'ALIBABA . . . ' COMPLETE



seing "pawed" by "the forty thieves" is Zeenat Am an in Producer F. C. Mehra's ambitious Indo-Soviet o-production, "Alibaba Aur Chalis Chor." The photograph was taken during an earlier shooting schedule of the film held in Tashkent.



The temptation goes on. Zeenat Aman with Russian artiste Frunzik Mukerchand in the film, which has been directed by India's Umesh Mehra and his Russian counterpart, Latif Fairley.



Allbaba is a joker, too. Dharmendra (he is in the name role) with a Russian artiste, Madame Sofico Chourell, who plays his mother.



Tern between two lovers. The "houri," Hema Matini, is restrained by the Prince (Frem Chopra), while Alibaba (Dharmendra) tries to pull her away.



is their problem : Zeenat Aman and Hema Malini in the flim, which is now complete. It has music by R. D. Burman.

Azurie danced as if possessed

SHANTARAM is locked in one of his many serious conferences at Rajkamai Studios. The orders are: "Boss at work; no one to disturb." The orders are carried out under the supervision of Shantaram's son Kiran.

Somewhere in the middle of the conference two women, rather aged but full of life, enter the studios. They want to see Shantanas come all the way from Pa-

People at the studio tell them it is just not possible. Kiran says the same thing. The woman from a little impatient. Pakistan gets looks agitated. She asks Kiran to tell his father that the woman wno wants to meet him is called

Somewhere in Kiran's mind a bell rings. He has heard the name Azurie from his father. He sends word to him. The name Azurie means so much to Shantaram.

He is engulfed as it were by a flood of memories. He comes down, meets Azurie and for an hour or so it is a long walk down memory lane. So much has changed and there is so much to talk

TEARS OF JOY A few days later, Azurie calls on Sulochana (Sr.), also known as Ruby Meyers. One look at her and there are profuse tears of Joy-It is a memorable meeting after more than twenty years. Azurie

and Ruby Meyers were stars in

their own time, women

talked about in the Fortles. Azurie also met a number of her old friends. "friends whose friendship is for all time." and everywhere there was joy abounding. It was the same Azurie who, more than thirty years ago. had brought joy into hundreds and thousands of lives - on the screen and even outside it.

Before I go any further, I must tell you something about Azurie. the woman who has made a place of honour for herself. "People may forget me. For the present generation, the name Azurie may not then and even now).

JOHN

artistes, who have done so tor indian cinema, are film industry should ed to let artistes like Sulochana and Cuckoo slowly wait to die." a fiery Azurie says. She is seventytwo years old, they has the body ("what a figure!" someone exclaimed) and the mind remembers the first time she she was a star, the first dancing of a thirty-year-old (not more saw Sulochana who was to be star. At a time when even acting than forty, certainly).

VISIT TO INDIA Pakistan where she had settled down soon to see a shooting (her after partition. She was in Bom- still didn't know anything) somebay recently "to visit my rela- one offered her a bit role tions and some good friends." It film. "I still remember. I had to was at her old house in Mahim, carry a pot and swing my hips Bombay. She stood for almost an for the scene. I did two or three hour and talked at breakneck scenes like that and soon I think speed with some very articulate they noticed my hips and gestures of her hands, eyes and beautiful body. One day a filmbody, relating the story of Azurie, maker asked me it I could dance

"It is a sorry thing to learn how artistes who have done so much for Indian cinema are left to suffer in silence. The Indian film industry should feel ashamed to let artistes like Sulochana and Cuckoo slowly wait to die...."

nimble-footed dancer, the wo- and, without thinking twice, man who, in those dim and distant said 'yes'. I started dancing and V. Shantaram's "Chandarsena." days, brought respectability to soon found out that I was born. Her drum dance in silhouette dancing. In films - and even to dance Everything came to me in the film is still remembered by

a tamily where films, Hindi films says. specially, was taboo, not even Soon Annette became a known bute from a master. heard of Her father was a strict dancer - not only in films but Among all the films disciplinarian. Surgeon General also at private and some public specially Gueizier. And her mother an ortho- functions. She remembers one made by A. R. Kardar. Her song dox Indian Brahmin. Till almost particular performance. "I her fourteenth year. Annette knew dancing for a programme organi- "O, Jaane Wale Balam Laut Ke Aa." nothing about Hindi films. It was sed by one Attea Begum ("who is still fresh, still played and her Indian cook and driver who encouraged me the most"). I went still liked. She also talks of "Na-"Indian tilm" (words used

