

Vijay (actor)

Joseph Vijay Chandrasekhar (born 22 June 1974), known professionally as Vijay, is an Indian actor and playback singer who works in Tamil cinema. In a career spanning over three decades, Vijay has acted in 68 films and is one of the most commercially successful actors in Tamil cinema with multiple films amongst the highest-grossing Tamil films of all time and is amongst the highest paid actors in India. He has won several awards as an actor. Referred to as "Thalapathy" (transl. Commander), Vijay has a significant fan following.

Born in Madras to director S. A. Chandrasekhar, Vijay made his debut as a child actor in the Tamil film *Vetri* (1984). After a few roles as a child actor in his father's films, he played his first lead role in the film *Naalaiya Theerpu* (1992) at the age of 18. Vijay continued doing lead roles for the next few years with notable films amongst them included *Poove Unakkaga* (1996), *Love Today* (1997), *Kadhalukku Mariyadhai* (1997), *Thullatha Manamum Thullum* (1999) and *Kushi* (2000). In 1998, he was awarded *Kalaimaamani* by the Government of Tamil Nadu for his role in *Kadhalukku Mariyadhai*.

In 2004, he starred in the blockbuster action-masala film *Ghilli* and with subsequent success of *Thirupaachi* (2005) and *Pokkiri* (2007) later, he established himself as one of the leading and commercially successful actors in Tamil cinema. Following a period of moderate success, Vijay acted in several critically and commercially successful films starting from early 2010s including *Thuppakki* (2012), *Kaththi* (2014), *Mersal* (2017), *Sarkar* (2018), *Master* (2021), *Beast* (2022), *Leo* (2023) and his penultimate film *The Greatest of All Time* (2024).

In February 2024, Vijay announced his retirement from films and his forthcoming entry into politics with the launch of his political party, known as *Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam*.

== Early life and family ==

Vijay was born as Joseph Vijay Chandrasekhar on 22 June 1974 in Madras (now Chennai), Tamil Nadu. His father, S. A. Chandrasekhar, is a film director and his mother, Shoba Chandrasekhar, is a playback singer and vocalist. His father is of Christian descent and his mother is a Hindu. Vijay had a sister, Vidhya, who died when she was two years old. Vijay did his schooling initially at Fathima school, Kodambakkam and later at Balalok school, Virugambakkam. He pursued a bachelor degree in visual communication from Loyola College, but dropped out early to focus on his acting career.

== Film career ==

=== 1984–2003: Debut and transition to lead roles ===

At the age of 10, Vijay made his debut as a child actor in the Tamil film *Vetri*, produced by P. S. Veerappa in 1984. He then acted as a child actor in films such as *Kudumbam* (1984), *Vasantham* (1986), *Sattam Oru Vilayaattu* (1987) and *Ithu Engal Neethi* (1988). He also acted in a supporting role with Rajinikanth in *Naan Sigappu Manithan* (1985), directed by his father.

Vijay played the lead role for the first time in *Naalaiya Theerpu* at the age of 18 in 1992. He then appeared in the films *Senthoorapandi*, *Rasigan*, *Deva* and *Coimbatore Mappillai*, most of those were successful. In 1996, Vijay acted in *Poove Unakkaga*, directed by Vikraman, which according to him, gave him his initial break and popularity. In 1997, Vijay acted in *Kaalameellam Kaathiruppen* and *Love Today*.

Later, he starred in commercially successful films such as *Nerrukku Ner*, *Kadhalukku Mariyadhai*, *Ninaithe Vandhai*, *Priyamudan* and *Thullatha Manamum Thullum*. In 1999, he then acted in the films *Endrendrum Kadhal*, *Nenjinile*, and *Minsara Kanna*. In 2000, he acted in critically successful,

Kannukkul Nilavu, which was his 25th film, alongside commercially successful romantic films, Kushi and Priyamaanavale. In 2001, he acted in hat-trick box office successes; Friends, Badri and Shahjahan before starring in the action film Thamizhan alongside Priyanka Chopra in 2002. Later, he appeared in the romantic film Youth and the action film Bagavathi in the same year. Vijay began 2003 with Vaseegara and Pudhiya Geethai.

