

## Airlift review: Akshay makes this a touching, heart-wrenching affair

### **Airlift**

**Director:** Raja Krishna Menon

**Cast:** Akshay Kumar, Nimrat Kaur, Purab Kohli, Prakash Belwadi

**Rating:** 3.5/5

Raja Krishna Menon brings Akshay Kumar back onscreen as Ranjit Katiyal with *Airlift* – a film based on India's massive evacuation of its citizens from Kuwait in 1990.

The film's narrative begins on the D-day – August 1, 1990 when Iraq president Saddam Hussein attacked Kuwait. Ranjit, a business tycoon, has closed a few deals, bought one of the most-sought after palaces in town and trumped a friend-cum-business rival. He can't wait to get home to celebrate. The same night, Iraqi forces attack the city and are running a riot.

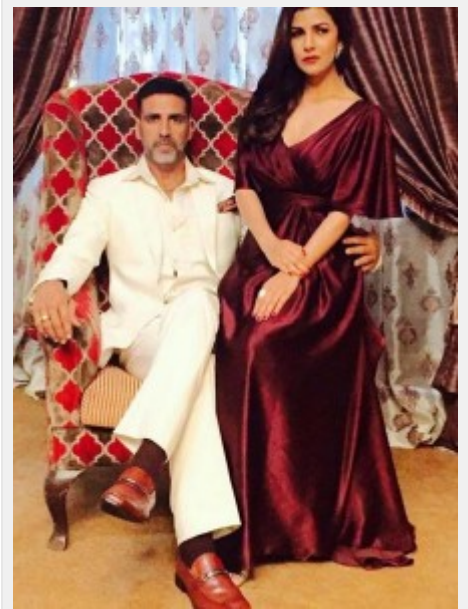
Menon peels back the layers to Ranjit's personality. Though of Indian origin, Ranjit detests being identified as an Indian. Also as one of Kuwait's richest businessmen, he is full of himself and money is all that seems to matter. Akshay's first dialogue – 'Profit explains everything' – is a key insight into Ranjit's psyche. This is significant as the plot line builds from here.

The context established, Menon wastes no more time and 10 minutes into *Airlift*, the plot is already racing. Soon enough all hell breaks loose with blood-thirsty Iraqi soldiers wreaking havoc and Ranjit becomes an unlikely saviour for the 1,70,000 other Indians stranded in Kuwait, including his family.

Though an action-packed story, *Airlift*'s strength lies in the turbulent emotions of people at the mercy of each other's generosity and self-preservation. Ranjit is suddenly acutely aware of the people around him including hundreds of his employees. Touching scenes like the interaction between Ranjit and his family, and with government officials are tightly edited to capture the pathos of the situation.

In a very non-Bollywood fashion, our 'hero' fails as well, staying true to the reality of the events. However, though based on true events, Akshay's character is not based on a single person. Instead, it is a fictional amalgamation of two individuals in Kuwait who mapped out the 1990 evacuation.

An overall engaging watch with a few gritty moments, *Airlift* does stumble a few times as well. Blame it on the Bollywood audience but the filmmakers couldn't seem to let go of the masala and song-dance paraphernalia that goes with a moolah-raking star in a lead role. An 'Arabic' number is also thrown in for good measure. But in a film that hinges on realism,



*Akshay Kumar and Nimrat Kaur in a still from Airlift. (Facebook)*

the songs are jarring.

Akshay impresses with his acting prowess, backed by an ensemble support cast including Prakash Belawadi, Inaamulhaq and Purab Kohli. Be it Prakash Belawadi who comes in the form of a cynical, old man who is simply not ready to acknowledge the Katiyal's efforts or Inaamulhaq's Iraqi soldier who enjoys the sudden turning of power equations or Purab Kohli's ever-dedicated and silent character – they all make Airlift a far more relatable affair.

However, Nimrat Kaur disappoints as his wife. Having seen her as the endearing housewife longing for love in The Lunchbox, her appearance as a decked-up bahu, straight out of TV soap opera with a penchant for cribbing looks superficial. It is only in one scene that we see the actor we know – her face-off with Belawadi.

Turbulence aside, Airlift is an engaging movie that keeps it real, emotional and dramatic.

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### Juhi Chawla encouraged me to take up 'Chalk N Duster' - Shabana

Veteran actress Shabana Azmi has revealed that she was initially unsure about being a part of her upcoming film "Chalk N Duster". The 65-year-old actress, who is sharing screen space with Juhi Chawla for the first time in the education drama, said her co-star encouraged her to take up the project.

"I was pretty unsure about the film because the makers of the movie are not familiar to me. I met Juhi and she convinced me to take up the project."

In the film, directed by Jayant Gilatar, Shabana plays a senior mathematics teacher of a Mumbai-based high school. "My role is very different. I play a middle class school teacher. So, I had to look very different from the way I am in real life. I had shopped on my own for my look."

“Chalk N Duster”, released yesterday, highlights the problem of teachers and students where teaching way in the education system is changing day by day.

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### Sonam Kapoor to present Neerja Bhanot Award to Subhashini Vasanth

The Neerja Bhanot Pan Am Trust will be conferring the Neerja Bhanot award on Subhashini Vasanth of Bengaluru here tommorrow.

The award will be presented by Bollywood actress Sonam Kapoor, who is playing the lead role in biopic “Neerja”.

The trust said that “This is the 24th year of the annual award which comprises Rs 1,50,000, a citation and a trophy.”

The awardee is selected by a specially constituted jury who look for a woman who shows grit and determination in adversity.

Subhashini Vasanth is the founder trustee of Vasantharatna Foundation, started in the memory of her husband, Colonel Vasanth V, who was awarded the Ashok Chakra (Posthumous) in 2008 after he lost his life fighting terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir.

Neerja Bhanot was a flight attendant for Pan Am, based in Mumbai, India, who was murdered while saving passengers from terrorists on board the hijacked Pan Am Flight 73 on September 5, 1986.

Posthumously, she became the youngest recipient of India’s highest peacetime military award for bravery, the Ashok Chakra.

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### Amitabh Bachchan floored by 'Wazir' response!

One of most awaited movies of 2016, ‘Wazir’ hit the theatres on January 7.

Starring the tank of talent Amitabh Bachchan and Farhan Akhtar, the movie is basking in appreciation.

Amitabh took to Twitter to share his joy with fans.

The movie also starred Aditi Rao Hydari in pivotal role.

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### Urvashi Rautela Is Competing In Miss Universe This Weekend

Call me Nostradamus, but I can totally foresee the first few comments on this article’s Facebook page, and correct me if I’m wrong but here’s what’s in store – “Bloody b\*\*\*\*\*, you should be supporting India, she’s making our nation proud”, and so on and so forth. So if you’re one of those, please ignore this because no matter what I say, your ‘opinion’ about me won’t change.



Facebook/ Urvashi Rautela

First things first, we all know that Urvashi is the girl who Honey Singh tries to heckle and woo outside a mall in the world famous song 'Love Dose'.

But we shouldn't be passing judgement on her based on Yo Yo's Grammy-worthy effort, so let's know a little more about Urvashi, shall we?

According to Miss Universe's official website, Urvashi, and I quote, "is an established Bollywood actor, model, beauty pageant enthusiast and has won several crowns and accolades for herself."

Which is funny because that's not quite what her Wikipedia page suggests.

According to wiki – " Urvashi won the title of Miss Asian Supermodel 2011 in South Korea. She then went on to win Miss Tourism Queen of the year International."

She starred opposite Sunny Deol in the film Singh Saab The Great. Rautela will star as the protagonist of Mr. Airavata (Kannada film), an action love story opposite Darshan Thoogudeep. On 26 June 2015 she was selected as one of the actress in the third installment of the Masti

## movie series known as Great Grand Masti.

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Not taking anything away from her, Urvashi is actually a very smart girl. She was Head Girl at D.A.V Public School and captain of the girls' basketball team. She was actually all set to become an engineer at one point of time. She even sat for the IIT entrance exams, but chose to become "an established Bollywood actor and model" instead.





Here are some of the other ladies Urvashi will be competing against, and it's a damn tough set!



*missuniverse.com*



*missuniverse.com*





[missuniverse.com](http://missuniverse.com)





*missuniverse.com*



[missuniverse.com](http://missuniverse.com)

And these are just five of my preference!

But Urvashi, too, is quite a looker. Just check these pictures out.

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Wow!

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[missuniverse.com](http://missuniverse.com)

Uff...

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*bollybreak.in*

She was born in 1994!

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*Urvashi Rautela/Facebook*

She was actually born the year Hum Aapke Hain Koun was released!

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*Urvashi Rautela/ Facebook*

Ni-sa-re-ga-re-sa-re-ga-re-sareeeeeee

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*Urvashi Rautela/Facebook*

Now, here's the problem – Urvashi looks drastically different with and without make-up. Look at this picture

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*Urvashi Rautela/Facebook*

and now look at this one...

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*Urvashi Rautela/ Facebook*

IITians, Miss Universe will be broadcasted live on 21st of December at 5:30 am. Best of luck waking up for that.

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### Bappi Lahiri, Kumar Sanu get lifetime achievement awards from Bengal

Veteran music composer Bappi Lahiri and singer Kumar Sanu were on Monday presented lifetime achievement awards by the West Bengal government.

Lahiri thanked Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who handed over the award at the inauguration of the annual Bangla Sangeet Mela.

Sanu could not be present, and was given the award in absentia.

The Bishesh Sangeet Samman was awarded to Dwijen Mukhyopadhyay, Ajoy Chakraborty and Sandhya Mukherjee.

Shantanu Moitra was honoured with Maha Sangeet Samman along with Mohammad Aziz, Kumar Bose and Shibaji Chattopadhyay.

Sriradha Bandyopadhyay, Dileep Kumar Bose, Fakir Alamgir, and Nachiketa were given Special Sangeet Samman.

Banerjee said that over 6,000 artistes will perform across 10 venues during the Bangla Sangeet Mela between December 15 and 21.

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