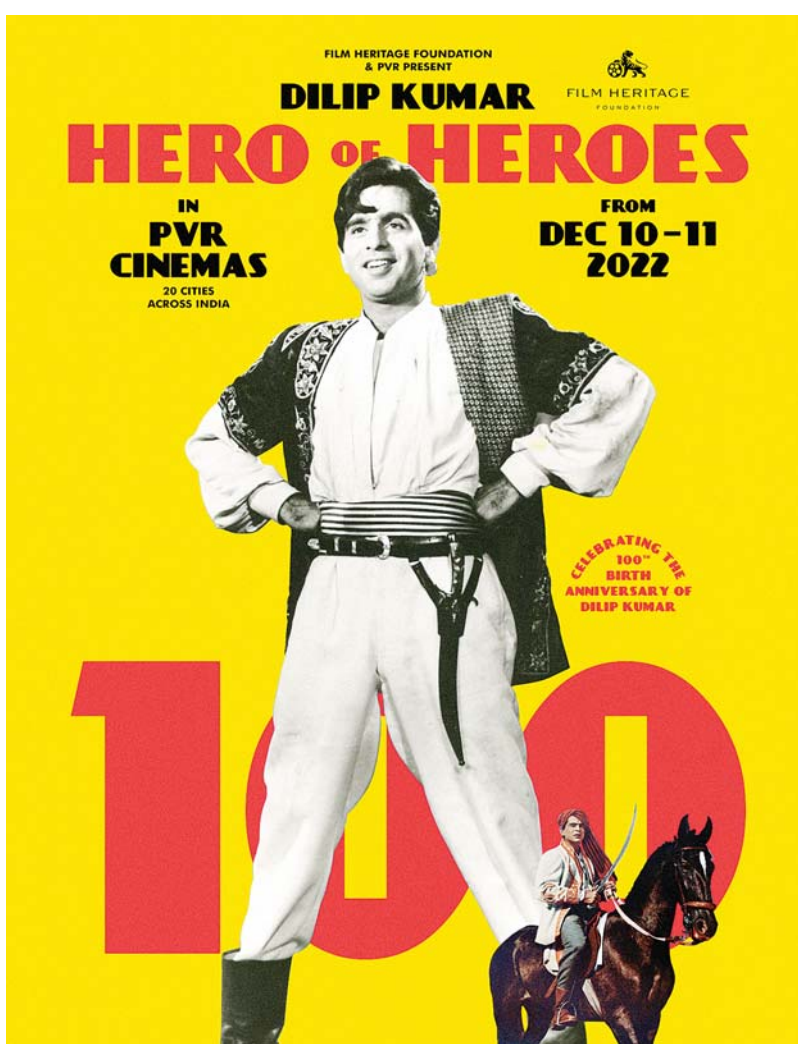


Tragedy on celluloid became Dilip Kumar's identity card and a time came when his producers felt that if he did not die at the end of the film, his fans felt betrayed! Around this time, this astute, extremely well-read, erudite and intelligent actor took stock of his bearings. He realised that being typecast as tragedy king could become self-defeating enough to stop his growth as an actor. One story goes that he took pains to consult a psychoanalyst who suggested he change his screen image to reflect a more swash-buckling, romantic side in order to discover avenues of histrionics he had not explored till then.



Dilip Kumar film heritage foundation poster.

## What A Man for All Seasons!

### Dilip Kumar (1922-2022)



Dr. Shoma A. Chatterji  
Film scholar  
journalist & author

It would not be wrong to state that Dilip Kumar will be regarded as the greatest actor Indian cinema has ever produced. One may add that at the jet-paced speed today with which actors come and go, it is doubtful whether any Indian actor will be able to reach the peak that he did.

He had stopped acting in films since his last film Qila (1998) flopped. This is 23 years ago. But he has never been out of the media, not of his own will but because his fans still worship him for his multi-layered, versatile performances enriched by his very personal touches of silence, pause between dialogues, small movements with his hands, his body and most importantly, his eyes that remain without parallel in the history of Indian cinema.

