

= Lagaan =

Lagaan (English : Taxation) is a 2001 Indian epic sports @-@ drama film written and directed by Ashutosh Gowariker . Aamir Khan , who was also the producer , stars with Gracy Singh in the lead roles ; British actors Rachel Shelley and Paul Blackthorne play the supporting roles . Made on a then @-@ unprecedented budget of ? 250 million (equivalent to ? 700 million or US \$ 10 million in 2016) , the film was shot in an ancient village near Bhuj , India .

The film is set in the Victorian period of India 's colonial British Raj . The story revolves around a small village whose inhabitants , burdened by high taxes , find themselves in an extraordinary situation as an arrogant officer challenges them to a game of cricket as a wager to avoid the taxes . The narrative spins around this situation as the villagers face the arduous task of learning the alien game and playing for a result that will change their village 's destiny .

Lagaan received critical acclaim and awards at international film festivals , as well as many Indian film awards . It became the third Indian film to be nominated for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film after Mother India (1957) and Salaam Bombay ! (1988) . It was one of the biggest box office hits of 2001 . In 2010 , the film was ranked No. 55 in Empire magazines " The 100 Best Films of World Cinema " . In 2011 , it was listed in Time magazine 's special " The All @-@ TIME 25 Best Sports Movies " .

= = Plot = =

The story is set in the small village of Champaner (in the state of Gujarat , western India) during the height of the British Empire in India in 1893 . Captain Andrew Russell (Paul Blackthorne) , the commanding officer of the Champaner cantonment , has imposed high taxes (" lagaan ") on people from the local villages that they are unable to pay due to a prolonged drought . Led by Bhuvan (Aamir Khan) , the villagers beg Raja Puran Singh (Kulbhushan Kharbanda) to help them . He tells them that , much to his regret , he is bound by British law .

After their visit to the Raja , the villagers first witness a cricket match . Bhuvan mocks the game and gets into a fight with one of the British officers . Taking an instant dislike to Bhuvan , Russell offers to cancel the taxes of the whole province " for three years " if the villagers can beat his men in a game of cricket . If the villagers lose , however , they will have to pay three times their normal taxes . Bhuvan accepts this wager on behalf of the villages in the province , without their consent . When the other villagers learn about the bet , they are furious with Bhuvan . He argues that it is important for everyone to fight against British rule .

Bhuvan begins to prepare the villagers for the match . He initially finds only five people willing to join the team . He is aided in his efforts by Russell 's sister Elizabeth (Rachel Shelley) who feels that her brother has mistreated the villagers . As she teaches them the rules of the game , she falls in love with Bhuvan , much to the anguish of Gauri (Gracy Singh) who is also in love with him . After Bhuvan reassures Gauri of his feelings for her , the woodcutter Lakha (Yashpal Sharma) becomes enraged as he is in love with Gauri .

In an attempt to discredit Bhuvan , Lakha offers himself as a spy for Russell and joins the villagers ' team to destroy it . Eventually , as the villagers realise that winning equals freedom . As a few of them are insulted by the British , they join the team . Short one player , Bhuvan invites an untouchable , Kachra (Aditya Lakhia) , who can bowl spinners . The villagers , conditioned by long @-@ term prejudice against Dalits , refuse to play if Kachra joins the team . Bhuvan chastises the villagers , shaming them into accepting Kachra .

The second half of the film focuses on the match . On the first day , Russell wins the toss and elects to bat , giving the British officers a strong start . Bhuvan brings Kachra into the match only to find that Kachra has somehow lost his ability to spin the ball ? new cricket balls do not spin as well as worn @-@ down ones (which the team have been practising with) . In addition , as part of his agreement with Russell , Lakha deliberately drops many catches . Later that evening , Elizabeth sees Lakha meeting with her brother . She races to the village and informs Bhuvan of Lakha 's deception . Rather than allow the villagers to kill him , Bhuvan offers Lakha the chance to redeem

himself .

The next day as part of his promise to Bhuvan , Lakha takes a diving one @-@ handed catch . However , the British score almost 300 runs , losing only three wickets by the lunch break . Kachra is brought back to bowl and , bowling with a now @-@ worn ball , takes a hat @-@ trick , which sparks the collapse of the British batting side . The villagers soon start their innings . Bhuvan and Deva (a Sikh , who has played cricket earlier when he was a British sepoy) give their team a solid start . Deva misses out on his half @-@ century when a straight @-@ drive from Bhuvan ricochets off the bowler 's hand onto the stumps at the non @-@ striker 's end , where Deva is backing up too far . When Lakha comes on to bat , he is hit on the head by a bouncer and falls onto his stumps . Other batsmen get out trying to score a boundary off each delivery . Ismail (Raj Zutshi) , a good batsman , retires hurt as he is hit on the leg . The villagers ' team ends the day with four batsmen out of action with barely a third of the required runs on board .

