Action-packed Bholaa has a massy appeal

CINEMA OF THE WEEK

Bholaa (Action, Drama, Thriller)
★★★1/2
Cast: Ajay Devgn, Tabu, Deepak Dobriyal, Amala Paul
Direction: Ajay Devgn
Duration: 2 hours 25 minutes
Language: Hindi (UA)

■ *Bholaa (Ajay Devgn), who is released from prison after 10 years, is desperately waiting to meet his daughter for the first time. However, he finds himself in a precarious situation when IPS officer Diana Joseph (Tabu) leaves him with no choice but to help her in a high-pressure situation that involves the drug mafia, the common man and a truck-load of cops.*

A truck, three people on board (and over a dozen cops), endless roads and a long dark night – this is what sets the tone of the film. And it all unfolds from here. Of course, it is not as simple as it sounds. This high-octane drama has a lot of twists and turns, literally, intense moments and adrenaline-pumping, raw action.

When Ajay Devgn rolls up his sleeves and gets down to doing action, there's nothing that seems improbable. And this time around, it's not just about a bunch of vehicles and men flying in the air. While there's enough and more of that, here he engages you with intricately woven action sequences that boast of a certain expertise and finesse. An ever-reliable performer, Ajay also has you rooting for Bholaa, an absentee father waiting to unite with his daughter. As a protagonist here, he is a man of very few words, who shows all his angst and pain through his eyes. Bholaa, a devotee of Lord Shiva, channels his inner *rudra avatar* to fight like a fearless warrior. He battles a horde of gangs, right from bike-driving baddies to well-greased, *bachcha*-sporting villains, to remove all the obstacles that come in the way of him meeting his daughter.

His co-actor of many movies, Tabu, proves that she is as convincing landing action chops as she is showing off her acting prowess. She lends solid support as a police officer who is never deterred by any danger. However, apart from a brief glimpse of her life beyond the uniform, her character has a limited arc, but here again, she stands tall in a story full of hulky men, with devious missions and menacing looks. Deepak Dobriyal, as the evil and unpredictable Ashwathama, is impressive. He is one actor who knows when to pull out the stops – as the main antagonist here, he is brutal and flamboyantly evil.

As a director, it is challenging to hold together a gritty tale that unfolds over one long night, but Ajay manages to do that to a large extent. There are several events happening at a quick pace parallelly through the night and each of them adds an element of thrill and excitement to the experience. Ajay's penchant for VFX is on full display here. That, along with Aseem Bajaj's cinematography, creates interesting imagery throughout the film, which is an adaptation of the Tamil film *Kaithi* (2019). While the action is the hero of the film, and pretty much drives the narrative, the story also has an emotional graph that will find a connect with the audience. An able supporting cast, including Sanjay Mishra, Gajraj Rao and Vineet Kumar, aid the narrative. While the use of *Aaj Phir Jeene Ki Tamanna Hai* is lyrical and apt, the background score had scope for improvement.

There's obviously a reason why little is revealed about Bholaa's past – apart from a brief glimpse of his romance with Amala Paul. You are left with many questions about the protagonist's life, which an origin story is likely to help unfold – à la Baahubali. Stay back post the climax to know who will be Bholaa's arch-enemy ahead. As for this one, *Bholaa* packs in quite a punch with his strength, grit and charisma.

— **Harshada Rege**

To review any movie and check show timings visit **etimes.in**

Dungeons & Dragons: Honor Among Thieves (Action-Adventure) ★★★
Cast: Chris Pine, Michelle Rodriguez, Hugh Grant, Regé-Jean Page, Justice Smith, Sophia Lillis, Chloe Coleman
Direction: John Francis Daley and Jonathan Goldstein
Duration: 2 hours 14 minutes
Language: English (UA)

■ *A quick-witted thief (Chris Pine) must venture upon an epic journey to retrieve a lost relic along with a group of adventurers. The task is not as simple as it may seem as it is replete with deceit, twists, and turns.*

The film is the latest silver screen adaptation of the 50-year-old legendary role-playing D&D game. Some may not know about *Dungeons & Dragons*, unless they've played it or were introduced to it via Netflix's *'Stranger Things'*. If you belong to neither, you can still enjoy it as a fantasy fable with some good humour and engaging action sequences. Those familiar with its roots are bound to get it more but it's an enjoyable experience even for the ones clueless about the source material.

It's the post Oscar season and perhaps the best time to loosen up a bit and recharge your batteries with some light-hearted entertainment. *Dungeons & Dragons* has its heart and humour in the right place as it takes you on an epic journey. The unfolding of an action-adventure makes for an immersive watch as long as you don't expect anything legendary from it. If you like heroes battling deadly foes, uncovering secrets, finding treasure, and more, this one offers escapist entertainment well.

