Goa Times

TUESDAY, MAY 9, 2017 | ADVERTORIAL, ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY PROMOTIONAL FEATURE

I feel like I'm being put to trial even after my acquittal: Ankit Tiwari

Prathamesh Sarmalkar

'FROM MY SIDE, IT WAS PURE FRIENDSHIP. THERE WAS NO *SHAADI KI BAAT*. THERE WAS NO PHYSICAL INTIMACY BETWEEN US. THIS FEELS LIKE A FILM'S SCRIPT... HER VERSION HAS CHANGED AT LEAST FOUR TIMES

Ankit Tiwari

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Barely a few days after the Mumbai Sessions Court acquitted singer Ankit Tiwari in a 2014 rape case citing lack of evidence, the complainant said that she was planning to move the High Court to reopen the case. Talking to us last week (edition dated May 1), she said that her decision was prompted by the post-acquittal statements made by Ankit and his brother, Ankur. According to the complainant, the brothers had signed a document promising that they would not speak about the case or her in the media.

However, Ankit has now lashed out, saying that he had never signed any document. He also denied being in a relationship with the woman and promising her marriage. Ankit and Ankur spoke to HT about the trauma of the three-year-long trial and more...

'IT WAS PURE FRIENDSHIP'

Ankit says, "I never spoke about the case during the trial. I opened up only after I was acquitted by the honourable court. And even then, all I said was that I had complete faith in the judiciary. Having said that, we haven't given her any written acknowledgement. I first met her during the Durga Puja in 2013. We were introduced by a common acquaintance and we exchanged numbers. Then we started meeting as friends and going out for coffee. From my side, it was pure friendship. There was no *shaadi ki baat*. In fact, she had lied to me about her marital status, but since I had no romantic interest in her, it didn't matter. There was no physical intimacy between us. This feels like a film's script. *Ek script nayi nayi hai your kaajan rishi hai*. Her version has changed at least four times."

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GOA CASHES IN ON INTERNATIONAL ACTS, BUT WHY ARE YOUNGSTERS MISSING FROM THE SCENE?

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Goa has been a hub to Electronic Dance Music festivals since the last decade or so, which has not only led to the state being portrayed as a favourable music festival destination in the country, but has generated numerous fans of the genre, which mostly include the youth.

However, more than a few retro, rock and 90's live acts like MLTR, Tribute to ABBA, Bellamy Brothers, UB40, Voyageboys, etc. have been finding their way into Goa since the last couple of years, but organisers say that they are struggling to woo the younger audiences. Goa Times finds out more.

Pradeep Dhar

LIVE MUSIC CONCERTS BACK IN VOGUE, BUT YOUNGSTERS MISSING FROM THE SCENE: ORGANISERS

Though the response to these events isn't as great as the EDM fests, Goa is slowly responding to these concerts. Two major gigs in the last couple of weeks – UB40 on April 30 in Caveloim as part of their Asia tour and Waterloo, the ABBA tribute band last Saturday in Bambolim – are testimony to this.

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> WE TRY TO GET ALL MAJOR ACTS INTO GOA. BUT HONESTLY, GOA ISN'T READY FOR IT. WHEN I SAY THIS, I DO NOT MEAN INFRASTRUCTURE WISE. THE FREEBIE CULTURE HAS SET INTO GOA AND LIVE EVENTS AREN'T CHEAP. I DON'T THINK GOA IS READY TO PAY. I APPRECIATE THAT MANY PEOPLE COME FOR THE EVENTS, BUT THE RESPONSE IS MEDIOCRE COMPARED TO OTHER STATES IN INDIA
>
> – Derryk Talker, concert organiser

'I've seen so much in life that films are like taking a walk in the park for me'

Prathamesh Sarmalkar

Amit Sadh

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After winning accolades for his impressive performance in *Kai Po Che!* (*KPC*), Amit Sadh did a slew of films that failed to set the cash registers ringing. While this may have dissuaded any other actor trying to find his feet in Bollywood, Amit was determined and continued to hone his craft. His hard work paid off in last year's hit, *Sultan*. Now, he's back on screen in Ram Gopal Varma's *Sarkar 3*, in which he is essaying the character of the arrogant, volatile Shivaji Nagre. Excerpts from a conversation...

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> 'I AM UNEDUCATED — I WAS ASKED TO LEAVE SCHOOL IN CLASS 11. I CAME TO MUMBAI WITH ONLY RS 300, YET THERE IS NO ONE IN THIS INDUSTRY WHO HAS NOT BEEN NICE TO ME'

Gaana wins top honours at global music awards

One of India's favourite music streaming apps, Gaana, has not only found fans in the country, but is also making waves internationally. It has won the 'Digital Media Company of the Year' award at A&R Worldwide's International Music Industry Awards 2017, which was held in Los Angeles recently. Interestingly, it's the only Indian music service to win an honour at this MUSIKXPO, which is among the most well-recognised platforms that brings global music partners and industry leaders together to discuss and exchange ideas, trends and a range of other topics.

Prabhan Agarwal (COO, Gaana) says, "This award stands testament to the fact that India can produce world class products. Gaana is a way of life for our users and our focus to serve them — be it on their mobile phone, computer, in their car, or on TV — has led to this international recognition."

The app's interface

With more than 70 million downloads, 34 million active users and 1 billion streams per month to its credit, the app can be accessed in nine regional languages apart from English. In the last one year, Gaana has been recognised for its various 'industry first' initiatives, including India's first Facebook messenger music bot. It also boasts of original content programming by artistes like Asha Bhosle and Shankar Mahadevan. The app has fast gained popularity with NRI audiences as well, after it launched its first global campaign in the US market this year. Now, music lovers across the world can listen to their favourite songs and artistes on Gaana by downloading the app.

Gaana wins the 'Digital Media Company of the Year' award

HITTING THE HIGH NOTE

- Gaana is the first music streaming service to launch Android Auto and Amazon Fire TV apps.
- It also launched its first global campaign in the US market earlier this year, adding to a 300 per cent growth in new users amongst the NRI audience.
- Its English content consumption has grown by 172 per cent in the last one year.
- The English content share has increased from 10.5 per cent to 14 per cent in the last one year.