

## Ramchand Pakistani

Pakistan 2008

**Director**

Mehreen Jabbar

**Screenplay**

Mohammad Ahmad

**Cinematography**

Sofian Khan

**Original Music**

Debajyoti Mishra

**Cast**

*Younger Ramchand*

Syed Fazal Hussain

*Older Ramchand*

Navaid Jabbar

*Champa*

Nandita Das

*Shankar*

Rashid Farooqui

*Kamla*

Maria Wasti

103 minutes Subtitles

We found tonight's gem tucked away late at night on Channel 4 last year. WFS has shown many Indian films over the years, mostly to great acclaim, but here is a first chance to see a tale from neighbouring Pakistan in which international tensions collide with individual lives.

The film is set in June 2002, a few months after Kashmiri militants attacked the Indian Parliament, allegedly with help from Pakistan. The story also serves as a reminder of the few hundred Pakistanis and Indians – some spies but several innocent fishermen and grazers – who've been jailed in both the countries. Without flying her country's flag or demonising India, Jabbar gently gestures to India's blind hatred of all things Pakistani. At another level, she shows that lower-caste Hindus are marginalised in Pakistan. Either way, both Indians and Pakistanis will be pleased.

*Nandini Ramnath, Time Out Mumbai*

'Two nations poised for war. One family torn apart' reads the tag line for *Ramchand Pakistani*. While this dramatic description would seem to fit the bill for any of the numerous war movies Bollywood has produced, *Ramchand* is a film project with a difference. The first-ever film from Pakistan whose main characters are from the country's minority Hindu community, *Ramchand*

seeks to emphasise the commonality between the people of the two countries rather than focus on the differences and the violence, as many Bollywood movies have tended to do.

*The News, Pakistan*

After *Khuda Kay Liye*, comes *Ramchand Pakistani*. What's heartening is the fact that this film too tells a compelling story culled from today's headlines and proves that change is indeed the cornerstone of Pakistani cinema currently. The film deals with the topical issue of cross-border prisoners who are languishing in jails, both in India and Pakistan, often, for no reason at all. It's only now that human rights' organisations have begun to take note of their plight. Otherwise, seven-year-old Ramchand who strayed into India territory might have remained an untold story, now and forever. The film is gentle, low key and very realistic as it documents the struggles of the prisoners. While young Ramchand finds new friends, specially in the cynical cop (Maria Wasti) who tutors him, despite treating him as an untouchable, the odd assemblage of prisoners present a microcosm of humanity that strives to lead a life sans borders, religious and caste divides. Watch out for some moving sequences between the father and son and some fine performances by the ensemble of actors.

*The Times of India*

Our next screening...

**Lebanon** (Israel)

Tue 22 February 2011

Dir: Samuel Maoz

A gunner. A tank. 1982

Lebanon War. Winner of the Golden Lion at Venice.