On the third and final day , Bhuvan passes his century , while most of the later wickets fall . Ismail returns to bat with the help of a runner and passes his half @-@ century , reducing the required runs to an attainable total . The game comes down to the last over with Kachra on strike . With one ball remaining and the team down five runs , Kachra knocks the ball a short distance , managing a single . However , the umpire signals no ball . Bhuvan returns to bat and swings extremely hard at the next ball . Russell backpedals and catches it , gleefully believing that the British team has won ? until he realises that he has caught gone beyond the boundary which gives six runs , and the win , to Bhuvan 's team . Even as they celebrate the victory , the drought ends as a rainstorm erupts .

Bhuvan 's defeat of the British team leads to the disbanding of the humiliated cantonment . In addition , Russell is forced to pay the taxes for the whole province and is transferred to Central Africa . After realising that Bhuvan loves Gauri , Elizabeth returns to London . Heartbroken , she remains unmarried for the rest of her life . The narrator (Amitabh Bachchan) says that Bhuvan went on to marry Gauri with great pomp and show . He concludes by saying that , despite the historic triumph , Bhuvan 's name was lost in the pages of history .

= = Cast = =

Aamir Khan as Bhuvan . Ashutosh first thought of having Shahrukh Khan and Abhishek Bachchan for the role of Bhuvan . After Bachchan chose to enter cinema with J. P. Dutta 's Refugee (2000) , Aamir was approached with the idea .

Gracy Singh as Gauri . Several actresses had offered to act in the film , but Aamir needed someone who matched the description of the character given in the script . After considering Sonali Bendre , Nandita Das , Rani Mukerji and Ameesha Patel for the role , Ashutosh selected Gracy Singh for the female lead because he was convinced that she was a good actress and dancer and resembled actress Vyjayanthimala . Singh , a newcomer , devoted all her time to the film .

Rachel Shelley as Elizabeth Russell

Paul Blackthorne as Captain Andrew Russell . Since the script also demanded a British cast , Ashutosh and Aamir hired Danielle Roffe as one of the casting directors . After Danielle and Ashutosh screen @-@ tested many , Shelley and Blackthorne were chosen for the prime roles . Overall , the film cast 15 foreign actors .

Suhasini Mulay as Yashodamai , Bhuvan 's mother

Kulbhushan Kharbanda as Raja Puran Singh

Rajendra Gupta as Mukhiya Ji

Raghubir Yadav as Bhura (seamer) , the poultry farmer . Yadav played the role of the legendary Haji Nasruddin in the teleplay Mullah Nasiruddin and has given many memorable performances such as Mungerilal Ke Haseen Sapne . Yadav was selected based on his performance in Earth (1998) . He had undergone an appendectomy operation in @-@ between the filming schedule and returned to complete some of his scenes .

Rajesh Vivek as Guran (seamer) , the fortune teller . Vivek was spotted by Ashutosh in the film Junoon (1978) . His liking for cricket helped him in his role .

Raj Zutshi as Ismail (batsman) , the potter . Zutshi 's friendship with Aamir and association in

several films brought him the role after the auditions .

Pradeep Rawat as Deva (all @-@ rounder) , a Sikh sepoy . Rawat 's association with Aamir in Sarfarosh (1999) brought him the role of Deva which was initially intended for Mukesh Rishi . Rawat claimed that it was the highest ever compensation he received in his career .

Akhilendra Mishra as Arjan (batsman) , the blacksmith . He is insulted by Captain Russell , as he fixes horse @-@ shoe on the Captain 's Horse and involuntarily hurts the animal . Captain who is enraged by the reprimand he received from his seniors for arranging a Cricket Match with the villagers for avoiding taxes , is furious to find his favourite animal hurt and he beats Arjan . After which Arjan joins the team of Bhuvan . Mishra has acted as " Ekku " Kroor Singh in the Teleserial Chandrakanta and also in the film The Legend of Bhagat Singh (2002) as Chandra Shekhar Azad alongside Ajay Devgn who performed the role of Bhagat Singh .

