

Ananya Panday: The Gen-Z Bollywood Star Who Feels Like Home

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At 26, Ananya Panday stands at a crossroads of Bollywood glamour and Gen-Z authenticity—and The Nod Magazine’s September 2025 cover captures that intersection in full flourish. Styled by Priyanka Kapadia and shot by Ashish Shah, the Elias-Gup-fashioned spread doesn’t just showcase her elegance—it underscores how deeply she resonates with a generation raised on a screen.

Rain or Shine, Always Radiant

The feature starts amid a torrential Mumbai downpour that transformed Ballard Estate’s cobblestone streets into glossy mirrors. Despite sitting through interviews and enduring traffic, Panday arrives looking immaculate—her hair unfazed, her energy unyielding. In a drenched, neo-classical studio setting, she surveys racks of sequins and style, mentally trying looks for upcoming red-carpet events.

Born Digitally, Felt Authentically

Ananya leans into her digital roots—born in 1998, the year Google launched. She embodies Gen-Z cultural durability in how she speaks, the references she drops (“bro,” “The Summer I Turned Pretty,” cheat-day chilli chicken from Royal China), and the unfiltered way she lives. This digital-native authenticity is her brand—the one her audience sees as genuine.

Gen-Z’s Everyday Superstar

Between shots, she doesn’t check hair or makeup—she takes selfies. BeReal moments, doomscrolling feeds, sharing music tastes—she even shapes the shoot’s vibe with her obsessions. “Everyone on set was on BeReal,” D’Cunha recalls. “At one point, she’d be taking photos there because you can’t post during a shoot. It became part of our schedule.”

Off-camera, she’s strategic. Despite limited theatrical outings in 2025—*Kesari Chapter 2* gave her a serious character leap—she took a pause: a Mykonos getaway, Miami holiday, and then back into shooting *Call Me Bae* Season 2. Her film slate, including *Tu Mera Mein Teri*, *Mein Tera Tu Meri* with Kartik Aaryan and *Chand Mera Dil* with Lakshya Sen, is paced rather than rushed.

A Brand Force Beyond Acting

Ananya’s digital ease extends to brand power. As the first Indian ambassador for Chanel, she aligns with Margot Robbie and Margaret Qualley in style pedigree. But endorsements range from Lakmé to Google Pixel to dog food—she brings the same trust to intimate and luxe brands alike.

Her spontaneous delight—like seeing her face on a phooljhadi (sparkler) box and squealing “Look, mom! I’m on a phooljhadi packet”—showcases her endearing normalcy amid celebrity. That’s the dynamic mix fans love: star appeal wrapped in girl-next-door charm.

As the shoot stretches into dusk, she remains alert, engaged, and lighthearted—always humming to her playlist, mostly Lana Del Rey, a soft soundtrack to scenes of couture and candor. In one glowing moment amid the lights and humidity, she shrugs off the extraordinary with a simple line: “I don’t think of myself as extraordinary. I think of myself as me. And that’s enough.”[The Nod Mag](#)

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