KEY ROLE FOR dancing there before all the Sah- burning issue — it still is

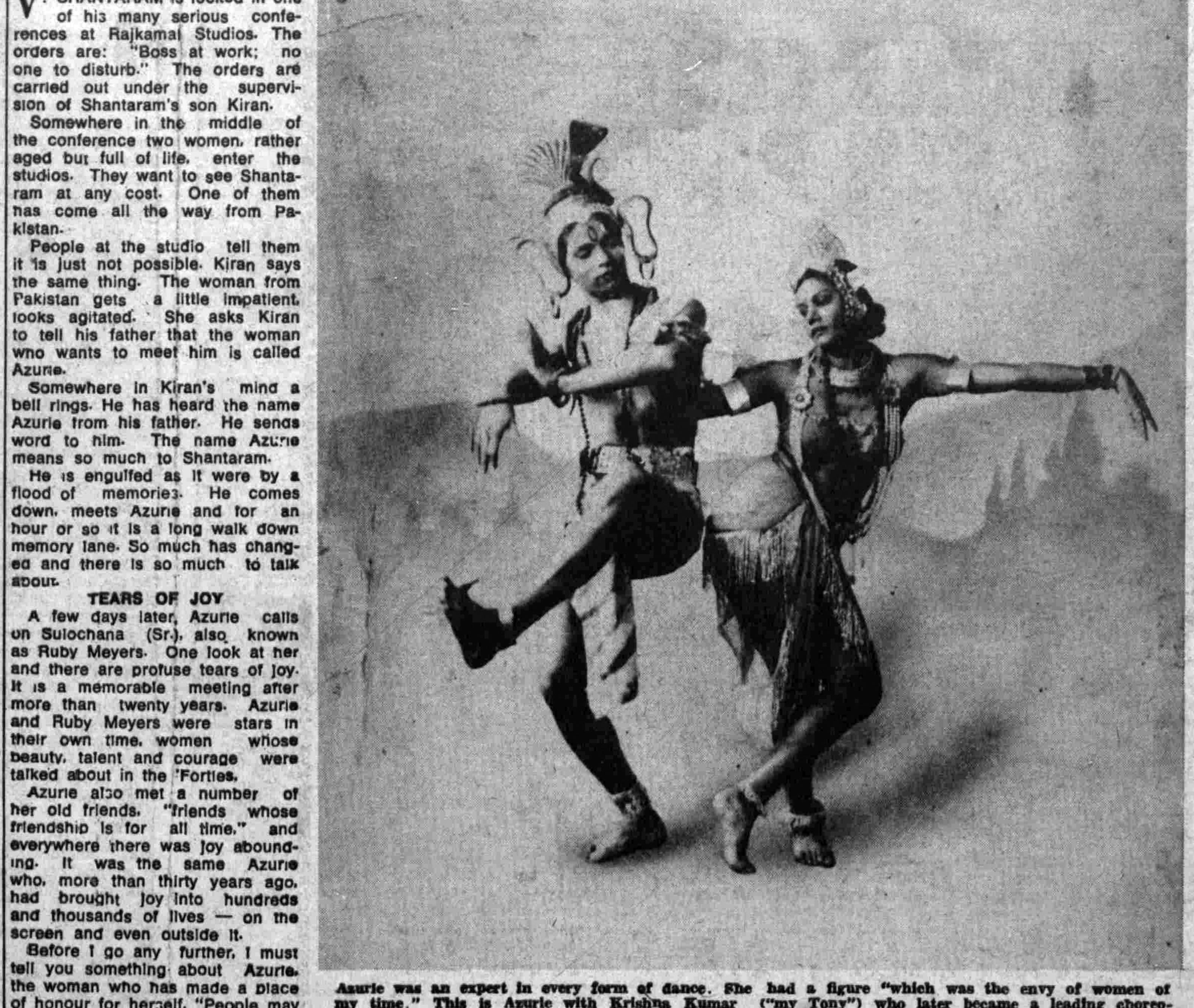
HOLLYWOOD. CAGNEY, who was July, will play role in the film version Doctorows

