

Just for Laughs

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Why won't stand-up comedian Aron Kader be at his usual post at the Comedy Store in Hollywood this week? Because, he's right here in India. OK, so that may not have qualified as a joke, but once the Big Laugh Festival kicks off in Delhi on Wednesday, there shouldn't be a dearth of some rollicking laughter.

The line-up is big—besides Kader, we have the hilarious Sugar Sammy from Canada, who's been nominated as one of the 10 rising talents from around the world by the Hollywood Reporter. Sugar Sammy, better known as Samir Khullar off stage, is currently busy researching for his performance. "This means I am zeroing in on concierges and kitchen staff in hotels to try and understand what Indians like to laugh about," says Sammy. His parents migrated to Montreal before he was born and the only time he's visited India was as a four-year-old. "I have loads of relatives in Delhi, so it's hard work trying to avoid them all," he says. His forte is personal stories, current affairs, TV shows and films. "Right now, everybody's talking about Shah Rukh Khan being questioned at Newark airport. Come to think of it, maybe they did it because they didn't like his films," jokes Sammy, who's been tripping through continents telling joke— this year alone, he's toured Australia and New Zealand, Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Bahrain and China.

Like Sammy who credits the "atmosphere at home, full of jokes and pranks" for his calling in life, Kader looks back at his Palestinian father and Mormon mother "for giving me so many reasons to be a comedian". Kader is a founding member of the famous Axis of Evil Comedy Tour which performed between 2003 and 2007. Expect a healthy dose of Arab humour as well as razor sharp one-liners from the comedian who had the crowds squealing at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and the US Comedy Arts Festival in Aspen. Papa CJ, who will host the show, says, "I will just stand to one side and make fun of everybody." He's recently returned from an international tour and adds that his bag is full of tricks "that lead the audience on a straight line of humour and then, suddenly drop them down a cliff".

Percept D'Mark's Big Laugh Festival will be held on today at Siri Fort. Tickets are priced at Rs 500, Rs 750, Rs 1,000, Rs 1,250, Rs 1,500