

# 'No problems with Ekta.. problems with her production house'

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## START-OFF

**INFORMATION:** Four years ago, he featured in the ha-ha movie *Fun2shh: Dudes in the 10th Century*. Followed *Bullet: Ek Dhamaka* and *Kaisa Yeh Pyar Hai*

**MARRIED?:** Yup, early this year to **Sneha Chhabra**. She had featured in the music video with him.. and then gave up camerabaazi. Movies weren't getting him anywhere. But the serial *Kaisa Yeh..* did. Then thunder and lightning.. he walked out of Balaji Telefilms. Seven months later, he returned with *Choonai Hai Aasmaan*.

**Why did you quit Balaji Telefilms' *Kaisa Yeh Pyar Hai*?**

I didn't quit, it ended. *Karam Apna Apna* was the only soap I quit and that's because I wanted time off to get married.

**You didn't quit because of a problem with boss lady Ekta Kapoor?**

I never had a problem with Ekta. I had a problem with the production house. You can't make people work 24x7 yaar! There are actors who just walk out of shoots, I couldn't do that. So I quit.



**Why should both Sneha and I be on television? She's my wife.. she's extremely lazy and needs 12 hours of sleep every day**

**Apparently she used to call you to late night parties.**

Wow, really? Ekta knows I'm not a party animal. I've attended all of two parties thrown by her. She has this tradition of pouring out tequila shots for everyone. But she knows I don't drink and she never forced me to.

**Recently, she lashed out against actors who have left her camp.**

Yeah. It's claimed that I said, "Just you wait and see my comeback." When and where did I say that? I'm not the kind of person who makes such statements.

**Did you call Ekta Kapoor and clarify that?**

No.

**What if you are offered another K serial?**

Right now, I'm happy with *Choonai Hai*.. the show hasn't been majorly promoted but it's doing well.

**It's believed that once an actor steps out of the Balaji camp, it's the end.**

*Aisa thodi hota hai!* I don't believe in anything of that sort. Allah



married that month. They returned two months later. I liked the concept.

Actually, I don't know why it's called 'different'.. just because it's set against the backdrop of the air force. Like most soaps, it's about the interplay of emotions.

The viewers want to see me as a tough guy with a softer side. Also, my physical appearance doesn't let me experiment much. (Laughs) Let's face it, I can't be cute!

**Would you ever go grey for TV? Play an older man?**

I do play grey. All my characters so

she needs 12 hours of sleep every day.

**Are you embarrassed by the movies you have done?**

What kind of a question is that? If you're a struggling newcomer and don't belong to a rich family, you can hardly make choices. I did *Fun2shh* because it was a big film. It had Paresh Rawal, it was a comedy, I played one of the leads.

Anuj Sawhney and I had more screen time than Paresh Rawal did, but he got the best lines. I don't blame the producers or writers for that. If I were to ever make a film, and I had an actor like say, Irrfan Khan, and a newcomer, I'd obviously give more footage to Irrfan. Actually, the film did pretty well.

**You're a college drop-out. Do you ever feel, let's say 'incomplete' for not completing your studies?**

Well, when I did my first show, they assured me that my name would appear in the credits as Iqbal Khan. It wouldn't read 'college dropout' in brackets. Ha!

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## Rapid fire

**Ekta Kapoor is:**

Hmm (laughs), I'd have to say hard-working.

**Favourite actor:**

Deven Bhojani. I got a chance to



creates you and only he can destroy you.

**Okay, so you must feel vindicated with your comeback to TV.** There's nothing like a comeback. I took a seven-month break to get married. I guess a break is more conspicuous on TV because viewers are used to seeing your face every day.

**How did *Choona Hai Aasmaan* happen?** I was approached by Star One in January this year but I was getting

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**Why nix lead roles in *Maayka* and *Parrivar*?** *Vis-a-vis Maayka*, I was tired of doing family dramas. Not that I have anything against them.. I might do one some day. As for *Parrivar*, I'd already accepted *Choona Hai*.. by then.

**Come clean. It's said you avoided *Maayka* because the female lead was being played by Neha Bamb.** Come on! The truth is.. Neha and I didn't get along on the sets of *Kaisa Yeh Pyar Hai*. Later, things got better.

**She got married last week..did you attend?** I heard about it. I didn't go. I didn't call either.

**Angad (*Kaisa Yeh Pyar Hai*), Shiv (*Karam Apna Apna*) and now Abhimanyu (*Choona Hai Aasmaan*).. aren't you tired of playing the tough guy?**

far have had grey characteristics. But an older guy.. no. It's silly. A few years *yahan-wahan* is fine but I can't play a 40-year-old.

**Would you ever accept a reality show?** I'd never do a *Bigg Boss* because I'm a very personal guy. I wouldn't like viewers to know my toilet habits.

**And *Nach Baliye* or *Jhalak Dikhhla Jaa*?** Those offers come our way every year. One of us is on TV, let it stay that way *na*. Why should both Sneha and I be on television?

**Why not?** She's my wife, a part of my personal space and I'd like it to stay that way. She's done one music video and that's enough.

**You don't want her to act?** *Arre*, she doesn't want to act.. she can't (*pause*). She's extremely lazy.

interact with him when I did the *Star Mahotsav Special on Baa Bahoo aur Baby*. He's brilliant.

- Favourite actress:** Aamna Shariff.
- Favourite co-star:** Maya Alagh. She played my *dadi* in *Kaisa Yeh Pyar Hai*.
- Dream role:** Jack Nicholson's in *As Good As It Gets*. But you need to have a certain look and age to fit in. I'd look stupid doing that right now.
- Nightmare role:** I'd never play a rapist or a traitor.
- Favourite roles played:** Shiv and Abhimanyu.
- Iqbal Khan is:** without complications.
- As a child I dreamt of becoming:** a naval officer.