



Digital premieres@Prez's place

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When the country's highest office-bearer nurses a passion for the lowest common denominator, Hindi cinema, what better bridge than technology?

The Rashtrapati Bhavan theatre has just gone digital so that President Pratibha Patil, an avid Bollywood buff, can catch all the latest movies first day, first show.

The gizmo that brings the magic of the silver screen to the President's house is a fancy satellite system worth Rs 15 lakh that was installed three weeks ago.

This system, which has done away with physical prints of films, allows movies to be beamed directly to 1,000 theatres across the country and the few luxury private homes which can afford to install it.

"With this technology, a man in Jharkhand can go to a local theatre and enjoy a movie for Rs 3.50 and the First Citizen can enjoy the premiere at her mansion," said a trade source.

It all started when the President expressed a desire to see Chak De! India , and the film was aired for her via a digital recorder. Sources said that actor Shah Rukh Khan, who stars in the film, was present on the occasion.

The President was reportedly so taken with her tryst with technology that her office placed an order for the system to be permanently installed at the Rashtrapati Bhavan theatre which boasts a 41-feet-wide screen.

The only hitch is that the President's office will have to get copyright permission for each screening through the local distributor or producer.

"Since we don't have the copyright of the movies, this will have to be done by Rashtrapati Bhavan officials," says Rajesh Mishra, India CEO of UFO Moviez which installed the system.

Sources said the Prez is yet to inaugurate the theatre but keen on catching the controversial Jodhaa-Akbar .