

News monitored for: Pepsi - Brands



**B**ajake aana." A winking Ranbir Kapoor hands a whistle to M.S. Dhoni and conveys this good luck missive to Team India.

Surjo Dutt, the man who helmed this Pepsi ad campaign bringing the two youth icons together for the first time on screen, has more reasons to follow the T20 World Cup underway in Sri Lanka. The series of five Pepsi commercials he has supervised featuring Ranbir, Dhoni, Virat Kohli and Suresh Raina are on beam between the overs of the high-octane matches. "The first ad of the series that we released on the Net registered 2.5 lakh hits within four days," says the executive creative director of JWT. "Our campaign brief was simple — T20 is not played by conventional rules, so viewers too shouldn't be seeing it in a conventional way."

That's why when a bus full of cricketers is mobbed in an alley, the fans all around start showing them what their responses will be to every move captain Dhoni makes, every sixer Raina hits or every sledging attack that Virat has to face. And when an irritated Captain Not-So-Cool yells:

"Yeh kya tameez hai?" Ranbir speaks for the mob with a goofy smile: "Yeh T20 hai boss. Na tameez se khela jata hai, na tameez se dekha jata hai."

Said Surjo: "That was where the ad was supposed to end. The director, Shujaat Saudagar, improvised with the whistle bit on the spot," giving MSD his second T20

## MEET THE MAN BEHIND THE RANBIR KAPOOR AND TEAM INDIA PEPSI AD FOR THE T20 WORLD CUP



Ranbir Kapoor and M.S. Dhoni in the Pepsi T20 ad

**"DHONI IS SO RELAXED IN FRONT OF THE CAMERA, PERHAPS BECAUSE HE HAS DONE SO MANY ADS. BUT VIRAT (KOHLI) TOOK THE LEAST TIME TO PICK UP INSTRUCTIONS.... PERHAPS IT WAS THE LOCAL BOY FACTOR. VIRAT HAILS FROM WEST DELHI, CLOSE TO SUBHASHNAGAR WHERE WE WERE SHOOTING"**  
— SURJO DUTT

whistle connection after Whistle Podu, the Tamil theme song for his IPL team Chennai Super Kings.

Though Surjo side-steps questions on the cricketers' acting skills, he picks Dhoni as the easiest to direct and Virat as the quickest on the uptake. "Dhoni is so relaxed in front of the camera,

perhaps because he has done so many ads. But Virat took the least time to pick up instructions."

The crew had hired some extras to form the crowd required for the ad but was shocked to find thousands gathered at the shoot site in Delhi. "The area was chock-a-block till two streets away. Thankfully that did not hamper our work."

Despite the presence of a movie star, it was Team India's youngest gun for whom the crowd cheered the loudest. "Perhaps it was the local boy factor: Virat hails from west Delhi, close to Subhasnagar where we were shooting."

Surjo, a 35-year-old who dropped out of college to get into advertising as a trainee, has pretty much worked with all the big names in Bollywood over the years — Shah Rukh Khan to Salman Khan, A.R. Rahman to Amitabh Bachchan, Saif Ali Khan to Kareena Kapoor. "This was my third ad with Ranbir after the Change the Game series (for Pepsi) and another featuring father (Rishi Kapoor) and son (Ranbir) together."

But of them all, the one ad he picks for generating massive emotional connect was the one featuring Sourav Ganguly, dropped at that point from the team and asking the audience, "Mera naam Sourav Ganguly hai. Bhule toh nahin?"

"It was brave of Pepsi to do that ad and even braver of Dada to agree to do it," the Chittaranjan Park-born Bengali signs off.

**Sudeshna Banerjee**  
Which cricketer do you like watching in ads and why?  
Tell @t20@abp.in