“And the award goes to…”

When asked about his film Black, Sanjay Leela Bhansali gave a warm smile stating, “What is gone is gone.” He chose not to say anything about the movie and the controversies surrounding it.

Conventionally, when one talks about movies chances are that he may finally end-up discussing more about controversies. In India, films and controversies go hand-in-hand. While films from all over the world are sent to Oscars with the hope of being nominated, in India it seems as though films are nominated to create more controversies.

Eklavya - The Royal Guard, directed by Vidhu Vinod Chopra, is one such instance. Nominated as India’s official entry to the Oscars in the Best Foreign Language category sparked-off a series of debate. Controversies kept hounding Eklavya as many critics were of the opinion that the movie hadn’t done well at the box-office, and that there were other good movies like Chak De! India, Gandhi My Father and Dharam.

“Technically speaking, the film Eklavya was very good, but then it lacked good content. Oscars is not only about technically sound films; the selection process should also look into other parameters of movie making. As against, Dharam had very good content, but the fact that it was not marketed well worked to its disadvantage,” believes Mohan Azad, an established script writer. When asked about Taare Zameen Par, he promptly replied: “I think the movie has everything to qualify for the Oscars. It not only has good content, but is also technically sound. I strongly believe that it deserves to be nominated for the Oscars.”

Controversies around nominations have become a regular affair. Last year, the media raised their pitch when Rang De Basanti was nominated ahead of Lagaan. Raho MunnaBhai. So much so, that the movie was later sent to Oscars as an unofficial entry. So also, in 2005, there was a row over Paheli being nominated ahead of Black.

This year, the 80th Annual Oscar Awards is scheduled on February 28, 2008 - an occasion that is likely to witness the who’s who from across the world. India is yet to nominate its official entry. Plausible, the stage is all set for yet another controversy. For it wouldn’t matter whether India bags the award or not, the Indian media can certainly look forward to some Bollywood mania.

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BROADWAY MEETS ALADDIN!

The musical - ‘A Diamond in the rough’ is a brainchild of the multi-faceted Faraz Ansari from MET Institute of Mass Media, Bandra. It’s his childhood dream which was showcased at Bandra’s St. Andrews Auditorium recently.

The musical is an adaptation of Aladdin, which incidentally has been scripted, directed and played by none other than Ansari, a true genius. “The musical is all about eternal struggle of a soul to triumph against the odds. It is the journey of a soul in search of better world, which has always been an inspiration for me!” he emotively elaborates. Interestingly, all the characters in the play have been acted by children of Our Lady of Salvation School, Bandra. The musical is not Ansari’s first attempt on the stage; in fact over the last few years, he has choreographed and directed many musicals like ‘The Lion King’, ‘Annie’ - an adaptation of The Beauty and the Beast…

As a matter of fact, Ansari has been creating and directing plays since his school days and it is his vast experience which enables him to weave stories that moves many a heart.

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