

Andhra awaits new film releases to end flop jinx

Telugu movie fans and producers are eagerly awaiting the release of two new films - 'Pandurangadu' and 'Bujjigadu' - to put an end to the string of flops.

While 'Pandurangadu' is a much-hyped devotional flick starring Balakrishna, 'Bujjigadu' by director Puri Jagannath has Prabhas and the petite Trisha in lead roles.

'Pandurangadu' comes at a time when Balakrishna, son of N.T. Ramarao, is all set to be inducted into the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) later this month following a reunion with brother-in-law and former chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu.

His entry into politics is seen as TDP's move to counter Telugu superstar Chiranjeevi's plan to launch a new political party.

'If Balakrishna is pitted against Chiranjeevi in the forthcoming by-elections, the scene will hot up in Andhra Pradesh as both are big stars. It will also revive the rivalry between two major communities here - Kamma and Kapu,' B.S. Raju, a political film historian, told IANS here.

Veteran director Raghavendra Rao, credited with big hits like 'Annamayya' and 'Shri Ramadasu' in the past, is expected to work his magic in 'Pandurangadu' to boost Balakrishna's career.

The other hope is Puri Jagannath's 'Bujjigadu' - a tale that claims to have great performances by Prabhas and Trisha. This is the third time the two have been paired opposite each other after 'Varsham' and 'Pournami'.

While 'Bujjigadu' is scheduled to release Friday, 'Pandurangadu' is set for a May 30 release.

It has been a sad tale of a string of flops for the Telugu film industry in the past few months.

Going by industry indices, the biggest summer releases 'Parugu' and 'Kantri' did not cash in as expected after decent starts, and others like 'Desamuduru' starring Allu Arjun sank without a trace.

The cause of 'Kantri' was not helped by the fact that it featured NTR Junior, also touted as an imminent TDP entrant, because of a weak storyline. Debutant director Meher Ramesh failed to deliver a hit despite glam diva Hansika's dance numbers.

These failures eventually ended up helping the collections of dubbed Hollywood flick 'The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian'.

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