

TAMPA SHINES UNDER IIFA'S BOLLYWOOD SPOTLIGHT

By SHEPHALI J. RELE

Tampa city officials estimate 8,000 people gathered at Curtis Hixon Park in downtown for the free music welcome party called IIFA Stomp to kick off IIFA weekend celebrations. DJs and dancers entertained the crowd along with a few star appearances.

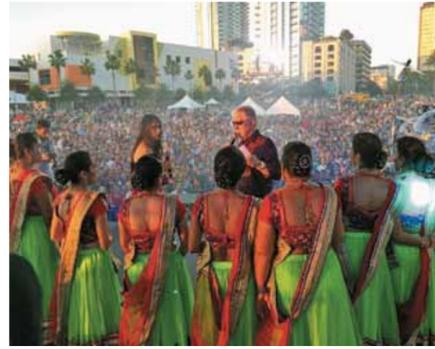


Photo by Sonia Kallarakal



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Highlights from Thursday, April 24

Anupam Kher premiered his short film "I Went Shopping for Robert De Niro" followed by an acting workshop at the historic downtown Tampa Theatre. Francis Vayalumkal, founder of the local India International Film Festival, attended. Here are his thoughts:

"I decided to go to Anupam Kher's workshop to meet him and see his approach to acting as he explains it. I had heard of his acting school Actor Prepares. With no interest in an acting career, I was skeptical if this would be a waste of time. However, at the end of the workshop, I walked out with a lot more than tips about acting. Anupam Kher offered lessons that anyone could use in regular life. It turned out to be an acting workshop combined with a motivational speaking session. It was amazing to see how the actor took members from the audience through an emotional yet entertaining journey through simple instructions. At several occasions, the acting exercises became very personal for the volunteers and the emotions were real, making even Anupam Kher himself teary-eyed as he participated in one. I wish the event was attended by more people who would've been interested. It was a very unique experience for me sitting through an acting workshop and walking away with lessons to be used in everyday life and inspired to do great things."



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Magic of the Movies and Technical Awards

The IIFA Magic of the Movies and Technical Awards was dedicated to the previously announced winners of the Technical and Special Awards part of the Tata Motors IIFA Awards 2014. The Green Carpet was rolled out the welcome the stars. Saif Ali Khan and Vir Das played hosts. Farhan Akhtar, Bipasha Basu, Sonakshi Sinha, and Kareena Kapoor Khan performed along with Ustad Rahat Fateh Ali Khan, Mika Singh, Pritam and others.



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Bottom row of the green carpet arrivals photos by Sonia Kallarakal

15th Tata Motors IIFA Awards - Highlights



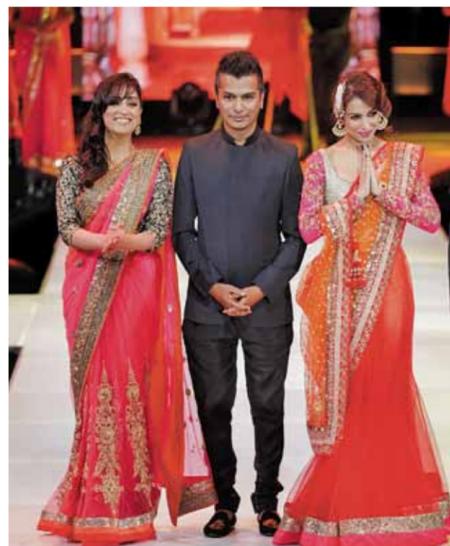
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IIFA Rocks: A Night of Fashion and Music

Designer Manish Malhotra displayed a collection from Shabana Azmi's NGO, the Mijwan Welfare Society with Anil Kapoor, Siddharth Malhotra and Sonakshi Sinha walking the ramp for Mijwan. Vikram Phadnis showcased his collection 'Nazaakat' touted as the epitome of classic Indian attire designed for Vishal Fashions. Malaika Arora Khan and Yami Gautam walked the ramp for Phadnis. U.S.-based fashion designer Amita Bal showcased her collection with Miss America, Nina Davuluri, as showstopper. Vivek Oberoi and Gauhar Khan hosted the exclusive invitation-only event. Maestro Rahat Fateh Ali Khan and singers Monali Thakur, Bhoomi Trivedi, Ankit Tiwari and the percussionist DJ Ravi Drums gave exciting musical performances.



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Although it had a late start, the show delivered its promised sensory overload of music, light and color. Hosts Shahid Kapoor and Farhan Akhtar arrived on a ship dressed as pirates as homage to Tampa's history and begged mayor Bob Buckhorn for keys to the city, which he granted after they promised to entertain and entertain.

John Travolta was recognized for his Outstanding Contribution to International Cinema and said, "I am honored and humbled to be put in this category. I believe that as human beings we are alike and (film) is a medium to celebrate our similarities."

"This is a very special moment as it is the first time I'm receiving an award for the film in the presence of Milkha Singh. He shared a lot of amazing stories with me and was the wind beneath my wings." "Bhaag Milkha Bhaag," was the big winner of the night (for a list of winners, see www.iifa.com)

Deepika Padukone and Farhan Akhtar were lead acting winners for the night. Padukone said, "2013 was an amazing year for me. I left home with a suitcase and a dream and I thank my parents for allowing me to follow my dream." Akhtar said,

Philanthropists Drs. Kiran and Pallavi Patel, the driving force who made the event possible in Tampa, were honored on stage. Both spoke eloquently to encourage others in charitable efforts.

There were amazing performances by Priyanka Chopra, Deepika Padukone, Ranveer Singh, Siddharth Malhotra, Madhuri Dixit Nene, and Hrithik Roshan each dancing to a medley of popular songs. The show is expected to air on Star Plus sometime in June.

Early on, Shatrughan Sinha was honored for his 'Outstanding Contribution to Indian cinema,' and accepted the trophy from his daughter Sonakshi Sinha.

The most memorable moments of the night: actor Kevin Spacey joining Shahid, Farhan and Deepika on stage for a little Lungi dance and John Travolta dancing with Priyanka Chopra at the end of her act and later accompanying Hrithik Roshan for some "Saturday Night Fever," which the crowd loved.

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Shriyan Photography