

Sher Khan, Kabuliwalla, Gandhari all figured in PM Narendra Modi's historic address in Afghanistan

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Kabul: The memorable portrayal of a pathan 'Sher Khan' by actor Pran in Bollywood movie 'Zanjeer' today found its way into diplomacy as Prime Minister Narendra Modi mentioned it to underscore how Indians view Afghans as true and magnanimous friends.

And not just Sher Khan, the character 'Kabuliwalla' in story by that name penned by Rabindranath Tagore too figured in PM Modi's speech to Afghan Parliamentarians, as did the successes of Afghan cricket team to highlight the strong cultural and people-to-people bond between the two peoples.

Addressing the Afghan Parliament today with numerous references emblematic of the warm, age-old ties, Prime Minister Narendra Modi lauded the Afghan people for their valour, courage and magnanimous friendship and then went to recite lyrics of a song in Zanjeer filmed on "Hindi cinema's most favourite Pathan character - Sher Khan".

"Yaari hai imaan mera, yaar meri zindagi" a smiling PM Modi said and then translated it for Afghan Parliamentarians, that "friendship is my faith and friend is my life."

This, he said, is how India views Afghans in its centuries long relationship, the Prime Minister said.

And as he pressed for an improved scenario where Indians and Afghans can jointly work towards economic prosperity, he referred to Tagore's 'Kabuliwalla'.

PM Modi said that he hoped for more free movement between the people of the two countries so that 'Kabuliwalla' can again come to India and win hearts.

And as he began the speech, PM Modi touched on another shared interest - cricket. The Prime Minister congratulated the Afghans as their Under-19 cricket team had beaten Zimbabwe in its first home series.

"We are just as proud," he said. PM Modi also expressed happiness that the Afghan cricket team has found homeground near Delhi and is preparing for the World cup.

Repeated rounds of applause punctuated Prime Minister's speech as he made references ranging from saint-poet Jalaludin Rumi, to the character 'Gandhari' in epic Mahabharat and ancient Buddhist monuments to highlight the bond between the two nations.

The Prime Minister was addressing the Afghan Parliament after inaugurating its swanky new building that was built by India at a cost of USD 90 million during his day-long visit.

- PTI