

INAUGURAL INDIAN FILM FESTIVAL OF MELBOURNE AWARDS - WINNERS ANNOUNCED

The Indian Film Festival of Melbourne announced the winners of the inaugural IFFM Awards, at a sold out gala event at Melbourne's Princess Theatre on Friday 2 May. **Amitabh Bachchan**, patriarch of Indian cinema, was the very special guest and recognised with the IFFM International Screen Icon Award.

Sports biopic **Bhaag Milkha Bhaag**, directed by **Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra**, dominated the evening, taking out every award for which it was nominated - Best Film, Western Union Best Director and Best Actor (Male) for **Farhan Akhtar**. The film, which follows the life of one of India's greatest living athletes and Olympian, Milkha "The Flying Sikh" Singh, stars Australian actress Rebecca Breeds.

International co-production **The Lunchbox**, directed by **Ritesh Batra**, won Best Indie Film and Best Actor for **Irrfan Khan** (shared with Farhan Akhtar, *Bhaag Milkha Bhaag*). *The Lunch Box* is Ritesh Batra's debut feature and will premiere at IFFM on Saturday 10 May, and be released nationally in July.

Kangana Ranaut won Best Actor (Female) for her role in **Queen** and director **Anand Gandhi** was given a Special Jury Commendation for **Ship of Theseus**.

The Telstra People's Choice Prize for the Indian film with the highest Australian box office takings in 2013 went to action film **Dhoom 3**, directed by **Vijay Krishna Acharya**, which is the highest grossing Bollywood film of all time both domestically and worldwide.

The awards were judged by a panel of leading Australian and Indian film figures including Phillip Noyce, Rajkumar Hirani, Suhasini Maniratnam, Jill Bilcock, Simi Garewal and Rajeev Masand.

Directors Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra, Ritesh Batra and Vijay Krishna Acharya; and actors Farhan Akhtar and Kangana Ranaut were in attendance at the gala to collect their awards.

INDIAN FILM FESTIVAL OF MELBOURNE AWARDS 2014 – WINNERS

Best Actor Male: **Farhan Akhtar** - *Bhaag Milkha Bhaag* and **Irrfan Khan** - *The Lunchbox*

Best Actor Female: **Kangana Ranaut** - *Queen*

Best Film: **Bhaag Milkha Bhaag**

Best Indie Film: **The Lunchbox**

Western Union Best Director: **Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra** - *Bhaag Milkha Bhaag*

Special Jury Commendation: **Anand Gandhi** - *Ship of Theseus*

IFFM International Screen Icon: **Amitabh Bachchan**

Telstra People's Choice Award: **Dhoom 3**

For more information go to www.iffm.com.au

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