Daya Shankar Pandey as Goli (seamer) , the man with the largest piece of land . Pandey , who preferred the role of Kachra , was known to Aamir and Ashutosh through previous films (Pehla Nasha (1993) , Baazi (1995) and Ghulam (1998)) . Pandey credited Ashutosh for his acting in the film , saying that Ashutosh and he would discuss the required emotions and expressions before shooting .

Shrivallabh Vyas as Ishwar (wicket @-@ keeper) , the vaidya (doctor) in the village and Gauri 's father .

Yashpal Sharma as Lakha (batsman) , the woodcutter . Sharma was chosen by Ashutosh after his portrayal in Samar (1999) . He said it was a good experience working with Aamir and Ashutosh during the film .

Amin Hajee as Bagha (batsman) , the mute drummer . Hajee earlier worked in a film with Ashutosh . The friendly association brought Ashutosh to him with the script , which he liked , and thereafter he successfully auditioned for his role . His knowledge of mute people and some assistance from a music band helped him better prepare for his role . Ashutosh , who believed that Amin was like Sylvester Stallone , would refer to him as Stallone during filming .

Aditya Lakhia as Kachra (spinner) , the untouchable . Lakhia 's association with Ashutosh in Kabhi Haan Kabhi Naa (1993) and Pehla Nasha (1993) brought him this role . He read the book Everybody Loves a Good Drought by P. Sainath to better understand and portray his character .

Javed Khan as Ram Singh , Indian who works with British and helps Elizabeth in translating villagers language .

A. K. Hangal as Shambu Kaka

Amitabh Bachchan as Narrator

= = Production = =

= = = Origins = = =

Director Ashutosh Gowariker has stated that it was almost impossible to make Lagaan . Gowariker went to Aamir , who agreed to participate after hearing the detailed script . Even after securing Khan , Ashutosh had trouble finding a producer . Producers who showed interest in the script wanted budget cuts as well as script modifications . Eventually , Aamir agreed to Ashutosh 's suggestion that he 'd produce the film . Aamir corroborated this by saying that the faith he had in Ashutosh , the story and script of the film , and the opportunity of starting his own production company inspired him to produce Lagaan . He also said that by being a producer himself , he was able to give greater creative freedom to Ashutosh . He cited an example :

" If the director tells the producer that he wants 50 camels , the latter will probably say , ' Why not 25 ? Can 't you manage with 25 camels ? ' Whereas , if he is telling me the same thing ... I will not waste time asking him questions because I am also creatively aware why he needs them . "

Jhamu Sugand co @-@ produced the film because he liked the emotional and patriotic story .

= = = Location , language and costumes = = =

One of the first members to join the production team was Nitin Chandrakant Desai , the art director , with whom Ashutosh set out for extensive location hunt throughout India , to find the setting for the fictional town of Champaner , in late 1998 . After searching through Rajasthan , Nasik , UP , they zeroed in on an ancient village near Bhuj , located in Gujarat 's Kutch district , by May 1999 , where the film was primarily shot .

The script demanded a dry location : an agricultural village where it had not rained in several years . To depict the 1890s era , the crew also required a village which lacked electricity , communication and automobiles . Kutch faced the same problems at that time and hence the village of Kanuria , located a few miles away from Bhuj , was chosen . During the filming of Lagaan , it did not rain at all in the region . However , a week after the shoot finished , it rained heavily bringing relief to Bhuj , which had a lean monsoon the previous year . The typical old Kutch hamlet was built by the local people four months before the arrival of the crew . The 2001 Gujarat earthquake devastated this region and displaced many locals . The crew , including the English , contributed to their cause by donating ? 250 @,@ 000 (equivalent to ? 700 @,@ 000 or US \$ 10 @,@ 000 in 2016) , with further contributions during the year .

Avadhi , which is a dialect of Hindi , is primarily from a region in Uttar Pradesh . It was chosen to give the feel of the language spoken during that era . However , the language was diluted , and modern viewers can understand it . The dialogues , which were a combination of three dialects (Avadhi , Bhojpuri and Braj Bhasha) were penned by Hindi writer K. P. Saxena .

Bhanu Athaiya , an Oscar winner for Gandhi , was the costume designer for the film . With a large number of extras , it was difficult for her to make enough costumes . She spent a lot of time researching to lend authenticity to the characters .

