



Billie Eilish lands the best original song for 'What Was I Made For?'



Messi, featured in 'Anatomy of a Fall', graces the ceremony.



'Oppenheimer' secures seven Academy Awards, including the Best Picture trophy.



Ryan Gosling was nominated in the supporting role category for 'Barbie'.



Gosling delivers an epic performance of 'I'm Just Ken'.

PHOTOS: REUTERS

# 96TH ACADEMY AWARDS

## Moments triumph over felicitations

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

The 96th Academy Awards dazzled audiences on Sunday night with its signature blend of glitz, glamour, and unexpected moments, making it a night to remember in Hollywood's storied history. From the triumph of the blockbuster biopic *Oppenheimer* to the heartfelt speeches and unforgettable performances, this year's Oscars showcased the power and diversity of storytelling in cinema.

Amidst the celebration of cinematic excellence, the event also bore witness to poignant reminders of global issues, adding depth and resonance to an evening marked by both celebration and reflection.

*Oppenheimer*, the blockbuster biopic about the race to build the first atomic bomb, claimed seven Academy Awards, including the prestigious Best Picture trophy, at the 96th Academy Awards.

Irish actor Cillian Murphy won the Best Actor award for playing theoretical physicist J Robert Oppenheimer, who led the US effort in the 1940s to create a weapon that ended World War II. *Oppenheimer* director British-American filmmaker Christopher Nolan took home his first Academy Award, clinching the Best Director crown.

"We made a film about the man who created the atomic bomb, and for better or worse, we are living in Oppenheimer's world," Murphy said as he held his trophy on stage. "So I would really like to dedicate this to the peacemakers everywhere."

A three-hour historical drama about science and politics, *Oppenheimer* became an unlikely box office hit, grossing USD 953.8 million and receiving widespread critical praise.

It was the first of Nolan's films to win best picture. The director has previously won acclaim for *The Dark Knight*, *Batman trilogy*, *Inception*, *Memento*, and other movies. As he accepted his gold statuette,



Cillian Murphy wins the Best Actor award for 'Oppenheimer'.



Emma Stone wins best actress for 'Poor Things'.



Robert Downey claims his first Oscar in supporting role for 'Oppenheimer'.

Nolan noted that the movie business was a century old and still evolving. "To know you think I'm a meaningful part of this means the world to me," he said.

Emma Stone was named best actress for playing a woman revived from the dead in the dark and wacky comedy *Poor Things*. It was the second Academy Award for Stone, who landed the best actress honour for the 2016 musical *La La Land*. "This is really overwhelming," she said on stage.

The best actress race had been considered one of the tightest competitions, with Lily Gladstone nominated for *Killers of the Flower Moon*. Had she prevailed, Gladstone would have been the first Native American to win an acting Oscar.

In supporting actor categories, Robert Downey Jr. of *Oppenheimer* and *The Holdovers* star Da'Vine Joy Randolph claimed their first Academy Awards.

Downey, who was nominated for an Oscar in 1993 before his career was derailed by drug

use, won his honour on Sunday for playing *Oppenheimer's* professional nemesis, Lewis Strauss. "I'd like to thank my terrible childhood and the Academy, in that order," Downey joked before he saluted his wife Susan, who he said found him as a "snarly rescue pet" and "loved him back to life."

Randolph received the Best Supporting Actress trophy for her role as a grieving mother and cafeteria worker in the comedy set in a New England boarding school. "For so long, I always wanted to be different, and now I realise I just need to be myself," she said. "I thank you for seeing me."

Hayao Miyazaki won his second Oscar for his semi-autobiographical Japanese animated feature film *The Boy and the Heron*, a fantasy tale about a boy grieving his dead mother. The Japanese anime film emerged as a major awards contender after winning a Golden Globe and a Bafta.

Winners were chosen by the roughly 10,500 members of the Academy of Motion Picture

Arts & Sciences.

After 2023 was marred by labour strikes by actors and writers, the Oscars gave Hollywood a chance to celebrate two blockbusters, *Oppenheimer* and *Barbie*, which brought in a combined USD 2.4 billion at theatres and made movies the centre of pop culture last summer.

*Barbie* ended the night with one Oscar. Billie Eilish and Finneas O'Connell landed the best original song for the ballad *What Was I Made For?* The pair had performed the song on stage earlier, with Eilish singing at a microphone next to O'Connell, her brother and co-writer, on piano.

