

ONCE UPON A TIME IN BIHAR

Director: Nitin Chandra
Writer: Nitin Chandra
Cast: Kranti Prakash Jha, Pankaj Jha, Ajay Kumar
Strength: Story, Acting
Weakness: Direction, Pace of the film
Runtime: 122 minutes
Rating: 2.5/5

PLOT: Based on real incidents, set in the year 2003 - 2004 in ravenous terrains of Buxar District of Bihar.

REVIEW: The social drama intends to make audiences sympathise with the Bihari youth, because of the lack of opportunities in the state and the hurdles they must overcome to earn a dignified living. The idea is to portray why many end up migrating to other states and why the situation isn't changing.

Rajiv Kumar (Kranti Prakash Jha) is a noble teacher, who wants to start coaching classes in order to gather sufficient money for his sister's wedding. His wish fails to fructify as the banks won't sanction his business loan. Shankar (Deepak Singh) is qualified to bag a government job but his inability to bribe the officers kills his opportunity. The two get exploited for being honest and hard-working.

Disheartened and disillusioned, the two turn to abduction — a supposedly common crime in Bihar.

While the story is relevant, setting authentic and performances decent, the sluggish pace is sleep-inducing. Also, the second half looks like a different film in itself, with no connection to the beginning.

Unless it's a documentary, when a film raises a significant socio-political issue like this, one expects it to propose logical solutions as well. This one aspires to trigger a revolution by projecting its protagonists as crusaders of human rights. Sadly, all they do is preach and then commit an idiotic crime themselves, much against their own values and beliefs.

The inability to expand the basic idea into a solid story lets this otherwise well-intentioned film down. It still can be watched, but only if you have nothing much to do.

Reviewed By Intisab Shahriyar



SPECTRE

Director: Sam Mendes
Writers: John Logan, Neal Purvis
Stars: Daniel Craig, Christoph Waltz, Léa Seydoux
Strengths: Action sequences, Acting
Weakness: Long runtime, Weak Story
Runtime: 148 minutes
Rating: 4/5

PLOT: A cryptic message from Bond's past sends him on a trail to uncover a sinister organization. While M battles political forces to keep the secret service alive, Bond peels back the layers of deceit to reveal the terrible truth behind SPECTRE.

REVIEW: If there is such a thing as "James Bond's Greatest Hits," then Spectre is it. The 25th Bond pays homage to all that was great and grand about the long running franchise. This film also firmly establishes Craig as one of the best to have portrayed the titular character.

The film starts off in down-

town Mexico City during the riotous Day of the Dead festivities. After a spectacular demolition and helicopter fight leaves a trail of carnage, James Bond is grounded by his jittery bosses. But he defies their orders as he races to Rome, the Austrian Alps, and the Moroccan desert in search of Franz Oberhauser, the shadowy mastermind behind an all-powerful criminal cartel called Spectre, reviving an iconic piece of 007 folklore dating back to the Sean Connery era.