= = = Filming = = =

Pre @-@ planning for a year , including ten months for production issues and two months for his character , was tiring for Aamir . As a first @-@ time producer , he obtained a crew of about 300 people for six months . Due to the lack of comfortable hotels in Bhuj , he hired a newly constructed apartment and furnished it completely for the crew . Security was set up and a special housekeeping team was brought to take care of the crew 's needs . Most of the 19th century tools and equipment depicted in the film were lent to the crew by the local villagers . Initially , they did not want to part with their equipment , but after much coaxing , they gave in . They then travelled to different parts of the country to collect the musical instruments used in that day and era .

During the shooting , Ashutosh suffered from a slipped disc and had to rest for 30 days . During this period , he had his bed next to the monitor and continued with his work .

The filming schedule spanned the winter and summer , commencing in early January and finishing in mid @-@ June . This was physically challenging for many , with the temperatures ranging from 0 to 50 ° C (32 to 122 ° F) . The actors had to drink frequently and sit in the shade . The schedule was strict . The day began at 6 am , changing into costumes and getting onto the actors ' bus , which took them to the sets in Kanuria . The actors , including Aamir , all travelled on the same bus . If anyone missed it , it was up to them to reach the sets . One day , Aamir was late and missed the actors ' bus . That day , his wife Reena , the executive producer , reprimanded him for being late . She told him he had to set an example for the rest of the crew . " If he started coming late , how could she tell the others to come on time ? " While on the sets , the actors were given call sheets with the day 's timetable such as breakfast , hair styling , make @-@ up , costumes , etc .

= = Release = =

Before its worldwide release , Aamir Khan kept a promise to screen the film to the locals of Bhuj . Lagaan clashed with Sunny Deol 's Gadar : Ek Prem Katha at the box office . The film made it to the UK Top 10 after its commercial release . It was the first Indian film to have a nationwide release in China and had its dubbed version released in Italy . With favourable reviews from the French press ,

Lagaan premiered in Paris on 26 June 2002 and continued to have an unprecedented nine weeks of screening with over 45 @, @ 000 people watching . It was released in the United States , France , Germany , Japan , Malaysia , Hong Kong , South Africa and the Middle East with respective vernacular subtitles . The film took a cumulative of \$ 2 @. @ 5 million at the international box @-@ office and ? 380 million (equivalent to ? 1 @. @ 1 billion or US \$ 16 million in 2016) at the domestic box @-@ office .

In 2001 , Lagaan had a world premiere at the International Indian Film Academy Awards (IIFA) weekend in Sun City , South Africa . The Locarno International Film Festival authorities published the rules of cricket before the film was screened to a crowd which reportedly danced to its soundtrack in the aisles . Lagaan was shown four times due to public demand as against the usual norm of showcasing films once at the festival . It subsequently won the Prix du Public award at the festival . After the film 's publicity in Locarno , the director , Ashutosh Gowariker said that distributors from Switzerland , Italy , France , Netherlands , North Africa , Finland and Germany were wanting to purchase the distribution rights . Special screenings were held in Russia , where people were keen to watch the film after its Oscar nomination .

Apart from these screenings , it was shown at the Sundance Film Festival , Cairo International Film Festival , Stockholm International Film Festival , Helsinki Film Festival and the Toronto International Film Festival .

= = Reception = =

Lagaan was met with high critical acclaim . The film currently scores a 95 % " Certified Fresh " approval rating on review aggregate site Rotten Tomatoes , based on 59 reviews , with an average rating of 7 @. @ 9 / 10 . The site 's critical consensus is , " Lagaan is lavish , rousing entertainment in the old @-@ fashioned tradition of Hollywood musicals . " Derek Elley of Variety suggested that it " could be the trigger for Bollywood 's long @-@ awaited crossover to non @-@ ethnic markets " . Somni Sengupta of The New York Times , described it as " a carnivalesque genre packed with romance , swordplay and improbable song @-@ and @-@ dance routines " Roger Ebert gave three and half out of four stars and said , " Lagaan is an enormously entertaining movie , like nothing we 've ever seen before , and yet completely familiar ... At the same time , it 's a memory of the films we all grew up on , with clearly defined villains and heroes , a romantic triangle , and even a comic character who saves the day . Lagaan is a well @-@ crafted , hugely entertaining epic that has the spice of a foreign culture . " Peter Bradshaw of The Guardian described the film as " a lavish epic , a gorgeous love story , and a rollicking adventure yarn . Larger than life and outrageously enjoyable , it 's got a dash of spaghetti western , a hint of Kurosawa , with a bracing shot of Kipling . " Kuljinder Singh of the BBC stated that " Lagaan is anything but standard Bollywood fodder , and is the first must @-@ see of the Indian summer . A movie that will have you laughing and crying , but leaving with a smile . " Kevin Thomas of the Los Angeles Times argued that the film is " an affectionate homage to a popular genre that raises it to the level of an art film with fully drawn characters , a serious underlying theme , and a sophisticated style and point of view . " Sudish Kamath of The Hindu suggested that " the movie is not just a story . It is an experience . An experience of watching something that puts life into you , that puts a cheer on your face , however depressed you might be . " The Times of India wrote , " Lagaan has all the attractions of big @-@ sounding A. R. Rahman songs , excellent performances by Aamir Khan ... and a successful debut for pretty Gracy Singh . In addition , there is the celebrated David vs Goliath cricket match , which has audiences screaming and clapping . " Perhaps one of the most emphatic recommendations for the movie , coming 10 years later , is by John Nugent of the Trenton Independent , who wrote " a masterpiece ... and what better way to learn a bit about India 's colonial experience ! History and great entertainment , all rolled in to one (albeit long) classic film . "

