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a-Y, the  
omen  
succeed



are the female youth icons

ON TOP

RJ Neethi is not as impressed by celebrities as she is by "every working mother." "I think women who struggle to balance their life are powerful because they represent the ultimate struggle in today's world."

The confidence to remain true to oneself is also highly valued. "JK Rowling is great because she faced a lot of opposition from the religious right because of her books but she was never apologetic, instead telling them to actually read the book before disparaging it," says Madhu.

Maheesh also respects Indian women with international recognition. "Aishwarya Rai has a lot of critics but she was among the first who made the world notice Indian cinema."

Youngsters also have different criteria when making choices. RJ Neethi says, "Most youngsters want their icons to have substance. They admire women who are courageous, honest and ambitious." They also admire women who are cheeky.

Says Madhu, "I don't agree with her, but Shobhaa De is powerful because when she speaks, she sets off a debate."

RJ Neethi concludes, "These women give us hope, as much for their positive qualities as their determination to succeed despite various obstacles."

PRIYANKA HALDIPUR

DECCAN CHRONICLE

**T**hey say that success in Bollywood doesn't come easy. Especially if you are a young 'nobody' who isn't related to any of the Khans. But this Khan has made all the right moves and is going places, though he humbly attributes it to "good luck." The 26-year-old Bengaluru boy is right where he wants to be and knows where he is headed next. Meet Saad Khan, the associate director of Ashutosh Gowariker-directed *Khelein Hum Jee Joan Sey* that will release next month.

If you're excited about learning what tricks he had to pull out of his hat to work with Gowariker, you're in for some disappointment. All he did was sit back and watch his spectacular resume work its magic.

"I founded Image Theatre Group in college and at 19, I had directed 16 plays including *Let's Talk About Love*, a musical and *Scream*. I went to New York on a scholarship to pursue a masters in mass media. I directed three short films, one (*Another Kind of Black*) was screened at Cannes in 2008. *On My Mind* was screened at the LA Film Festival in 2009," says Saad, who chose to return to India after a stint in the US, and work with a top Bollywood director. "It was tough getting an appointment with Ashutosh Gowariker. But when it did happen, he hired me immediately," smiles the dude who was also the script supervisor for Hollywood flick *The Road* starring Viggo Mortensen and Charlize Theron.

It sure was challenging to work in a period film-based on the Chittagong Uprising of 1930. "I was in charge of working on the continuity and supervision for artwork and costumes. A lot of research went into making the film. I read Manini Chatterjee's *Do or Die*, which the film is adapted from, several times," he says.

On his experience of working with Gowariker, Abhishek Bachchan and Deepika Padukone, he says, "Ashutosh Gowariker knows filmmaking and he excels in period

Directing is his forte. Artistic ventures, his calling. Meet city lad Saad Khan



A scene from *Khelein Hum Jee Joan Sey*



A scene from *The Road*

films. He is a great mentor and a gem of a person. He treats his team members with respect. When I met him for the first time, and he said 'I hope to learn from you,' I was like wow!" He adds, "Deepika and Abhishek were thorough professionals."

The next achievement in his soaring career graph is a Hindi film that he will play writer and director to. His advice to youngsters is, "Get educated and then make a film. A masters degree is essential." Does he miss Bengaluru, now that he's based in Mumbai? "All the time. I missed it when I was in New York. And I miss it now. I love everything about this city — the weather, Corner House for its ice cream and Airlines Hotel for its *chai*. I also enjoy relaxing at home with family every time I visit!" he says.

Saad Khan