

South Indian stars shine in Dubai

The South Indian International Movie Awards honoured achievers in Malayalam, Telugu, Kannada and Tamil cinema

By **Nagarjuna Rao**, Senior Pages Editor

The second day of the South Indian International Movie Awards (Siima), which honoured excellence in Telugu and Kannada cinema for 2017, paid glowing tributes to Sridevi at Bollywood Parks in Dubai on Saturday.

Actors Khushboo, Radhika, Puneet Rajkumar and producer Allu Aravind praised the star as a versatile performer par excellence.

Khushboo was overcome with grief as she recounted her conversation with Boney Kapoor a few days before Sridevi and her family were to go to Dubai for a family wedding.

"It was a rude shock to be woken up with a very sad news [of Sridevi's death]," Khushboo said. "I think the legacy that she left behind is there to keep her in our hearts with all the good memories."

Playback singer P Sush-eela, who has served the South Indian film industry for over six decades, was honoured with a Lifetime Achievement Award.

The event also remembered the legendary Telugu actor and late chief minister of Andhra Pradesh NT Rama Rao. His son Nandamuri Balakrish-

na, who is donning the role of NTR in the eponymous biopic, said his father has served the film industry for over six decades and had established the identity of Telugu people on the world map.

Balakrishna, who received the critics award from Radhika and Sharat Sridevi for his title role in *Gautamiputra Satakarni*, which also starred Hema Malini, said the film was made in 96 days and shot in India, Morocco and Georgia.

Baahubali 2: The Conclusion led the pack in bagging Siima Awards: best director (SS Rajamouli), best film (Shobu Yarlagadda), best cinematographer (Senthil Kumar), best singer (Kaala Bhairava for the song *Dandaalayya*) and best music director (M M Keeravani).

Bhairava said: "This award is just the beginning and I have a long way to go." He said he was pleased to receive the award from Bhumika Chawla whose *Simhadri* he said he saw as a child.

Rana Daggubati won the best entertainer of the year award for his roles in *Baahubali 2*, *The Ghazi Attack* and *Nene Raju Nene Mantri*.

The show that got off to a spectacular start kept the audience engaged until the end.



Pragya Jaiswal.



One of the many performances.



Praneeta.



Sanjana Galrani.



Nikhil Kumar.



Asha Sharath.



Keeravani.



Madhu Priya.



Nandamuri Balakrishna (left).



Kaala Bhairava.



Shane Nigam.



Shubra Aiyappa.



Vishnu Priya.



Bhumika Chawla and Bharat Thakur.



Raiza Wilson.



Keerthy Suresh.



Rana Daggubatti and Balakrishna.



Puneeth Raj Kumar.



Eesha Rebba.



Neha Anand.



Sshivada.

Photos by Nagarjuna Rao/Gulf News, Arshad Ali/Gulf News, Atiq Ur Rehman/Gulf News

Kerala's Fahadh Faasil wins big

The first night of the two-day South Indian International Movie Awards (Siima) 2018 on Friday night saw actor Fahadh Faasil's satire *Thondimuthalam Driksaskshiyum* scoop major awards including best film and best actor (critics).

The drama, which saw Faasil play a thief who swallows a gold chain and is taken into police custody, opened to positive reviews. While Faasil did not attend the event in Dubai to collect his award, actor Nivin Pauly — who won the best actor (popular) for his role in the touching drama *Njandukalude Naatil Oru Idalvela* — appeared on stage to celebrate his win.

Actress Parvathy won the best actor (female) award for her role as a troubled nurse in the war-ridden hostage drama *Take Off*, while Aishwarya Lekshmi won the same award in the critics section for her role in the tragic love story *Mayaanadhi*.

The actors from the Tamil industry were also honoured on the same night along with Malayalam artists. S. Sasikanth's *Vikram Vedha* won the best film award, while its lead hero Madhavan took home the best actor trophy.

— Manjusha Radhakrishnan, Chief Reporter