

Thousands Attend Sikh Day Parade in New York



'Street' Women in Suits



Indian Film Festival Opens in New York



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Dia Mirza appointed brand ambassador of personal care retailer The Body Shop

How a Sikh Boy Read about it in the



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artsentertainment

New York Indian Film Festival Opens With 'Do Dooni Char'

By BHARGAVI KULKARNI

- NEW YORK

They may not be in an age to run around trees now, but Rishi Kapoor and Neetu Singh stole the scene as they walked the red carpet at New York's prestigious Paris Theater on May 4 night to inaugurate the 11th annual New York Indian Film Festival (NYIFF).

Neetu Singh looked glamorous in a cream-colored salwar-kameez as she walked between her husband, Rishi Kapoor, and writer-director Habib Faisal. The couple stars together in Faisal's "Do Dooni Char" after a gap of 30 years.

Also attending the premiere were Pulitzer Prize-winning author Siddhartha Mukherjee, actor and director Aparna Sen, Madhur Jaffrey, Aditya Bhattacharya, Ajay Naidu, Samrat Chakrabarti, Meetu Chilana, Rehana Mirza, Sarita Choudhury, Ami Sheth, Poorna Jagannathan and a host of actors and filmmakers whose films will be screened at the festival through closing night.

The star-studded event opened with the U.S. premiere of "Do Dooni Char," Disney's first live-action Hindi film. A discussion with the lead pair and the director followed. It was moderated by Aseem Chhabra, the festival director.



Above, Neetu Singh Kapoor, center, with husband and co-actor Rishi Kapoor and writer and director Habib Faisal on the red carpet of the opening day of the 11th annual New York Indian Film Festival at the Paris Theater in New York, May 4. Above right, actor and director Aparna Sen on the red carpet.

During the discussion, the star couple said they were surprised when Faisal approached them. Neetu Singh admitted that it needed more than a little convincing for her to agree to a silver-screen comeback.

Indian films are very youth-oriented, Rishi Kapoor said, adding that the idea of playing "a middle-class character, who is also the main protagonist of the film, in an emerging India," attracted him to the film.

"I don't chase women down the valleys and run around trees anymore," he said with a smile.

For Faisal, the hero of the film was the subject. Once he wrote the film, drawing inspiration from his personal experiences,

he said he knew he wanted Rishi Kapoor to play the lead role. And once he was roped in, the director was convinced that nobody else but Neetu Singh would fit opposite him.

The discussion was followed by a gala benefit dinner at the Jumeirah Essex House on Central Park South.

The festival will present 25 feature films, among them Sudhir Mishra's "Yeh Saali Zindagi," "A Decent Arrangement" and "Raakh



Redux." Documentaries to be screened include "The Bengali Detective," "Made in India" and "Bhopali."

The U.S. premiere of Rituparno Ghosh's "Nauka Dubi" is to close the festival May 8, and the New York premiere of Aparna Sen's "Iti Mrinalini" is to be screened as the centerpiece selection May 6.

Anil Kapoor to Play Cop in Hollywood Film

FROM NEWS DISPATCHES

Bollywood actor Anil Kapoor has reportedly acquired another Hollywood project – Roger Donaldson's thriller "Cities," where he will share screen space with Clive Owen.

Kapoor will play a cop in a film that focuses on greed and ambition and has global scale with three colliding story lines, the Hollywood Reporter said.

The first story is said to involve around a New York-based hedge fund manager, played by Owen, who, in spite of having everything, craves for more.

The second story is about a London-based couple who

just want to buy their first home, something that seems impossibly out of reach. And the third story will see Kapoor, a Mumbai cop, fighting corruption between property speculators and his colleagues.

The project will be launched at the Cannes Film Market next

week, the Reporter said. Shooting will begin in October at multiple international locations, including New York, London and Mumbai.

Kapoor, who rose to international fame with "Slumdog Millionaire" had a meaty role in Fox's hit TV series "24." He will also be seen in "Mission: Impossible-Ghost Protocol," the fourth installment of the "Mission: Impossible" franchise.



Dia Mirza Named Brand Ambassador for The Body Shop

FROM NEWS DISPATCHES

Bollywood actress Dia Mirza has been named brand ambassador for The Body Shop, a Britain-based personal care products retailer. Her appointment was announced May 3 in New Delhi. Mirza will endorse the Moisture White Shiso range – a collection of skin-care products to help achieve fairer, clear-looking skin and uniform skin tone with a translucent complexion, news reports said.

This is the first time the brand has appointed anyone to promote its products in India.

"This is a real honor for me and I am very excited to be associated with this wonderful and inspiring brand," Mirza was quoted saying at the launch event in New Delhi. "For as long as I can remember, I have been

using The Body Shop Range of products."

According to the Indo Asian News Service, the 29-year-old actress looked fresh and resplendent in a flower-print tunic, and her minimalistic makeup was in tune with the brand's philosophy of looking good naturally.

"I have always said that I will endorse only those brands that I believe in. And The Body Shop is one such brand. I also believe that a brand just doesn't need a face but a voice as well to help in its aim to meet expectations," IANS quoted Mirza as saying.

The actress has recently turned to direction and her production company Born Free Entertainment is all set to roll out its first venture "Love, Breakups, Zindagi."

According to a press release on The Body Shop website, the retailer plans to expand its operations from 65 to 150 stores in two years, with a major push into smaller cities.



Hrithik Shoots for TV Show at London's Madame Tussauds

FROM NEWS DISPATCHES

Bollywood actor Hrithik Roshan filmed an episode of his TV show "Just

Dance" at Madame Tussauds in London. According to news reports, "Just Dance" is the first Indian TV show to be shot at the wax museum.

The show will be aired on Star Plus, the Indian TV channel, the Indo Asian News Service reported. A source from the channel said that since Roshan's wax statue is already part of the museum, authorities granted permission to film the show there.

Roshan filmed with his wax statue, installed at the museum earlier this year, the report said. The filmstar was accompanied by co-judges Farah Khan and Vaibhavi Merchant, and the team was allowed to film for an hour only.

The show invites dancers from all around to participate. Auditions were also held in London.

Zoo Not Right Place for Animals, Says Anoushka Shankar

- NEW DELHI

Sitarist Anoushka Shankar is against the idea of keeping animals in the zoo and is spreading this message in a new PETA ad.

In the new ad for PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals), the 29-year-old Shankar, who gave birth to a son in February, is seen behind iron bars with the words "Exotic Animals Belong in the Wild, Not in Zoos" written next to her.

"I choose to entertain people for a living, but animals in zoos are locked in barren enclosures and put on display against their will," she said in a statement.

"Hundreds of thousands of animals languish in zoos around the world. Because

these animals are denied everything that is natural and important to them, they express their frustration and loneliness through obsessive, repetitive and even self-destructive behavior," she added.

This is not the first time Anoushka has featured in a PETA ad. She appeared in PETA's 30-second public service announcement with her father Pt Ravi Shankar to encourage the government to increase penalty for cruelty to animals.

- IANS

