

COFFEE WITH BS ▶ KABIR BEDI | ACTOR

Life in many shades

There is no one way to describe Bedi's eventful journey, finds Chintan Girish Modi as he looks into its very beginnings

The book jacket of actor Kabir Bedi's memoir describes him as "a man who holds nothing back, in love or in storytelling". I realise how true this is over a Zoom call to discuss *Stories I Must Tell: The Emotional Life of an Actor*, published earlier this year by Westland. One of India's first international stars, whose acting credentials extend to the United States, Canada and Italy, Kabir Bedi shows up with the warmest of smiles and his baritone voice. Seated in the study of his apartment in Juhu, Mumbai — I'm at my work table at home, roughly 10 km away — he comes across as a man who has found peace after all the ups and downs in his life. "This conversation is supposed to happen at a coffee shop but I'm sorry we have to do it online because of the pandemic," I apologise, my mug of milky instant coffee by my side. I cannot see him, but I do see a poster of Mehboob Khan's *Mother India* (1957) on the wall behind him. Kabir Bedi assures me that it's fine because "we all have to adapt to the new world".

To lighten the mood, he quotes Gulzar: "Khud se zyada main apne mobile ko sambhaal ke rakhta hoon kyunki ab saare rishte isi mein quid hain (more than myself, I take care of my cellphone because this is what holds all my relationships now)." We share a moment of laughter.

Kabir Bedi, 75, wrote his memoir during the pandemic, maintaining a disciplined routine and enjoying the view of palm trees from his window. He credits his wife, producer Parveen Dusanj, for "protecting" him from distractions. Theirs is a young marriage; the couple tied the knot just five years ago.

He uses the memoir "to set the record straight" about his relationships with his former wives — model and Odissi exponent Protima Gauri Bedi; British fashion designer Susan Humphreys; and British television and radio presenter Nikki Bedi — and his girlfriend, late actor Parveen Babi with whom he had a turbulent romance.

I am more interested in hearing about his parents, Freda and Baba Bedi, especially because he writes, "My greatest regret is that I did not partake in my parents' highest spiritual teachings."

He remembers them as idealists who believed in sacrificing personal gain for the welfare of others and for the freedom of the country. I first learnt about them when I attended the launch of Andrew Whitehead's book, *The Lives of Freda: The Political, Spiritual and Personal Journeys of Freda Bedi* (2019). I was



ILLUSTRATION: BINAY SINHA

touched by the story of a Punjabi man and an English woman meeting at Oxford, getting married, and coming to India to join the freedom struggle.

"My father was a communist, my mother a Gandhian," he says. "She grew up as a Christian and became a Buddhist nun (the first Western woman to take full ordination in Tibetan Buddhism); he was a descendant of Guru Nanak who became a new-age philosopher." He cherishes their values that helped him "through dark times" and steadied him "in euphoric times". In Kabir Bedi's roller coaster life, there were plenty of both. Triumphs and tragedies; milestones — like getting an exclusive interview with The Beatles as a 20-year-old freelance reporter with All India Radio during their visit to Delhi — and mistakes. The beginning itself was tumultuous.

Born in Lahore a year-and-a-half before Partition, he's known first-hand of countless lives lost to or disrupted by communal violence. That's a reason why after the anti-Sikh riots of 1984, he started the

Sikh-Hindu Allied Relief Exchange (S.H.A.R.E.) Peace initiative to appeal for harmony and help financially. "I regard those riots as the most barbaric act in the history of independent India," he says. "The fact that 3,000 Sikhs were murdered at the instigation of goons from a political party is absolutely unforgivable."

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's death was also a personal loss. She was "Aunty Indu" to him since his mother worked closely with Jawaharlal Nehru. Rajiv and Sanjay Gandhi were his "peers and playmates" in Delhi. He says his idealistic parents often had very little financial stability in their lives, so "Aunty Indu" paid part of his sister

Gulhima's college fees. "I may not have agreed with her on everything but she was very kind to us." Over the years, the families lost touch. And during the 2019 Lok Sabha election, Kabir Bedi took to Twitter asking India to vote for Narendra Modi.

