Twitter Thread by Kahaniyan, Bas Yun Hi



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Amongst my absolute favourite musicians of all time, one name that is certainly near the top is of Ustad Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan sahab. I don't know if any such data exists, but I am pretty sure he would also be among the most widely sold international artists in India. (1/43)

This is a thread about Nusrat sahab's connections with India - his first performance here, songs blatantly copied from his compositions, his non-film albums done here, and also his work in Bollywood. So buckle up, coz this is gonna be very very loooong. (2/43)

The story starts in 1979, when a certain legend by the name of Raj Kapoor was invited to a Qawwali show in Birmingham, and heard Nusrat sahab performing there. So impressed by his music was Kapoor sahab, that he made up his mind to invite Nusrat sahab to India. (3/43)

Soon after, in early 1980, Rishi Kapoor was getting married to Neetu Singh, and Raj Kapoor promptly invited Nusrat sahab to perform at one of the sangeet ceremonies. The invitation actually was sent through Pakistani actor Mohammad Ali, a mutual contact of the two. (4/43)

Nusrat sahab accepted the invite, and was apparently excited with the prospect of also visiting Ajmer Sharif. His performance at the sangeet was attended by the who's who of Indian film and music at the time, and he is said to have performed for hours through the night. (5/43)



Rishi ji actually even Tweeted about it twice, in 2015:
https://t.co/WWoIZbu8sg
https://t.co/3Zmresb4HP
(6/43)

> This is wonderful. Nusrat Ali and his dad Fateh Ali first performed on Indian soil in 1980 at my Wedding Sangeet https://t.co/JOXxWL1vMw
>
> — Rishi Kapoor (@chintskap) August 25, 2015

Given that this was his first visit and first performance in India, Nusrat sahab performed a rendition of a Meerabai bhajan, one that he had not covered till then - Saanson Ki Mala Pe Simrun Main Pi Ka Naam. It remained the only Mirabai bhajan he ever performed. (7/43)

The tune we associate with the bhajan is almost certainly Nusrat sahab's original composition. Such was the impact of the rendition that it was later "adapted" for two different Hindi films - by Nadeem-Shravan for Jeet (1996) and by Rajesh Roshan

for Koyla (1997). (8/43)

Nusrat sahab performing Saanson Ki Mala later: https://t.co/OcRJQX2G58
Jeet: https://t.co/cMjeWFLF0i
Koyla: https://t.co/XjMNftKbAz
Rahat Fateh Ali Khan @ MTV Unplugged: https://t.co/TSUrkzwqdi
(9/43)

That brings us to the story of how so many people blatantly copied Nusrat sahab's tunes and made hit Bollywood songs. There is a looong list of such songs, and a simple search on Google or YouTube will show many results about the same, so I won't get into that. (10/43)

When asked about the same, Nusrat sahab was never bitter about it. In fact, in an interview given to Zee TV in the mid 1990s, he said that he liked Viju Shah's and Anu Malik's adaptations of his song the best.
Interview link: https://t.co/CDqJkfgxRT (11/43)

Going back a bit, a 1981 Dharma film called Nakhuda features a 4:30 long piece from Nusrat sahab's Haq Ali Maula. The vocals are indeed Nusrat sahab and his team's, but the film's copy uploaded on Prime Video doesn't have any mention of Nusrat sahab. (12/43)

So I'm not sure if any official permission was sought or not.
Film piece: https://t.co/t80z9MSDOp
Live performance by Nusrat sahab (with Rahat sahab): https://t.co/5DZM2IAKnA
(13/43)

Sometime in the mid 1990s, seeing how so much of Nusrat sahab's music was being loved in India, albeit through plagiarism, @RahulRawail decided to get him to compose music for his next film. The two met in England, and Nusrat sahab agreed. (14/43)

He had two conditions - he wanted @Javedakhtarjadu to write the lyrics, and Lata Mangeshkar to be available to lend her vocals should such a need arise. Rahul Rawail obviously agreed, and Aur Pyaar Ho Gaya (1997) became Nusrat sahab's first Hindi film. (15/43)