There are dozens of young actors who took him as a role model and tried to do everything he did including copying his hairstyle. A few of them did make a name for themselves but they could not be compared to Dilip Kumar precisely because they tried to "copy" him instead of evolving their own, distinctive style. But many of them fell by the wayside, forlorn and forgotten.

Dilip Kumar was born in Qissa Khwani Bazaar, Peshawar, when Pakistan was a part of British India, on 11th December 1922 as one among 12 children to his father, a fruit merchant. The family later came down to Deolali and then Bombay and his father continued with his fruit business there. Dilip Kumar studied at Barnes School, Deolali in Nashik. He later studied for his graduation in a Bombay college and had no dreams of stepping into films. He quarrelled with his father and shifted to Pune to look after the military canteen there and also run a small fruit shop in front

of the camp.

#### The Golden Era

One day, he happened to meet Devika Rani, wife of Himanshu Rai who co-owned and managed Bombay Talkies. Devika Rani asked him how much he earned per month and Yusuf Khan said he earned roughly around Rs.150/ per month. Devika Rani told him that she would pay him Rs.450/ per month if he agreed to work in her film. The money was the main attraction and he at once said "Yes." The story of Dilip Kumar began to get written.

Like his contemporary Raj Kapoor, Dilip Kumar's screen image offered a complex, cultural/psychological terrain displaying the anxieties of independence and the nostalgia of pre-Partition childhood. Unlike Raj Kapoor however, Dilip Kumar's naturalistic underplaying often presented him as an innocent loner caught in and destroyed by conflicting social pressures such as in *Andaz*, in which he played one

loved to fall in love with through song and dance even if he featured as a pickpocket or a card-sharper. Raj Kapoor, on the other hand, became famous as the "Charlie Chaplin of Indian cinema," since he often portrayed a tramp-like figure, who, despite adversity, was still cheerful and honest. But Dilip Kumar stood out without any stereotypical label attached though many have labelled him "Tragedy King" which is not true because he never played a tragic role in any of his films. The money was the main attraction and he at once said "Yes." The story of Dilip Kumar began to get written.

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the hero dies. This became the film where the young actor revealed himself as a serious worker with total commitment to his work. In this final scene, Dilip Kumar's martyred corpse was taken out in procession against the lines of the famous song, watan ke raah mein watan ke najawan shaheed ho.

This film crowned Dilip Kumar as the "tragedy king," as he went on living up to the sobriquet in one film after another - *Andaz*, *Footpath*, *Shikast*, *Mela*, *Babul*, *Deedar* and *Uran Khatola*. "Tragedy on celluloid became his identity card and a time came when his producers felt that if he did not die at the end of the film, his fans felt betrayed!" Around this time, this astute, extremely well-read, erudite

and intelligent actor took stock of his bearings. He realised that being typecast as tragedy king could become self-defeating enough to stop his growth as an actor. One story goes that he took pains to consult a psychoanalyst who suggested he change his screen image to reflect a more swash-buckling, romantic side in order to discover avenues of histrionics he had not explored till then.

His romantic screen presence was overwhelmingly magnetic and made every female in the audience identify with his lady-love on screen. He had a naughty smile when he would crinkle up his eyes and smile mischievously at his lady love. This marks his ability to command romance in characters such as the ones he portrayed in *Naya Daur*, *Leader*, *Ram Aur Shyam*, *Azaad*, *Kohinoor*, *Aan*, *Gunga-Jumna*, *Insaniyat* and many more.

Looking back on his performance in these films, one feels that the crown of "Tragedy King" he has been made to wear is too limiting for an actor of his range and durability not only in terms of his histrionic talent but also in his popularity.



Dilip Kumar in Mughal-e-Azam

kaan ka bala. The song-dance number was picturised on Vyjayantimala. In the two scenes with Dilip Kumar as his naughty self on the morning following the suhaag raat are very sensual. *Gunga-Jumna* is the only film he produced in his entire career because the film was stalled from release for almost six months because the CBF found certain things unacceptable which of course, would be considered Kinder Garten stuff by today's standards.