Milos Forman will direct the film for Dino De Laurentiis who holds the film rights for the book-The script has been written by Forman. "Ragtime" is scheduled to go on the floors in May-

10-m.-dollar film on Arab general

BEIRUT. United Ara-THE London-based bia International is making a 10-million-dollar film on Kahied Ibn Al Walid, the Arab general every one of his 41 battles-

The film based on Javed Yusuf's screenplay and being made in English and Arabic, will have an international cast-



my time." This is Azurie with Krishna Kumar ("my Tony") who later became a leading choreo-

When Annette saw Instantly she felt the urge to be I had to pay for my love for dan- vacuum in Hindi films but she some are not but I am not wora part of that magic. Many times cing." Azurie says, going nostal- had blazed a trail, a trail which ried. I have just done my duty. By ALI PETER after that first time, Annette slip- gic. DANCING STAR to see the magic till one day she. The broken bone and all the girls are following. Azurie had known name now. She is still

which she saw Sulochana (Ru- her failed to stop her from dan- Working in films, and especial- ong the younger people "who find

her "very good friend" later.

The fourth time Annette

A BIT ROLE

DANCING STAR

by Meyers) for the first time cing. The "dancing devil" had by as a dancer in all those dar- me as young and as full of life

"Oh she was so beautiful! When possessed her and she was wil- ing dresses and with a beautiful as they are." But Azurie is very she came down the steps. I al- ling to do or die for dancing. Every- young body, was a very difficult blunt and asks me to quote her most lost my heartbeats. She was thing fell in place and in a thing for a girl, especially a beau- when she says: "Pakistanis make like an angel, a Goddess coming short time Annette became the tiful girl. "There were men who really bad films and I have told down from heaven. I stared at her dancing rage. Dancing had be- tried to take me for granted. They them that to their faces and for almost an hour," Azurie still come a part of her being. In films tried to play tricks with me but some of them even agree with

the door and whacked me till I fell in love with a Pakistani na- pher who is still one of the best her first had turned black and blue and tional, Mahmood, "a great man," in Hindi films. "There are some film, she was stunned even broke a bone. I still have and then decided to leave magic that mark on my hand, the price Karachi. Her going there left a at least to remember me and others like Cuckoo and later God knows it," Azurie says. Helen and now a number of young In Pakistan, too, Azurie is a

> I distinctly remember how I slap- film-makers coming." producer at the risk During her short stay in Bom-

Even as she made a name as a dancer in films, Azurie did her best to propagate the art and culture of dancing. Every week she used to give lectures, demonstrations and discussions. From Bombay she and the troupe she had formed went all over the country and even abroad "to show them how much life there is in

MEETING GANDHI

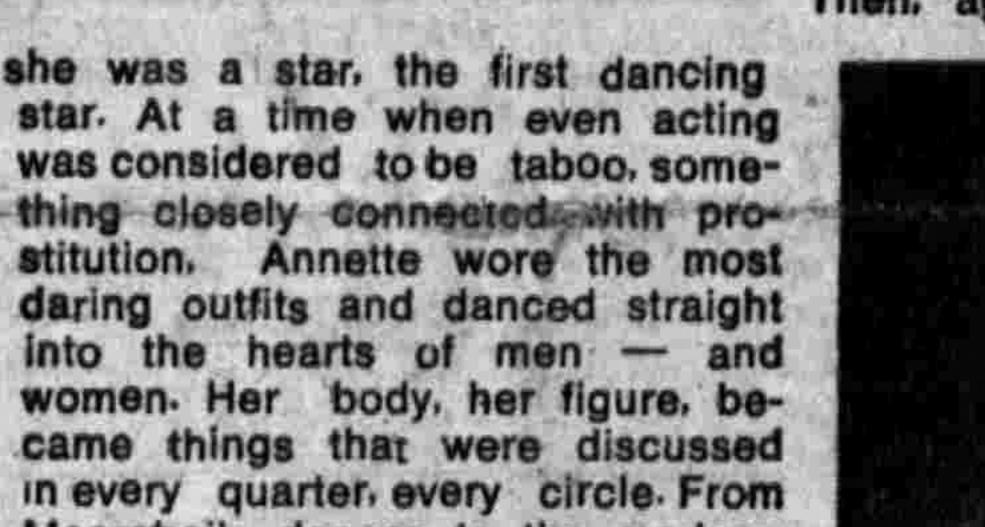
Azurie remembers with pride the time she with Krishna Kumar (her disciple) danced Buckingham Palace. She also re-Gandhi. She says: "My song, "Main Harijan Ki Chhori," had become so popular that even Gandhiji liked it and he sent for me and asked me to join his ashram to work for the upliftment of the Harijans. I told him that would like to work from outside and he agreed. My meeting with him was a memorable occasion. Even the Harijans of those times

