

My favourite team is Arsenal

DNA | April 5th, 2009

“My favourite team is Arsenal”

Three years ago, ex-French football star Zinedine Zidane or Zizou visited Bangladesh. Little did he know then that his trip would inspire an entire film. Sooni Taraporewala (She scripted the Oscar-nominated film *Salaam Bombay*) wrote a story around the event which was shot over the last two years. “The film is about an 11-year-old football-crazy boy called Xerxes, who prefers being called Zizou. When Zidane visits Bangladesh, Xerxes prays to his deceased mother to bring the football star to the country,” said Taraporewala. The film released three weeks ago and is running in theatres across the city. **yal** caught up with little Zizou, **Jahan Battivala**



Are your exams over?

Yes. In fact, they got over way back in December. We usually don't have exams before our summer holidays so it isn't very stressful. We have regular classes now. I am very excited about the holidays.

Any plans?

Lots of books, video games and a whole lot of football.

You shot the film two years ago. How did you react when your mother first told you that you will be starring in it?

I must have been very happy. Very very happy. I don't quite remember how exactly I reacted. It was very long ago. But I am sure I must have been very happy.

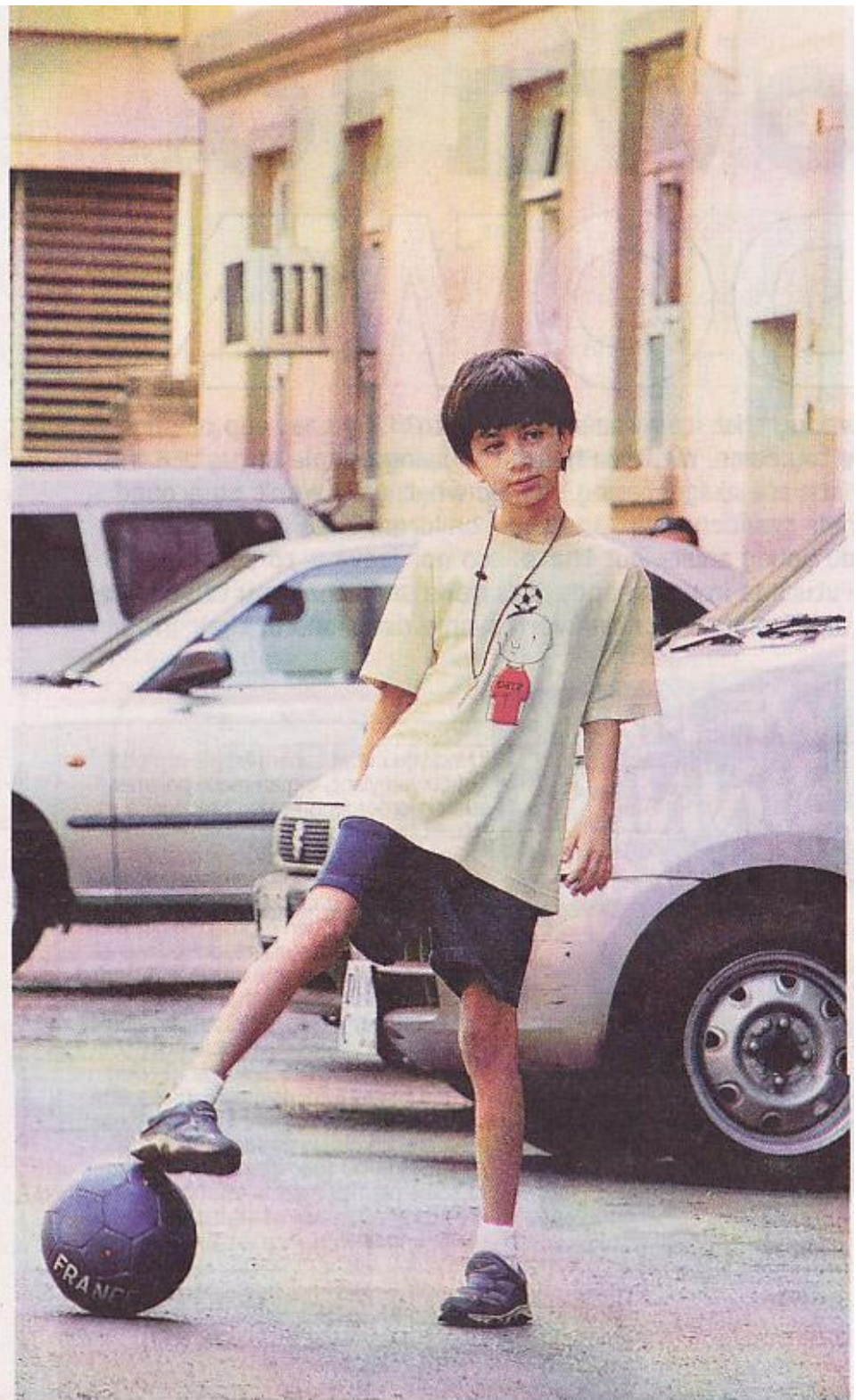
Your mother directed the film. How was it working with her?

It was very comfortable. She knew what I was like at home and she wrote the role accordingly. She made it very easy for me and I could

talk to her if I wasn't okay about doing it.

Did you enjoy working on the film?

It was fun. We shot through the summer of 2007, so my school and studies were not affected. Plus there were so many people on the set. Once, while we were shooting the assistant director with the camera kept going behind. He didn't watch where he was going and BAM!, he banged into the car. He fell with a thud and it was quite funny actually. Luckily he wasn't hurt and we just laughed it off. Something always keeps happening on the sets.



Who is your favourite character in the film?

Cyrus Broacha. He has a short role but he was hilarious.

Did your friends watch the movie?

They all thought it was very funny and cute. People who knew me came and congratulated me. People who didn't know me also congratulated me.

So are you really a football fan?

A huge football fan! In fact my favourite player is Zinedine Zidane. If I ever get a chance I will definitely invite him for dinner and maybe a game later. My favourite team is Arsenal. The team isn't doing well now but I am pretty sure they will bounce back. They always do.

Is there anybody else you would want to invite for dinner?

Obama, I think. He sounds like an interesting person.

Quick 5

- Favourite author:** Roald Dahl
- Favourite book:** BFG
- Favourite colour:** Blue. No... actually, green.
- Favourite food:** Bhel puri, but only from the roadside *bhaiyya*.
- Favourite subject:** PT (Physical Training). We get to play football!

Will we get to see you in any forthcoming films?

No, I am just going to study and do regular stuff for a while. No more films for me. I am not even sure yet what I plan to do when I grow up. I guess I will decide when I grow up. I like going to school and I don't want to do anything else right now.

