

'Indian Idol and I are inseparable'

Composer-judge Anu Mallik clears the air about his association with Sony and the reality show

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What were the issues between the channel, Sony, and you?

I wouldn't like to talk about those issues now since everything has been amicably sorted out. My association with Sony and Indian Idol is not a month or a year old. We go back a long way — from Season One to Season Five.

In these five years, Sony has become like my extended family. And like any normal family, we too have our share of disagreements and differences. But now, all those issues and concerns have been put to rest. We are back together to create magic, once more.

But buzz is that the channel has approached Bappi Lahiri and Mika Singh to replace you on the show.

I don't know anything about this. You will have to speak to the channel on this subject.

Reportedly, the channel may not retain you for Season Six.

Once again, it's not something that I can comment on. You will have to speak to Sony about this. However, I must say that during our joint address to the media recently, Ajit Thakur, business head, Sony Entertainment, had remarked, "I cannot imagine Indian Idol without Anu Malik".

How has Season Five been so far?

It has been one of the finest seasons as far as talent, jury



CHANNEL SPEAK

We personally met Anu to sort out his problems and our discussions have been fruitful. Anu is returning to the show with immediate effect. We would like to point out that Anu has been with Indian Idol since its inception and we value our association with him. He has been the star face of the show and has

always contributed significantly in making our show a success. He has and will continue to be an important part of Indian Idol as a distinguished celebrity judge. We are happy to have him back and hope to continue with our mission to find that one voice that will touch the heart of millions on Season Five.

- Danish Khan
Head of Marketing, Sony Entertainment Television

and hosts are concerned. The bar has been raised.

Our new anchors are refreshing and there is great chemistry between the two new judges, Sunidhi Chauhan and Salim Merchant.

The number of contestants is more than the last four seasons. It's fabulous to see the show grow. I feel like a proud father.

Have you found anyone whom you can rope in to give playback for one of your forthcoming projects from the many contestants?

Each composition has a specific requirement and you go with the singer you feel will be best suited. I am always ready to for give an opportunity to new talent. But like I said, talent required

on every song is different. It can't be an ad-hoc decision.

What are you looking for in this Season of Indian Idol?

I am looking for that one voice that will touch a billion hearts. We have gone far and wide, covered numerous cities and auditioned more contestants than ever before.

Sunidhi Chauhan and you are supposedly fighting on the sets all the time. True?

All I would like to say on this is that judging is not an easy task. One does have disagreements, they are a part and parcel of your work. We haven't had any fights but there have been differences of opinion. That's bound to happen, we're different individuals with different mindsets.

Whom do you miss having on the show?

Rather than missing anyone, I am enjoying the company of the two new judges on the show. And looking forward to interacting with some of these hugely talented contestants.

A girl wanted you to kiss you on the show. Comment.

(Laughs) That's true. She was a fan and had even tattooed my name on her thigh. Obviously, I didn't allow her to kiss me but instead gave her a 'jaadu ki jhappi'.

Have shows like this made composers and singers more visible?

Absolutely, the show not only provides a platform to thousands of Indians to fulfill their dreams of achieving fame but also brings together India's biggest and most famous singers and music composers.

Today, TV has become an important medium to not only reach out and connect with the viewers. And gives visibility to your work.

Where is your daughter Anmol? She hasn't sung after the 'Talli...' track in Ugly Aur Pagli.

