

Drama in Reel Life

The moment has finally arrived. The day we announce the Awards for Best Film, Best Actors, Best Director, Best Set Design, Best Actor in a Supporting Role and so on. While many of the films are being released everyday and many more will come later, nothing will quite live up to the drama, suspense and excellent acting in the film The Big Mess that bagged most of the awards this year. SWM highlights some of these amazing talents and the stories behind their brilliant work.

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Cartoons: Sharier Khan

Best Actor

Yesuddin

Yesuddin has played a number of different roles recently receiving three nominations for the best actor role. He started off by playing the silent understated role of the benign President; critics claim this was his weakest showing of the lot. While he did not have many lines, every now and then he managed to shake off the chains of silence and come up with memorable quotes such as "I seek cooperation from all in protecting the constitution". Only one with sublime acting skills could actually pull that off. He did so, effortlessly.

His role as the Professor was also critically well-received. He played the part of a professor whose strong leadership guides a country through choppy waters. While he tried his best for the role, eventually the script let him down. But credit to him that his acting was so good he almost had people convinced. The sound bite to remember was "being a teacher I have always discharged my responsibilities impartially".

Playing the role of Chief Addy in the film The Caretaker in a Soup was undoubtedly his performance to remember. It was set against the backdrop of political turbulence; he played the swashbuckling role of a "young" man desperately seeking to rebuild a country. At first his character lay low and watched voyeuristically as political meltdown crippled the country. Then he swung into action, like Tarzan on a vine, he swooped over the mess and scooped up the role of Chief Addy. With his newfangled power he set about "impartially" planning the next election. That is where film school has helped him out, his dramatic sense of timing is what defined the role. The entrance amidst flames and unexpected exit, were both out of character. That is the mark of a true actor, when they can step in and out of character at will. His closing lines were "the January 22 election will be held in a free, fair and impartial manner". And that was what eventually won him the award for Best Actor.



Best Director

PrinceTrek

Prince Trek also known as Mr 10% had no competition when it came to the best director category. By that, one means he really had no competition, namely because he paid off the judging panel and threatened to execute anyone who contested. The role of a director is not only to have a vision of what a movie should look like, but it also involves interpreting



the plot, casting the characters and set management. Like any good director he controlled every aspect, and demanded that the actors and crew follow instructions precisely.

His actors were his most loyal subjects; they followed orders to the letter and thus his vision of his epic Million Dollar Baby came to light. The name of his movie was also significant, he thought it would be good luck to name it after another Oscar winning movie. Aside from that it best described his nickname Mr. 10%, the past five years in government have made him a (multi) million dollar baby. He promulgated an unofficial law where by he would receive 10% of all monetary transactions in the industry, whether it was smuggled phensydil from the north, honey sold out of the Sunderbans in the south or Eid Zakat.

Coupled with his greed, he like any good director called all the shots behind the scenes. The now famous "Air House" was where his "business" transactions took place. Business aside, he also played a significant role in his own movie. Just like Hitchcock appeared for a cameo in all his movies, Prince Trek did the same. Turning the cogs behind the The Big Mess he was never really that visible, like a good director he kept himself in ones peripheral vision. The screenplay he scripted was almost flawless, everyone in The Big Mess knew their parts and lines to perfection. But without his magnificent direction, the movie would have fallen flat on its face. A well-deserved honour for the man who was pulling all the strings.

Best Actress 1

Queen Bee Dolly

Queen Bee Dolly should rightly have been given the lifetime achievement award, but with stiff competition in that category she had to settle for Best Actress. This is far from her first nomination, but this time around she deserves the award, as her character was really born out of a labour of love. In the psychological, political thriller The Big Mess, Dolly is the unflinching, uncompromising and controlling matriarch who whiplashes her minions when they go astray. She spits venom and chokes at the very mention of her arch-rival Queen Shaksina and her loyalists.

The character played by Ms Dolly inherits a corrupt kingdom and successfully manages to keep it that way. The scheming nature of the role was played with brave and unflinching accuracy. She exuded confidence as mountains of promises went up in smoke. That too was ironic as the fires that burnt the promises, were the only source of light that the nation had for most of her five years. The rest was plunged in darkness as she shrewdly built power plants in the air. Aside from widespread corruption, continuous harassing of the media she also paved the way for the death metal band Big Fundies Against Liberation, who hogged many of the more dramatic scenes.

Last year, like many previous Best Actress winners, she graced the cover of Time magazine. While still in character she gave an interview and was quoted as saying "Everywhere in Bangladesh, [people] lead a good life. Nobody goes without food or clothes. Everybody has access to education. They get proper health care. There is no hunger. What else do you want?" What a performance!