considered me to be one of them." Azurie also remembers the time she danced for "some English writer called Shah" (she meant George Bernard Shaw). He liked her dancing "immensely and the old man liked my figure more than

Azurie is also proud "with every reason to be proud" about helping people. She claims to have got the veteran Naushad his first break as an independent music director in A. R. Kardar's "Nai Duniya." She remembers: "Naushad was an expert in playing the harmonium. I found the fire In him and, when Kardar wanted me to choreograph a dance for his film, I told him I wanted some new music director. I suggested Naushad. He was tested he passed the test and Naushad was made." Azurie also made the dancing careers of Tony and Robert "whom I picked up from some orphanage and trained till they were perfect dancers." Tony later became Krishna Kumar, a famous choreographer, and Robert became Surya Kumar, a choreografor who are grateful and who care

saw the shooting of a film in stringent measures taken against started a new school of dancing respected there - specially amalways put them in their place me but there are better, younger

> of losing a very important role, bay. Azurie saw some Hindi films. Then, again, I remember how I She liked the films, she liked



Meerabai's dances to the modern. an adept in every form of dancing - "I just tried and everything came to me. It was God's gift to me." Meanwhile "Annette" had be come "Azurie" (a dazziing blue

light) and from 1938 to 1948 was Azurie and Azurie all the way, Everytime they wanted good dance in a film they ran to

Among her films Azurie even "Mere Wattan," "Jai Swadesh, liyug," "Nai Duniya," "Return o Toofan," "Sheikh Chilli," "Yaad," embers, there are others like

naturally, everything just flowed those who have seen the film Azurie's out of my body and the film-mak- Shantaram is said to have told name before she was christened ers were very, very happy and I some one "Give me a girl with a was born into was happier than them," she figure like Azurie's and I'll give you anything." It was a real tri-

