Tiger, he does not steal the limelight from Adarsh Gaurav, despite him being the more accomplished and established of the two. He is able to carry comedy roles like Stree and Bareilly Ki Barfi and also serious roles like in Trapped and Newton. Rajkumar Rao has acted with the best directors in Bollywood like Anurag Kashyap, Anurag Basu, Abhishek Kapoor and Ashwini Tiwary. His OTT release Chalaang was meant to be a theatrical release. Earlier this year, his film Roohi released in the theatre. He is extremely positive about how the OTT platforms are convenient option since people are not ready to step out.

**BEST
DESCRIBED:**

Consistent, Trustworthy, Earnest



Bobby DEOL

Soldiering on

Everyone knows how the OTT platforms have given a new lease of life to dormant careers. Bobby Deol is one such Bollywood star. He came with loud bang with his dashing good looks in Barsaat in a much-hyped film with the sensational Twinkle Khanna under the direction of Raj Kumar Santoshi, the much sought-after director of the 90s. He is claimed to be the OTT King when he received the Best Actor Dadasaheb Phalke International Awards for playing the role of a godman in Ashram. He says that cinema usually tends to bracket actors and they are seen playing unidimensional roles. But, the OTT has widened the net and they can play roles with various shades. Ashram also happened to be the most watched show on OTT. Bobby Deol was also seen in Class of 83, where he plays a brooding and intense police inspector who builds a team of 5 cadets to form a secret squad of encounter specialists to clean off gangsters from Mumbai's crime scene. The film didn't receive great reviews, mainly because of its storytelling, although Bobby Deol was extremely convincing as a policeman completing his punishment posting at the police academy. Ashram 3, Apne 2 and Arth are some of Bobby's new projects and we are waiting to see more of him on OTT.



**BEST
DESCRIBED:**

Talented, Charming, Tangible

Amit SADH

A Win-win Actor



He was again one of the early faces of OTT with the release of Breathe Season 1. It was Prime Video's second release, after Inside Edge. Amit Sadh's debut in Bollywood was in Abhishek Kapoor's Kai Po Che alongside Rajkumar Rao and the late Sushant Singh Rajput. He was later seen in several major projects including Sultan with Salman Khan in 2016 and Sarkar 3 with Ram Gopal Varma in 2017. In 2020, he appeared in 3 Originals namely Operation Parindey - a film by Sanjay Gadhvi of Dhoom fame, Tigmanshu Dhulia's Yaara and Shakuntala Devi with Vidya Balan. His other OTT releases have been Avarodh, a military drama which released on Sony Liv. Breathe Season 2 with Abhishek Bachchan in the lead, got Amit Sadh the Best

Supporting Actor award in a Drama Series by Flyx Filmfare OTT.

His Jeet Ki Zid, is based on the true story of a Kargil veteran which released on Zee5 in January this year. Amit Sadh, despite the pandemic has had a great year when it comes to his work. Amit Sadh is known for his honest performance and he has been able to crack a series of major projects in Bollywood and OTT. He said that for those who don't have Godfathers, OTT is the Godfather and it is a perfect place for underrated gems to shine. In one of his interviews, he said his biggest dream is to win an Oscar and be on that stage. We wish him all the very best in this endeavour!

**BEST
DESCRIBED:**

Ambitious, Honest, Positive



Dhruv SEHGAL

Millennial's Mantra

Dhruv Sehgal is multifaceted. His show Little Things which as first meant to be a YouTube film was purchased by Netflix as a franchise. The series is about a young couple in a live-in relationship where they explore the various ups and downs of a couple. The show is in English and he has acted with Mithila Palkar – another much seen actress on OTT.

Schooled in the UK, he completed his postgraduation in Symbiosis Institute of Media and Communication, Pune. He has directed a number of sketches for Filter Copy and three of Dice Media's web series. He is the co-creator and Head writer for his series Little Things.

In 2019, Dhruv was the recipient of the Storyteller of the Year at MTV- IWM Buzz Digital Awards. He was also the recipient of the Flyx Filmfare OTT Awards for Best Actor in a Comedy Series for Little Things Season 3. He has directed a short film called Kunal for which he received an award for Best Short Film at MAMI 2016 and was also selected for Mumbai International Film Festival. Dhruv is known to have conducted writing workshops in IITs and IIMs. Dhruv will be seen in the much-awaited Bollywood film Brahmastra, Ranbir and Alia's film.



