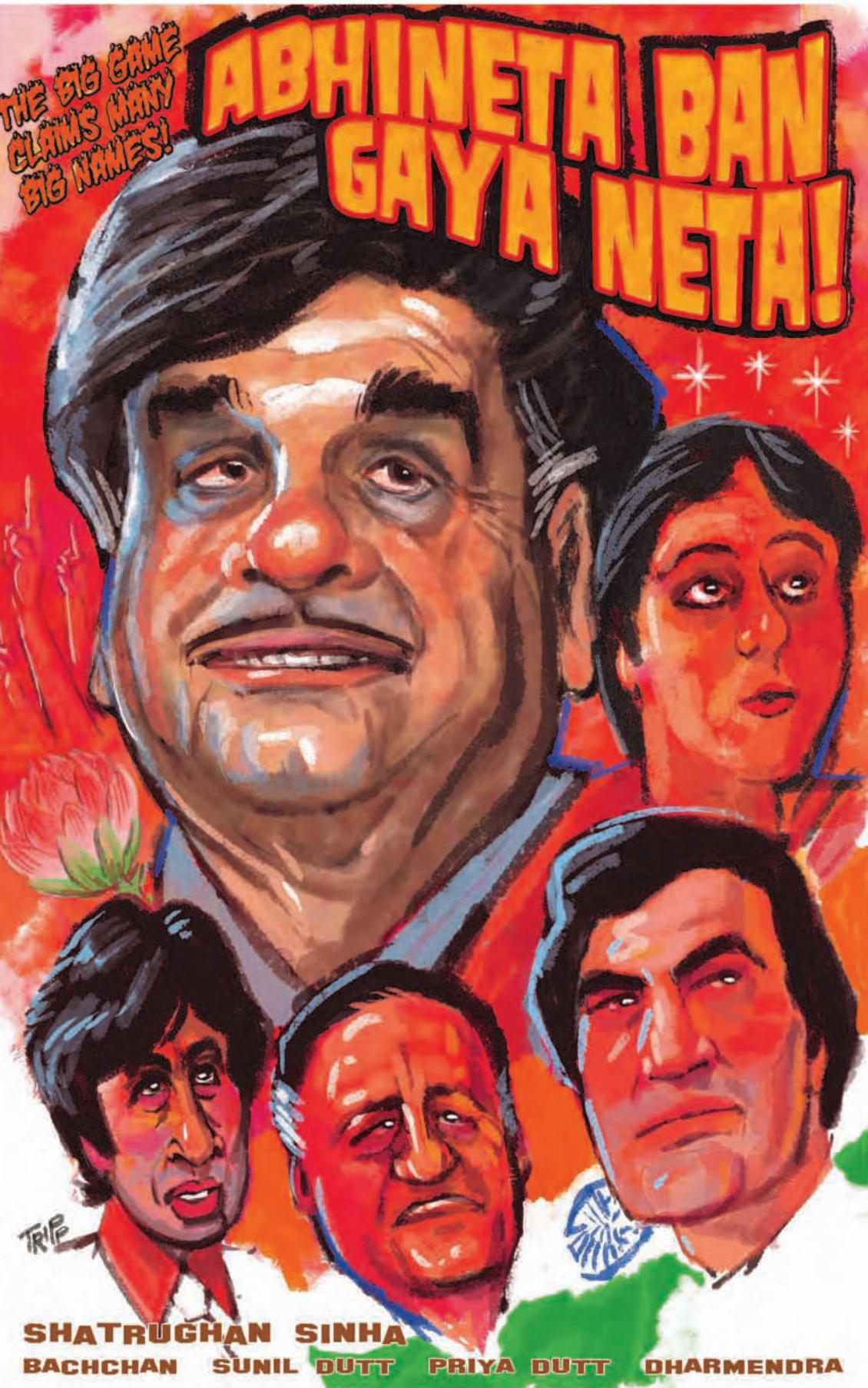


Starry Politics

By: Roshni Mulchandani



In India, Bollywood, Cricket and Politics pretty much sell and make headlines across the country. And sometimes, they marry to create some of the most interesting and controversial of personalities.

