

# LIGHTS, CAMERA, COVER!

The recent libel cases against *New York* and *Short Kut* — *The Con Is On* has made filmmakers a cautious lot



Stills from *Short Kut* — *The Con Is On* and *New York*

**F**ilm under-writing is on the rise. With legal cases becoming the norm, rather than the exception, the number of producers running for cover is definitely on the rise.

Aatur Thakkar, director, of an insurance firm confirms that whether it is Karan Johar's *My Name is Khan* or Madhu Mantena's *Rann*, they've all sought cover.

Thakkar who made the film clientele aware of the importance of the E&O (error and omission) clause for the entertainment sector says, "This is extremely important for filmmakers because it covers cases rising out of defamation, libel/slander/copyright infringement (including music) title infringement, plagiarism and even emotional distress."

Another insurance agent quickly points out that two films that recently suffered on account of not having the E&O cover are *New York* — where another writer claimed copyright infringement and *Short Kut* — *The Con Is On* and *Dekh Re Dekh* were taken to court for title infringement.

Trade buzz is that the *New York* matter is still pending; but in the case of *Short Kut* —

*The Con Is On*, Anil Kapoor confirms that he reached an out-of-court settlement with film-maker BS Bhullar who raised the complaint.

A trade source says, "Had these films bought a cover, they would have covered for the legal expenses and they may have even managed compensation for slander."

Looking at the number of such libel cases, film producer Jayantilal Gada who is making an animated version of *Mahabharatha* for the big screen has purchased a cover of Rs 50 crores. Gada says, "It's the third time in film history that *Mahabharatha* is being made on the large screen. The first version happened in 1933 and was directed by Nanubhai Vakil; and the second was directed by Babubhai Mistry in 1965. *Mahabharatha* was also made into a television serial on a couple of occasions. The reason why we chose to cover our film with such a big insurance is to safeguard against claims that our version doesn't match with the story so far authenticated."

— MEENA IYER