**BEST
DESCRIBED:**

Talented, Positive



Saqib SALEEM

Ahead in the race



Saqib Saleem played the lead in the Zee5 web series Rangbaaz, a true story of gangster of Gorakhpur Shri Prakash Shukla. It chronicles how he went from an impressionable teenage college kid to UP's most wanted criminal. As a gangster-based show, the film has all the ingredients of a gangster drama with an outstanding support cast like Tigmanshu Dhulia, Ravi Kishan and Ranvir Shorey. While critics said that Saqib didn't quite befit the gangster, his effort was laudable. Saqib's biggest grosser was the Bollywood masala film Race 3 which released in the same year. Last year, he appeared in a Zee5 original called Comedy Couple with

Shweta Basu Prasad, the story of 2 standup comics and a couple trying to make it big in the comedy circuit and the perils of real-life relationship issues that ensue. Saqib later acted in another web series called Crackdown which appeared on Voot last year. The show was directed by Apoorva Lakhia who directed Shootout at Lokhandwala. Saqib is the lead on the show as a R&AW agent trying to ward off a threat to the security of the country. Saqib will be seen in the much awaited 83, the story of India's win at the Word Cup. He is playing the role of Mohinder Amarnath in the film. Saqib is brother of Huma Qureshi, the actress of Gangs of Wasseypur fame.

**BEST
DESCRIBED:**

Ambitious, Charming, Talented



Pankaj TRIPATHI

King of OTT

In Sacred Games 2, Pankaj Tripathi's character tells Ganesh Gaitonde, played by Nawazuddin, 'Tu Veera Hai'. In real life, Pankaj Tripathi is the real Veera of the OTT platform. Born to a farmer in Belsand, Bihar, Pankaj Tripathi has the humility and tenacity of a farmer. In his college days, he was a part of Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad and for one of his protests he was jailed for a week. He studied Hotel Management and worked in a hotel's kitchen for 2 years. Several years after making it in Bollywood, he stayed in the same hotel with Manoj Bajpayee, his idol and inspiration.

Mirzapur series is unthinkable without him. Pankaj Tripathi, a degree holder in Hotel Management and a National School of Drama graduate has had a long struggling career in Bollywood. After finishing his training at the National School of Drama dreaming of being a character actor earning only enough to be able to pay his bills. He has done a host of films in Bollywood. From Masaan to Fukrey, from Bareilly Ki Barfi to Stree and Newton. He received a National Film Award – Special Mention for his role in Newton, in which he played an Army officer. Pankaj Tripathi's first major role was in Gangs of Wasseypur by Anurag Kashyap. The two seasons of Criminal Justice on Disney Hotstar, Mirzapur on Prime and Sacred Games on Netflix – he has played major roles in all these 3 shows. He also played significant roles in Netflix originals like Karan Johar's Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl for which he received Hitlist OTT award for the Best Supporting Actor in a film. Anurag Basu's Ludo also was extremely successful for Pankaj Tripathi. We will be seeing him in 83, a much-awaited film and of course in Mirzapur 3.

