

cinema



* Bipasha Basu plays Zoey, a woman who has to sacrifice her love and reputation to earn a career as an international flight steward in *Dum Maro Dum*.

Going, going, gone...

Goa's seedy side is showcased in *Dum Maro Dum*, but even the racy add-on 'item number' can't hide the lack of a proper script, writes **Gautaman Bhaskaran**

Dum Maro Dum opened last week amid a rage of controversy. One of them was a line that cheapened the women of Goa, conveying utter insensitivity. Another seemed to portray the impression that the western Indian state where the film unfolds is debased in many ways.

Helmed by Rohan Sippy — who is better known as the son of Ramesh Sippy, the man who turned *Sholay* into a cult — *Dum Maro Dum* presents the seedier side of Goa. Admittedly, the state is no longer known for its happier side: the sun, the surf and the sunny people, tracing their joyous, celebratory disposition to a carefree Portuguese

culture (Goa is a former Portuguese colony).

In recent years, paedophiles and drug lords have turned Goa into a notorious den of vice.

Young girls have been raped and murdered, and narcotics have eaten into the social fabric of a people who swore by the simple joys of life and living.

It is this sorry state of a beautiful place that *Dum Maro Dum* uses as a platform to weave the story of a corrupt cop Vishnu Kamath (played by Abhishek Bachchan), who turns clean after the tragic death of his wife and child in a road accident. And when he is asked to free Goa of its drugs and the cartels who promote this poison, Kamath takes it up as his life's mission.

In what appears to be Bollywood's favourite pastime of clicking coincidences together to get the plot moving, Kamath reaches the airport the day young Lorry (Prateik Babbar, son of the late Smita Patil) is flying to an American university, bartering the steep education fee for carrying cocaine. He is caught and sent to a juvenile home even as Kamath continues with his chase to find the drug kingpin, the elusive Michael Barbosa.

Dum Maro Dum plays on several layers: there is Bipasha Basu's Zoey, a woman who has to sacrifice her love and reputation to earn a career as an international flight steward, there is Lorsa Biscuit (Aditya Pancholi), who is saint by the day and scoundrel by the night and has Zoey firmly in his bed, and, finally, there is Lorry, who turns a drug carrier to follow his girlfriend in America.

But, in the end, it is Bachchan's Kamath who holds the centre stage as the devil-may-care police officer who subdues tens of ruffians with the knock of his palm and the kick of his foot.

Indian cinema can never get rid of its obsession for turning men into some kind of Goliath.

Kamath becomes one, much to the chagrin of any critic. Self-obsessed and often trying to play to the gallery, Bachchan as usual fails to impress beyond a point.

A poor performer with the best of scripts, Bachchan junior has had a series of flops, *Game* and *Raavan* being the two most disastrous ones. Not that his other ones did any better: *Drona*, *Delhi 6* and *Khelein Hum Jee Jaan Sey* could neither get the cash-registers ringing nor provide the

punch for the actor's sagging career. *Dum Maro Dum* opened at India's multiplexes to about a poor 35% weekend capacity. A huge disappointment certainly, and my own impression was that most viewers went to the theatres out of sheer curiosity, provoked by the legal cases against the movie and the censorial objections to some parts. One line went something like this: liquor is cheap in Goa, the women even more so! Of course, this was taken out.

What, however, must have really upped the people's antennae is Deepika Padukone's sizzling song and sway to the beat of *Dum Maro Dum*, words lifted from Dev Anand's 1971 hit film, *Hare Rama Hare Krishna* that took us into the world of hippies in Nepal. Sung by Asha Bhosle along with Usha Uthup and her chorus, written by Anand Bakshi and set to music by Rahul Dev Burman, the song *Dum Maro Dum* acquired a magical status in the 1970s India that was fascinated by the pot-smoking, sexually liberated hippies, who came closest to the West's Flower Children.

Zeenat Aman essayed such a free soul in *Jasbir*, estranged from her family, though not her brother Dev Anand's Prashant. With parents divorced and forced to stay with her father and ill-treating step-mother, *Jasbir* runs away from home and befriends a group of hippies, adopting their westernised culture and degenerate ways.

Finally, when the siblings unite, it is too late. The idea of *Hare Rama Hare Krishna* came to Dev Anand, when he escaped to Kathmandu following the failure of and protests against his *Prem Pujari*.

There the star happened to come across hippies and, what he saw as their terribly decadent culture.

Hare Rama Hare Krishna came out of this chance encounter, and proved to be a great success with newcomer Zeenat Aman stealing the show even from Dev Anand.

Sippy's *Dum Maro Dum*, the song as well as the movie, are no patch on Dev Anand's 1971 work.

No wonder, Dev Anand is all set to remake *Hare Rama Hare Krishna*, spinning a story not on the hippie culture, but on current social maladies.

"I know that people want another *Hare Rama Hare Krishna*. The script is ready. If hippies were the trend of 1970s, there are drugs even today. That story was different. This (the remake) will be different because I will have to look at today's trends," the 87-year-old veteran said.

Dev Saheb, as he is fondly called, refuses to call it a day, and who knows, his new *Hare Rama Hare Krishna* may just about eclipse Padukone's sizzler and Sippy's song-and-dance peep into the world of ecstasy.

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* Dev Anand and Zeenat Aman in the 1971 film *Hare Rama Hare Krishna*, which seems to have inspired the makers of *Dum Maro Dum* to recreate the hippy anthem with Deepika Padukone replacing Aman.