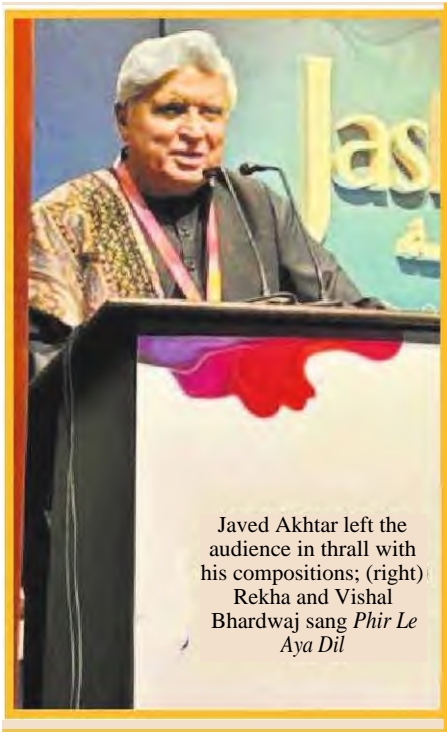


Phir le aaye Rekha, Vishal and Javed sa'ab, to a suhani shaam in Dilli



Javed Akhtar left the audience in thrall with his compositions; (right) Rekha and Vishal Bhardwaj sang *Phir Le Aya Dil*

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When filmmaker-musician Vishal Bhardwaj and singer Rekha Bhardwaj took the stage at the opening night of the 8th edition of Jashn-e-Rekhta, mellifluous ghazals and Sufi tunes delighted the audience. Their rendition of *Phir Le Aya Dil* left the audience in awe as lyricist-screenwriter Javed Akhtar shared some words of wisdom.

Regaling the audience with nuggets from their long relationship with this stage, Vishal said: "Often, there are times when I find poetry in Urdu, which is so lovely. But, even I am unable to understand it... I turn to either Javed ji (Akhtar, lyricist) or Rekhta (the website), which tells me the meaning in the most beautiful way... Next time, Javed ji has promised to write a couplet for me to recite, too!"

The banter on the stage left the audience members charmed and inspired. One could hear a

youngster bid adieu to their companion with 18th-century Urdu poet Meer Taqi Meer's words, "Ab toh jaate hairs but-kade se 'mir', phir milegi agar khuda laaya." While this sounds dramatic, it turned out the duo was only parting ways as one wanted to head to the food festival and the other wanted to hear Akhtar recite ghazals and nazms such as *Achha Nahin Lagta*.

The decor at this edition of the festival, which is celebrating Meer's 300th birth anniversary, features banners with shers by the Mughal-era poet. "While I was on my way to my Delhi, anyone who met me already knew I was on my way to attend Rekhta," said Akhtar when on the stage.

"The way he recited the poetry was simply lyrical... I have an exam tomorrow yet I especially came to witness Javed sa'ab live," said Karuna K, a student of Delhi



Technological University, who was among the many youngsters attending the event.

"My favourite aspect of this event is how it has a little something for everyone," gushed Disha Chatterjee, a software engineer and resident of Safdarjung Enclave. "I came with

my partner, our parents and his younger siblings. From the succulent kebabs that can be savoured to the books that can be relished, there's a lot. Even the interesting merch with Urdu poetry printed on it makes this fest a haven for a true Dilliwallah," she added.

It is our privilege to perform Javed ji's ghazal *Mujhe Yakin Hai Sach Kehti Thi*, in front of him. Hum char dinon se subah-shaam isi ka riyaz kar rahethhe.

VISHAL BHARDWAJ,
Filmmaker-musician