

#MADHAVI LATHA

The Woman Behind the Steel Arc

They knew this required more than conventional engineering!



High in the rugged, unforgiving terrain of Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district, where the Chenab River slices through deep gorges and the Himalayas loom like silent giants, a marvel of human ambition now stretches its arms, the Chenab Rail

Who is Professor Madhavi Latha

Professor A.S. Madhavi Latha is from Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru. She is a highly respected expert in geotechnical engineering and is a distinguished academic from IISc Bengaluru and a stellar example of Indian scientific and engineering leadership. Her expertise in slope stability, soil-structure interaction, and geotechnical investigation

The Reluctant Trailblazer

Professor Madhavi Latha was never the one to chase headlines. She had already spent decades quietly pushing the boundaries of geotechnical engineering, the science of building stable structures on earth, rock, and uncertain terrain. But when the Indian Railways, under its ambitious Udhampur-

The Fearless Mind

"People kept asking, what if the terrain collapses? What if there's a landslide? What if the winds tear the bridge down? I kept asking, what if we succeed?" Professor Madhavi Latha would later recall in interviews. Her task was immense. The land near Chenab was treacherous, steep slopes, poor rock quality, high seismic activity. But she wasn't just there to advise, she led

The Teacher Who Built a Nation

Even as she worked on the Chenab Bridge, Prof. Madhavi Latha never stopped being a teacher. Her students at IISc remember how she'd take overnight flights from Kashmir to make it to morning lectures. How she'd bring real-world problems into the classroom and inspire young Indians, especially girls, to believe that engineering wasn't just about textbooks, but about shaping a nation's destiny. "I'm happy to have been part of a project to realise a century-old dream," said the rock mechanics specialist and professor of civil engineering at the Indian Institute of Science, and a consultant for the Chenab Bridge project. She studied civil engineering at NIT Warangal and obtained a PhD from IIT Madras before joining the IISc. She was assistant professor there



Bridge, the tallest railway bridge in the world. But behind this audacious achievement lies not just engineering brilliance but a tale of resilience, vision, and courage, that of Professor A.S. Madhavi Latha, a geotechnical expert whose quiet determination and technical genius helped make the impossible possible.

tions made her a crucial advisor in several national infrastructure projects, including the Chenab Bridge. Her involvement in the Chenab Bridge project was particularly significant in terms of site assessment, foundation design, and slope stabilisation, critical components in a bridge built in one of the world's most complex geological settings.

Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project, envisioned a bridge soaring 359 meters above the Chenab River, taller than the Eiffel Tower, they knew this required more than conventional engineering. It needed courage, intellect, and unshakable faith in science. She was invited to join the expert panel.

the geotechnical investigation that would determine the strength, stability, and behavior of the foundation that would anchor the bridge. Rock samples were extracted from hundreds of meters below. Wind and seismic simulations were run in labs and re-run when they didn't convince her. She wouldn't allow guesswork. Not when Indian soldiers and citizens would one day cross that bridge.

when Afcon recruited her in 2005 as a project consultant.

The bridge required some 28,660 tonnes of steel, equivalent to nearly 4 Eiffel Towers, plus 66,000 cubic metres of concrete and 26 km of motorable roads to bring in cranes, other equipment and workers. Designed to last 120 years and handle train speeds up to 100kmph, the bridge can remain operational at 30kmph even if one of its eight piers fails! Multiple times during the construction, the engineering teams had to adopt design strategies, solutions and sequences of construction that, she said, which were not available in any textbooks or construction codes. At the end of it all, she is just happy to see the project successfully completed. Just as a matter of fact. Nothing more!

The Chair Of Inspirations

Kapoor's commitment to meaningful storytelling was evident in his meticulous approach to filmmaking. Rawail describes him as a conductor of a symphony, orchestrating every detail, from music to editing, with an unmatched passion. His films, known for timeless songs like 'Bol Radha Bol' from Sangam and 'Sun Sahiba Sun' from Ram Teri Ganga Maaili, continue to captivate audiences worldwide. Yet, it was his ability to weave social commentary into entertainment that made him a true showman.

Geetha Sunil Pillai

On June 2, as we commemorated the death anniversary of the legendary Raj Kapoor, the showman of Indian cinema, we delve into a lesser-known facet of his life, a profound connection with Dr. B.R.

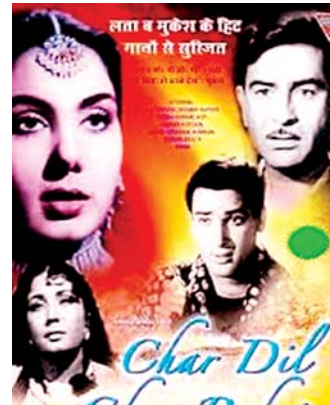
Ambedkar, the architect of the Indian Constitution. Known for his cinematic masterpieces that captured the pulse of a young India, Kapoor's films like Awara, Shree 420, Jagte Raho, Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai, Mera Naam Joker, Satyam Shivam Sundaram, Prem Rog, Ram Teri Ganga Maaili tackled bold themes such as casteism, hardships faced by the underprivileged, unem-



An iconic moment with Raj Kapoor and Vijayanthimala alongside India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru.



