



**Projector**

# Past forward

2008's reel at a glance

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Looking back on the bygone days of 2008, no doubt, anyone will agree that it had been a significant year for the Sinhala cinema. With much hyped about films like *Aba* and *Prabakaran* breaking to the scene and ruffling feathers along with movies like *Siri Raja Siri*, *Machan* and *Akasa Kusum* heading for international heights, the year set unforgettable benchmarks for the Sri Lankan wide screen all the way. Daily News 'Projector' sets aside this space to reminisce over the highlights of glory and sorrow of the year gone by.



**Heart FM**

Serook Bandula Gunaratne's eagerly anticipated movie was the first to make its presence in theatres in 2008. The movie, though was not as well received as his debut *Adaraneeya Vasanthaya*, won praise for its light romance set to a different tune. Sachitra Ayendira and Kanchana Meera took on the lead along with Giban Wickramatilleke's introduction to cinema.



**Machan**

German-Italian Sri Lanka co-production, Umberto Pesoli's *Machan* based on a true incident regarding a lake-based 'ball' team from Sri Lanka won the European Award and the best film award presented by the Italian film industry at the Venice Film Festival. The latest news coming our way reveals that *Machan* also clinched the audience award at the International Kerala Film Festival held in India from December 12 to 19.



**Nil Diya Yahana**

Darpana Ratnayake's debut movie, *Nil Diya Yahana* ran in theatres in the CEL circuit recently. The movie stars Chathurika Perera and new comer Saranga Dassanayake in lead roles.



**Rosa Kele**

Sanjaya Nirmal's *Rosa Kele* introduces South Indian actress Monika Murthy to Sinhala cinema. Roshan Kanawana along with 30 child actors also took part in *Rosa Kele*.



**Adare Namayen**

A. Rajah and S. Rajah's production, *Adare Namayen*, relating a story of a love triangle between three college students, is doing a successful run in theatres. The team launched its audio before the movie released a first time episode in Sinhala cinema history.



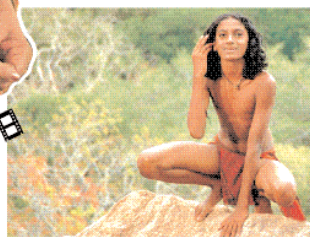
**Akasa Kusum**

It was a double triumph for director/producer Prasanna Vithanage when both his production *Machan* and direction *Akasa Kusum* were well received by the critics and audience. *Akasa Kusum* premiered in Paris and then screened at the International Film Festival in India (IFFI). Screen Queen Malini Fonseka, who portrayed the main role in the movie, won the Silver Peacock award, her third international award. The movie had been invited to be shown in more festivals abroad.



**Vala Patala**

Renowned stage dramatist Vijitha Gunaratne enters the cinema scene with the critically acclaimed *Vala Patala*. Gamini Electro-veganes, Jayalath Mawatte, Saumya Uysanga, Jayani Senanayake, Palitha Silva and Deepani Silva portray the main roles.



**Aba**

Jackson Anthony's much hyped about cinematic saga *Aba* conquered the main circuit theatres from August 8 till November 21. The movie ran for 101 and earned praise as well as criticism. Many claim *Aba* to be the turning point in the Sri Lankan movie scene to have shattered records, brought masses back to theatres and set stage for debates, discussions and hypocrisy. Never had a movie sparked so much controversy and interest in recent times.

**HOLLYWOOD arena**

- ▼ The much acclaimed 'No Country for Old Men' (best picture), Joel Coen and Ethan Coen (best directors) for 'No Country for Old Men', Daniel Day-Lewis (best actor) for 'There will be Blood' and Marion Cotillard (best actress) for 'La Vie En Rose' emerged winners at the 80th Annual Academy Awards.
- ▼ Hollywood couple Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie were blessed with twins.
- ▼ 'Mamma Mia!', comprising ABBA songs also delighted many with its lively comedy infused into romance and suspension.
- ▼ 'The Dark Knight' (Batman), 'Iron Man', 'Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull', 'The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian', 'Sex and the City', 'Wanted' and 'The Incredible Hulk' raked in the bucks.



**Wall - E**

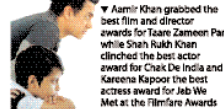
▼ Animations like 'Bee Movie', 'Wall - E', 'Kung Fu Panda', 'Bolt' and, of course 'Madagascar' won applause, hinting where the audience's tastes lay this year.