We return to his mother. Deeply moved by her spiritual journey after reading Whitehead's book, I had got myself copies of two other books —

The Revolutionary Life of Freda Bedi: British Feminist, Indian Nationalist, Buddhist Nun (2017) and *The Spiritual Odyssey of Freda Bedi: England, India, Burma, Sikkim, and Beyond* (2018). It was quite generous of Kabir Bedi and his siblings — Ranga and Gulhima — to share private archives with the authors.

He tells me, "It's a crime if family members don't share important materials and writings of their parents. They are not achieving anything when they are gathering dust." So he shared recordings, photographs and memories after checking the authors' credentials. "I tried to write about my mother but then felt that publishers might think every child believes their mother is great. The story is more credible when it comes from others. They have added to my knowledge of my own mother," he says.

We talk about Freda Bedi's exposure to Buddhism on a trip to Myanmar (then called Burma), where he'd tagged along, and her work with Tibetan refugees in India after the 14th Dalai Lama and his followers came here in 1959. He speaks fondly of the Young Lamas Home School that she set up in Dalhousie — where he taught English — and of renowned Buddhist teachers Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, Akong Rinpoche and Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo who were mentored in their early years by his mother.

He recalls feeling "betrayed" when she appeared at home "with a shaved head and in maroon robes" and told him that she was going to live at the Rumtek monastery in Sikkim. He was 20. The 16th Karmapa of the Kagyu School of Tibetan Buddhism would be her guru. "I was part of her journey into Buddhism; I was shocked she didn't tell me earlier. I felt I had lost her," he says. He "melted" only after she wrote him a letter.

This letter appears in his memoir. Freda writes: "The link between the baby and the mother does not cease. It continues. Nothing ceases. In a way, this time I am the baby. And I need all your love and protection... To take an ordination in a direct line from the Buddha is an inexpressible sacred thing." Reading this made me think of how Rahula must have felt thousands of years ago when his father, Siddhartha, left home to pursue his spiritual quest that finally led him to become Gautam Buddha. It so happens that Kabir Bedi's own son was called Siddharth (he died at the young age of 25).

Kabir Bedi's has been a life with many shades. It's a life that's difficult to capture in one book, let alone one coffee meeting over Zoom. Speaking of coffee, so engrossed have we been in the conversation that we have totally forgotten about our coffees, which are now lying forlorn and cold. Hopefully, there will be another occasion for coffee and conversation — about the past and the future. For, Kabir Bedi is now keen to take on more acting and writing assignments, and discover "the real nature of truth".

BOOK REVIEW

Selector at the crease

Ravi Shastri offers entertaining cameos of cricketers he thinks were great

TCA SRINIVASA RAGHAVAN

Last year's lockdown saw many conceptions, including this book. Its birth, like so many of the author's shots, is perfectly timed, coming out bang in the middle of an absorbing Test series against England, in England.

It consists of very short assessments of the players Ravi Shastri thinks were great. Its pithiness makes it an excellent read.

From start to finish it will take just a couple of hours if you read it at one go. But that's unlikely because it's actually a book for dipping into from time to time. There's no continuity.

Since he starts by saying these were the best, there is no question of his saying anything even remotely negative about them. That makes it a little bit monotonous but if you are a follower of the game, you get a pretty complete view of why these players were great, not just in Shastri's opinion but everyone's.

Shastri has dedicated the book to "The fans". But it is not clear to whose fans he is referring. It's best to assume that it is to the fans of the game.

Also, it is a relief to see that he has chosen only six players from Mumbai. Given that it is his state, he could easily have included twice or even thrice that number and no one could have faulted him. Mumbai was like that only till about two decades ago.

He also says that had some of the current players not been still "developing" he would have written about those like Ajinkya Rahane, Rishabh Pant, Cheteshwar Pujara, Mohammad Shami and so on. But by mentioning them he makes it clear that in his view they are top class players.