1. Awara (1951)



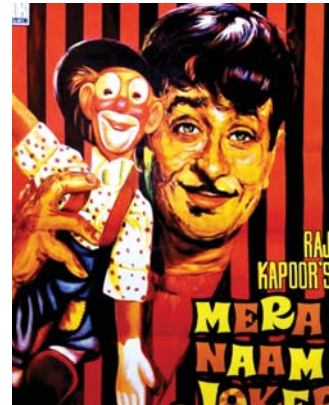
2. Char Dil Char Raahein (1959)



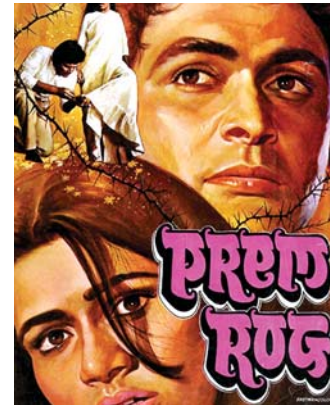
3. Shree 420 (1955)



4. Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai (1960)



5. Mera Naam Joker (1970)



6. Prem Rog (1982)



7. Ram Teri Ganga Maaili (1985)

Directed by Khwaja Ahmad Abbas and starring Raj Kapoor alongside Meena Kumari, Char Dil Char Raahein is a bold anthology film that intertwines four stories at a crossroads, addressing the issue of untouchability and caste discrimination. Meena Kumari's portrayal of an untouchable woman challenges societal norms, advocating for a new 'religion of equality' that transcends caste, a theme echoing Dr. Ambedkar's embrace of Buddhism to combat social hierarchies. Though less commercially successful, the film's raw portrayal of poverty and redemption made it a cultural phenomenon in India and abroad, including the Soviet Union.

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In Shree 420, Raj Kapoor plays Ranbir Raj, a naive graduate who arrives in Bombay with dreams of success but encounters the harsh realities of urban corruption and materialism. The film exposes the moral decay of a newly independent India, where greed and dishonesty tempt even the purest hearts. Through Raj's journey, Kapoor critiques the exploitation of the poor by the elite and the loss of ethical values in the pursuit of wealth. The song 'Mera Joota Hai Japani' became a symbol of Indian pride, while the film's exploration of honesty versus survival cemented its status as a cult classic.

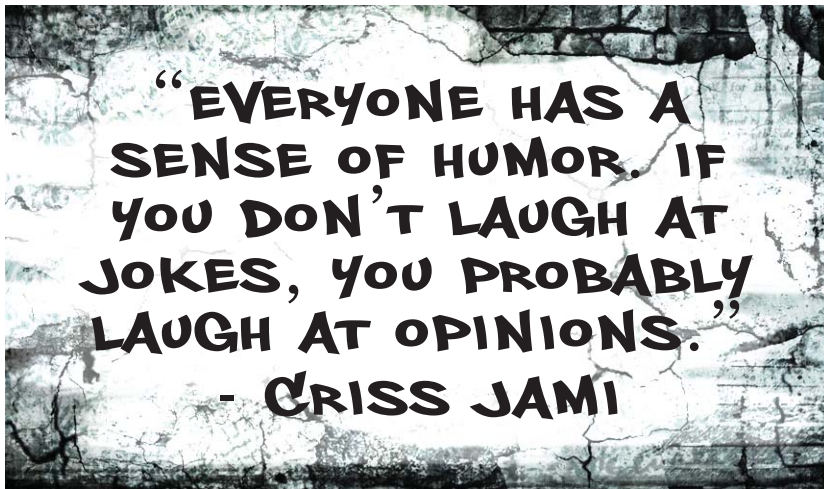
Directed and produced by Raj Kapoor, who stars as Raju, a simple villager, Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai tackles the issue of dacoity and societal reintegration. Raju's encounter with a gang of dacoits and his efforts to reform them highlight the socio-economic factors driving crime, such as poverty and lack of opportunity. The film's message of compassion and redemption, paired with its soulful music like 'Mera Naam Raju', reflects Kapoor's belief in constructive change, inspired by Ambedkar's vision of a just society. Its blend of social critique and optimism earned it critical acclaim and cult status.

Raj Kapoor's ambitious magnum opus, Mera Naam Joker, is a semi-autobiographical epic that explores the life of a circus clown, Raju, who hides his personal sorrows behind a smiling facade. The film delves into themes of unrequited love, societal expectations, and the struggles of an artist in a materialistic world. Though initially a commercial failure due to its lengthy runtime, its heartfelt storytelling and iconic songs like 'Jeena Yahan Marna Yahan' have since made it a beloved cult classic. The film's reflection on personal and societal alienation resonates deeply with audiences.

