

**HITA**  
A star-studded charity dinner Pg 3



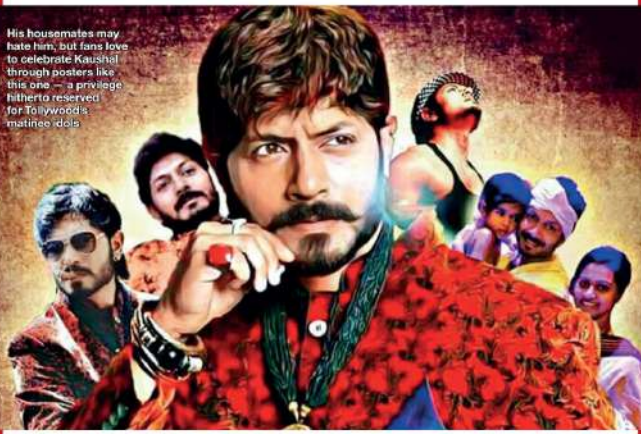
**BACK BEAT**  
Ruby Rose is internet's most 'dangerous' celeb Pg 6

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He came, he played, he conquered. But...

## The hullabaloo around Kaushal refuses to die

His housemates may hate him, but fans love to celebrate Kaushal through posters like this one — a privilege hitherto reserved for Bollywood's matinee idols



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Another season of the popular reality show *Bigg Boss* has come to an end. The winner has been declared, the winning speech has been made and all the contestants have gone home after attending a glitzy finale. All's well that ends well, right? Not quite. 'Cos this time, not everyone is on the same page about things ending all that well. After all, *Bigg Boss Telugu* Season 2 saw a phenomenon that was unlike anything that any other season of the show, in any language (Hindi, Kannada, Tamil, Marathi or Malayalam), has seen. And that phenomenon is Kaushal Manda, who went from being a little-known TV tiddler to the winner of Season 2, garnering a record number of votes, as some sources claim. The runner-up, Geetha Madhuri, a very popular playback singer, managed to finish a distant second. So, how did a model-turned television actor amass a fan following that is usually enjoyed by only reigning superstars of South India? It's all foul play, allege many of Kaushal's fellow contestants.

### HE PLAYED THE LONE WOLF, BUT WAS IT ONLY TO CRY WOLF?

While most people formed groups in the *Bigg Boss* house, Kaushal preferred to stay alone. It seemed like he was targeted by many of his housemates and was pushed into a corner. Remarkably, Kaushal looked calm and collected throughout it all — a strategy that clearly seems to have worked in his favour. Ratianna and humanist, Babu Gogineni, however, mixes no words as he calls his play out. "Kaushal is not the hero that the organisers and so-called fans are projecting him to be. What was shown on TV was just selective bits of the whole story. It doesn't reflect the reality in its entirety. Neither does it showcase the real Kaushal that we got to see in the house. His whole gameplan was based on projecting that he was isolated and targeted by everybody, and as a result, he didn't want to talk to anyone. But that was a charade. He's the one who didn't want to be friends with anyone in the house. So his 100 days in the house were spent just strategising. I think that's a poor way to play any game, be it in the house or in life," he says.

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— Babu Gogineni

**KAUSHAL WON NOT BECAUSE HE GOT GOOD VOTES AND LOADS OF LOVE, BUT BECAUSE EVERYBODY ELSE GOT ABUSED BECAUSE OF HIM. EVEN THE AUDIENCE WOULD TALK SH\*T ABOUT US BECAUSE OF HIM. I AM NOT SURE IF THE VOTES WERE FAKE OR THE IDS WERE FAKE. BUT WHAT HAPPENED IS JUST UNFAIR**

— Tejaswi Madivada

**AYUSHMANN KHURRANA**

## 'I know I have the talent and I will survive'

**WE ACTORS TEND TO TAKE OURSELVES TOO SERIOUSLY. WE WANT TO 'LOOK DIFFERENT' IN OUR MOVIES, BUT WE FORGET THAT PEOPLE WANT A NEW STORY, NOT A NEW-LOOKING ACTOR**



Tejas Khattar

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With films like *Vicky Donor* (2012), *Dum Lagu Ke Haishe* (2015), *Boreilly Ki Barfi* (2017) and *Shubh Mangal Saavdhan* (2017), Ayushmann Khurrana has carved a niche for himself in Bollywood. His on-screen characters often celebrate the quirks and joys of contemporary middle-class India. As someone who grew up on a staple diet of commercial *naach-gaana* films, Ayushmann's deepest desire is to switch lanes, and become a commercial, blockbuster star. But until that happens, he is enjoying the mould he has set himself in. Ahead of his next, Sriram Raghavan's *Arjun Reddy*, the actor talks to us about how he prepped for his character in the film and why bending genres with every

film can actually be detrimental to an actor's shelf life. Excerpts:

**After jokes about donating sperms and suffering erectile dysfunction, there's now a running gag on social media that erectile dysfunction can also lead to blindness! How do you react to such memes?**  
[Laughs] Yeah, I know. It's so funny. It's amazing. I love these jokes and I also self-troll, because I don't take myself too seriously. I enjoy the humour. There is no point in taking yourself too seriously. I come from a background of anchoring shows, writing funny lines for radio programmes and reviewing movies. As anchors, we would troll ourselves and crack jokes on others, too. So, I take these things on the Internet with a pinch of salt and it really works. You might remember the

kind of stuff we would say while reviewing films on our shows. The way we'd joke and pass comments was hilarious. So, there's no point getting offended and feeling bad. **Vicky Kaushal, Rajkumar Rao and you seem to have become poster boys of new-age parallel cinema, thanks to the kind of films you all have picked...**  
I think everyone is a hero in their own right. Varun Dhawan, Ranbir Kapoor and Ranveer Singh have more commercial success, while we are more realistic. Their films release on a bigger scale and are mounted in that manner. Our budgets and release scales are lower, but even then, our success ratio is almost as good as theirs. I've always believed that getting respect as an artist is of utmost importance.

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## Journey actor Vatsan to play the baddie in Nikhil's next



Vatsan Chakravarthi

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Vatsan Chakravarthi, who shot to fame with the AR Murugadoss-backed *Journey*, has been roped in to play the antagonist in Nikhil's next. Titled *Mudra*, the film is a remake of Tamil blockbuster *Kanithan*. Incidentally, Vatsan worked as an assistant script writer for the original too. "It's a very meaty part and it's a great makeover from the lover boy image I have in Kollywood. Director TN Santosh had asked me if I could bulk up to play the antagonist in the remake. I hit the gym with gusto and worked out for over four months to get my body right, by training six to seven hours a day. My physical transformation impressed the makers a lot," says Vatsan, who recently shot for a pre-interval fight sequence for the film.

The actor seems to be in love with Tollywood. "Telugu industry feels like home any day. I am enjoying my work here. I had a good time shooting for the film and Nikhil was a sport on the sets. I have developed a good command over the language during the shoot and plan to dub for my role too," he says, signing off.

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