

THE OSCARS

Showbiz predictions for the Academy Awards 2016

After last weekend's International Press Academy awards, we at Star Showbiz finally have enough data to talk about tomorrow's Academy Awards. We have seen much of our predictions for the Emmys come true, so the team will dare to put their movie knowledge to the test and make predictions for the major categories at the 88th Academy Awards. And the Oscar goes to...:



BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS: Alicia Vikander, who portrayed Gerda Wegener in "The Danish Girl", has roped in wins at the Screen Actors Guild, Critics' Choice and Chicago Film Critics Association awards. Trailing slightly behind her is Kate Winslet, a veteran performer who won the BAFTA, and the Golden Globe for her role in "Steve Jobs". Our pick: It's a legitimately interesting race and it will be either Winslet or Vikander, most likely the latter.

BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR: This category has confounded us. Typically, the Screen Actors Guild gives us the best look into the eventual winner. Idris Elba won the SAG award for his turn in "Beasts of No Nation" but was snubbed by the Academy for a nomination. Sylvester Stallone ("Creed") won at the Golden Globes and Critics' Choice awards but wasn't nominated for a SAG or BAFTA. Mark Rylance ("Bridge of Spies") pulled off a win at the BAFTAs and the New York Film Critics Circle. Our pick: This race is tight, and in the absence of a consensus, but an educated guess says

Stallone.

BEST ACTRESS: Of the awards we track, Brie Larson, who anchored "Room," has won six of the seven prizes for which she was nominated, losing only at the Satellite Awards to Saoirse Ronan ("Brooklyn"). Our pick: It would be shocking if Larson lost.

BEST ACTOR: Leo is undefeated. Of the awards we track, "The Revenant" star has won everything he was nominated for: the Golden Globe, the Screen Actors Guild, the BAFTA, the Critics' Choice award, the Satellite Award, and the Chicago Film Critics Association award. His closest rival is Fassbender, whose portrayal of Steve Jobs, won the Los Angeles Film Critics Association award. That's it. Our pick: Leo is right up there, but do be prepared for a let-down if history is to repeat itself.

BEST DIRECTOR: Even though George Miller ("Mad Max: Fury Road") led our tracking for the majority of the time, wins at the Directors Guild and the BAFTAs have made Alejandro G. Iñárritu a prohibitive favourite.

Our pick: It looks like Iñárritu will win the first back-to-back directing Oscars since Joseph L. Mankiewicz's victories for 1949 and 1950.

BEST PICTURE: This is a fun year to pick the best picture winner. "Room" and "Brooklyn," failed to gain much traction while "Bridge of Spies" and "The Martian," got few nominations. "Mad Max: Fury Road" won two awards from critics groups, and "The Big Short" had a burst in the middle, but couldn't maintain momentum. "Spotlight" won the Writers Guild Award for best original screenplay, the Critics' Choice and Satellite awards for best film, and most significantly the Screen Actors Guild's top prize, outstanding performance by a cast. "The Revenant," which bloomed late, scored the best drama at the Golden Globes, and massive wins at the Directors Guild and the BAFTAs. Our pick: It will most probably be "The Revenant", but "The Big Short" remains a strong contender.

SHAHEEN SAMAD

A valiant singer



LIFE'S LYRICS

NASHID KAMAL

There was one small TV in my grandmother's room. My father Justice Mustafa Kamal occasionally sat down to watch the musical shows on BTV. It was probably 1976 and he pointed out to this lady singing on TV, "Ma, this is Shaheen, just watch how well she sings, how trained she is!"

My father was a critical person, never giving tributes unless it is due. I tried to listen to this beautiful rendition of 'Esho he sajal shyam ghono deya' (Nazrul song). Later on, I learnt about her plight during the 1971 liberation war. She went to Kolkata, stopping in Agartala, clad in a burkha, riding a rickshaw when the Pakistani soldiers stopped the rickshaw. She was saved by sheer luck and joined the Bangladesh Mukti Shongrami Shilpi Shonshtha upon her arrival in Kolkata. The songs she sang from camp to camp (along with others) and her role as an inspirational person has been documented in the short film titled 'Muktir Gan' and has been lauded too.

I have watched Shaheen Samad's tireless efforts to take her songs, and her inspirational role from there to many more. Those were the days (in 1971) when she was only eighteen, but as an adult, as she led her life, she has always been present on the screen, narrating all these experiences, continuing her songs.



While many others who were singing soldiers had discontinued their roles, she and Timir Nandy and few others have continuously risen to the occasion during the months of March and December. I have seen Shaheen teaching the songs

in Chayanaut, where she had joined as a student (child) in 1963 and to this day, teach in the final year (Nazrul and inspirational songs).

Between these years, I have found Shaheen Samad in London, UK. She got

the position of teaching children as part of the Inner London authority, and there too, she continued teaching, singing, marking various occasions of the Indians and Bangladeshis. On one occasion, I went to listen to her in the prestigious 'Nehru Centre' in London and felt very proud. From one end of UK to the other, every town had been visited by Shaheen Samad and her songs.

Regarding the propagation of Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam's songs, Shaheen Samad once again played a pivotal role in bringing all the Nazrul exponents together, letting us use her home as the premises for initial meetings, sumptuous tea and snacks and smiles from her better half Habib Us Samad, gave us (Nazrul exponents) a strong footing to start.

It is a joy to know Shaheen whose versatility in life knows no bounds. Simple and straightforward, Shaheen always stands by those who are in need or in ill-health. I watched her extending her hands for artists Moshad Ali, Bipul Bhattacharya and others. A kind, well-spoken lady who has indeed been exemplary deserves all our felicitations and kudos for being awarded the 'Ekushey Padak' this year. Let this be the beginning.

The writer is an **academic, Nazrul exponent and writer.**