

Bengal sweep overshadows Munnabhai at national award

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BENGAL SWEPT the 54th National Film Awards on Tuesday, overshadowing *Lage Raho Munnabhai's* four wins.

The state took three acting honours, with Soumitra Chatterjee declared best actor for *Podokkhep*, Prosenjit winning a special jury award for *Dosar*, and Konkona Sen Sharma emerging best supporting actress for *Omkara*.

There were also three winning filmmakers: Dibakar Banerji for *Khosla ka Ghosla* (best Hindi feature), Anjan Das for *Faltu* (best feature on family wel-

fare) and Manash Bhowmick for *Lama Dances of Sikkim* (special jury award, non-feature section).

The list went on. *Yatra* brought the best cinematography award to Goutam Ghose, while *Bishar Blues* brought three awards to Bengal, with Amitabha Chakraborty, Amit Debnath and Partha Burman winning for documentary directing, editing and audiography. The award for best Bengali feature was shared by *Anuranan* and *Podokkhep*.

Podokkhep's acting award saw a change in stance from Soumitra, who had refused the special jury award for *Dekha* in 2001. "I am accepting this

award on behalf of my audiences, who have showered upon me so much love for the past 50 years. They will feel bad if I don't take it," he told *HT*.

He had lost faith in the national awards for the last 25 years. "I didn't receive one for any Satyajit Ray film, or for any other film. This is not to say *Podokkhep* is not a good one," he said.

Konkona felt "excited", "happy" and "blessed", while Prosenjit's award was recognition for his foray into offbeat cinema. "It's come after 25 years in the industry. It adds to my responsibility; I must do more good work."

Dibakar Banerjee said, "I'll be win-

ning cash. Don't you think that's exciting? I will invest it in my next film." For Goutam Ghose, national awards are familiar territory, though mostly as director. "I have won it 15 times. I'm happy for my technicians and the laboratory people." For the *Bishar Blues* team, Amitabha Chakraborty said, "The win is unexpected but a happy one."

The filmmakers of the two Bengali feature winners reacted differently. *Anuranan* director Aniruddha Roychowdhury said, "The film is also a commercial success. The award is a huge pat on our shoulders and a sweet accident." And *Podokkhep* director

Suman Ghosh said from Florida, "happy that people will be aware of film and I hope they will recognise contribution to Bengali culture."

Lage Raho... became the first Hi sequel to win the award for best popular film, following *Munnabhai ME* in 2003. Its other awards were for lyrics, screenplay and supporting actor (Dilip Prabhavalkar as Gandhi).

Other winners included Priyam as best actress for Tamil film *Paru Veeran*, Madhur Bhandarkar as best director for *Traffic Signal* and Malay film *Pulijanmam* as best feature.

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