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‘Vishwaroopam’ ban can spell Rs.30 crore loss: Experts

The delay in the screening of Kamal Haasan’s Rs.95 crore film ‘Vishwaroopam’ big star, then only good opening can help break



in the wake of a ban after some groups tagged it as anti-Muslim is likely to result in an estimated loss of Rs.30 crore, say industry experts.

“A film like ‘Vishwaroopam’, which was promoted at a huge scale, will perhaps have to bear a loss of around Rs.20 to Rs.30 crore. But it also depends on the fate of the film. If the film again gets delayed, then the loss might even cross more than Rs.30 crore,” Mumbai-based distributor Rajesh Thadani of Multi Media Combines told IANS. After the ban on the international espionage drama, directed and produced by Kamal, in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala, distributors and theatre owners are worried about recovering the cost. Karnataka distributor Gangaraju said that when a star’s film gets banned, the losses are heavy.

“If a single-screen theatre shells out about Rs.5-Rs.10 lakh for a film involving a

even in two weeks’ time,” he added.

A theatre owner said: “By Jan 22 we started bookings for ‘Vishwaroopam’ and removed all other films that were playing. But the ban has come as a shocker and we had to fill the screens again with old films such as ‘Alex Pandian’ and ‘Samar’.”

The Tamil and Telugu versions of “Vishwaroopam”, which deals with the adversities of war, were scheduled to release Jan 25, but couldn’t come out on the schedule time as a ban was imposed by the Tamil Nadu government following protests from Muslim groups.

A day later, the Madras high court restricted the film’s release till Jan 28.

On Friday, some theatres in Andhra Pradesh and Kerala screened the film, but had to stop the run after religious leaders approached Home Minister Sabita Indra Reddy and urged a ban. Prakash Reddy, a distributor, said:

“A Kamal Haasan film is bound to have a good opening but sadly, that was not in the case of ‘Vishwaroopam’ as the shows were disrupted.”

Now “Vishwaroopam” is substituted by “Race 2” and “Aakash Vani” in the multiplexes, while single screen theatres are playing Pongal releases like “Naayak” and “Seethamma Vakitlo Sirimalle Chettu” in Hyderabad.

It was the same in Karnataka.

“We definitely missed the box-office opening of the film. But our biggest problem now seems to be the reimbursement of tickets that were bought and booked online. Some said they don’t need their money back and demanded screening of the film again,” Gangaraju said.

To watch a film in a multiplex, viewers have to shell out somewhere between Rs.120-Rs.150 for a film. In cities like Bangalore, multiplexes some times charge Rs.250 per ticket at the weekend.

In single-screen theatres, the tickets are priced at Rs.70 to Rs.100 in the region.

Some audiences, who booked online, demanded instant reimbursement and made a ruckus at the theatres.

“Usually, a third party vendor takes care of online booking and it usually takes a few days for the money to get credited into their account, but since the shows were cancelled, most of them were disappointed,” added Gangaraju.

In Karnataka, multiplexes are now playing new Hindi releases along with Sudeep-starrer “Varadanayaka”. Some are also showing “Alex Pandian” and “Samar”.

In Kerala, “Vishwaroopam” released on 82 screens Jan 25, but soon after the first show, most theatres were forced to stop the screenings.

But on Jan 26 the film was shown in some theatres in Kerala with the help of youth wing members of certain parties.

“In places like Trivandrum there was tension but members of Yuva Morcha and Hindu Munnani opposed the ban against the film and ensured a smooth run,” said Arvind.

But those who can’t run the film in the state are showing the Mammooty-starrer “Kammath & Kammath”.

Initially, the film had a peaceful release in the overseas market, where distribution price is reportedly Rs.1.5 crore.

“Vishwaroopam” collected Rs.57.13 lakh in Britain in the first three days,” tweeted trade analyst Taran Adarsh.

But now the trouble has travelled abroad with a ban on the film’s screening in Malaysia. Confirming the same, A. Ramalingam, distributor of the film in Malaysia, said: “The film ran to packed houses on the first day but following a request from the ministry, we had to stop screening on Saturday.”