He is particularly benign to young Rishabh Pant. There must be something about young Pant that is visible only to the connoisseurs.

As an excellent all-rounder, Shastri also doesn't show any preference between batsmen and bowlers. For every batsman, he has chosen nearly an equal and opposite bowler.

He admits that there will be people who disagree with his list. But says that "all selectors must be sufficiently thick-skinned and prepared to take criticism". **Mixed chances:** Well, here's one, though not of Shastri but of his publishers. The book is needlessly expensive. Its high price will discourage sales.

Of Shastri himself the criticism is that he has played it altogether too defensively. Having played with and against so many of the players that he has listed, he could have

described those experiences. He has, but very occasionally and that too very sketchily. That's like failing to convert a 50 into a 100.

For example, of Michael Holding he says, "I will never forget on my first tour of the West Indies in 1983 when Holding came off his full run up in front of a packed Sabina Park and sent Sunil Gavaskar's leg stump cartwheeling almost all the way to Joel Garner at fine leg."

Then, altogether too laconically, he adds, "It was an extraordinary sight." It must have been, but there's nothing about how he felt watching from the other end or how he fared when his turn came to face Holding. The way he has written it, he could well have been sitting in the stands.

Readers will find this consistent omission hard to understand. The book lacks feelings and resembles the batting of the late Ken Barrington playing the late Bapu Nadkarni.

Colourful characters: Thankfully, he has included some of the highly colourful characters in the game. That includes Farokh Engineer, Ian Chappell, Javed Miandad, David Gower, Shane Warne, Sourav Ganguly, Harbhajan Singh and Virendra Sehwag. About such players, he has this gem to offer: "The one thing you have to be serious about is not be so serious that you miss out on the joys of life."

These players were great proponents of that attitude. All of them realised that it was, in the end, a sport and that it had to be enjoyed.

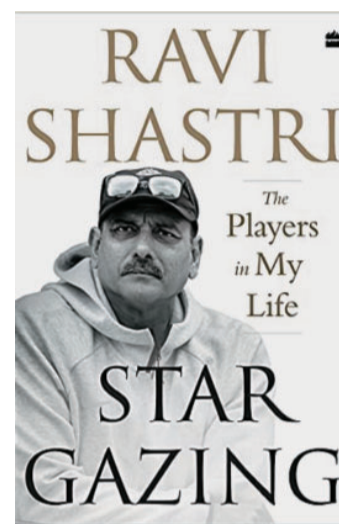
It would seem that this is the advice he is giving as the India coach, which might explain the team's inconsistent performances because some players at least don't seem to realise

that while they are enjoying themselves, the fans are not.

The one common characteristic that all the players in this book possess is supreme self-confidence. It seems Shane Warne, in his debut match, in which Shastri himself scored a double century, and in which Warner took just one wicket for 150 — Shastri's — was still strutting with his chest out at the end of the game.

About Sachin Tendulkar he writes that in 1992 in Australia there was a lot of sledging. Shastri, who was batting at the other end, told Tendulkar to ignore them and just bat, which is exactly what he did, forcing the Aussies to stop sledging. They both got hundreds.

Finally, Dhoni. Shastri's description of the reaction in the dressing room when he announced he was retiring is classic. But you will have to buy this book to find out how the team reacted.



STARGAZING: THE PLAYERS IN MY LIFE

Authors: Ravi Shastri with Ayaz Memon

Publisher: HarperCollins

Pages: 296

Price: ₹699

What is Apple doing with its App Store?

MICHAEL LIETKE & MATT O'BRIEN
3 September

Over the past week or so, Apple has eased some longstanding restrictions that helped make its App Store into a big money-maker for the company. The company has long required app developers to pay high commissions to Apple on the sales of paid apps as well as purchases of subscriptions or digital items inside their apps.