He took up one film at a time and that was his absolute commitment and focus. He also raised his fee to Rs. 1 lakh, the highest amount paid to any actor in India at the time which, adjusted to today's inflation, would approximately amount to Rs. 1 crore. This also kept producers he did not want away from queuing outside his door.

When his films as hero did not do well, he took a sabbatical of five years and when he came back in senior roles beginning with *Kranti* directed by Manoj Kumar, he gave



Dilip Kumar and Suchitra Sen in Devdas.

one hit after another in films like *Karma*, *Vidhata*, *Shakti* and so on. When he was nominated as member of the Rajya Sabha, he utilized a significant portion of his MP LAD fund towards the construction and improvement of the Bandstand Promenade and the gardens at Bandra Fort at Lands End in Bandra.

#### Accolades

He is the only actor to have won the Best Actor Award from Filmfare eight times, followed by the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, the nominated membership of the Rajya Sabha, the Padma Vibhushan and the Filmfare Lifetime Achievement Award (1993), and last but not the least, the Government of Pakistan's award conferred on the title Nishan-e-Imtiaz, the highest civilian award in Pakistan, in 1998. The ruling political party in Maharashtra had objected to this award and questioned Kumar's patriotism. However, in 1999 in consultation with the Prime Minister of India, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Kumar retained the award. He was honoured with CNN-IBN Lifetime Achievement Award in 2009.

Few people are aware of the erudition he had acquired some of which spilled over into his acting. According to his wife Saira Bano, he loved to read Eugene O'Neill, Joseph Conrad, Fyodor Dostoyevsky and Tennessee Williams, when he was not engrossed in the writing of a script or a scene that waited to be picturised the next day morning. He was fluent in Urdu, Hindi, English and Gujarati. His knowledge of the Holy Quran and his recitation of the verses retained in memory from childhood were no less brilliant than his knowledge and recitation of the Sanskrit verses in the *Bhagvad Gita*. "He was the most secular human being I have ever met," says Saira Bano. And that sign-off the story of Dilip Kumar. (1111) writetoarbit@rashtradioot.com

Dr. Shoma A. Chatterji is a film scholar, journalist and author. She has authored 30 books. She won the National Award for Best Writing in Cinema as Best Film Critic (1990) and for the Best Book on Cinema (2002). She won the Lifetime Achievement SAMMAN from the Rotary Club, Calcutta-Metro City in July 2012. She contributes to around 12 online and print outlets. She has won around five Lifetime Achievement Awards over the years and has been on a jury of film festivals in India and abroad. She has also won a senior research fellowship from the ICSSR for research in cinema.

#### International Shareware Day

The electric windows in your, the blender you use so religiously to make all of your healthy shakes and that smartphone taxi app that prevents you from getting ripped off every time you come back from a party-these are all based on more or less complicated computer programs that people do their best to avoid paying for. All in all, we can agree that International Shareware Day, a day dedicated to the programmers typing their lives away to make yours easier, is a day that needed to happen.

### #LOVE FOOTBALL

## Dilip Kumar Dribbled Like a Champion



Prakash Bhandari  
The writer is a senior journalist

Dilip Kumar, would often come to spend his winters as the guest of Duru Miya, the scion of the Loharu royals and a former minister. He used to put up in the palatial property of the Loharu schion, in the heart of Civil Lines in Jaipur and would enjoy hot kababs sitting in the spacious lawns of Loharu House with his wife Saira Bano, and Durru Mian's wife Fauzia and daughters. They had a very old relationship with Dilip Kumar's family. Thanks to the generosity of Duru Miya, three of us-Abdul Gani, Mohammed Yaseen and Dilip Kumar spent a memorable evening talking about cricket and football. My friend of half a century now, Abdul Gani asked Dilip Kumar whether he ever played football.

Dilip Kumar was both amused and surprised by Gani's question and asked him why he was asking it.

