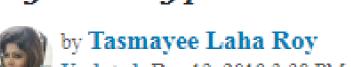
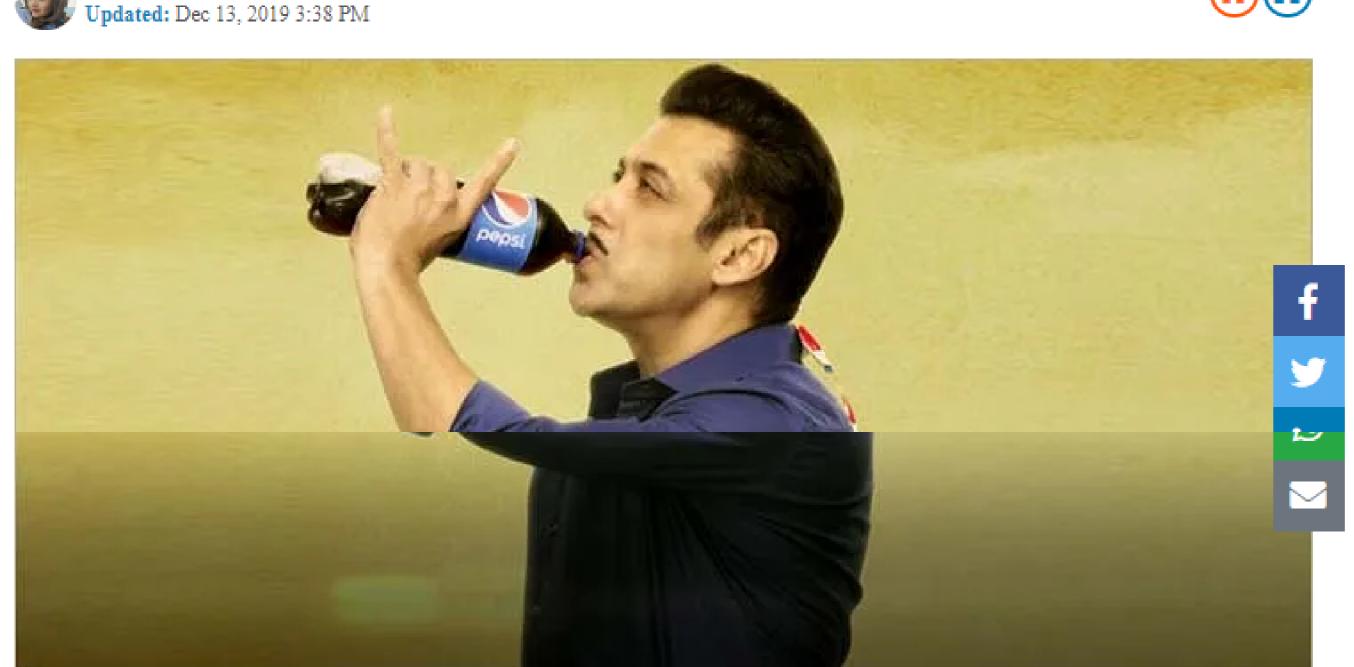
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Pepsi to raise its fizz factor with Salman's swag

The Dabangg star looks set to woo the endorsement world again with his mass appeal, say industry pundits





Salman Khan is back. This time it's not just with the blockbuster franchise 'Dabangg 3' but also in the endorsement world as Pepsi's new brand ambassador.

However, this time there is more to 'Brand Salman'. Bagging a deal with Pepsi to be the face of the brand has put the 53-year-old Khan back in the endorsement game and how. After building the story with Thums up's 'Aaj kuch Toofani Karte Ha', he will now be endorsing competitor cola brand's 'Har Ghoont Mein Swag' proposition.

Like every other actor, Salman has also had his good and bad days at the Box Office, but courtroom dramas and controversies had put him off the radar for brands for some time now. In 2016, Coca Cola dropped him as the brand ambassador for 'Thums Up' after four years of association with him. Prior to that, he was the face of another aerated drink - Mountain Dew.

