



Actor Aamir Khan with West Bengal Governor M. K. Narayanan at a function to mark the 125th birth anniversary of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in Kolkata on Wednesday. - PHOTO: ASHOKE CHAKRABARTY

Aamir wants to make film on Maulana Azad

Shiv Sahay Singh

KOLKATA: Actor Aamir Khan on Wednesday expressed his desire to make a film on country's first Education Minister, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. He described him Azad as an "extremely intelligent" with a "progressive mind" whose predictions have come true 65 years after Independence.

"I hope that some day...this is the dream I have... I can use the capabilities that I have and the art form that I practice to make a film on Maulana Azad and to bring his life to a larger populace of India," the actor said speaking at the fifth edition of Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival in the city that was inaugurated with a special tribute to Maulana Azad.

Speaking on "Maulana Azad: His Belief in Secularism and His Foresight" at the lawns of the historic Victoria Memorial Hall, Mr. Khan re-

ferred to an interview by Maulana Azad in 1946 and said every word he said had come true.

Reading out excerpts from the interview, he pointed out that Maluana Azad had predicted that Pakistan that was being set up on grounds of religion will have problems like any other military dictatorship — absence of friendly relations with neighbours and armed conflict, heavy burden of foreign debt and internal unrest and regional conflict.

Mr. Khan said Maulana Azad had predicted that it would not be possible for "East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) to stay with West Pakistan for any considerable period of time."

"There is nothing common between the two regions except they call themselves Muslims," Maulana Azad had said, the actor added, quoting an interview published in the Lahore-based Urdu maga-

zine *Chattan* in April 1946.

"It is really amazing that he had such clear thoughts back then in 1946, a year before partition and Independence and lists out, point-wise, what is going to happen. And about 65 years later we stand and see what he had predicted comes out to be true to the very word," Mr. Khan said.

Though he rued that fact that he never met Maulana Azad he said an advice of great personality to his uncle Nasir Hussain, a prominent director in Bollywood — to follow the heart and not listen to what others said — has a bearing on his career in cinema.

"If he had not given the advice to my uncle, he might not have been in films. If my uncle had not joined films my father would not have joined films. If my father had not, I might be some where else.. So I want to thank him [Maulana Azad] for the advice," the actor added.