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Pakistani cinemas will screen Iranian and Turkish films to fill void

Description

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As the ban on Indian content persists, Pakistani cinema owners and film distributors hope to bring about a change in the cinema experience for audiences by screening IranianFilm distribution , Turkish and hopefully Chinese and South Korean films.

Film distribution company IMGCâ??s Chairman Shaikh Amjad Rashid and Mohsin Yaseen of Cinepax management speak with Images on screening foreign films in Pakistan.

â??Itâ??s in the initial states right now. Weâ??ve decided to screen films from Iran and Turkey to fill the gap of Indian films,â?• says Rashid.

â??Yes. We are looking at different options from around the world to fill the gap, as Turkish dramas had a good following in Pakistan, we feel their movies will have a good impact too. Currently, we only play films from Hollywood, Bollywood and Pakistan,â?• echoes Mohsin Yaseen of Cinepax (Karachi) management.

> The hit Turkish drama â??Ishq e Mamnoonâ?? went viral in Pakistan and girls couldnâ??t stop gushing over BehlÃ¼l.

This move comes because local productions arenâ??t enough to sustain Pakistani cinemas.

Says Yaseen, â??Hollywood has a set number of releases around the year and these films have a certain market following. Bollywood has a huge market following but due to the political scenario there will always be uncertainty. Pakistani movies are coming in but they are limited in quantity, and are not enough to run 52 weeks of cinema business in a year. And Iranian films have good international repute, some Iranian directors have won international awards as well.â?•

However, both agree that this wonâ??t necessarily be a permanent move. The chairman explains: â??If the ban on Indian films is lifted, this will fizzle out because they (Iranian and Turkish films) will not yield a profitable response; theyâ??re very different from Pakistani culture.â?•

> Although Turkish dramas like *Ishq e Mamnoon*, *Fatima Gull* and *Mera Sultan* went viral in Pakistan, itâ??s costly to buy their rights. But Yaseen hopes that Turkish films will be just as popular as these TV dramas.

The reason being Indian films donâ??t have a language barrier and our culture closely mirrors theirs. Additionally, the Pakistani audience is more receptive to Indian artists because they are popular here and are frequently seen in TV commercials, he explains.

â??Iranian artists are new (to our audience), even I donâ??t know who their top actor or actress is,â?• says Rashid. â??However, this experiment can be done and it can be said that there is potential by placing one or two films.â?•

Although Turkish d l in Pakistan, Rashid explains tha ghts. Plus, the traction died down.

Turkish drama 'Fatima Gull' became famous in Pakistan owing to Turkish actress Beren Saat.

â??We had some advantage through Turkish dramas but thereâ??s a difference in TV audience and the cinema audience,â?• he explains. â??Itâ??s about paying money to go watch a show, as opposed to sitting at home and watching one which is available on cable.â?•

Yaseen, on the other hand, is hopeful that the films will be as successful as the Turkish shows. â??This formula worked on TV content. We are experimenting on a similar pattern as we have seen few screeners of the films and they are amazing and Iâ??m sure our audience will like these movies as well.

On screening foreign films, IMGC aims create a trade system with Iran and Turkey and also bring China on board. â??There should be a barter system. In new markets we should do a barter system, Pakistani films should also be screened there,â?• says the chairman.

> Rashid discloses that a Pak-China film is in the works penned by Amjad Islam, which will be directed by Shehzad Rafique.

He adds, â??South Korea is making exceptional movies nowadays, and we should explore China (as a market), even if 5% are released there itâ??ll be profitable. When Pakistani films were released in China they did really well and were screening for years.â?•

Although China is a viable option, as it is the second largest market after the U.S., there are a few considerations to note. For example, only 20% of foreign films are allowed to be screened in Chinese cinemas, the rest are all local productions.

Another Turkish drama which become outrageously popular among Pakistani audiences was 'Mera Sultan'.

â??When the Indian PM went to China he took an Indian film distributor with him to sign a film agreement with them. Itâ??s unfortunate that when Pakistani officials go they donâ??t take anybody from the film industry or try to get the agreements signed,â?• says Rashid.

However, efforts are being made on both fronts to strengthen ties with China. He discloses that a Pak-China film is in the works penned by Amjad Islam, which will soon be directed by Shehzad Rafique. Theyâ??re planning on taking two actresses; one from Pakistan and one from China. The working title of which is *Rishta Hai Pyaar Ka* and shooting will begin after winter.

Both, Yaseen and Rashid agree that it will take a long period of time till people become comfortable with the idea of foreign films. As of now, the foreign films which will be screened have not been finalised.

(Source: http://www.images.dawn.com)

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