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## **Sean Baker's obsession with sex** workers finds a voice in Cannes title Anora

## By Gautaman Bhaskaran

May 22, 2024 03:49 PM IST



Sean Bakers brings a spin to the Cinderella story with his latest feature, Anora, that premiered at Cannes Film Festival.



Director Sean Baker and cast member Mikey Madison pose during a photocall for the film Anora at the Cannes Film Festival.(REUTERS)

This has not been a great year for Cannes Film Festival selections. But if you dig hard enough, you might find a rare diamond. Sean Baker's Anora was one, and the Russian language work was hilarious. It is about a sex worker who falls in love with a Russian nobleman. He is just 21, really a boy, but she is older, not necessarily wiser. The movie got a 7.5-minute standing ovation, largely because of its humour. (Also read: Internet dissects Kelly Rowland and security guard drama on Cannes red carpet)

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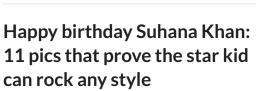
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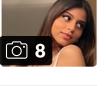
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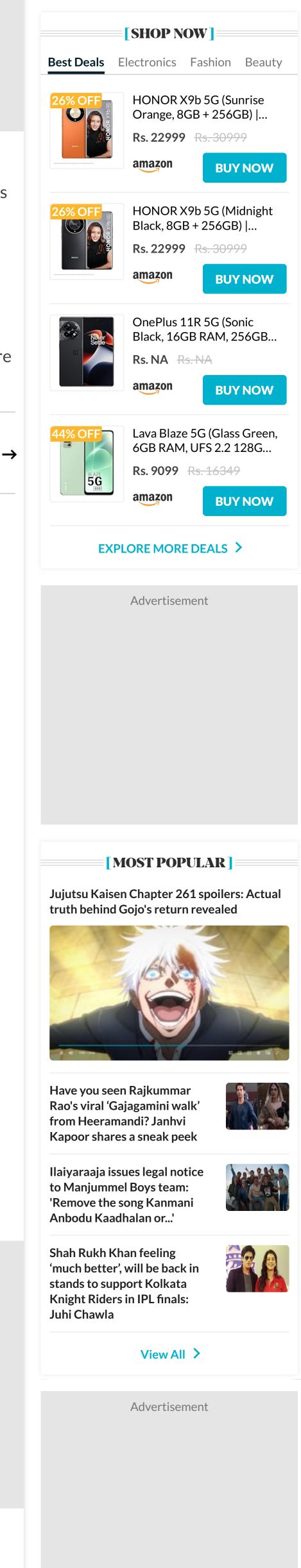


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#### **About Anora**

In Anora, Mike Madison (Once Upon a Time In Hollywood) is 23, and is a stripper in New York. When she meets Vanya (Mark Eydelshteyn), Cupid strikes. He is stinking rich, and takes her to Las Vegas, where the two, on an impulse, get married. Then begin their woes. His parents are aghast and send Russian hoodlums to trace the couple and annul their marriage. It is a hilarious romp where the gangsters are more funny than vicious.

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Baker has made other films, including Tangerine. It was shown at 2015 Sundance, and was shot on a smart phone. The clarity was remarkable.

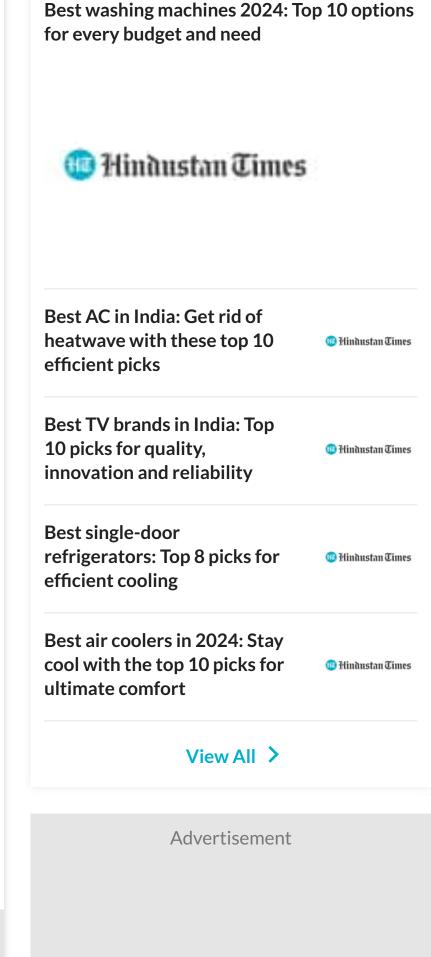
A pattern to pursue?

He loves to film sex workers. In Tangerine, he made a movie about street walkers in Hollywood. They stood below tangerine-coloured lights. Hence the title. Next, he did The Florida Project in which a woman and her daughter struggle with their daily existence.

Baker is now part of the Cannes landscape. Red Rocket was screened in Competition and traces a retired porn star who has to camp out of his former wife's sofaset in Texas.

However, Anora marks a shift in this script. It is about rich people, although a streetwalker remains at the centre. The work reminded me of Pretty Woman or even My Fair Lady, where poor women get lucky when rich men fall in love with them. Maybe as Baker said in a press meet, it is a Cinderella story.

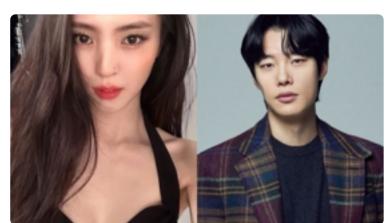
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