

QT

Indian Experience



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Poster of the film Pathaan, which has sent the box office cash registers swelling.

INDIAN EXPATS GIVE 'PATHAAN' the thumbs up, laud its 'message of brotherhood, harmony'

Indian expatriates in Qatar go gaga over the movie, dole out '10/10' to Pathaan, as Shah Rukh Khan returns as a lead after a hiatus of four years

FOR his fans, watching Pathaan in theatres in India has become akin to a festival these past few days. People have been seen jostling with excitement, going gaga, relishing the film with friends and kin, even dancing to the tunes of the film's chartbuster songs inside theatres. For Bollywood watchers and well-wishers who spent a distressed 2022, as film after film was coming a cropper, Pathaan's glorious run seems so good it feels surreal.

While the film is doing roaring business at multiplexes across India, it seems to have resurrected single theatres – most of them had downed shutters following the outbreak of COVID-19 – as well. After all, the superstar has returned to the cine screen in a lead role after four years.

Shah Rukh Khan, very much like the late showman Raj Kapoor, and to some extent Mithun Chakraborty, enjoys a large international fan base, including in the Gulf countries, Europe, the US and more. Indian expatriates in Qatar, like Shah Rukh Khan's fans elsewhere, seem to be loving every bit of the cinematic experience that Pathaan has unfolded.

Sharing his review, Jawed Ahmad, chairman of AMU Alumni Association Qatar and founder president of AMU Alumni Toastmaster Club, is willing to give 10/10 to Pathaan! "An action-packed thriller, suspense and patriotic movie, and overall, a complete package of entertainment, this is. SRK, Deepika, John, Salman [Khan] all rock with their superb acting. We didn't notice any point of controversy in the film. After a long time, a must-watch movie and a strong message of unity in diversity," he told Qatar Tribune.

Mohammad Musaraf Khan, another Indian expat based in Doha, aired a similar view. "My recent experience at the cinema watching Pathaan was really enjoyable. It is an action thriller and as far as action films go, this one definitely met my



SRK fans watch Pathaan at a theatre in Qatar



Doha residents Mahesh Mishra and Mohammed Musaraf Khan at a cinema hall in Doha, to watch 'Pathaan'.



AMUAAQ founder Jawed Ahmad

expectations."

When asked to elaborate his views a tad further, Musaraf Khan noted: "The pacing was great and the action sequences were spectacular. Shah Rukh Khan has really brought his A-game in his usual charismatic acting style. He was able to quickly captivate the audience with his presence.

"Deepika Padukone too has brought her incredible acting chops to the table; her performance was simply magnificent. Furthermore, the cinematography, editing, and music were all top-notch and really added to the overall experience. To sum it up, Pathaan was an entertain-

ing and intense movie-viewing experience that I highly recommend."

The high-octane spy thriller with its patriotic theme is finding its chord with audiences across the world. Said Abdul Rehman, a Qatar resident from India: "I think Pathaan is one of the few top movies of Bollywood to date. Full of action, thrill, suspense, and most importantly, patriotism.

"This is a never-seen-before avatar of SRK – as a complete action hunk. I think this movie will break all the records. It's probably going to end up as Bollywood's biggest blockbuster. This film is spreading the message of brotherhood, secularism and communal harmony, bringing everyone together."

Bollywood superstar discovers new mojo as his latest film sets the box-office on fire

"SUGGEST that the only books that influence us are those for which we are ready, and which have gone a little further down our particular path than we have yet gone ourselves." – E.M. Forster

There's much more than meets eye in this quote that came from Edward Morgan Forster, the celebrated English author best known for his novels A Room with a View, Howards End, and A Passage to India. Self-discovery is quite an art. And science no less. As one ages, specifically those in the show biz, careening off from the beaten track into uncharted territory is part of the game.

With his latest flick, Pathaan, the Bollywood baadshah (ruler), as he is often referred to, Shah Rukh Khan seems to have discovered a new mojo. An action hero with a larger-than-life portrayal of a die-hard patriot – the actor is back with a bang after a hiatus of four (would-you-believe-it?) years. His last film, Zero, which released in 2018, was a box office dud albeit not literally if one were to look at it numerically as it had still managed to rake in substantial earnings.

Shah Rukh is not alone in his transformation from a boy-next-door to a Mission Impossible type protagonist trying out gravity defying stunts. Yes, we are talking about Tom Cruise, who at age 60, is a trail-blazer of his own league.

In these times of OTT, when the audiences had perhaps started getting uncomfortable with Shah Rukh romancing women half his age, the action mojo couldn't have come at a more opportune time for the ageing superstar. In all fairness, this is still a new territory for Shah Rukh and it would take much more than a Pathaan to catapult him to action crown. His next few movies – those in the making – are reported to be in the same action mould as well.

However, if morning shows

the day, it's all good omen thus far. Pathaan's box office collections have been nothing less than mindboggling. James Cameron's recent release Avatar 2 had reportedly made \$10 million in a day. Pathaan, according to trade reports, made \$13 million in one day. In less than a week since its release, the film that stars Shah Rukh, Deepika Padukone and John Abraham, is seen headed towards unprecedented glory. And in five days of its release its worldwide collections have topped Rs500 crore.

Reacting to its humongous success, Siddharth Anand, the film's director, was quoted in media reports as saying: "Scripting history. Everyone wants it, but one can't plan it. It just happens. And when it does, it's actually a very humbling experience. I'm feeling incredibly overwhelmed right now and inspired to get back on the film set and try and create something really special for audiences again. That's my state of mind."

For a large part of his acting journey, Shah Rukh, the Delhi boy who forayed into Bollywood in the early 90's, has earned the sobriquet of King of Romance, the boy-next-door. Not since Rajesh Khanna (the first superstar of Hindi cinema who made females swoon and go weak in the knees with his histrionics and boyish good looks) had a Hindi film star enjoyed such a cult romantic image. That changes with Pathaan and how. It has left everyone shocked with the amount of love it is garnering across the globe.

Amazingly, in just four days, Pathaan surpassed the lifetime collections of Salman Khan's Bharat and Prem Ratan Dhan Payo, Akshay Kumar's Housefull 4, Good Newwz, Mission Mangal, Ajay Devgn's Golmaal Again, and Aamir Khan's 3 Idiots.

Shah Rukh, as of now, is clearly basking in his new mojo.