

pickle

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Californian company bets on India Films

WestHam Woos India

The company will distribute Munir Ahmad produced film *Don't Stop Dreaming* starring Suniel Shetty, Rishi Kapoor in the global market



There is good news for Indian film producers looking for global distribution, especially to crack the US market. WestHam Films, a California-based company is keen to push Indian films in the global distribution network.

WestHam has been hired by London-based Munir Ahmad, producer of *Don't Stop Dreaming* (starring Suniel Shetty, Rishi Kapoor) for global distribution of the movie. *DSD* will be screened for industry professionals during American Film Market on November 6 at the Culver Studios Ince Theatre. WestHam will also screen the movie for Indian distributors at Goa during the International Film Festival of India on November 27, 2006.

"*Don't Stop Dreaming* is very similar to *Bend It Like Beckham*. It is multi-cultural and has got a global appeal. WestHam sees huge potential of Indian

movies in the global market," said Ron Lavery, head WestHam Films.

This would strengthen and give more access to Indian films in new territories. This will also be a big relief for independent film makers in India who are on the look for dedicated sales agents for overseas and domestic distribution.

While domestic companies like Yashraj, Adlabs, UTV, Eros are strengthening their global distribution network, the entry of players like WestHam is a clear trend of the growing popularity of Indian cinema in the overseas market. There is a possibility of new business models emerging out of this development as WestHam would look for tie-up or partnerships with India distribution companies. This would also result in a win-win for Indian distributors, as they could engage companies like WestHam for overseas distribution.

Page two interview with Ron Lavery



"Indian cinema is already the biggest in the world. It's just that the West is taking time to wake up to it. Indian cinema has already had ... almost a century of catering to the Middle East, Russia, the Asian diaspora"

MIRA NAIR, Director of *The Namesake* at the Rome International Film Festival

Don't Stop Dreaming

Bringing together established stars and exciting newcomers from Bollywood and Britain, *Don't Stop Dreaming* is a musical comedy overflowing with memorable characters, unforgettable situations, heart warming drama and amazing music. It is an English movie and the distribution company is working out strategies to dub the movie in Indian languages. Set in modern day Birmingham, the rocking story revolves around the trials and tribulations of a group of misfits who come together to form a band that attempts to change the face of music by creating a new sound that fuses eastern and western vibes. The cool musical comedy set to rock the world is about hope, friendship and following your dreams and has a star cast that includes Rishi Kapoor, Suniel Shetty, Richard Blackwood, Michelle Collins and multi-million selling pop star Taz from Stereo Nation.

India find a new sales agent in Ron Lavery

Indian films are good

Says Ron Lavery, head, WestHam Films, based in California. He is a known figure in the showbiz world. Ron chats with Pickle

What is WestHam Films all about?

WestHam Films has a revolutionary approach to distribution of independent films - in fact all entertainment media. Our people have a combined distribution experience measurable in decades - we are in day-to-day personal contact with buyers from all over the world who always let us know what they are looking for.

We are always on the lookout for high quality independent productions to represent in the domestic and international market. We have worked out several ways to have a mutually beneficial relationship between the producer and the distributor.

What is your take on Indian Films?

Indian films are great. It is new to the market outside India. It has got a great potential in the global mart. A Multi cultural theme of Indian-led films like *Don't Stop Dreaming* has a great potential -- it has music, young people and modern in outlook. We have been hired by Munir Ahmad, producer of DSD for worldwide distribution of the film. We are working to make it a world-wide hit. DSD will be screened for the industry professional at the AFM on November 6. We would be coming later to Goa during the International Film Festival of India on November 27. We will move to London for further market screenings.

How do you see yourself working with Indian producers or distributors in the months to come?



The story of Ron

RON LAVERY started his career in the Film Industry in 1968. He was an Assistant Cameraman at Elstree Studio working such television shows as "The Pathfinders", "The Protector's and many others. With a single telephone number and not a friend in sight soon Ron was working with some Hollywood's finest. In 1986, Ron produced his first film titled, "Terror in Beverly Hills" In 1990, Ron embarked on an unexpected career in Film Distribution attending 14 American Film Markets, 11 Cannes Film Festivals and 8 MIFEDS in Italy. Also Ron has attended many film festivals in his role as acquisitions executive, and has acquired over 50 films

tors in the months to come?

I see myself working at three levels. I would look for projects like DSD for worldwide distribution. We are getting ready to produce a new movie called *The Novice* starring Chuck Norris and Suniel Shetty. At the third level, I would be keen to work on co-productions with Indian partners on new projects. All these three levels of projects excite me. I have a confident about Indian movies doing great in the global mart.

What's *The Novice* all about?

It is an action comedy starring Shetty and Norris. Shetty works well in the movie because he is a kick boxer. The film has lot of chase and run. The film will be shot at Texas and will target the global market.

What are your distribution strengths?

