

# The Legend..... Amjad Khan

## ‘Kitne aadmi the?’

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When death suddenly visited him on July 27, 1992, Amjad Khan was not even 48yrs old. But a massive cardiac arrest did him in, fatally and forever. Massive, Cruel but that's the one word that could describe everything about him.

His funeral was massive - he died the way he wanted to, with the entire film industry around him. He was heading the Cine Artistes Association at that time, an organization that gave him no profit (he never sought any, anyway) but put him in the role he loved - of solving his colleagues' many bickering. **The day he died, he'd just chaired a meeting and the several problems of friends and colleagues which he always unstintingly took on his own strong shoulders, put that added burden on his heart which gave way suddenly.**



But Amjad Khan wouldn't have wanted to live or to go any other way. He loved the film industry so unquestionably that much earlier, just after the massive (ah, that word again) success of **Sholay**, when he'd met with a near-fatal car accident near Goa, he's sneaked out of bed while recuperating. Holding a stick, he'd gone to a film studio, "Just to stand there and take in the smells of the sets", as he later sheepishly confessed.

**A lover of music and a man who spoke several languages with ease, Amjad Khan was a massive actor. Ever since he touched unimaginable heights of fame as dreaded daku Gabbar Singh in 1975,** Amjad Khan slipped into a variety of roles with efficiency. When renowned filmmaker **Satyajit Ray** came to Mumbai (then known as Bombay) to cast his actors for his first Hindi feature film, apart from Sanjeev Kumar and Shabana Azmi, he wanted no one else but Amjad Khan in a principle role in *Shatranj Ke Khilari*.

In his personal life, Amjad Khan was a man who only became finer as his fame and fortune dramatically shot up. **A complete teetotaler who sipped no liquor but downed dozens of cups of tea every day.** He liked nothing better at the end of the day than to retire to his large bungalow in Golf Links, have wife Shehla lay out a huge spread on the table and

sit at home surrounded by close friends who'd known him since his childhood. That's right. The actor whose fame lives on to this day and who could rub shoulders with any celebrity in the country, was most at home with his handpicked *Bandra gang*.

While Amjad Khan the actor was known to the entire nation, only those who personally interacted with him knew him as a caring man to whom his fortune only meant that he could help that many more people. When Amjad died, the unbelievable number of mourners who'd been helped by him astonished even his own family since he was not the kind of man who donated anything under a spotlight.

**Astonishingly, although Amjad Khan died of a huge heart attack, his fists were not clenched in agony. He died with both his hands wide open, in the giving gesture that he's always lived by.** To those who were fortunate enough to have known him, his death was a stunner because he always seemed so invincible. But perhaps even in death, he remained invincible.....

Come to think of it, **Gabbar Singh** and the man who immortalised the screen character have not really died. Legends don't die, you see.