



# Bollywood's Most Loved Villain Pran Passes Away At 93

By Ramesh D. Kalicharran

**L**egendary actor Pran Krishan Sikhand, popularly known as Pran of Hindi cinema who played the dreaded villain and lovable character with class in hits like 'Milan', 'Madhumati', 'Bobby', *Zanjeer* and 'Ram Aur Shyam', passed away at a suburban hospital at the age of 93.

"He died after a spell of prolonged illness," his daughter Pinky said. He was admitted to Lilavati Hospital a month ago after his health started deteriorating, she said.

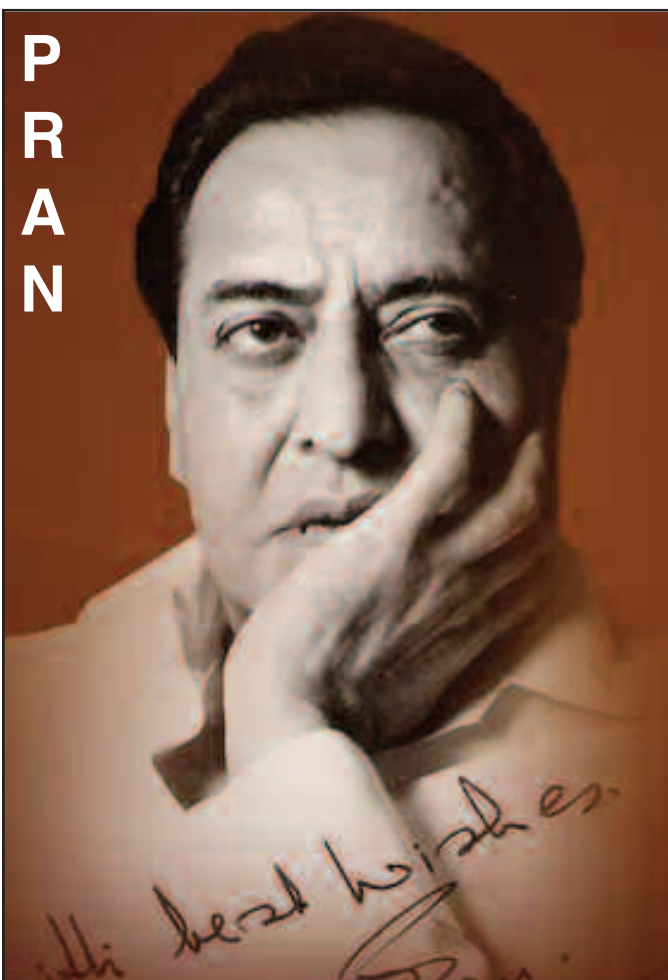
He was the 'pran' (life) of every film," said popular Bollywood actor Aamir Khan, who feels fortunate to have worked with the legend very early in his career." "He was an institution and we have lost one of the legends of Indian cinema," he added.

His funeral was held at Shivaji Park in Mumbai, attended by many Hindi Cinema fraternity, like Amitabh Bachchan, Anupam Kher, Gulzar, Shatrughan Sinha, Shakti Kapoor, Jacky Shraff, Amir Khan and among others. Last time I had seen a big gathering at the Shivaji Park was when Balasaheb Thackeray, passed away and his funeral was held at the same park. I was traveling with Bharat Yartra group with Sita Panday, (nightingale of Guyana). Mumbai was complete shut down. This also reminded many yatrans of the passing of Shri Prakash Gossai of Guyana, who was loved by people.

The veteran actor, who had a six-decade-long career that saw him performing in over 400 films, playing a vast range of roles, from a hero to a villain to a character artist, was conferred the country's highest cinema honour - the Dada Saheb Phalke award - in April. He received his award and honor at his residence when India's Information and broadcasting minister Manish Tewari visited Hindi movie actor Pran and honored him with Dadasaheb Phalke Award at 93. Earlier, the legendary actor could not appear for the felicitation ceremony of Dadasaheb Phalke award due to health reasons. No one from his family was present either to receive the nation's top cine honor. Considered one of the most versatile actors in Hindi films, Pran joined the industry to become a hero but ended up playing one of the best villains it ever had in the last 65 years.

Pran Krishan Sikhand, better known as Pran was known as the most famous movie villain and character actor in Hindi cinema from the 1940s to the 1990s. He acted as a hero from 1940-56 in movies like *Khandaan* (1942), *Pilpili Saheb* (1954) and *Halaku* (1956) and as a villain from 1942-199, played supporting and character roles from 1948-2007.

His roles in the films like *Madhumati* (1958), *Jis Desh Men Ganga Behti Hai* (1960), *Upkar* (1967), *Shaheed* (1965), *Aansoo Ban Gaye Phool* (1969), *Johnny Mera Naam* (1970), *Victoria No.*



203 (1972), *Be-Imaan* (1972), *Zanjeer* (1973), *Don* (1978) and *Duniya* (1984) are considered to be among his best performances.

Pran won the Filmfare Best Supporting Actor Award in 1967, 1969 and 1972 and was awarded the Filmfare Lifetime Achievement Award in 1997. He was awarded as the 'Villain of the Millennium' by Stardust in 2000. The Government of India honored him with the Padma Bhushan, country's highest civilian honor in 2001. In 2010, he was named on the list of CNN's Top 25 Asian actors of all time.

Pran was born on 12 February 1920 in Ballimaran, Kotgarh Old Delhi, into a wealthy Punjabi family. His father, Kewal Krishan Sikand, was a civil engineer and a Government civil contractor; his mother was Rameshwari and the couple had four sons and three daughters.