Ranbir Kapoor to strike against film ban



The actor and ‘striker’ will lead our team in a friendly football match against Bangladesh to commemorate the end of a 41-year-old blackout of Indian films

Cricketers may no longer be the darlings of the nation. And Bollywood may no longer be all starry-eyed at the mention of the sport. What better way then to herald the end of a 41-year-old ban on Indian films in our neighbouring Bangladesh, than a friendly football match between our actors and theirs?

TOI has learnt that on April 15 and in May, a team captained by Ranbir Kapoor will take on a Bangladeshi one, led by top actor Firdaus, at two commemorative matches in Dhaka and in Kolkata.

Bangladesh had imposed the ban in 1972 to protect

the indigenous film industry from the onslaught of Indian, especially Hindi films.

While team Bangladesh will be represented by stars from their film industry, team India is likely to have Abhishek Bachchan, Prosenjit, Mithun Chakrabarty and with a host of Bengali stars. Ranbir will play as a striker.

The development was confirmed by Prosenjit, who was in Mumbai to receive a film award. He said that preparations for the high-profile matches are in full swing and the venues have been confirmed.

“We have had meetings with the Information and Broadcasting Minister of Bangladesh, Hasanul Haq Imu on this matter recently in Kolkata. It was decided that the ban will be

Udita-Mohit wedding celebrations underway

Filmmaker Mohit Suri and actress Udita Goswami will marry at the Hare Rama Hare Krishna temple on January 29 at 6 pm. A close friend of the couple said, “Udita’s hen party was held on January 26 with all her close friends in attendance.”

While the mehendi ceremony will take place today evening, the wedding reception will be



held at Mahalaxmi Race Course on January 31.

According to another friend of the actress, “The mehendi and wedding will be very simple, but the reception will be ‘full-on dhamaal’.”

Friends of the couple will perform at the do. As Udita’s friend added, “From Udi’s side, a few close friends and family are dancing, while from Mohit’s side, his family, Emraan Hashmi and his industry friends will be performing.”

Udita and Mohit started dating during the making of Zeher and have been together since then.

Nothing wrong with the birth of girls: Akshay Kumar

The 45-year-old actor, who was in Jaipur for the promotion of his upcoming film ‘Special 26’, championed the cause of the girl child and said that the government should come up with a scheme to provide financial support to families welcoming a female newborn.

The 45-year-old actor, who became the father of a daughter in September 2012 after wife Twinkle Khanna gave birth to a baby girl, said that the nation needs to promote the birth of a female child and a positive atmosphere for them to grow was required for a healthy society.

“We need to tell people that there is nothing wrong with the birth of girls. There

are some places in the country where even today the birth of a daughter is not welcomed and we need to change the situation,” Akshay said.

“Government and we should help them financially. There should be a government scheme which involves monetary benefit on the birth of a girl child so that their birth could be promoted. I work for this cause and promote this,” he added.

The actor also said that he and his family are thankful to the government for honouring his father-in-law, superstar Rajesh Khanna, posthumously with the Padma Bhushan.

Khanna, who passed away in July last year, was conferred with India’s third

highest civilian honour on Friday.

“We are thankful to the government for the recognition,” Akshay told reporters.

Talking about his film, Akshay said ‘Special 26’ was an entertaining movie with a lesson for people that some unexpected ugly incidents could be averted with vigilance.

“This is a movie about fake and real CBI officers. It tells us how we can prevent an unwanted event from happening with vigilance. We need to be careful about the identities of the watchmen, security guards and others in general,” he said.

The film’s leading lady Kajal Aggarwal said that

she was lucky to work with actors like Akshay Kumar and Manoj



Bajpayee. Akshay also flagged off a 6-KM ‘Dream Run’ at Ramniwas garden which was organised by Sanskriti Yuva Sansthan. Nearly 40,000 people participated in the dream run and marathon.

HC dismisses petition against Amitabh Bachchan

The Allahabad High Court today dismissed a petition, which had accused Bollywood superstar Amitabh Bachchan of having made a



“derogatory” remark “with malicious intention” about the Holy Quran in a more than a year-old episode of game show ‘Kaun Banega Crorepati’.

The petition filed by Jhansi resident Mudassir Ullah Khan, who had taken exception to the use of the phrase “racha gaya” (composed) in the context of the Holy Quran by Bachchan in the episode aired on 28 September, 2011 was dismissed by Justice Manoj Misra.

