

A grand achievement

Ahead of August 2020, when the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne will enter its eleventh year with a grand opening, the team organised a prelude event in Mumbai. The festival's association with La Trobe University culminated with the launch of the Shah Rukh Khan La Trobe University PhD Scholarship, announced at the 2019 festival. It has been dedicated to a female researcher, Gopika Kottan-tharayil Bhasi from Thrissur (Kerala), working on farming practices through animal science, ecology and molecular studies. She was chosen from over 800 Indian women for the honour. She was awarded the four-year scholarship at the event that was held in Mumbai on Wednesday, February 26.

While it's been 10 wonderful years, festival director Mitu Bhowmik Lange is gearing up to make the 2020 celebrations just as grand.

Their celebrations till now have included names like Karan Johar, Zoya Akhtar, Rima Das, Arjun Kapoor, Malaika Aro-ra, Tabu and filmmaker Sriram Raghavan, among others.

Shah Rukh Khan, in a statement, said, "I would like to personally thank Mitu. I attended the Indian film festival of Mel-



MITU BHOWMIK



Shah Rukh Khan with Gopika Kottan-tharayil Bhasi

bourne last year and it was such a warm experience. I'm a staunch believer in education and would like to congratulate Gopika. Way forward for every-

one is to gain education and there's never an end to learning. The key to empowering women is only by providing them with education."