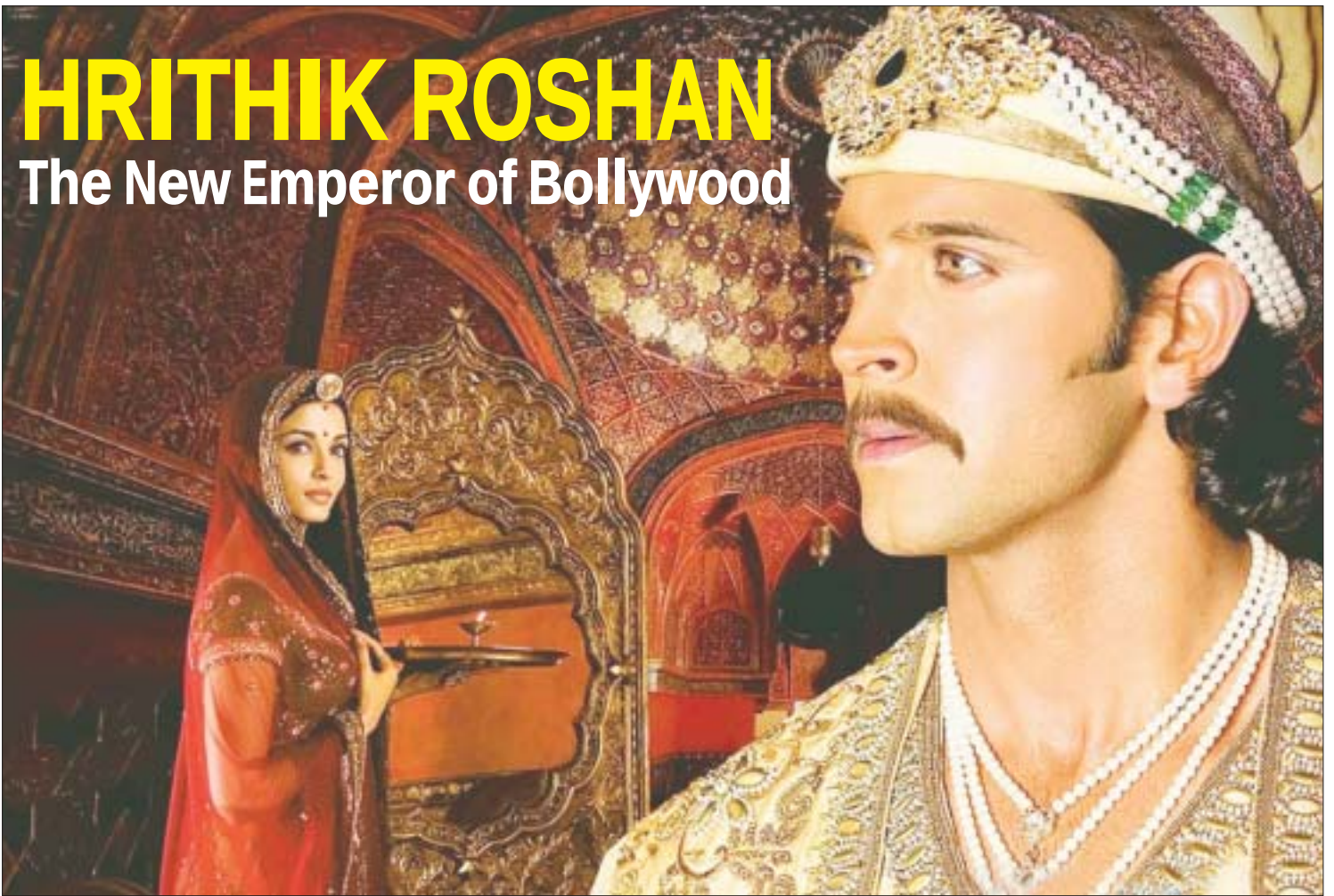


HRITHIK ROSHAN

The New Emperor of Bollywood



In all the clamour made about the banning of the Hindi period romance 'Jodhaa Akbar' by the Indian states of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh (MP) and Uttar Pradesh, the subsequent lifting of the ban by the MP High Court, the protests staged by a motley group in Maharashtra against the movie, and about the box-office collections that the movie has raked in worldwide (about Rs. 740 million worldwide within 10 days of its release), one gets a feeling that something is not being given the attention that it richly deserves. It is the emergence of Hrithik Roshan as the new emperor of Bollywood.

Reams of pages have been written about the 'Badshahs' and 'Shahenshahs' of Bollywood. But if there is someone who is a worthy contender to the title Shahenshah, it has to be Roshan. There are reasons.

A great actor is one who can get into the skin of any character that he is asked to portray and live the character on the screen. Though every actor worth his salt tries to do just this, very few succeed in their efforts. And that too, portraying a historical character on the screen is not something that comes easily to everyone.

Roshan has excelled in all sorts of roles. Starting from his first film 'Kaho Na Pyar Hai'

to the latest 'Jodhaa Akbar', he has essayed roles that are as diverse and wide as the gamut of emotions and acting skills that he is capable of exhibiting.

Be it any role — a romantic hero Rohit/Raj in 'Kaho Na Pyar Hai', where he made his stunning debut and caught the imagination of the nation, or a convincing portrayal of a terrorist in 'Fiza', or a mind-blowing interpretation of a growth retarded man-child in 'Koi Mil Gaya', or a fantastic Indian superman avatar in 'Krrish', or a daz-



zling depiction of the mysterious Mr. A in 'Dhoom-2' — Roshan has displayed an amazing repertoire of histrionics and breathed life into his on-screen personas so much so that you get to see the reel characters and not Roshan, the actor.

But it was as Akbar in Ashutosh Gowariker's 'Jodhaa Akbar' that the true magnificence of Hrithik emerges.

Roshan as Emperor Jalaluddin Akbar looks absolutely larger than life. The film made by Ashutosh Gowariker is today hailed as one of the best historical films ever made.

Apart from this, the performance of Hrithik has left not only the audience but the critics also spellbound. The notable fact with this film is that Hrithik played his role with such aplomb that we just cannot imagine anyone else of today's generation who could possibly match his persona.

No wonder that Dilip Kumar, the legendary actor who played the role of Akbar's son, Salim, in the magnum opus 'Mughal-e-Azam', reportedly said, "After watching Hrithik play Akbar, I was reminded of my film 'Mughal-e-Azam' and the role of Salim that I essayed. Besides, he plays any role to such perfection that he metamorphoses from being Hrithik playing a role to the actual character in the film going about as himself." ■