We all knew it was coming but Ryan Gosling's full-throated rendition of the *Barbie* movie's hit *I'm Just Ken* was even better than we could have hoped for. He started out the Oscar-nominated original song sitting just behind *Barbie* co-star Margot Robbie, who could not seem to control her laughter as Gosling crooned into her ear.

Carrying on in his all-pink tuxedo, Gosling made his way to the stage where he danced a choreographed routine with a dozen accompanying cowboy-hat-wearing Kens transforming the sometimes stuffy evening into a rousing concert. And, if that wasn't enough, Slash appeared to lend his talents for a guitar solo. There were even suggestions the choreography was a homage to *Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend*.

The red carpet wasn't the only eye-catching item at the 96th Academy Awards on Sunday night. The Oscars served drama from the moment the telecast began - which was five minutes late, due to pro-Palestine protesters blocking roads and delaying some of the biggest stars' arrivals at the Dolby Theater. Protesters chanting "ceasefire now" walked down Sunset Boulevard to the sound of honking horns, while Los Angeles police stood by in riot gear.

There were reminders of the conflict inside the ceremony too, with several big-name stars including Billie Eilish, Mark Ruffalo and Ramy Youssef sporting red pins in support of a ceasefire (Artists4Ceasefire) between Israel and Hamas. The pins were from Artists4Ceasefire, a group of stars and others who work in the entertainment industry who signed an open letter urging President Biden to call for a ceasefire. More than 30,000 people have been killed since the war in Gaza began in October.

The award for costume design won't be easily forgotten this year, thanks to the presentation by John Cena. Prompted by Kimmel, Cena - a wrestler and actor - appeared on stage entirely naked, save for a pair of Birkenstocks and a strategically placed envelope carrying the name of the winner. Cena shuffled on stage to the sound of roaring laughter, before a quick exchange with Kimmel - one of the better sketches of the evening.

"The male body is not supposed to be funny," Cena said. "Mine is," Kimmel replied.



No school wanted to take my daughter:  
**SWASTIKA**

Tollywood's Swastika Mukherjee is no stranger to controversy, as much as she is adored for her bold looks and pristine acting skills. However, she pays no heed to the negative news surrounding her, as she is perfectly happy with her daughter Anwesha, who resides abroad. Born to her and Pramit Sen, Anwesha was raised by Swastika alone, as the actress stormed out of her in-laws' place while pregnant.

Speaking on the difficulties of being a single mother, the renowned actress said in a talk show, "Many admissions boards required both parents to be there, and they wouldn't take my daughter as I am a single mother."

"I even took my father to those admission interviews, but to no avail," said the actress. The actress, ever a spokesperson for change, is now an inspiration for all single parents to prevail, irrespective of their struggles.

### Mimi Chakraborty and Nabila to star opposite Shakib Khan in 'Toofan'

The casting for the highly anticipated film *Toofan* has been finalised. The film, which stars Shakib Khan in the lead role, had been the subject of much speculation regarding the female lead.

After much anticipation and rumours circulating in the media and amongst netizens, it has been confirmed that Mimi Chakraborty from West Bengal and Masuma Rahman Nabila from Bangladesh will be portraying the main female characters in *Toofan*.

This casting announcement comes amidst great excitement from fans eagerly awaiting the release of the film. Both Mimi Chakraborty and Masuma Rahman Nabila are well-known figures in the entertainment industry, and their inclusion in the cast is expected to generate significant interest in the project.

### Aamir Khan confirms casting Sunny Deol son, Karan, for 'Lahore 1947'

Aamir Khan has confirmed that Sunny Deol's son Karan Deol is set to star in their upcoming film *Lahore 1947*. Recently, it was revealed that Karan had auditioned for a crucial character in the film, and has been selected for essaying the character of Javed.

"I am so happy that Karan Deol has tested so well for the extremely critical role of Javed. His natural innocence, his sincerity, and his honesty bring a lot to the table. Karan has really applied himself, worked hard, done



workshops with Adishakti, rehearsals with Raj, and is giving it his all," Aamir said in a statement. Sunny Deol and Preity Zinta will

be seen in leading roles in the film. The period film is being produced by Aamir Khan Productions and directed by Rajkumar Santoshi. *Lahore 1947* will also feature Shabana Azmi, Abhimanyu Singh and Ali Fazal. Abhimanyu will play the antagonist opposite Sunny.

Sunny, Rajkumar Santoshi and Aamir Khan are coming together for the first time with this film. Santoshi is also collaborating with AR Rahman and Javed Akhtar on the film.