

SINHALA CINEMA

Hiripoda Wessa exceeds fifty days

Udhayakantha Warnasuriya's *Hiripodha Wessa* has completed 50 days in the halls which screened the movie from the day of release.

The movie, which was aimed at the youth audience has been welcomed by movie goers of all ages and had a huge response from the youngsters.

The movie also has a star cast like Chathurika Peiris, Anarkali Akarsha, Pubudu Chathuranga and veterans like Jayalath Manorathne, Jayantha Atapattu and Vijaya Corea. The music in the movie also was appreciated by the youngsters as it was different from the usual style. The tunes composed by the duo Bathiya and Santhush added freshness to the movie and was supported by excellent picturization. The background music also blended with the locations and was appreciated by movie buffs.

TAMIL FILMS

Tirupathi is red hot



The countdown for Ajith's *Tirupathi* has begun. With just a month away for the movie to make it to theatres, great expectations are soaring among fans. Produced by AVM and directed by Perarasu, the movie has Ajith and Sada in the lead roles.

Says Perarasu, who is hoping to strike a hat-trick, "certainly it will live up to the expectations of Ajith's fans. AVM gave me enough freedom and Ajith, on his part, gave his best."

Quite typical to my films, it would have fiery dialogues with enough punch lines and swift screenplay, he adds.

Bharadwaj's music is another highlight and there are five racy numbers sure to satisfy music-lovers. After a lean patch, Ajith managed to set his career on the right track with Paramasivan. Now with *Tirupathi* releasing next month, it is hoped that he would certainly strengthen his hold in the industry with the movie.

Asin's distinction



Asin had the rare distinction of acting as heroine to two big heroes last year. She played Vijay's ladylove in *Sivakasi*, while in *Majaa* she acted along with Vikram. Interestingly, Asin is all set to repeat the same feat again this year too.

According to sources, Asin is tipped to act with Vijay in the actor's next movie *Murasu*, while in Vikram's *Bheema*, Asin is expected to play the heroine. She is awaiting the release of *God Father* in which she has acted with Ajith.

Kamal and Rajini in a release contest



The latest buzz in Kollywood is that Rajinikanth and Kamal Hassan who had their films releasing on the same day last April will do the same this *Deepavali* too. Grapevine has it that both would have their next movies releasing this *Deepavali*.

While Rajinikanth starrer *Sivaji* is being planned for a *Deepavali* release, Kamal's *Dasavatharam* is tipped to make it to the market on the same day.

Vishal, Reema again



Vishal and Reema Sen, who came together for director Gandhi Krishna's *Chellame*, are paired together for their next movie titled *Thimir*. For Vishal, who from an assistant director ventured to become an actor will be commencing his next movie soon to be directed by debutant Tharun Gopi.

Reema Sen would be acting opposite him and the cast includes Shreya Reddy. A popular VJ, she left her mark acting in a few Malayalam movies. The movie would have musical scores by Yuvan Shankar Raja.

Bollywood

Isn't Rani Bollywood's Queen Bee?



Hello Brother along with Salman Khan and his brother Arbaaz Khan, at the box office had left no chance of her ever becoming number one. But soon her talented acting and ever smiling face left everyone, including the world beauty Aishwarya Rai and chirpy Kareena Kapoor, far behind in the race of number one actress even in the wake of her relatively weak personality and split voice.

Rani Mukherjee has reached the top though it has taken her a long time to be crowned Queen Bee of Bollywood. She has been crowned following the number of awards conferred on her in the recent past for her best performance in *Black*, starring millennium star Amitabh Bachchan. The latter has profusely praised Rani for her excellent and skillful acting. Besides, she has proved her worth even in a brief role in Aamir starrer *Mangal Pandey - The Rising*. Apart from these, she has moved far ahead of her contemporaries in *Bunty Aur Babli* starring both the senior as well as the junior Bachchan.

Movie watchers wonder how a girl who began her career in *Raja Ki Aayegi Baraat* and was neither as beautiful nor soft voiced as are other actresses, has won both the audience and the critics. Moreover, the miserable failure of Rani starrer

Bollywood — Apne brings the three Deols together



The last time more than one generation of a film family came together was for Randhir Kapoor's *Kal Aaj Aur Kal*, which starred grandfather Prithviraj, father Raj and son Randhir Kapoor himself. Now it's time for the three Deols — Dharmendra and his two sons — Sunny and Bobby Deol — to be cast together. Says Bobby: "We were very sure that we'd come together with dad only in a

