

Indian historical epic sweeps 'Bollywood Oscars'



Bollywood actor Ranveer Singh poses for photographers.

Indian historical epic "Bajirao Mastani" swept the "Bollywood Oscars" yesterday, taking home awards for best director, best supporting actress and best male actor for leading man Ranveer Singh. The movie, which sees Singh play an 18th century Maratha warrior, picked up nine other technical awards at the International Indian Film Academy awards, including for choreography and best cinematography.

"I am quite overwhelmed by all of this," the movie's director, Sanjay Leela Bhansali, said as he picked up his prize at the International Film Academy awards being held this year in Spain for the first time. "I don't want to thank anyone for this film. I think thank you is just not enough for this film," he added to applause from the 5,000-strong crowd gathered at Madrid's IFEMA congress centre for the event. "Bajirao Mastani" made around 3.5 billion rupees (\$52 million) according to industry estimates, and it has already picked up a number of Indian film awards this year.

Singh in turn said he learned "how to be singleminded and uncompromising in the pursuit of excellence" by working with Bhansali on the film. "I hope we will continue to make magic together," the 30-year-old actor, who impressed audiences in his 2010 debut as a street-smart Delhi wedding planner in the romantic comedy "Band Baaja Baaraat". The best picture award went to "Bajrangi Bhaijaan" starring Salman Khan, whose character embarks on a journey to reunite a mute six-year-old Pakistani girl stuck in India with her parents in Pakistan.

The movie was the biggest-grossing Bollywood film of 2015, earning around 6.26 billion rupees. Sridevi Kapoor, considered by many to be the first female superstar of Hindi cinema, was honored with a



Bollywood actress Deepika Padukone poses for photographers at the International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) Rocks Green Carpet for the 17th Edition of IIFA Weekend & Awards in Madrid, Spain, Saturday. — AP photos

lifetime achievement award. The award show, which celebrates the Hindi language film industry known as Bollywood, takes place in a different city outside of India every year in the hope of luring new audiences to the genre.

Donkeys and footballers

The co-hosts of the show, Bollywood stars Farhan Akhtar and Shahid Kapoor, arrived on the stage for the start of ceremony which got underway two hours behind schedule-riding donkeys. They were followed by young men wearing football jerseys who did tricks with a ball with their heads and a mariachi band in white suits. In

the opening ceremony Bollywood superstar Hrithik Roshan, accompanied by dozens of dancers, performed the flamenco-themed song "Senorita" from his 2011 film "Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara", a road movie shot largely in Spain. Spanish tourism promotion agency Turespana worked closely on the production of the film and it was one of the sponsors of the awards ceremony, which is expected to bring 15,000 extra visitors to Madrid.

Spain is seeking to diversify its tourism base beyond the traditional northern European sunseekers that account for the bulk of its visitors and officials hope hosting the awards will draw more Indian visi-

tors. Madrid city hall was illuminated with the colors of the Indian flag over the weekend in honor of the awards.

"Dear friends it is so nice to have you here. I am really, really pleased and at the same time very proud of your choice," Madrid mayor Manuela Carmena said at the start of the awards ceremony.

The broadcast of the awards attracts approximately 800 million viewers worldwide. Launched in 2000 at the Millennium Dome in London, other cities to have hosted the glitzy event include Dubai, Bangkok, Singapore and Toronto. It was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia last year. — APF



Bollywood actor Anil Kapoor poses for photographers.



Bollywood actress Shilpa Shetty.



Bollywood actress Shriya Saran.



Bollywood actress Elli Avram poses for photographers.



Bollywood actress Athiya Shetty.



Bollywood actress Sonakshi Sinha.

Rakshesh Brahmanandan: In pursuit of music

Rakshesh Brahmanandan is a well-known and a distinguished voice among young play back singers of Malayalam music industry. He proudly shoulders the legacy of his father KP Brahmanandan - the legendary singer of Malayalam. He worked for great maestros such as Dakshinamoorthy Swami, Ilayaraja, Ravindran and more. He also shared stages with legends like Yesudas, Jayachandran, Hariharan and duet with P Susheela, B Vasantha, Madhuri, Chithra, Sujatha and many more. He was privileged to performed in UK, Russia, Singapore, UAE, Qatar,

Bahrain, Kuwait and Indonesia. Malayalam film director Jayaraj offered Rakshesh's debut song in the movie 'Anachantham' (Arikil varoo) after listening to his voice in a live music show at Kozhikode. Later crooned into many movies for music directors like Alex Paul, Bijibal and aspiring talents. Rakshesh was lucky enough to sing for Mammooty - the legendary actor of Indian cinema for the movie 'Jawan of Vellimala' which was the actor's first production venture. The song 'Pora niranjoru pathira' was an instant hit. Songs in Tamil and Kannada movies are

also in his credit line. Rakshesh has anchored and performed in prominent TV channels like Flowers TV, Asianet and Kairali. In a span of ten years, Rakshesh sang almost 700 songs, falling in different genres like devotional, albums and folk songs which iconized his remarkable presence. Rakshesh, now is in pursuit of his own voco - fusion multi genre band from Cochin embracing Indian music culture in an international outfit. He wishes to launch his band shortly in Bangalore or Dubai. He believes that he can commu-

nicate in a broader perspective with the music lovers around the world through his band named RB LIVE. Moreover he has surprise performance packages for music lovers, suiting different interests and occasions - old Indian movie songs show, North Indian flavored Mehfilis and South Indian Classical concerts. Brahmanandan had made Rakshesh understand the taste of classical music at an early age, now trained under legendary violinist B Sasikumar and other gurus like Ambalapuzha Vijayan and Vazahmattom Chandrababu.

