

COVER
STORY

FULL THROTTLE

Rana Daggubati not only puts in some notable work within the entertainment industry, but he also commits to serious labour at the gym. He embraces fitness as a lifestyle to feel and look his best.

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T-shirt & Shoes: Numero Uno

QUICK FAVOURITES

80's movie
Nayakan

Music genre
Changes with my mood

Season
Winter

Sport to play
Kabaddi

Holiday destination
Home

Way to relax
Staying at home

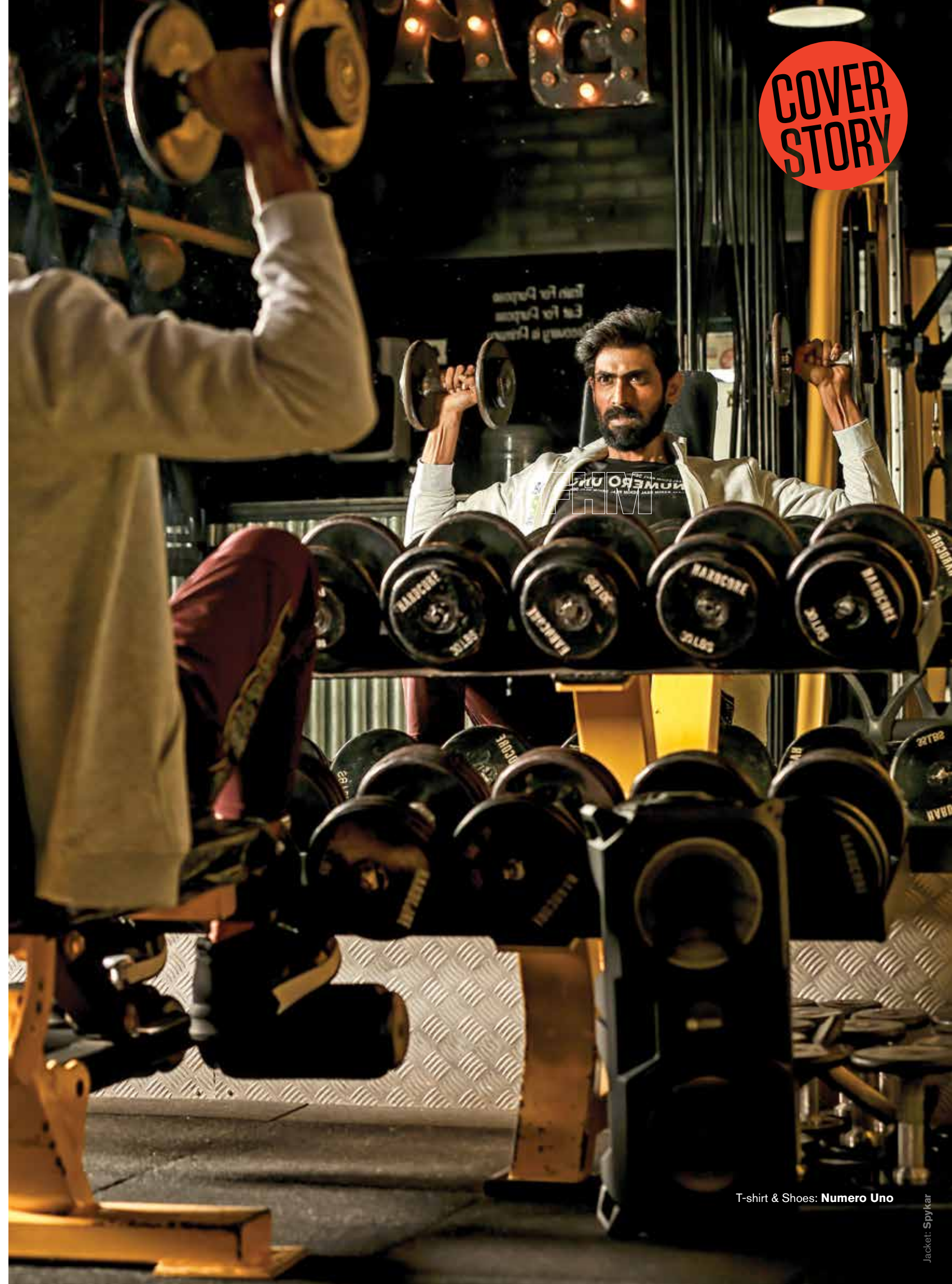


Full Look: **Numero Uno**
Headphones: Maestro by **Zoook**



Track Suit: **Fila India**

Shoes: **Numero Uno**
Thunder XL Speaker by **Zoook**



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FHM

T-shirt & Shoes: **Numero Uno**

Jacket: **Spykar**

It isn't easy to talk mid-workout, but Rana Daggubati manages to pull it off in this charming and motivational interview, where he takes us through his cinematic journey that started out from him being the guy behind the camera to the one in front of it. Standing an astounding six feet plus tall — currently, he has been flaunting his lean physique, which is also a transformation for his upcoming project *Haathi Mere Saathi*. He had initially hit headlines for his brawny physique and fierce expressions as seen in *Baahubali: The Beginning*. Edited excerpts...