Best Actress 2

Queen Shaksina

Shaksina is one of the most accomplished

actresses in the world; it is a shame that this year she has to share the award of Best Actress with another ageless beauty Ms Dolly. For most of their professional lives the two have played opposite each other, notable movies have been Who is the Real Father of the Nation?, The Election I, The Election II and the forthcoming Election III. While they have switched roles around quite a lot, it could be safe to say that Shaksina has made the role of Opposition her own. It was for the portrayal of that very role that she shares this year's award with Dolly .

Her character started off by refusing to accept the fact that she had been defeated in the previous parliamentary elections. While that is common for most people playing the role of Opposition, her acting skills really set her apart from the crowd. Her role seemingly has no off button as in the film she consistently complains about one thing or the other - for five years! The most "explosive" part of her performance was in the attempted assassination scene on her in August 2004. Amidst scenes of chaos and carnage (similar scenes defined the Best Actor Yesuddin portrayal of the Chief Addy) she escaped unhurt. Inside sources claim that for the shooting of that part she may even have lost hearing in her left ear. With ringing noises in her ears she renewed the challenge of ousting the government, but she had to do so without the services of two very important members of her group. Sadly, they lost their lives in the process of making the film. There were also comical moments as Best Supporting Actor Abe Jal claimed that the government would fall before April 30, 2004. But Queen Shaksina's son Prince Victor also deserves a notable mention, his cameo appearances showed the public a side they had not seen for some time. Shaksina the loving mother, it helped to soften her character as the Opposition taskmaster.

As the time for the caretaker government loomed, her character sized the day and managed to get support from some of the disgruntled loyalists of Queen Bee Dolly as well as Lifetime Achievement Winner H.M. Borbaad to her grand alliance. But there was to be a twist to the tale, as she virtually lost her mind and gave away a staggering number of royal seats to her alliance members.

Then in the grand finale of The Big Mess, Shaksina plays the disoriented, delusional and delirious leader who shows her dual personality. Much to the horror of her loyalists, admirers and fans, she joins hands with the 'Little Fundy Offshoots' , a group of fanatics who think stoning a woman will get brownie points in the afterlife.

Her role as Opposition could be likened to Nicole Kidman's Oscar winning performance as Virginia Wolfe. Deeply disturbed individuals, struggling with the world around them, they fought for some sense of reality.

Best Actors in a Supporting Role

The Abe Twins

Abe Jal and Abe Mann

They are the most-talked about pair since Uttam and Suchitra. But their love is of a different kind. Though their previous films, Trump Card Day and For the Love of God and Rural Development flopped, their latest joint venture, Sagarika 2, almost did well. In this film they play two pen friends who write to each other for months before they decide to meet -- only to find that the heroine has, in the meantime, eloped with an officer of the peacekeeping forces in the civil war-torn nation. It is rumoured that though they smile and shake hands in front of the camera, off-screen they are both rigorously lobbying for the lead role in the upcoming blockbuster, Minister, Me, the shooting of which was scheduled to begin this month but which has been postponed due to



the dearth of good actors in the film industry. Rumour has it that Abe Jal is pulling strings through an extremist religious outfit while Abe Mann is using his mafia connections to bag the role. But for now, our award for Best Actor in a Supporting Role can go to no other than, jointly, the most popular unromantic duo on the silver screen.

Critics' Award Best Actor

Bad Doc and Cornoilius

This year's Critics' Award for Best Actor in a Supporting Role also goes to two special talents. Special, because they have moved from very different fields to the film industry to give it an alternative twist. First, we have the doctor-turned-actor, Bad Doc, who first went from his chamber to Rampura TV Station to host "My Health is my Headache" and finally landed at Dollywood with No, Prime Minister and We Will Not be Moochies. Losing interest in the mainstream industry, however, he literally shifted to the alternative with Bikalpo Bhabna.

He was soon joined by his friend from Dollywood -- also repulsed by the world of glamour -- retired army officer Cornoilius, our second candidate for this award. Together, they have starred in films like LDP 2006: From Launching to Fizzling Out and My Kula and I. Though nowhere near being big commercial successes, these actors have carved a teeny-weeny niche for themselves in the industry where they exist but don't really make a difference.



