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ANALYSIS BRIEF
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The Fictional Pathan and the Partition History Bollywood Leaves Out

Original analysis by **Swati Goel Sharma and Sanjeev Newar**

The authors argue that Bollywood repeatedly idealises Pathan characters while overlooking Partition violence that historical accounts attribute to some Pathan policemen and other perpetrators. They contrast testimony cited by Dinesh Chandra Sinha, Ashok Dasgupta and Gurbachan Singh Talib with portrayals in Prithviraj Kapoor's play Pathan and films such as Chhalia, Zanjeer and Gangubai Kathiawadi.



The Teaser Poster of the upcoming film titled 'Pathaan'

THE ESSENTIAL POINTS

- Dinesh Chandra Sinha and Ashok Dasgupta record violence by Pathan policemen in Bengal, including a Hindu colony set ablaze and armed raids on homes.
- Gurbachan Singh Talib's book records murders and sexual crimes by members of the Pathan community in Punjab and the North West Frontier Province.
- Zanjeer carried the loyal Pathan figure into mainstream Hindi cinema through Sher Khan, whom screenwriters Salim Khan and Javed Akhtar fashioned around bravery and loyalty.
- The authors see the pattern continuing in Gangubai Kathiawadi, which gave a sympathetic screen role to a character modelled on Mumbai mafia don Karim Lala.

THE TAKEAWAY

The authors trace a recurring portrayal of Pathan loyalty and protection from Prithviraj Kapoor's stage play to the character based on Karim Lala in Gangubai Kathiawadi.

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Updated from an original written by Swati Goel Sharma and Sanjeev Newar in November 2022. Summary prepared by Rashtra Jyoti Staff. Facts refer to the original reporting date.