

# Penelope's passion burns bright

The Telegraph. By Pratim D. Gupta, September 24, 2006

**It may take some time, but Penelope Cruz will someday be crowned Maharani Prem Kaur**

Despite protests from the Kapurthala royals, the Spanish actress is determined to produce — and act in — the celluloid adaptation of Javier Moro's *Passion India*.

Richard Garlock, the spokesperson for Cruz who is on a festival trek with Spanish auteur Pedro Almodovar's latest film *Volver*, told The Telegraph: "Penelope is very passionate about bringing it to the screen."

After "falling in love" with the story, Cruz rallied for seven months to buy the rights to the book. In an interview, the actress said recently: "It's an amazing real story that people don't know about... I'm going to take some time off to focus on that, as we have to put time in finding a writer (who will adapt the novel into a screenplay) and director. It's a big movie that shoots in France, Spain and India."

Shatrujit Singh has reservations about the way his great-grandfather has been portrayed in the book and has vowed to stop the movie from being shot. But Cruz, who has declared she will be "stubborn" and "persistent" as a producer, has promised the film will happen even if it takes some time to roll. As Garlock revealed: "This production will not happen this year. It will take a long time for all the elements of the production to come together. It is in very early stages at the moment."

Also, Cruz's first production venture under her newly launched production company, 88 Producciones, will not be *Passion India* but a movie for Spanish director Fernando Trueba. With that happening next year, Cruz's Indian project can only take off in 2008 or even later.

The actress has confirmed she would be coming to India to scout for locations and select the principal local cast.

This will not be her first tryst with the country. The last time she was here was in 1990 when, a girl of 16, she had arrived in Calcutta to spend a week with Mother Teresa. That "life-changing experience" can be one reason why she wants to base her production in India.