Now another thing is that Bandit Queen was already made, when the work on APHG even started. And both had Nusrat sahab's music. So the reason I think APHG and not BQ is referred to as Nusrat sahab's first Indian film is that BQ was produced in part by Channel 4. (16/43)

When Nusrat sahab came to India and was working on the album with Javed sahab, he played a very high-tempo tune, and told Javed sahab that he's played it for many people, but no one is able to write lyrics on that extremely quick tune. Javed sahab took up the challenge. (17/43)

With the lyrics done, Asha Bhonsle was called on to sing the song, as the composition was peppy, yet very difficult - something that Ashaji is the best in the world at, IMHO. Ashaji rendered the song with perfection, and Nusrat sahab was very happy with the result. (18/43)

Before the final release, however, the tempo of the song was slowed down a bit. I obviously don't know the reason, but it might be to make the song more sing-able. I don't quite like the song, but the intricacies are clear as daylight.
Link: https://t.co/doPPjc31xD (19/43)

I love two other songs from APHG though - Koi Jaane is easily among the best wedding party songs of all time, and Meri Saanson Mein has @uditnarayan_ at his melodious best
Koi Jaane: https://t.co/JVgcfHB0LU
Meri Saanson Mein: https://t.co/qsNpdv6buT
(20/43)

While Nusrat sahab and Javed sahab were working on APHG, HMV Music approached them with the idea of doing a non-film album. They agreed, and Javed sahab named the album "Sangam" - as it was a confluence of music and poetry, and of India and Pakistan. (21/43)



Sangam comprised six songs - three of which were a part of Javed Akhtar's poetry collection Tarkash (1995). Out of the three songs written specially for Sangam, one is the song that was probably the introduction of millions of people to Nusrat sahab. (22/43)

I'm talking about Afreen Afreen. Such is the power of the song that the Coke Studio recreation (we should expect that about Nusrat sahab songs) has I kid you not 317 million + views on YouTube. Various uploads of the original have only about 25-30 mn in total. (23/43)

The original music video for Afreen Afreen which released alongside the album featured Lisa Ray (of Kasoor and Water fame) and Himanshu Malik (of Tum Bin fame).
Official upload of music video (incomplete): https://t.co/a8McWCv61t
Full video: https://t.co/cvIapnEgLl
(24/43)

I'm linking some other renditions of Afreen Afreen here:
Nusrat sahab performing it live with his team, including Rahat sahab: https://t.co/clhZUwoUQ1
Nusrat sahab performing it at some function, evidently in honour of the album Sangam: https://t.co/C3ugvZuFyr
(25/43)

Not just versions, covers, and adaptations, the song also inspired a standup comedy piece by @adg_5 . Yes it was based more on the Coke Studio version, but the root obviously lies in the OG.
Link: https://t.co/hQxw63gK31
(26/43)

One of the nazms from Tarkash that was adopted for Sangam was Jism Damakta. I heard that song for the first time, strangely so, in a Dabur Amla hair oil advertisement in 2019 or 2020.
Ad link: https://t.co/bbllf0vs6s
Song link: https://t.co/mjwPfdCjOF
(27/43)

One person greatly inspired by Nusrat sahab has to be @arrahman . His album Vande Mataram (1997) featured a beautiful song Gurus of Peace, co-sung by both of them. Rahman apparently had to go to Pakistan, to record Nusrat sahab. Song link: https://t.co/C9T8Q8EDjW (28/43)

Rahman has openly credited Nusrat sahab for influencing his sufi ways, and also dedicated Tere Bina from Guru to Nusrat sahab. In the BTS video for @cokestudio's Tu Kuja Mann Kuja (season 9), @shirazuppal tells a story about himself, AR and Nusrat sahab. (29/43)

Uppal calls AR his ustad and tells that AR considered Nusrat sahab as his ustad - Nusrat sahab had given Tu Kuja to AR as a lesson. Uppal searched for 2 days in Lahore, and found 1 cassette that had Nusrat sahab's rendition of Tu Kuja. And he gifted that to AR. (30/43)