How did the switch from being an entrepreneur and visual effects coordinator to cinema come about?

The switch really happened in the year 2007-2008, when visual effects was not such a big thing in films. We were a smaller service

house back then; after which I sold out the business, and went into gaming for a very brief time before I began acting in films. Now, there was a different kind of cinema and stories that I preferred over others, for which my first step was to take time off and learn acting. Thereafter, I enrolled myself in theatre classes. For me it was a transition from storytelling to acting. After a year, I received my first film - *Leader* (2010).

After making your Telugu debut in 2010, you made your 2011 Bollywood debut in *Dum Maaro Dum* which marked you as a promising newcomer. How do you look at your career graph from then to now?

Dum Maaro Dum happening right after *Leader* was probably the best thing that could happen to me. I was exposed to two different industries, their styles of storytelling and various filmmakers; it opened a world of opportunities which was larger than that of Telugu cinema. As an

actor, my constant effort is to be a part of films that have stories which cross language and emotional borders—the ones that can travel far and wide. I have done films in Tamil, Telugu and Hindi and further aim to showcase my hardwork across mediums.

Ghazi and *Baahubali* became extremely successful franchises for me, that placed me on the world map. Moreover, recently I have been in a positive spirit, and believe that's the *mantra* I need to follow for years to come.

Having established yourself as one of the leading actors in Telugu cinema, and also being able to achieve pan-Indian appeal by taking up a variety of roles, from supporting to leading characters, in different languages; what have your learnings and challenges been?

After working in multiple industries, I am more aware of the insights that are at play, be it the thought

process of various directors, the fitness philosophy of gym trainers, and more so the social and economic differences that are vividly apparent in each of them. Each industry has opened up and welcomed me with open arms thereby giving me a boost in my journey.

The challenge would be making a film in multiple languages, as you have to repeatedly act and enact the same instances again and again. Such as, in the case of my upcoming film — *Hathi Mere Saathi*, which should be out in the summer of 2020, wherein we shot thrice with an independent cast. There were Bollywood actors for the Hindi version, and Tamil actors for the Tamil version yet a few of us remain constant in the film. Even though it might look difficult in the beginning, but the end result comes out to be fruitful, as it gets delivered across language barriers.

Throughout your career, you haven't been afraid to play

the anti-hero, and many of your roles have had grey shades. Is that a choice you make?

The choice of the role whether its good or bad, negative or positive really doesn't matter as long as I can relate to it. The best aspect of my job is that I get to be a different character with every film, I can give each role my personal touch which allows me to step out of my comfort zone and challenge myself to be a better version of myself as an actor.

In the last two years, the regional boundaries are blurring in Indian cinema. Has *Baahubali* given you the confidence to experiment in the Hindi film industry?

I am a firm believer that art transcends boundaries and unites all. I think *Baahubali* really was a film which helped people, filmmakers and storytellers to dream big. Over the years I have been working on how to break through stigmas and make stories that travel from one place to another. *Baahubali* really was the gateway that made everyone aim big, and unleash their creativity in a sense that would be appreciated by audiences all across Hindi, Telugu, Tamil and Malayalam cinema or even any other region that we went into.

Taking queue from *Baahubali* — as *Bhallaladeva* in the film, we saw a never seen before avatar of yours. Having said that nothing goes down without hard work, patience and dedication. Take us through your fitness transformation process for the role.

The character of *Bhallaladeva* is written and described so majestically that as an actor you aim to go through all sorts of hurdles to do complete justice to it. And my job as an artist requires me to transform my body for every role and each film. I would not advise anyone else to go through such a massive transformation, unless and until they are not into the field of acting.

Given your tall lithe frame and chiselled physique, there must be moments when you are overwhelmed with female attention. How do you handle it, given your shy demeanour?

