

# Rakeysh Mehra to Produce Bio of Legendary Athlete

MUMBAI (PTI) — Director Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra, known for hits such as “Rang De Basanti,” announced Feb. 7 production on his next film, “Bhag Milkha Bhag.” Based on the life of legendary runner Milkha Singh, the project will chronicle the athlete’s journey from a traumatic childhood to Olympic gold.

“Milkha Singh’s life story is extremely inspiring. I had read his autobiography and approached him with my wish to make a film on it,” said Mehra, who wanted to create a faithful portrayal of Singh’s life. “We researched for

two years about Milkha’s life and his past during our interactions with him in Chandigarh,” he added.

As a child, Singh witnessed the murder of his family during riots on the Pakistan side of Punjab. He has a vivid memory of dying father screaming to him, “Bhag Milkha bhag!” which means, “Run Milkha, run,” urging him to escape. Milkha ran across to the Indian side of the border and eventually became one of the top professional runners became one of the greatest runners of the country. Mehra has yet to finalize the cast for “Bhag

Milkha Bhag,” but expressed interest in finding a fresh face for the title role.

Regarding other projects following “Bhag Milkha Bhag,” Mehra mentioned an untitled movie about a father-daughter relationship starring Amitabh Bachchan and a new actress; Mehra is signing on as producer and will begin work on the project in May.

Mehra expressed interest in doing a range of work and constantly evolving as a filmmaker. “Once a movie is out of my system, I can’t make the same

thing again,” he said. “Rang De Basanti” was a huge success. But, I cannot repeat the same story of youngsters out to change the world,” he remarked, adding that he tries to vary his repertoire and work closely with very different projects.

“My stories are original and hence it takes time to create a story. I normally take two years to finish the story before getting down to actual shooting,” he

said. There are long gaps between Mehra’s projects, as he writes, produces, and directs all his films. Furthermore, he is careful to not let profit impede his creativity. “You can’t chase money in any business,” he insisted. “I believe in chasing excellence in work, and money will follow.”

“The idea is to do good work to the best of your ability,” he said. You want to tell a story and that is why you do the film.”

## First Look at Vikram Bhatt’s ‘Haunted’ in 3D

By R.M. VIJAYAKAR  
Special to India-West

MUMBAI — BVG Films, a division of ASA Productions and DAR Motion Pictures, the filmed entertainment division of DAR Media Private Limited, unveiled the first look of India’s first Stereoscopic 3D film “Haunted 3D” at Mumbai’s PVR Juhu Cinema Feb. 7.

The producers also announced that UFO Moviez India Ltd., the world’s largest satellite-delivered

digital cinema network, has come on board this path-breaking project as the technical and digital 3D partner.

The theatrical promo was released in the presence of director Vikram Bhatt; Arun Rangachari, chairman, DAR Capital Group; Kapil Agarwal, joint managing director, UFO Moviez India Ltd., screenwriter Amin Hajee; and the cast led by Mahakshay Chakraborty, Tia Bajpai and

Achint Kaur.

Also present at the event were singer Shibani Kashyap and Satish Kaushik.

Said Bhatt, “‘Haunted’ is my most challenging and fulfilling movie. The challenge began from the scripting stage itself because we had to visualize the country’s first next generation stereoscopic 3D film. It was all new — the style, the technology and the technical aspects.”



Vikram Bhatt, Tia Bajpai, Mahakshay Chakraborty, Arun Rangachari and Kapil Agarwal, joint managing director for UFO Movies, at the “first look” event Feb. 7 for Bhatt’s latest film, billed as India’s first Stereoscopic 3D film.



Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra will diversify his repertoire with an upcoming biopic on Olympic gold medalist Milkha Singh. (Getty Images)

## N.Y. Indian Film Festival to Be Held May 4-8

By a Staff Reporter

NEW YORK — The Indo-American Arts Council announced Jan. 21 that it is now accepting applications from filmmakers wanting to screen their works in the New York Indian Film Festival.

The 11th Annual IAAC Film Festival will take place from May 4-8. Formerly held every November, “the oldest and most prestigious film festival for Indian cinema in North America now moves to its new spring home on the first weekend of May,” said a spokesperson.

Aseem Chhabra, a film writer and long-time IAAC Film Festival selection committee member, has been named the new film festival director.

“I am really excited about these

changes and look forward to presenting New York with a fresh and exciting selection of films this year,” IAAC executive director Aroon Shivdasani said in a statement.

The festival will take place at the Paris Theatre in Manhattan, the Tribeca Cinemas and the Asia Society, and will hold its opening night party at the opulent Jumeirah Essex House. In addition, the festival will also host an exclusive celebrity-filled celebration honoring the 150th anniversary of the birth of India’s Nobel Prize-winning artist and poet Rabindranath Tagore at the Asia Society May 8.

A call for submissions has been announced by the Indo-American Arts Council with a deadline date of Feb. 20. Filmmakers can find details at [www.iaac.us](http://www.iaac.us).

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