Pran acted in 22 films from 1942-46 in Lahore and of them 18 got released by 1947. In 1947, his career came to a brief pause due to the partition. All the films he did from 1944-47 were all made in undivided India. His films *But Taraash* (1951) and *Khanabadosh* (1952), both co-starring Manorama, for which he shot in early 1947, were released only in Pakistan after Partition. He left Lahore and arrived in Bombay. But no films came his way for months. He continued his search for opportunities of acting along with other jobs. He took a job in Delmar Hotel, Marine Drive and it was only after eight months, in 1948, he got a chance to start all over again as an actor. With the

help of writer Saadat Hasan Manto and actor Shyam, he got a role in the Bombay Talkies' film, *Ziddi*, launching his career in Bombay. The movie had Dev

Anand and Kamini Kaushal as leads and was directed by Shaheed Latif. The film turned out to be Dev Anand's big break as a hero, and there was no turning back for Pran also. By 1950 he got established gradually as a premier villain in Hindi cinema.

Pran was regularly offered the role of the main villain or of negative character in the films with the famous tri of Dilip Kumar, Dev Anand and Raj Kapoor as the lead hero in the 1950s and 60s. From the 1950's directors like M. V. Raman, Nanabhai Bhatt, Kalidas, Ravindra Dave, I. S. Johar, Bimal Roy repeatedly cast him in different roles in their many

films. While in the sixties he acted in directorial ventures of A. Bhim Singh, Shakti Samanta, Bhappi Sonie, K. Amarnath, Nasir Hussain and others. In 1970's many new directors and producers cast him in their films even though his price was highest among supporting actors from 1968-1982.

His association with Dev Anand which had begun in 1948 continued even during the 1970s and the 1980s with *Johnny Mera Naam* (1970), *Yeh Gulistan Hamara* (1972), *Joshila* (1973), *Warrant* (1975) and *Des Pardes* (1978).

Pran always had a significant role in comedy films starring Kishore Kumar and Mehmood Ali in the lead roles. His memorable collaborations with Mehmood include *Sadhu Aur Shaitaan* (1968), *Lakhon Me Ek* (1971) and with Kishore Kumar include *Chham Chhama Chham* (1952), *Aasha, Bewaqoof* (1960), *Half Ticket* (1962) and *Man-Mauji* (1962).

In the period of 1969-1982, Pran was the highest paid actor than most lead actors like Vinod Khanna, Amitabh Bachchan, Shatrughan Sinha, Randhir Kapoor and Rishi Kapoor. The lead hero to be paid much higher than Pran was only Rajesh Khanna in the 1970s and 80s. He played the leading man in the film *Aurat* (1967) paired opposite Padmini and Rajesh Khanna in a supporting role. Pran and Khanna worked in 6 more films - *Aurat* (1967 film), *Maryada* (1971), *Jaanwar* (1983 film) (1983), *Souten* (1983), *Bewafai* (1985) and *Durgaa* (1985).

In 1973, he recommended Amitabh Bachchan to Prakash Mehra for the character of Vijay in *Zanjeer*, which was earlier offered to Dev Anand and Dharmendra. Pran's character of Sher Khan, with red wig and beard and Pathani style was well appreciated.

He paid great attention to his looks and proved to be the selling point of the film where Bachchan was still a new comer. He acted with Bachchan in about 14 films with notable ones being *Zanjeer*, *Don* (1978), *Amar Akbar Anthony* (1977), *Dostana* (1980), *Naseeb* (1981) and *Sharaabi* (1984).

In the late 1990s, Pran started rejecting film offers citing age-related problems. But in the 1990s when Amitabh was going through a bad patch in his career, he requested Pran to do roles in his home productions *Tere Mere Sapne* (1996) *Mrityudata* (1997) and Pran made an exception by acting in them. Pran's legs had begun to shiver in 1997 so his character in *Mrityudata* was modified accordingly to justify his legs shivering and in *Tere Mere Sapne*, his shots were taken with him being seated. Post 2000, he made few guest appearances.

So effective was his acting that it was said that people stopped naming their children 'Pran' because of his negative roles, while the industry had started calling him 'Pran Sahab'. His favorite line "Barkhurdaar" became immensely popular.

His biography, ...and Pran, was so named because in at least 250 of the 350 movies that he acted in, his was the last name in the cast portion of the credits, with the words "...and Pran" and sometimes "...above all, Pran". In 2012, he gave his hand print for "Legend's Walk", a waterfront promenade in Bandra.

Pran has been honored with numerous awards for his portrayal of both negative and character roles. He has been honored by various awards with their Lifetime Achievement awards; including those of Filmfare, Star Screen Awards and Zee Cine Awards. In 2001, the Government of

India conferred the Padma Bhushan, country's third highest civilian award on him. Recently, 2013, he received the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, the most prestigious award of the Indian cinema, presented by the Government of India.

Various celebrities congratulated him on this occasion with Amitabh Bachchan calling him "a large pillar of the Indian Film Industry." Pran married Shukla Ahluwalia in 1945 and has two sons, Arvind and Sunil and a daughter, Pinky.

In the Indo-Caribbean community from Guyana, Surinam and Trinidad, people loved Indian movies. Pran was always seen as a very powerful actor. We knew that he played villain and negative roles, but his character uplifted hero's role, in the sense his character delivered more good in the end. We were in awe of him in admiration as well in fear. Pran made a place in people's heart in the indo-Caribbean community. We are so proud that he has been given the highest film award even though so late in life, but better late than never. He will always be remembered for his versatility, boldness and charisma.



Pran in his heydays



Film Celebrities Jackie Shroff, Amitabh Bacchan & Amir Khan among others attended the prayer meeting for Pran Krishan Sikhand.



Pran was honored earlier this year with Dada Saheb Phalke Award