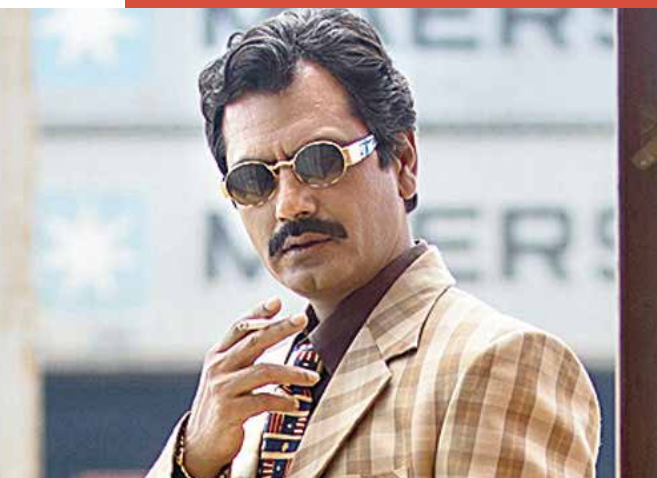


**BEST
DESCRIBED:**

Sensitive, Passionate, Humble

Nawazuddin SIDDIQUI

Never say Die



Another alumnus of the National School of Drama and 8 years senior to Pankaj Tripathi, Nawazuddin too has had a long struggle in Bollywood. His claim to fame was Anurag Kashyap's *Gangs of Wasseypur 2*, where he played the lead. *Gangs of Wasseypur* was showcased at Cannes Film Festival. Eight of Nawazuddin's films have been selected at Cannes making him the only actor in the world to have that many films screened at the festival. *Lunch Box*, *Manto*, *Raman Raghav* are some of his notable films. He has also acted in mainstream blockbusters like *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* with Salman Khan, *Talaash* with Aamir Khan and *Raees* with Shahrukh Khan. He has acted in Netflix

originals like *Photograph*, *Serious Men* and *Raat Akeli Hain*. He is one of the 2 leads in *Sacred Games* too which was nominated for the International Emmy Award for Best Drama.

Nawazuddin is an actor who has received several national and internal awards and recognition. He got the National Award for *Talaash* and Filmfare award for *Lunchbox* for Best supporting Actor. He also received the Flyx Filmfare Best Actor Award in Web Original Film for *Raat Akeli Hain*.

He is one such actor who is successful in both formats of film whether its 70 mm celluloid or even OTT. Despite his man on the street looks, he has certainly created a niche for himself. He is going to be seen in a crime thriller called *Sangeen* next.

**BEST
DESCRIBED:**

Talented, Versatile, Mature



Sunil GROVER

A different groover

Sunil Grover's main forte is comedy. He is undoubtedly one of the funniest actors in the country and his characters Gutthi, Rinku Bhabhi and Dr. Mashoor Gulati are household names. He played these caricatures in Kapil Sharma Show on Sony Entertainment Television. But with Tandav he has transitioned into being considered as a serious actor, perhaps a villain too. In Tandav, he has played a right-hand man to Saif Ali Khan's character named Gurpal Chauhan. He is brutal and unforgiving. For Sunil Grover, this was his second project with Director Ali Abbas Zafar who has directed films like Tiger Zinda Hain, Bharat, and Sultan. Sunil Grover was also seen in Vishal Bhardwaj's Pataakha wherein he played the part of Dipper, a nosy neighbour of the 2 sisters played by Radhika Madan and Sanya Malhotra.

The web series Tandav was mired in controversy recently after its release where the show was heavily trolled on social media and an FIR was also lodged against the makers for hurting the religious sentiments of the country. The makers were asked to pull off the show off the medium. Sunil Grover's next web series is called Sunflower which is a crime thriller helmed by Vikas Bahl. Sunil Grover is a serious actor and it mustn't be easy for an actor to make such a huge shift. Most actors say that Bollywood is eager to typecast actors and it is only on OTT that allows actors to freewheel between different kinds of characters and genres. Sunil Grover is actively looking to break the comedy mould and he is doing it with extreme believability.



**BEST
DESCRIBED:**

Talented, Mature, Versatile

Rajeev

KHANDELWAL

Style Icon



Rajeev Khandelwal has had a long career in television, the movies as well as on web series. He shot to fame with Kahin Toh Hoga with television actress Aamna Shariff which was based on Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice. He was the host of reality show called Sach Ka Saamna, which was modelled on the American show The Moment of Truth. Rajeev Khandelwal's film debut was with the film Aamir, which was inspired from American films Phone Booth and Cellular. He appeared in Anurag Kashyap's Shaitan as the lead. Rajeev Khandelwal's film career should have skyrocketed after Shaitan, but as confessed by him, he

was picky in his projects. He did not want to do run of the mill films and films that didn't excite him. In 2015, he appeared in Reporters, a show on newsroom drama, which was considered below average by critics. Rajeev Khandelwal acted in Pradeep Sarkar directed Coldd Lassi Aur Chicken Masala which released on Alt Balaji and Zee5. Subsequently, he was in Voot's 6-part series called Marzi. Rajeev Khandelwal has received plenty of television awards since the beginning of his television career. He was nominated for the Filmfare Award and Screen Award for Best Male Debut for Aamir and also won for Best Anchor for his reality show Sach Ka Saamna.

