

**Embassy of India
Yerevan**

**Speech at the opening of the Festival of Contemporary Indian Films
in Yerevan**

[Moscow Cinema, Yerevan, 05-07 December 2025]

- H.E. Mr. Mnatsakan Safaryan, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs,
- Mr. Davit Banuchyan, Director, Cinema Foundation of Armenia,
- Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
- Armenian Friends of India,
- Members of the Indian community,
- Dear Friends,

Namaskar! Bari yereko! Good evening! Jermoren vokchunum em bolorid hndkakan filmeri paratonin! My colleagues at the Embassy and I are delighted to bring to audiences in Armenia a festival of Contemporary Indian Films. Indian cinema has always been vibrant, diverse, and emotionally rich. Contemporary Indian cinema has seen a powerful wave of content-driven storytelling. Audiences today want more than just glamour - they want nuance, honesty, and originality. However, the most inspiring aspect of contemporary Indian cinema is that it continues to evolve. Contemporary Indian cinema is a reflection of India itself: diverse, bold, restless, emotional, and endlessly creative. It bridges tradition and modernity, regional identity and global ambition.

2. Since my arrival here more than two and a half years ago, this is our fifth Film Festival. From Satyajit Ray's movies, to a retrospective of Raj Kapoor and Mithun Chakraborty's films, this current three-day

festival showcases films by the current film makers. We have chosen three films which deal with different subjects and pertain to different timelines.

3. This evening, we will be watching “*Sam Bahadur*”, or “Sam the Brave”. It is based on the life of one of the most beloved military leaders of India, Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw, fondly called Sam Bahadur. Sam Manekshaw served for over four decades in the Indian Army and fought in 5 wars. He was India’s first Field Marshal (a five-star General). So far, in Indian military history, we have had only two Field Marshals. The film is directed by the critically acclaimed Meghna Gulzar, daughter of legendary film actress Rakhee and poet, lyricist and director, Gulzar. The second film, entitled “*12th Fail*”, directed by the famous Director & Producer, Vidhu Vinod Chopra, is based on a true story, recounting the struggle of Manoj Kumar Sharma who overcame extreme poverty to become an Indian Police Service Officer. It recounts the grueling 3-stage Civil Service Examination. The film won Awards for the Best Feature Film at the 71st National Awards, Filmfare Award, its Director and lead actors also won many critical acclaims for the film. The third film, ‘*Padmaavat*’, is an epic historical drama directed by the iconic Sanjay Leela Bhansali, one of the most celebrated film makers of the Hindi Film Industry. Sanjay Leela Bhansali is known for his female-led films with a distinctive style of grand cinematic sets and extravagant costumes, incorporation of classical music and inspiration from dramatic epics. “*Padmaavat*” is set in 13th century Medieval India and recounts the life of Queen Padmavati of Chittor in present-day Rajasthan.

4. We would like to thank each and every one of you for coming today. Before the screening, we are delighted to present to you two Indian

classical dance performances – the first one showcasing the different classical dance forms of Bharatnatyam, Kuchipudi, Mohiniattam and Kathak; the second one is a mesmerizing Kathak performance.

5. Before concluding, allow me to thank the Government of the Republic of Armenia, Indian Ministry of Information & Broadcasting and National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) for helping us organize this film festival. Please do enjoy these films and give us your feedback.

Thank you! Namaskar!