

Friday 20, September 2013

From India, with love

Pakistan's official entry to the Oscars, Zinda Bhaag, has several desis as part of the project

SHAHEEN PARKAR
shaheen@mid-day.com

Pakistan's entry to the Oscars in the Best Foreign Film category, Zinda Bhaag, ironically has an India connect — and in more than one way. The neighbouring country's Oscar entry — its first after 50 years — couldn't after all do without drawing on Indian expertise to make a mark.

The film not only stars Naseeruddin Shah in the lead role but almost all of its technical crew is Indian. The film's post-production was also done at the Prasad Film Lab in Mumbai.

The film's editor is Shan Mohammed who will be editing Farah Khan's upcoming Shah Rukh-Deepika-starrer Happy New Year. The cinematographer is Satya Rai Nagpaul who bagged a National Award for Best Cinematography for the Punjabi film Anhe Ghorey Da Daan last year. The film's sound designer is Vipin Bhatti who has

worked on several of Nagesh Kukunoor's films.

Interestingly, Naseer had quietly shot for the film in Lahore where he had even conducted a week's workshop for the cast members making their debut. He plays the role of a manipulator in the film and even dyed his hair red for the role. Naseer earlier featured in the Pakistani film Khuda Ke Liye (2007).

Zinda Bhaag revolves around three young men trying to escape the reality of their everyday lives in Lahore. Their journey provides a look into the lives of youngsters in Pakistan and how they feel the West is the way out for them. The Punjabi-Urdu film, written and directed by Meenu Gaur and Farjad Nabi releases in Pakistan today. The Pakistani actors include Amna Ilyas, Khurram Patras and Salman Ahmed Khan. It bagged four awards at the Mosaic 2013 festival in Toronto last month. The makers are hoping to release the film in India too.



A still from Zinda Bhaag

Pakistani imports

Mukesh and Mahesh Bhatt are known to import talent from across the border for their films. They have introduced singers like Atif Aslam, Ali Zafar (who also acts), Rahat Fateh Ali Khan, Shafqat Amanat Ali. Pakistani starlets include Meera, Veena Malik and Sarah Loren

India's entry on September 22

India's entry for the Best Foreign Film category at the Oscars will be announced on September 22. Among the contenders are apparently The Lunchbox, Ship of Theseus, Bhaag Milkha Bhaag, Kai Po Che!, English Vinglish and Madras Cafe besides the Kannada movie Lucia. The Film Federation of India will select the movie that will represent India.

The other entries

Some other nations have already pencilled in on their choice. **AUSTRALIA:** Kim Mordaunt's The Rocket which is about a 10-year-old boy's attempts to deal with armed conflict and poverty. **AUSTRIA:** Julian Polser's The Wall is about a woman trapped in a valley. **SAUDI ARABIA:** Debutant Haifaa Al Mansour's Wadjda takes a look at women in the kingdom through the eyes of a 10-year-old girl.