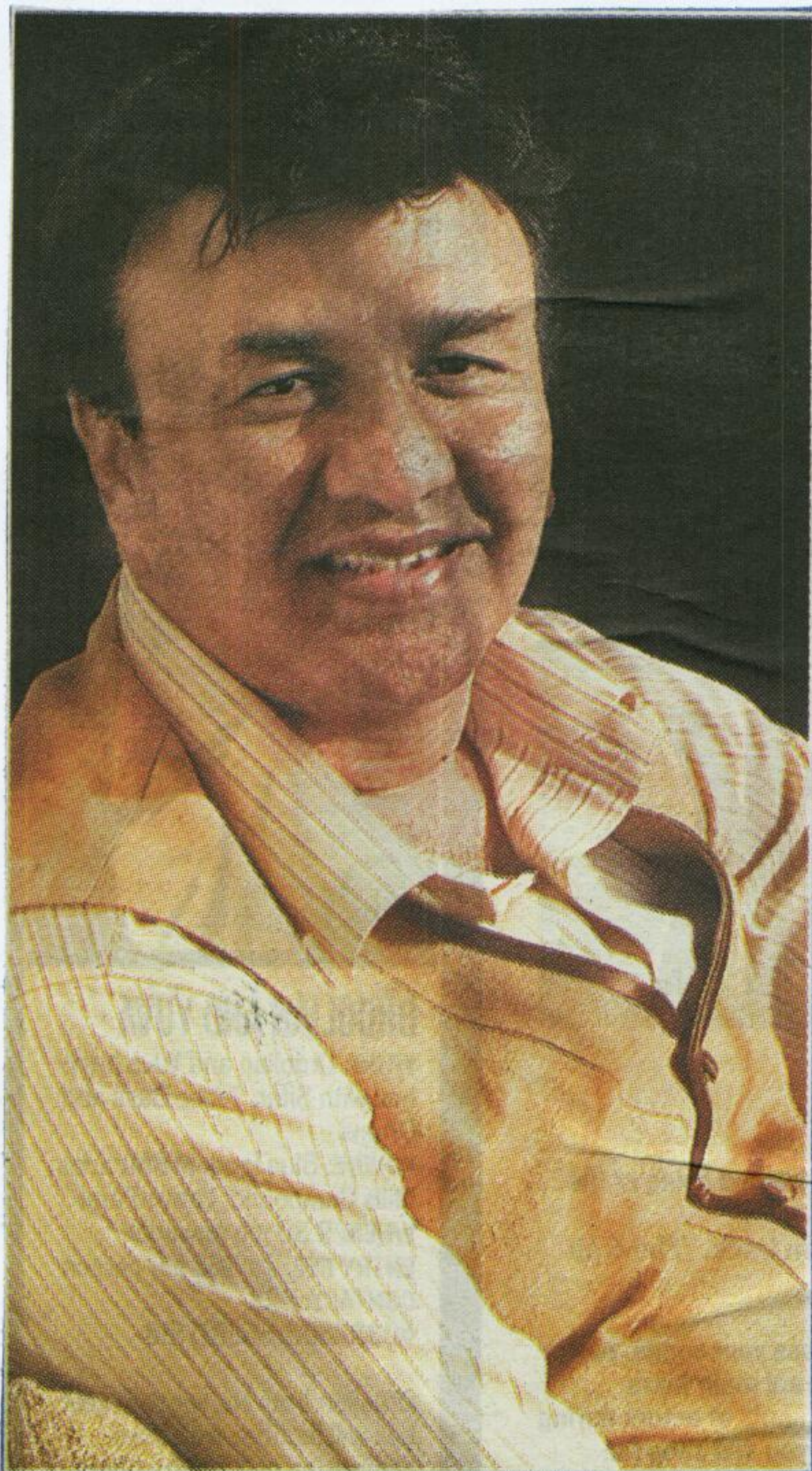
She's studying at the Warwick University in the UK.

It was reported that you wanted to produce a reality show of your own.

Nothing as of now.

Will you be there on the next season of 'Entertainment Ke Lije Kuch Bhi Karega'?

At the moment, I am judging Indian Idol 5. You will have to check with the channel on this.



Q The channel was reconsidering having you on Season Five.

A This is absolutely untrue. I have been associated with Indian Idol since its inception and I value my relationship with Sony. I have been the constant face of the show for four seasons in a row, which proves that I am an integral part of the show. I will continue to be a part of Indian Idol as a celebrity judge for as many seasons as there will be.