Apple is facing some significant pressure to open up the App Store further. A federal judge is soon expected to return a verdict in an antitrust lawsuit filed by Epic Games, the maker of Fortnite, that seeks to strike down much of Apple's commission system. And earlier this week, the South Korean legislature passed a law that would allow developers to sidestep payment systems run by both Apple and Google — and the commissions of 15 per cent to 30 per cent they charge.

But Apple hasn't always explained its moves very clearly, leaving some iPhone users with unanswered questions as to what exactly it is doing and if and how they'll be affected.

What exactly is Apple doing? Late Wednesday, Apple agreed to App Store changes starting next year to resolve an investigation by Japanese regulators. For the first time, Apple will allow Spotify, Netflix and other apps that sell digital subscriptions to music, video, magazines, newspapers, books and audio to include an in-app link to their own sites, where users can sign up outside Apple's payment system.



Apple took a more limited step in the same direction last week when it agreed to let app developers email users about ways to sidestep Apple when signing up for subscriptions. Such efforts could previously have gotten apps kicked out of Apple's store. That change resulted from a preliminary settlement in a class-action lawsuit that requires court approval.

Spotify CEO Daniel Ek applauded the Wednesday move as a "step in the right direction" in a Thursday tweet. But he lamented that Apple isn't granting the same freedom to all apps, including those that make video games. "Our goal is to restore competition once and for all, not one arbitrary, self-serving step at a time," Ek tweeted.

Will this make apps cheaper for users? Probably not.

In theory, subscription apps could lower their prices, although there's little reason to think they will. Netflix, for instance, has been steadily raising prices for reasons that have nothing to do with Apple's commissions. The video streaming service says the price increases help it pay for a steady stream of new original programming. But the changes could make

life easier for some users of services like Spotify and Netflix, which had simply blocked sign-ups in their iPhone apps because they didn't want to share that revenue with Apple. Instead, users have had to visit the companies' websites to start a subscription they could then use with their iPhone app.

Why does Apple run its app store with an iron hand? Apple maintains the fees it charges help it recoup the more than \$100 billion it has spent on its iPhone ecosystem. And it notes that most of the 1.8 billion apps on its store pay nothing because they rely on ads instead of subscriptions and other user purchases.

Apple also insists that control over its app ecosystem helps protect the privacy and security of its customers. Critics, however, say that's just a pretext for preserving a commission system that unexpectedly turned into a gold mine, even though co-founder Steve Jobs didn't envision making money from the store when it opened. Apple doesn't disclose the app store's financial performance but it is a major component of the company's services division.

बैंक ऑफ बरौदा Bank of Baroda

www.bankofbaroda.in

TENDER NOTICE

Bank of Baroda invites responses to tender for selection of service provider for anti-phishing services.

Details are available under 'Tenders section' on Bank's website: www.bankofbaroda.in

Addendum, if any shall be issued on Bank's website under 'Tenders section'. Bidder should refer to same before final submission of the proposal.

RFP Reference No: BCC:CISO:113:73 Date: 4th September 2021

Last date for submission of RFP Response – 18th September 2021 up to 15:00 hrs IST

Place: Mumbai
Date: 04.09.2021

General Manager & Group Chief Information Security Officer

SHREE GLOBAL TRADEFIN LIMITED

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NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the 35th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Company will be held on Wednesday, 29th September, 2021 at 11.00 a.m. through Video Conferencing (VC)/ Other Audio Visual Means (OAVM) in compliance with the applicable provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 read with MCA General Circular No. 14/2020 dated 08th April, 2020, MCA General Circular No. 17/2020 dated 13th April, 2020, MCA General Circular No. 20/2020 dated 05th May, 2020 and MCA General Circular No. 22/2021 dated 13th January, 2021 to transact the business set out in the Notice of the AGM. The Company has sent the Annual Report along with the Notice of AGM on Friday, 03rd September, 2021, through electronic mode to Members whose email addresses are registered with the Company's Registrar and Share Transfer Agent/Depositories in accordance with the circular issued by Ministry of Corporate Affairs dated 05th May, 2020 read with circulars dated 08th April, 2020, 13th April, 2020 and 13th January, 2021 and SEBI circular dated 12th May, 2020 & 15 January 2021. The Annual Report along with the Notice of the AGM is also available on the Company's website www.sgtl.in and on website of the CDSL www.evotingindia.com.

