

## Rekha magic endures as diva turns 54 Friday

From 12 to 54 - 42 years of reigning over Bollywood and counting. The enigmatic Rekha turns 54 Friday, still mesmerising filmgoers and the industry too with her pout and expressive eyes.

Director Pradeep Sarkar, who cast her for a song in his film 'Parineeta', describes her as a perfect blend of beauty and glamour.

'I could not think of any other actress except Rekha for the song 'Kaisi paheli zindagaani' as the song had a nostalgic feel and was, at the same time, sensuous. The way Rekha carried herself in the song can only be done by an actress of her calibre. She is a perfect blend of beauty, glamour and talent,' Sarkar told IANS.

At a time when a new Bollywood star seems to be born every Friday, Rekha's admirers bridge the generation gap.

Shweta Joshi, B.Com first year student, said: 'I saw her film 'Khooon Bhari Maang' on DVD. I was awestruck by her performance. The way she carried herself as a simple wife and a glamorous model was something I cannot go without appreciating. Also, her performance in the song 'Kaisi paheli zindagaani' in 'Parineeta' was marvellous.'

Rekha gave memorable performances in 'Ghar', 'Muqaddar Ka Sikandar', 'Khubsoorat', 'Silsila', 'Vijeta', 'Utsav', 'Khooon Bhari Maang', 'Zubeida', 'Bhoot' and 'Krrish'.

Daughter of renowned Tamil actor Gemini Ganesan and Telugu actress Pushpavalli, Rekha was born in [Chennai](#) Oct 10, 1954. She was called Bhanurekha Ganesan.

Rekha's journey into showbiz was not easy. The money crunch in the family forced her to do films. In 1966, when she was only 12, she started her career as a child artiste in a Telugu film 'Rangula Ratnam'. She went on to act in more than 180 films in a career spanning 42 years.

Her first Hindi film was 'Sawan Bhadon' where she was paired with Navin Nischol. But, because of her inability to speak Hindi and being overweight, audiences rejected her.

Gradually she carved a niche for herself with films like 'Kahani Kismat Ki', 'Namak Haram', 'Raampur Ka Lakshman' and 'Pran Jaaye Par Vachan Na Jaaye'.

As an actress she evolved with each role, working at the same time on her look and finally establishing herself as one of filmndom's most glamorous actresses.

Her first performance-oriented role came in 1976 when she signed 'Do Anjaane' with Amitabh Bachchan.

But it was Prakash Mehra's 'Muqaddar Ka Sikander', again with Amitabh, that made her a household name. Her portrayal of the character of a courtesan in the film won her rave reviews and the film was the biggest hit of the year.

'The way Rekha performed in the film could not have been done by any other actress! It was her

character in the movie along with her dedicated performance that led to the successful shaping of the story,' said Mehra.

'I always wanted to cast an actress for that character who did not have a huge star background but was a good actress and Rekha fitted the bill. I think after that film I lost the chance of not calling her a big star,' an ailing Mehra quipped.

Rekha, who was the Bollywood sex symbol for long, has also won the National Award for her acting in 'Umraao Jaan'.

Farooque Shaikh, her co-star in the film, is all praise for her.

He said: 'Rekha has been one of the most vibrant and spontaneous actor I have ever worked with. While working with her in 'Umraao Jaan', I came to know why she is called one of the finest actors. Her reactions in every scene and her portrayal of the character helped me give a better performance.'

'The character required a really good actor and Rekha carried it off effortlessly which mesmerised all.'

Echoing the view, veteran director Shyam Benegal, who had worked with Rekha in films like 'Kalyug' and 'Zubeidaa', said: 'She is a flexible actor who can fit into any role easily. Rekha in spite of being associated with glamour has always portrayed deglamourised roles with equal conviction, which makes her a great actor.'

Young director Raj Kumar Gupta too is fascinated by her charismatic persona.

Gupta, who debuted with acclaimed movie 'Aamir', said: 'Rekhaji is an icon for us. Her portrayal of different and varied characters has shown the range of her acting. It is a dream of every new filmmaker to work with her.'

Rekha is quite secretive about her personal life. She lives with her secretary Farzana and is seen only in select award functions.

Recently Rekha has been signed by director Raj Kanwar for his film 'Sadiyaan', in which she is paired with Rishi Kapoor.

*Devapriyo Bhattacharjee* ( © IANS / India eNews)