

Embassy of India

Yerevan

Speech at Inauguration of Mithun Chakraborty Film Festival

[Moscow Cinema, Yerevan, 28 March 2025]

- H. E. Mr. Artur Martirosyan, Deputy Minister of Education, Science, Culture & Sports of RA,
- Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Armenian Friends of India,
- Members of the Indian community,
- Dear Friends,

Namaskar! Bari yereko! Good evening! My colleagues at the Embassy and I are very happy to welcome you all to yet another Indian Film Festival, this time, as promised, celebrating Mithun Chakraborty, better known in this part of the world as “Jimmy”. Since my arrival here exactly two years ago, everyone has talked so fondly of “Jimmy” and his iconic status that I thought it was in the fitness of things to do a film festival celebrating this super star of Bollywood. We, at the Embassy, have been delighted to bring to audiences in Armenia, a series of film festivals highlighting the close cultural bonds between our two countries. After delving into nostalgia, our next film festival, after a few months, will focus on contemporary block busters, including from South India.

2. It is difficult to talk about the multi-talented Mithun Chakraborty in a few sentences but that is what I will attempt to do. We are fortunate that Mithun da (as he is fondly called by one and all – a respectful way of addressing someone elder to you in Bengali) has sent a video message

and we will play it after the speeches. His talent was spotted in his very first film, “Mrigayaa”, in 1976 which earned him his first National Film award for best actor. His film “Disco Dancer”, which we will watch in a short while, was released in 1982. The film catapulted Mithun da to astronomical heights making him a super star in India and worldwide. He particularly became an iconic figure in the erstwhile Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Turkey and across Africa. The film popularized him as one of the best dancing heroes of Bollywood with the youth trying to imitate the Mithun style of dance. In a career spanning over five decades, he has acted in around 350 films, mostly in Hindi and Bengali languages, and a few in Odia, Telugu, Kannada, Punjabi and Tamil. He is the recipient of three National Film Awards and four Filmfare Awards. In January 2024, Chakraborty was awarded the Padma Bhushan, the third-highest civilian honour by the Government of India. In October 2024, Mithun da was awarded India's highest award in the field of cinema, the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, conferred on him by the President of India. Mithun da is also a producer and a former Rajya Sabha (Upper House) Member of Parliament.

3. I would like to take this opportunity to remind you all that India will be hosting the World Audio Visual & Entertainment Summit or WAVES 2025 from 01– 04 May in Mumbai, the home of our Hindi Film Industry, also popularly called Bollywood. WAVES 2025 is a premier Media & Entertainment (M&E) convergence platform that will encompass the entire spectrum of the industry, offering high-level interaction opportunities for networking business and investment proposals and provide a stage to highlight the creative potential of the global Media & Entertainment industry.

4. Before concluding, allow me to thank the Indian Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) for helping us organize this film festival, I would also like to thank the RA Ministry of Education, Culture, Science & Sports for their unstinted support and cooperation. It would have been wonderful if Mithun da could have joined us today! The three-day festival will bring to you three of his hit films starting with “Disco Dancer” this evening, “Dance Dance” tomorrow evening and “Pyar Jhukta Nahi” day after. Please do enjoy these films and give us your feedback.

Thank you! Namaskar!