

"If I do *Kyunki* too I will die! I won't have hours left in a day to shoot for *KavyAnjali* and *Kaisa...* too!"

But I do enjoy playing the role. I can safely say that work is worship for me. Nowadays, I shoot for 13 hours a day and all of us on the sets have a blast. My pal on the show is Amit Tandon who plays Prithvi. He is like a brother to me. I always finish most of his grub and he ends up with an empty stomach. I am friendly with the rest of the actors who play my mom, dad and siblings." As an afterthought: "Of course, you can't be best friends with everyone!"

Is that a reference to the icy vibes with Kripa, played by Neha Bamb? A few months ago there were whispers about Neha Bamb's cold war with both her costars – Iqbal Khan and Amit Tandon. After a short, uneasy truce, the two guys are allegedly digging in their heels over Neha's arrogance, which has been annoying them for the past year-and-a-half.

"All I can tell you is that we do have problems getting along," Iqbal admits carefully. And yet, astonishingly, Khan's chemistry with Neha is palpable on screen. He dismisses, "Screen-chemistry has nothing to do with personal relationships!"

Though there were rumours of him entering *Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi*'s next generation, Iqbal laughs them off as pure rumours. "If I do *Kyunki* too I will die! I won't have hours left in a day to shoot for *KavyAnjali* and *Kaisa* too – right? Moreover, I was never considered for *Kyunki*."

But in the one-year journey Iqbal has endeared himself to his fans with his portrayal of not only Angad but the fake Sujal in *Kabin Tob Hoga*. "I was delighted by the response that my stint in *KTH* got me. It was supposed to be a four-episode cameo but got stretched to one whole month – 16 episodes. I would play the sober Sujal before the family and the roadside *mawaali* in front of Swayam who had planted me in Kashish's life. People stopped calling me Angad and started calling me Mamu – the comic line from the character in *Kabin Tob Hoga*. This means audiences didn't typecast me as one character and I am glad about that."

Talking of fans, Iqbal is happy about his female following but one of them spooked him. "This girl from Amritsar calls me often and I can see her Amritsar number on my cell, yet she seems to know what I am doing. She would ask me, 'Why are you wearing a brown coloured shirt – it doesn't suit you.' I was amazed, then

"I was finalized for Angad's role on February 10, which was my birthday!"



"I have been living in a one-room flat, I plan to buy a house. But I am not thinking of getting married for the next three years!"

amused, and now I am put off."

But his girlfriend Sneha Chhabra who is Iqbal's pride, doesn't mind all the attention he gets. And Ikky appreciates this. "To me, she is a complete woman. She is very special. Sneha has kept me grounded and focused in life. She encourages me a lot and I love her for that."

So, is marriage in the pipeline?

Iqbal balances love with a strong practical streak. "I have been living in a one-room flat since my struggling days and now that I have a secure bank balance, I plan to buy a house in the next six months. But I am not thinking of getting married for the next three years, as my profession is very demanding and Sneha understands that!"

*Karma* sure is on his side – a booming career and a perfect girlfriend. Will some of Iqbal Khan's luck rub off on *KavyaAnjali* too?

– Pooja Sharma