Directed and produced by Raj Kapoor, Prem Rog is a powerful critique of the regressive traditions surrounding widow remarriage in Indian society. Starring Rishi Kapoor and Padmini Kolhapure, the film tells the story of Devdhar, a progressive young man, and Manorama, a young widow bound by oppressive customs. Kapoor boldly exposes the hypocrisy of societal norms that deny widows the right to love and remarriage, advocating for individual freedom and dignity. With memorable songs like 'Yeh Pyar Tha Ya Kuch Aur Tha,' Prem Rog struck a chord with audiences, becoming a cult classic for its emotional depth and social relevance.

Raj Kapoor's final directorial venture, Ram Teri Ganga Maaili, is a poignant commentary on the exploitation of women and the erosion of moral values in modern India. Starring Mandakini and Rajiv Kapoor, the film follows Ganga, a pure-hearted woman from the mountains, whose journey to the city exposes her to betrayal and societal corruption. The film critiques the commodification of women and the loss of cultural purity, symbolized by the polluted Ganges River. Its iconic song 'Sun Sahiba Sun' and bold narrative made it a commercial and critical success, cementing its place as a cult classic.

THE WALL



BABY BLUES



ZITS



Let us celebrate National Herbs and Spices Day!

day to bring tons of flavour to everyone's plates, National Herbs and Spices Day brings out the best taste in a vast array of dishes. From the daily salt and pepper to the more exotic saffron or black cardamom, herbs and spices offer the essence of seasoning to everyone's table. And National Herbs and Spices Day is the perfect time to celebrate! Observing this day involves a tempting array of foods, whether cooking them, eating them, or both. The day took its own of evolution and today, just opening a person's kitchen cabinet can introduce a collection of fragrant and flavourful spices and herbs that likely originated from all over the world!



#VIRAT KOHLI

When the why walks away

A certain class of Test cricket, the kind that moved philosophers and CEOs alike, has drawn its curtain.



Published in some well known spaces and now quite viral all over the subcontinent, this is what the Pakistanis think of Virat Kohli. I've taken the liberty of publishing on

this sheet, a forwarded whatsapp, it was a rarity, not a false, I'm a party, life is a party and rich, but something truly rich; this universal emotion, of the few left to share between us. Read on...

Kohli didn't leave because he stopped loving the game. He left because the game stopped understanding the kind of love he gave it. Junaid Aziz, Published June 2, 2025.

There was a time: before hashtags and hostilities, when cricket on this subcontinent belonged to purer minds. I was lucky to grow up in that Karachi. A city where cricket was not a proxy for politics but a portal into grace, grit, and genius. Our coaches didn't teach us whom to cheer based on flags; they taught us to revere Sunil Gavaskar if we wanted to learn the art of attrition, and Gordon Greenidge if we sought the fury of a square cut in full bloom. We were taught that genius bowed to no border. Which is why, today, I feel no conflict in mourning Virat Kohli's exit. In times like

these, when vitriol comes easier than virtue, this piece is not written in protest or praise. It is written in remembrance. For the game we once loved. And the way we were once taught to love it. There are English summers, and then there are English summers that contain Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli. The former are pleasant; the latter, unforgettable. This year, the roses will still bloom, and the Barry Army will still sing. But the air will be thinner, the echoes fainter, because this is a summer robbed of its lords. First, Rohit Sharma stepped away, quietly, gracefully. And now, so has Virat Kohli. What remains is not merely the absence of players; it is the departure of meaning. A certain class of Test cricket, the kind that moved philosophers and CEOs alike, has drawn its curtain.

The absence feels architectural. As if two marble columns were quietly removed from a historic pavilion, with the entire structure now precariously leaning towards collapse. One could still enter, but who would stand in awe? And yes, we will watch. Ben Stokes deserves that. The man has turned trauma into leadership and chaos into a story He will give every ounce of himself to this series, and

it is only right that we show up.

But let us not pretend. Not all cricketers are made equal. Some you watch casually; others, you rearrange your life for. Across boardrooms in Zurich, Karachi, Sydney, and Palo Alto, people rescheduled earnings calls, postponed honeymoons, and stepped out of climate summits simply to witness Kohli in whites, confronting once more the fraught architecture of the fifth-stump line. A craftsman in prolonged dialogue with imperfection, he embodied what many might recognise as the Romantic Peril of Test Cricket, the very paradox that makes the long form so intellectually and emotionally compelling.

But now? With the great ones gone and the new ones still waiting to become legends, it's harder to justify the same trade-offs. With Virat absent, the return on investment for five days of Test cricket has fundamentally shifted. India's Virat Kohli gestures towards his wife Anushka Sharma in the stands as he celebrates reaching his century (100 runs) during day three of the first Test cricket match between Australia and India at Optus Stadium in Perth.

This is not a critique of the younger players. They are brilliant, earnest, and committed. But some of us still believe that respect is not a courtesy; it is a currency. You don't give up five days of a sanctuary vacation or abandon a boardroom just to watch a rough diamond endure its necessary grind at the crease. You do it for the rare performer whose genius warrants the interruption of your own.

Which brings us, inevitably, to the question: why now? Why would Kohli walk away at the peak of his fitness, form, and fervour? There isn't one reason. It never works that way.

The Farewell

Great careers end the way great loves do, not with one betrayal or a single heartbreak, but with the erosion of belief.

By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman