

Test clearly belongs to Madhavan

GAUTAMAN BHASKARAN

Hindi cinema has for a while been spinning stories out of real life events. We saw Jolly LLB dramatise how a drunk driver ran over and killed several sleeping pavement dwellers. We also watched how a plot of land was usurped by criminals in Khosla Ka Ghosla. Much before these films played out on screen, we followed a young couple's struggle finding a home in Mumbai with its acute housing problem. Well, we now have Test – blazingly headlined by Madhavan – only that I found his character somewhat similar to the one he played in the 2024 Shaitaan!

Be that as it may, Test – now on Netflix – by producer-turned-director, S. Shashikanth, in his first feature, creates a sports drama – which may also be seen as a thriller of sorts that examines the grey areas of four people essayed by Madhavan, Siddharth, Nayanthara and Meera Jasmine. More importantly, it powerfully underlines what really ails India today: greed in a scenario where more is not enough.

Madhavan's Saravanan struggles to get his dream project – of making petrol from water – off the ground, while Arjun (Siddharth who really needs better roles to prove his calibre) finds himself in the midst

of a cricket match fixing web, where crores of rupees are at stake. Kumudha's (Nayanthara) initial anger over her husband Saravanan's crime of kidnapping a child and demanding a ransom evaporates when she realises his frustration with red tape that does not let the water-to-fuel project fructify.

While the performances are top class with Nayanthara compellingly conveying her anguish over Saravanan's crime, Madhavan is in great form wrecked by an unfeeling society and crushing negativity. Unfortunately, Siddharth is let down by a poorly written role. By the way, what was Nasser doing? In what reminded me of Alfred Hitchcock's appearances, the actor came and went in a blink.

Test as a whole may be one of the better made Tamil movies, but that is not saying much in a climate where so much mediocrity prevails. A script that needed more meat, a narrative which required to be more imaginative and an editing which left so much to be desired – all these stopped the film from flying high. Even compelling performances by the leads could not quite help. Sadly talents were wasted without any qualms!

The writer is a senior movie critic and author