**BEST
DESCRIBED:**

Stylish, Mature, Positive



Amit SIAL

The Real Sial



Amit Sial has been a familiar face in the OTT space since the history of OTT. He has been seen in both the Seasons of Inside Edge on Amazon Prime where he plays an annoying casteist cricketer and Kathmandu Diaries on Sony Liv where he plays the lead. After studying International Business in Melbourne, Australia, where he did some theatre work as well, Amit Sial returned from Australia and worked with Barry John's theatre group. Amit Sial can oscillate between positive and negative roles with equal conviction. Since, most web series are set in the backdrop of Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities, Amit Sial, who hails from Kanpur fits the bill perfectly. In Jamtara-Sabka Number Ayega, he played the sleazy politician, wherein in Mirzapur he plays the honest cop who knows how to play the system. He also played the role of a fearful lackey in both the seasons of Hostages. Amit Sial became noticeable from Dibakar Banerjee's Love Sex AurDhokha and Subhash Kapoor's Phas Gaye Re Obama. Amit Sial has also been seen in several television commercials. He co-wrote and co-produced Charlie Ke Chakkar Mein, a crime thriller neo-noir film with Naseeruddin Shah as its lead.

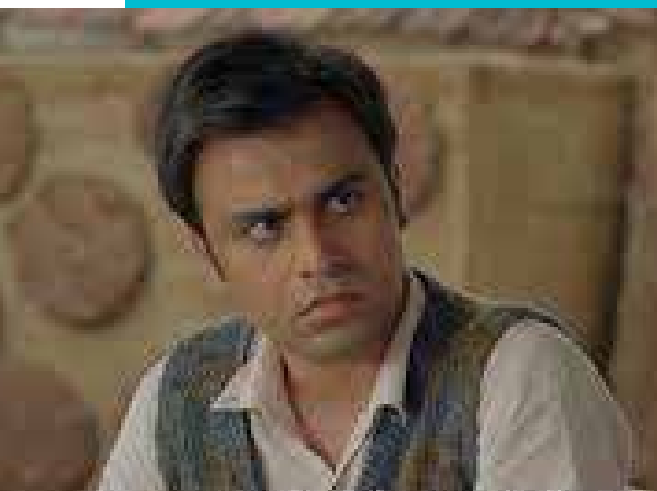
**BEST
DESCRIBED:**

Honest, Confident



Jitendra KUMAR

Millenial Actor



An engineer from IIT Kharagpur, Jitendra Kumar shot to fame with his Bollywood film ‘Shubh Mangal Zyada Savdhan’ where he played the role of a gay person opposite Ayushman Khurana. Jitendra Kumar has acted in several comedy sketches for TVF (The Viral Fever) including TVF Pitchers, which is about 4 guys launching their own startup company. In Kota Factory, he acted as an IIT aspirant, a role for which Jitendra was a perfect cast. The Kota Factory was a critically acclaimed show which portrayed a true depiction of the coaching centres in India. In March 2021, it was announced that a Season 2 of this show will release on Netflix. He also acted in Panchayat

playing an urban secretary of the Panchayat office in the Phulera town of Uttar Pradesh. Jitendra Kumar bagged Best Actor in a Comedy Series Award at the Flyx Filmfare OTT Awards. Jitendra Kumar is a millennial and has influenced several young minds through the roles played by him on the digital medium. He has opined that engineering is not the end of the world and he himself made a career shift from being a civil engineer to acting. While this shift for him was not easy, his opinion is that students should pursue a career of their choice and that education and occupation are two different things. Jitendra also taught physics thrice a week so that he could pursue acting on other days of the week. The message that he instills in the youngsters of today is to stay the course, despite the hardships. Lage Raho.

**BEST
DESCRIBED:**

**Unconventional, Experimentative,
Positive**



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