

# 'Everest of directors' no more



**P Bharathiraja**

jinikanth to stardom.

Bharathiraja also remade the film in Hindi as *Solva Sawan* (1979), and convinced a reluctant Sridevi to reprise her role, her first foray into Hindi cinema. Bharathira-

ja remade some of his other Tamil films into Hindi, such as *Red Rose*, starring Rajesh Khanna and Poonam Dhillon; *Lovers*, featuring Kumar Gaurav and Padmini Kohlapure; and *Saveray Wali Gaadi* with Sunny Deol and Poonam Dhillon.

His pathbreaking films in Tamil include *Sigappu Rojakkal* (1978), a sophisticated, gritty psychological thriller that broke his rural mould; *Alaigal Oivathillai*, a poignant, critically acclaimed romance addressing caste and religious barriers; *Mudhal Mariyathai* (1985), a masterful, mature narrative on platonic love featuring Sivaji Ganesan;

and *Karuthamma* (1994), a hard-hitting social commentary tackling the menace of female infanticide.

Beyond his technical prowess behind the lens, Bharathiraja was widely recognised as the industry's ultimate star-maker. He frequently rechristened his lead actors with names beginning with the letter "R". Bharathiraja introduced artistes such as Radikaa, Revathi, Radha and Rekha.

In the latter half of his career, Bharathiraja seamlessly transitioned to the front of the camera, reinventing himself as a formidable character actor. PTI

**Chennai:** Veteran director, producer and screenwriter P. Bharathiraja died on Wednesday of age-related complications here, leaving behind a rich legacy of filmmaking that saw the studio-to-village transition in Tamil cinema. He was 84.

The Padma Shri recipient, who was affectionately called "Iyakkunar Imayam" (Everest of directors), is survived by wife Chandraleela and daughter Janani.

Bharathiraja debuted as a director with *16 Vayathinile* (1977), widely considered a pathbreaking Tamil movie that catapulted its leads Sridevi, Kamal Haasan and Ra-