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With a brand value of \$55.8 million, as per the fourth edition of the Duff & Phelps report on India's most valuable celebrity brands, Salman holds the sixth place after the likes of Deepika Padukone, Akshay Kumar and Ranveer Singh.

However, now with Pepsi in his kitty, the Dabangg star has instantly added credibility and recognition to his brand image.

But why did Pepsi choose Salman? For the brand it was his 'swag' that works. "Over the last year, SWAG has been the underlying message throughout Brand Pepsi's campaigns, celebrating the innate self-belief of the Indian consumer today," said a PepsiCo India spokesperson.

Not just the 'Har Ghoont Mein Swag' campaign, Pepsi will also be launching its association with Salman by tying up with 'Dabangg 3'.

Brand experts agree with Pepsi's take on Salman's 'swag' factor but they have more to add. "Like every other retail brand or e-commerce brand Pepsi too is upbeat about Tier II, Tier III and even Tier IV markets and these are the areas where controversies around Salman don't matter. People in these markets idolize him and that is what the soft drink brand has been cashing in on. If we look at the urban crowd, there isn't much demand for aerated drink given the sudden emphasis on being fit and eating healthy," said entrepreneur Sandeep Kohli who is best known for bringing KFC to India.

"Salman's mass appeal is his another big advantage. The reason behind the actor bagging a big fat cheque from Big Boss for years now is this mass appeal. Pepsi is next in line to cash on this swag and command over the masses."

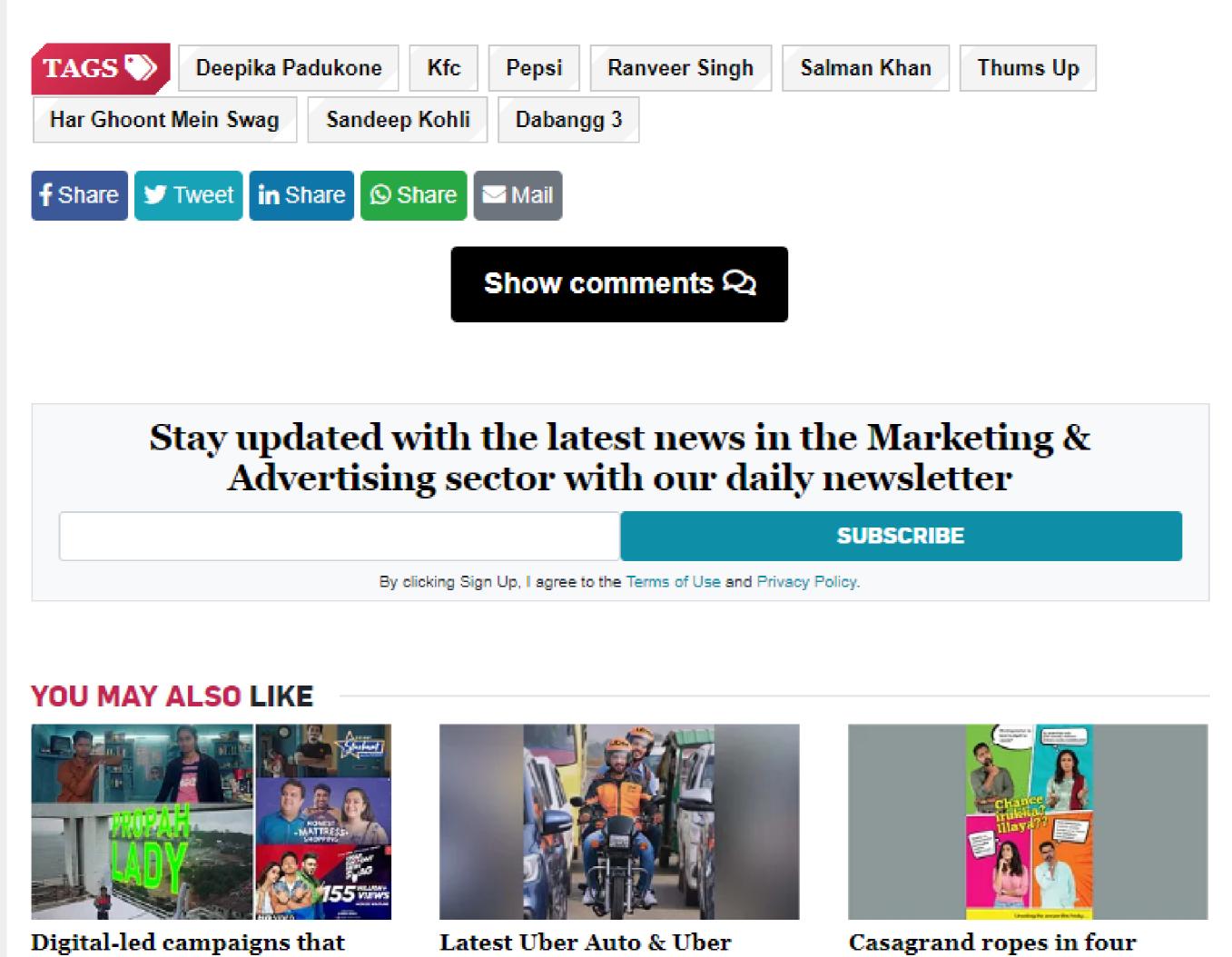
Sharing another side of this story is Chandan Bagwe, Brand Consultant and Founder & MD of C Com Digital. Getting Salman on board is part of the long battle between Coca Cola and Pepsi, says Bagwe.