Gani, a sharp journalist said that he saw him in his film *Leader* where he was in the lead role along with Vyjayantimala. Gani said there was a scene in which he is shown playing football and after seeing this scene in which he is shown dribbling the ball, he was sure that he must have played football some time in his life. Dilip Kumar in all admiration complimented Gani for his perfect observation and told us that football was his first love and he played a lot of football in his childhood and in his days in Bombay's Khalsa College.

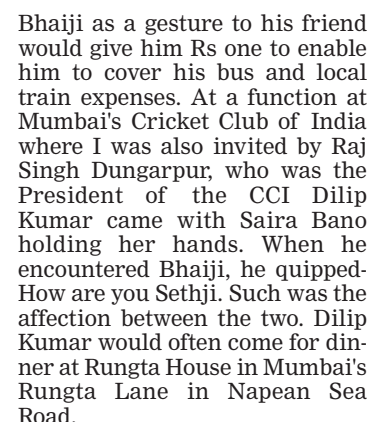
#### Football Lover

Dilip Kumar was a great football lover and by his own admission, in an interview with Cinema In India, Dilip Kumar had said in 1992, "Soccer has been my first love, my passion. It inspires a spirit of healthy combat, to lead, to work your way through the odds, playing football till I was 57. It helped me tremendously as an actor... gave me a strong, flexible body..."

While studying in Wilson College in Bombay, he used to play football, but an Anglo-Indian lobby at Wilson College in Bombay kept him out of the college team. Frustrated with the lack of chances, he moved to the Khalsa College and excelled at the sport.

Late PM 'Bhaiji' Rungta, who was Cricket Board's President was basically a football lover too, and he used to play football during his years in Bagar village in Jhunjhunu district. After moving to Bombay as it was then called, he would go to the Cooperage in the evening to see football matches. Dilip Kumar's love for football also brought him to Cooperage, the football ground in Bombay. Bhaiji PM Rungta along with friends and Dilip Kumar would enjoy the game of football. Those were the days when Dilip Kumar was struggling, yet he would turn up to see football matches like Bhaiji and

"Whenever we would go to play in Rovers Cup for East Bengal, music director S D Burman would come to cheer us and would also give us tips. He would call the East Bengal team to his home for dinner. Burman Da's love for east Bengal was natural as he hailed from east Bengal which is today's Bangladesh. In the Rovers Cup, Dilip Kumar would also come to see matches. He would come much before the match in his whites and would never miss a moment" said Balram.



Thulasi das Balram.

Bhaiji as a gesture to his friend would give him Rs one to enable him to cover his bus and local train expenses. At a function at Mumbai's Cricket Club of India where I was also invited by Raj Singh Durgapur, who was the President of the CCI Dilip Kumar came with Saira Bano holding her hands. When he encountered Bhaiji, he quipped-How are you Sethji. Such was the affection between the two. Dilip Kumar would often come for dinner at Rungta House in Mumbai's Rungta Lane in Napaeen Sea Road.

#### Charity Matches

Dilip Kumar was a regular to Bandra Gymkhana in Bombay where he would reach early morning to play a game or two of badminton. He would often play with national champion Nandita Natekar, who also was his coach. They would talk in Marathi. Dilip Kumar had also admitted to having ambitions of being a cricketer and he wanted to score several centuries playing for the Indian team, too. His passion for cricket helped his philanthropic Endeavour's though. Throughout his career, Dilip Kumar captained many Bollywood cricket teams in charity matches. His appearances in such matches in Kolkata, playing against actor Uttam Kumar's team and others in Hyderabad and Bangalore continue to be talked about to date.

Dilip Kumar was a great admirer of Times of India's cricket writer K N Prabhu and he often used to say that Prabhu wrote about Sunil Gavaskar in the 1971 West Indies tour when India won the series. Dilip Kumar was happy to learn about Prabhu's Jaipur connection as Prabhu's father was the Post Master General in the Jaipur state and his sister Hemlata Prabhu taught English in Rajasthan University



Bhaiji PM Rungta with Dilip Kumar at a cricket party in Mumbai.



