

Smriti Irani shoots for 'Kyunki...' on birthdays Mumbai - Having signed the contract for 'Kyunki Saas Bhi Kahbi Bahu Thi' on her birthday six years ago, Smriti Irani spends a part of her special day each year shooting for it. That's what she did when she turned 30 years of age last week. 'As a tribute to that relationship I always work on my serial on my birthday. I need to remind myself how grateful I am to have landed myself such a splendid life-making job. There were many candidates to play Tulsi. I guess I was just lucky to get it,' says Smriti Irani, television's most beloved icon, in an interview to IANS. Smriti plays the lead role of 'Tulsi' in the popular TV soap by Balajee Telefilms. 'What these 30 years and specially the last six years have taught me is to keep my feet firmly to the ground. 'Zameen se rishta-naate nahin todna chahiye. Udna asaan hai zameen pe tikey rehna bahut mushqil.' 'My family always told me... no matter where you go never forget where you belong to... Never be ashamed of your roots. So many people tell me to hide my penniless past. But I feel it's a matter of pride that I gave up my parents' cushy life to struggle on my own. I chose to do it on my own. For me, that's an achievement.' Considering she plays a much older woman in the serial, her age comes as a surprise to her fans. 'More like a shock,' she laughs. 'They can't believe it at first. I would say it's a tribute to my acting talent that Ekta Kapoor considers me capable of playing a much older woman day-in and day-out,' she says. 'While others try to beat the clock, I'm actually running ahead of my times.' Now with a generation leap happening in Balajee's most beloved soap, Smriti will play an even older woman. 'I don't know what Ekta's plans are. In my six years at Balajee I've never asked her what plans she has for me or the soap... I know I can never get tired of 'Kyunki...' Ekta is smart enough to not make the serial or me boring. I know she'll never make me a lampshade in the corner of the set. She knows my worth.' Not too many people know that Smriti has done a socially relevant talk show 'Kuch Dil Se' or that she owns a production company. 'I'm doing a Gujarati play Manibehn.com which has completed 75 shows in just two months. I play this totally uncouth woman who doesn't know the e of English language. 'It's quite a challenge but a satisfying experience. The biggest challenge in theatre is to not only please the critics but also have audiences on your side. I think I've managed that with Manibehn.com. That apart I've my political office, plus two feature films, one in Bengali and one in Gujarati.' About her two movies, she says: 'Very honestly, I am not interested in playing Tulsi in films. Don't I do enough of that on television? If I take up a film it will have to pose a challenge beyond what I am doing. In the Bengali film I play this very angry physically handicapped jealous and petty woman. The Bengali role is radically different to my TV image. The language won't be a problem as my mom is a Bengali. 'The Gujarati film is a typical masala film. I've never done anything so commercial before. It has me in a before-and-after role -two distinct shades for the two halves. The idea is to do something different in films. Otherwise why would people spend money to watch me in a movie theatre when they can see me for free at home? I can't possibly do mirror-reflections of Tulsi in films.' On her schedule in the coming month, Smriti says: 'In April I am co-producing some TV software with Balajee Telefilms. Then in May the 'Kyunki...' team goes to Haridwar... Yes it's full plate. But better than having an empty plate.'

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