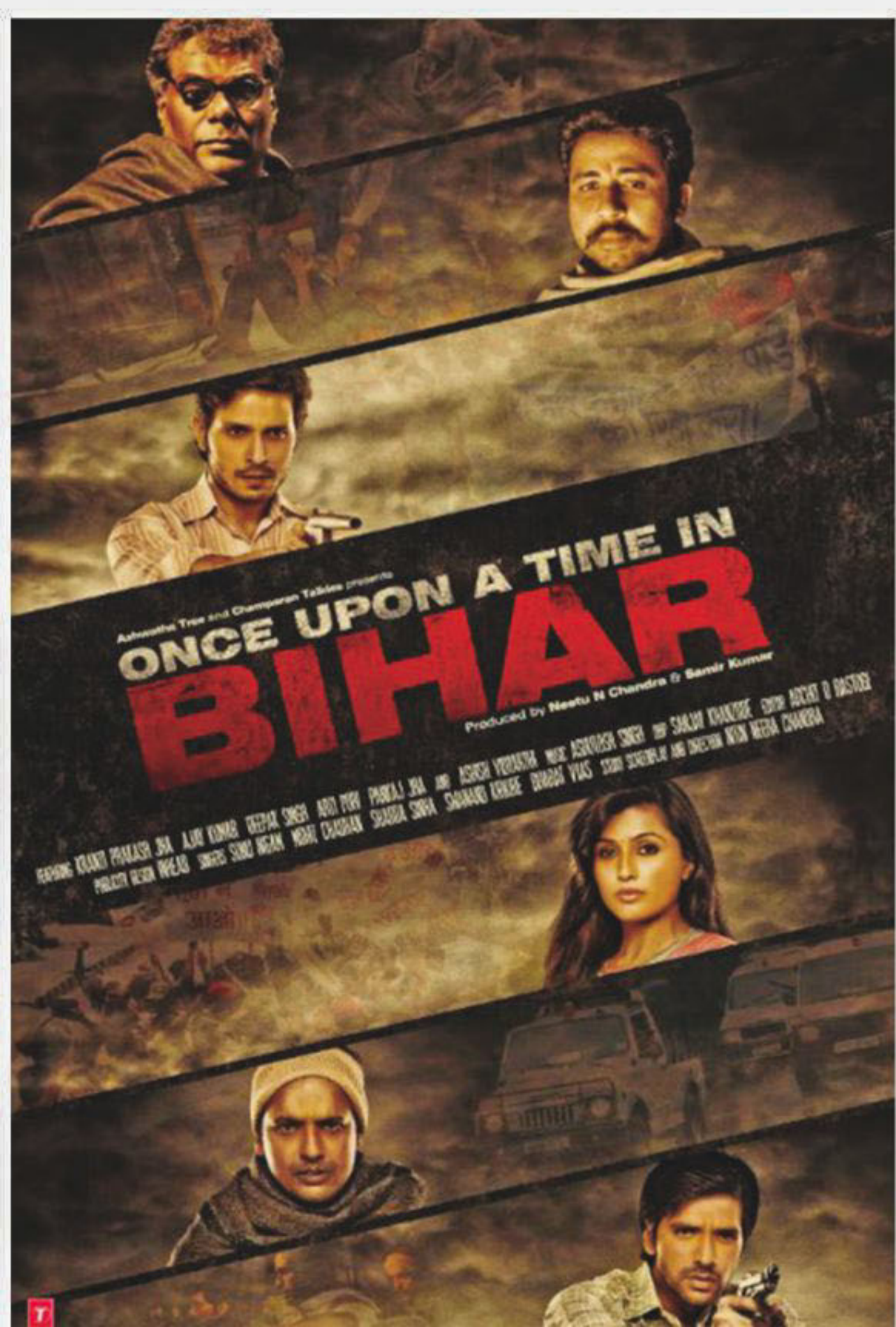
Meanwhile, back in London, M, Money Penny, and Q are fighting for survival against an ambitious government mandarin called C who plans to shut down the 00 agent program and replace it with his own sinister high-tech surveillance network.

Sam Mendes, who directed the critically acclaimed Skyfall, returns here as well, although,

it seems he hasn't been able to pull off the same magic again. Spectre, as I said before, can be taken as a Bond's Greatest Hit, but that's not necessarily a good thing. There are many elements of the old Bond franchises which should have been left behind in the era they belonged in. After Bond's thorough character building and reinstating to the modern era in Skyfall, it just feels like Spectre took 3 steps back by trying to plug it in with the old classics.

Despite this shortfall however, the movie is still enjoyable, and the action scenes and locations are to die for. Craig has really managed to shine in this latest outing as Bond. Plus, Bond's new chariot is a sight to behold and of course, Monica Bellucci is one of the Bond girls, and that alone should be worth the watch.

Reviewed by Intisab Shahriyar



CLASSIC REVIEW

IRIS AND THE LIEUTENANT (1946)

Director: Alf Sjöberg
Writers: Olle Hedberg, Alf Sjöberg.
Stars: Mai Zetterling, Alf Kjellin, Åke Claesson.
Runtime: 86 minutes

PLOT: The officer Robert Motander is invited to a dinner with his upper-class relatives. During the dinner he observes the beautiful young house-maid, Iris. He suggests that the two of them go out to see a movie. This is the beginning of a love story that Robert's relatives will do anything to stop. A working-class mistress will do but a working-class fiancée? Never!

REVIEW: Alf Sjöberg's film version of Olle Hedberg's bittersweet novel of the young lieutenant and the little maid is a tender portrayal with the signature Alf energy behind every scene. He whips out a corrosive, uneasy



mood in the brilliant beginning and never lets go throughout the production and he excels in revealing details and bold camera settings, where stairs, mirrors and other props are used with technical mastery. But he also remains

tender and gentle, warmer than any time in the scenes with Iris and the Lieutenant. Perhaps because the Mai Zetterling and Alf Kjellin is an extraordinarily lovable pair, her being piteously young, slightly melancholy, weak, yet full-blooded, a budding femme fatale; and he was serious yet dashing, well-mannered and a youthful male.

It is a film with dramatic, demonized and poetic strength, firm and tight in the image portrayal. Each image is as always in Sjöberg's movies: purposefully composed. All the actors give their best, such as Ingrid Borthen as the hysterically wicked Mary and all these together make it the classic that it is, truly deserving of the awards it has amassed over the years.

Reviewed by Mohaiminul Islam