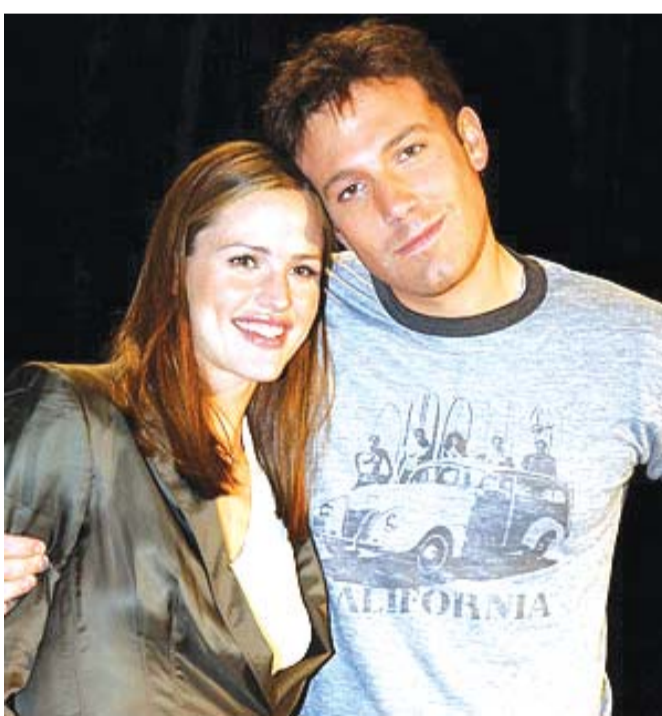
project worthy of such casting. Anil Sharma, who's a family friend, is someone we are all comfortable with." The long-in-the-anvil project has been titled *Apne*. It stars Katrina Kaif along with the three Deols.

Though Sunny and Bobby came together as brothers in *Dillagi*, which Sunny directed, they avoided the temptation of casting their dad and let Dara Singh do the needful. Earlier, Guddu Dhanoa, who is the

Movie world with Jamila Najmuddin and Arthur Wamanan

Hollywood

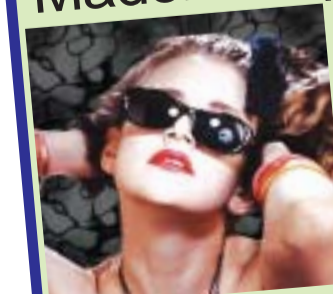
Affleck and Garner targeted by burglars



Ben Affleck and Jennifer Garner's wedded bliss has been wrecked by a gang of burglars who have turned their Los Angeles neighbourhood into a crime zone. Police have warned the couple and their neighbours to make sure their doors and windows are locked at all times and to try to make sure that someone is at home all day, everyday.

A police spokesman says, "We've got a roving gang of burglars up on this hill and they're hitting this neighbourhood like crazy. The neighbours have been made aware."

Madonna quits acting



pop superstar has worked on a string of notorious flops including *Shanghai Surprise*, *Swept Away* and *Body Of Evidence*.

She explains, "What film can survive people saying it's going to be a bomb from the second it's announced? Making movies is such an effort."

Madonna has vowed never to star in another movie, because she fears her terrible acting reputation will condemn any film. The

Sesame Street' snubs Crowe



Gadiator star Russell Crowe won't be stopping by children's show *Sesame Street*, after producers rejected an appearance by the actor, claiming he's not a good role model.

The actor has a two-year-old son, Charles, with wife Danielle Spencer and another baby on the way — but *Sesame Street* producers don't see him as a family-friendly guy thanks to his hellraiser reputation.

Sesame Street executive producer Carol-Lynne Parente said of the star's prospects of joining the show, "He may not be the best role model for kids."

Crowe has a reputation for having a bad temper and was arrested last June for throwing a phone at a hotel clerk in New York City.

However, one of Crowe's fellow Australians would be welcomed with open

Vivek returns to story writing?

Vivek Oberoi is a writer at heart. Even before entering into acting, he used to write stories for films. Incidentally, he had met with Aishwarya Rai for the first time when reading his story to producer-director Vidhu Vinod Chopra in the latter's office. Besides, Vidhu Vinod Chopra's movie *Mission Kashmir* is said to be based on the story written by Vivek! Another noteworthy fact is that Vivek played a story writer's role in his last year's movie *Home Delivery*.



Who can ignore that he had then said that the story writer's role is closer to his heart? He is back to his first love though after a long journey in films followed by his relationship with Aishwarya Rai and its abrupt end coupled with his quarrel with Salman Khan.

Now, Vivek is writing a story and one could imagine its subject. Some of his director-producer friends are anxiously awaiting the completion of the story to start making a movie. Film circles can guess about his story though they are keeping quiet.

However, there is no truth in reports that Vivek has shifted to story writing following his being marginalised in the acting field. Sources close to the actor inform that Vivek has turned more serious about his job now. He has reduced his body weight by as much as eight kilos and 'shocked' Vishal Bhardwaj.

