



PARTY TIME:
Years later with good friend Saranya at his birthday party



HONORED:
Receiving the Dadasaheb Phalke award at the hands of then-President Sanjeev Reddy



CHARITY MATES:
With Nargis and Raj Kapoor



FRIENDS FOREVER: P. Jairaj and Pritviraj Kapoor with their wives at John Beach, Mumbai

P. JAIRAJ | 1909 - 2000

Remembering
Indian screen's
first He-man,
superman and
on-screen kisser

— the late

Dadasaheb
Phalke awardee

P. Jairaj — on

September 28,

his birth

centenary. A

fond tribute by

his daughter,

Deepa and

grandson

Rajan Shahi

A BOOK LOVER

P. Jairaj spent 70 years in the film industry during which he played various roles — from a body-double stardom to the macho hero, from mythological God to social drama leads and from filmmaker to the custodian of the film industry's welfare through various associations — and endorsed himself to everybody. P. Jairaj joined the industry at the tender age of 19 and lived a full life till the age of 91. He is survived by four daughters and two sons. His second daughter, Deepa Shahi and her son Rajan, a popular tele-serial maker of *Jai Jai Koi Nakh*, *Kavarna Kavarna*, *Arin* and *16h Shakti Kyu Kesham* *Woh Faisla* go into a reward mode. "Papa was a totally family-oriented person. He would be up at the crack of dawn by 5 am and by 9 pm the lights would be out! He wasn't a strict father though, he liked to educate us through books," recalls Deepa. He amassed a huge library of books on every subject under the sun which he eventually donated to various libraries in Mumbai, Kolkata and to his friends and relatives. "I got the historical section with books on architecture," elaborates Deepa while her son inherited books on filmmaking and artistic performances.

THE SILENT ERA

Born in Karimnagar (Andhra Pradesh) in a cultured family, young Jairaj was schooled in Rishi Valley school. Thereafter he joined the Nizam's col-

lege and that helped," opines Deepa.

FIRST KISSING STAR, FIRST SUPERMAN

Jairaj featured in over 200 films during which he romanced all the top heroines of his times — Devika Rani, Noorjehan, Khursheed, Nigar Sultana, Nadira, Shakila, Durga Khote, Nirupa Roy, Nimmi, Saranya, Madhubala and Meena Kumari. "He was the first kissing star of his times, he was lip locked with his heroine Madhubala in *Agamgati*, *Kosonni*. He was also the first superman of the Indian screen," informs Rajan Shahi about the on-screen shenanigans of his manaji.

"Although Papa was famous for his parties, he was never involved in any scandal. All his heroines regarded him as their close friend. I remember, Nargis had knitted him a sweater monogrammed with his initials!" Deepa reminisces fondly.

Jairaj started accepting character roles from mid-'30s. His roles in *Jaanjot*, *Baharon Ki Sopye*, *Nool Karnai*, *Rasatte Aur Mantri* are memorable. Also his most recent cameos in *Don*, *Mazoon* and *Khosu Bhai* *Ming* are known to viewers today. Jairaj had also acted in three international films, the Russian co-production with R.A. Abbas *Parole!*, MGM's *Mega* and 20th-Century Fox's *Nine Hours To Rama*. The last film was based on Mahatma Gandhi's assassination and was banned in India.

of Jairaj's showbiz legacy: "Nanaji advised me to build goods in the industry. Name and fame will come and go, only your goodwill will see you through," he said. That's the most valued mantra for me," admits his grandson gratefully.

P. Jairaj passed away on August 11, 2000 at the ripe age of 91, leaving behind a rich legacy.

— Deepa Karmalkar

With Saranya in *Arjun*



P. Jairaj's daughter Deepa and grandson Rajan