Dilip Kumar playing football with Gulshan Grover in the film Mashaal.

Cup, had had a few run-ins with Dilip Kumar.

#### Off The Pitch

"Dilip Kumar was extremely passionate about football. On the field, when he'd come to a game as a chief guest, you don't get to talk much. But I had met him a few times off the field as well, and he used to love to discuss the game with us," Bhattacharya said. "I remember he used to be a frequent visitor in the Rovers Cup games. He had also come to the Santosh Trophy Final in Kashmir (1978-79)."

Off the pitch, Bhattacharya had met Dilip Kumar a few times on different studio sets, and the former defender recalled how the film star exhibited his hospitality. "I went to meet him a few times when I was in Bombay, at the Himalaya and the Nataraj Studios. The first time I went there, he came over to meet and belovled in an affectionate manner 'Aise khada kyun hain? Why are you standing there? He took me to the director and introduced me, 'Bada player hai, India ke Iyve khahta hai. Issse baitho do. (He's a big player, plays for India. Let's find him a place to sit)."

"He truly was one of those people who are pure at heart. There was no malice in the man. And he was a very good actor too. This is a huge loss for India," stated Bhattacharya.

#### Surprise Elements

Late Subhash Bhowmick, who was a member of the Indian bronze medal-winning squad in the 1970 Asian Games, has himself been an avid fan of Dilip Kumar films - Mughal-e-Azam (1960), Ganga Jamuna (1961) were two of many Dilip Kumar films that had captivated Bhowmick.

"It was an honour to see such a great superstar come to watch our matches. Not only the club matches but he was also an avid follower of the National Team," he recalled. Dilip Kumar had a soft corner for Hyderabad footballers whose skills and style he admired greatly. Whenever he came across a player from Hyderabad, he would offer a few words of friendly advice. Recalling his meetings with Dilip Kumar, former Indian team Captain and Coach Shabbir Ali in an interview with *siyasat.com* said that the famed film star was always ready to interact with sportsmen and meet them despite his busy schedule as the topmost film personality of those days. He also donated trophies and offered cash prizes on several occasions.

"Since Dilip Kumar Saab lived in Mumbai where the Rovers Cup was the biggest football fixture of those days, the organisers would keep two seats permanently vacant for Dilip Kumar and S D Burman at the famous Cooperage Stadium. These two celebrities would often turn up to see big teams in action and they would come without any prior notice, thereby catching everyone by surprise. As soon as they entered the stadium, the attention of the spectators would be drawn towards them and for a few minutes, the action on the ground would be forgotten," recalled Shabbir Ali.

#### Sought-After Chief Guest

"Dilip Kumar would often be present to watch us play. Despite his busy schedule, he managed to arrange his commitments to make sure that he attended the final stages of the Rovers Cup tournaments. He was a much sought-after Chief Guest at many functions but never failed to turn up for sports events. His heart lay in sports," said Shabbir Ali.

"The first time I met him was when he was invited to a match as the Chief Guest. I was his biggest fan. I loved watching his superb acting. All my teammates rushed to have their photos taken with him. But since I do not like to push myself forward, I held back. I have great respect for Dilip Kumar Saab but I didn't want to run to him for a photo," said the former Indian striker who has also interacted with many sports celebrities such as Muhammad Ali, Diego Maradona, and film stars Raj Kapoor and Mithun Chakrabarty.

Victor Amalraj, another well-known footballer, also remembers his meetings with the superstar of Bollywood.

"In the course of my career as captain of all the three big clubs of Kolkata, I had the opportunity to meet many famous people such as S D Burman, his father Sachin Deo Barman, Jalal Agha, Mithun Chakrabarty and also Dawood Ibrahim (who used to always wear a cap and dark glasses). But it is my interaction with Dilip Saab that I remember the most. He used to always be dressed in spotless white suits and once when he saw me scoring a goal, he told me after the match 'Sabaash. Bahut achcha goal kiya.' I was thrilled to hear these words from my idol. We sportsmen miss his presence and his encouragement," said Amalraj.