=== 2003–11: Established actor ===

In 2003, following the action-romance film Thirumalai, Vijay starred in Ghilli, directed by S. Dharani, alongside Trisha and Prakash Raj. The movie became a commercial success and became the first Tamil film to gross over ₹500 million at the domestic box office and also broke the record for the most people watching the movie within the first week of its release, previously held by M. G. Ramachandran's Adimai Penn (1969). Following the same, he acted in Madhurey and Thirupaachi in 2005. Later, he starred in the commercially successful films Sachein, Sivakasi and Pokkiri. Pokkiri became one of the highest-grossing films of his career at the time.

In late 2007, Vijay starred in the romantic thriller film Azhagiya Tamil Magan, where he portrayed a dual role for the first time in his career. He played the roles of both protagonist and antagonist. The film was commercially successful outside India. Except the commercially successful, Kuruvi in 2008 and Vettaikaaran in 2009, his subsequent releases Azhagiya Tamil Magan and Villu were average successes at domestic box office while continuing to be more successful overseas. Vijay continued to be one of the highest paid actors despite the moderate success of then recently released movies. In 2010, he acted in the action comedy film Sura, which was his 50th film as an actor. In early 2011, Vijay acted in the romantic comedy Kaavalan, directed by Siddique which received positive response and a box office collection of ₹102 crore worldwide. The film was screened at the Shanghai International Film Festival in China. Kaavalan was a commercial success in China. His next film was the action film Velayudham, directed by M. Raja which released during Diwali and became one of the top-grossing films of 2011. The movie was also a critical success overseas.

=== 2012–2022: Commercial success and stardom ===

In 2012, Vijay acted in the commercially successful Nanban, a remake of successful Hindi film 3 Idiots. Later in the year, he acted in the action thriller Thuppakki, directed by A. R. Murugadoss. The film became the third Tamil film to gross more than ₹100 crore domestically and became the most successful film of Vijay's career at the time, grossing over ₹121 crore. His next film Thalaivaa, directed by A. L. Vijay, was released in August 2013 to mixed reviews. In 2014, he acted in Jilla which ended up as a box office hit. Vijay then starred in the action thriller Kaththi, where he portrayed another dual role. The film received positive reviews and collected ₹130 crore at the box office, becoming one of the highest-grossing Tamil films in 2014.

In 2015, he starred in the fantasy film Puli, directed by Chimbu Deven, which received mixed to poor reviews from critics. Despite the reviews, the film was one of the highest-grossing films of 2015. In April 2016, the action-thriller Theri directed by Atlee released to mixed reviews. It became the second-highest-grossing Tamil film of 2016, grossing over ₹170 crore. In 2017, the masala film Bairavaa was released, again to mixed reviews. In 2017, the action thriller Mersal released, which became a commercial success, becoming the first of Vijay's films to gross over ₹250 crore. The film won the Best Foreign Language Film award at the National Film Awards UK in 2018 with Vijay earning a nomination for the best supporting actor. The film was amongst the few films of Vijay to be released in Japan and China with further screening at the Bucheon International Fantastic Film Festival in South Korea.

In 2018, Vijay acted in the political film Sarkar, which entered the 100 Crore Club within two days. The film was released in 80 countries and became his second ever film to gross over ₹250 crore. Vijay acted in a football action film Bigil, which released in 2019. While the film received mixed reviews from

critics, Vijay was praised for the portrayal of his character and the film was a commercial success, earning more than ■300 crore. It was also the first Tamil film to be released in Egypt and Jordan. In 2021, his next film Master, directed by Lokesh Kanagaraj was released. Upon release, it received mixed to positive reviews from the critics. The film collected over ■300 crore worldwide and was declared a box office success. His next film was the dark comedy action film Beast, which received mixed reviews from critics. The film performed well in overseas box office and was commercially successful, collecting more than ■300 crore worldwide. It became one of the most viewed films on Netflix globally in 2022.

=== 2023–present: Continued success ===

In 2023, Vijay starred in the action drama film Varisu directed by Vamshi Paidipally. The film was a commercial success, grossing over ■300 crore at the box office. His next release of 2023 was the action thriller Leo. It received mixed reviews from critics, but went on to become a commercially successful film and emerged as one of the highest grossing Indian films of the year with a gross more than ■600 crore. His sci-fi action film The Greatest of All Time opened to mixed reviews, but had a theatrical revenue of more than ■450 crore. In February 2024, Vijay announced that he would do only one more film, which will be his 69th and last as a lead actor, titled as Jana Nayagan.

