

'Pechcha Bhangre Da' finale a hit with crowds

Pammi Bai, Harbhajan Mann, Jazzy B enthral audience

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A bevy of stars descended on the city last evening to be a part of the grand finale of a bhangra dance competition 'Pechcha Bhangre Da', a fun-filled, power-packed Punjabi cultural bonanza.

The competition turned out to be a massive hit with city residents, who sang and danced along with their favourite Punjabi singers for over five hours and enjoyed every bit of it.

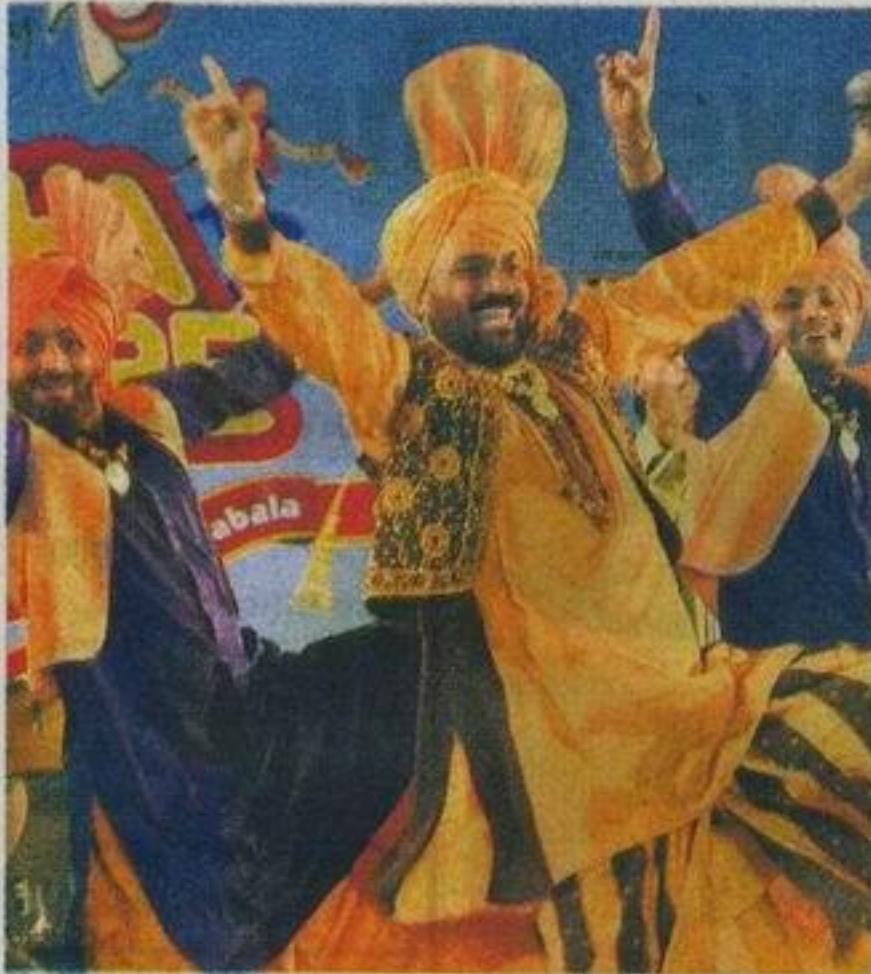
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The evening started with a marvellous performance on hit Bollywood number "Tu paisa paisa karti hai" by the evening's anchor VJ Gaurav, followed by his co-anchor Punjabi comedian Rana Ranbir's much-awaited entry on stage.

The duo conducted the stage with great ease and near perfection and had the audiences in splits with their perfectly-timed one-liners and impromptu gags. Chief guests of the day IG (Jalandhar range) Sanjeev Kalra and his wife were accorded a rousing welcome.

