



Rajesh Khanna Today

CAN an idol who falls ever rise again? The question comes sharply into focus as you watch Rajesh Khanna in action vis-a-vis Amitabh Bachchan in *Namak Haraam*. Their confrontation here is no different from what it was in *Anand*—Rajesh once again plays the title role in *Namak Haraam*. Even the writer-director team is the same: Gulzar and Hrishikesh Mukherjee. Yet, where Rajesh stole the show in *Anand*, Amitabh has the edge on him in *Namak Haraam*. This despite the fact that, as in *Anand*, Rajesh's is the more sympathetic role.

Every top dog has his day and Amitabh is top dog right now. Yet somehow one did not expect him so completely to overshadow Rajesh.

Rajesh's handicap, ironically, is his own 'Super Star' image—Amitabh has no such image to live up to. *Namak Haraam* is a cleverly 'localised' adaptation of *Becket*. In it Amitabh is cast in the mantle of Peter O'Toole while Rajesh is the prototype of Richard Burton.

Rajesh has some of the best lines to put over in the film, yet he is somehow not able to make the impact he should.

Has Rajesh then reached a point of no return in his career? The turning-point in the careers of Rajesh Khanna and Amitabh Bachchan would seem to be their marriages. In the case of Rajesh, Dimple's triumph in *Bobby* has put her husband in the shade. In the case of Amitabh, Jaya's being away on "maternity leave" has happily coincided with her husband's spectacular advance.

In the light of all this, one wonders whether Rajesh Khanna can ever again be the 'Super Star' he was? Even an artist of Dilip Kumar's stature could not be quite the same again once he fell from favour as *Leader*, while what happened to Rajendra Kumar after *Aman* is filmi history.

So Rajesh perhaps can now at best hope to salvage something from the wreckage. Who knows, his career may be a pointer to the fact that any star today can hope to be at the peak for just four years—no more.

RAJU BHARATAN



THE INEVITABLE BIRTHDAY PARTY WITH WOODEN GUESTS. Shatrughan Sinha, Sharmila Tagore, Shashi Kapoor and Master Tito fill an "emotion-packed" scene. The complications were caused by the heroine's crafty old father. Shatrughan Sinha, "the doctor trained in Germany", slaps the child real hard and cures him of polio.

Film Review

AA GALE LAG JAA

OUR film heroes and heroines have sung duets aboard trains, motorboats and luxury liners. They have sung lying on stretchers, inside operating theatres—and they have sung atop the Alpine peaks, in racing cars and on skis. What are a mere pair of roller skates? Wait till you see *Aa Gale Lag Jaa!* Two pairs of roller-skates bring millionairess medical student Sharmila Tagore and unemployed salesman Shashi Kapoor together in Simla, serve as their mode of transport and means of final reunion.

As the pair roller-skate in romantic Simla, what with one thing leading to another, Sharmila produces a bastard child. (The medical student did not know her birds and bees. The hero thought he was giving her artificial respiration after her fall in a pool. Later she tells him coyly she would have done the same to him had he needed help.)

The heroine is separated from Shashi by her wily father (Om Prakash) and engaged to be married to a Germany-bound doctor (Shatrughan Sinha). When she produces the baby, the wily father passes it on to poor Shashi Kapoor, who brings him up lovingly, etc, etc.

The film is pure corn. But even yours faithfully cried a little when Master Tito appeared on the screen as the polio-stricken motherless child. Which only goes to show that our producers are nobody's fools. The film is a hit, especially with women.

When Sharmila meets Shashi and the child after six years, she cannot guess that it is her own son. That's how dumb some women can be. Shatrughan Sinha returns home from Germany, meets the child and

declares that he will not get married till he has cured him. That is nobility for you. Then all misunderstandings are cleared. Ma and Pa are united thanks to that little angel Master Tito, bless him!

Shashi Kapoor is much too good-looking, oozes sweetness and acts well. Om Prakash is fine. Master Tito is very good indeed.

There is a villain who wears a golden wig.

I confess I am a Shatrughan Sinha fan. He is different from our usual sloppy chocolate-cream screen men. (The heroes of South Indian films even wear lipstick.) Shatrughan is good in this film too.

After seeing A. G. L. J., I have reached a heartening conclusion. No nation on earth can surpass us in the art of producing such unmitigated mush. The Pakistanis tried to copy us; they failed. The Egyptians also tried and failed. The same is true of the Ceylonese. We are and shall remain masters of corn.

QURRATULAIN HYDER

Solution To Last Week's 'Crick-Cross'

