

Film Review: ‘Baazaar’ tries and fails to rip off Wall Street blockbusters



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CHENNAI: It is widely accepted that Bollywood moviemakers often lift ideas and even storylines from foreign films. Gaurav K. Chawla’s “Baazaar” reminds me of the Will Smith film “The Pursuit of Happyness” (2006) and “The Wolf of Wall Street” (2013), in which Leonardo DiCaprio plays the rogue broker.

But if there is one redeeming feature in “Baazaar,” it is Saif Ali Khan. In his latest adventure on Dalal Street, India’s Wall Street in Mumbai, Khan essays the ruthlessly ambitious Shakun Kothari. Money and profit are all that matters to him as he juggles numbers, cunningly stamping out his opponents. As a top stockbroker, he allows nobody to inch anywhere near him, and he seems to have no competition even from his fellow actors in the film.

Rohan Mehra (son of the late Bollywood actor, Vinod Mehra), who debuts as aspiring stockbroker Rizwan Ahmed does not quite match up to Khan. Ahmed travels from Allahabad to Mumbai with just one dream — to work with Kothari and maybe outshine

and outsmart him. Renting out a hole in the wall in a Mumbai slum, he tells his landlord that he will soon own a swanky apartment in one of the city's tall blocks. "Baazaar" takes us through the nefarious games of the stock market, where friends turn foes without compunction.

"Baazaar" has nothing very original to offer and even in the performance arena, Chitrangada Singh as Kothari's wife, Mandira, does not delve deep into her character and instead is treated as a mere pretty face — her on-screen emotions do not vary, even when the scene calls for it.

Meanwhile, Radhika Apte's Priya — a Mata Hari of sorts — works for Kothari and manages to radiate some energy and pluck but is let down by a lifeless script.

All in all, Khan is the overwhelming star of the film, outshining insipid attempts by the remaining cast members.