Six well-known Punjabi faces then took to the dais one by one as a panel of judges for the event, which comprised Sukhvinder Sukhi, best-selling folk artiste of Punjab for four consecutive years, Jasvinder Singh Kooner, dhol champion, Dolly Malkiat, prominent personality on Punjabi folk music scene who has dedicated more than half of her life for promoting giddha and bhangra across the globe, Balkaran Brar and Ajay Sharma, who dedicated their lives to bhangra, training students from over a decade.

Dressed in deep yellow and dark brown traditional Punjabi attire, grandmaster judge of the event Pammi Bai made a grand entry on stage with hit numbers like "Jee nai jaan nu karda", "Kudi Punjaban" and



Punjabi folk singer Pammi Bai performs; and (right) a laser show in progress during the finale of 'Pechcha Bhangre Da' in Ludhiana. Tribune photos: Himanshu Mahajan

Sidelights

- Singer Pammi left an indelible mark on the minds of many with his rude behaviour after his mike stopped functioning in the middle of his performance. The singer flung the mike in anger at a backstage staff member, which hit his face. Later, he jostled two little kids near the judge's thrown as the duo sought his autographs
- Municipal councillors Simarjit Singh Bains and Jagbir Singh Sokhi's entry with an army of supporters led to major chaos at the venue as the latter pushed and shoved members of the audience seated in front rows to make space. The chaos subsided as soon as the councillors and supporters left the venue
- Anchors Rana Ranbir and Gaurav appreciated the efforts of the Punjab Police wholeheartedly and asked the audience to give the men in khaki a huge round of applause for their tireless efforts towards maintaining peace. This lightened up many a cops face
- Each one of the singers requested the audience to launch a crusade to save the native language Punjabi, which is slowly being replaced by Hindi and English, invoking consenting nods from the audience

"Giddha sari raat chalna".

Later the crowd witnessed the actual ceremony for which the glittering function was organised -- performances by the contestants of the competition. One by one, the teams took to stage, each one outdoing the other in performance and presentation, impressing the judges and the audiences alike with their coordination, synchronisation and dancing talents.

The much awaited performances came next with popular

Punjabi actor-singer Harbhajan Mann enthralling with hits, including "Main teri maa di boli haan", "Vasda rahe babul da vohra" and "Jag jiundian de mele". The audience could not resist shaking a leg as the singer belted out hits after hits.

The audience was in for a pleasant surprise when the entire star cast of the forthcoming Punjabi movie "Ik Kudi Punjab Di" walked on to the stage to share some light moments. Actors Gurpreet Ghuggi, Guggu Gill, Darshan

Aulakh, Aman Dhaliwal, Jaspinder Cheema, actor-singer Amrinder Gill and director Manmohan Singh talked about their movie as well as encouraged the contestants of the competition.

Youth icon Jazzy B came in next in a pair of blue jeans and a black and red tee. His trademark gold "khanda" and spiked red hair completed his look of a rock star.

One after the other the star singer doled out hit numbers like "Jatt maujan karda hai",

"Aaya main gaddi mor ke", "Neend vi gayi mera chain vi gaya" and "Rambo" among others. The electrifying performance by Jazzy B had even the elder people in the crowd on their feet wanting for more.

A laser show, wherein a dancer moved smoothly to the gyrating music and bright-hued dancing laser lights amid a dark background, was the show's highlight.

Soon after the performances by the remaining contesting teams, the results were announced by master of ceremonies Pammi Bai. While the Nachda Punjab Cultural Society, Hoshiarpur, and Mohindra College, Patiala, bagged the best bhangra and giddha team awards, respectively, Shiv Chand Public School, Nawan-shahar, walked away with the winner's trophy in the under-16 category.

The winning team received a cash prize of Rs 1,00,000 and an additional cash reward of Rs 10,000 announced by Punjabi actor-singer Amrinder Gill. Besides, the winners will have the opportunity to feature in the upcoming movie by renowned Bollywood and Punjabi film producer-director Manmohan Singh of 'Jee Aayan Nu' fame.