The ensemble film follows a quest to retrieve a lost relic set in the Forgotten Realms campaign setting. Fairy generic in its execution, it's the cast that makes a difference. Chris Pine looks great alongside strong women (Gal Gadot and now Michelle Rodriguez), who bring in the brawn and he, the brain. Hugh Grant is outstanding as his natural wit and awkward energy translates to his screen roles and Michelle Rodriguez is the tough soft woman that she is in all her films. Put Bridgerton's Regé-Jean Page in the mix, and you have a fun concoction of talent.

The team behind *Dungeons & Dragons: Honor Among Thieves* claim they're not exploiting the game's heritage but want to pay respect to the game's ongoing legacy and they succeed at that. Those unaware, it's a game where you role-play a scenario, usually full of unexpected twists and turns, planned and orchestrated by a Dungeon Master.

If you would like to flex your imagination a little bit, this one's a decent family entertainer with a well-crafted blend of comedy and heart.

— **Renuka Vyavahare**

RATING SCALE
TRASH ★ | BELOW AVERAGE ★★ | AVERAGE ★★★ | ABOVE AVERAGE ★★★ | GOOD ★★★★ | VERY GOOD ★★★★ | OUTSTANDING ★★★★★ | MASTERPIECE ★★★★★

Man undergoes liver transplant & open-heart surgery in one go

Anuja.Jaiswal
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New Delhi: Doctors at the Max Superspeciality Hospital in Saket conducted two 12-hour surgeries — a liver transplant and an open-heart surgery — one after another and saved the life of a 47-year-old man with end-stage liver disease and a leaking heart valve.

The patient, who worked in a private school in Delhi, was suffering from Hepatitis B that had progressed to end-stage liver disease. However, when the doctors examined him, they found a more severe problem. One of the heart valves had a leak so severe that the patient could barely walk a few steps without losing his breath.

Dr Rajneesh Malhotra, the principal director in cardiothoracic and vascular surgery, said that during evaluation for the liver transplant, the patient was diagnosed with aortic insufficiency due to infective endocarditis, a bacterial infection in the heart valve with a severe leak.

One of the important decisions the doctors needed to take was which surgery would happen first. The heart surgery would happen first, they decided. Explaining how this decison was reached for the Januarry 11 surgeries, Dr Malhotra said that "since during and after the liver transplant, there would be an excessive load on the diseased heart, the benefit of performing the aortic valve replacement before liver transplant outweighed the risk".

DOCTOR SAYS
The surgery required stopping the heart. A prosthetic heart valve was inserted and the dilated wall was repaired with a patch

The valve was changed by open-heart surgery which required putting the patient to be put on a heart-lung machine. The surgery required stopping the heart. During surgery, the valve was found to be damaged by the infection at multiple places. One of the walls had dilated. A prosthetic heart valve was inserted and the dilated wall was repaired with a patch, the doctor said.

For the liver surgery, the patient's wife donated a part of her liver.

Since both heart and liver disease were critical enough to be fatal, the doctors planned an inter-departmental coordination to provide optimal conditions for the two challenging surgeries in one go.

Dr Subhash Gupta, chairman, Centre for Liver and Biliary Sciences, Robotic Surgery, said the complex surgeries were performed successfully. In total, 4 cardio-thoracic specialists and 15 doctors for the liver transplant were in the OT.

Doctors said the patient had made a full recovery. The patient, who has resigned from his school job, said: "Now, I am doing well and will soon join some institution." He said his wife had given her liver and a team of doctors at Max Hospital had given him a new life.

2 robbers wanted under Gangster Act held

Ghaziabad: Two robbers wanted in several cases under the Gangster Act as well as involved in theft, robbery and loot were arrested on Thursday early morning after a gunfight between them and a police team near Nagdwar.

They have been identified as Raju alias Akeel and Fardin, both from Sahibabad. While the third accused Asif, a resident of Sahid Nagar, Sahibabad is absconding. TNN

Road rage: Court frames charges

New Delhi: The Tis Hazari court recently framed charges against three persons for beating a person and injuring him grievously in a road rage case of December 2017 near Tilak Nagar Flyover.

However, the court discharged the accused persons of the charge of attempt to culpable homicide not amounting to murder.

The court framed charges against Mandeep Singh alias Raja, Ashmeet Singh and Tarun Sharma alias Monu. It held that the accused persons are liable to be charged for the commission of the offences under sections 323, 341, 325 and 34 of the IPC. ANI

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