Nusrat sahab's rendition of Tu Kuja Mann Kuja: https://t.co/c7ut4FaoKs
Coke Studio version of Tu Kuja Mann Kuja (one of the very few recreations of a Nusrat sahab song that I love): https://t.co/NqGwjXKZe4
BTS video: https://t.co/Lgm2TeY3LV
(31/43)

Talking of other films, Nusrat sahab composed and sang for Kartoos, sang for Nadeem-Shravan in Dhadkan (Dulhe Ka Sehra), and sang for Anand-Milind a song that was to be used in Indian (Sunny Deol), but the film got delayed so the song was used in Dillagi (Tanhai) (32/43)

Dulhe Ka Sehra: https://t.co/frtvEjYMdI
Tanhai: https://t.co/pCLMjbjp3T
Ishq Ka Rutba: https://t.co/GZChcaHM0X
All work he did in India was done between 1995 and 1997. Both Dulhe Ka Sehra and Tanhai were recorded in 1997, but the films came out much later. (33/43)

One film I haven't talked about is Kachche Dhaage (1999). @milanluthria's directorial debut was the last film Nusrat sahab composed for. He was extremely overweight and couldn't fit in cars, so he stayed put in his Mumbai hotel as moving around was very difficult. (34/43)

When the film's lyricist, Anand Bakshi sahab, asked Nusrat sahab to meet and work together, he obviously denied, and asked Bakshi sahab to come to the hotel. But Bakshi sahab thought he was being pricey, so he too rejected the offer. (35/43)

Moreover, when Bakshi sahab sent some lyric drafts, Nusrat sahab didn't like them much, and when Nusrat sahab sent some tunes, Bakshi sahab was not impressed. This happened for 2-3 weeks, but then Nusrat sahab asked his people to take him to Bakshi sahab's house. (36/43)

Nusrat sahab fit into the car only in a lying down position, and then was taken up to Bakshi sahab's first floor flat by 8 people on their shoulders. Seeing the pain that Nusrat sahab went through to bury the hatchet, a teary eyed Bakshi sahab apologized and patched up. (37/43)

They then started working in Nusrat sahab's hotel room itself, and made some brilliant songs - some new compositions, and some reimagining of Nusrat sahab's own compositions. For one song, a few male singers were tried but Nusrat sahab wasn't satisfied. (38/43)

So he asked for someone he had met in some shows, someone who had never ever sung for a Hindi film before. Said person was called from Jalandhar, but when Nusrat sahab played the composition for him, he said that he won't be able to do it, as some parts were too high. (39/43)

But Nusrat sahab showed faith in him, and told him that only he can sing that song, and he should sing it for Nusrat sahab. So he did. The song was Khali Dil Nahi, and the singer was sufi, folk and pop sensation Hans Raj Hans. (40/43)

My favorite song from Kachche Dhaage, however, is a qawwali sung by Nusrat sahab himself - Is Shaan-e-Karam Ka Kya Kehna
Is Shaan-e-Karam: https://t.co/13h200Y8sW
Khali Dil: https://t.co/KVh6T9mu8M
Khali Dil (Nusrat sahab): https://t.co/3ktPPqsFPF
(41/43)

Unfortunately for the world, this was Nusrat sahab's last album. He passed away on August 16, 1997 due to a sudden cardiac arrest arising out of many pre-existing ailments. He was only 48. We have actors older than that playing college students in our films. (42/43)

His first Bollywood film, APHG, released a day before his death, so the only success he saw in India during his lifetime was that of Sangam. But he was loved - in Pakistan, in India and all across the world - and I’m sure he knew that. (43/43)

A gifted artist, a beautiful human being and one of the best vocalists the world has ever seen, Ustad Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan is alive through his exceptional music, and always will be.
Signing off with one of my favourite Nusrat sahab songs - https://t.co/ZSskEYu47C