

VOL. I. No. 17
October 17, 1952

Filmfare

THE FORTNIGHTLY
FILM MAGAZINE

A Year Of Decision

The tragedy of the Indian film industry, it is said, is that those in a position to influence its fortunes either take too long to learn or forget too easily. Though there has been a complete reorientation in all branches of production and practice in the past ten years, though modern techniques have even been brought to this country by units on location, our Movie Moguls have absorbed (albeit temporarily) only what is profitable, discarding all else that might make for a pattern of progress and advancement. There has been little to commend anything attempted, anything achieved in the past ten years. 1952 is a year of decision, a twelve-month which will erase the adverse record of the past or attach forthrightly the signal stamp of obloquy. There has been a momentous change demanded in production values by a discriminating public, one which the industry has failed to appreciate and meet, and has therefore had to suffer one grievous financial blow after another. It is a year in which a trade pact is likely to be entered into with Pakistan—an agreement which will be either immensely profitable or immensely regrettable if we do not keep pace with corresponding Pakistani advancement. It is a year in which we have seen such acclaimed epics in colour as "Aan" and "Jhansi Ki Rani" completed, each of which has blazed a unique path. Lastly, we have had personalities of the experience and influence of the President of the Indian Motion Picture Producers' Association, Mr. Chandulal Shah, and directors, producers, actors, actresses and technicians who compose the film delegation to the United States spending a considerable holiday in Hollywood itself, absorbing the systems and methods of the motion-picture capital under the auspices and, at the invitation of the President of the American Motion Picture Producers' Association. The collective result of these vary-

ing yet interrelated events is that each of them may, and should, sharpen thinking among those most concerned. The problems that have assailed us are not merely those of flopping films. They encompass a host of issues, from so irritating a shortcoming as unpunctuality on the sets on the part of our stars to the total absence of organised film finance. There is an immense gulf to be bridged in every branch of the science film production is, making for better-organised promotion and production; a gulf that can only be bridged with time, patience and the best and most sincere endeavours of all genuinely convinced that the studios in Chembur, Madras and Calcutta have a part to play in a cultural renaissance. The various individuals and kinematic elements and associations abroad and at home, studying and striving for improvement, can each make their contribution and we hope that it will not be too long a-coming if the common man's waning faith in the industry is not to be sharply sapped and allow of Government intrusion through rationalisation or nationalisation. It is therefore, as has been said, a year of decision. It will be widely hoped by all the well-wishers of the industry that men of eminence in the industry at home and producers of the highest rank will meet before the end of the year to decide upon a code similar to that adopted abroad, one which will clearly demarcate duties within every branch of the industry and as far apart as creating acceptable financial conditions on the one hand and a recruiting pool on the other. The whole industrial fabric has to be strengthened and developed to the nation's and the industry's advantage, so that adventurers will not seek to profit from an occasional incursion and a star-system that holds each production to ransom will cease to exist.



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