Dilip Kumar was a big football fan. When Goa defeated Punjab 1-0 to win the Santosh Trophy outright for the first time in 1984, the Bollywood star was cheering from the VIP gallery in Madras in Mumbai where the Rovers Cup

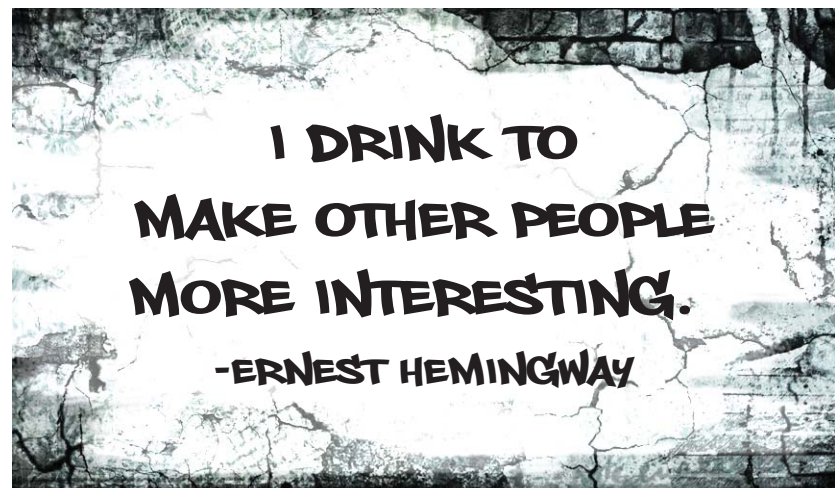
#### Blue Planet

Here are some incredible, geographical facts about this planet we call Earth.

1. Continents shift at about the same rate as your fingernails grow.
2. Ninety percent of Earth's population lives in the Northern Hemisphere.
3. Australia is wider than the moon.
4. The Dead Sea is currently 429 meters below sea level and sinking about 1 meter a year.
5. Mount Everest, the world's tallest mountain, can fit inside the Mariana Trench, the deepest part of the ocean.
6. Russia spans 11 time zones.
7. Africa is the only continent that covers four hemispheres.



#### THE WALL



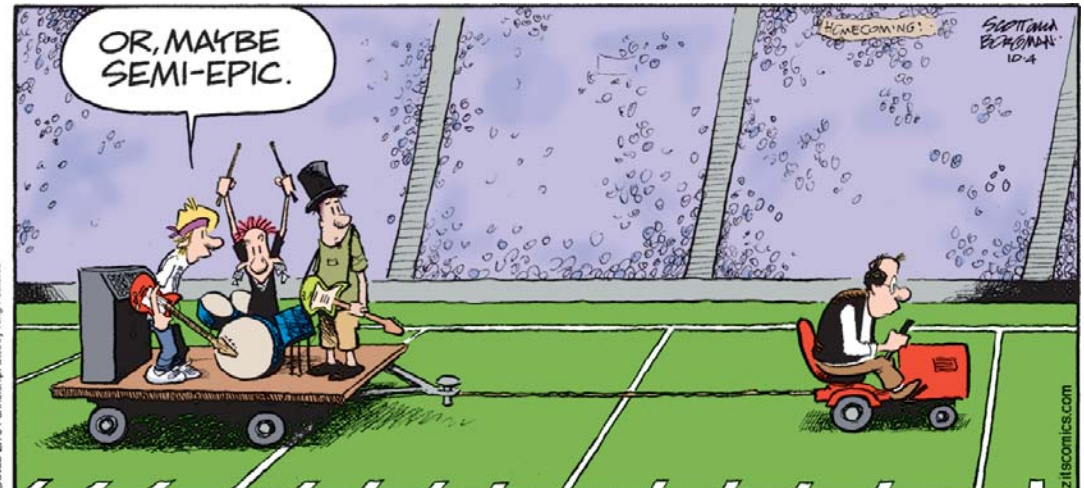
#### BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



#### ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman