## Jodha Akbar - The Film

Jodha Akbar — The Film
Seema Bawa analyses this highly controversial film with a historical perspective





Actors: Aishwarya Rai and Hrithik Roshan

The historian in me could not resist having a dekko at a historical romance based on a character such as Akbar, who indeed is a larger than life figure of world history. A man of vision, statesmanship and great depth Akbar was the Insaan-e-Kamaal of his era. Hrithik Roshan as the young Akbar indeed does not disappoint even though in terms of physique he does not match the descriptions of the historical Akbar. The scenes depicting his valour, strength and prowess in battle, though competently performed are not exceptional. It is the sheer regalness of his bearing and the small details such as the fluid and effortless movements with which he sits on the throne, an act which requires immense theatrical perfection, that help him make the character his own. The scene showing Akbar getting into a trance while listening to mystical music of Sufi dervishes is authentic to the sources and enacted with great felicity. Aishwarya Rai as Jodhaa is right out of Mughal-Rajput miniatures paintings in her stance, apparel, ornaments and indeed her entire external persona.

The character of Akbar is better delineated because of the wealth of source material available, much of which is hagiographic in nature. That is not to say that the counterview was not available as is seen from the killing of Adham Khan Akbar's foster brother. Other aspects of Akbar's prowess such as his exceptional skill as a bare-hand fighter, his dueling an elephant, his consulting philosophers of other

faiths; all having basis in historical sources ring quite true in the film.

Jodhaa, on the other hand, being largely a figment of the writer-director's imagination, has been conceptualized with less depth. The single character trait that has been reiterated is her spirit, and her spirited resistance to patriarchal values which while anachronistic to the period depicted, is also quite tedious. Her depiction as a Rajput woman of honour and integrity is overstressed.

As for the characterization of secondary characters, unlike Lagaan, in Jodhaa Akbar this aspect has been largely ignored. Instead we have stereotypes paraded as Rajput Ranas, and good and faithful courtiers such as the *Khan-i-khanan* and Todar Mal versus fanatical *ulema* and scheming relatives. The entire structure of Mughal aristocracy, the *mansabdars*, so significant for the actual and visual construction of the Mughal era, is overlooked.

The film succeeds in reconstructing the sense of architectural spaces of the grand Mughal era, especially the *Diwan-i-Aam*. The battles and the epic scale are well done even though the armies rush towards each other rather than in formation.

The music of AR Rahman goes well with the film but does not stand out. The background score though is excellent.

The film is at one level an elaborate seduction of the spirited though mono-dimensional Jodhaa by a rather desirable Akbar. The plot is entirely based on coitus-interuptus, which is interrupted ad-nauseum where the consummation is heartily to be wished for so that one can finally go home. The sexual tension is very well structured and indeed works very well but for the length it has been stretched out. The political intrigues and the romance appear to be yoked together by violence and are not linked organically. Indeed they should have been two separate films.

Perhaps the entire relationship of Jodhaa and Akbar should have been read within the context of sexual politics that underlay the harem of the Mughals, which could have served as an interesting back drop to the delineation of Emperor Akbar, arguably the greatest monarch and statesman this land has seen. We know that Akbar had at least two wives (besides many concubines) before he married the Rajput princess. The Rajput princess, whatever her real name may have been, would have been competing with them for her Emperor's favours and allusions to the same may have made interesting viewing. Instead the harem intrigues center around her conflict with Maham Anaga Akbar's foster mother whose importance had waned by the time Akbar attained adulthood.

The film is largely didactic in that it addresses issues of shared cultural heritage and communal harmony without appearing to preach. The historicity of Jodhaa/ Harka or Jia Bai is irrelevant to the film.

## Keval Arora's Kolumn — who's afraid of the documentary film

**Keval Arora's Kolumn** 



who's afraid of the documentary film

Remember the cynical manoeuvring by which the Film Federation of India had, some years ago, denied entry to video documentaries in their festival? And how this had brought home the threat that this medium

can pose to vested interests? After initially denying space to video films in its international film festivals, ostensibly because these were 'in a different format', the Federation had inserted a censorship clause for all Indian entries to the festival. The row that ensued had been extensively reported in the media, so a bald re-iteration should do for now. Film-makers had come together to form an organisation named VIKALP with the aim pf safeguarding the rights of documentary film-makers. Launching a Campaign Against Censorship (CAC), they had run a widely attended 'Films for Freedom' programme of screenings and discussions at educational institutes.

This proactive initiative has had an interesting spin-off. It has placed the agenda of activism and its methods on the front-burner for a generation that is often written off as a self-absorbed 'I' rather than a 'why' generation. (By the way, what is this generation's current alphabetic habitation? Is it still Generation Y, or is it now staging its last stand as Gen-Z?) The video documentary has, as a result, been so comfortably privileged as the conscience keeper of the nation that I'm tempted to play the devil's advocate and ask if theatre isn't a better mode of communication through which activist agendas can be carried out. However, before outlining crucial differences between the video documentary and theatre, let's identify some strengths that both share.

The video documentary and theatre performance have, unfortunately, often been disparagingly prized as no more than a handmaiden to other activisms — as techniques by which grass-root actions extend or advertise their interventions. Such a view has treated video and theatre as little more than a courier service, as blandly variable vehicles of a relentless messaging. Put another way, the medium has been equated with its message; and has therefore been valued, from its aims to its achievements, for the literal directness of its effort. NGOs have been particularly susceptible to this lure of social advertising, perhaps in the belief that generating the same message through a variety of formats extends its effectiveness, even though all it really does is relieve the tedium. If Doordarshan was obsessed years ago with televised puppet theatre as its favoured mode of

disseminating advice to farmers and pregnant women, it's the NGOs' turn now to patronise street theatre with a similarly deprecatory optimism.

Why puppet theatre and street theatre is anybody's guess. I don't think the social sector's preference for these two forms is based on any insight into their potential. Rather, these forms are trivialised when used as a platter for pre-digested data and handed-down attitudes, as a dressing-up that goes hand in hand with a dumbing-down. Obviously, state television and the NGO sector rate the urban proscenium stage as the 'true' theatre, and puppet theatre or street theatre as cute country cousins suitable for rustic and other under-developed tastes. (Not that its performers have seemed to mind: in a shrinking market, even wrong attention is welcome as preferable to none.)

Yet, it must be pointed out that there is a faint glimmer of wisdom in the social sector's choice of theatre and documentary film for carrying out its activist agendas. This wisdom is hinged on two features common to all performance: greater accessibility, and the affective power of story-telling. Performative cultural modes are accessible to audiences in a special way because they circumvent the barriers of literacy and the drudgery of reading. Such accessibility is then magnified through the affective power of stories that theatre and film usually place at their centre. To the extent that the theatre and the documentary film tell stories, they can never be reduced to mere data transcription codes. It is immaterial whether their stories are real or fictional, or whether these are particular instances or typical cases, because performative modes that tell stories irradiate even simple statements with a penumbra that deepens, authenticates and often problematises the business of a literal messaging. Clearly, the potential of theatre and film for activist causes remains unrealizable if these are used merely to sugar-coat mundane fare.

It is when we define accessibility in physical terms that differences crop up in the respective potential of film and theatre as activist space. Film is unrivalled in its ability to reach out to vast numbers of people. There is no gainsaying the seduction of spread: if

maximising contact with people is vital to the activist impulse, the medium that reaches out more effortlessly will obviously be regarded as the more enabling one. In contrast, theatre performances exist in the singular and have to be re-constituted afresh for each act of viewing. Not only does this call for much more forward planning, it also implies that there can be no guarantee that later shows will work exactly like the earlier ones. Films, on the other hand, travel to venues more rapidly than do theatre troupes and offer an assurance of stable replication (every spectator gets to see exactly the same thing as created by its crew, give or take some transmission loss on account of projection equipment).

Of course, problems of technology and finance do cramp film-makers, sometimes so severely that I think 'accessibility' should be defined not just in terms of audience comprehension and taste, but also in terms of the artist's access to the tools of her art. However, recent developments in video technology have ensured that these twin pressures are less burdensome to today's film-maker — high-end digital cameras have become cheap enough for independent film makers to acquire their own hardware; sophisticated editing software, faster computer processors and capacious storage disks now enable footage to be processed at home. The result: a fresh impetus to the documentary film movement which is evident in the range and number of films being made today.

It is interesting to note that if this celebration of accessible technology and reduced expenditure were to be taken to a logical conclusion, it is theatre rather than the video film that would shine in an advantageous light. It's cheaper to make plays than films, and it's possible to make them without recourse to equipment of any kind other than the human body. Most theatre performances can be designed without technological fuss in a way that even the barest film cannot. Such a theatre gains a quality of outreach that far outstrips the reach of film. For, what technology can ever hope to compete with the affordability and the portability of the body and the voice? Sure, this isn't true of all theatre productions. But I would argue that productions which depend on technological assists for their effects

(take, for instance, the romance with projected images that most plays glory in nowadays) end up shackling themselves in ways that erase their fundamental nature. I say this fully aware that some of us believe that the facility which technology brings in some ways is well worth the price that has to be paid in others.

Take another difference between film and theatre. Films possess a huge advantage in terms of authenticity in reportage. They have no peer if the business of activism is to disseminate images and narratives of actuality, to show things as they actually are. But, if the primary purpose of activism is to persuade and engage with people, then the advantage that film enjoys over theatre is considerably neutralised. The very attractions of the film medium — stability, replication, transportability — become limitations from this point of view.

It is a truism worth repeating that the uniqueness of theatre performance is that it is a live event. People come together at a particular time, to a particular place, for a transaction where some people show things to others who watch. In film, there is no equivalent scope for interaction and therefore no lively relation between actor and spectator. The idea of a collective spectatorship — where the audience becomes a prototypical community — is of course common to both film and theatre. But, in the latter, this 'community' includes the actor as well. It is not just the audience that watches the actor, but the actor too who 'reads' his audience and subtly alters his performance accordingly., Interaction, engagement and persuasion between the performers and audience is so central to theatre that it is often the richest source of dialogue in the performance event.

Where, pray, is any of this possible during a film screening? The film spectator remains more or less a passive recipient of a fixed structure. The film may well 'play' with the spectator's responses, but even such playing is welded to a grid that is frozen unalterably on videotape or celluloid. Interactions in the theatre between performer and spectator are, in contrast, dynamically dependent on the particulars of that performance. In other words, the fragile instability of theatrical performance becomes a powerful opportunity

for an activist intervention, as is evident in the way Augusto Boal has actors interrupt the performance and address audiences directly in his Theatre of the Oppressed. Techniques used in Theatre-in-Education methodologies ('Hot-seating', for instance, where spectators talk back to 'characters' in the play and offer their comments) is another case in point.

As I said, where, pray, is any of this possible with film?

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## India Dominates MIFF, Wins Largest Number Of Awards In International Category — B B Nagpal



Goddesses



India Untouched



Inauguration

Makers of short or documentary films generally feel they are given the short shrift when they try to find finances for making their films, and are then treated to a step-son treatment by the government, the public service broadcaster Doordarshan, and the private television channels as far as distribution and exhibition goes. As a result, it is felt that people are no longer interested in short, documentary or animation films.

But the large number of viewers that turned up at the Tenth Mumbai International Film Festival for Documentary, Short and Animation Films were enough to prove that the medium has its own niche viewership. And the ovation that the award-winners got also showed that their judgment did not differ very much from that of the juries.

However, though every festival has some good and some bad films, the primary problem with MIFF is that the duration is just one week thus permitting only one show per film, and the number of films and variety of sections needs to be curtailed. The press conferences also could have been coordinated in a better manner since they often clashed with the film shows.

It was also necessary that while there are films that last less than a minute and others may go over one hour, the selection of films in one slot should as far as possible be of a similar kind. For example, all films dealing with wild life or all those made in animation could have been shown together. This helps the discerning viewer to decide the kind of films he or she wants to see, since all four theatres were showing different films and making a choice was often difficult.

The festival, which is held every second year by the Films Division (a media unit of the Union Information and Broadcasting Ministry) in collaboration with the government of Maharashtra and the Indian Documentary Producers Association, took place in the four theatres of the National Centre for the Performing Arts at Nariman Point in Mumbai from February 3 to 9.

A total of 235 films were shown in the special packages in the festival. In addition, there were 44 films in the International Competition from 16 countries, 54 films in the Indian competition, and 13 international and nine Indian films in special screenings. Films from a total of 37 countries were screened in different sections.

Renowned Manipur filmmaker Aribam Syam Sharma received the V Shantaram Award for Lifetime Contribution from Kiran Shantaram amidst a standing ovation. The award carries a shawl, a citation, and a cash component of Rs 2,50,000.

Sharma is a film director, actor, critic, and music director. He came to limelight with his award winning film 'Imagi Ningthem' (My son, My Precious) that received the grand Prix at International Film festival at Nantes in France in 1982. His other acclaimed films include 'Ishanou', the official

selection (un Certain Regard) for Cannes Film Festival 1991, and 'Sangai-The Dancing Deer of Manipur' declared as the "Outstanding Film of the Year 1989" by the British Film Institute. He has directed nine Manipuri feature films and 26 non feature films. They include 'Sanabi' (The Frey mare) in 1996, 'Rajarshee Bhagyachandra of Manipur', and 'Gurumayum Nirmal'. He has won numerous national awards and also chaired many juries.

Indian films bagged the top award — the Golden Conch — for best documentary in both the national and international categories even as it bagged four other awards in the international category at the Festival.

While 'India Untouched — Stories of a People Apart' by Stalin K. based on the oppressive caste system got the top award in the Indian section (Rs 1,50,000), 'Goddesses' by Leena Manimekalai on women's emancipation received the Golden Conch in the international section (Rs 2,50,000) for films up to sixty minutes.

'India Untouched' also won the award of Rs 100,000 for best film/video of the Festival for the Producer Drishti — Media, Arts and Human Rights.

In 'Goddesses', the young filmmaker tells the story of three old material goddesses who for different reasons find themselves naturally emancipated from Tamil tradition and orthodoxy. Leena creates a trusting filming arena that was never manipulative so that the three women opened up and revealed their total strength and power bordering on the archetype. They emerged free, master of the very tradition that had earlier kept them shackled.

'India Untouched-Stories of a People' not only achieves the ideals of socially and politically committed documentary film making, but unflinchingly uncovers the all pervasive, deeply rooted and still existing caste system in twenty first century

India, with chilling evidence that it shows no sign of abating in generations to come. In fact, the Jury recommended the film as essential viewing for all audiences worldwide, adding that the film is in the best tradition of documentary film making and is an inspiration to all filmmakers for independent, thought-provoking, free-spirited use of the medium for social change.

The film's producer Drishti — Media Arts & Human Rights won the award for taking the initiative and having the courage to investigate the issue of untouchability and its ramifications in all corners of Indian society.

The awards were given away on 9 February in Tata Theatre by Festival Director and Films Division Chief Producer Kuldeep Sinha, filmmakers Shyam Benegal and Jahnu Barua, and actress Nandita Das in a ceremony conducted by television actress and presenter Rajeshwari Sachdev.

The other Indian films to win awards in the international category were: 'Kramasha' by Amit Dutta which won the best fiction up to 75 minutes (Golden Conch and Rs 2,50,000) and the Producer's Award for the Film and Television Institute of India (Rs 100,000), 'Ink' which was the first best film by director Bharani Thanikella (Trophy and Rs 100,000), and 'Undertakers' by Emannuel Quindo Palo which shared the award for second best fiction film up to 75 minutes with Belgium's 'Bare Handed' by Thierry Knauff (Silver Conch and Rs 100,000).

In 'Kramasha', the music keeps one quietly enthralled with a resonating sense of things without a need to necessarily reduce the experience to a verbalization of meanings. The film shows a world of images and sounds that make one smell and touch the lush of nature amid a mysterious index of hallucinations. Like a dream that one may fail to understand but that reaches deep recesses of the unconscious and touches familiar chords, this film by Amit Dutta weaves a powerful narrative that blends legends, myths and nostalgia into a film

that allows us to recall one's early experiences.

Emannuel Quindo Palo's 'Undertakers' manages to distance the viewer from the narrative and create a moving account of a Catholic coffin maker whose business is death but whose dead friends can claim free coffins. The absurd idiom of the film draws a humane picture of the struggles of an ordinary salesman who appears strangely caught between his survival and personal ethic.

Through surreal imagery, Bharani's 'Ink' was able to employ a violent visual idiom for existential struggle of the poet, and the fight he wages against violence of terrorism. In this film which is full of resilience, the poet's wife deeply worried about their lives takes on the mantle of fight against terrorism after the poet's death.

Just the manner in which the dancer in Knauff's 'Bare Handed' handles the newspaper and the noise caused by it to strangely reveal the violence a newspaper and therefore the world around us may carry. But it is the dancing woman whom a verbal world threatens to contain. In a series of deft choreographed movements and an equal graphic light the film makes the dancer dance her way through memories and desires until after a complete immersion in this world she loses herself in it.

Poland, the United States, and Egypt won two awards each in the international section. Two Polish films 'One day in People's Poland' by Maciej J. Drygas and 'Beyond the Wall' by Vita Zelakeviciute, both produced by Drygas, shared the award for Second Best Documentary up to sixty minutes duration (Silver Conch and Rs 100,000). 'Salata Baladi' (House Salad) by Nadia Kamel of Egypt got the Golden Conch and Rs 2,50,000 for best documentary above 60 minutes and the international critics FIPRESCI award (Certificate of Merit). The two American films to win awards were 'Flow: for love of water' by Irena Salina got the FIPRESCI award and Rs 100,000, and 'View from a Grain of Sand' by Meena Nanji which won the second best

documentary film above sixty minutes (Silver Conch and Rs 100,000).

September 27, 1962 was an ordinary day in Poland except for its reconstruction by Drygas in the film 'One Day in People's Poland'. The archival images and sounds retrieved from several sources obviously do not synchronize to a singular reality. Without an effort to force a historical realism upon the material, the director keeps the two tracks independent, making them move closer and further away from each other, creating an extraordinary document that is startling in its revelation of the nature of surveillance the state maintained in the sixties by keeping account of banal and inconsequential details in the daily life of its suspect citizens. The enormous task of editing the monumental archival material has been handled very competently.

'Beyond the Wall' uses short and pure images that elude description. Through this poetic procedure, the director directly enters into a hazy universe of Russian soldiers sent to prison hospital to serve their sentence. The nondescript events such as the walks, the meals, the medicines, the crowding of the cell generate an unforgettable poem of silence and depth in confinement. Vita Zelakeviciute's narrative of broken spirits is a reflection on cold and heartless systems mankind is able to set in place in governance of countries.

'Salate Baladi' breaks down the classical cinema composition and makes a film deeply insightful of history. It makes geographical borders between countries appear unnatural, incapable of constricting families from their extensive affinities. The metaphor is no longer the family tree rooted in local soil — it is closer to a multiplicity in the manner the grass grows.

Faced with an environment where women are oppressed to the extreme, Meena was able to make her characters in 'View from a Grain of Sand' feel safe for them to candidly re-evaluate

their condition under the Taliban and post-Taliban periods in Afghanistan. Even as they put themselves to risk they are prepared to boldly share their knowledge and experience with the filmmaker.

The FIPRESCI jury decided to characterize its Award as recognition of films that bring unknown shocking revelations that threaten ecological and even existential balance of planet Earth. The depiction of a global crisis caused by privatization of natural resource such as water in the film 'Flow: Love of Water' attempts to educate the audience of atrocities major corporations commit against individuals, families and communities in the name of water and for the sake of plain old profit. The message of the film is clear: make water free, clean and available to the citizens of the world. The revealing research Salina conducted was exemplary.

In the Indian section, the Golden Conch and Rs 1,50,000 also went to best fiction 'Manjha' by Rahi Anil Barve who also got the award for best first film of a director (Rs Trophy and Rs 25,000), and best animation film 'Myths about you' by Nandita Jain. Other awards included Indian Jury Award (Rs 100,000) which went to two films: 'I'm very beautiful' by Shyamal Kumar Karmakar and 'Thousand Days and a Dream' by P Baburaj and C Saratchandran, the Indian Critics award to 'Mahua Memoirs' by Vinod Raja which also received the award for second best documentary (Silver Conch and Rs 75,000).

'Mahua Memoirs' compassionately exposes the ruthless underside of corporate globalization through the ongoing decimation of Adivasi lands, people and their cultures throughout India. Crafted with outstanding visuals and haunting music, it is an urgent call to re-examine the policies of the day.

In 'Manjha', first-time director Rahi Anil Barve's fictional expression of child sexual abuse and survival has been portrayed in a highly individualistic, graphic and cinematic style. The filmmaker manages to extract outstanding

performances from the actors within a stark, industrial urban landscape. The film is also laudable for the understanding of cinematic form and idiom and having the courage to push the form to tell a difficult story.

'Myths About You' is a clever and imaginative representation of the history of the Universe, both in terms of Hindu mythology and scientific research, in an original graphic style, all within a short span of 9 minutes.

'I'm the Very Beautiful' is a personal, complex and often contradictory portrait of an indomitable woman and her continuous struggle in her pursuit of a life of freedom and dignity despite her social stigma in a patriarchal and chauvinistic society. In its style and treatment, the film mirrors the free spirit of the protagonist with abandon and candour.

'Thousand Days And A Dream' tells the poignant and dramatic story of the peaceful struggle of common people against a gigantic multinational company supported by the policies of the state in which the people have been deprived of their vital, basic natural resources and livelihood.

The Silver Conch and Rs 75,000 for second best films also went to 'The Lost Rainbow' by Dhiraj Meshram produced by FTII (fiction up to 75 minutes) and animation film 'Three Little Pigs' by Bhavana Vyas and Akarito Assumi.

'The Lost Rainbow' presents a series of nostalgic, touching moments in an evocative and playful manner, enhanced by the realistic performances of the child actors. The film details how the results of mischievous sibling rivalry can haunt the protagonists for the remainder of their lives.

'Three Little Pigs' is a well-known childhood story made through wire frame animation techniques in a deceptively simple style. The film has background voice-overs in the form of a conversation recalling the story, which is both engaging and amusing while bridging the documentary form with animation.

Special Mention and Certificate of Merit was awarded to two films: 'Our Family' by Dr K P Jayasankar and Dr Anjali Monteiro, and 'Raga of River Narmada' by Rajendra Janglay.

'Our Family' is a compassionate and sensitive portrayal of the third sex — their bonding and their aspirations. The film traces their roots sourced from mythology combined with a mesmerizing one-person performance of the traumas and stigma experienced by their community.

'Raga of River Narmada' has fascinating flowing visuals highlighting the river in its many vibrant moods through its journey complemented by an exceptional use of the Dhrupad.

Apart from the main sections, there were sections like 'Best of Festivals' for selected films from some renowned documentary, short and animation film festivals and Oscar winning and nominated films, a retrospective of films by jury members, a section of Classics featuring films of great masters of documentary films which will have films made by Great Masters like Bert Haanstra, Robert J. Flaherty, Francois Truffaut, Istvan Szabo, Kristof Zanussi and Ritwik Ghatak. This package was organized with the support of National Film Archives of India. A Film Memoir showed biographical films made on great filmmakers like Andrei Tarkovsky, Ingmar Bergman, Satyajit Ray, and Bimal Roy

There was a special and rarely seen section on films on the Second World War with rarest film records of the Indian troops in action at various part of the world during Second World War. This will also feature the battle of Britain, Russia and other major incidents of that period. This package was put together with the help of the Armed Forces Film & Photo Division, Delhi.

There were sections for films from the North East and from

Jammu and Kashmir, and Glimpses from the archives of the Division, apart from homage to filmmakers who passed away in the recent past.

Unfortunately, most of the films which won awards are unlikely to be shown anywhere, since Doordarshan shows the films at unearthly late hours and the Government is still not taking a decision on a proposal by the Films Division for a separate documentary channel. The NDTV recently commenced showing documentaries once a week, but all this is hardly enough.

It is high time that the Information and Broadcasting Minister Mr Priyaranjan Dasmunsi loves up to the promise he made on the opening day of MIFF that he would clear any proposal for a documentary channel within five days. With the new advent of short features and amusing animation, even a documentary channel is bound to find sponsors and become commercially viable.

The author is a senior film critic

## Stars Shine in Himalayan Kingdom | Manohar Khushalani

Along with Dev Anand, Waheeda Rehman, Shahrukh Khan and Manisha Koirala, Manohar Khushalani was invited, by the Indian Embassy, to Kathmandu to attend the celebrations of 50 years of Indian Cinema as a Columnist of Pioneer, where he ran a column called "Footlights'. The clip of the review published on 2nd May, 1997 is shown in the attachment. Here is a small extract from the 7 column spread that Pioneer gave his piece.

Probably the best public relations exercise between two country is to establish a people to people interaction through cultural activity. Raj Kapoor was probably the best Indian Ambassador of good will for the soviet Union. Nobody perhaps known it better than the snake Indian Ambassador to Nepal. K.V. Rajan. By organising a festival of Indian films at Kathmandu he proved that what Raj Kapoor did at USSR Dev Anand can do in the Land locked Himalayan State. The incredible love and affection of Nepalese common men for Indian actors was brought home by the adulatory response to four Indian sorry three Indian and one Nepales star; Waheeda Rehman, Dev Anand, Shahrukh Khan and Manisha Koirala.

"I am very fond of nature & open spaces. In Bombay it was difficult. What I noticed was that when they retired from cinema long ago, my son was still in school. When someone asked him, where the milk came from. He said Mother Dairy. That's when we decided to move to a Farm and expose our child to that aspect of life as well."

Waheeda Rahman who is leading a more or less retired life & last asked nearly seven years ago is willing to perform only of she gets a central role. "Unfortunately most of the roles available for performers of my agee are stereo typed roles of Aunts or mothers, I would rather not perform than take up such roles"

Waheeda shifted bag & Baggage to a farm house in the outskirts of Bangalore because of she put it her children were not even aware about how the milk come they only knew that it come from a machine in the milk booth. Being a lover of nature she preferred to shift close to it....

"I am very fond of nature & open spaces. In Bombay it was difficult. What I noticed was that when they retired from cinema long ago, my son was still in school. When someone asked him, where the milk came from. He said Mother Dairy. That's when we decided to move to a Farm and expose our child

to that aspect of life as well." She told me, this too when we were flying later over the everest and I was seated next to her. Both of us were admiring the pristine beauty of nature

Dev Anand despite his severely years displayed such energy and enthusiasm that he would put many younger people to shame. He said that he was greatly in love with this Country and would never forego an opportunity to come to Nepal. He had always advocated that this Country was a good location of or shooting films but not many producers were willing to come due to difficulties of terrash & communication. Dev to probably the most active amongst the stars of his generation. Right now he was making a film in which he was acting as himself © Dev Anand as the actor. A teen age female fun follows him around the counting observing him as an action. She finally manges to meet him. The story appeared to be similar to Guddi.

Later at a function to felicitate the stars. Dev held the audience spellbound with his half hour long talk which was special with experiences of Nepal, tales of the role of the King in shooting of his films and personal advice on how to lead a dynamics life like him.

Manisha Koirala's entering was greeted by compliments to her beauty and brains in Dev's inimitable style. The local scribes were most comfortable with Manisha in her native tongue. Ms Koirala had no plans to act in a Nepali film in the near future she left it vaguely to events and occassions.

Manohar Khushalani accompanies Indian filmstars on a recent trip to Nepal for a celebration of the golden jubilee of India's independence

Stars shine in Himalayan kingdom

As the Royal Nepal Airlines Boeing 737 circled over the final and final an

ment.

Probably the best public relations exercise between any
two countries is to establish a
people-to-people interaction
through cultural activities.
Nobody perhaps knows it better than the suave Indian ambassador to Nepal, K V Ilajan.
By organising a festival of
Indian films at Kathmandu he
proved that what Raj Kapour
could do for India in the Soviet
Union. Dev Anaud can do in the
land-locked Himaly year, the ambassador is also planning an
NSD these frestival in
Kathmandu.
The incredible love and affection of the Nepalese common
man for Indian actors and acfresses was brought home by
the adulatory response to the
four filmstars: Waheeda
Rehman, Dev Anand, Shah
Rukh Khan and Nepals own
Manisha Koirala, of whom the
valiant Gorkhas are extremely
proud. The streets around the
Birendra International
Convention Centre were jampacked with fans as the four
stars waded through the milling
crowds to attend a function or
ganised to felicitate them.

"Inside, Dev held the audiences
spellbound with his haff-hourlong talk which was speced with
his experiences of the hill state,
tales: about the part King
Birendra played in casing the
way of Dev Anand's Shootings in
Nepal, the guitar-toting hippie
girl who inspired the creation of
a role for Zeenat Aman in Hare
Rama Hare Krishna, and of
course some personal advice on
how, to lead a dynamic life and
remain young like himself.



Representatives of cultural camaraderie: Dev Anand meets Queen Aishwarya (left): Shah Rukh Khan mobbed by female fans in Kathmandu

Representatives of cultural can
As far as Shah Rukh Khan
was concerned, great as the confluence of two generations of
performers may have been, he
was too busy warding off the
bevy of limitalyan beauties out
to mob him. "Oh no, not here
too!" he smirked.

