

'India did not give singer Mohammed Rafi his due'

Dhaka - A Bangladeshi newspaper has raked up an old controversy by saying that singer Mohammed Rafi was not given his due by the government of India.

Paying rich tributes to Rafi in the the Daily Star, Bakul Sultan, a columnist asks why Rafi was given only a Padma Shri while some of his contemporaries received higher honours. Lata Mangeshkar received a Bharat Ratna.

'Irrespective of the honours Rafi will remain immortal in the hearts of music lovers of the subcontinent,' wrote Sultan.

Rafi, who died 26 years ago on July 31, remains popular in South Asia and 'even distant climes such as the UK, Kenya and West Indies that have a large Indian expatriate community,' he wrote.

Disagreeing that Rafi was at par with Mukesh and Kishore Kumar, Sultan quotes Manna Dey, another great singer, who often said that 'Rafi was by far the most versatile and gifted singer among his contemporaries'.

Sultan points out that although Kishore Kumar sang all the songs in the films he acted in, music maestro O.P. Nayyar preferred Rafi's voice for the classical song 'Man mora bawra' in the Kumar starrer 'Ragini'.

'Nayyar knew that only a singer of Rafi's calibre with a classical background could fully justify his songs,' he wrote.

Rafi has left a rich legacy that is kept alive by new Bollywood singers Mohammad Aziz, Shabbir Kumar, Anwar and the current sensation Sonu Nigam, he added.

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