

Neil Nitin Mukesh in a stunt mishap

One minute this way or that, and it could've been fatal for Neil Nitin Mukesh of 'Johnny Gaddar' fame.

'Fortunately, I had the presence of mind to move out of the way just in time before calamity struck,' shuddered Neil at the thought of near-disaster.

It happened last week when he wasn't looking while shooting a dangerous stunt on the roads of Andheri with action director Shyam Kaushal's 'Freeze', in which Neil plays a photographer on a mission.

Recalling the incident, Neil says: 'It was a carefully planned chase sequence on a highway. I was in an auto-rickshaw and was being chased by a skidding car. It was supposed to swerve to the right, while my auto was supposed to go the other way. Instead, both the vehicles turned in the same direction.'

To the shock of the entire crew, the speeding car hit Neil's auto-rickshaw.

'If I didn't have the quick reflexes and presence of mind to jump out just in time, anything could've happened,' Neil shuddered.

The incident recalls what transpired in Nashik three years ago during the shooting of Rajkumar Santoshi's 'Khakee' when a car lost balance and struck Aishwarya Rai.

'These things happen, but not because of careless planning. No amount of calculation and planning can make you immune to miscalculation during a stunt. I'm game for it because I've lots of stunts in 'Freeze' and also in Kabir Khan's next for Yash Raj Films. But after what happened last week, I intend to take precautions.'

Neil has decided to provide walkie-talkies and uniforms to all his staff.

'That's to make them more easily identifiable and accessible when I'm shooting. That day when I was hit, I looked around for my own staff in the chaos. I couldn't find a single person, although they were all right there in the crowd. I confess I panicked more because I felt isolated.'

'I'll carry a walkie-talkie at all times. Giving my staff walkie-talkie and uniform is not a form of self-glorification for me. It is a way of joining hands with my own people in a crowd. We all wore uniforms in school for no other reason except that feeling of oneness. These are people who have been with my family for years and treat me like a son. Our driver insists on driving me home and then going home to the other end of the town, no matter what time it is.'

Subhash K. Jha (© IANS / India eNews)