

## Sarkar has a Waaris on tube

By Lipika Warma



Though Ugraya Productions may still be a new name for TV audiences, its owner, the actor and Ekta Kapoor's favourite bahu, Smriti Irani's is not. The most popular bahu of Indian small screen again in producer's garb. Waaris, her new venture loosely based on the hit Sarkar Raj, will soon go on air on Zee TV.

An intense actor like Ashish Vidyarthi has been roped in to play the lead role. He will play a family.

About his role being similar to that of Amitabh's in Sarkar Raj, Ashish says, "Well, in a family, comparisons are bound to arise. I portray Rudra Pratap. This character allows me to play different shades. The story is all about a family on how they try to adjust to the harsh realities of this time, the family wants to keep their empire in tact." Does this mean Ashish is the do-gooder or an out and out negative character. My responsibility is to keep the family united. Most of the time, you go against your choices or wishes, you are bound to get angry and hence the sparks fly," pat comes the reply.

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The other cast include Rucha Gujrati, who will be seen in a pivotal role, Bhawna Roy who won great accolades in a reality show and Shilpa Shinde paired opposite Iqbal Khan.

Says Smriti Irani, "After hits like Thodi Si Zameen, Virrudh and Mere Apne, Waaris is yet again an attempt to portray a family drama in an interesting way. Like Ashish Vidyarthi, Iqbal Khan, Shilpa Shinde, Yuvraj to work for one's soap is every producer's dream."

Although Rucha agrees that Waaris is "inspired by Sarkar Raj, there's a considerable amount of variation in both the stories."

And that's where the fun lies. "But I can't reveal any information," says Gujrati.

Shilpa, however, spills more. "Yes, the serial is quite close to Sarkar Raj. I play the role of Gayatri. Ashish Vidyarthi is playing my father-in-law and a brave front in the presence of the family. The revenge taken by him on anyone is always unnoticed by us. Although he prays a lot, he is a do-gooder," she says.

So why did she opt for this role? "The character is very different and I immediately fell in love with it. After all, it's not easy to portray the role of a woman whose story revolves around the underworld so you can say it is like Sarkar Raj," adds Shilpa.

Yuvraj Malhotra, who will also be playing an important character says, "I am playing the role of Shourya, a college student."

However, he says the serial does not bear much resemblance to Sarkar Raj. "Waaris is not totally based on Sarkar Raj. The head-honcho is Amitabh Bachchan. But you will have to wait and watch how I relate to the negative shades in the characters of my brother and father," he says.

Smriti Irani has the final word on whether the serial has been inspired. "No, it's not. But I guess since the cast has generated so much interest, she signs off.