



A still from *Mukti Bhavan*, one of the films to be screened at the festival

## For Your Years

Issues of ageing are in focus at an international film festival in the Capital

SURBHI GUPTA

DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKER David Sieveking, from Germany, takes the audience on a personal journey in his movie *Forget Me Not*. His mother, Gretel, suffers from severe dementia and the filmmaker has moved back home to assist his father Malte. In another film, *Astu – So be it*, Indian directors Sumitra Bhavne and Sunil Sukthankar take us into the life of Chakrapani Shastri, a retired Sanskrit professor, who is suffering from Alzheimer's disease. He sees an elephant on the streets of Pune and follows it, leaving his daughter in panic. These and other movies like *Mukti Bhavan*, *The Song of Life* and *Golden Oldies*, which delve into the issues of age and aging, will be screened in the first edition of Film Festival for Generations: Reimagining Ageing, at IIC in Delhi till September 26.

The festival, which opened on September 24, aims to promote healthy and active ageing and improving quality of life for older people, and is one of few cultural events in the country making space for an exchange of ideas between generations. "We saw the need for an inter-generational exchange and communication between the older and younger generations. These films can bring the two together. Studies have shown that the younger generation is interested in the

practical, emotional and instrumental details and how they could support," said gerontologist Andreas Kruse from Germany's Heidelberg University, who initiated a similar festival in his country. The European Festival of Generations, organised by the university's Institute of Gerontology, is in its ninth year and, over time, has had countries like Portugal, Great Britain, France, Belgium and the Netherlands join in collaboration.

"Our ministry is a nodal agency and is looking into the welfare of senior citizens in the country. We jumped at the opportunity to support such a festival. The 2011 census had about 100 million people over the age of 60. In 2018, it should be nearing 150 million. Films have a profound effect on the psyche of the people, hence it a very powerful medium to address the issues," says TP Madhukumar, Deputy Secretary (ageing), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

The festival, which is free, expects the presence of actor Mohan Agashe, Matthias Roos, co-head of the European Film Festival for Generations, and German filmmaker and politician Barbara Wackernagel-Jacobs. It is a part of an academic cooperation between Heidelberg University, Germany, and Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru University under the project, New Directions in Active Ageing and Age-friendly Culture in India and Germany.