We've had cricketers turned actors— **Ajay Jadeja** was one such disastrous example and then of course, every single actor in Bollywood believes they are worthy of being on the Indian Cricket Team. The most fascinating of personalities are those that have dabbled in Bollywood and then moved on to Indian Politics.

Sometimes they realize that politics demands more time and work from them, and decide to wander back into the big bad world of Bollywood. Other times, they stick it out and actually make a difference in the society. Using their popularity to their advantage, these very movie-stars go on to become important political dignitaries. CityMasala gives you the ultimate lowdown on which stars have taken to politics and actually made it ... and the ones that did not.

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The Dutt family

The entire Dutt family has been heavily involved in politics starting with the head of the clan, the late Sunil Dutt. The veteran actor joined the Congress Party in the early eighties only to get fully involved in the nineties. He was quickly appointed the Sheriff in Mumbai and later on represented the North-West Constituency in for the city. Interestingly, every time he stood to contest, he won by a large margin which demonstrated his popularity and an immense following. It was this recognition that later won him a position as the Union Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs.

He finally stepped down from his position as a sign of protest during the inadequate management during the Babri Masjid incident. Dutt still stayed true to his calling and continued his social work to help slum dwellers, earthquake victims, and the underprivileged.

Son and actor Sanjay Dutt too has recently shown an interest in politics but his previous dreaded tussle with the law saw a withdrawal of his ticket.

Sunil Dutt's daughter, Priya Dutt however, has been a part of politics for over four years now and has successfully helped keep her father's grand reputation intact.

The Bachchans

No one ever thought Amitabh Bachchan, the actor with the midas touch, could fail at anything and that too politics! Thus, it came as a surprise when his political stint was not only short-lived but filled with controversy. It initially began with a bang. He won the majority vote by a whopping 62% which led political pundits to believe, he was here to stay. However, it was not how it looked.

Politics proved to be too-hot-to-handle for the superstar who eventually found himself heaved into the 1980's Bofur Scandal which ruined his reputation and caused him to be torn apart by the media. It was then that Bachchan walked out of the political arena and back into the world of film after a sabbatical.

His wife, the notably talented Jaya Bachchan, on the other hand, has had a more successful run in politics. As a Member of Parliament which she believes she "needed to do," she has managed to work closely with the government to voice her opinion and make a difference.

Dharmendra

Seventies heartthrob Dharmendra entered politics only to quickly realize he was a complete misfit. As a Member of Parliament, he was rarely seen in any

of the cabinet session which he was constantly criticized for. However, he still continues to represent his constituency of Bikaner with great love and respect.

His better-half Hema Malini just like Jaya Bachchan has proved to be a better politician than him. Actively involved, she was often seen at various rallies and political events only to retire this year after her six-year term came to a close.

Vinod Khanna

Vinod Khanna is another such actor who indulged fully in politics during the late nineties. Khanna was appointed as the Union Minister for Culture and Tourism in Gurdaspur, Punjab and later moved onto become Ministry of External Affairs. More recently, he lost his seat to ex-cricketer Navjot Singh Sidhu.

Shatrughan Sinha

Lastly, if anyone had to be regarded as the most successful actor-politician, it would have to be Shatrughan Sinha. The veteran actor left his acting career when he was at his utmost high only to realize that his real calling was in politics and not films. To his credit, he is the only member from Hindi films who has managed to become a Cabinet Member in the Government of India. Additionally, Sinha has held positions in the Department of Shipping, Department of Health and is the appointed head of the Culture and Arts Department. Sinha is known for his immaculate leadership skills and is also a fabulous speaker, which ultimately has won him a huge following amongst the masses.

And others...

A whole host of actors have tried their hand at the art of politics; Govinda, Shekhar Suman, and even Nagma have attempted to take a stab, but have unfortunately found themselves left in a pool of mess instead. Clearly only the most determined and talented of actors have been able to handle the intricacies of film and politics without allowing one to intervene with the other.

During the last set of elections, the likes of Salman Khan, Om Puri, Urmila Matondkar and even Shakti Kapoor were seen out and about on the campaign trails supporting a multitude of politicians. While they haven't openly declared their interest in politics, don't be surprised if you see them taking on such the additional title in the near future... Salman Khan: actor, game show host and Member of Parliament? You'll just have to wait and watch!