was and dance with Krishna Kumar,



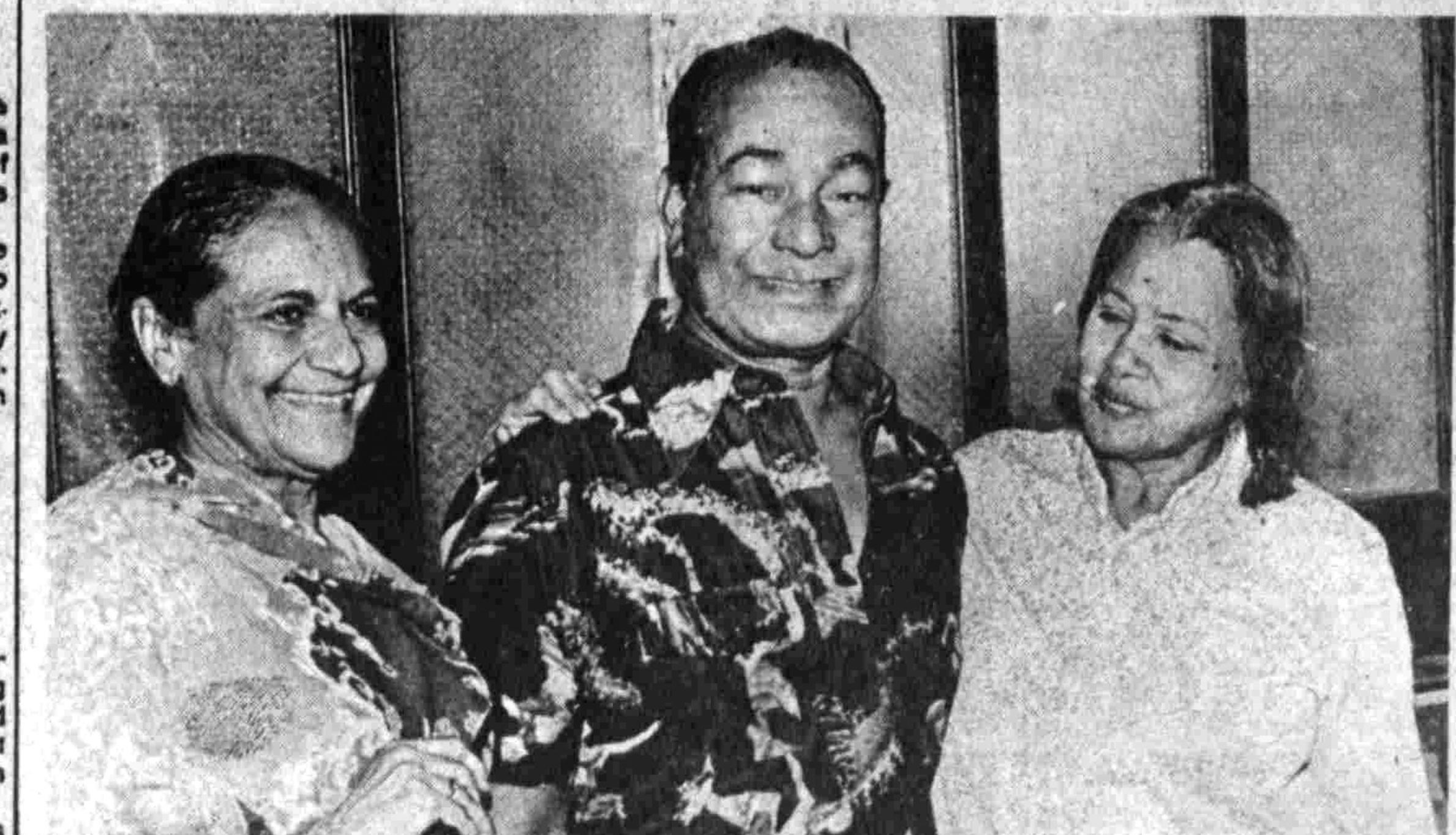
The Azurie people saw more than thirty years ago -- "a face that shone like a brilliant star in the sky," as friend Pramila describes

first drew her attention to the on dancing. I was possessed as ya Sansar," made by Bombay almost stabbed a very big actor Amitabh. Bachchan and all the with if it were by the dance and I Talkies. In this film, too, her whom I shall not name because other heroes, "but your heroines contempt among the higher class didn't even see when my father song, "Main Harijan Ki Chhori," he is dead. A time came when are very bad. All of them look walked in. Back home it was the became very popular at a time men almost feared Azurie. I had alike. Not one of them has any most painful night for me. My when the Harijan problem was a to do these things to survive, to thing fresh about them and there dance with respect more than to is nothing striking about them-

ibs was a big insult for him. Her dancing went on till parti- survive. I never surrendered my They all look tired. You should He was livid with rage. He closed tion. A little before partition, she self-respect at any time," Azurie have seen the heroines of Sulochana I have ecross any Indian beautiful as she was. And today she is ill and dying and there is no one to care for her and so many other artistes of my time." Azurie again comes back to her earlier appeal: "It is high time you people did something for these old artistes who have given best days, their best muments, their life for you, for entertainment," there is pain in her

> She refuses to sit. It is almost an hour since she started talking. Her one big It has given that I have to it. Our relationship will never end. I'll be a dancer in my next stage of life. too. I hope God agrees," she says

a fact - a beautiful fact of life.



Seventy-two, strong still and ever smiling. Asurte (extreme right) ("whom I taught like a little child") and "an old and very dear friend," Pramila,