"Although Coca Cola had dropped Salman, their four-year association had been very fruitful. It is now a huge win for Pepsi to get him on board. This takes the brand rivalry to new heights. In the US, Coca Cola and Pepsi loyals don't mix their drinks. While in India the loyalty issue is not on the same scale and Khan's involvement with Pepsi will definitely influence his fans while choosing their drink," adds Bagwe.

At the moment, his other endorsements include the likes of eyewear brand Image, Relaxo, Dixcy Scott, Astral Pipes, Bharat Pe, Somany Ceramics, CP Plus and Emami edible oils.

Now, according to people in the know, in less than a week of Pepsi announcing their association with Salman, other brands too have started to approach the star due to the instant credibility that such a deal brings along.

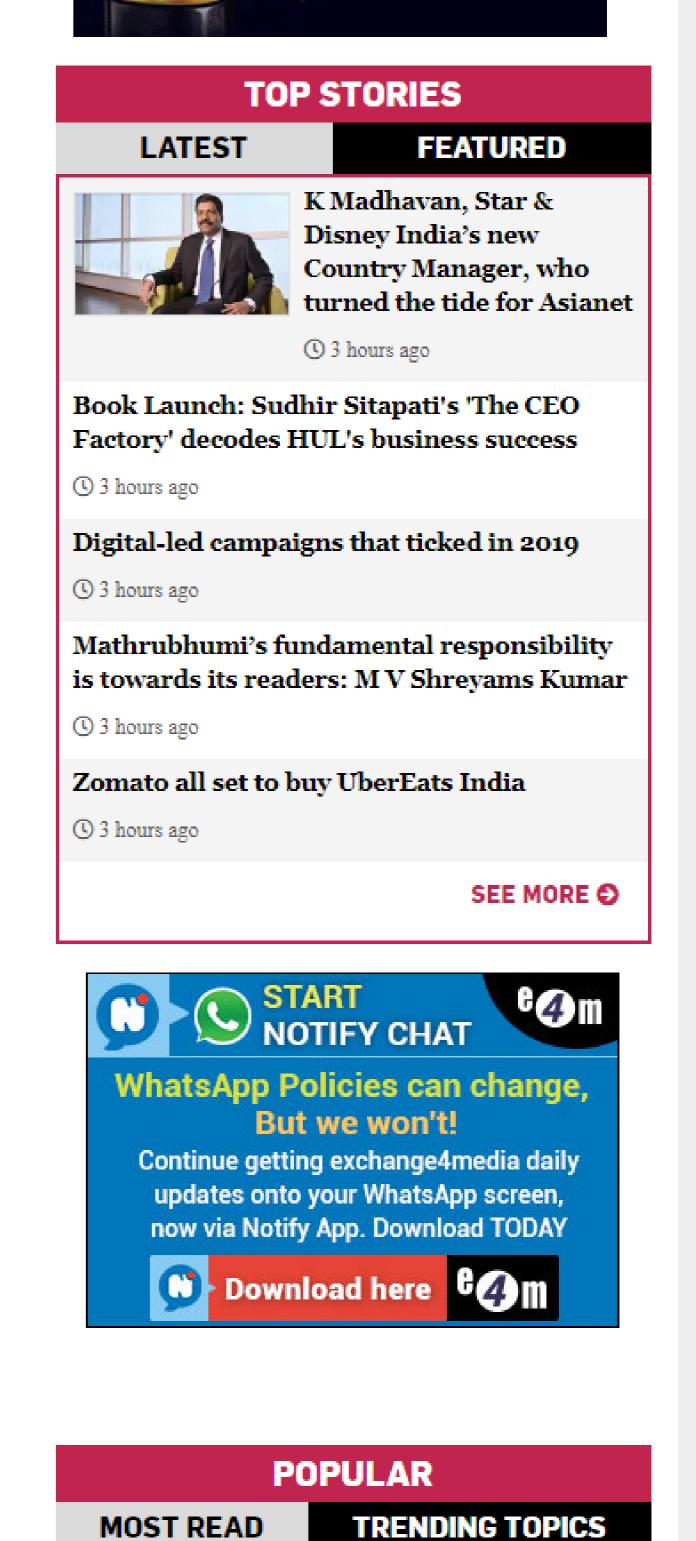
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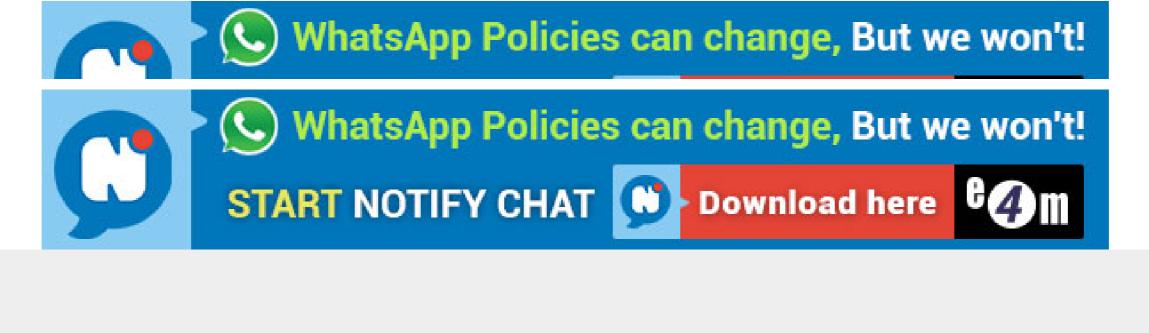
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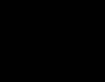
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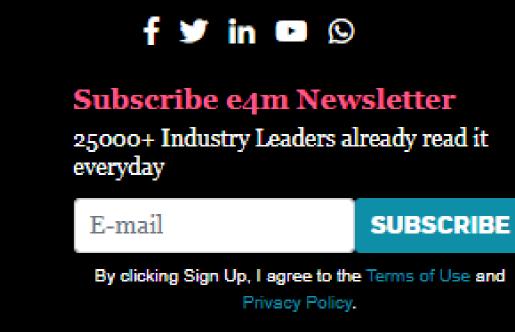
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