‘Lutyens’ New Delhi’ wins laurels abroad

By Anita Joshua

NEW DELHI, DEC 29: An Indian film found itself among the awards at the 33rd International Festival of Films on Art and Education (IFFAP) that was held in Paris earlier this month. The Indian film, “Lutyens’ New Delhi”, was picked for an award from among 160 films entered for the festival by 17 countries.

The Indian film by Manu Rewal bagged the Ethnic Archives Award at the festival organised by UNESCO under the patronage of the French Ministries of Culture and National Education. Of the 160 films entered for the festival, 82 were shortlisted for the competition.

Chosen to compete because of their “remarkable cinematographic production”, these films zoom in on artists, art workshops, criticism, history of art, architecture, dance, music and cultural life in general. Only 172 films made it to the awards list and India found a place among the six non-French entries. The other non-French winning entries were from Germany, Canada, Holland, the United Kingdom and Switzerland.

An award at the UNESCO Film Festival on Art and Education is nothing new to young Rewal who bagged the “Prix de l’Information Archéologique” at the 1996 fest for his film “Manda - The City of Joy”. This film also got the Certificate of Honorary Mention at the Columbus Film Festival in Ohio that very year.

A Masters in Film Studies from Sorbonne in Paris, Rewal has to his name eight heritage films. Besides Manda and Lutyens’ Delhi, he has captured on film the architectural marvel of Jaisalmer, Fatehpur Sikri, Udaipur, Datta and Orchha, and Jantar Mantar. Also, he has made a film on Chandigarh where he has sought to retrace the legendary Le Corbusier’s search for modernity.

While showcasing the architectural wealth that India has, Rewal also makes an attempt at presenting the heritage site from a particular viewpoint. In the case of Fatehpur Sikri, he looks at Akbar’s vision in stone; in Udaipur, his focus is on romance with nature; in Datta and Orchha, he wonders at the spirit of innovation; and in his latest celluloid venture on the astronomical observatory at Jantar Mantar, he charts the heavens.