We have devised several ways to work closely with the producers of completed projects in order to maximize profits and maximize exposure for the picture and the filmmakers - here in the US and all over the world. WestHam has many contacts to sell movies in Germany, Japan and many other countries. We act as professional sales agent in the global distribution of movies. I have acquired over 50 movies for global distribution.

Three Predictions by Pickle

1 Overseas right owners of Indian films will soon buy out theatres in foreign countries. This would give better control to screen Indian movies. This trend has already begun with a leading South Indian overseas distributor having remote in Chennai to control theatres (especially screening of South Indian movies) in Malaysia and Singapore. Hindi cinema overseas distributor is far behind in this initiative.

2 Film star Shahrukh Khan, in all probability is likely to succeed, if he ventures into floating a global distribution company for Indian films. He has the potential and the brand to create an institution out of an individual. It has to be debated whether he will do on his own or join with one of the current distributors.

3 The Emergence of offshore business, to provide subtitling and dubbing service of Indian films. Film producers will work closely with companies engaged in subtitling services to work out simultaneous release of a Hindi movies and create subtitled versions in French, German, Spanish to release the movie on the same day.

New revenue from film rentals of DVD

Landmark Judgment

Obtaining a license to rent film DVDs and VCDs from authorized copyright owners is now compulsory in India

In a landmark Judgment which will have a far reaching impact on the film rental business in India, Justice Reva Khetrpal on September 1, 2006 passed orders restraining the rental library Cinema Paradiso from renting out any cinematograph films, the copyright of which belongs to any of the 9 leading Hollywood studios. Cinema Paradiso currently has rental operations in four major Indian cities including Chennai, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Kolkotta and had plans to open in other Indian cities including Mumbai and Delhi. The studios were perturbed by the wrong claims made by Cinema Paradiso on its website claiming itself to be the "First DVD store with all licenses" when in fact no licenses had been obtained from the Studios. When the Studios through a legal notice inquired about the licenses, they received a response stating that Cinema Paradiso had obtained a license "from the com-



missioner office in each respective state to run a video library business" The owner Mr. Santhosh claimed that "This is in the form of license that all original libraries obtain for their functioning" Surprisingly, many well-known actors and persons connected with the film industry apparently are members of Cinema Paradiso, or so is the claim made on their website. The library is apparently joint-

ly owned by the well-known south Indian actress Shalini and her brother Richard.

Rental business in India is largely run by small shops servicing the rental requirements of the locality. No licenses are paid to the copyright owners. Says, Chander M. Lall, counsel representing the Hollywood studios, "Film Despite the fact that the copyright laws do not permit unauthorized rental of films, rental libraries are functioning all over the country without any licenses or authorization of the copyright owners. This is obviously depriving the legitimate industry of much needed revenues."

In India, the home video market comprises only 10% of the Rs 8,000 crore film industry revenue as against the US, where it commands 80%.

This is also a big victory for copyright owners of Indian films who can license and force rental shops to obtain license before renting an original DVD and VCD films.

Berlinale Co-Pro Market

Submissions are now being accepted for the fourth Berlinale Co-Production Market February 11- 13, 2007

Until November 2, 2006, production companies from around the world can submit new projects for which they would like to find international co-production partners. Their budgets must range between 2 and 10 million euros (for so-called transformation countries, they may begin at 1 million euros), and at least 30% of the financing must already be in place.

At the Berlinale Co-Production Market, the producers of the selected projects meet with potential co-producers, financial backers, distributors and international sales agents as well as broadcasting and funding representatives. According to the participants' requests, the Berlinale Co-Production Market organizes 30-minute individual meetings at which producers can

win international partners for their projects. In 2006, there were some 1,000 individual meetings of this kind.

The intense working atmosphere, a supporting programme with the latest information on international trends and potential financing, the countless opportunities for the 400 participants to establish contacts with each other, and last but not least its spacious location – the Berlin House of Representatives directly across from the European Film Market – have turned the Berlinale Co-Production Market over the past years into a "home" for producers and financial backers during the Berlinale.

"Within a very short time, the Berlinale Co-Production Market's careful selection of projects has

proved to be a true stamp of quality," says Berlinale Director Dieter Kosslick. Project Manager Sonja Heinen sums up the success of the Berlinale Co-Production Market as follows: "30 projects from the first three years have been completed or are in production, twelve have already been theatrically released, and ten films have made their way into the programmes of category 'A' film festivals. It is wonderful to observe these successful developments and we hope that our 'nose' for material that is both attractive and realizable for international partners will turn out to be just as good this year."

Since 2004 the main partner of the Berlinale Co-Production Market has been MDM and it was joined by the MEDIA Programme of the European Union in 2005.