The petitioner had contended that the Holy Quran was “neither written nor created by anybody, rather it came into existence/revealed by Allah (God) Himself” and hence the use of the phrase “racha gaya” was tantamount to “a serious offence” as Bachchan was a “popular figure” and “words used by him affects all communities”.

However, Justice Misra disagreed with his contention and said, “To

say ‘racha gaya’ does not necessarily imply that the Quran was written by some person.

“The phrase can also imply that the Holy Book was composed by Allah Himself, which is another way of saying that it is a revealed scripture,” Justice Mishra said.

Through the petition, Khan had also challenged orders of Chief Judicial Magistrate and District and Sessions Judge of Jhansi whereby his pleas for directing the police to register an FIR under sections of Indian Penal Code dealing with hurt caused to religious sentiments were turned down.

He had submitted that while the CJM had dismissed his complaint “illegally and without application of mind”, the District Judge turned down his subsequent criminal revision terming it as “frivolous and vexatious” besides submitting that no objection was raised by any ‘school, institution or the Mohammadan community’ nor was there any ‘fatwa’ issued against Bachchan.

‘OMG’ helmer to direct a comedy with Abhishek Bachchan

Director Umesh Shukla, who tasted success with his debut film ‘Oh My God’, will be next working on a comedy project with actor Abhishek Bachchan in the lead.



“I am doing a film with Abhishek. I have met him and narrated the story line in short. He has liked it and has showed his interest towards it. I am still working on my script and will meet Abhishek once again with a proper draft,” Shukla told.

Shukla’s directorial venture ‘Oh My God’ had Paresh Rawal playing the role of an atheist while Akshay Kumar was seen in a modern day avatar of Lord Krishna.

The film was a satirical-comedy-drama on religion and did well at the box office after its release on September 28 last year. This time again, Shukla is going to have a social element in the

film. “I can’t talk about it now as I am still working on my story. All I can say is it will be of social relevance coupled with comedy.”

When asked about the leading lady, he said, “I haven’t thought of anyone yet.”

The film is likely to be backed by Bhushan Kumar, Chairman and Managing Director of T-Series, and Shyam Bajaj.

“The film will go on floors this year,” Shukla said.

The director was even toying with the idea of making a film on scams and share market which has been put on hold.

He was also planning to work with “Dabangg 2” star Sonakshi Sinha, but nothing is happening on that front also.

“The film on scams is on hold. While for the one with Sonakshi, nothing is finalised yet. If things work out then we would work. I would need a good script for Sonakshi,” Shukla said.

Aamir supports fight against alcoholism among women

Bollywood actor-producer Aamir Khan, who brought



several social issues to the fore through his show ‘Satyamev Jayate’, has now lent support to the fight

against alcoholism amongst women. He says women should be forthcoming about admitting their addiction. Addressing a press conference by an NGO, Aamir said the problem is more complex in India as women never come out and admit that they drink. “In India, the problem is more complex. There are so many modernistic issues involved with drinking that women

would be afraid to even admit openly that they are drinking. Its a very difficult thing for them,” the 47-year-old said. “So, the fact that you (female reporters) have come here, will give them a lot of strength, lot of courage and with the media reporting about it, the message that it is a disease will come across. Even if you are a woman and if you are suffering, you need to step

out and there is help available to you,” he added. Aamir says eradicating the issue will take time, but it will have to be a continuous struggle. “Certainly this is a struggle which is a continuous struggle. I don’t think that anyone’s step is ever the end of it. Its a continuous struggle that we all have to take forward and we have to be committed,” Aamir said.

Ranbir to be guest lecturer at Yale university

In 2012, it was Bollywood Badshah Shah Rukh Khan who was roped in as a guest lecturer at Yale University, Connecticut, USA.

On April 8 this year, it will be Ranbir Kapoor — who is currently seen as Bollywood’s brightest light — who has been asked to be a guest lecturer at the American education institution.

Ranbir is in Kashmir wrapping up Ayan Mukerji’s Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani and is then expected to join Abhinav Kashyap’s unit of Besharam in Chandigarh.

Sources say he is working out his dates to accommodate this prestigious assignment.

