RASHTRA JYOTI

ANALYSIS BRIEF
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Cultural Discrimination · From the reporting archive

The Missing Diwali in Bollywood's Festive Films and Songs

Original analysis by **Swati Goel Sharma**

The author argues that Bollywood rarely celebrates Diwali in films and songs despite its place in Indian public life. She cites older Diwali songs, later films that use the festival as a backdrop for violence, and more extensive traditions of Bollywood Eid songs and Hollywood Christmas films.



Picture for representation

THE ESSENTIAL POINTS

- The cited Gaana Diwali playlist largely contained flirtatious Punjabi songs unrelated to the festival, illustrating the gap between a festive label and festive content.
- Zanjeer used Diwali as the setting for the protagonist's parents' murder, with firecrackers and gunshots drowning their screams in the opening scene.
- The essay identifies festive Diwali songs in films from the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, establishing that celebratory material once existed.
- The argument challenges the mismatch between Bollywood's reputation as India's cultural ambassador and its distance from a festival central to Indian life.

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Updated from an original written by Swati Goel Sharma in November 2021. Summary prepared by Rashtra Jyoti Staff. Facts refer to the original reporting date.