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● BEGAN HIS CAREER ON A SALARY OF ₹400 ● LED A RALLY IN MUMBAI TO PROTEST AGAINST THE EMERGENCY

## The Dev Anand legend started in Pune

Swati Shinde Gole | TNM

Pune: Legendary actor Dev Anand's film career began in Pune when he signed up for 'Hum Ek Hain' in 1946. The movie was being made by the erstwhile Prabhat Film Company, a leading film company in the country in those times. In fact, the prestigious Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) is today housed in the premises of Prabhat Film Company.

Ajit Damle, grandson of Prabhat Film Company's co-founder V G Damle, told TOI on Sunday that Dev Anand worked on a monthly salary of Rs 400 — a generous amount then — for one-and-a-half years when the film was being shot. "Dev saab's success with 'Hum Ek Hain' led him to sign up another feature film with Prabhat titled 'Aage Badho' in 1947," he said. The thespian, who was often

File photo



Dev Anand at the golden jubilee celebrations of FTII on March 20, 2010



Prabhat Film Company



Prabhat Film Company

A still from Dev Anand's first film, 'Hum Ek Hain', and (right) a still from his second film, 'Aage Badho'. Both films were made by Prabhat Film Company

compared with the handsome Gregory Peck, had one flaw in his otherwise good looks... the gap between his teeth! "This gap, which later actually prompted many a director to prominently highlight it, was considered his weak point during the making of 'Hum Ek Hain'." When Dev Anand was called to Mumbai to discuss the movie, Baburao Painter, partner in Prabhat Film Com-

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pany thought that the gap in his teeth spoilt his look. So, the directors got it filled temporarily. Later on, however, his smile with the gap in the teeth became rather endearing," Damle said.

Damle said, "During the shooting of the film, Dev saab stayed at a bungalow opposite the film company. For the first time then, he travelled by the Deccan Queen from Mumbai to Pune. Travelling by this train in those days was a prestigious thing and Dev saab quite enjoyed that ride."

Damle recalled that Dev Anand was a cricket fan and often came to their residence between shoots to check the

score if there was a match happening.

The FTII celebrated Dev Anand's 70th birthday some 18 years ago, in the main theatre of the campus. FTII film research officer Chandrashekhar Joshi, who organised the event, said, "He never turned down any invitation from FTII. And he made sure he was there whenever invited. On his 70th birthday, he happened to be in Pune, so we decided to give him a surprise. We invited him to our campus and made arrangements for his birthday celebrations. He was surprised to see the gala set-up at the main theatre. He cut the birthday cake and even sang

songs with the students. Around noon, he left for Mumbai for further celebrations. It was definitely a moment to cheer and remember." Joshi, who has been with the FTII for the past 30 years, said, "He gave Shatrughan Sinha, then an acting student at the institute, a break in the film industry."

When Dev Anand visited the Times of India's Pune office on March 20 last year, he recalled some of his memories of the city. "My career was born in Pune. During the Prabhat days, I used to walk on the roads, climb the Khadakwasla hill and look beyond. From Prabhat Company I used to walk down to Lucky restaurant (at Deccan Gymkhana), eat an omelette and bread and walk back. On the way, there used to be a vendor selling bananas and I used to gobble at least six... seven... eight bananas."

His love for journalism was quite evident during his visit to the TOI office. "If I were not an actor, I would have become a journalist. You people are doing an important job. Feel proud about it," he had said.