**BOLLYWOOD scene**

- ▼ Success stories of this year are headed by the controversial Jodhaa Akbar, Race, Jannat and Rock On. It was a staggering blow for big banners like Jashraj when some of their movies tanked. Tashan, Sarkar 2, Drona, Thode Pyaar Thode Magic, Crazy 4 and Love story 2050, comprising big budgets and multi stars fell flat at the box-office. However Shah Rukh Khan brought back the old magic with the recently released *Rab ne bane di Jodi*. Aamir Khan followed his rival with *Gajini* which is also ascending the box-office ladder at a steady pace.
- ▼ Kareena Kapoor's dramatic weight loss for *Tashan* also raised a few eyebrows while star relationships continued to spark curiosity.

**Taree Zameen Par**

▼ Aamir Khan grabbed the best film and director awards for *Taree Zameen Par* while Shah Rukh Khan clinched the best actor award for *Chak De India* and Kareena Kapoor the best actress award for *Job We Met* at the Filmfare Awards.



**Julia**

*Julia* became the first movie to premiere at an international theatre - Odessa, London, on December 14. The movie was also screened at the end of the EU Film Festival held in local soil.

**Sanath Gunatilleke's debut screenplay and direction**

Sanath Gunatilleke has to be one of the most active figures in the cinema scene of the year. With constant appearances in nearly half the films screened this year and more to come along with the release of the screenplay and DVD version of his maiden production and 1992 hit *Sisila Giri Gani*, he also moved onto launch the website of his debut direction *Ekamath Eka Raktela* as [www.ekamathvivo.com](http://www.ekamathvivo.com).



Widely known as Master, Premasiri Kumardasa, who had composed music to well over 100 movies, passed away on October 24 leaving his indelible legacy.

**Muhuraths and Premieres**

Movies like *Magu Digo Dai*, *Paya Ewa*, *Iliru Se*, *Sowandara Daruna*, *Jeevithe*, *Sina Sana*, *Adaren*, *Suvini*, *Vivirana*, *Nimmayake Hudakalawa*, *Uthura* and *Dancing Stars* held their muhurath ceremonies while *Adara Meera*, *Veda Bel Tarzan 2*, *Veda Bel Tarzan Mathi Sabayata*, remake of *Uta* a drama *Socayya* and *Pita Salawala Kumaryal Pancho* held their muhurath ceremonies.

**Sarasaviya goes global**

The film *Sarasaviya*, Sri Lanka's longest surviving cinema weekly joined the web as [www.sarasaviya.lk](http://www.sarasaviya.lk).

**Rukmani Devi remembered**

Rukmani Devi Uyu Jivana Vitthi, an autobiographical novel authored by Karunasena Jayalath and Yugayaka Swarna Geethaya 2, by senior Journalist A.D. Rajith Kumara were launched in one volume to mark the 30th death anniversary of Sri Lankan cinema's nightingale Rukmani Devi on October 28.

**Fund raiser for Galle Film Festival**

The fund raiser for the Galle Film Festival, which will be held in 2009 took place at end October and early November with the Asian premiere of Paul Schrader's *Adam Resurrected* and *Kieran Mehta's Rang Rasiya*. This gala event showcased movies by world Sri Lankan filmmakers like Lester James Peres, Prasanna Vithanage, Dharmasiri Bandaranaike, Samirna Perles, Vinitha Jayawardana and Anoka Handegama.

**Prabakaran**

'*Thushara Peiris*' maiden movie, *Prabakaran*, the first Sri Lankan film based on the ongoing war in the country, hit theatres in April. The movie claimed much interest due to the director being physically assaulted by attackers in Tamil Nadu, who believed that the LTR leader Velupillai Prabakaran had been poorly depicted in the movie. However Peiris was able to take the movie to a number of countries and it became the first movie to be screened in Jordan.

**First Chinese Film Festival**

For the first time in Sri Lanka history, a Chinese Film festival was held from April 2 to 6 with the participation of a Chinese delegation. This event, showcasing six recent Chinese movies, was organized as a response to the Sri Lankan Film Festival held in Beijing last year.

**A biography on Latha Walpola**

Latha Walpola's biography written by veteran journalist Deepthi Fonseka was issued to mark 75th birthday of the queen of song on November 11. Walpola had rendered her voice for background vocals for more than 500 films in a career spanning 54 years.



**Siri raja Siri**

Enter Somaratne Dissanayake-Renuka Balasooriya duo's *Siri Raja Siri*, the highly appealing film which won five international accolades in Canada, Mexico, Kenya and Argentina. The movie introduced child artist Koelika Pavan Jayasuriya to cinema.