In terms of and in compliance with provisions of section 108 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with Rule 20 of Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014 as amended from time to time and Regulation 44 of SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, the Company is providing the "remote e-voting" and "e-voting during the AGM" facility to members to cast their vote electronically on all the resolutions set forth in the Notice of the 35th AGM through electronic voting system of Central Depository Services Limited ("CDSL"). The cut-off date for determining the eligibility to vote by electronic means through "remote e-voting" or "e-voting at the AGM" is 22nd September, 2021.

The remote e-voting period commences on Saturday, 25th September, 2021 (09:00 a.m. IST) and ends on Tuesday, 28th September, 2021 (05:00 p.m. IST). The remote e-voting mode shall be disabled by CDSL thereafter and remote e-voting shall not be allowed beyond the above mentioned date and time. Those members who shall be present in the AGM through VCOAVM facility and had not cast their votes on the resolutions through remote e-voting and are otherwise not barred from doing so, shall be eligible to vote through E-voting system during the AGM. The members who have cast their votes by remote e-voting prior to the AGM may also attend/participate in the AGM through VCOAVM but shall not be entitled to cast their votes again. Once the e-vote on the resolution is cast by the members, they shall not be allowed to change it subsequently. The person whose name is recorded in the register of members or in the register of beneficial owners maintained by the depositories as on the cut-off date only shall be entitled to avail the facility of remote e-voting as well as e-voting at AGM. Any person who becomes a member of the Company after the notice has been sent electronically by the Company, and holds shares as on the cut-off date i.e. 22nd September, 2021, may go through the instructions mentioned in Note No. 22 of the Notice of 35th AGM to enable them understand the process of obtaining the Login ID/User ID and Password. For the process and manner of "remote e-voting" and "e-voting during the AGM", Members may go through the instructions mentioned in Note No. 22 of the Notice of 35th AGM. In case of any queries/issues/grievance connected with e-voting, please contact: Mr. Rakesh Dalvi, Manager, CDSL, A Wing, 25th Floor, Marathon Futurex, Marfatil Mill Compound, N. M. Joshi Marg, Lower Parel East, Mumbai-400013, or send an email to helpdesk.evoting@cdslindia.com or contact at 022-23058738 and 022-23058542/43.

This notice should be read in conjunction to our earlier notice of AGM published in this Newspaper dated 30th August, 2021.

For Shree Global TradeFin Limited
Sd/-
Kumari Rachna
Company Secretary

Place: Mumbai
Date: 03/09/2021

ILLUME 6.0
Industry Institute Interaction
4th SEPTEMBER
Official Title Sponsor
GUEST SPEAKERS

Mr. Gunjan Shah
CEO, Bata

Mr. B. Ashok
CEO, Ratnagiri Refinery & Petrochemicals Ltd. (RRPL)
Former Chairman, Indian Oil Corporation Ltd.

Mr. Krishna Gopal
Global Head-Sales Enablement, Tech Mahindra

Mr. Shailesh Kekre
Ex- Managing Partner, McKinsey & Co

Mr. Sangram Singh
Head, Commercial Banking, Axis Bank

Ms. Seema Kumar
CTO, Microsoft

Ms. Anita Guha
CIO Talent Advisor, IBM

Mr. Amrinder Singh
Executive Vice President & Head of Europe, Hexaware

Mr. Anshuman Vatsyayan
Director, NCR Corporation

Mr. Subramanyeswar S.
Group Chief Strategy Officer, Mullenlowe Lintas Group

Mr. Neeraj Kakkur
Co-founder & CEO, Hector Beverages

Ms. Rekha Sethi
Director General, AIMA

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