It does get overwhelming at times but it isn't like I am your ideal romantic hero nor do I act in love story based films. But the bottomline is, when something good is coming your way then one should not question it (laughs).

“FILMS, BEING A VISUAL MEDIUM REQUIRE AN ACTOR TO LOOK THE PART AND THAT IS ENOUGH OF A MOTIVATION FOR ME TO DEDICATEDLY WORKOUT.”

FHM

RAPID FIRE

What do the first 60-90 minutes of your day look like?

I take out time to breathe and enjoy the simple things in life. After that my fitness training depends upon the film that I am working on and my character in it — whether I have to be a big guy or a lean one. I begin with cardio early in the morning or else I try to read a little.

What's one fitness or health myth that people should avoid?

I strongly believe that crash diets are something that people should avoid and rather look for a sustainable way to stay fit.

If you could choose one exercise to do every day for the rest of your life, what would it be and why?

Mixed martial arts and weapon training

What does your daily workout session look like?

My workout session differs from film to film, as I have just lost all the weight since *Baahubali* for a film that I just finished shooting for.

What is that one thing that you enjoy the most about being an actor?

The fact that I am able to transform myself for every role, and do it consistently is what brings in the element of fun.

How many calories do you target at burning on a daily basis?

I was bad at math even as a child which holds true even today. I don't focus on calories but rather put in more effort towards looking right as films are a visual medium.

How would you define your diet in 3 words?

Sustainable, eating right and non-complex.

How do you push yourself to workout and not procrastinate?

I have a job that requires me to look a certain way, and that's more than enough of a motivation for me.

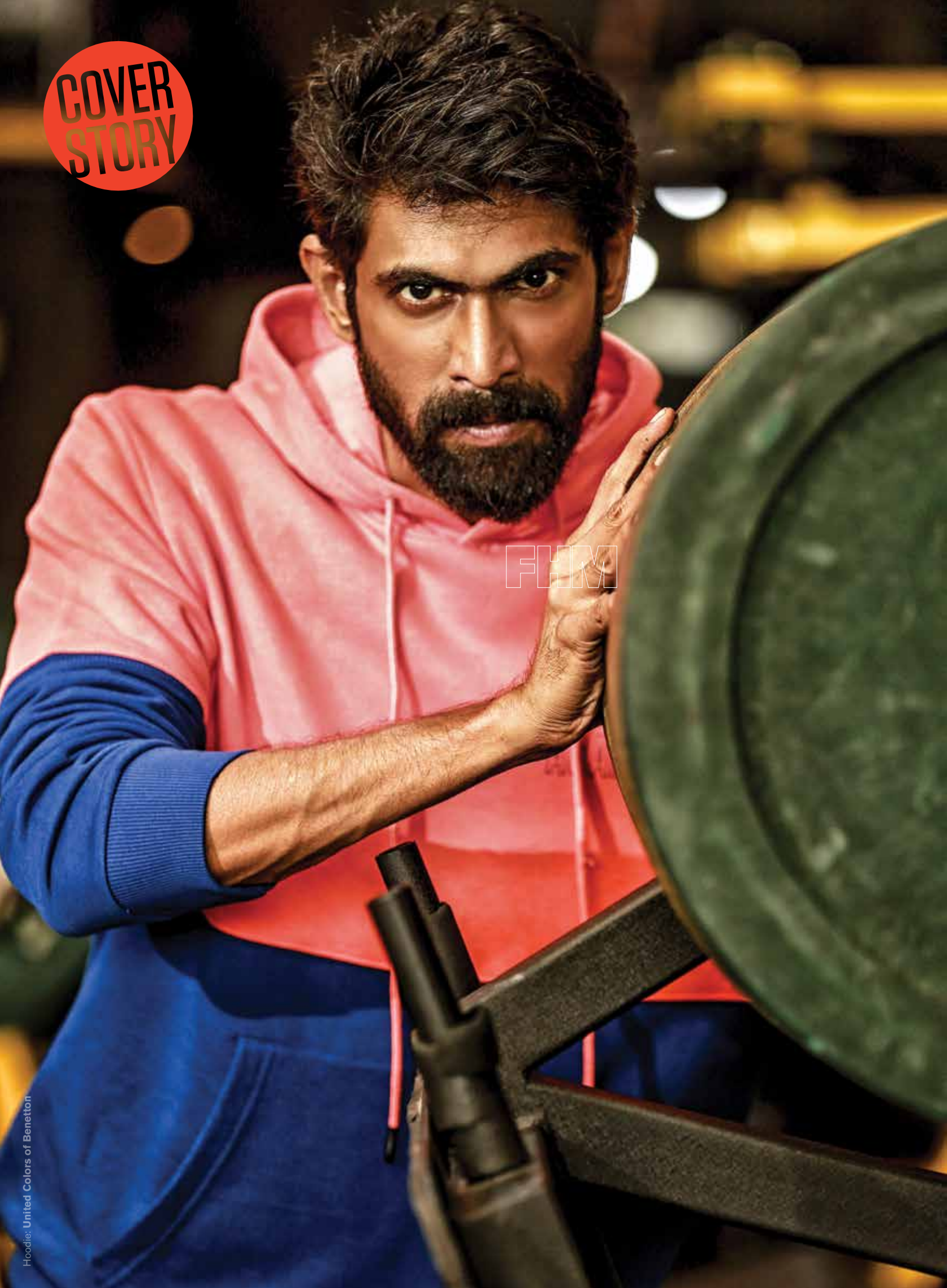
What songs are you enjoying listening to these days?