== Music career ==

Vijay is considered as one of the most prolific singers among Tamil actors. He has sung for composers including but not limited to, Ilaiyaraaja, Deva, Vidyasagar, Sirpy, Bharani, S. A. Rajkumar, Ramana Gogula, A. R. Rahman, Yuvan Shankar Raja, D. Imman, Devi Sri Prasad, Harris Jayaraj, G. V. Prakash Kumar, Anirudh Ravichander, Santhosh Narayanan and Thaman S.

Vijay made his debut by singing "Bombay City Sukkha Rotti" (1994) in Rasigan. After his 25th song "Vaadi Vaadi" (2005) in Sachein, Vijay took a sabbatical from singing to concentrate on acting, but made a comeback with "Google Google" in Thuppakki (2012). He won the Favorite Song of The Year at the Vijay Awards for his performance of the song. and a SIIMA Award nomination for Best Playback Singer.

In 2016, the pop song "Selfie Pulla" which Vijay had recorded in 2014 became popular in Romania and other European countries. He was nominated for a Filmfare Award South in the Best Playback Singer category for "Selfie Pulla". In 2015 he was again nominated for Best Playback Singer, for his performance of "Yaendi Yaendi".

== Political career ==

In 2009, Vijay launched his fan club Vijay Makkal Iyakkam. The organization supported the AIADMK alliance in the 2011 assembly elections. The fan club organization contested in the local body elections in Tamil Nadu in October 2021, securing victory in 115 out of the 169 contested seats. On 2 February 2024, Vijay announced the launch of his political party, Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK). Political analysts suggested that the TVK party might undergo expansion to other states of India. Vijay deemed the Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 passed by the BJP government as unacceptable as it will disrupt the social religious harmony of the nation.

== Personal life ==

Vijay married Sangeetha, a Sri Lankan Tamil on 25 August 1999. They have two children: a son Sanjay who briefly appeared alongside his father in Vettaikaaran, and a daughter Divya who appeared in her father's Theri.

=== Wealth and earnings ===

As of 2021, Vijay's net worth is over ₹420 crore. Vijay earned a ₹100 crore salary for *Beast* and also earned an estimated ₹120 crore—₹150 crore for *Varisu*. In 2023, he reportedly received a ₹200 crore salary, becoming one of the top paid actors in India.

On 5 February 2020, the Income Tax Department raided Vijay's residence in Chennai on potential tax evasion and his investments in immovable properties. Later, the officials stated that nothing significant was found during the raid. On 13 July 2021, the Madras High Court dismissed a writ petition filed by Vijay in 2012 seeking exemption of the Entry Tax for his Rolls-Royce Ghost car that was imported from the United Kingdom and imposed a fine of ₹1 lakh. On 27 July 2021, a two-judge bench of Madras High court stayed the earlier order. On 25 January 2022, the court dismissed the critical statements made by the earlier judge and on 15 July 2022, the court declared that no fine shall be imposed.

== Accolades ==

In 1998, Vijay was awarded the Kalaimamani by the Government of Tamil Nadu and Vijay received an honorary doctorate from the Dr. M.G.R. Educational Institute for of his achievements in the film industry in 2007. Vijay was awarded the Best International Actor of 2018 in the United Kingdom for his role in *Mersal*. He has received numerous other awards and accolades for his acting.

== In the media ==

Referred to as *Thalapathy*, Vijay has a significant fan following in India. Vijay is among the highest paid actors in Tamil cinema. He has appeared several times on *Forbes India Celebrity 100* list from 2012 to 2019, and peaked at the 26th position in 2018. *News 18* describes Vijay as a "versatile actor" and a "fantastic playback singer, dancer and philanthropist". He has been praised for his dancing with *The Times of India* labelling Vijay's dance moves as "energetic and effortless". He has been praised for his acting skills with *Zee Media* reporting that "Vijay amazed audiences with his acting and screen presence".

Vijay was placed 2nd in *Rediff.com*'s "Best Tamil Actors" list. Vijay became the 3rd most tweeted about South Indian actor in 2020 and in 2021, he was the most tweeted about actor on the same list. In 2019, a wax figure of Vijay was unveiled in a museum in Kanyakumari. In 2023, Vijay was placed 8th in *Eastern Eye* magazine among the global celebrities in Asia. A research study conducted in 2023 by Indian Institute of Human Brands (IIHB) stated Vijay as one of the highest-ranked celebrity in South India. In 2024, Vijay was placed 35th on IMDb's List of 100 Most Viewed Indian Stars.

== References ==

== External links ==

Vijay at IMDb