

## 'Jannat' will be Emraan's 'Naam': Mahesh Bhatt

Filmmaker Mahesh Bhatt says his just released 'Jannat', which is about match-fixing, will change his blue-eyed boy Emraan Hashmi's image the way 'Naam' did Sanjay Dutt's.

He has special words of praise for his leading man.

'I think 'Jannat' is Emraan's coming of age movie. It would do for Emraan what my 'Naam' did for Sanjay Dutt. He is a vulnerable, abominable risk-taker who falls in love with a woman who has a value system totally contrary to his,' Bhatt told IANS.

The film co-stars Sonal Chauhan and has been directed by Kunal Deshmukh.

A strange thing is happening to Bhatt. After spending years extracting creativity from real life, now when cricket fever has touched an all-time high thanks to the Indian Premier League (IPL), he plays down the cricketing karma of his new film 'Jannat'.

'The cricketing world is only the wallpaper in 'Jannat'. The cricketing field is the space in which the tale of this risk addict, played by Emraan Hashmi, unfolds.

'He is a typical product of the 21st century who goes into shopping malls to look for new things to buy every day. Emraan plays the kind of person for whom the end is more important than the means. He then meets this girl who changes his life.

'When personal gratification becomes more important than the larger concern, then society is doomed. Emraan plays a character who needs to restrain himself from the acquisitive tendency.'

Bhatt is the man whose cinema has constantly walked the tightrope depicting the worlds of idealism and corruption.

'Jannat' is about match-fixing, but Bhatt says: 'Like I said, it's reflective of the times we live in. It holds a mirror to the conscience of today's youth, who believe gratification is the bottom line of existence.'

He hesitates in connecting 'Jannat' with present-day happenings in the cricketing world.

'Incidents like Bob Woolmer's suspicious death were at the back of my writers' heads. But to say that 'Jannat' replays incidents from the cricketing world like the Woolmer one would be absurd. It's just a grotesque coincidence that the actor who plays Woolmer was a close buddy of the dead man.'

Bhatt would rather focus on the larger moral question that his cinema raises.

'Cricketers are as human as anyone else liable to be seduced by the goodies of the world. The film points out that there's huge money in cricket. It's a moneymaking industry. Everybody exploits this deity called cricket. So does my hero Emraan.'

*Subhash K. Jha* (© IANS / India eNews)