The theme song of the film *The Irishman*

What are you most excited for in 2020?

I look forward to exploring new fitness training methods.

Shoes: **Numero Uno**
Thunder XL Speaker by **Zoook**



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What gives you the motivation to workout and improve yourself regularly? Also, what does a typical day of eating and exercise look like for you?

The motivation for me comes from the character that I am pursuing, because most of them are action-based films where one needs a lot of physical transformation. That is the time when I am constantly on a diet which drives me to achieve the physique that I want.

Have you thought of exploring the digital medium? Also do you see fitness and technology really being effective together?

The digital medium is completely changing the way filmmakers and the audience view content. There is so much happening, and herein filmmakers have the freedom to narrate a story by stepping back in time. And they also have the opportunity to create masterpieces that can be 100 hours, 20 hours or even 10 minutes long. I think as a platform the digital space offers a completely different narrative, and I look forward to doing something in the realm for sure.

Fitness and technology are meant to be together, and today you can witness a lot of tech in fitness, be it the apps that monitor how you train and what you eat to even the machines that you use. But I think I am still a little more basic in that sense — I like following simple diet plans and lifting heavy weights while I train at the gym.

What is your take on nutrition and supplements?

While I was training for a complete 360-degree physique transformation in *Baahubali*, I was required to eat a certain amount of carbohydrates and protein to look a certain way. I was training to become a big guy who is immensely powerful. But those supplements were all taken for the film. Nowadays, I only eat as much as I want to, since there is no requirement for me to become *Bhallaldeva* at the moment again.

If you could have one cheat day and eat anything without any consequences, what all would you indulge in?

I live in Hyderabad, and a cheat day for me is mostly the typical cuisine that the state boasts of, such as *Biryani* and a lot of meat, I think

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that is pure indulgence.

The entertainment industry comprises of hectic schedules with unending working hours, how are you so dedicated to working out?

There is a noteworthy saying by Joe Weider, “*Find time for fitness, not excuses,*” and I abide by it. Films being a visual medium require an actor to look the part and that is enough of a motivation for me. When I need to look right then I make sure to take time out to workout no matter what.

What kind of a workout are you following these days, given that you have to constantly work on your body transformation for every role?

My last two films — *N.T.R.: Kathanayakudu* wherein I play the role of N. Chandrababu Naidu

required me to look like him when he was very young. For the same role I had to drop a lot of weight that I had initially gained for *Baahubali*. And in my upcoming film *Haathi Mere Saathi* I was required to be strong but also very lean as my character lives in a jungle.

For this transformation I was required to eat lesser carbohydrates and focus more on cardiovascular and athletic training. My next project — *Hiranaykhasyap*, will be starting soon, and it requires me to bulk back up and you will see a slightly bigger version of me in the next couple of months.

Tell us something about your upcoming projects.

I have a film called *Haathi Mere Saathi* coming out this summer, wherein I play a man who has been living in the jungle for the past 25 years. My role demanded a physical transformation where I was leaner and had a long beard. Part of the film will be out in January 2020.

How was your experience of shooting with FHM India?

I really liked it as it was a smooth sailing process, and I would like to thank the entire team.

Full Look: **Numero Uno**



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WHAT'S THE FIRST THING THAT COMES TO YOUR MIND WHEN YOU HEAR?

Guilty Pleasure
Haleem and Biryani

Power
Comes from within

Desire
Does not stay constant

Love
Still trying to figure it out

Fitness
Lifestyle

Strength
Comes from within

Versatility
My job as an actor