

Vishal Enterprises' teleserial based on real-life stories by famous private detective Ramesh C. Madan was launched on June 20. Om Puri, Anang Desai, Rajendra Gupta, Hyder Ali, Asha Sharma, Suresh Chatwal, Shashi Kiran, Kavita Vaid, Saadia Siddique, Ravi Jhankal, Dilip Sinha, Yusuf Khurram, K.K. Raj, Munira, Anil Paliwal and Sashi Puri play key roles in the serial. Directed by Kul Deepak Bakshi from his own screenplay for producer Vishal Nihalani, the serial has music by Shaarang Dev and is presented by Pahlaj Nihalani.



Photos: R.D. Rai



TUBE-TALK



STAR-STRUCK?



THE film, '1942 - A Love Story', may well end up being the best publicised film on television in the history of Indian cinema. Its teaser-trailers on television on Zee, DD and JAIN are the best put-together works on television. Tantalisingly hiding more than they reveal, the trailers have achieved what they set out to achieve; which is perk up interest in the film. But why is *Newstrack* going overboard in its coverage of the film? Almost every edition of the newsmagazine has some feature connected with the film. Aren't there other issues that the magazine could concentrate on? And there is another point here. Remember what happened to 'Roop Ki Rani Choron Ka Raja'? (Of course, the film wasn't as hyped up on television then only because there weren't as many options on television then as there are now). There is a real danger the hyped expectations could prove counter-productive in the long run.

Talking of hype, remember DD crying wolf over satellite television in general and MTV in particular when it was being shown on the STAR platform? The latest

indicate that it is seriously considering airing 150 minutes of MTV on the Metro channel. While the details of the deal wouldn't be known for some time, some news reports indicate DD will be charging MTV a reduced tariff for use of its channel. That way DD will actually generate revenue from the deal unlike STAR TV which had to pay MTV a fee for using its software. MTV, in turn, will generate revenue from ad spots to be hawked to Indian users. MTV is reported to be considering the use of more Indian music footage in its Indian capsules.

While that is good news for MTV-lovers in India, what becomes of the government's much avowed objection and opposition to the MTV-culture in the first place? Will it now be sacrificed at the altar of commercialism and revenue-generation? What are the changed circumstances that has provoked the ministry of information and broadcasting into thinking that MTV is no longer a cultural-threat to India? And that too when far more viewers may end up seeing MTV now than they did earlier. If that was the case what was the big deal in crying foul

STAR platform? Isn't this another clear-cut case for a lack of coherent policy on satellite TV on the government's part?

Meanwhile on DD, the football fever is on in full swing and DD's picture quality left a lot to be desired. Couldn't it do something about the quality of its own feed to the local DD Kendras? Instead of a rock steady picture that is required, the images changed intensity once too often for comfort. DD could take a leaf off Prime Sports whose live pictures of the Wimbledon Tennis Championships are the best that have been viewed in a long time. While DD deserves kudos for telecasting live a large majority of the matches, couldn't it repeat the most interesting match of the day the following morning or evening? That would ensure a better viewership for DD and a better coverage viewer penetration for the sponsors of the telecast. Considering that the most important matches are all played in the very early hours of the morning, it is debatable who other than the most ardent soccer fan will stay awake to watch the matches.

Talking of sponsors, isn't it crazy the way they are dishing out prizes for all and sundry programmes? And most of those viewer-participation quizzes don't deserve to be rewarded. Except for a couple - the *Surabhi* weekly quiz is interesting - the rest are pretty bizarre. And look at the contrast. While the participants and viewers in our less-than-standard quizzes get fancy prizes for questions that don't really deserve them, all that the eventual winner of BBC's masterly *Mastermind* gets at the end of a gruelling programme is a crystal bowl. And this seeming lack of incentive hasn't put people off from participating on the programme. The programme is now in its 23rd year and the winner of the programme is generally acknowledged as being intellectually superior than his peers. And people still flock to make it to the qualifying rounds of the programme.

TAILPIECE: When exactly was 'Ram Rajya', directed by Vijay Bhatt and reportedly the film that he persuaded Mahatma Gandhi to see, released? Sangeet Sitaré (on DD-2) had the date down as 1967, in which case Mahatma Gandhi couldn't have seen the film because he was long dead by then. Or was the date 1947, in which case Mahatma Gandhi could possibly have seen it.