



HITLIST

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HRITHIK'S AJEEB GUZAARISH

Asks Barbara Mori not to come to India to promote her Spanish film because it could draw attention away from his own flick

PS: Both films release the same week

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Thanks to her Kites co-star Hrithik Roshan, Barbara Mori won't be flying down to Mumbai later this month to promote her Spanish flick *My Brother's Wife*. Mori's film releases on November 19, the same day as Hrithik's *Guzaarish*.

Sources close to the actor reveal that he does not want Barbara in the city at a time when he will be promoting his film. He believes Mori's presence in Mumbai will take attention away from his film and focus it onto them, given their history.

Don't spoil it for me!

It is learnt that Roshan Jr called Mori and categorically asked her not to come to Mumbai, even if this meant not promoting her own film. *Guzaarish* is a sensitive and an important film for him, and Duggu doesn't want anything to affect the film's chances.

Incidentally, the Barbara-starrer will have a bilingual release in India. The



SOMEONE'S MISSING: A still from *My Brother's Wife*

Hindi version is called *Spanish Beauty* while the English one is called *The Beautiful Wife*. Pen India has bought the nationwide rights to the film.

Says an insider, "The clash of dates has put Hrithik and Barbara's friendship under strain. Initially, Mori had confirmed to Pen India that she would fly down to Mumbai a week earlier (she was expected to arrive on November 12) but after Hrithik's call asking her to stay away, she is now in a fix. She's not happy about being put in this position, but considering that she was brought to India by the Roshans, she has told her producers that she will not be available

to travel to India for her own release."

The distributors have received feelers to move the release date of the Mexican actress' film but they are adamant about releasing the same day as the Sanjay Bhansali film.

The film's distributor Dhawal Gada claims Barbara has gone back on her promise, "We feel ours is a wonderful, emotional story which will connect with Indian audiences. For the same, we corresponded with Ms Mori's manager Oscar for her participation in the promotions, beginning November 12. Her manager responded that she would be busy with her play which opens in Mexico on that date. After that, we requested her to give a few video bytes for the promotions and that we'd even organise a crew in Mexico to cover it, but are still awaiting a response!"

Meanwhile, Duggu had this to say when contacted, " *My Brother's Wife* is one of the movies we watched that concluded our search for the female lead in *Kites*. It's an award-winning film with a spectacular performance by Barbara. I wish it all the success."



AKSHAY WANTS INTERNATIONAL KHILADIS

WANTS TO TAKE HIS KARATE CHAMPIONSHIP GLOBAL



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Thrilled with the response to his all-India karate championships in the last two years, Akshay Kumar now plans to make it an international activity. He wants children from other Asian nations to participate.

The championship hosted by the actor is very popular and children of all ages participate in it. The actor feels that it should no longer be restricted just to India.

More exposure

Says an insider, "The South Asian countries are far ahead of us in martial arts and Akki feels fighting them, and interacting with them will benefit those learning the art here. He wants the children here to have exposure to the best karate fighters and teachers. He wants children to learn martial arts with the same passion and dedication as children in other South Asian countries do. Like a boy from a every rural family is sent to the armed forces to become a soldier, he hopes that a child from every family will be enrolled in karate."

The *Khiladi* admits, "Yes. Taking the championships to an international level is

on the cards. The response we have received over the last few years has been phenomenal. We have received over 5300 applications in the last 15 days. I am confident we will see success even with an international karate championship. India has some extreme talent and I'm doing all I can to expose it. I couldn't be more pleased with every single one of them. All the adults and children take this competition very seriously — every opponent was there to win — there are guys and girls who can seriously kick ass.... I have already prepared them for the fact that next year we are making my tournament international and that countries such as Malaysia, Thailand, Japan, Indonesia, will be competing with India's finest karate champions. I'm already looking forward to next year! Karate will one day be our national sport or at least in our top two."

Apart from inviting international karate students, Akki is also planning to host the international championship at a foreign city with a tie-up with the host country. However AK maintains, "Right now, I want to host the championships only in India and I want to show the world what a great host India is."

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— AKSHAY KUMAR