Market Indicators

Overview

There are interesting investment opportunities in several listed media and entertainment companies in India. Fund managers believe that value of the entertainment stocks listed in the BSE would be created by companies concentrating on outsourcing, domestic consumption, box office collections, creating infrastructure in the value chain of movie business. Many companies are actually trading at very attractive PE multiples. The quality of management and business strategy will enable entertainment firms to move from small-cap to mid-cap status and from mid-cap to large-cap status.

Media & Entertainment Companies traded in the Bombay Stock Exchange (value in Rs)

Company name	Oct 13, 2006	Oct 20, 2006
Adlabs Films	352.35	361.00
Balaji Telefilm	136.50	145.00
Cinevista Ltd	25.35	23.00
Crest Animation	137.10	127.50
Cyber Media	104.95	106.50
Deccan Chronicle	533.00	650.00
ETC Networks	47.00	46.70
ENT Network India	234.70	240.00
Galaxy Entertainment	198.00	200.00
HT Media	590.0	699.00
Inox Leisure	151.70	152.95
JagranPrakashan	303.60	316.40
K Sera Sera	31.60	30.75
Mukta Arts	58.90	57.50
NDTV	239.75	221.00
PVR	240.90	244.00
Pritish Nandy	47.95	47.00
Sahara One	310.00	325.00
Saregama India	183.65	176.05
Shringar Cinema	64.95	64.20
Sun TV	1248.35	1252.90
TV 18	605.00	669.95
TV Today Network	74.70	74.90
TIPS Industrie	21.10	23.60
UTV Software	181.40	180.00
Zee Telefilms	297.20	297.00

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PICKLE DIGEST

61 countries in final race

A record 61 countries have submitted films for consideration in the Foreign Language Film category for the 79th Academy Awards next year IN 2007

Here's the complete list of Oscar submissions.

- Algeria, "Days of Glory"
- Argentina, "Family Law"
- Australia, "Ten Canoes"
- Austria, "You Bet Your Life"
- Bangladesh, "Forever Flows"
- Belgium, "Someone Else's Happiness"
- Bolivia, "American Visa"
- Bosnia and Herzegovina, "Gbravica"
- Brazil, "Cinema, Aspirins and Vultures"
- Bulgaria, "Monkeys in Winter"
- Canada, "Water"
- Chile, "En la Cama"
- China, "Curse of the Golden Flower"
- Colombia, "A Ton of Luck"
- Croatia, "Libertas"
- Cuba, "El Benny"
- Czech Republic, "Lunacy"
- Denmark, "After the Wedding"
- Egypt, "The Yacoubian Building"
- France, "Avenue Montaigne"
- Germany, "The Lives of Others"
- Greece, "Chariton's Choir"
- Hong Kong, "The Banquet"
- Hungary, "White Palms"
- Iceland, "Children"
- India, "Rang De Basanti"
- Indonesia, "Love for Share"
- Iran, "Transit Cafe"
- Iraq, "Dreams"
- Israel, "Sweet Mud"
- Italy, "Golden Door"
- Japan, "Hula Girls"
- Kazakhstan, "Nomad"
- Korea, "King and the Clown"
- Kyrgyzstan, "The Wedding Chest"
- Lebanon, "Bosta"
- Lithuania, "Before Flying Back to Earth"
- Macedonia, "Kontakt"
- Mexico, "Pan's Labyrinth"
- Morocco, "The Moroccan Symphony"
- Nepal, "Basain"
- Netherlands, "Black Book"
- Norway, "Reprise"
- Peru, "Madeinusa"
- Philippines, "The Blossoming of Maximo Oliveros"
- Poland, "Retrieval"
- Portugal, "Alice"
- Puerto Rico, "Thieves and Liars"
- Romania, "The Way I Spent the End of the World"
- Russia, "9th Company"
- Serbia, "Tomorrow Morning"
- Slovenia, "Gravehopping"
- Spain, "Volver"
- Sweden, "Falkenberg Farewell"
- Switzerland, "Vitus"
- Taiwan, "Blue Cha Cha"
- Thailand, "Ahimsa Stop to Run"
- Turkey, "Ice Cream, I Scream"
- Ukraine, "Aurora"
- Venezuela, "Maroa"
- Vietnam, "Story of Pao"

Indian Film Festival in SA

Seven Indian films will be screened free to the public in a joint project between Cinema Nouveau screened by Jameson and the Indian High Commission in South Africa. The work and inspiration of some of the most talented Indian filmmakers -- spanning three generations, will be featured during the Indian Film Festival at Cinema Nouveau: Cavendish (Cape Town) 20 - 26 October 2006; Rosebank (Johannesburg) 27 October - 2 November; Brooklyn (Pretoria) 3 - 9 November; and Gateway (Durban) 10 -16 November. Three of the movies on the list stars Shah Rukh Khan in Dil Se, Hum Tumhare Hai Sanam and Pardes.

BY THE NUMBERS

There are **32 million** books available in the world, **25 million** music tracks, **7.5 million** hours of movie time and **half a million** of movies made till date. All these will be available in digitalised platform in the next five years.