Lifetime Achievement Award

HM Borbaad

He started his career with the film Coup D'etat in the early '80s in which he played the role of an ambitious army officer who toppled the government and declared himself president. After that, he ruled the film industry single-handedly until 1990, when his films Autocrat Number 1 and Bulldozing the DU Students crashed at the box office. In the mid-'90s, however, he again became the nation's heartthrob with Elections from Prison. Since then, it has been all uphill, with all the leading ladies falling and fighting over him while his latest off-screen love interest, an alleged thief, threatened to jump off the roof with his cherished cell phone. His life has been a colourful one, both professionally and personally, with his fan club splitting five ways. He is also the most expensive actor for hire. Now in his 80s, his latest film, an animation, promises not to be his last. In Autobiography of a Pendulum, he gives vocals for a pendulum, which keeps swinging to and fro throughout the movie until it finally breaks and falls off. The Lifetime Achievement Award goes to the tragic hero who refuses to go away, the dictator of our hearts, HM Borbaad.



Best Set Design Team

The Big Fundies and Gang

The Big Fundies, a popular death metal band known for their funky beards and flowing gowns have shown their talents in another area - set designing and special effects. In the film The Big Mess this team creates an eerie ambience with chilling chants of death and a perfectly controlled setting for the film. First they made sure they had Dolly's group of friends where they wanted -- by the, well, collars. One brilliant move the Big Fundies made and also got hat's off approval from their close friends Dolly and Co, was to employ a grand team of stuntmen from the JMB Terrorist Training Institute. The JMB TTI was headed by SAR and a rather cuddly fellow fondly known as



Bangla Bhai, famous for his efficiency in terror tactics including medieval torture as well as the art of disguise.

So, with the help of its legion of JMB stuntmen this remarkable set designing team managed to create the greatest illusion of the decade (first there were no religious terrorists in the country and it was all a figment of media imagination; then there were Miami Vice-like suspense raids to hall them in). Special effects were created by the JMB -- simultaneous bomb blasts in 63 districts.

The film The Big Mess was said to contain too much violence by the censors but this did not stop the JMB team to create consistent terror (on the screen) through numerous gory bomb blasts with grisly scenes of utter mayhem.

All in all the Big Fundies and its partners deserve the award for best set design and special effects for creating the scenario for the previous government to blow democracy and secularism to the winds and welcoming with open arms -- anti-liberation ideology, bigotry and state-sponsored terror.

Best Props

RAB

The Rabidly Active Battalion were especially cast to lend mystery, thrill and suspense to the film The Big Mess. It is said their black-ninja outfits were custom-designed by top class designer Mo Dude Klein. These stylish yet terrifying-to-look-at dudes with Raybans were the vigilante squad that combed the streets for crime, cleansing society of all the petty criminals through a game called "Crossfire".

Best Actor in a Supporting Role - Nominee

CPB (Crying Proletariat Bandwagon)

The CPB was nominated for best supporting role but lost out to the Abe Twins because, well, they just didn't have as much screen presence. They did play good-intentioned sidekicks to the wishy-washy Shaksina dynasty but their lack of glamour and obscure dialogue could not make much of an impact with the audience. They were the apparent good guys in the films Pump Up the Power and Travails of the Garment Worker. They have been consistently anti-imperialist, anti-feudalist and anti-communal but the overall performance seemed to be a little out of steam. This is quite a mystery considering the fact that the plot of the film The Big Mess in which they acted, centred around a huge proletariat being exploited by feudal, power-hungry, materialistic politicians who never gave two hoots for the toiling, suffering masses. In the film The Deliverance -- a sequel to The Big Mess, they had a tiny part where they gave 53 lines of dialogue on how to bring about a happy ending to the 'big mess'.



Best Extras Award

Alu Da and Bokhles Mia

Both these actors have had obscure film history behind them. One played the lead in the flop film The Bodyguard 2 and the other played a two-bit cub reporter of a paper -- Our Tiresome Mouthpiece. Feltu got his big break after 2001 and plays the role of cheery politician who smiles his way to fame and fortune becoming a media mughal, concocting sensational news about those he didn't like and acquiring all the



buildings and business he could lay his eyes on.

But even this consistently corrupt role paled in front of Bokhles who even with his diminutive stature and uninspiring costume managed to take away Alu Da laurels with his sickening obsequiousness, manipulation and self-aggrandisement. First he was the bland president's conniving secretary. Then he was the little Iago who kept whispering into the Chief Addy's feeble ears making sure that the strings of the puppet did not get detangled from the Great Puppet Company Air House's hands. He made sure that the Puppet President played to the Great Bokhles Tunes. They included "Don't talk about my cronies ever" and then "Let me tell you lies". Bokhles' brief but critically acclaimed performance was in The Deliverance where he plays the role of a con artist who manages to dupe private television channels for a day to refrain from airing any political news or talk shows on politics.