Saif to turn filmmaker



In the footsteps of his other colleagues like Shah Rukh Khan, Ajay Devgan and Suniel Shetty, actor Saif Ali Khan has also decided to enter into filmmaking. He seems to have been encouraged by his recent National Award for his best performance in *Parineeta*.

However, he doesn't want to say goodbye to acting. In fact, he has recently got his head shaved off like Salman Khan, to play a special role as per the demand of the script of his next movie. In the task of debut filmmaking *Chhote Nawab* has assigned the job of a director to who else but the director of *Parineeta*, Pradeep

The LIC Zee Cine Awards, held at the Swami Vivekananda International Convention Centre in Mauritius Saturday night, was no different from the earlier Filmfare, Star Screen or Apsara Awards — in all of which *Black* swept the awards.

In the Zee awards, *Black* won in the best director, best actor and best

Bollywood Black tops Zee Awards



Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Black* bagged the top honours at the star-studded Zee film awards that saw some power-packed performances by Shah Rukh Khan, Rani Mukerji and Preity Zinta even as Abhishek Bachchan had to miss the show due to viral fever.

actress award categories. Bhansali, after receiving the best director award from Neetu Singh, said: "As I'm going to make a film with your son Ranbir — I hope next year I am here on stage with your son, madam."

He also received the award for the best film from Rekha and Akshay Kumar. It came as no surprise when Amitabh Bachchan's name was announced as the best actor award for his powerhouse performance in *Black*. Saif Ali Khan, who was also nominated in the best actor (male) category, said before the show that Amitabh was the obvious choice. Amitabh, who is still recovering from an operation, could not make it to the show and his co-star in *Black*, Rani Mukerji, and Sanjay Leela Bhansali received the award on his behalf from father-son duo Feroze and Fardeen Khan.

Locklear wants second divorce judge replaced

Heather Locklear has requested the second judge assigned to her divorce case be removed, just one week after her estranged husband Richie Sambora challenged the objectivity of the first judge.

Locklear's attorney, Lance Spiegel, filed a preemptory challenge last week, claiming Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Mark Juhas is biased

against his client and would prevent Locklear from receiving "a fair and impartial trial or hearing." The court accepted the challenge and the case will be reassigned, according to court documents.

Locklear filed for divorce from Sambora on February 2, citing irreconcilable differences.

The pair wed in Paris in December 1994 and have one daughter together.



Children Of The Heaven — in Iranian Film Week

By Rohan Canagasabey

Children Of The Heaven is an Iranian film about the love between a young brother and sister. One of them loses the other's shoes but they agree to share the remaining pair between them, without revealing the loss of the other pair to their poor parents.

The film carefully portrays the consequences of the brother and sister having to secretly share one pair of shoes, including the emotions involved when things don't always work to plan. The film naturally offers an insight into the life of a poor family in Iran, and is beautifully crafted around a simple subject, ending with the brother's attempt to win a pair of shoes in a school athletic competition.

Children Of The Heaven, directed by Naser Taghvaei, was first screened to an invited audience at the BMICH cinema on March 9, in launching the Iranian Film Week, organised by the Consulate-General of the Embassy of Iran and the Asian Film Centre (AFC), to coincide with the 27th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution.

It is the sixth Iranian Film Festival held in Sri Lanka since 1994. The chief guest was the Minister of Media and Information, Anura Priyadarshana Yapa.

But strangely, the film

shown at the opening was one dubbed in Chinese, instead of the original Persian, but of course subtitled in English. A fact that few in the audience probably realised. However, a representative of the AFC indicated that the original Persian versions with English subtitles would be screened during the film festival, when questioned on this point by this writer.

The Iranian Film Week culminates tonight (15) with the 5pm screening at the BMICH cinema, of the leg-



endary Iranian Director Abbas Kiarostami's film, *Taste Of Cherry*, on a man's attempt to obtain assistance from others to help him commit suicide. Probably another example of a simple but unpleasant storyline, turned into a beautiful film.

Yesterday — A South African film on a harrowing issue

Yesterday is a South African film set in a remote village nestled below mountains and thus providing a beautiful backdrop to the storyline, enhanced by good cinematography.

But the story is a harrowing one. *Yesterday* is the tale of a young mother with a pre-school daughter and a husband who lives away near Johannesburg, working as a miner. Her cough is discovered to be brought on by HIV/AIDS, which she contracted through her husband.

The harrowing wastage and death of her husband after he returns home, is followed by signs of *Yesterday* developing AIDS. But *Yesterday* is determined to see her daughter Beauty begin school. *Yesterday* has the comfort of knowing that upon her death, her friend, the new female school-teacher, will look after her daughter. The film *Yesterday* also reveals society's ignorance and ostracism of AIDS victims. The film won a few international awards and was also nominated for an Oscar in the Best Foreign Language Film category in 2004. *Yesterday* was screened at the IOBS on March 8.