Lagaan was listed as number 14 on Channel 4 's " 50 Films to See Before you Die " and was the only Indian film to be listed .

= = Awards = =

Aamir Khan and Gowariker went to Los Angeles to generate publicity for the Academy Awards . Khan said , " We just started showing it to whoever we could , even the hotel staff . " About India 's official entry to the 2002 Oscars , The Daily Telegraph wrote , " A Bollywood film that portrays the British in India as ruthless sadists and Mafia @-@ style crooks has been chosen as Delhi 's official entry to the Academy Awards . " It added that the film was expected to win the nomination .

On 12 February 2002 , Lagaan was nominated for the best foreign language film at the Academy Award nominations ceremony . After the nomination , Khan reacted by saying , " To see the name of the film and actually hear it being nominated was very satisfying " . Post @-@ nomination reactions poured in from several parts of the world . The USA Today wrote " Hooray for Bollywood , and India 's Lagaan " . With Sony Pictures Classics distributing the film and Oscar @-@ winning director Baz Luhrmann praising it , Lagaan had a chance to win . The BBC commented that the nomination raised Bollywood hopes that Indian films would become more popular in the US . In India , the nomination was celebrated with news reports about a win bringing in " a great boost for the Indian film industry " and " a Bharat Ratna for Aamir Khan and the status of a ' national film ' for Lagaan " .

When Lagaan lost the award to the Bosnian film No Man 's Land , there was disappointment in India . Khan said , " Certainly we were disappointed . But the thing that really kept us in our spirits was that the entire country was behind us . " Filmmaker Mahesh Bhatt criticised the " American film industry " as " insular and the foreign category awards were given just for the sake of it . " Gowariker added that " Americans must learn to like our films " .

The film won a number of national awards including eight National Film Awards , nine Filmfare Awards , nine Screen Awards and ten IIFA Awards . Apart from these major awards , it also won awards at other national and international ceremonies .

= = Soundtrack = =

= = Home media = =

There were two releases for the DVD . The first , as a 2 @-@ DVD set , was released on 27 May 2002 in limited regions . It contained subtitles in Arabic , English , Hebrew , Hindi , Turkish and several European languages . It is available in 16 : 9 Anamorphic widescreen , Dolby Digital 5 @. @ 1 Surround , progressive 24 frame / s , widescreen and NTSC format . It carried an additional fifteen minutes of deleted scenes , filmographies and trailers .

The second was released as anniversary edition three @-@ disc DVD box after six years of the theatrical release . This also included Chale Chalo which was a documentary on the making of Lagaan , a curtain raiser on the making of the soundtrack , deleted scenes , trailers , along with other collectibles . After its release , it became the highest selling DVD in India beating Sholay (1975) .

= = Merchandise = =

In the anniversary DVD edition , a National Film Award @-@ winning documentary , Chale Chalo ? the lunacy of film making , 11 collector cards , a collectible Lagaan coin embossed with the character of Bhuvan , a 35 mm CinemaScope filmstrip hand @-@ cut from the film 's filmstrip were bundled with the film .

A comic book , Lagaan : The Story , along with two colouring books , a mask book and a cricket board game were subsequently released to the commercial market . The comic book , available in English and Hindi , was targeted at children between the ages of six and 14 . At the book 's launch , Aamir Khan said that they were keen to turn the film into a comic strip during the pre @-@ production phase itself .

In March 2002 , a book titled The Spirit of Lagaan ? The Extraordinary Story of the Creators of a Classic was published . It covers the making of the film , describing in detail the setbacks and

obstacles that the crew faced while developing the film from concept to its release .