

Bollywood on self-healing path with four hits

Energetic openings to Bollywood's four recent releases, 'New York', 'Kambakkht Ishq', 'Love Aaj Kal' and 'Kaminey', have succeeded in getting the business perk up. Wounded by a long strike earlier this year, the film industry is perhaps on a self-healing path now, say trade pundits.

The two-month-long stand-off between the producers-distributors and multiplex owners over revenue sharing, which was resolved June 5, led to a whopping Rs.300 crore (Rs.3 billion) loss to the Hindi film industry.

The dry spell was broken by Kabir Khan's 'New York' that released June 26 followed by the other three films -- 'Kambakkht Ishq' that came July 3, 'Love Aaj Kal' July 31 and 'Kaminey' Aug 14 -- raking in a net profit close to almost half the losses so far this year.

'These four films will do a net business of Rs.150 crore (Rs.1.5 billion) put together,' revealed an industry insider.

Said trade analyst Taran Adarsh: 'The industry is definitely on a recovery path... it is getting better now, but we do need a big number of hits to follow as even an A-list movie like 'Luck' bombed.

'Every movie has a luck of its own. For example, a small-budget film like 'A Wednesday' had a moderate release last year but proved to be a dark horse. At the end of the day it's the content that will win.'

Film critic Omar Qureshi had something similar to say.

'The industry is healing. Everyone was deprived of movies. There was a desperation to watch films and the audiences couldn't handle it. So they took multiplexes by storm once good movies hit the screens and the result is worth watching,' said Qureshi.

'But that doesn't mean mediocre movies will win the race too... it'll only take big-budget and big-banner movies with a good story to make up for the losses and bring in footfalls,' he added.

The stand-off between producers-distributors and multiplex owners started in February over revenue-sharing. While the producers demanded a flat 50 percent share of all film revenues irrespective of the stars, budget and box-office collection, the exhibitors stressed on sharing profits based on the movie's earnings.

As a result the producers declared a strike from April 4 onwards, which saw no big Bollywood releases in multiplexes across the country.

Now all eyes are set on an array of big releases after the lull.

The line-up includes Shahid Kapoor-Rani Mukerji starrer 'Dil Bole Hadippa', three movies of Salman Khan -- 'Wanted', 'Main Aur Mrs Khanna' and 'London Dreams' -- two Ranbir Kapoor-starrers 'Ajab Prem Ki Ghazab Kahani' and 'Rocket Singh - Salesman of The Year', and Aamir Khan's '3 Idiots'.

Apart from these, there are also Hrithik Roshan's much-talked-about action thriller 'Kites', Priyanka

Chopra's 'What's Your Raashee?', two movies starring Amitabh Bachchan -- 'Aladdin' and 'Pa' -- Akshay Kumar's 'De Dana Dan', Govinda's 'Hook Ya Crook' and Neil Nitin Mukesh's 'Jail'.

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