

People's world through the prism of films

IT IS a world of greys, blacks, and whites. A world of real colours — nothing technicolor or Eastman colour.

This world rips apart the Asian visit of a former U.S. President; here life begins at 3 a.m. for an "Akbara" in India...

Its a People's World. And from November 28 to December 1, Bangaloreans are invited to a People's Film Festival which celebrates that world.

The People's Film Festival Bangalore (PFFB) - South Asia, 2001 is a labour of love — the result of a synergy of like-minded people, a group of guys (we're being unisex here) who are into making documentary films for "people".

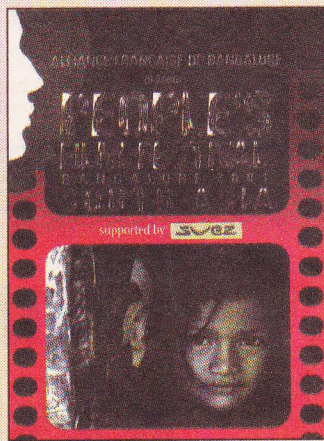
PFFB South Asia is a reflection of what people really think and do of how life affects common man. As Dr. Parvez Imam, festival convenor, puts it, the PFFB is an attempt to bring

documentary films "closer to Bangaloreans".

The topics covered are varied. There are 15 documentaries — films on South Asia by French film-makers and films by South Asians and others. Naturally, the Alliance Francaise de Bangalore (AFB) is involved. If you remember, the first edition of PFFB was also held at AFB.

The fest begins at 6 p.m. on Wednesday with a film on *The Secret of the Temples of Angkor*. After that is *King For A Day* — a deglamourised look at the Bangladesh visit of U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton. The documentary wonders whether the lives of ordinary Bangladeshis were changed because Mr. Clinton was in their city for 12 hours — from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

For Indians, the film raises disturbing questions. Because that same President visited India too and was feted and wooed. The film tears off our



rose-coloured spectacles and gets us wondering whether we really benefited from the visit.

Other films selected for the festival are equally disturbing and moving.

There is a look at the life of Guru Hanuman — the late wrestler who ran his own "akbara" and successfully transformed orphans into the country's medal-winners. This

documentary too is by a foreigner, a Frenchwoman

There are of course, works by Indians. There is a film on "Ramlila", the theatrical representation of the story of *Ramayana*.

Then there is one titled *Turf Wars* on the Great Himalayan National Park in the Kullu Valley of Himachal Pradesh. There is also *Scribbles on Akka*, a film on the life and works of the 12th Century saint-poet Akka Mahadevi.

Panel discussions will be held every day to discuss documentary film-making, its challenges, the market, the style, and content so on and so forth. The PFFB has a special section by film students within Bangalore.

The organisers say they found it hard to garner sponsors. Finally, French company, Suez, lent support. But rest assured, entry is free for all.

By Divya Sreedharan