The programme was anchored by none other than the
inimitable imitator, Jaaved
Jaffrey, who interspersed the audio-visual on Indian cinema
with his pet, often heard and
sometimes unheard of jokes.
While Jaaved did his best to livsumptime of the control of the
unp the proceedings, what iwas
really a treat were the nostalgic
unmbers segmented decadewise.

The first decade from 1947 to

wise.

The first decade from 1947 to 57 had songs like Awara hoon, Jeevan hai agar zahar to, Chhor do annchal zamana kya Kaher ad Juyan kara dil ye pakare au ja, and Ai mere pagar watan. Wata a comedown it was maving into the present decade with songs like Chhoo le chhoo le, Choli ke peeche kya hai and

maraderie: Dev Anand meets Que
Chumma de de.
Earlier at an informal Press
conference the Nepalese and
Indian scribes had the opportunity to talk to the Bollywood
stars and one particularly got an
interesting glimpse of the mindsets of the older legends and
how they were coping with the
new trends in cinema. Waheeda
for example was surprisingly
positive about modern Indian
cinema.

She disagreed with the sugcinema.

She disagreed with the suggestion that there was too much
exposure in today's films and
quoted examples of many films
which were wholesome like
plikede Dultunia Le Jayenge
and Kabhi Ha Kabhi Na.
Waheeda hersel] is leading a
more or less retired life and last
faced a camera nearly seve
years ago.
She was willing to undergo the

saced a camera nearly seven years ago.

She was willing to undergo the ordeal again only if she got a sat-isfying role. "Unfortunately, most of the roles available for per-formers of my age are stereo-typed ones of aunts or mothers,"

en Aishwarja (left); Shah Rukh K
she clarified. Twould rather not
perform than take up such assignments.

Takking of the time when she
lived in Bomba, Walneeda said
that her children there worked
hard in school and watched
television rest of the time.
They were not even aware
about where the milk not their
table came from. They only
knew that it came from a machine in the milk booth. That
was enough for her and she
shifted bag algage to a
farmhouse in the outskirts of
Bangalore lieing a lover of nature she thus got an opportunity to get close to it.

Dev Aband, spile his 70-odd
years, Uppears to be getting
younger—if not in appearance,
then in Incaredy, He displayed
such energy, and enthusiasm
that wold put many younger
people 6 shame. As he said, he
is gready in but Nepal and
will never fore go an opportunity
to come to disk country. He
had always advorated that this

Khan mobbed by female fans in K
place was a good location for
shooting films but not many producers were willing to come, due
to difficulties of terrain and poor
communications.
Unlike Waheeda, Dev Anand
will like to work right till his last
breath. Currently, he is making
a film in which he is acting so
himself — Dev Anand, the story
work of the second of the s

Kathmandu
comfortable with Manisha as she
switched to ber native tongue.
Manisha has no plans to agt in
a Nogal film in the mear future.
She led it sagneds to exents and
occasions. Manisha was happy
to come to her country but she
and no desire to settle here, she
said. Living in Mumbai suited
her.

Dev Anand was not bothered
by the repeated box-office failures of his recent films. He
claimed that he never lost money in any film and that if any of
his films were appreciated for
their quality, that was enough of
a reward for him. When this correspondent asked Manisha
Koirala if she would prefer to
make a good film or a box-office
him shi saids the would rather
have both, but if it came to
a runch, sho would opt for a role
in a good film.
Dev Anand put it more suecluctly. Many times a good film
any times it doesn't. Many
times at average film also sue-

But if a film succeeds it

ceeds. But if a film succeeds it must have some merits — it cannot be ignored even if the criticis think it should be.

Shali Rukh Khan had very little to say eveept that he would not act in an art film and would not onger do the anticheroroles. Of course, once upon a time ho acted in a Mani Kaul film, because he understood it. Most art films according to him were pseudo-intellectual.

A special flight aver Mount Everset with Wahevda Rehman and Jaaved Jaffrey, however, struck an onlinous note. The Everset was not visible due to heavy chouls, even while we were in mist of a golden jubile excelebration. A government is fulfilled in the product of the product of the course of the product of the product of the course of the course of the product of t

